GLOBALIZING CANADIAN EDUCATION FROM BELOW:
A CASE STUDY OF TRANSNATIONAL IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP
BETWEEN SEOUL, KOREA AND VANCOUVER, CANADA

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores a form of transnational economy that involves cross border movements of students, families and business people that are motivated by education. A main objective of the study is to explore the interplay of structural factors and the agency of migrants in the development of this industry.

Using interview data collected in Seoul, Korea and Vancouver, Canada, this study demonstrates that the globalization of the international education industry is not simply an economic process but a by-product of complex relations between many economic and non-economic factors. The intensification of globalization in general, and the rise of neo-liberalism in particular, have introduced macro structural changes in the political economies of both Korea and Canada that have had important implications for growth in the education industry. The role of nation-states is critical in that both Korean and Canadian national governments have delivered more relaxed policies regulating international migration and educational flows between the two countries. At the local level, both public and post-secondary educational institutions in Vancouver have become actively engaged in recruiting fee-paying international students.

Ordinary migrants, both permanent residents and temporary visitors, play an important role in promoting Canadian education in the global market as well. The successful recruitment activities of local schools (and school boards) have been facilitated by Korean international education agencies operating in Vancouver. Relying on close social and cultural linkages between Korea and Canada, the transnational entrepreneurial activities of Korean immigrants demonstrate how globalization actually works in practice. With strong motivation and spatial mobility, the rising demands of Korean students and their parents have also been an important precursor of recent industrial growth.

This seemingly smooth growth of the international education industry between Seoul and Vancouver, however, masks more complex dynamics of the process. I provide four critiques on taken-for-granted approaches towards neo-liberalism and economic globalization. Exploring immigrant participation at the heart of the knowledge economy (education), this study also asks if the entrepreneurial opportunities that are being cultivated by Korean-immigrants represent an innovative shift from traditional and low-level ethnic niche economies toward more lucrative opportunities.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The international education industry has grown significantly over the last two decades. Along with changes in global trade, industrial structure and labour markets, internationalization has been a key word for the education sector worldwide. In a special focus section on the outlook of British Columbia's economy, the *Vancouver Sun* claimed that the education sector is, and will continue to be, one of the most valuable industries for the province (Jan. 26, 2005 section D). The article reported that the education industry of BC generated more than 5.2 percent of the provincial gross domestic product in 2003 and that the sector employs seven percent of the total BC workforce. The education industry of BC comprises many sub-sectors encompassing a wide range of public and private educational programs and related services. Of the several sub-sectors, the international education industry that serves foreign students has become a leading contributor to the overall growth of the Canadian education industry. While popular media and policy makers have increasingly become aware of the rapid growth and positive economic impact of the industry, little research has been done by social scientists.¹

Beyond primarily economic-focused and celebratory approaches towards the industry, I will explore its political-economic and socio-cultural aspects. Drawing upon a case study between Seoul, Korea and Vancouver, Canada, I demonstrate the ways in which the globalization of the international education industry in Vancouver is closely related to the

¹ Some exceptions are Ong (1999) and Waters (2003).

transnational migration process and immigrant entrepreneurship. Transnational migration is inextricably linked with the changing conditions of global capitalism and must be analyzed within a global context (Glick Schiller et al. 1992). Within the rubric of transnationalism, migrants are no longer viewed as passive subjects beneath the hegemonic power of structural forces. Unlike structuralist approaches, the transnational framework leaves room for human agency and socio-cultural practices. While the everyday lives of ordinary migrants are critically affected by the rapidly changing political-economic contexts of global capitalism, these individuals have become important agents of globalization, utilizing social networks and conducting cultural practices that are well embedded in the process.

Drawing upon transnationalism as a major theoretical framework, the main objective of this research is to explore the interplay of structural factors and the agency of migrants in driving industrial growth between places of origin and settlement. In so doing, I argue that the globalization of the Canadian education industry is not simply an economic process but rather a by-product of complex relations between economic and non-economic factors. This research will help clarify the roles and relationships among the political economy of migration, the social embeddedness of immigrant entrepreneurship, and the cultural logic of consumption in the global education industry. Beyond the academic rationale for this thesis, an understanding of these complex dynamics should help policy makers implement better policies that affect international trade, (im)migration and integration.

As a form of international trade, the international education industry involves various cross-

bordering movements of educational goods, programs and people (scholars, staff and students). While there are many different forms of international education, such as establishing off-shore schools, developing distance learning courses and exchanging scholars, studying abroad remains a major form of the industry. In this research, I focus on the provision of Canadian education and related services to non-domestic students (of Korean origin) at all levels (K-12, private and public post-secondary education) in Vancouver, BC.

I analyze the findings focusing on three dimensions of the international education industry: first, the structural aspect of the rise of international education in Canada; second, agency-driven factors of the development of the industry; and finally, the consumption side of the industry. Three main parts of the thesis, Chapters 5, 6 and 7, deal with each dimension. It is, however, important to recognize the ways in which the three dimensions of the industry are closely intertwined and sometimes blur their boundaries. There are many incoherent and geographically specific aspects in the developmental process of the international education industry. In an increasingly globalized world, this calls for a more contextualized and balanced approach that pays particular attention to the roles of nation-states, local actors and ordinary migrants.

The thesis is comprised of eight chapters. Chapter 2 reviews major theoretical accounts in the literature that situate relevant research questions of the thesis. I examine four specific areas of study: transnationalism and international migration; urban labour market conditions and immigrant entrepreneurship; globalization and the role of states; and

rethinking neo-liberalism and neo-liberal subjects. Proposing several research questions in relation to the literature, I suggest transnationalism as a more balanced and integrated approach. The analytical framework of transnationalism is useful to move away from many binary approaches that only emphasize the importance of ‘either’ one ‘or’ the other. The concept is also valuable for finding links between structure/agency, temporary/permanent migration, place of origin/destination, global/local, and the past/the present.

Chapter 3 introduces the research methodology of the thesis. In order to achieve the theoretical and empirical objectives of the research, I used different sources of information and explored various dimensions of the industry. Statistical data were used to draw a bigger picture of the operation of the international education industry. Through transnational fieldwork between Seoul and Vancouver, I obtained insights provided by government officials, international program managers of both public and private educational institutions, immigrant entrepreneurs, international students and their families.

Chapter 4 draws a current portrait of the Korean-Canadian community in Vancouver as research background. Examining the overall characteristics of Korean migration and settlement in Vancouver through time, I find two key developments. Since the mid 1980s, a large number of Korean immigrants have arrived with higher qualifications and significant financial assets. Secondly, unprecedented flows of international students and visitors have arrived following the visa exemption granted to Koreans in the mid 1990s. I demonstrate how these recent transitions in the community have been fundamental for the development of the international education industry.

Chapter 5 examines how the role of public institutions has contributed to the rising mobility of international students and visitors between Korea and Canada. Influenced by the broad trend of neo-liberalism, I demonstrate how both nation-states facilitate easier movements of people, goods and monies between the two countries. However, I also argue that inconsistency, resistance and ambivalence are prevalent in their approaches. Reconsidering the nexus of migration, education and neo-liberalism, I emphasize how one single, grand theory may conceal complexity situated within different contexts. In addition, I argue that such an approach disregards the human agency of migrants in the process of globalization.

Responding to the critique of neo-liberalism, Chapter 6 demonstrates how Korean immigrant entrepreneurs have played an important role in drawing a large number of international students and visitors to Vancouver. The agency of transnational immigrant entrepreneurs was heightened through their social and cultural linkages. Situating the analysis within the literature of immigrant entrepreneurship, I also consider how their transnational business activities are geographically specific and are based upon socially and culturally embedded experiences. In so doing, I ask whether the international education industry can be regarded as an example of a 'break-through' from traditional ethnic niche economies for Korean immigrants in Vancouver.

Chapter 7 explores the consumption side of the international education industry. Examining the everyday experiences of international students and their families in Vancouver, I demonstrate that these individuals are not passive cultural minorities but active agents of

transnational migration. Their experiences also illustrate the ways in which they transgress multiple boundaries of place, ethnicity and culture. Reflecting upon the narratives of international students and their families, I suggest several policy recommendations in terms of visa processes, education quality and health care.

Chapter 8 summarizes the findings of the previous chapters and emphasizes the interplay of different factors in the international education industry. By contemplating the contribution of this research to the fields of migration, education and geography, I consider how I might further expand my research findings.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

A. Introduction

B. Transnationalism and International Migration

C. Urban Labour Market Conditions and Immigrant Entrepreneurship

D. Globalization and the Role of Nation-States

E. Rethinking Neo-liberalism and Neo-liberal Subjects

F. Conclusion

A. Introduction

Major theoretical debates in the literature are examined in this chapter. In order to frame research questions, the discussion focuses on four specific areas of theoretical development: transnationalism and international migration; urban labour market conditions and immigrant entrepreneurship; globalization and the role of states; and rethinking neo-liberalism and neo-liberal subjects. Drawing upon transnationalism as a major theoretical framework, this chapter demonstrates how the most simplified and blunt theorizations of globalization and neo-liberalism are not helpful in explaining the complex developmental process of the international education industry. In the process, I emphasize institutional factors as well as human agency concerning the significant roles played by nation-states, local institutions, and (im)migrants in Seoul and Vancouver.

B. Transnationalism and International Migration

Since the early 1990s, transnationalism has been a buzz word for social scientists who study migration. The introduction of the term as a conceptual approach was first made by a group of anthropologists, Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc (1992). The authors called for a new conceptualization that repositions contemporary migrant experiences and consciousness in the global capitalist system. They argue that, instead of the old images of rupture, uprootedness and painstakingly difficult immigrant adaptation in the places of settlement, new immigrants now actively develop and maintain multiple relations across borders. Hence, they define 'transnationalism' as "the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement" (p.1).

There are six premises embedded in the framework of transnationalism that collectively summarize this analytical approach (Glick Schiller et al. 1992: 5).

1. Bounded social science concepts such as tribe, ethnic group, nation, society and culture need to be reconsidered. As several critics have pointed out, such naturally given and readily identifiable categorizations are problematic. By reconsidering migrants' multiple and fluid identity formations, there have been efforts to challenge and rethink territorially bounded group identities like culture, class and society (e.g., Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Rouse 1995).

2. Researchers should acknowledge that the transnational migrant experience must be analyzed in relation to the changing conditions of global capitalism (e.g., Ong 1999).

3. Transnationalism is embedded in the everyday lives, activities and social relations of migrants (e.g., Waters 2002)

4. By maintaining the complex web of social relations in the societies of both origin and settlement, transnational migrants face multiple identity formations. Within the global capitalist system, they should no longer be seen as positioned entirely in insecure and vulnerable living conditions. Rather, they actively manipulate their identities in order to accommodate to and resist their subordination by the larger process of global capitalism (e.g., Smart and Smart 1998, Bailey et al. 2002).

5. Furthermore, many commentators have rejected the simplistic structuralist view of international relations (i.e., world systems theory) and instead have emphasized the on-going significance of nation-states (e.g., Bailey 2001).

6. Transmigrants deal with and confront a number of hegemonic contexts, both global and national. These hegemonic contexts shape the lives of transmigrants, but at the same time transmigrants reshape these contexts by their interactions and resistance (e.g. Smith 2001).

In sum, the transnational approach challenges the unidirectional view of immigrant acculturation and the tendency to treat immigrants as passive subjects against hegemonic power at various scales, such as global capitalism and American nationalism.

Most of the earlier criticisms of the concept of transnationalism have focused on the novelty of the issue as well as the scope and significance of the empirical phenomenon of transnationalism. Foner (2001), for example, argues that immigrant transnationalism is long-established and not as novel a practice as the early proponents of the concept claimed it to be. Portes (et al. 1999, 2001, 2003) also notes that the actual scope of the phenomenon has been exaggerated and over-used by adopting the term 'transnationalism' to explain nearly everything associated with migrants and migration. Because of this over-use and misuse, Levitt (2001) asserts that the concept is losing its explanatory power. In fact, numerous research projects published over the last decade and a half have shown that there are a variety of forms and scales of transnational practices. There is no single, typical transnational migrant experience (Hiebert and Ley 2003).

There are two reasons that the concept of transnationalism still holds both empirical and theoretical importance, however. First, the development of information and transportation technologies has enabled contemporary migrants to maintain denser and more efficient social links with their places of origin. Compared to a century ago, contemporary migrants more easily travel back and forth by air. They also keep close contacts through cheaper communication devices such as telephone and email. In addition, the rapidly expanding global capitalist system has created different political and economic contexts in which international migrants can engage with a variety of transnational practices. Many can transfer money through globally connected banking systems, and this practice has significantly affected some economies. More countries have become interested in the benefits of dual citizenship. Thus, contemporary migrants now arrive in different contexts

and with different capacities.

Adding to these arguments, I believe that what has made the concept of transnationalism appealing has been its conceptual power of crossing and linking multiple binaries. The concept was originally designed to be an agency heavy framework for migration studies. The shortcoming of this approach has been pointed out and modified by many scholarly works. Bailey et al. (2002), for example, argue that the relations between agency and geo-historical contexts have been weakly theorized in most transnational projects. Furthermore, Mitchell (1997) cautions researchers to remember the structural principles embedded in the various relationships between states, institutions and individuals. The transnational approach has gained currency by moving away from the dichotomy of *either one or the other* (i.e., structure/agency, migrant/non-migrant, place of origin/settlement, global/local, the past/the present) and implies a more synthetic and connected set of concepts. Through the transnational approach, researchers attempt to explore many links between these taken-for-granted binary boundaries and thus move towards a more balanced approach.

Situating my research project within a transnational theoretical framework, I consider every factor and structural context in relation to other factors and contexts. My main research questions, as a result, are:

- Focusing on the development of the international education industry between Seoul and Vancouver, I first identify major factors in the industrial growth of this emerging transnational economy. Who are the major contributors? What kind of structural forces have reinforced the newly emerging transnational economy?

- How have migrants' transnational linkages and business activities between Korea and Canada been shaped by the local, national and global power structure? In turn, how do those activities influence and reshape these structural forces?
- Can we distinguish a clear boundary between temporary/permanent migration, formal/informal economies and structural factors/agency of migrant relations? How are these taken-for-granted categories challenged and intertwined?

C. Urban Labour Market Conditions and Immigrant Entrepreneurship

In many immigrant receiving countries, scholars and policy makers have become interested in the successful economic integration of immigrants. While a large proportion of the immigrant population is still drawn to wage employment, researchers find that a disproportionately high number of immigrants choose self-employment as a vehicle for their socio-economic participation and upward mobility. In countries like the U.S., self-employment has always been an important form of economic integration for immigrants. As the number of self-employed among immigrants and ethnic minorities has also increased in European countries, the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship has been burgeoning with comparative perspectives.

Focusing on the transnational entrepreneurial activities of Korean-Canadian immigrants in the international education industry, this research is well situated within the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship. In this section, I first examine the main American theories of immigrant entrepreneurship as well as the later addition of European perspectives. I ask how Korean-Canadian entrepreneurial experiences fit into both theoretical approaches. By

considering the urban labour market conditions for ethnic minorities, I also investigate research questions about the benefits and barriers that the industry establishes for the successful economic integration of Korean-Canadians in Vancouver.

Social science interest in ethnic/immigrant entrepreneurship began in the early 1970s with publications by Ivan Light (1972) and Edna Bonacich (1973). Both U.S. scholars were interested in the causes of higher self-employment rates among certain ethnic groups. Light (1972) concluded, in his first publication, that social trust among co-ethnic group members supported entrepreneurship. Although Bonacich (1973) interpreted self-employment in a Marxist framework, as driven by structural conditions, she concurred that the sojourning orientation of middlemen minority groups intensified social solidarity and thus encouraged entrepreneurship. A decade later, influenced by a neo-classical approach, Borjas (1986) argued that the high propensity of self-employment among immigrants was derived from their motivation and rational decision making. Based on their own human and financial capital, they chose to start a business. Beyond individual motivation towards self-employment, most sociologists tend to emphasize the role of group resources, ethnic social capital.

Social capital theory is relevant to the experiences of Korean-American entrepreneurs. Min and Jaret (1985) found that Korean business owners in Atlanta were successful due to the strong spousal support that is in turn related to the ethno-cultural capital associated with strong family ties. Yoon (1997) noted that in Chicago, Korean immigrants usually utilized ethnic resources (ethnic social networks, a form of social capital) to establish businesses

and later depended more on their own class resources (financial and human capital) in their maintenance. Min (2001) also documented significant institutionalization of Korean ethnic resources (political participation) in New York, showing that various Korean business and alumni associations have strategically utilized the collective power of their ethnic resources in the political arena. There has been ample evidence of the significance of ethnic social capital (also see Light and Gold 2000, Gold 1994).

Advantages in ethnic resources can lead to the successful formation of ethnic entrepreneurship and/or ethnic economies. The most important feature of ethnic resources, however, is their ability to contribute to economic survival and achievement among groups lacking necessary business (class) resources. While social capital theory is useful in explaining general outcomes, the advantages of ethnic minorities and immigrant groups need to be examined with care. Social capital theory does not sufficiently explain why some groups are more likely to succeed in the establishment of ethnic economies while others struggle. Such approaches that focus on group-based resource utilization also fail to illustrate how individual entrepreneurs exercise their motivation for self-employment in a specific opportunity structure.

American approaches that emphasize the importance of social capital and ethnic resources tend to neglect institutional dimensions of immigrant entrepreneurship. It is important to remember that ethnicity carries a double-edged meaning for ethnic entrepreneurship. Bluntly speaking, a disadvantaged ethnic identity may cause individuals to believe that they will not be able to find a job and may therefore cause them to turn to self employment and

ethnic group support as a result. This is an example of ethnic ties providing benefits to entrepreneurs, as co-ethnic networks assist individuals in establishing and stabilizing their businesses. However, at the same time, ethnicity can also be a negative influence in that it may be associated with stigmatization and social hostility. As Waldinger and Lichter (2003) have shown in their study of ethnic niche formation, the stereotypical views based on ethnic identity are often incorporated in hiring criteria. For example, there is a widespread sentiment that Latino people are fit for 3D (Dirty, Dangerous and Difficult/Demeaning) work but incapable of managerial positions. Thus, the impact of ethnicity is socially constructed and reconstructed depending on context and convenience. These group-based approaches, which American scholars have championed for some time, require more critical thought, especially regarding internal differences within groups and the structural context of inter-group relations (Kloosterman and Rath 2003, Engelen 2001).

Recent scholarship from European countries argues that we need to see beyond the endogenous mobilization of business resources, including both the human capital of the individual and the ethnic and cultural capital associated with social groups (Ram et al. 2002, Kloosterman and Rath 2003). In the European context, especially in Britain, scholars have begun to emphasize differences in business environments to understand varying rates of business ownership (Ram et al. 2002). Welcoming the development of the interaction model by Waldinger and his associates (1990), many European scholars have begun to place the development of ethnic businesses in a balanced context that stresses the interaction between ethnic resource mobilization and the opportunity structure. The opportunity structure consists of market conditions (ethnic consumer markets and non-

ethnic/open markets) and access to ownership (business vacancies, competition for vacancies, and government policies) (Preston et al. 2003). According to the interaction model, the entrepreneurial propensity of groups depends on a balance that is achieved by the interaction between resource utilization of individuals/groups and the demands of the local economy.

What seems lacking in these theoretical approaches is a greater appreciation of the value of innovative strategies that immigrant entrepreneurs bring to economies, in some cases even to the highest levels of the global economy.² According to Engelen (2001), previous literature has mostly focused on immigrants' entrepreneurial activities in precarious urban labour markets and has not considered how immigrants 'break out,' or gain access to larger and richer markets. Immigrant enterprises are often described as having a high failure rate, low profitability, long working hours and a high degree of informal activities (Collins et al. 1995, Light and Bonacich 1988, Light and Gold 2000, Waldinger and Lichter 2003).

Waldinger's ethnic niche economy theory is a representative example, a theory based on the notion of assimilation. Waldinger (2001) argues that the concentration of groups into economic niches begins to decline only when immigrants are assimilated and newer groups of immigrants arrive, taking the place of the previous groups. Changes occur not in the nature of the niches themselves, but in the particular groups occupying them and their relative size. That is, immigrants move into positions which are dominated by some prior,

² Some exceptions are Li et al. 2002; Saxenian 2002; Wang 1999; Zhou 1998.

established group. As generations change, and as the second and third generation of immigrants assimilate, the potential for niche membership is passed on to newer and lower ranking groups. For example, newcomers, often Asian or Middle Eastern immigrants, moved in as Euro-American ethnic groups abandoned petty retailing, garment contracting, and other less remunerative business sectors.

Despite its significant contributions to the literature, the ethnic niche model neglects rapid changes in the post-industrial urban economy as well as place-specific institutional contexts (Rath 2002). Today, many immigrant-receiving countries have been attentive to attracting highly educated, entrepreneurial and resource-rich immigrants to boost their economy. Of the talented immigrants, some are able to cash in their human capital and enter the labour market or entrepreneurial pursuits quickly, without beginning at the very bottom. A large proportion of less educated immigrants are still, of course, placed onto the bottom rung of the labour market ladder. This reality is described by Sassen (1998, 2001) as a typical labour market structure of global cities, with growing polarization of the urban labour force. According to Sassen, this condition has been accelerated by a freer flow of global capital and a worldwide restructuring of the post-industrial economy. Thus, the macro-structure of the political economy is critical to shaping immigrant entrepreneurial experiences.

What seems imperative is a more balanced approach that considers how and under what circumstances immigrants participate in entrepreneurial activities and move successfully upwards in the macro political economy. Kloosterman and Rath (2003, forthcoming) propose a more elaborate concept of the opportunity structure with their theory of mixed

embeddedness. They argue that even under similar post-industrial structures, different national institutional frameworks create divergent self-employment trajectories. The concept takes into account three dimensions: the characteristics of individual immigrant entrepreneurs (the supply); the shape of the opportunity structure (the demand); and the institutional regulations mediating between the two (the mediator). Without neglecting the significance of social embeddedness (utilization of social capital and other socio-economic processes), Kloosterman and Rath suggest three possible types of markets where business opportunities may arise for immigrant entrepreneurs: vacancy-chain openings, post-industrial/low skilled options and post-industrial/high skilled options.

The three-market structure model suggested by Kloosterman and Rath is situated within a national institutional framework. The authors mainly designed the model in order to compare ethnic entrepreneurship in different countries by assuming that the political economy is bounded at the scale of the nation-state. I believe this can be further elaborated with lower scales of structure, including the municipal and provincial levels, because many advanced welfare states have experienced decentralization of regulatory regimes. This question of scale also draws our attention to the supra-national state level. As I demonstrate with this research project, immigrant entrepreneurial activities may not be bounded within one jurisdiction but can also be transnational, linking two different contexts and regulatory regimes.

Situating Korean-Canadian entrepreneurial experiences in the international education industry in this literature, I ask the following questions:

- How do existing and newly developed theories help us explain Korean-Canadian entrepreneurial experiences in the international education industry? How does this research contribute to the development of better theoretical frameworks?
- The entrepreneurial opportunities grasped by the Korean-Canadian population in the international education industry represent an innovative shift from old ethnic niche economies. Is this 'break out' really stable? If so, what kinds of preconditions exist for success? If it is not stable, what kinds of barriers inhibit it? What are the implications for urban labour market conditions for immigrants?

D. Globalization: The Process of Deterritorialization and Reterritorialization

A popular definition of globalization, mainly derived from the corporate world, states that it is a set of processes in which national cultures, national economies and national borders are dissolving. Economic globalization is considered a self-sustaining dynamic. A truly global economy is claimed to have arrived or to be in the process of emerging, while distinct national economies are increasingly losing their ground.

One of the well-known business management gurus, Kenichi Ohmae (1990, 1993), for example, argues that as a result of irresistible globalization processes, the world has become borderless. He suggests four distinctive economic processes as undeniable evidence of this hegemonic phenomenon. First, financial capital is no longer geographically constrained: it flows instead to places of the highest return or to the best opportunities. Secondly, industrial production and trade are also much more integrated and open than before. Next, the advancement of both information and transportation technology has

enabled international corporations to operate anywhere in the world. Finally, individual consumers around the world are becoming more similar than before in their tastes and orientation.

On the basis of these changes in the world economy, regional blocs (such as NAFTA, EU, ASEAN, APEC, etc.) gain a greater importance as natural economic zones instead of nation-states. Discussing the implications of regional blocs to central governments, Ohmae (1993) strongly suggests that national governments should adjust to the reality of economic regional entities. In a 'borderless world,' where transnational capital can flow freely across national borders, regulations and incentives of the state are no longer effective. He claims that "in the borderless economy, the less state interventions in these regions, the better off they will be." (p.87, *ibid.*)

This view that describes globalization as a hegemonic force bringing about a unifying socio-economic space has drawn much scepticism. Hirst and Thompson (1999) go so far as to call this perspective a 'globalization myth' while noting that it has been a necessary one. With the end of the prolonged growth era of 1945-1973, the international economy has experienced significant changes. The effects of the collapse of the Bretton Woods system, the OPEC oil crisis, and the rise of new economies in Asia have led to the relative decline of U.S. hegemony. The rapid shift from standardized mass production and consumption to a more flexible production system, often summed up as post-Fordism, has burdened every economic actor - individual and collective alike - to be more competitive than ever. By the late 1970s, the fast changing and irrepressible world economy was a shock to those

schooled by Keynesianism who believed that poverty, unemployment and economic cycles could be controlled in a market economy based on profit maximization. The perceived decline of national control and increasing uncertainty and unpredictability of world economic relations required institutions and individuals to become as competitive as possible. The once widespread belief in broad-based prosperity with stable growth has become regarded as illusionary and idealistic. In this way, the whole set of economic changes in recent years seems to be a globalization myth, the only reality without illusions.

In order to deconstruct the myth, David Harvey (1995) suggests viewing globalization as a process rather than as a political-economic condition. Since its inception (going back to the encounter of Columbus with the new world), globalization has been a process that was integral to capitalist accumulation. It has also been associated with on-going geographical reorganization that results in uneven geographical development. Harvey argues that this process of globalization reveals the inherently contradictory nature of capitalism. While capitalism has been interpreted as a simultaneous time-horizon with an increasingly efficient spatial reach, globalization turns out to be a process of production of uneven development. It has created an increasing level of inequalities between locals, states and people. Globalization is thus an on-going process of deterritorializing and reterritorializing.

Why is this spatial issue important to consider? While Ohmae emphasizes a world that has become an isotropic space under global capitalism, he neglects the other side of the process. Cox's (1997) consideration of the overgeneralization and hype of globalization is useful here. He notes:

any assessment of the globalization debate has to take into account not just **the deterritorializing** forces, the emergence of a world of enhanced locational substitutability, but also **the territorializing**: those conditions, those social relations that result in enduring commitments to particular places, which can in turn be a source of competitive advantage and so serve to reinforce those commitments.

(emphasis added, p. 5)

Globalization cannot be accurately understood within a single and unidirectional socio-spatial logic that erases all the differences between various places. Social behaviour, for example, does not occur in a vacuum. Every social activity involves spatial properties that contain often culturally and socially distinctive characteristics. Therefore, global strategies – whether individual or collective – need to be understood as complex relations between society and space. Globalization opens up new ways of thinking about long-existing territorial boundaries (like nation-states) and their significance. With freer flows of goods, capital and people around the world, the borders are believed to be increasingly porous and spatially bounded identities like ethnicity, nationality and culture would lose their unique characteristics (deterritorialization). However, we should not disregard the fact that the very same processes often recreate place-specific social conditions (reterritorialization) that affect people's everyday lives. What is important to note is that globalization has often been uneven and controversial.

In the concept of transnationalism, reterritorializing is closely associated with a redefinition of the roles of nation-states in the global era. Regarding the claim that we are now moving

into a post-national phase of the global cultural economy (e.g. Appadurai 1996), Smith (2001) responds that “nationalism is very much alive as a political project not only of state formations but of transnational political diasporas and ethnic formations within existing states” (p.19). When local populations receive immigrants, we see the rise and expansion of movements that recuperate and reify a mythical (or nostalgic) local identity as a way to discourage the penetration of ‘others’ (Ley 1995). This kind of protest is often expressed and exemplified as preservation of a national identity. At the other end of the spectrum, sending nations often re-essentialize their national identity and propagate it to their former nationals and their descendants as an important way of maintaining their loyalty and flows of useful resources back home (e.g., remittances and return migration) (Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999).

Reterritorializing place-specific experiences thus indicates that deterritorializing global forces do not herald the demise of the nation-state. What we need to keep in mind with the territoriality of nation-states is that the emerging world economy and politics cannot be adequately understood through the fixed territorial-state-based view which has been prevalent in mainstream international relations theory for the last two centuries (Agnew and Corbridge 1995). Rather than seeing the nation-state as a territorial trap, we need to consider the existence of extended socio-economic linkages within and across borders. The nation-state is, therefore, not a self-contained entity inclusive of class, gender and ethnic/racial differences. Although some business management gurus claim that the nation-state is no longer the primary scale of the world economy and global politics, this does not necessarily mean that the nation-state loses its significance. There are possibilities of

governance and national political strategies that influence (and are often influenced by) individual (grassroots as well as elite) activities of the nation-state (Glassman 1999). In contrast to the popular belief in post-nationalism (Ohmae 1993), many aspects of the current international economy and political systems continue to be nationally based and under the control of various regulatory regimes. Thus, global processes should be closely examined, with attention given to local dynamics between regulatory regimes and different social groups.

I aim to reveal these complex relations associated within the international education industry. The primary issue in this section is the relationship between global market formation and the political-economic role of nation states. Despite the popular belief regarding the unifying global force of free market formation, many scholars have shown that the world economy has never been free from multiple forms of regulation and control. Sometimes, nation-states actively incorporate global capitalist logic with pro-market policies of their own (e.g., Mitchell 1993, Murphy et al. 2003). At other times, however, in order to respond to place-specific local situations, nation-states often delay and resist market forces with restrictive policies. I espouse the view that each market is defined by and exists within a plethora of regulations that govern trade relations, migration flows, employment systems and legal procedures (Engelen 2003). Acknowledging the importance of the regulatory practices of governmental institutions at both ends, I examine how activities of the Canadian and South Korean states enable the formation of a global market for international education in Vancouver. These are the questions I hope to answer as a result of my research:

- How has the force of globalization affected the existing imagination of nation-states and operational regimes in Korea and Canada?
- What kinds of national and provincial policies have been linked with the formation of the international education industry? (I pay particular attention to the bilateral trade and migration policies between the two nation-states of Korea and Canada.)
- How have these policies been beneficial and/or detrimental for the development of the international education industry between the two places?
- How are these policies related to the rapidly changing nature of global capitalism? Can we add another example of the on-going importance of nation-states by examining the newly emerging transnational economies of international education?

E. Rethinking Neo-liberalism and Neo-liberal Subjects

Neo-liberalism was articulated and developed by a group of economic theorists at the University of Chicago. Influenced by liberal philosophy, the earlier proponents of neo-liberalism regarded individual freedom and human dignity as the fundamental values of civilization (Harvey 2005). They also believed that the function of the free market, where economically rational individuals make choices, is the most superior form of economic development. The concept is naturally appealing for anyone who believes individual choice is a primary value and anyone who wants to make profit out of his/her own decisions. This is probably why the concept has been spreading around the world so powerfully (Harvey 2005). Against the value of freedom, however, any sort of collective intervention is considered harmful. If necessary, the role of the state is limited to creating a freely

functioning market condition where individual choice is valued and protected. A renowned proponent of the neo-liberal movement, Milton Friedman, argued that “progress could be achieved only in an order in which government activity is limited primarily to establishing the framework within which individuals are free to pursue their own objectives” (cited in Noble 2006: S11).

Accordingly, the core assumptions of neo-liberalism are summarized in the following four characteristics (Olssen and Peters 2005: 314-5):

1. The individual as economically self-interested and a rational decision maker.
2. The free market as the most efficient and superior mechanism of allocation.
3. Laissez-faire policy as the dominant governmental approach towards regulation.
4. Free trade as the ultimate goal for international economic relations.

Neo-liberalism has often been understood as a key aspect of globalization as national economies are opening up to global economic forces. While globalization is described as a much broader phenomenon of worldwide deterritorialization, neo-liberalism is seen as a specific political economic discourse that replaced Keynesianism and other regulatory/developmental state forms. In relation to the global economic process, it is generally noted that the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system in the western world led to the abolition of financial controls and signalled the arrival of a new form of regulation and governmentality. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, many national economies and systems of urban governance moved away from the welfare state principles of redistribution and engaged with the privatization of public goods and services (Peck and Tickell 2002). The Neo-

liberal rhetoric, “more market/less state,” has rapidly spread with global economic restructuring and the emergence of powerful transnational actors. The simplified relational concept between market mechanisms and state functions has been used to explain a wide range of governmental restructurings and concurrent social changes in different places.

Several critical human geographers have begun to problematize this seemingly straightforward concept. Larner (2003: 510), for example, claims that the concept needs to be tested and reconsidered because it seems to be associated with an ‘identity crisis.’ While neo-liberalism is seemingly arising everywhere, the problem of the grand abstraction of the concept and its application have provoked scholarly debates (Castree 2006). The debates began with Wendy Larner’s (2003) question whether a typical neo-liberalism exists. She argued that, because of critical academics, the concept has become a largely reified and exaggerated form of hegemony. In real life, there are actually many different variants of neo-liberalism. The concept is differently applied, accepted and even resisted depending on its subjects and contexts. The issue is essentially geographical, in that Larner emphasizes multiple and contradictory aspects of neo-liberal subjects and systems across different times and spaces.

Describing neo-liberalism as a “perplexingly amorphous political-economic phenomenon,” Jamie Peck (2004:394) also notes that the neo-liberal project has involved institutionally specific processes that have resulted in highly variegated and contingent outcomes. While neo-liberalism as an ideological concept was developed in Chicago by a group of economists, its practical applications have affected extremely diverse sites. In fact, Chilean

bureaucrats were the first practitioners of neo-liberalism when they implemented the ideology as a political reform project after a 1971 military coup. The diverse sites encompass not only ideological heartlands of neo-liberalization like the U.K. and the U.S., but also the developmental peripheries of the Global South, including countries in Latin America and Asia. As a result, the cliché of more market/less state is no longer able to represent the actual manifestations of neo-liberalism. Instead, we have seen a burgeoning literature of local neo-liberalisms with a series of case studies of inconsistent and hybrid forms of neo-liberal projects.

We must ask why the actual practice of neo-liberalism has been so disparate from its theoretical assumptions and why it has produced so many variant forms. Examining the theoretical assumptions and the actual role of the neo-liberal state, David Harvey (2005: chapter 2) argues that the concept of neo-liberalism was born with an innate problem of ideological inconsistency. From the beginning, neo-liberalists believed that the state was supposed to take a laissez-faire approach towards regulation. In actual practice, however, the typical neo-liberal state plays an important role in creating good businesses and investment environments for individuals and corporations. In order to reach their goals, neo-liberal states tend to dismantle the collective rights of labour unions and the social welfare net. With their strong faith in monetarism, neo-liberal states tend to side with the interests of financial institutions over the well-being of the general population.

To earn support from the general public, then, many national governments have shown the tendency to utilize the nationalism card. Neo-liberal politicians argue that in order to

compete in the global arena, the state needs to function as a competitive corporate entity. In the process, the ideological objectives of valuing individual freedom and human dignity are often neglected. In addition, the theoretical goal of making a borderless and barrier-free trade market sits uneasily with strong territorial and nationalist players in the global market. The rise of regional trading blocs like the EU and ASEAN is similarly a potentially troubling aspect for global mindsets.

The neo-liberal ideal of unfettered competition provokes another inconsistency when it is applied to the real world. It is nearly impossible to find completely open markets. The emergence of monopolies and the growth of a few multinational corporations have been common at the global scale. At the local level, we have seen many small and mid-sized enterprises merge into a few big corporations under the goal of strategic restructuring. The virtues of free competition sometimes accompany the emergence of unruly market conditions and unequal societies.

If the original concept and subsequent executions of neo-liberalism are both problematic, we must ask how we should study neo-liberalism and our purpose in studying it. Recognizing the rise of neo-liberalism as a major factor in the industrial growth of international education, my analysis of the development of this industry in and between Korea and Canada may prove to be elusive. But then, that is the very point that I am about to make here: themes are inconsistent and contradictory aspects of industrial growth in our neo-liberal age. The seemingly triumphant growth of the international education industry in and between Korea and Canada was not the result of purely market driven forces. Rather, I

argue that the globalization of Canadian education has emerged through institutional intervention, has been network driven and has been characterized by culturally defined factors that are socially embedded. The development process involves various actors and inconsistent reactions at different scales. Thus, a locally specific approach is critical here. Through the transnational fieldwork between Seoul, Korea and Vancouver, Canada, I attempt to answer the following questions:

- How has the rise of neo-liberalism affected the political economy of international education? Can we consider neo-liberalism as a major structural factor in the industrial growth of this sector?
- Who are the major actors of the developmental process? Can we reconsider the role of nation-states, local institutions and other previously disregarded voices?
- How do these different actors justify and/or resist their involvement with market forces and the consumption of education as cultural capital?

F. Conclusion

It would be axiomatic that it is never ‘neoliberalism’ alone that causes anything, but always ‘neoliberalism-plus’— begging the empirical question of at one point of ‘impurity’ it becomes impossible to use the term neoliberal in any meaningful analytic sense (Castree 2006: 5).

Through the standard accounts of globalization and neo-liberalism, I found that such grand theorization cannot fully explain complex socio-economic phenomena. Noel Castree blamed the development of such grand theories for a lack of academic rigour.

Reconsidering neo-liberalism in conceptual and actual form, Castree advised that we should resist ‘aspatial’ thinking even if we *may* find that commonalities between different neo-liberal phenomena do not exist in reality. He argues that we need to take a critically realistic approach that pays closer attention to complex, varied and different aspects of local neo-liberalisms. His critique of the grand theorization of neo-liberalism is not about factual existence but more about the analytical approach taken.

My focus in this thesis is not to testify whether neo-liberalism exists in actual form or not. Both Korea and Canada, in fact, have experienced significant structural changes since the mid 1980s. Their political-economic reforms were clearly neo-liberal in that an increasing level of privatization and deregulation are identified as common traits of these changes. I rather explore how neo-liberalism is differently accepted, practiced and even resisted between Korea and Canada and influenced the development of the international education industry between Seoul and Vancouver. In that regard, I find that transnationalism provides a more effective analytical framework because it urges researchers to take a more balanced approach between grand abstraction and substantive differences in the field

As I began to study the international education industry, I learned that the actual operation and growth of the industry has been quite complex and has involved multiple actors. While admitting the rise of neo-liberalism as a major structural factor in the growth of the international education industry, I argue for ‘neo-liberalism-plus.’ My objective in the thesis is to specifically investigate how various actors and different institutions have been involved with the growing industry of international education. My stance fits into a

transnational theoretical framework as I criss-cross various conceptual and empirical borderlines. While I am not as optimistic about the rise of the international education industry as neo-classical economists, I try not to be as pessimistic or morally judgemental as those who adopt a socially progressive stance. Steering a course between structuralist and agency-driven views of market formation, I reconsider the role of regulatory regimes, local institutions, grassroots organizations and ordinary migrants. Empirically, my research is also transnational, examining the linkages between two different research sites, Seoul and Vancouver. In the following chapter on methodology, I briefly introduce how I organized and conducted my transnational fieldwork.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

Major findings of this thesis are drawn from two preliminary analyses and fieldwork. Through a pilot project in 2003, I first examined the overall socio-economic characteristics of the Korean-Canadian community in Vancouver and drew a preliminary picture of the development of international education between Korea and Canada. The pilot project yielded two working papers published online by MBC (Metropolis British Columbia) in 2004. The contents of Chapter 4 were largely drawn from the first paper, “An Exploration of the Korean-Canadian Community in Vancouver” (Kwak 2004). The second paper, “Transnational Economies of Export Education,” provided the analytical bases for Chapters 5, 6 and 7 (Hiebert and Kwak 2004).

In order to obtain more in-depth knowledge, I carried out major fieldwork between June and November 2005. Spending the first three months in Seoul, Korea, I conducted in-depth interviews and visited different sites of international education. The later part of the fieldwork was carried out in Vancouver, Canada. The data collected were used to elaborate on the initial findings of the research and to generate a clearer (and more complex) picture of the development and growth of the international education industry.

Methodologically, both quantitative and qualitative sources of information were used. In order to better understand migration flows, immigrant entrepreneurship and business

operations in the international education industry, I analyzed a variety of quantitative data from the 2001 and 2006 Canadian Censuses, LIDS (Landed Immigrant Data System), CIC (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) special reports and statistical data from the BC (British Columbia) Ministries of Trade and Tourism. Data drawn from the BC Ministry of Education were also used in order to examine the degree of internationalization in the public education sector of BC. For information on the Korean side, I examined a relevant set of statistical data drawn from the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (KMOFAT) and the Ministry of Education.

Qualitative sources of information were collected through three stages of field work in Vancouver and Seoul. The first stage was conducted in Vancouver between June and September, 2003. With so little information existing on the Korean-origin group in Vancouver, it was necessary for me to collect background information and build a community profile at the outset of the research. This project involved observing three community events and completing 17 individual interviews with significant members of the community. The seventeen informants included:

- Community Leaders
 - Korean Society of BC for Fraternity and Culture (1)
 - Korean Businessmen's Co-op Association of BC (1)
- Social Workers
 - SUCCESS (2)
 - MOSAIC (1)

- Business Professionals
 - Travel Agency Owners (4)
 - International Education Agency Owners (3)
 - ESL School Coordinators (3)
 - Realtor (1)
- Government Officials
 - BC Ministry of Competition, Science and Enterprise (1)

The year 2003 was the fortieth anniversary of Korea's first diplomatic relations with Canada. There were several official events and cultural festivals organized in partnership with the Korean Consulate General, CIC's Pacific Regional Office and different community organizations in Vancouver. The three events that I observed were:

- Second Korean Heritage Day Festival (The Plaza of Nations: May 31, 2003)
- Korean Immigration Workshop: Jointly organized by the Korean Consulate General & CIC Pacific Regional Office (Italian Community Centre: June 23, 2003)
- Korean National Choir Performance: Organized by the Korean Society of BC (New Westminster Massey Theatre: June 24, 2003)

Building upon the pilot project, the second stage of my fieldwork was designed to be transnational, investigating the business linkages, socio-cultural networks and political-economic relations between Seoul and Vancouver. Other than government officials, I asked former interviewees in Vancouver to provide the contact information of their business

partners in Seoul. Starting from the referrals, I used snowball sampling to recruit more business professionals in the international education industry. In order to collect more insightful and diverse opinions related to the topic, I managed to talk to three groups of people: government officials, business professionals and international students and their families. In Seoul, I interviewed a total of 36 individuals who included:

- Government Officials and NGO leaders
 - Canadian Embassy in Seoul (3)
 - Canadian Education Centre Network Seoul Office (1)
 - Canadian Tourism Commission Seoul Office (1)
 - Korean Ministry of Education, Division of International Co-operation (2)
 - Korean Overseas Study Association (1)
- Business Professionals in Seoul
 - International Education Agency Operators/ Directors of Canadian Destinations (10)
 - Directors of International Education and Immigration Division in Major Banks (2)
 - The General Manager of Seoul English Village (1)
- International Students and Parents
 - ESL School Program Participants (Post-Secondary Level) (10)
 - Parents of K-12 Level International Students (5)

South Korea is well known for its strong internet infrastructure. I found that a lot of information was exchanged through many different internet forums among potential international students and returned students. The forums are at first informally operated by a small number of students but, in many cases, become entrepreneurial and profit-making. By joining several such forums, I had several chances to participate in off-line meetings and to meet other student participants and operators of the forums. While I was in Seoul, I participated and observed three such meetings. With permission of the forum organizers, I could talk to students and even take some pictures of their information seminars. I discuss the nature and implication of such business activities more in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

For my third stage of field work in Vancouver, I interviewed 35 individuals. My informants included:

- Government Officials, NGO Leaders and Representatives of Public School Boards
 - Korean Consulate General in Vancouver (1)
 - Canadian Education Centre Network Head Office (1)
 - International Education Program Directors of the Public School Boards in the Greater Vancouver Area (3)
 - Association of Korean International Education Agencies in Vancouver (1)
- Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Business Professionals in the International Education Industry
 - International Education Agency Owners (8)
 - Home-Stay Providers (2)

- International Education Program Managers and Korean Student Coordinators in Post-Secondary ESL Programs (Private and Public) (5)
- Consumers of the Industry
 - Post-Secondary University Students (9)
 - Parents of K-12 Level International Students (5)

Other than government officials, most informants in this part of the project were recruited by referrals from previous research contacts and followed by snowball sampling. In Seoul, I also relied on snowball sampling that used referrals from the existing business network in Vancouver. In several cases, I referred to newspaper advertisements and business directories to contact business professionals in the industry. However, I found that using referrals was a more effective way of approaching potential interviewees, particularly for international students and their parents. Because there were a number of negative media reports on international education in general and transnational families in Korea, I could sense that some mothers were very careful about their participation and representation in the study.

The interviews were semi-structured. Three types of interview schedules (Appendix 3) were used as a guide and all questions were open-ended. The schedules consist of four or six major themes that range from personal background to their experiences with and expectations about the international education industry between Seoul and Vancouver. I asked government officials and business professionals a total of fifteen questions under the

four themes, including personal background, questions about the roles and services provided by the ministry/institution/business, their perspectives on the international education industry and overall assessment. Exploring more personal experiences of migration, settlement and education of international education, international students and parents were asked a total of 26 questions that covered six major themes. The six themes covered questions related to personal data, questions about their consumer experiences of Canadian education, their perspectives on the international education industry, their living experiences in Vancouver, their future plans and overall assessment.

Most interviews with business professionals and government officials were conducted in their place of work. I usually asked international students and parents to meet me in public spaces such as coffee shops or parks. In some cases, however, I was invited to their home, was served tea and was asked many questions in return by informants. I found that the dialogue between informants and me became more relaxed in such a setting. I do not believe all questions were well received and answered easily by informants. As I asked detailed questions about business operations and their partnerships across borders, some business professionals were sensitive about questions related to tax issues and money transactions. As expected, government officials in most cases tended to highlight positive aspects of the international trade and the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

The length of interviews varied depending on participants. I designed the interview schedule so that each interview would last approximately one hour. However, some were able to answer the questions in less than 30 minutes, while others added a great deal of

detail. In the latter cases, the interviews often lasted longer than 2 hours. With the consent of participants (Appendix 2), most interviews were digitally recorded. Other than Canadian government officials, NGO leaders and public school board directors, I was able to communicate with most informants in Korean. After each interview, I listened to the recorded data and selectively took notes of important comments for basic content analysis. I translated the interviews conducted in Korean into English. With English interviews, Ms. Nicky des Ormeaux and Ms. Vivian Tsang assisted me with full transcribing of the raw data. Where informants wished, the translated and transcribed notes were sent for their review. Most of them agreed and accepted the content of the notes, but some asked for clarification and subsequent revision of the interview data. Some informants were more serious about their comments and unanticipated results from their participation than others. In the process, for example, one government official and one business professional withdrew from the study.

The basic content analysis was done along major themes. Reading line-by-line all the transcribed interview data and notes, I was able to discern major themes and collect relevant quotes in separate files with different theme labels. All the quotes included in the following chapters were selected from these files and from the two previous analyses. Unless participants consented, I hid the identities of my research informants. Pseudonyms were used and the names of businesses and places were changed where readers may suspect their identity from the texts.

CHAPTER 4
Research Background:
An Exploration of the Korean-Canadian Community in Vancouver

A. Introduction

B. Korean Migration Flows to Canada

B-1. Permanent Migration

B-2. Temporary Migration: International students, workers and visitors

C. The Korean-Canadian Community in Vancouver

D. Socio-Economic Geographies of the Korean-Canadian Community

E. Discussion: Migration, education and a community in transition

A. Introduction

Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, the three largest census metropolitan areas (CMAs) of Canada, have attracted large numbers of new immigrants whose impacts have been notable. Arriving from non-traditional source countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, many new immigrants have enriched the cultural mosaic of Canadian urban landscapes. This “new” immigration began in the 1960s when the Canadian government removed discriminatory selection policies and has intensified since the 1980s, when the government of Canada decided to double the target of its annual immigration intake.

With the influx of new immigrants, mainly from Asia, Vancouver has experienced dramatic

changes in its ethnic composition. 2006 census data reveal that about 40 percent of Vancouver's population was born outside Canada (Statistics Canada 2006). Among immigrants, the number of Koreans has been growing rapidly, with almost a half of the population having arrived since 1996. The growth rate of Koreans in Vancouver has been even higher than that of Toronto, the city with the largest Korean population in Canada. In addition to about 36,000 Korean-Canadians with permanent residency rights, Vancouver has become the most favoured city for Korean visitors and students holding temporary visas. In 2005, the Korean consulate in Vancouver estimated that there were about 15,000 Korean students with a temporary permit in the city, pursuing various educational goals.³

The increasing Korean population has resulted in several residential and commercial concentrations in Vancouver. According to the 2006 census, Koreans seem to be scattered throughout the region, but their recent growth has been largely a suburban phenomenon. Except for those international students (and sometimes their lone parents) who choose their residences in the downtown area and Vancouver's west side, a large proportion of recent Korean immigrant families have settled outside the City of Vancouver. Some parts of the eastern suburbs of Burnaby, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Surrey, Langley and Maple Ridge have experienced higher growth in their Korean-origin population than other municipalities. In response to the suburbanization of the Korean-Canadian community, several commercial concentrations have emerged, forming small scale 'ethnoburbs.'⁴

³ This information was collected during an interview with a Korean consulate official in 2005.

⁴ The term, ethnoburb, indicates a new ethnic enclave economy associated with ethnic residential clusters in contemporary North American suburbs (Li 1998)

In this chapter, I provide a current portrait of the Korean-Canadian community in Vancouver to establish background information on the development of the international education industry between Vancouver and Seoul. Drawing upon qualitative and quantitative data, the overall characteristics of Korean settlement and economic development are examined. Some major issues arising within the community are also discussed. The community has experienced a major transition with the recent influx of new immigrants and temporary residents. I argue that two key ingredients in this change have been: the rising number of immigrants who have been arriving with higher qualifications and significant financial assets; and the unprecedented flows of foreign students and visitors who have arrived since the visa exemption granted to Koreans in the mid 1990s (see below). Although it is too early to understand the full impact of these changes, Korean-Canadians seem to experience the same difficulties in the Vancouver labour market as other newcomer groups. In an effort to overcome these difficulties, Korean-Canadians have, in large numbers, established their own businesses. This process actually began in the 1960s, but we are now seeing the emergence of new forms of Korean-Canadian entrepreneurship, especially in the field of “international education.” The emergence of the industry reflects and heightens the growing significance of transnationalism. The remaining chapters of the thesis will explore in greater detail the interplay of structural factors and the agency of migrants in driving industrial growth between Seoul and Vancouver.

B. Korean Migration Flows to Canada

B-1. Permanent Migration

International population movement can be classified crudely into two types: permanent

migration (immigration); and temporary migration for employment, education or casual visits. However, as Castles and Miller (2003) argue, international migration has become more complicated and diversified in recent years. In this section, I examine three distinct types of Korean migration to Canada: permanent; temporary visits by international students; and temporary visits related to tourism.

Figure 4-1. Korean Immigration to Canada (1962-2005)

Source: the Korean MOFAT & CIC Statistics

Korean immigration to Canada began officially in 1962, after the government of Canada removed discriminatory policies against people from countries outside Europe and the Commonwealth. With the first diplomatic relations with the Korean government in 1963, the introduction of the ‘point system’ in 1967 accelerated migration from Korea. Except for

the period from 1977 to 1986, Canada has experienced a steady growth in its total Korean-Canadian population in each of the last five decades. Korean immigration into Canada in the late 1990s was unprecedentedly high (see Figure 4-1). According to the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Korean MOFAT 2008), in 1999, the number of Korean emigrants who reported their landing destination as Canada surpassed those who did so for the United States (the most favoured destination for Koreans for almost 35 years), and the tendency lasted until 2003.

Between 1999 and 2001, Korea was the fifth largest immigration source country for Canada, with an annual number of more than 7,000 new arrivals (CIC 2006). A number of policy changes in 2002 negatively affected the scale of Korean immigration. Although CIC reduced the threshold of passing points for skilled workers in the following year, the latest system still values higher standards of educational qualification as well as proficiency in English or French—meaning that fewer Koreans will be admitted as skilled workers. There were also changes in the business immigration programs that had an impact. Those immigrants qualifying as entrepreneurs now need at least one year of actual business management experience (CIC 2007), for example. As a result, the annual inflows have dropped slightly. Since 2004, annually 5,000-6,000 Koreans have earned permanent residency rights in Canada.

The revised policies, while reducing the scope of application for permanent migration from Korea, seemed to encourage more temporary migrants from Korea to apply for permanent residency rights while staying in Canada. Since 2002, more than 7,000 Koreans residing in

Canada have reported their acquisition of permanent residency rights to local consulate-general offices (Korean MOFAT 2008).⁵ Shown in Figure 4-1, the increasing gap between the Korean departure data and Canadian landing data since 2002 explains this point. With a rapidly growing number of international students and visitors from Korea, the trends suggest that migrants with temporary permits will be an important source of future immigrants.⁶

In terms of entry class, most recent Korean immigrants have arrived in Canada as economic immigrants rather than through the family reunification or other programs. The economic class consists of four major sub-categories: other independents (skilled workers), entrepreneurs, self-employed and investors. The business program includes the last three of these sub-categories. Since 1984, about 80 percent of the total Korean-Canadian immigrant population arrived as economic class migrants. The percentage climbed to 86 percent

⁵ The data for local landings are only available from 2002 when the Korean MOFAT became able to collect information through consulate general offices.

⁶ In the case of the U.S., where a large pool of temporary and undocumented migrants exists, local landings have also become more common. In 2007, while there were 2,200 Koreans who reported their departure to the U.S. for immigration, around 12,000 Koreans earned permanent residency rights in the U.S. (the Korean MOFAT 2008). It is hard to predict a long term trend for Canada here. However, I believe that more strict immigration policies, coupled with a difficult labour market situation in Canada, will result in an increasing number of local landings. In November 2007, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration announced it would implement the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) in 2008 (CIC 2008a). The CEC will help temporary workers and international students with Canadian degrees and Canadian work experience apply for permanent resident status from within Canada. Establishment of the CEC and recent implementation of a more relaxed Off Campus Work Permit (OCWP) program will contribute to the trend as well. This issue will be examined further in Chapter 7.

**Table 4-1. Top Ten Source Countries for Business Immigration to Canada
(2000-2005 & 1986-2005)***

2000-2005			1986-2005		
Rank	Country	Number (%)	Rank	Country	Number (%)
1	P. R. of China	6,351 (32.5%)	1	Hong Kong	24,945 (28.0%)
2	R. of Korea	2,657 (13.6%)	2	Taiwan	12,601 (14.1%)
3	Taiwan	1,513 (7.8%)	3	P. R. of China	8,282 (9.3%)
4	Iran	1,104 (5.7%)	4	R. of Korea	8,226 (9.2%)
5	Hong Kong	652 (3.3%)	5	Iran	2,467 (2.8%)
6	Pakistan	627 (3.2%)	6	Germany	2,295 (2.6%)
7	England	556 (2.8%)	7	England	1,916 (2.2%)
8	India	511 (2.6%)	8	USA	1,720 (1.9%)
9	Netherlands	467 (2.4%)	9	UAE	1,690 (1.9%)
10	UAE	453 (2.3%)	10	Pakistan	1,518 (1.7%)
Top 10		14,891 (76.3%)	Top 10		65,660 (73.7%)
Other		4,629 (23.7%)	Other		23,454 (26.3%)
Total		19,520 (100.0%)	Total		89,114 (100.0%)

* Only principal applicants are counted.

Source: Business Immigration Program Statistics, CIC (2005).

between 1996 and 2005 (CIC LIDS 1980-2005). The number of Korean business class immigrants that have been processed between 2000 and 2005 is especially significant, accounting for 13 percent of total business class migration. The annual number of Korean business class applicants has been large enough for Korea to be ranked as the fourth largest source country since 1986 (see Table 4-1). This indicates that a large proportion of recent Korean immigrants are likely to be involved with business activities in Canada.⁷ The

⁷ However, this does not necessarily mean that they are experienced entrepreneurs. As Ley (2006) found in his study of immigrant entrepreneurs in BC, Korean business migrants are less likely to have entrepreneurial

already high propensity of self-employment among Korean-Canadians will likely persist for some time (Ornstein 2000, Razin and Langlois 1996).

B-2. Temporary Migration: International students, workers and visitors

Many Koreans stay in Canada to pursue their educational and career objectives with temporary permits. The rapid growth of international students and visitors from Korea has been phenomenal since a visa exemption was granted to Koreans in 1994.⁸ In the late 1990s, Korea was the leading source of international student inflows to Canada (Figure 4-2). The inflow dropped temporarily in 1998 as a result of the Asian financial crisis. However, the number fully recovered in 1999 and kept increasing until 2003. There were 14,304 Korean students who received study permits to enter Canada in 2006.⁹ The number of Korean students accounted for about 23 percent of total foreign student inflows to Canada in that year. In the latest report, CIC counted the number of students with an official study permit at one point in the year to estimate resident student volumes.¹⁰ In 2006, Korean visa students accounted for about 18 percent of the total student stock with an approximate number of 27,000 (CIC 2006). An additional data source from CIC identified more than 100,000 Korean students who applied for or renewed their study permit for the five year

experience in their country of origin. Unlike their counterparts from Hong Kong and Taiwan, most Korean principal applicants to the business program worked as managers in large corporations.

⁸ Under the new travel agreement between Korea and Canada, Korean visitors can enter and stay in Canada for up to six months without a visa.

⁹ To measure 'flows,' t CIC special report only counted the number of students entering the CIC system (presumably the country) for the first time. Thus, the number does not include those students who renewed their visas in that particular year (CIC 2006).

¹⁰ In the report, the chosen date was December 1st (CIC 2006).

period from 1998 to 2003.¹¹

Figure 4-2. Korean International Student Flows to Canada (1980-2006)

Source: CIC Special Reports 2003 & Facts and Figures 2006

While these numbers are already substantial, it is important to note that CIC reports do not take into account the number of students on tourist (visitor) visas. Korean students who plan to study for less than six months are allowed to enter Canada as visitors. In addition, it is tacitly known that extending the tourist visa period is not too onerous for Korean students as long as they prove their student status and financial stability. In general, interviewees in the international education industry agree that the number of students with visitor visas increases during the summer. One agency worker estimated that the average annual share of students with tourist visas would account for about 40 to 50 percent of the total student

¹¹ Data source: FOSS Data Warehouse Cubes, May 27, 2003. This information has been provided courtesy of T. Vermette, a program specialist at CIC Pacific Regional Office.

inflow from Korea. It can therefore be estimated that, in 2006, the actual number of Korean students in Canada could have been nearly 30,000.

The inflow of Korean temporary workers has not been as significant as other types of entries. However, it has also experienced a moderate increase over the last five years. The annual growth rates have been uneven but positive, with a 25 percent increase in 1998 and another 5 percent in 2003. According to FOSS data, the total number of Korean temporary workers entering Canada between 1998 and 2003 was 10,688.¹²

Table 4-2. Overnight Customs Entries to BC & Canada by Overseas Core Markets (2002 & 2007)

	2002		2007 (% Changes from 2002)	
Country	BC	Canada	BC (%)	Canada (%)
USA	3,774,947	16,152,067	3,352,776 (-11.2%)	13,415,032 (-16.9%)
UK	199,671	749,659	246,443 (23.4%)	908,806 (21.2%)
Japan	273,699	436,510	190,876 (-30.3%)	330,931 (-24.2%)
Australia	96,047	157,610	143,955 (49.9%)	219,592 (39.3%)
R. of Korea	106,425	151,476	123,696 (16.2%)	200,388 (32.3%)
P. R. of China	77,184	96,142	91,521 (18.6%)	152,220 (58.3%)
Germany	73,127	295,715	82,029 (12.2%)	306,638 (3.7%)
Hong Kong	86,423	119,449	75,989 (-12.1%)	113,404 (-5.1%)
Taiwan	96,752	105,139	69,387 (-28.3%)	80,167 (-23.8%)

Source: Tourism British Columbia (2002 & 2008)

Since the 1960s, the tourism industry has become a more important element of the Canadian economy. For the province of British Columbia, the trend has been even more

¹² This figure is courtesy of T. Vermette again.

significant than for other parts of Canada. Today, tourism in BC accounts for nearly one fifth of the national tourism economy (the Coreamedia 2003). Among many contributors, Korea has become a major source of tourists to Canada and more specifically to BC, in recent years. In 2007, more than 200,000 Koreans visited Canada and more than 60 percent of the inflow came through BC customs.¹³ In 2006, total spending by Korean tourists was estimated at 300 million dollars, ranking 7th among the largest overseas tourist markets (CTC 2007). According to Tourism British Columbia, Korea was the 6th largest source of visitors to Canada and the 5th largest to the province of BC in 2007 (see Table 4-2).

These different types of Korean migration in recent years have had significant impacts on the growth of Korean-Canadian communities in major Canadian cities. Recent arrivals have changed the socio-economic characteristics of the community in Vancouver as well. In the following sections of the chapter, I elaborate this point and examine several issues raised within the community.

C. The Korean-Canadian Community in Vancouver

Reflecting on the overall trend of Korean immigration to Canada, one of my interviewees testifies that:

At that time [1981], I heard that there were about 6,000 Koreans in Vancouver. ... From 1975 or 76 to the early 1980s, in '82 and '83, there were no Koreans coming in. The community was so small that everyone knew each other. Since 1986 when the new immigration program called 'Investors Immigration' was introduced, some

¹³ This number does not include immigrants and temporary visa holders (e.g., international students and temporary workers).

Korean investors started to come. From that point, the community began to grow rapidly. (Mr. Tae, a travel agency owner, immigrated in 1975)

As Mr. Tae noted, Korean immigration can be roughly divided into four different time periods: before 1976, 1977-1985, 1986-2001 and 2002-present (see Figure 4-1). Each period reflects a major revision in Canadian immigration policy. The introduction of the 'point system' in the late 1960s enabled the first large volume of Korean migration to Canada. Before that, there was a very small number of pastors and students from Korea.¹⁴ The more inclusive family reunification program also played an important role in this period. Extended sponsorships beyond parents and children, to relationships such as siblings, uncles and aunts, became possible. During the first period, the vast majority of Korean immigrants were admitted under the family reunification program.

Their backgrounds and reasons for migration to Canada were varied. There were many skilled workers, health care professionals, Korean guest workers from Germany and agricultural migrants from Latin American countries who migrated to Canada (Park 1997). In the late 1960s, the Park regime was committed to reducing high unemployment rates in Korea and became interested in labour export to places in need. Between 1963 and 1977, more than 8,000 mine workers and 10,000 female nurses left Korea to work in West Germany (MBC 2004a). Many chose to settle in the United States or Canada at the end of their three-year contracts (Park 1997). A large proportion of Korean agricultural immigrants to Latin countries who could not settle as farmers moved to North American countries. The

¹⁴ Some significant members of the community recollected that there were about 30 Koreans living in Toronto in 1961 and 50 Koreans in Vancouver in 1964 (Park 1996).

flow of secondary migration to Canada was not as large as that to the United States. However, the migrants who settled in Canada became the base for further chain migration by subsequently inviting families and relatives from Korea to Canada. In general, it is safe to say that Korean immigrants in this period left Korea for better economic opportunities.

The second period was characterized by a lull in Korean immigration to Canada while large flows of immigrants to the U.S., Latin American and European countries were sustained (Korean MOFAT 2008). Due to a 1976 policy revision that excluded siblings and other relatives from the family reunification category, Korean communities in major Canadian cities experienced minimal growth for a decade. While many skilled workers found jobs as wage employees, most of the earlier immigrants who had to start their lives from scratch in Canada turned to self-employment in this period, after years of hard work and saving in order to establish their own shops (Lee 2002). This is the period when the first Korean grocery stores, travel agencies, and restaurants appeared in Vancouver (Lee 2001).

The third period is characterized by a sustained increase in the number of Korean immigrants. In 1986, the newly revised business immigration program began to attract affluent migrants from Asian countries, including Korea (Nash 1994). Since 1997, the number of skilled workers also increased rapidly as the Asian financial crisis hit the Korean economy. Many affluent potential entrepreneurs and well-educated middle class families decided to leave Korea to avoid unstable socio-economic conditions, including the stressful education system for their children, and to pursue a better quality of life. These large outflows of the middle class from Korea were once referred to as an “emigration

syndrome” (the Korea Times Daily 2000). Since 1986, economic migrants under the two categories have dominated the picture of Korean immigration to Canada. This has been the trend for flows to Vancouver as well (Figure 4-3).

As briefly mentioned earlier, the fourth period (2002 – present) has been affected by revised policies in the early 2000s. Higher emphasis on both proficiency in the official language and business experience has become a barrier for potential immigrants from Korea. In this period, Korean immigration decreased until 2004 and began to recover in 2005. Rather than permanent migration, an increasing number of Koreans have begun to come to Canada on a temporary permit first and then to apply for immigration later on.

Figure 4-3. Korean Landings in Vancouver by Immigration Class (1980-2005)

Source: LIDS (1980-2005)

Figure 4-4. Regional Distribution of Korean Landings by Settlement Destination (1980-2005)

Source: LIDS (1980-2005)

Since the 1990s, the vast majority of immigrants to Canada have chosen to live in a few metropolitan areas, namely Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal (Hiebert 1996b). This is also true for Korean immigrants although it started much earlier. Even by 1980, about 60 percent of all Korean immigrants landed in one of these three CMAs (Central Metropolitan Areas) and the corresponding figure rose to 80 percent by 2001 (see Figure 4-4). Due to their preference to speak English, Toronto and Vancouver have been the two most important destinations for Koreans over the years. Toronto has attracted more Koreans mainly because of its larger labour market. This tendency was most notable in the early 1980s, when Vancouver experienced a major economic recession, and in the late 1990s, when a

large number of skilled workers arrived from Korea as a result of the Asian financial crisis. In these two time periods, Toronto has admitted, respectively, more than 40 and 50 percent of total Koreans immigrant inflows to Canada. Overall, Toronto has absorbed 37 percent of all Korean immigrants who landed between 1980 and 2005.

Vancouver is second only to Toronto as a settlement destination for new arrivals from Korea. For the last two decades, about one quarter of Korean immigrants have landed in the city. The importance of Vancouver as a destination has increased steadily over time, especially for those who arrived after 1991. As Ley (2006) notes, BC has been the most favoured province for business migrants from East Asia. A slightly higher proportion (29.4 percent) of total Korean business migrants than the overall flow (26.7 percent) landed in Vancouver (see the summary box in Figure 4-3). Ironically, however, only a few informants considered Vancouver a competitive city for business activities. Vancouver is rather known to be a favourable destination for those new middle class immigrants from Asia who value easy access to a natural environment and geographical proximity to their country of origin. Mr. Kum, who immigrated in 1987, shares this observation:

MJK: Why do Koreans choose Vancouver?

Mr. Kum: There are many Koreans wealthy enough to be not doing anything for a living here in Vancouver. It is also true that there are many geese families [the Korean phrase for astronaut families]. I can't say that I know well enough about Toronto, but I think it could be geographical reasons. First, Toronto is a bigger city with a better economy. On the other hand, Vancouver is quite small. However, Vancouver's close geographical distance to Korea helps people travel back and forth easier than Toronto. In addition, good weather can't be exempted from all the possible reasons.

The two pull factors of proximity and climate/environment have also been effective in drawing a large student population from Korea. For post-secondary level students, Vancouver seems to be an attractive destination because they can take advantage of its good educational facilities as well as its tourism potential. For young students and their parents, close geographical proximity to Korea is beneficial for their frequent trips across the Pacific Ocean. Since the mid 1990s, the province of BC has become the primary destination for Korean international students. In 2001, for example, 48 percent of Korean students chose BC, followed by 37 percent for Ontario (Figure 4-5). This is a notable increase when compared these results with the share BC had in earlier years.

**Figure 4-5. International students from Korea,
by Canadian Destination (1980-2001)**

While permissive regulations at the federal level, such as the visa exemption of 1994 and the expedited medical examination process introduced in late 1997, enabled many Korean students to study in Canada in the first place, the Korean-Canadian community in Vancouver has played an important role in attracting more students from Korea. According to Mr. Han, who manages an international education agency downtown, there are three types of geese families: first, immigrant families with one parent (often the father) working in Korea; second, international students with a lone parent who plans to immigrate in the near future; and lastly, those without an immigration plan. In addition to post-secondary students, young students without either parent are another important client base for Mr. Han. The growing demand for Canadian education generated a new form of entrepreneurial specialization for Korean-Canadians. Relying on extensive transnational social networks, many new business migrants and skilled workers from Korea have participated in a business related to international education. The rapidly growing immigrant population and their active entrepreneurial activities in international education have both been influential, drawing a significant proportion of Korean students and visitors to Vancouver. Thus, I argue that the development of the Korean-Canadian community in Vancouver should be examined as an intersecting process that encompasses settled immigrants, non-permanent residents, and temporary visitors from Korea.

Census data reveal more detailed information on the composition of the community. In 2006, about 45,000 ethnic Koreans resided in Vancouver. Of these, about 4,800 were born in Canada, 6,000 arrived before 1991, and nearly 5,200 landed between 1991 and 1995

(Table 4-3). The number of new immigrants who arrived since 1996 constitutes a majority of the population, accounting for more than 20,000. Another interesting aspect of the community is that the category of non-permanent residents includes a substantial number of Koreans holding temporary visas. In comparing the two Korean origin communities in Vancouver and Toronto, the former has much smaller proportions of Canadian-born Koreans (10.6 percent) and pre-1991 arrivals (13.4 percent). While newcomers account for 45 percent of the total Korean population in Vancouver, the share of non-permanent residents (19 percent) also exceeds that of Toronto (10 percent) and the national average (14.8 percent). Despite the four-decade-long immigration history, Vancouver has a less “settled” Korean community; instead the vast majority of this population is still going through an earlier stage of the adaptation process.

**Table 4-3. Korean Population in Canada,
by Immigration Status and Period**

	Vancouver (%)	Toronto (%)	Canada (%)
Total	44,825 (100%)	55,270 (100%)	141,890 (100%)
Canadian-born	4,760 (10.6%)	9,360 (16.9%)	21,255 (15%)
Total Immigrants	31,490 (70.2%)	40,385 (73.1%)	99,695 (70.3%)
Before 1991	6,005 (13.4%)	13,695 (24.8%)	26,655 (18.8%)
1991- 1995	5,210 (11.6%)	4,765 (8.6%)	13,350 (9.4%)
1996- 2000	8,270 (18.4%)	9,125 (16.5%)	23,675 (16.7%)
2001-2006	12,000 (26.8%)	12,805 (23.2%)	36,020 (25.4%)
Non- Permanent R.	8,575 (19.1%)	5,525 (10%)	20,935 (14.8%)

Source: 2006 Census- 20% sample data

Compared with earlier immigrants who landed before 1991, newer immigrant cohorts are distinguished by their high human capital and substantial financial assets. The percentage of newcomers who possess a completed university degree is higher than earlier cohorts (Table 4-4). Another difference is found in family size. Under the family reunification program, many earlier immigrants were sponsored individually as spouses, parents and children. Most recent arrivals who came through the business or skilled worker programs are composed of nuclear families, often including parents and one or two school-aged children (Table 4-5). There are many transnational families among new immigrants as well as non-permanent residents, such as geese families, satellite children and home-stay pseudo families, and these have occasionally been subjects of public debate (Waters 2002). I explore these issues further in Chapter 7.

**Table 4-4. Educational Attainment of Korean Landed Immigrants
(% with Bachelor Degree or Higher)**

	Montreal	Toronto	Vancouver
1980-1985	13.4%	12.9%	13.2%
1986-1990	18.9%	17.3%	20.7%
1991-1995	20.0%	22.5%	27.4%
1996-2001	24.6%	37.7%	35.5%
2002-2005	38.0%	40.1%	41.9%

Source: LIDS (1980-2005)

Table 4-5. Average Family Size of Korean Landed Immigrants (1980-2001)

	Montreal	Toronto	Vancouver
1980-1985	1.95	1.77	1.70
1986-1990	3.09	2.11	2.80
1991-1995	3.57	2.43	3.15
1996-2001	3.22	2.87	3.01
2002-2005	2.26	2.64	2.87

Source: LIDS (1980-2005)

D. Socio-Economic Geographies of the Korean-Canadian Community

For some time, suburbs have been seen as a typical space of white, middle class families (Hiebert 1999b). In the past, urban geographers have tried to explain processes of ethnic spatial concentration and segregation in terms of an expected assimilation process (van Kempen & Ozuekren, 1998). However, increasing suburbanization by recent immigrant households has challenged the dichotomous portrait of inner city versus suburbs and the very nature of suburbanization itself. In Toronto, Lo and Wang (1997) found that wealthy Hong Kong immigrants are largely concentrated in affluent neighbourhoods of Richmond Hill and in the Markham area, both distant from the inner core of metropolitan Toronto. In the Vancouver CMA, other than the traditional immigrant reception area of Vancouver's East Side, a number of suburbs have emerged as new immigrant settlement areas, especially Richmond, Surrey, Burnaby and the Tri-Cities (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, and Port Moody). In her case study of Los Angeles, Li (1998) proposed the term 'ethnoburb' to describe the unique characteristics of new immigrant settlement and commercial

concentrations in suburban areas. In this section, I examine the process of Korean ethnoburb formation and the transformation of local geographies associated with it.

In Vancouver, the Korean population is largely dispersed, as shown in Figure 4-6. Several concentrations of the Korean population in the Vancouver CMA are found in suburban areas. Although some areas are exaggerated because of uneven census tract sizes, the highest concentrations are identified in Burnaby, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Langley and some pockets of Surrey and West Vancouver. Some clusters found in the downtown and Vancouver's West Side are also noteworthy because they are concentrated areas of international students and their families, often lone mothers. The residential dispersal of the Korean population in middle and distant suburbs is occurring, but at the same time, we see some concentration in the downtown area. In fact, the two areas are populated by distinct sub-groups. The general trend is apparent in the maps of location quotients (Figure 4-7), which show the residential choice of the total Korean-origin population and of recent arrivals from Korea.¹⁵ The darkest purple colour indicates a census tract that holds at least twice the average proportion of Koreans in the metropolitan area. In contrast, the darkest green colour indicates areas where Korean immigrants are less likely to be found. The two maps in Figure 4-7 justify the point that the suburbanization of the Korean-Canadian population has been an ongoing phenomenon but has become more intensified by recent arrivals.¹⁶

¹⁵ Due to the data availability at the moment, I have to define recent immigrants as those who arrived after 1996 in the maps.

¹⁶ Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada. The maps have been provided by Dan Hiebert.

Figure 4-6. The Korean-Origin Population in the Vancouver CMA, 2006

Source: 2006 Census, Visible Minority Status (Korean) 20% Sample, Statistics Canada

Figure 4-7. New Korean Immigrant Landings in the Vancouver CMA

While many recent immigrant families from Korea are able to purchase suburban homes upon their arrival, their economic integration to Canadian labour markets has been more complicated. Despite their high levels of education and language proficiency, the weak economic performance of recent immigrants in major Canadian cities has drawn much attention (Badets and Howatson-Leo 1999). A number of researchers have shown that the difficulties faced by new immigrants in the labour market are not only place-specific but also vary along the lines of ethnicity and gender (Hiebert 1999a, Preston and Cox 1999). According to the 2001 census, Koreans in Vancouver seem to have many difficulties in the labour market (Table 4-6). Korean men and women show much lower participation and employment rates than those of Chinese origin, the total visible minority and the overall population in Vancouver. Their weak economic performance is also evident in their employment income. In the tax year of 1995, Koreans in BC earned on average \$20,764, whereas the total visible minority population reported \$24,081 as their average employment income (Statistics Canada 2001). In 2000, the average incomes for both groups were slightly higher, but the gap has remained.

Koreans, however, are prone to engage in self-employment. According to 2001 census data, 32 percent of working Korean men in the Vancouver CMA were self-employed, twice the ratio of the total visible minority male population (16.2 percent). For Korean women (23.6 percent), the tendency was even more significant: they were 2.5 times as likely to be self-employed as visible minority women in general (9.0 percent). The high rates of Korean self-employment in the Vancouver CMA are similar to those found in previous studies

conducted in both the U.S. and Canada.¹⁷

Table 4-6. Labour Force Activities by Visible Minority Groups

	Vancouver Total			Visible Minority			Chinese			Korean		
	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F
LFP (%)	66.2	71.6	61.1	60.9	65.9	56.5	54.6	59.0	50.6	47.1	52.3	42.4
ER (%)	61.4	66.4	56.7	55.1	59.8	51.0	49.5	53.5	45.8	42.1	47.2	37.6
UER (%)	7.2	7.3	7.2	9.5	9.3	9.8	9.3	9.3	9.4	10.6	9.9	11.5
SE (%)	13.5	16.6	10.1	12.7	16.2	9.0	14.8	18.6	10.8	28.1	32.3	23.6

Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

*LFP: Labour Force Participation Rate

ER: Employment Rate

UER: Unemployment Rate

SE: Self-employment Rate

As many of the previous studies have demonstrated, Korean businesses are highly concentrated in the retailing and restaurant sectors. Mr. Shin, the general manager of the Korean Businessmen's Association of BC, corroborates this generalization:

The five typical business types for Korean immigrants are grocery, smoke shop, coffee and sandwich shop, coin laundry and dry cleaning. After 1987 and 1988, new business immigrants began to invest in bigger businesses such as gas stations, motels

¹⁷ See Light and Gold 2000, Min 1998, and Yoon 1995 for U.S. case studies and Kwak 2002, Ornstein 2000, and Razin and Langlois 1996 for Canadian case studies.

and ESL schools. With so many new immigrants, the price for these businesses seems to reach the highest limit. With high rent and tax, the profit is so small. Our main members are grocery owners. I haven't seen any growth in their businesses for the last three years. (Mr. Shin, immigrated in 1986)

Their economic achievement is decidedly mixed. A few are well off, but Korean businesses in general are known not to be particularly lucrative. However, at the same time, they are less likely to fail completely. In an assessment report of the business immigration program, Ley (2006) examines the business performance of immigrant entrepreneurs in Vancouver. Among entrepreneurs from three Asian countries, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea, he finds that although success for all three groups was limited, higher achieving businesses were more likely to be operated by Koreans. Ley reasons that the moderate success of Korean entrepreneurs is largely due to their higher education and mainstream marketing strategy. This mainstream marketing may be linked with the suburbanized spatial dispersion that reflects an assimilationist locational strategy. In producing Figure 4-8, I geocoded five types of Korean businesses that mostly target mainstream consumers. It shows significantly scattered business locations across the whole Greater Vancouver Area. Except for those business concentrations in “glamorous” shopping districts such as Vancouver’s downtown, the Metrotown centre in Burnaby, and New Westminster’s downtown, Korean grocers, florists, laundry shops and fish markets are literally located everywhere, even in the remote areas of Greater Vancouver.

Figure 4-8. Korean Businesses targeting Mainstream Markets (2002)¹⁸
(Grocery, Florist, Laundry and Fish Market Shops)

During an interview, a provincial government official commented that Korean entrepreneurs should move towards more innovative and productive business operations (rather than running typical retailing businesses) in the near future. However, many other informants were sceptical about the idea and noted several practical difficulties faced by newcomers. According to a Korean realtor interviewed for this study, niche businesses are still a safer choice for Korean entrepreneurs despite less satisfactory income levels. Newcomers can obtain useful information and benefit from already well established

¹⁸ Source: the BC Korean Business Directory, BC KBCA 2002. To show a broad spatial pattern of mainstream Korean businesses, I only selected those businesses in the aforementioned five categories. A total of 466 business addresses were sorted and geo-coded. I also purposely relied on the business information published in 2003 in order to match with the time frame in which I collected the qualitative data (2001-2005) for the thesis.

business networks within the community. The Korean Businessmen's Co-op Association of BC is a good example that is built upon these business networks, with more than 1,500 Korean entrepreneurs listed as members. On the other hand, innovative ventures are often risky as well as costly in terms of time and energy for newcomers.

Responding to the rapid growth of the community, Korean businesses that primarily depend on co-ethnic customers have shown positive growth in terms of their quality and quantity over the last decade. Although there is a prevalent belief—among many academics, planners, journalists, etc.—that clustered ethnic businesses are a problem,¹⁹ the recent development of Korean commercial districts in Greater Vancouver seems a natural phenomenon that reflects residential concentrations of new customers. A large influx of new immigrants and international students creates a new customer base for these businesses. As shown in Figure 9, ethnic market-oriented Korean businesses are largely concentrated in areas near large Korean populations. Such clusters are seen along North Road between Burnaby and Coquitlam, Robson Street in Vancouver's downtown, and the municipal town centre areas of Coquitlam, Surrey and Langley. Compared to the more suburbanized development of Korean business concentrations, the oldest Korean ethnic business cluster along the Kingsway corridor seems to reflect determination on the part of entrepreneurs to gain access to customers who travel by car, rather than the residential location of Korean-

¹⁹ There have been several scholarly projects that hold negative views on ethnic enclave economies. Light and Gold (2000) summarize these works in the context of U.S. cities. In Canada, there were several cases of public debates against Chinese business district developments. See Wang (1999) and Preston and Lo (2000) for the controversial case in Toronto and Edgington et al. (2003) for the case of Richmond, BC.

Figure 4-9. Ethnic Market-Oriented Korean Businesses (2002)²⁰
(Korean Restaurants, Korean Grocery Shops and Beauty Parlours)

Canadians. Emerging Korean business clusters have often revitalized economically stagnant areas and have transformed the visual ‘look’ of selected local geographies. For example, the areas of Robson Street and North Road have become culturally specific districts that not only serve immigrant populations but also attract a large number of tourists and international students.

With an increasing number of students and visitors from Korea, the entrepreneurial activities of Korean-origin people in export education and tourism have been burgeoning since the mid 1990s. According to the Korean Business Directory (2002), there were 57

²⁰ Source: the BC Korean Business Directory, BC KBCA 2002. A total of 163 addresses in the three business categories were sorted and geo-coded.

Figure 4-10. Korean Businesses in New Economic Sectors (2002)
(International Education/ Immigration Consultant and Travel Agencies)

firms listed under the heading “Foreign studies and immigration agencies” in Vancouver. Thirty two businesses were also listed in the “Travel agencies” section. These are notable numbers, considering the fact that there were only 39 foreign studies and immigration agencies and 16 travel agencies in Toronto, the city with the largest Korean-Canadian population. While a small number of travel agencies and immigration consultant agencies existed before 1994, the vast majority of these businesses have emerged and become successful since 1995.

As the directory heading implies, these firms specialize in the provision of education on the one hand and immigration consulting on the other. However, field research suggests that many of these firms actually perform a combination of two or all three roles, that is, a mix of travel arrangements, immigration assistance, and educational services. With a large

number of Korean international students and Korean tourists visiting Vancouver, these businesses were well oriented towards the co-ethnic market. Their business locations well reflect this point (Figure 4-10). In addition to a major concentration in Vancouver's downtown, the overall spatial pattern of the new economic sector businesses is largely matched with that of Korean ethnic enclave businesses (such as Korean grocery stores, restaurants and beauty parlours).

Yet, it would be premature to view the nature of these businesses in new sectors as just another example of the ethnic enclave economy. Beyond their physical locations at the local scale, we need to consider more detailed information on the ways in which immigrant entrepreneurs operate their businesses on a day-to-day basis. Most informants in all types of agencies and ESL schools spoke about their marketing strategy beyond the local scale, which often relies upon various connections maintained between Korea and Canada. They transfer goods, money and cultural products between Korea and Canada in order to cater to the community. Other business owners in the new sectors of international education and tourism also confirmed that transnational social networks are a critical source of their business operations. Their cross border entrepreneurial activities play an important role overseas in promoting Vancouver as a desirable city for study and travel. Thus, emerging Korean ethnoburbs and the downtown business clusters can be viewed as outposts that link regional economic activities to the global economy. As Shukla (2001) argues, those ethnic commercial districts with residential populations have increasingly become sites where transnationality, an ability to economically, physically and imaginatively cross borders, is materialized. These points are explored in Chapter 6 in greater detail.

E. Discussion: Migration, education and a community in transition

In this chapter, I set out to draw a current portrait of the Korean-Canadian community in Vancouver. With the recent influx of new immigrants and temporary residents, the community has not only grown in size but has also become more socio-economically diversified. More immigrants have arrived with higher qualifications and significant financial assets. Unprecedented flows of temporary visa holders from Korea make it difficult to understand the Korean-Canadian community by examining only the group of immigrants and their Canadian-born descendants.

The impacts of the non-permanent resident population are notable in many ways. For example, international education and tourism industries that target students and visitors from Korea have become important business sectors for Korean-Canadian entrepreneurs. The nature of these industries reflects and reinforces transnational linkages of the Korean-origin population in Vancouver. In addition, an increasing number of temporary migrants have become permanent residents in Canada. According to a CIC official, this is a welcome trend for Canada. I have also seen significant interest from non-permanent residents in this process. Above all, they have become an important part of the community by revitalizing and transforming socio-economic spaces. Thus, the overall wellbeing of the permanent resident community needs to be assessed using the broader scale of the transnational context and considering the significant presence of the non-permanent resident population from Korea.

When asked questions about overall characteristics of the community, my informants pointed out that the recent influx of new immigrants and visitors to the community was an important transition. Most informants raised two concurrent issues. First, many expressed frustration over the less satisfactory labour market performances of newcomers and rising competition among co-ethnic businesses. Although many employment and business workshops have been offered by public and private organizations, the general outcomes for Korean-origin job seekers seem grim. Many skilled workers from Korea are under-employed. Some have been successful in pioneering a niche economy but many have suffered from the fierce competition that arose at a later stage. Others were driven to settle as astronaut ('geese') families by maintaining two households, living, in effect, between Korea and Canada.

This frustration was often expressed in relation to the second issue, a question of solidarity and power within the community. In the literature on ethnic economies, ethnic solidarity and cooperation among co-ethnics has been considered a major advantage for economic integration. The assumption of ethnic solidarity has often gone beyond the economic realm. A high level of institutionalization among different ethnic groups has also been considered as evidence of co-ethnic unity and power. In the process, ethnic groups have too often been mistaken as homogenous social entities. This superficial assumption of ethnic solidarity, however, requires a careful re-evaluation. With the great diversity among community members in Vancouver, those whom I interviewed often commented on existing fragmentation within the community. Subtle tensions between different sub-groups have never been discussed seriously in public but often surfaced as major issues among

community members.

There is lack of communication between old and new immigrants. No trust. Maybe misunderstanding. I think this is a problem of our community.

(Mr. Kye, immigrated in 2000)

[There is] a need to build bridges across the gaps that currently divide the community, for example between first and second generation Koreans and between those who have been in Canada for many years and those who are recent arrivals.

(Building Community: by M. Spiegelman, 2000: 32)

Among the diverse members, seeking common interests beyond immediate economic issues has been difficult. In a community where two thirds of the population are new arrivals, existing community organizations have been too weak to respond effectively to the complex and varied needs that have arisen. Limited resources and lack of support from community members were pointed out as primary reasons for insufficient and inadequate settlement service provision. The roles of Korean churches in Vancouver, however, have been important in this respect. As in other North American cities, Korean churches have provided for everyday needs as well as spiritual and emotional wellbeing comfort for new members. Although the degree of Christian influence seems not to be as great in as in the case of Toronto, the proportion of Christian Korean-Canadians in Vancouver is still significant. According to the 2001 Census, the overall proportion of the Korean Christian population (for both Catholic and Protestant denominations) in Vancouver was nearly 50 percent.

Another important source of information and assistance for recent arrivals in Vancouver

seems to be social networks maintained between Korea and Canada. Although the importance of social networks has been well emphasized in previous studies of migration, the scale of utilization seems even greater for recent migrants (Hiebert and Ley 2003). When more qualified new immigrants experience serious underemployment after migration (as is the case for Korean-Canadians in Vancouver), they often reach out to economic opportunities across borders. Beyond these economic circles, transnationalism challenges an old theoretical view of the process of immigration and integration. This also seems empirically evident for the Korean-Canadian community.

For some earlier arrivals who believe in the virtue of assimilation to mainstream society, prominent transnational practices among new immigrants and temporary migrants are seen as opportunistic. Mr. Chin shares his view on the growing number of geese families in Vancouver:

You see, earlier immigrants were more likely to assimilate to Canadian society. We did our best to settle in Canada. But recent immigrants are different. They seem to be more opportunistic. I heard that there are so many geese families in Vancouver. Some estimate that there are about 250 lone mothers from Korea with school-aged children just around my neighbourhood [Vancouver's West Side]. There are many reasons behind this, such as Vancouver's poor economy and irrational education fever in Korea. Nonetheless, I still think this is very problematic [for the community].

(Mr. Chin, immigrated in 1966)

There are sources of tension, then, between long-established Koreans in Greater Vancouver and newcomers, and also between foreign-born parents and Canadian-born children. However, these demographic fractures (which are common among most immigrant

populations) reflect important socio-economic differences between immigrant cohorts. Compared to the past, Korea's position in the world economy today provides a different basis for international migrants leaving Korea. In fact, unlike their earlier counterparts, recent Korean immigrants sometimes bring substantial financial assets with them under the liberated foreign currency law. With minimal levels of restriction under the new property possession law for foreigners, Korea also allows emigrants to retain property there and/or to invest in Korea even after migration. The Canadian context is also significant. At the receiving end, newer immigrants face different labour market conditions as well as changes in the nature of social acceptance. Canadian immigration policies have also become more flexible toward transnational activities of permanent residents.²¹

It seems that some of the subtle tensions between immigrant cohorts are also related to the problem of insufficient service provision for a large number of newcomers and non-permanent residents. Three Korean social worker informants agreed there have been overwhelming demands associated with Korean-Canadians in Vancouver. Furthermore, basic services such as assistance with public documents, job search programs and ESL programs are often limited to the permanent resident population. As many Koreans have sought other sources of assistance from personal social networks and religious groups, many key services have become privatized for profit making. These industries have been some of the fastest growing business sectors for Korean entrepreneurs (*The Korea Daily*

²¹ For example, CIC adopted more relaxed permanent residency obligations for immigrants in 2002 (www.cic.gc.ca). In every five year period, immigrants need to accumulate only two years of physical presence in Canada rather than six months in each year.

2004). The relationships between consumers (often recent immigrants or non-permanent residents) and the owners of firms providing services (often immigrants or earlier arrivals) are likely to cause tensions involving profit making vs. ethnic trust.

The objective of compiling a community profile makes this chapter rather more descriptive than analytical. However, there is an important analytical point that is worth repeating here. Too often, policy makers and academics alike consider an immigrant (or an ethnic) community as just those who hold permanent residency rights. This derives from the assumption that they will remain in Canada and contribute in various ways to mainstream society. The case of the Korean-Canadian community in Vancouver shows, however, that the group is decidedly heterogeneous in socio-economic terms and that temporary residents are integral to this population. Exploring the links between temporary and permanent migration provides an important analytical basis for the development of the international education industry between Seoul and Vancouver. In the following chapters, I examine the various interactions between structural forces (the rise of neo-liberalism and the role of public and private institutions) and the agency of migrants in the emerging field of transnational economies of international education.

CHAPTER 5

Globalizing Canadian Education from Above: Neo-liberalism and the Political Economy of Migration and Education

A. Introduction

B. The Rise of the International Education Industry: Global trends

C. Institutional Approach in South Korea

C-1. Globalization and South Korea

C-2. Global Desire and Local Anxiety: The rise of international education industry in South Korea

D. The Institutional Setting in Canada

D-1. Neo-liberalism and Canada

D-2. The Political Economy of Migration and Education in Canada

D-3. International Education and the Role of Canadian NGOs and Local School Boards

E. Discussion: Rethinking the neo-liberal nexus of migration, education and institutions

A. Introduction

In the twenty-first century, it is not surprising to regard knowledge as capital. The demand for professional skills and higher education has also steadily grown, and now more employers require their work force to be equipped with competitive global knowledge. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 1996) observed that

global economies have become more dependent on the production, distribution and consumption of knowledge than ever before and that related industries have shown especially strong growth in western economies.

The rapidly growing international education industry, a key sector of the knowledge economy, has been particularly notable around the world. Canada is no exception to this trend. The international education industry, which mainly serves foreign students has become a leading contributor to the overall growth of the Canadian education industry over the last two decades. The rising demand in the international education industry of Canada, and particularly that of British Columbia, has been explained largely as a response to an increase in the Asian market in recent years. Many stakeholders celebrate this phenomenon because the industry brings a positive economic impact to the province. Numerous reports from governments and research institutions have assessed this booming industry in positive terms and even started to design strategic market development plans for it (e.g., BCCIE 2000, 2003, 2004, Adrian Kershaw Consulting 2005, CIC 2003, RKA Inc. 2006).

It is also true, however, that in Canada, where education is known as a public good and a universal social right, the commodification of education has been controversial. The shift towards viewing education as a commodity has been identified as an element of neo-liberalism. That is, some argue that this change in the perception of education has been the result of deliberate neo-liberal policy-making, as education has been increasingly restructured, deregulated and privatized since the last decade (CCPA 2006). The rise of the international education industry (selling Canadian education to overseas clients) is

interpreted as an important element in the commercialization of Canadian education. Accordingly, some socially progressive voices see the growing neo-liberalization and commercialism in Canadian education as a worrisome trend that may destabilize universal access to education, and thus hinder the path to build a just, democratic society (e.g., CCPA 2006).

Between these two extreme views – neo-liberal versus progressive – towards the growth of the international education industry in Canada, I feel the need to take a more balanced approach that is integrative but at the same time critical of the two. I find that previous accounts lack a contextualized and nuanced analysis that incorporates more complex and variegated causal factors into the understanding of industrial growth. Beyond the conventional neoclassical view of industrial growth (with its strong faith in market essentialism), I examine a set of non-market factors that involve institutional intervention and that are socially embedded, network driven and culturally specific. In steering a middle ground between approaches that endorse versus criticize neo-liberal reforms to education, I argue that the seemingly deliberate and inevitable process of neo-liberalization is actually far less coherent and is geographically inconsistent. Furthermore, I suggest an analytical base that challenges the structuralist treatment of neo-liberalism and thus leaves room for human agency. Further discussion of this issue will follow in the next chapter, which investigates the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in the international education industry.

In this chapter, I focus on the role of public institutions in the industrial growth of international education in and between Seoul and Vancouver. Adopting an institutional

approach in this chapter, I question how neo-liberal policymaking influences the transnational flows of students, families and visitors between Seoul and Vancouver. I demonstrate that the rise of neo-liberalism is indeed a major factor in the growth of international education at both ends and consider how different institutions are affected by the neo-liberalization of education. I am especially interested in any resistance or inconsistency in the broad trend of neo-liberalism. In the following section, I begin this probe by surveying the general process of neo-liberalization and its policy implications on education and migration in Canada and South Korea. Then, I examine different institutional approaches towards the growth of international education. Using interview data, I illustrate how different public institutions on one hand have embraced a neo-liberal ethos and on the other hand sometimes play a passive role. In so doing, I hope to demonstrate how a neo-liberal project is in fact a much messier process that is caught in the middle of multiple inconsistencies at different geographical scales.

B. The Rise of the International Education Industry: Global trends

Since the 1990s, the scale and economic significance of the international education industry have grown notably. Among different forms of international education, studying abroad, which involves either short- or long-term migration of students, has become a major form in the industry. Due to varying visa requirements and data collection systems, it is hard to trace all the student movements at a global level. Current estimates of tertiary education in the OECD countries, however, provide a partial picture (OECD 2004). According to this report, each year about two million students study in another country, and their spending on living, tuition and travel generates US \$30 billion revenue per year. This amount accounts

for about three percent of the total value of service exports that the OECD countries generate.

Accordingly, the recent growth of the international education industry has generated collective interest around the world. Since 2000, private forms of the international education market have been considered a major agenda item by the 140 member countries of the GATS (General Agreement on Trade of Services) (OECD 2004).²² The discussion has been controversial, and no unanimous agreement has been reached. However, many members of the organization see high potential for economic growth of the international education industry in the near future.

The prospective reports on industrial growth from major destination countries are especially revealing. In a projection of global demand for international education in 2002, Australia estimated that the current figure of two million international students would grow to seven million in 2025 with revenue of \$100 billion (IDP Education Australia 2002).²³ British Council Vision 2020 project estimated that, of the study destinations for foreign students, English speaking countries will likely benefit the most as the importance of English as an international language increases. It is expected that the number of students who choose to study in an English speaking country will rise from 1 million in 2000 to 2.4

²² All WTO members, some 140 countries at present, are at the same time members of the GATS and have different levels of commitments in individual service sectors (www.wto.org).

²³ Unless specified, all the amounts of international education revenue mentioned in the text include education fees, living and travel costs.

million by 2020 (British Council 2007). Most countries are eager to share in this growth, as the industry has generated extra revenue for their national economies. New Zealand projected that the education export industry contributed \$700 million to the economy in 2000, has the potential to realize \$1 billion per annum within two years (New Zealand MOE 2001).

For Canada, where there has been no integrated approach towards the international education industry, a national projection of revenues has been hard to find until recently. According to a report of the OECD (2004), Canada's export earnings from tertiary international students were estimated at a modest \$727 million in 2002, accounting for two percent of Canada's total service exports. Because education has been a provincial responsibility, a number of provincial governments in Canada have been active in recognizing and promoting the importance of the industry. According to a report to the British Columbia Progress Board²⁴ (A. K. Consulting 2005), it is estimated that the direct economic impact of international education on the provincial economy is over \$2 billion a year. In terms of job creation, international education is contributing to the province as well. The Vancouver Economic Development Commission (2003) reported that ESL schools and private colleges in Greater Vancouver had created approximately 2,000 new jobs in the province. The British Columbia Centre for International Education (BCCIE) also reported

²⁴ With an independent panel of 18 senior business and academic professionals, the British Columbia Progress Board was established by Premier Gordon Campbell in 2001. The Board investigates and promotes BC's economic and social performance over time. It is the Social and Economic policy advising think tank for the Premier and the Provincial government (BC Progress Board 2005).

that, in the year 2004 alone, public school districts hired more than 200 teaching and support staff in order to assist international students at the K-12 level (A. K. Consulting 2005).

South Korea has become a major source country of international students for Canada. One Korean government official in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources informed me that while there were 165 Canadian students enrolled in Korea, more than 16,000 Korean students were identified in Canada in 2004. As a result, the country has had a significant trade deficit in the industrial sector of international education. For many receiving countries, including Canada, Korea is now identified as one of the most important markets.

There seems no doubt that international education has been economically beneficial to the national and provincial economies of Canada. Recognition and promotion of the industry has been led not only by the private sector but also by public institutions in both countries. In Canada, public educational institutions have begun to engage in the internationalization of Canadian education.²⁵ This increasing level of commercialism in Canadian education warrants scrutiny, particularly the relationship between neo-liberalization and the growth of the international education industry in BC. In Korea, discussions about the growth of international education are often interpreted as the unavoidable fate of globalization. There has been a collective consensus to shape the country as a global player in the twenty-first

²⁵ See J. Waters (2004: Chapter 3) for key aspects of internationalization of Canadian education.

century. At the same time, however, the clash between global desire and local anxiety was noticeable among different government ministries and social groups.

In the following sections, I will first survey the general trend of globalization and neo-liberalization in Korea and Canada. Drawing upon in-depth interviews with education professionals and government officials, I reconsider the underestimated roles of public and semi-public institutions in the developmental process of the international education industry. I will then show how the growth of international education is not only driven by markets but also through institutional intervention.

C. The Institutional Approach in South Korea

C-1. Globalization and South Korea

Neo-liberal reforms were introduced in Korea abruptly. If most western neo-liberal reforms were the result of complex dynamics between local politics and global rhetoric, Korea's experience was a more radical response to the force of external global economic organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF). For Korea, globalization [*segryehwa*] was initially brought into political discussion by President Kim Young-Sam (1993-1998) and later embraced by his successor, President Kim Dae-Jung (1998-2003). It was a largely state-oriented project and top-down strategic plan that resembled developmentalist state plans from previous years. Beyond simple economic liberalization, the original *segryehwa* plan encompassed a far more comprehensive embrace of the global world, including political, cultural and social exchanges. The speeches by the two presidents illustrate the original outlook of the plan.

Fellow citizens: Globalization is the shortcut which will lead us to building a first-class country in the 21st century. This is why I revealed my plan for globalization and the government has concentrated all of its energy in forging ahead with it. It is aimed at realizing globalization in all sectors – politics, foreign affairs, economy, society, education, culture and sports. To this end, it is necessary to enhance our viewpoints, way of thinking, system and practices to the world class level...We have no choice other than this. (President Kim Young-Sam, 6 January 1995 (cited in Kim 2000: 1))

The world is now advancing from industrial societies where tangible natural resources were the primary factors of economic development into knowledge and information societies where intangible knowledge and information will be the driving power for economic development. The information revolution is transforming the age of many national economies into an age of one world economy, turning the world into a global village... Diplomacy in the 21st century will center around the economy and culture. We must keep expanding trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges in order to make our way in the age of boundless competition which will take place against a backdrop of cooperation.

(President Kim Dae-Jung's inaugural speech, 25 February 1998 (cited in Kim 2000:1))

The structural reforms in Korea's political and economic systems were fortified by the IMF's bailout program after the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 (Dent 2003). The IMF sought to abolish so-called crony capitalism that led the three-decade-long economic growth of the country under strong governmental guidance and an intimate link between the state and corporations. The organization recommended a number of structural reforms: first, to liberate financial markets and build a healthy financial structure; second, to restrain reckless corporate expansion through domestic and international merger mechanisms; third, to end the governmental practice of protecting chaebol's (Korean business conglomerate) interests; fourth, to enhance the transparency of corporate management; and finally, to put forward more effective and flexible labour regulation (Kim 2000, Chang 1998).

After the financial crisis, the government of President Kim Dae-Jung sought to decouple the state-corporate link and began to seek adaptive partnerships with foreign investment firms. The government hoped to implant a new management system into Korean firms and to assist the Korean economy to compete internationally at a global standard. The Korean consumer market was no longer sufficiently stable for domestic firms as trade tariffs and protective quotas were increasingly removed, and there was a significant growth in direct inward investments from foreign TNCs (Trans-National Corporations) as imports of foreign goods and services were increasing. However, the rise of economic nationalism and labour resistance from the working class contested global neo-liberalism and foreign capital (Smith 2000). Even within different governmental departments, there were feuds over contradicting interests between globalization and economic nationalism (Dent 2003). Despite this confusion, the discourse of globalization has become pervasive, especially affecting the mindsets of Korea's (future) work force. More people wished to obtain global knowledge because it was recognized as a critical quality of a competitive work force.

The concurrent impacts on Korean international migration were especially notable in this regard. In Korea, strict restrictions on international travel and education were relaxed respectively in 1981 and 1989 (Im and Song 1992). After restrictions on foreign currency and overseas travel were reduced, international migration of Koreans (including all forms of travel) began to increase significantly. Starting in the late 1980s, the number of travellers from Korea quadrupled to 350,000 before the economic crisis. After the crisis, the Korean economy recovered quickly, and the number of Korean travellers was more than 13 million in 2007 (Korea Tourism Organization 2008, www.knto.or.kr). Of the total outflow of

Korean travellers, the number of students has risen substantially because more students and parents wish to obtain high quality education at a global standard. Including those who study foreign language courses or take short summer programs at all ages, the total number of students who left Korea in 2004 was reported to be nearly 400,000 (Korean Ministry of Justice, Immigration Bureau 2005, www.immigration.go.kr).

Under the pressure of an economic crisis and an intensifying global desire, the Korean middle class began to emigrate in higher numbers, leaving for new settlement destinations like Canada, Australia and New Zealand. As briefly examined in Chapter 4, children's education is known to be one of the main objectives for this type of migration. The influx of Koreans into these countries in the last decade has also been facilitated by relaxed travel regulations. It seems that the liberalization of regulations and the rise of temporary and permanent migration are mutually reinforcing processes. The intersection of these seemingly separate phenomena will be further discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

C-2. Global Desire and Local Anxiety:

The rise of the international education industry in South Korea

I argue that international movements of Korean people have been significantly assisted by more liberalized travel and foreign currency regulations. Despite the popular rhetoric of globalization and the demise of nation-states, the importance of regulatory systems remains strong, as they play a major role in shaping the condition of international migration movements. Therefore, the evolution of the international education market is also

determined by a complex set of regulatory regimes. One Korean government official admitted that the temporary and permanent overseas movements of Korean people have caused a serious trade deficit to the country, accounting for about US \$6 billion in 2005. However, he argued that the principal view of the Korean government towards the phenomenon has been very positive. His remark on the issue is illustrative:

Of course, there is a serious trade deficit. However, we believe that in the era of globalization, we, Korean people, have to go out [abroad] more and learn what others are doing and how they are doing it. Language is an essential asset in that regard. By learning a foreign language and cultural customs, I think all these movements will contribute to Korean society after all. Either through immigration or foreign education, I think it would be a win-win strategy for both Korea and Canada, or other destination countries. I think this is a very positive phenomenon.

(A Korean consul in Vancouver, Canada)

This seemingly straightforward government vision of globalization and the future of Korea has been influential enough to generate a series of relaxed regulations that enables the recent out-flows of Korean travellers and students. However, it is also important to note that the top-down development and implementation of this vision has not always been smoothly accepted. This is another aspect that I would like to point out in this chapter: the contested nature of economic globalization and neo-liberalization. During my fieldwork in Seoul, I observed both subtle and sometimes quite overt inconsistencies in policy views and implementation among different government ministries. On occasion, I witnessed unintended outcomes of this globally minded program. I will return later in the chapter to the point that economic globalization and neo-liberalization are highly contested issues.

Under the grand vision of globalization, the Korean government has also been intent upon internationalizing the educational curriculum at home. In 1997, for example, the Korean Ministry of Education and local school boards started to include English as a mandatory subject in the elementary school system and began to recruit more native English speaking teachers from abroad.²⁶ As the importance of English education was officially recognized by the government, there was a significant increase in the number of private English institutions. In fact, some conservative voices opposed the idea of English education for elementary school students because they suspected that the program would only escalate the pressure and cost of private education. The Seoul Metropolitan Government responded to the criticism by establishing the Seoul English Village in November 2004. Its first campus was located in Pungnap dong, Seoul, and subsequently two additional campuses were opened in northern parts of Seoul.

In this typical neo-liberal project, the City government and a private company worked together to design and deliver the public program. The corporate partner of the Pungnap SEV was selected by public auction, and Korea Herald Media won the bidding. The general manager of the Pungnap SEV told me that building materials and educational equipment were provided by the City government of Seoul. The corporate partner was responsible for actual management of the program by recruiting and training English teachers. In addition,

²⁶ The Korean Ministry of Education initiated elementary English education in 1982 as a special educational subject that students could choose to add to their regular curriculum (Korean MOEHRD 2006). Before this, English was not introduced at the elementary level but was taught starting in the first year of Junior High School, or the equivalent of grade 7 in the Canadian school system.

the company developed the curriculum and managed the education of the students.

The concept of the SEV was to create a living environment where children could learn and practice their English as a daily language. Upon arriving at the village, the children are expected to go through immigration customs and are interviewed by their English teachers, who guide and act as immigration officials. In the village, the young participants are supposed to communicate only in English. A regular program is designed to be one week long. During the one-week program, children learn how to act and use services in English in a variety of social situations, such as at restaurants, banks and the post office. It is assumed that children gain important cultural experiences and therefore prepare themselves as global leaders in the future. The welcome message from the mayor of Seoul clearly recognizes the importance of English.

The world today faces a new era of globalization where every corner of the world is uniting together, surpassing ideologies and boundaries. In the light of such progression, English has become not only a means to secure a better job opportunity or higher education, but a necessary tool to understanding the world's colourful cultures and to mature into citizens of global society. Faced with such demands, Seoul City established the Seoul English Village in the hopes of offering an affordable alternative for Korean youth to acquire a high level of English proficiency and to gain valuable cultural experience. The Seoul English Village will provide opportunities to enjoy learning English at an affordable cost through various programs and to become global leaders.

(Mr. Lee, the mayor of Seoul, posted in the SEV official website, www.sev.org.kr.)

According to Mr. S. H. Lee, the general manager of the Pungnap SEV, the program has been very successful in drawing a large pool of potential participants. As the demand is

high, the program is currently limited to grade 5 and 6 students in Seoul, and students are allowed to participate only once. The village usually selects participants through an on-line lottery system. This successful government-initiated program, however, rendered an unintended outcome as well. Mr. S. H. Lee told me that:

The program is so popular. At this point, we can not meet all the demand from students and parents. Since our program is very short, there are many parents and students who want to extend their experience by flying overseas. A real irony is that City Hall actually designed this kind of program in order to reduce the skyrocketing private education cost and to prevent so many students from leaving Korea's public education system to other countries.

(Mr. S. H. Lee, the general manager of the Pungnap SEV)

It seems that not all Korean government officials share this view on globalization and the fate of Korea. While the positive governmental view about the recent growth of the international education industry has often been repeated by several Korean government officials, I heard other reactions from two officials in the Korean Ministry of Education. One official stated that the ministry is facing “an absolute dilemma” between its global vision and the fear of a failing public educational system. Besides a rapidly rising trade deficit, the growing demand for K-12 international education is especially worrying for the ministry because it could be interpreted as a widespread lack of confidence in the national system of public education.²⁷ The “geese family” syndrome (the Korean version of the

²⁷ According to the most recent report by the Korean Education Development Institute, a government research institute under the Korean Ministry of Education, the total number of K-12 students who left Korea for overseas education in the academic year of 2006 was a record-setting 29,511 (KEDI 2007). Even though

astronaut family) has also raised a lot of concern from the general public. Many negative views on separated families in the Korean media underscore the heightened level of public debate around the issue, and this will be further discussed in Chapter 7. Moreover, the fact that some parents can afford to send their children overseas to study while others cannot is, arguably, deepening the level of social polarization in the country and enhances the ability for those with middle to high incomes to pass their privilege to the next generation.²⁸

This is likely the reason that the Korean Ministry of Education has for some time prohibited K-12 students from leaving to pursue an education abroad.²⁹ However, this rule is routinely broken and, between 1995 and 2001, unapproved international education accounted for more than 80 percent of the total cases registered in official data (the Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2002). This amounted to some 25,000 elementary and secondary school students. Under the relaxed travel and foreign currency regulations, there has been lack of political will to control the significant out-flows of Korean students. Penalties to parents for sending children to other countries are

the practice is illegal, the number increased six-fold since 2000.

²⁸ Through a case study of Hong Kong students, J. Waters (2006) demonstrates this point well. According to her, family migration and international education are closely linked to accumulation of cultural capital and the reproduction of social privilege. In Chapter 7, I will echo her argument regarding the experiences of Korean international students.

²⁹ This rule was relaxed in the latest revision of international education policy, in 1998. Students are now allowed to obtain high-school education elsewhere under special circumstances (that students are evaluated as outstanding and recommended by their school principal), while it is still illegal for elementary and middle-school students to do so. The Ministry of Education is also stepping up its efforts to recruit foreign students to come to Korea for post-secondary education.

insignificant. In addition, there is no regulatory institution that officially governs the approximately 1,000 private international education agencies operating in the country. Even if these agencies provide services to send K-12 students to other countries, they are unlikely to face any sanctions. When I asked about the phenomenon, Ms. Lee, who works for the Korean Ministry of Education, shared her view:

From the perspective of the Ministry [of Education], there are not many things to say about the current situation. Basically, early international education, including elementary and junior high (grades 1-9), is illegal. No, we rather use the term, “unapproved.” Anyway, the unapproved activities are commonly practiced among our citizens. I think it is beyond our control. Our approach has to be universal as a government institution, but sending their kids abroad is an issue of personal domains. We can’t say much about it. We have been emphasizing the bad sides of international education of young children. But, when children don’t want to study in the Korean system and their parents don’t want to see their children under pressure, we can’t say much about it.

The governmental vision of globalization and the fate of future Korea are not always shared by everyone. Even though Korea has enacted a series of neo-liberal reforms through top-down approaches, there are inconsistent views towards the recent growth of the international education industry. When I asked Ms. Lee about the current situation of international education and the future opening of the Korean market to global capital, her response revealed a contrasting view to that of a governmental official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Of course, there are some success stories. But, I am doubtful about the success rate. And, there are so many separated families, so-called geese families. As you might have sensed already, it nearly has become a social problem of Korea today. Some say

that because of the escalating problem, we should fully open our education market for foreign schools [capital] soon. This is the popular view from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, where a large number of liberal economists work. We, the Ministry of Education, have been a conservative voice in this issue. After all, I think it is an issue of [different] ideological views, not of ethics or morality.

(Ms. Lee, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources)

Although there has been some resistance from different interest groups, we see there would be a lot of benefits from the FTA (Free Trade Agreement) between Korea and Canada. We have been trying so hard to emphasize the win-win aspects of the agreement. We are almost there and very much looking forward to reaching the agreement. My view towards the international education industry is very positive as well. Through the industry, both countries, Korea and Canada, have benefited so much. And, for Korea, I believe there would be so much to gain in the future.

(Mr. Kim, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

D. The Institutional Setting in Canada

D-1. Neo-liberalism and Canada

Over the last two decades of the twentieth century, Canada has enacted a series of neo-liberal public policy reforms that resulted in a reduction of government intervention. Beginning in the 1980s, both federal and provincial governments gradually focused on managerial reforms that decisively reduced deficits and public debts in subsequent decades (Clark 2002). In the aftermath of the economic recession of the early 1980s, the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney had to deal with a deepening crisis in public finance. Ending nearly 40 years of state expansion, the federal government came up with a series of attempts to retrench the state and its administrative forces. Through several neo-liberal programs, the public sector was downsized, and its management cost was reduced.

This neo-liberal project in the public sector was further expanded in the Liberal administration of Jean Chrétien by placing priority on fighting the fiscal deficit (Schacter 1999). The Liberal government continued to downsize public services and restructure federal funding regimes for provincial education, health and welfare programmes. Most significantly, an increasing number of publicly funded organizations began to reshape themselves as semi-public or private organizations. All levels of government also began to commit themselves to partnering opportunities with non-profit organizations and private corporations (Richmond and Shields 2004).

Under the dominant public discourse of ‘deficit politics’ in Canada, neo-liberal policy responses prevailed through welfare programme cut-backs, downsizing the number of government employees, devolution of federal responsibilities to provincial governments and deregulating certain sectors of the economy. In the following section, I examine a set of neo-liberal reforms that are directly related to the industrial growth of international education. The focus lies on economically conscious (im)migration policies and an increasing level of privatization and commercialism in public education.

D-2. The Political Economy of Migration and Education in Canada

Over the last two decades, Canada’s intake of immigrants with high levels of human capital and/or business skills and financial assets has increased (Figure 5-1). The annual ratio of economic class immigrants³⁰ and their dependants surpassed those entering under family or

³⁰ Economic class immigrants mainly include skilled workers and business class immigrants, as well as their accompanying family members. The category also includes some smaller groups arriving under the program

humanitarian programs in the late 1990s. While maintaining its commitment to humanitarian programs, the federal government's overt interest in the potential for immigrants to propel economic growth became apparent with implementation of the entrepreneur class immigration program. In 1978, this program was created to attract more wealthy immigrants. These immigrants were expected to invest their risk capital and business knowledge in Canadian enterprises, which would thereby create jobs for Canadians. Historically, Canada has recognized immigrants as an important source of labour. After the post-war period, for example, skilled immigrant workers effectively filled the labour shortage in Canada. It is safe to say that economic motives continue to be at the heart of the immigration program of Canada. However, it is also true that this intention has become more overt and, in some ways, more controversial in recent years (see Nash 1994, Ley 2006).

While immigration has long been a federal field of jurisdiction in Canada, decentralization and devolution of federal power have started to take place. Recently, for example, most provincial governments have begun to develop and promote Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs) under special agreements with the federal government. With these PNPs, provincial governments are now able to select skilled workers and investors whose labour market skills and assets can be directly invested in the regions.³¹

like Live-in-Caregivers.

³¹ All provinces and one territory in Canada now have established provincial nominee programs with an agreement with the federal government.

Figure 5-1. Permanent Residents to Canada by Class (1980-2005)

(Source: CIC 2006, *Facts and Figures 2005*)

Canada's neo-liberal policies are also evident in the sector of immigration settlement. In 1995, the federal government initiated a "settlement renewal" process which sought to devolve funds and responsibility for immigrant and refugee settlement services to the provinces. For the province of British Columbia, a federal-provincial agreement was signed in 1998, and the amount of \$45.8 million was to be transferred annually for the next five years based on the federal government's understanding of the cost of necessary services (Creese 1998). The agreement was not simply about devolution of responsibility from the

federal to the provincial level but included profound changes in funding provisions.

Under the influence of neo-liberal attitudes, the provincial government insisted on an open, competitive bidding process for contracts with NGOs that provide settlement services. Government funding has, arguably, become more targeted on specific projects, and a larger share has been allocated to specific NGOs who have been able to win in these bidding systems (Creese 1998, Richmond and Shields 2004). Increasingly, over time, the non-profit organizations have built their budgets by reaching out to funding agencies and private corporations for their program planning (Scott 2003). The overall trend necessitates that the NGO sector is becoming more self-sufficient and efficient in its operation and encourages it to incorporate elements of the market economy (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004). Thus, it is fair to say that the marketization of the sector has largely been led by policy changes, although there have been other factors involved as well.³²

Along with these neo-liberal policy changes in migration, there have also been important changes in the structure of Canadian education. In Canada, education has been a provincial/territorial jurisdiction and primarily a public domain. Both K-12 and degree awarding post-secondary institutions are still mainly public. The major funding source for Canadian schools has therefore been government grants. However, the real provincial per capita spending on post-secondary education declined by 20% between the fiscal years of 1992/93 (\$432) and 1999/00 (\$371) (CAUT 2000). While different levels of funding are

³² Another important cause of these changes can be found in the demand side of social service provision. Over the years, the needs of immigrants have become both more diversified and more specific (Guo 2006).

transferred to post-secondary education across provinces and territories, the average level of funding remained 27 percent below the levels of 1992-1993 (ibid.). Under the neo-liberal funding policies, the government funding scheme began to emphasize productivity of programs over general quality (Scott 2003). It also tended to fund targeted programs rather than providing a lump sum grant to the institutions. With the constraint of financial resources, some post-secondary institutions relied more heavily on part-time instructors. According to data provided by Smallman (2000), the number of full-time faculty decreased 9.7 percent between 1992 and 1998. In addition, governmental intervention on labour unions has become more aggressive. In the late 1990s, for example, the BC provincial government took part in collective bargaining between faculty and the colleges (Puplampu 2004).

In her case study of Ontario, Basu (2004) argues that the neo-liberalization of public education in the province is best described as a stealthy process. It has slowly progressed through a series of measures that have been accepted (and some have been successfully resisted) since the mid 1990s. Under the rationale of efficiency, accountability and equity of educational resources, neo-liberal programs have been introduced across the provinces. In British Columbia, all direct educational services in public schools have been gradually affected by lay-offs of teachers and service staff since 2001. The report from the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (2004) notes that the number of teachers paid by public funding declined by 7.7 percent, whereas enrolments of students declined by 2.5 percent between 2001 and 2003. The Federation further argues that this result was directly related to the public funding freeze and neo-liberal legislation that stripped the staffing formula

and class size limits from the provincial teachers' collective agreement (ibid).

Locally generated revenue for public schools has been on the rise. Beyond government grants to school districts, this revenue typically includes summer school fees, continuing education fees, international student fees, cafeteria revenue, central stores, rentals and leases, and investment income. Since fiscal year 1998-1999, the average percentage of local revenue as operating funds in BC's 59 school districts increased from 2.51 percent to 4.16 percent by 2003-2004 (BCTF 2005). The percentage is especially higher in the districts of Metro Vancouver, where a lot of international students choose to settle. In 2003-2004, the Richmond district was least reliant on local revenue, with a percentage of 4.58. The district of West Vancouver topped this measure, recording 19.3 percent (ibid.).

As school districts need to be more financially self-sufficient, commercialism in Canadian education has become more visible as well. According to a report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (2006), private interests have not only deeply affected the physical look of educational sites but also affected policymaking. By advertising, partnering, and/or acting as a private corporation themselves, Canadian public schools are no longer sites of pure pedagogy but have commercial interests. In BC, this ideology has materialized into policy. Through the School Amendment Act, 2002 (Part 6 Division 2), the BC Department of Education allowed school districts to engage in entrepreneurial activities by setting up their own private corporations (Hibbins 2006). In so doing, school district business companies can market and sell their learning resources, enrol international students and provide education and business services in order to support their programs.

All these changes in the macro structure of the political economy have had important implications for the international education industry and its recent growth. More public or semi-public educational institutions have become engaged with revenue-generating activities. The trend was quite notable in my research site of Vancouver, BC. I found, however, that the neo-liberalization of education and migration and their overall impacts on the growth of the international education industry did not consult the typical story of a management-driven project nor the harsh imposition of faceless neo-liberalism. Rather, the development and growth of the industry was a process that involved many local actors who were often believed to be the victims of neo-liberal globalization. The process involves a complex combination of resistance and acceptance, and occasionally the activities of local actors lead policy changes as well. Drawing upon interview data with government officials and educators, I challenge the orthodox rhetoric of neo-liberalism and economic globalization that masks complex dynamics of the growth of the international education industry.

D-3. International Education and the Role of Canadian NGOs and Local School Boards

In an increasingly globalized world, Canadian universities recognize the need to provide graduates with a global perspective, international knowledge and cross-cultural skill and are committed to bringing an international dimension to their teaching, research and community service.

(AUCC 2008, in the statement of Advocacy Priorities: Internationalization)

Resulting from the rise of globalization, the internationalization of education is now

recognized as a necessary goal for Canadian educational institutions. In the process, Canadian schools have undertaken a number of different strategies. There have been extensive efforts to change the curriculum and create global exchange programs.³³ The recruitment of international students, however, has been one of the most visible activities. Under the newly created neo-liberal funding regime, the direct financial benefit of having international students is difficult to ignore. Along with socio-cultural enrichment, the monies poured into the Canadian economy are welcome. In Canada, where education has been recognized as a public good for a long time, it is no longer taboo to discuss making profits by selling educational programs and services. In fact, I was able to hear a similar opinion from various levels of government and public institution leaders, who openly recognize the economic benefits of selling Canadian education to international students.

Government policymakers, educational institutions and other key stakeholders have long recognized the important contribution that foreign students make to Canada's economic social wellbeing. (CIC 2003: 1)

We see it as a positive thing; clearly it is a positive thing for us, and I think it creates links between the two countries and we wish that the Koreans have a good experience when they are in Canada so they can bring back their experience here and talk to other people about this. Financially, also, let's be frank; financially, that's a lot a money that's coming into Canada, also, so that's another positive point for Canada. So it's cultural because of the exchange, and financially, so that's two important points, it's positive.

(Interview with Mr. Cliche at the Canadian Embassy in Seoul, Korea)

³³ For example, as of 2008, the University of British Columbia has exchange programs with 135 partner universities in over 45 countries.

[In order to draw more qualified international students,] the visa and immigration system needs adjusting so that we can be much more nimble in the marketplace. Otherwise we will not be able to compete with the more aggressive players around the world.

(Martha Piper, the former President of UBC, quoted in A.K. Consulting 2005)

Such recognition has materialized into several policy revisions and program designs. Over the last two decades, a number of ministries at the federal level have intensified their efforts to attract more international students to Canada. In 2002, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, for example, enacted a new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act that facilitates the entry of students as permanent immigrants (CIC 2003). Under the new Act, potential independent immigrant applicants or their spouses who have studied in Canada for more than two years can obtain an extra five points for the evaluation criteria.³⁴ In 2006, CIC announced an Off Campus Work Permit (OCWP) program in co-operation with the provinces and territories (BC Ministry of Advanced Education 2006).³⁵ The government of British Columbia also joined the program, allowing all qualified international students to have a chance to obtain work experience in BC's labour market and return their skills to the

³⁴ The Point System of Canada assesses all independent/skilled worker applicants based on six criteria: education, languages, work experience, age, arranged employment in Canada and adaptability. To be eligible for permanent migration, an applicant needs to score at least 67 points (www.cic.gc.ca).

³⁵ In April 2008, the Ministry of CIC removed restrictions on the type of employment and requirement for a job offer from a potential employer in the previous OCWP program. Under the new program, the duration of the work permit has also been extended to three years across the country. The previous program only allowed one or two years of employment depending on location (longer for the work locations outside Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto) (CIC 2008a). In the following month, May 2008, the Ministry of CIC and the BC Ministry of Advanced Education together announced a pilot expansion of the program that allows not only international students at public universities and colleges but also those who study at private post-secondary institutions in British Columbia to apply for OCWPs (CIC 2008b).

province. Bilateral visa exemption policies and friendlier working holiday visa programs with several Asian countries have also played an important role in bringing a large number of short-term stay students to Canada.

These policy changes seem to work, as indicated by the rising number of international students since 1980 (see Figure 5-2). Although negatively affected by the outbreak of SARS and the 9/11 incident in 2001, the number of foreign students has been recovering since 2004.

Figure 5-2. Foreign Students to Canada (1980-2006)³⁶

Source: CIC 2006, *Facts and Figures 2006*

³⁶ The numbers do not include international students who came to Canada under a visitor visa. Under the new Act, student authorizations are only required for those who wish to study more than six months (CIC 2003). Thus, the data exclude a large number of short-term-stay ESL students.

While some still argue that the invisible hand of the market is the only force at play, the development and growth of international education has been significantly shaped by a set of regulations and affected by various scales of institutional approaches. As shown above, several passive policy changes (at both ends) were influential enough to draw a larger number of international students to Canada than before. Although Canada has been blamed for lacking an integrated approach towards international education,³⁷ I encountered a number of governmental initiatives, NGOs and local institutional actors who have played important roles in the process. The role of nation-states, institutions and regulations still matters. During my fieldwork, for example, I encountered two federal initiatives that have promoted Canadian education in the global market. With three local offices in Canada and 17 overseas offices around the world, the Canadian Education Centre Network (CECN),³⁸ has responded to the demand of international students and has provided marketing support to Canadian educational institutions. The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC)³⁹ has promoted Canadian tourism not only to travellers but also to international students. In Seoul, Korea, the CECN, the CTC and the Canadian Embassy have often worked together in promoting Canadian education. Ms. Son, the manager of the

³⁷ This point has been repeatedly mentioned during the interviews with business professionals in Vancouver (also see G. Wilson 2006).

³⁸ The network started with CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) funding in 1985 and became a private and independent non-profit company in 1995. Its global network includes centres in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam.

³⁹ The CTC (Canadian Tourism Commission) became a Crown Corporation when it separated from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 1998. It acts as a quasi-governmental organization but is still dependant on full government funding support. It is now a sub-division of the Ministry of Industry.

CTC Seoul office, explained how the marketing targets for tourism and international education intersect and how their promotion works in partnership with the CECN and the Canadian embassy.

Currently, our major partners are tourist agencies. But, in fact, we promote education as well. For example, when we promote summer and winter programs, the typical educational programs would be short-term study programs like ESL education plus out-door activities. For youth programs such as the working holiday program, we have worked together with the Canadian embassy. When there are education fairs [organized by the CECN], we participate too. When students study in Canada for 6 months or a year, they always spent a month or two travelling Canada before or after their study. For students, we provide travel information on train passes, Greyhound bus passes, youth hostels or budget hotels, day tour passes in major Canadian cities, BC ferry passes and so on. So, students became our important market source too. Of course, the CECN deals more with those long-term study programs, but our presence has been strong in promoting short-term education.

The partnerships of the CECN and the CTC often go beyond the institutional boundaries of governmental and semi-governmental organizations. In order to promote Canadian education and tourism effectively, they often seek a corporate partnership and work together to reach the goal. Ms. Son gave several examples of corporate partnership that include different sectors of the Canadian industry. She emphasized the important progress the organization has made over the years through public and private partnerships:

In many cases, we are always working together with the CECN and the [Canadian] embassy. For non-traditional partnerships, we also work with family franchise restaurants like Bennigan's or TGIF. So far, we have seen quite positive synergy effects from all these partnerships. We hope to see the trade relationships between Korea and Canada grow over time. As more Canadian products are introduced to Korea, we have a good chance to promote tourism. We had experiences of working with Canadian companies like Baskin Robbins and Roots. Also, we have worked

with business organizations like the Canadian Beef Association. Partnering is a critical aspect of our business because we believe that we can get big synergy effects through effective partnering. So, we are basically open to any kind of partnering opportunities.

Under the newly emerging neo-liberal funding regime, the non-governmental and semi-governmental organizations like the CECN and the CTC have to meet unprecedented challenges in their program development and service provision. In the case of the CTC, ROI (Return-On-Investment) is a critical aspect of renewing its program. With its transformation to a private organization, the CECN has become actively engaged with the market economy. The CECN is now fully operated on the basis of membership fees and other profit-making activities.⁴⁰ The CECN Seoul office, for example, has operated the CECN Cultural and Language Institute Korea since 2001. Based on the British Council Model, the institute has provided all levels of English language courses, as well as cultural programs for all ages. A nursery program teaches English songs and plays to three-year-old toddlers, and a pre-migration program provides essential settlement information to adult clients. According to Mr. Wilson, the Director of Public Policy and Research of the CECN, the program has been successful and is expected to contribute to future growth of the international education industry of Canada. His enthusiastic remarks about the program noted:

⁴⁰ The organization currently has about 170 public and private educational institution members. In approximate numbers, there are about 45 universities, 45 community colleges, 40 public school boards and 40 private secondary proprietors. Of the 40 public school boards, half of them are located in British Columbia. Most of the Boards in the Greater Vancouver area and the Lower Mainland are all identified as major clients of the network.

That's right, [the Cultural and Language Institute Korea is] very well run and good quality of instruction in kind of Canadian settings. Those kinds of offices are a marvellous way of continuing to promote Canada. Our CECN office can do lots of things and hold education fairs, but when you've got hundreds or thousands of young Korean kids coming through the Culture and Language Institute, five, six and seven years old, when they're fifteen and sixteen and seventeen years old, when they're going overseas, they're probably going to come to Canada. We call it the British Council model because the British Council has been doing this from the U.K. They've been doing it for fifty years. You know, British Council Officers promote English language, obviously, British culture, British technology, British scientific advancements, British this, British that. And if a young person spends any time in a setting like that, when they think about going overseas for further study, they're probably going to think about going to the place where they've learned about the overseas opportunity. So, we think that's a marvellous way of continuing to profile Canada in Korea, and we have centres in Vietnam, and Argentina as well, and we will be opening more when we have the money to do so.

Meanwhile, public school boards in BC have tried hard to develop non-governmental funding revenue sources. The dependence on international student tuition fees as a source of operating revenue is shown in Table 1. The size of total operating revenue varies from one district to another. However, international student tuition fees are often identified as a significant source of locally generated revenues beyond government grants. In the fiscal year of 2003-2004, international students paid more than \$10 million and \$13 million to the districts of Vancouver and Coquitlam for their education. The district of Surrey also collected nearly \$8 million in the same year. In the case of West Vancouver, the dependence on international student tuition fees as operating revenue was especially significant, accounting for 82 percent of locally generated revenue and 16 percent of total operating revenue.

**Table 5-1. International Student Revenue,
by School District of the Metro Vancouver Area (2003-04)***

2003-2004	Total operating Revenue	Total Local Revenue**	Intl. Student Tuition Fee Revenue	Intl. Tuition Fee as % of Local Revenue	Intl. Tuition Fee as % of Total Operating Revenue
Abbotsford	\$125,805,493	\$7,920,819	\$5,058,454	64%	4.0%
Langley	\$127,408,259	\$8,476,974	\$6,651,211	78%	5.2%
Surrey	\$397,125,719	\$15,774,487	\$7,857,741	50%	2.0%
Delta	\$113,090,296	\$6,358,733	\$2,953,871	46%	2.6%
Richmond	\$151,537,027	\$6,945,337	\$2,461,275	35%	1.6%
Vancouver	\$396,987,243	\$24,148,829	\$10,867,680	45%	2.7%
New Westminister	\$44,366,559	\$3,617,361	\$2,435,313	67%	5.5%
Burnaby	\$156,093,450	\$7,686,608	\$3,320,302	43%	2.1%
Maple Ridge	\$99,775,768	\$6,386,556	\$4,641,237	73%	4.7%
Coquitlam	\$211,459,182	\$21,185,921	\$13,564,632	64%	6.4%
North Vancouver	\$123,825,979	\$9,066,942	\$4,256,951	47%	3.4%
West Vancouver	\$46,135,431	\$9,010,941	\$7,402,870	82%	16.0%
Total	\$1,993,610,406	\$126,579,508	\$71,471,537	56%	3.6%

* The figures are calculated by the author based on the two research reports from the BCTF (BC Teachers Federation 2005 and 2007)

** Local Revenue is comprised of various sources of independent funding generated locally by each school district. Beyond government funding, this revenue includes summer school fees, continuing education fees, international student fees, cafeteria revenue, central stores, rentals and leases of school properties, and investment income.

What I have found most intriguing in my fieldwork were the marketing activities of public school boards of BC, particularly those in Metro Vancouver. As Mr. Wilson told me, almost all the school boards in Metro Vancouver and the Lower Mainland are members of the CECN. They pay about \$2,000 each in annual membership fees and participate in education fairs organized by the network twice a year. Over the years, the number of international students has steadily increased, and their marketing efforts have paid off. According to the report by the BCTF (British Columbia Teachers Federation 2007), international student enrolment to the province nearly doubled since the 2001-2002 school year, rising from 4,083 full-time equivalent program registrants in 2001-2002 to 7,853 in 2005-2006 (See Figure 5-3). Accordingly, the overall revenue that international students have generated for the province also significantly increased (See Figure 5-4). Compared to the school year of 2003-2004, the revenue from international students in 2005-2006 rose by \$10 million, reaching \$109 million for the province as a whole and nearly doubling since the school year of 2001-2002.

**Figure 5-3. BC International Student Full-Time Equivalent Enrolment
(2001-02 to 2005-06)⁴¹**

Source: BCTF Research Report 2007

⁴¹ With currently available student enrolment data from BC Ministry of Education, it seems clear that the proportion of international students in total FTE enrolment is steadily increasing. For example, 1.04 percent of total FTE enrolments were international students in the school year of 2003/04; 1.15 percent in 2004/05; and 1.23 percent in 2005/06 (BCTF Research Report 2007 and BC Ministry of Education 2008).

Figure 5-4. BC International Student Tuition Fee Revenue (2001-02 to 2005-06)

Source: BCTF Research Report 2007

While the neo-liberalization of education has been a controversial issue in many ways, the rising number of international students and their contribution to the local economy has been hard to ignore. During interviews with international program directors of Metro Vancouver, many agreed that international students are an important source of operating revenue and help keep their programs running and prevent school closure. With government funding cuts of the last decade, the need to maintain an international program has become clearly recognized. Ms. Onstad, the International Program Director of Vancouver, noted that, besides the social and cultural enrichment that international students bring into the district, the positive economic impact of the program is significant.

Each school that receives international students, the benefit they get from international students is that they're given more teachers. That's how we do it, it's not in the form of money to a school, it's in the form of extra teachers. And **extra teachers benefit our local students and the international students because where they use the extra teachers are in programs that would normally be cut because of budget cuts.** That's typically elective area courses in our high schools like band programs, or art programs, or something that is considered extra beyond academics. That makes the school experience for all of the students richer, so **we're using these funds to combat the cuts in funding we've been getting from the provincial government in the last decade, basically.** And they're used for teachers. We have for example, last year, our international student revenue supported an additional 42 teachers in our district; 42 teacher positions that wouldn't be there otherwise. That's very important for our district, for local and international students' benefit.

(Ms. Barb Onstad, the International Program Director of Vancouver: my emphasis)

Under the increasingly stringent neo-liberal funding regime, the marketing of international education has become a survival strategy for many districts. Mr. Matheson, the District

Principal and the Director of the International Program of West Vancouver, openly discussed the enterprising nature of his school program. After all, the market and education no longer exist in separate ideological realms for him. He enthusiastically noted:

Yes, lots of different things have given us exposure in the marketplace, and really what we're talking about ... I'm not talking now as an educator...[I have spent] thirty years in education, but what I'm talking about [here] is running a business. What I'm doing now in our district is running a business more than running an educational enterprise. [Here], the commodity is education!

(Mr. Rod Matheson, the District Principal and the Director of the International Program of West Vancouver)

Selling Canadian education has become an important agenda for many public school districts in BC. In fact, the ways in which these school districts market their international programs are quite aggressive in nature. I found that the school districts often operate a separate department for international education programs and hire marketing professionals who have extensive experience in international education program management. Their marketing strategy often resembles that of the corporate world, as it involves active partnerships and targeted investment. Mr. Matheson, for example, shared these comments about his marketing strategies and how to reach potential clients in the most efficient way.

RM: Sometimes, we go out to schools in the different countries and do presentations at the schools.

MJK: You mean you do presentations in public schools to advertise the program?

RM: No, not normally in public schools, usually private schools. You need to be looking at where your potential clients will be coming from. The families need to have some resources behind them if they're going to send their kids here. So

you can do an awful lot of talking to a lot of people but **you need to really start to focus on where there is potential return for that investment.**

MJK: Have you been asked to do a presentation in Korean private schools?

RM: Sometimes they do, but generally it's the other way around. It is a little bit more global because in the Korean market I didn't have to go to high schools. We rely more heavily on agents in Korea and we've developed a large network of agents both here in Vancouver and in Korea who really do a lot of marketing for us. I attend a couple of fairs a year in Korea. Through KBS and SBS [two of the three major national broadcasting networks in Korea], we aired special programs on West Vancouver. We advertise. We've got promotional things, the launching of our online learning through our school district along with the Toronto School Board. It was just in August in Seoul, along with the CEC as one of our partners and Hewlett Packard, Microsoft, and a few other large corporations. [They] are part of our overall marketing ... so a lot of advertising.

(Mr. Rod Matheson: my emphasis)

As the conversation with Mr. Matheson reveals, the marketing approaches of Canadian school districts are not globally identical but rather locally specific. They approach different markets with different strategies. As Mr. Matheson hinted, Korea is known to be an agent-driven market. This is another important piece of the puzzle that I explore in the next chapter: the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in the industrial growth of Canadian education. Examining their transnational entrepreneurial activities, I highlight how their strong socio-cultural networks have played an important role in connecting the educational institutions in BC and international students in Korea, thus contributing to the industrial growth of international education across the Pacific Ocean.

E. Discussion:

Rethinking the neo-liberal nexus of migration, education and institutions

While it is 'neoliberalism' that vaguely united these various state projects, the term itself tends to be defined implicitly and commonsensically. Relatively little is known, at least systematically, about the historical geographies of neoliberalism within which these projects are located, about the complex ways in which the (relatively) 'soft' neoliberal transitions experienced in post-Keynesian states have been connected with the 'harder' and (perhaps) most externally driven transitions that have been taking place in the post-communist world and in the structurally adjusted countries of the global South. (Peck 2004: 393)

The rise of neo-liberalism and economic globalization was identified as a significant factor that contributed to macro scale structural changes in the political economy of migration and education in Korea and Canada. In this chapter, the empirical focus of my analysis was on how nation-states have played important roles in shaping the market conditions of the international education industry under the structural changes brought about by neo-liberalization. I paid particular attention to how different public institutions have become actively engaged with profit making activities through promoting and selling Canadian education. In so doing, I reconsidered the implications of neo-liberalism to the political economy of migration and international education. Drawing upon empirical evidence from my research in Seoul and Vancouver, my objective is not to endorse neo-liberalism but to explore complexities that challenge the taken-for-granted approach towards neo-liberalism. It is important to remember that neo-liberalism has taken the form of various types of projects out of different political-economic contexts.

Regarding the development process of the international education industry between Vancouver and Seoul, my critique of the neo-liberal nexus is summed up in the following four elements. First, with the cliché of ‘more market/less state,’ the roles of nation-states and public institutions tend to be underestimated in the process of global market development. For the growth of the international education industry between Seoul and Vancouver, for example, relaxation of travel and foreign currency regulations for Korean people were identified as some of the most important factors. In some ways, such weak regulation seems to contribute to the limited role of nation-states in shaping market conditions. However, my observation revealed that both Korean and Canadian public institutions have been actively engaged with various scales of entrepreneurially inclined activities. Through a significant level of public and private partnership, they actively sought better ways of marketing and selling education.

The first point leads to another contested aspect of the simplified relationship between the rise of neo-liberalism and the demise of nation-states. Following the popular concept of globalization, the world was supposed to become borderless with freer flows of goods, services and people. I found, however, that the business professionals, educators and government officials I spoke with were always speaking of nationalism, national identity and national interest vis-à-vis the agenda of economic globalization. In Korea, for example, government officials often mentioned that embracing the vision of globalization was in pursuit of a nationalist goal and interest: to become a competitive player in the global market. In fact, the nationalism card has often been played when many national governments need to conduct neo-liberal projects (Harvey 2005). However, the nationalism

card is not only utilized by governments but also by business professionals who are typically believed to strongly resist government intervention. In my fieldwork, there were many Canadian business professionals in the international education industry who urged their nation-state to play a more active role in promoting Canadian education in the global market. Mr. Wilson, the Director of the CECN mentioned:

We continue to be engaged with the government but my own view is that the Federal Government has really ... we welcomed the financial support they provided in the early days and in fact over the course of a decade, but there has been no vision, no leadership, no kind of inspiration at the national level to place Canada on the same competitive footing as say Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Great Britain, Netherlands, Germany, France. Virtually all the other countries that are involved in international education marketing, have some kind of governmental support, some kind of governmental backing, some kind of governmental leadership. In Canada, that has not happened, and that's quite disappointing.

Third, it is important to note that specific political economic conditions in different countries determine the degree of border openings for international students. While most developed countries have positively viewed international students in recent years, there have been cases of exception as well. For example, after the 9/11 incident, the increasing level of security concern made the U.S. close its doors to international students from the Middle East. While the Canadian government has become more receptive to these students, the door to Chinese students from the PRC has been rather rigidly managed. During field research, I have encountered many business professionals who are interested in the possible opening of the Chinese market in the near future. However, an agreement between the two countries has been hard to reach mainly due to high levels of political concerns (e.g.,

human rights issues in the PRC) expressed by the conservative national government. There exists a clear tension between open and closed doors. Through immigration policies, nation-states exercise the ultimate power of controlling the market, and this conveys an important point. Between open and closed doors, neo-liberalism is not uniformly applied to different contexts.

Lastly, my critique focuses on the blanket treatment of neo-liberalism as a top-down, unified and aggressive project. Many socially progressive academics tend to emphasize the discontent associated with neo-liberalism and thus view the socially and culturally marginalized as victims of the system. I argue that this tendency largely denies human agency in the process of globalization. As I highlighted in this chapter, a number of NGOs and local institutions were indeed identified as active players in the development of the global market. In the process, I also found that there were intriguing inconsistencies and resistance. In the following chapters, my analysis of the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in the global industry of international education further demonstrates that ordinary immigrants are not always victims of the process of globalization. They instead can be active proponents of neo-liberalism and promoters of globalization.

CHAPTER 6
Globalizing Canadian Education from Below:
The Role of Immigrant Entrepreneurs in the International Education
Industry

A. Introduction

B. The Opportunity Structure of Vancouver's International Education Industry

B-1. Vancouver as a Popular Destination for International Students

B-2. The Regulatory Environment and International Education in BC

B-3. BC Schools Seeking Out International Students

C. Transnational Economies of Export Education

C-1. Becoming Entrepreneurs

C-2. Going Global

C-3. Network, Network, Network: the Socio-cultural embeddedness of immigrant entrepreneurship

C-4. The Other Side of Ethnic Embeddedness

D. The Messiness of Globalization

E. Discussion: Still a promising story to tell?

A. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I surveyed the scale and estimated economic significance of the international education industry in British Columbia. An increasing number of policy papers and business reports have noted that the benefits of recruiting international students to Canada are far too great to be neglected. These reports are written in a celebratory tone –

whether by policy makers or media – despite concerns raised by the 9/11 incident in the U.S. and other national security issues. International students are known to contribute to the local economy by transferring international funds to pay their tuition fees and living costs in Canada. Furthermore, international education is increasingly seen as a globalization project because Canadian institutions can draw many students from culturally different parts of the world. Policy makers in Korea and Canada have created policies that allow international students, visitors and business professionals to cross borders more freely. Many public educational institutions have also begun to incorporate elements of the market economy. These trends have created a structural environment that fosters the growth of the international education industry at the national and supra-national scales.

In this chapter, I turn my analytical focus to the ‘agency’ of Korean immigrant entrepreneurs whose social and cultural linkages play an important role in attracting a large number of Korean international students and families to Vancouver. Drawing upon transnationalism as a theoretical framework, I aim to give voice to ordinary immigrant entrepreneurs whose efforts have rarely been recognized in the globalizing process of Canadian education. I pay particular attention to their transnational networks and business activities that connect potential consumers and various types of educational institutions in Vancouver. Situating the analysis in the burgeoning literature of immigrant entrepreneurship, I demonstrate, however, that the transnational entrepreneurial experiences of Korean-Canadian agents and home-stay providers are both locally specific and also socially and culturally embedded. I use qualitative data collected from 38 interviews with Korean-Canadian business professionals in Vancouver and their business partners in Seoul

to provide insights into transnational business activities.

The remainder of this chapter consists of four sections. First, drawing upon the analytical model of mixed embeddedness (Rath and Kloosterman 2003), I examine both structural and agency-driven aspects of transnational immigrant entrepreneurship in the international education industry. Adding to the structural analysis of the industry presented in Chapter 5 (the macro political economic structural changes in Canadian education and the active role of public institutions in the industry), this first section of Chapter 6 provides additional information about Vancouver's opportunity structure from the perspective of immigrant entrepreneurs. Insights collected from local educational workers and business professionals tell us about the demand side of educational and personalized service needs, which makes Vancouver one of the most attractive places for international students. Secondly, I examine the supply side of immigrant enterprises and their characteristics (agency). I further consider the role of immigrant entrepreneurs (international education agents and home stay providers) as mediators between consumers and providers of Canadian education programs. This section focuses on the socially and culturally embedded nature of the education industry. The third section of the chapter explores another side of the growth of international education between Seoul and Vancouver. This section reveals the messier aspects of the globalizing process of Canadian education. Finally, I reconsider the newly emerging economic opportunities cultivated by Korean immigrant entrepreneurs in relation to a broader discussion of the socio-economic mobility of minority groups. Based on the research findings explored here, I subsequently ask: Does the participation and strong presence of recent Korean immigrants in the rapidly growing international education

industry provide an example of a ‘break out’ from traditional ethnic niche economies? What kind of challenges do immigrant entrepreneurs need to deal with? What are the implications for these immigrants in terms of the more general urban labour market conditions for newcomers in Canada?

B. The Opportunity Structure of Vancouver’s International Education Industry

B-1. Vancouver as a Popular Destination for International Students

The number of Korean international students, families and visitors who choose to study and live in Vancouver has been growing. As discussed in Chapter 4, BC has been the most popular destination for international students from Korea since the mid 1990s. When I surveyed my student informants with their reasons for choosing Canada for their study destination, the top three responses were: the use of American English; safety (especially after 9/11); and an easier visa process for short-term-stay students. Within Canada, Vancouver was chosen because of its environmental beauty, geographical proximity to Korea and previous existence of a Korean social network. For most post-secondary students, Vancouver is an attractive place because they tend to seek tourism opportunities in addition to improving their English skills or pursuing other academic goals. For young children and their parents who are more likely to pursue longer-term study, close geographical proximity to Korea is beneficial, as they frequently need to travel back and forth across the Pacific Ocean.

The influx of Korean students and visitors to Vancouver has created various business

opportunities for potential immigrant entrepreneurs. Especially after the aforementioned visa relaxation between Korea and Canada in 1994 and the expedited medical examination process introduced in 1997, the entrepreneurial activities of Korean immigrants in international education have been burgeoning since the mid 1990s. This point is supported by Ms. Yoon, a Korean Canadian who immigrated to Toronto in 1991 but moved to Vancouver three years later to tap into the possibilities associated with the new regulations:

It was 1994 when the visa exemption was in effect between Korea and Canada. My husband and I thought that the travel business would be good. That is why we opened this business. Well, since 1994, people have started to come. Also, Korean students began to come, an influx. It was much more difficult to come to Canada before, because of the complex visa issue.

(Ms. Yoon, a tourism and international education agency operator in Vancouver)

Korean immigrant entrepreneurs are directly involved with the industry by operating the following kinds of businesses: private ESL schools, international educational agencies (often combining a business setting with immigration consulting and/or tourism services) and home-stay operations. In fact, the scope of the international education industry is hard to define as it may include a very wide range of educational and non-educational services offered to both native and foreign students. The exchange of students, scholars and programs between countries is also considered an important part of international education. Educational services include those provided in and outside Canada, transnationally and even those in a virtual setting. For this research, I define the ‘consumer base’ as international students of all ages who arrive from Korea to study in a Canadian educational institution. The focus of my research project is thus limited to educational programs and

related services provided to them. I am particularly interested in those businesses that Korean immigrants are closely involved with either as direct service providers or as interlocutors. The latter group includes mostly education consulting agents who work for students enrolled in private ESL schools, public school boards and, in some cases, publicly funded colleges and universities. The former group includes small- and mid-size business operators as private school owners and home-stay providers.

In general, it is very hard to count the exact number of Korean owned and managed businesses in the education industry. According to an international education agency owner, there are about 20 Korean-Canadian owned private ESL schools in Vancouver.⁴² It is known that, in total, there are about 120 registered private ESL schools and programs operating in Vancouver. One ESL school Korean coordinator informed me that the number of Korean international education agencies of all sizes, including entrepreneurs operating from a home office, is more than 100. As many relatives, families and friends accommodate a large proportion of Korean international students, the actual scale of home- stay businesses seems to be significant as well.⁴³

⁴² The exact number of Korean owned schools in Vancouver is hard to verify because some owners do not actively participate in the management of the school. Some schools tend not to advertise themselves through Korean ethnic media or business directories, even though Korea has been the most important source of post-secondary ESL students in Vancouver. Some school owners even tried to conceal the fact that schools are owned by an ethnic minority in order to avoid negative stereotyping about the quality of their language program.

⁴³ From interviews with Korean-Canadians in Vancouver, I learned that many families are taking care of children of their relatives and friends with some fees. These are not considered to be a formal business but provide important income to the host families.

It is beyond the scope of this study to compare the opportunity structures of international education businesses between Toronto and Vancouver, the cities with the largest Korean-Canadian communities in Canada.⁴⁴ However, comparing the numbers of Korean immigrants who operate an international education business in the two cities reveals how important Vancouver has been for the industry. In Vancouver, it is easy to find advertisements related to home stay hosts, international educational agencies and private ESL programs in any local Korean ethnic newspaper. In Toronto, which has the largest Korean-Canadian community, the number of advertisements is relatively small compared to that of Vancouver and the size of its community. According to the 2007 BC Korean Business Directory, 71 businesses were listed under the heading “international education agencies” in Greater Vancouver (See Table 6-1). Under the heading “immigration consulting,” 29 additional businesses were listed, advertising that they provide immigration consulting services as well. There were 36 firms listed in the “travel agencies” section of the directory.⁴⁵ In comparison, there were 46 international education agencies, 23 immigration consulting agencies and 29 tourist agencies listed in Greater Toronto Area (Korean Business Directory of Ontario 2007).

⁴⁴ According to 2006 Census Data, there were 55,270 people with Korean ethnic heritage in Toronto and 44,825 in Vancouver (2006 Census- 20% sample data).

⁴⁵ However, field research suggests that many of these firms actually perform a combination of all these roles, that is, a mix of travel arrangements, immigration assistance, and educational services. This point will be further explored in the following section of this chapter.

**Table 6-1. Korean-Canadian International Education Businesses
in Vancouver and Toronto (2002 & 2007)**

	Vancouver, BC				Toronto, ON			
	2002	2007	Survived*	New	2002	2007	Survived*	New
International Education Agencies	40	71	17/40 (42%)	54/71 (76%)	22	46	13/22 (59%)	33/46 (72%)
Immigration Consulting Agencies	23	29	11/23 (48%)	18/29 (62%)	30	24	19/30 (63%)	5/24 (20%)
Tourist Agencies	32	36	22/32 (69%)	14/36 (39%)	16	27	14/16 (88%)	13/27 (48%)
Business per Pop.1,000**	3.3/ 1,000	3.0/ 1,000			1.6/ 1,000	1.7/ 1,000		

Sources:

- Ontario Korean Business Directory (OKBA 2002 and Canada Korean Times 2007)
- BC Korean Business Directory (BC KBCA 2002 and Blue Computer and Graphics Company 2007)

* The number of agencies that have survived since 2002.

** Based on 2001 Census data

Based on 2001 Census data, the average number of agency businesses per total Korean population in Vancouver was also higher than that of Toronto, with 3.3 versus 1.6 businesses per 1,000 individuals. For both years 2002 and 2007, the number of international education agents in Vancouver was nearly double that of Toronto. On the other hand, the lower survival rates of Vancouver businesses testify that the market has been more competitive and volatile than that of Toronto. While the preference factor of Korean students and parents towards Vancouver helps explain why Vancouver has had a consistently stronger market for the industry, it is also important to explore the specific conditions of the opportunity structure that allow Korean immigrants in Vancouver to

become more active, and at the same time less successful in the industry than their counterparts in Toronto.

B-2. The Regulatory Environment and International Education in BC⁴⁶

The small business sector has always been an important ingredient of urban economies. This trend has accelerated over the past few decades by the rapidly changing nature of macro-economic structures. Since the arrival of post-industrial economies, more jobs have been created in the knowledge and service sectors of the economy rather than resource and manufacturing industries. In addition, as Sassen (2001) notes, the on-going process of globalization accentuates the development of two-tier economies in so-called global cities. While multinational corporations have practiced footloose mobility and faceless expansion around the world, we have also seen a growing sector of specialized, usually labour-intensive, small enterprises in major urban cores. This sector is often established and maintained by an immigrant labour force equipped with relatively limited financial assets but rich human resources.

Metropolitan Vancouver fits this description of a post-industrial global city. Since the 1960s, the region has experienced significant changes in its economic structure and labour force. Once developed around its resources and resource extraction industries, the most profitable industries of BC are now believed to be those that are technology driven, service oriented and knowledge based (Vancouver Sun 2005). This trend has largely been driven by small

⁴⁶ The major content of this section is drawn from a working paper on immigrant entrepreneurship and the role of NGOs in an era of neo-liberal governance (Kwak and Hiebert 2007).

business growth in the region. According to a recent report, BC has experienced the highest provincial growth rate (in Canada) of small businesses in the past decade (WED 2005). Between 1994 and 2004, the number of small businesses in the province grew 25 percent, while the national average was just under 15 percent. Turning to several specific sectors as examples, the highest growth rates were found in the businesses that provide education services (16.3%), information and cultural services (12.9%) and business services (8.0%).⁴⁷ With the presence of a large (and steadily growing) number of Asian immigrants and, in particular, Korean-Canadians involved in these industries, their experiences as entrepreneurs within Vancouver deserve scholarly attention.

In addition to the growing demand base of the education industry, it is also important to examine how the regulatory regime influences the establishment of immigrant businesses in this sector. Findings from another project that explored Asian immigrant entrepreneurial experiences in Vancouver revealed that immigrants in fact found the province of BC a good place to establish their own business (Kwak and Hiebert 2007). One Korean cosmetic products seller who has a transnational business in California mentioned that “as long as you understand English, the on-line business registration system in BC was easy to use and pretty straightforward.” The provincial government has provided easier access for business

⁴⁷ According to figures provided by BC Stats, the other two sectors with notable growth rates were Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Real Estate Services, each at about 7 percent. The figures are important indicators of sector-specific growth in the BC economy; however, they should not be considered as a precise measure because there is no reliable data available on self-employment by industry. The figures are drawn from the data on paid employees in small businesses and thus exclude the number of self-employed persons without paid help (WED 2005).

information and an integrated module for business registration for potential entrepreneurs. The latter program, namely the OSBR (One Stop Business Registration) station service, has been set up by the federal and provincial governments and is operated with language support from local NGOs (e.g., S.U.C.C.E.S.S.). The user-friendly system of business registration in BC and the mediating role of the immigrant service agency were recognized as useful services that have helped immigrants become self-employed. Although successful business management entails a whole set of different challenges for immigrant entrepreneurs, this pro-small-business environment creates a positive opportunity structure for potential immigrant entrepreneurs to start their own businesses in the region.

Regulations governing the academic environment of international education institutions are enabling as well. In Canada, education is a provincial mandate, and most regulatory restrictions apply at the level of provincial jurisdiction. In BC, there are four distinct types of educational institutions in the province. First, public-sector schools, colleges, and universities are highly regulated and, of course, open to public scrutiny and program review. Secondly, a small number of privately-owned language schools and colleges have submitted their curricula to full evaluation and have been approved by self-regulating associations like the Canadian Association of Private Language Schools (CAPLS).⁴⁸ Across Canada, there were 72 member institutions that provide English and/or French language education in over 100 locations. With its own quality standard and accreditation scheme,

⁴⁸ There is a similar self-regulatory association called PELSA (Private English Language Schools Association) as well. However, the size and influence of the association seems much smaller than that of CAPLS. I found that all members of PELSA in BC are also associated with CAPLS.

CAPLS has promoted and led the self-regulatory system of the industry of language (English/French) education. This role was strengthened after new BC legislation in November 2004 stipulated that ESL schools are no longer required to be registered with PCTIA (Private Career Training Institutions Agency).⁴⁹ In BC, 36 private English language schools are registered members of CAPLS.

Thirdly, nearly all of the privately-owned institutes are licensed but have not subjected themselves to academic review. In obtaining a license, they must follow certain rules about their financial practices as businesses, especially the proper management of tuition fees (with the potential to provide refunds to students as needs arise). However, institutions in this category do not have to provide a set curriculum, do not have to hire teachers who have proper educational degrees and professional training, and their students are not eligible for financial support from the government.

Finally, I have learned that there is also an unregulated market system of ESL education. In addition to private tutoring businesses that teach English, there are pseudo language schools called conversation clubs. These conversation clubs are usually organized by international

⁴⁹ PCTIA is a regulatory agency for private training institutions in the province of BC. The agency succeeded PPSEC (Private Post-Secondary Education Commission of British Columbia) in 2004. The PPSEC was an accreditation board that was initially established by the provincial government of BC. In 2003, after a major restructuring of the organization, the agency was made independent. In 2004, it was exempted from regulating private ESL schools in the region and changed its name to PCTIA. According to the PCTIA website (<http://pctia.bc.ca>), in 2006, there were 526 registered institutions and, of them, 210 were accredited. The accredited member institutions are subjected to program review and thus treated as equivalent to the first category.

education agencies who wish to attract more students to their primary educational business. They hire a university student as an instructor and collect small participation fees from students. Because of the modest cost of education and flexibility of the program schedule, this mode of English education has become increasingly popular among international students. One Korean coordinator, however, worried that this trend will bring excessive competition among ESL institutions.

There are many pseudo language schools called conversation clubs. These clubs are not registered as educational institutions. They hire mostly university students as instructors so that they can pay little. Of course, most money transfers are done without records. These exist as an invisible industry. I think this kind of unruly market needs to be regulated once in a while to avoid unnecessary competition.

(Mr. Gu, the manager of a private ESL school.)

We should resist concluding that the academic environment of the international education industry as a whole, and particularly that of BC, is poorly administered or is characterized by inadequate instruction. Rather, the existence of these clubs shows that regulations are lax. The regulatory expectations towards private ESL schools in general are modest, as it is relatively easy to establish a private language school as a licensed business in BC. In addition, establishing an international education agency in a home setting and operating a home-stay business do not seem too complicated either (this point is further explored through entrepreneurial experiences of Korean immigrants in the following sections). It is fair to say that the weak regulatory regime, ironically, has conditioned a positive opportunity structure for industrial growth.

B-3. BC Schools Seeking Out International Students

The recruiting effort of private and public schools in BC is an important aspect to consider. In this section, I focus on the public school districts that enroll and provide services to K-12 students. In 2004, a headline in a sub-section of a Korean ethnic newspaper article read:

Northern BC school districts failed to recruit international students:

The school districts admitted a complete failure in their attempt to relieve a financial deficit with the recruitment of Asian students this semester. They are seeking answers.
(Vancouver Chosun Ilbo 2004b)

According to the article, the director of the Quesnel school district, Mr. Napier, was wondering about this failure. He thought that the schools in the district provided a perfect learning environment for Korean and Chinese students, as there are few Korean and Chinese speaking people in the area. The district was expected to have international students, as they hired ESL teachers and prepared a home-stay program. However, the recruitment effort turned out to be unsuccessful, as there was not even one international student registered in the district. The situation was similar in the northern district of Prince George. Mr. Chamber, the school district director, also expected to have about 200 Korean students. The school district directors contemplated that the main reason for the failure to recruit international students resulted from the poor performance of recruiting agents. This article highlights two important aspects of the international education industry in BC: the recruiting effort of public school boards and the significant role of agents.

While the political-economic structure of BC in general has become more supportive of small business establishment and operation, it is important to consider the specific urban

conditions of the opportunity structure that both provide and hinder immigrant entrepreneurship in the international education industry. In the previous chapter, I discussed one of the most intriguing aspects of Vancouver's international education: the active role played by all levels of public and private schools and educational institutions in recruiting international students. Dealing with Korean international students, the largest consumer market for the industry lately, the relationship with agents was often emphasized by the schools. Agents play a critical role in that they are the first contacts and interlocutors between the local school/college in Vancouver and the students and their parents in Korea. With an appropriate level of knowledge about both societies, these agents are expected to transfer accurate information about educational institutions, their programs, and Canadian lifestyles to the students. On behalf of students and their parents from Korea, they also need to be able to search for and recommend a credible school program that meets individual needs. In return, they charge service fees to students and/or earn commissions from schools.

For local schools, paying commissions to private agencies that recruit students on their behalf has become increasingly common. These schools include all levels of private schools and local public school boards. This practice seems well accepted by the institutions in the province of BC and Metro Vancouver in particular. Generally, therefore, agents prefer to send students to Vancouver rather than to any other city. One Canadian market manager in an international education agency located in downtown Seoul testified to this point:

For many reasons, Vancouver has been a good destination for Korean students. As you know, Vancouver has good weather, close proximity to Korea and a large Korean community. Above all, **BC schools have been very receptive** to Korean students. They are eager to have more [international] students. They respond to our inquiry so well. BC school boards are so fast and prompt. In Ontario, there is only one school board that works like that, the Toronto school board. Except for that school board, everyone else is so slow. BC school boards are paying a commission to us. But, most Ontario school boards are not. So, from the agencies' perspective, you send students to BC where you can get something.

(Ms. Lee, the Canadian market manager in an international education agency)

Interviews with the directors of three public school boards in Metro Vancouver confirmed the importance of the Korean market in the districts and their reliance on Korean agents in recruiting students (See Table 6-2). In all school districts, Korean high school students make up 27 to 45 percent of the total international student population. At the elementary school level, more than 75 percent of all international students were identified as arriving from South Korea.

Table 6-2. Korean Students and Agent Relations in Three BC Public School Boards

	West Vancouver	Vancouver	Surrey
Total Students	6,800	55,043	65,648
Total Intl. Students	600	946	875
% of Intl. Students	Around 9%	1.7%	1.3%
Intl. Students High School level (percentage of Korean)	400 (around 140, 35%)	732 (201, 27.5%)	450 (around 200, 45%)
Elementary level (percentage of Korean)	200 (around 150, 75%)	214 (194, 91%)	425 (around 400, 95%)
Intl. program began	1982	1986	Mid-1990s The program was formalized in 2000
Important Markets	Korea, China, Brazil and Germany	Korea, China, Germany, Taiwan, HK, Japan, Vietnam and Brazil	Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Mexico, HK, China, Thailand, Vietnam, Brazil, India
# of Korean agencies with business partnership relations	15 in Vancouver, 15 in Korea	2 only but usually communicates with 40-50	13 in Vancouver, 15-20 total
Agency Commission	10% (tuition: \$14,000) Only provide commissions to professional agents (Not to individual referrals)	10% (tuition: \$12,000) Pays to only 2 Korean agencies & excludes Van. WestSide and elementary schools	10% (tuition: \$12,800)

Although commission payments have become increasingly common, the regulations governing the industry have not yet been well established or consistently applied. Some institutions are able to recruit students and manage their program without paying any commissions. However, others cannot survive without strong partnership relations with private agents. In a way, the international education industry has been developed and operated under the most simplified market dynamics between the demand and the supply. The market function has created a polarized structure of the industry where the big and powerful dominate as the rest struggle to survive. In that picture, the role of agents can be critical.

For the K-12 level of public education in Metro Vancouver, for example, the parents of international students have shown a strong geographical preference for Vancouver West side schools, which are regulated by Vancouver School Board and are located in one of the richest districts in BC. Some Korean parents called the West side of the Vancouver School Board as ‘Vancouver’s eighth district,’ referring to its resemblance to the most competitive and popular school district in Seoul. Given this high demand, the school district has been able to be restrictive with agency relations. The director of the international program of the Vancouver School Board told me that:

We have a very unpopular policy amongst the agencies that way because we are in the fortunate position of being Vancouver – that we’re kind of well-known enough that we don’t really need agents to recruit on our behalf so we’re not so popular with agents actually. Especially speaking of Korea, we’re so popular in the Korean market right now that we don’t have to offer commission to agents.

(Ms. B. Onstad, the director of the Vancouver School Board)

However, even in this popular school district, there are occasions when agents are paid a commission.

We do [pay commissions], but it's very limited. I was telling you about our dilemma of having schools that have spaces but people don't want to send their children to those schools [a strong prejudice of Korean parents against East side of Vancouver schools and preference for West side Vancouver schools]. On those schools, we will pay commission if agencies assist us to find students for those schools.

(Ms. B. Onstad, the director of the Vancouver School Board)

The situation is similar for well-known college or university language programs. Although agents still play an important role in recruiting students for these programs, the degree of dependency is much lower, and the programs can even choose not to deal with agents at all. These points are well expressed by the directors of VCC (Vancouver Community College) and the UBC ELI program (English Language Institute).

I would say that to different degrees with different agents, and [we] certainly have some agents which are very, very productive that we have very close relationships with. There are other agents that we are aware of and that we monitor, but we're not maybe as tightly linked with them, but all around, I would say that agents in general are a critical component of our marketing network. Twenty-three percent of our students come as a result of agents, so we think that's an important enough number to make us pay attention to them.

(Ms. Smith, the director of an international education program at a community college)

At one end you have people like UBC who are very concerned with high quality education as a goal in itself, and at the other end you have people who think "I can make some money out of this." [...] I'm very involved in marketing here, but I really don't like to deal with agents, to be honest. Their primary objective is to make money. That's not our primary object. And some of them are good agents, they do a good job, they're honest, they inform the students properly and they don't take more money than they should do, but then there are others at the other extreme. It's difficult to

find your way through them.

(Mr. Baker, the director of a university ESL education program)

Small, private ESL school owners or managers who are more representative of immigrant entrepreneurs speak of different experiences, however. For them, the practice of paying commissions is a necessary marketing strategy that is directly intertwined with their survival in the market. The existence of smaller schools and competition in student recruitment among them has enabled business activities of small agencies working from home offices. Two Korean school coordinators shared their view on the practice:

There are different kinds of commission. Of course, those agencies that send more students get better commissions. Sometimes, we provide one-month tuition-free commission to the agency. In that case, the agency charges a student and receives the tuition fee as a commission. In the case of small agencies, they can't send many students at once, so we keep a record of it and then reward them after six months or so. There are many different types of commissions. Summer time is okay [because many students come to Vancouver in this period], but during winter time, it is hard to maintain the school and we need to rely on agencies. So, the commission is something we can't get rid of any time soon.

(Ms. Goh, a Korean coordinator of a private ESL school)

MJK: Do you deal with individual agents as well? You know, those who introduce a student or two to you as a side business?

Mr. Gu: I heard that in the case of bigger schools, they don't deal with those individuals. But, in the case of smaller schools like us, we have to make a deal with them in order to survive in the market.

(Conversation with Mr. Gu, a Korean manager of a private ESL school)

The contrast between high demand for certain local schools versus the commission practices led by smaller schools and less popular school districts are important aspects of

the opportunity structure of Vancouver's international education industry. These factors contribute to creating a favorable business environment for new immigrant entrepreneurs to establish a small business in the industry.

C. Transnational Economies of Export Education

C-1. Becoming Entrepreneurs

As explained in the previous section, the market for international education has been developed around rather weak regulations on academic institutions and agencies. Particularly for small businesses, the regulations that control the market are loose enough to create new opportunities for immigrants to work as mediators between two societies and cash in on their familiarity with both cultures. It is ironic to find that a growing population of international students and a global market in education have become possible through a series of public policy changes. My interviewees stressed this point when I asked them for the reasons they established a business related to the industry. Ms. Lee, who started one of the first international education agencies, told me that her firm was established in response to the rapidly increasing number of Korean students following the visa exemption policy in 1994. However, it is also true that the establishment and management of her business were easier with lack of direct regulatory restrictions on the sector.

Looking back on my difficulties as an international student before, I wanted to help other students. I started my business at home, in my small downtown apartment. When I first registered my business in 1996, they [the BC government] didn't even know what an international education information centre was for. My agency was one of the first for Korean students.

(Ms. Lee, an international education agency operator)

Whereas international education agencies provide a wide range of information related to studying and living in Vancouver, home-stay providers contract room and board for international students. The demand in housing for international students creates another important sector of the international education industry. In Vancouver, educational institutions typically arrange room and board with local families where visiting students are expected to become immersed in Canadian culture after their regular school program. Some students prefer to rent their own apartment and share with friends later on. However, home-stay seems to be the most popular way of starting student life in Canada. According to a recent student profile survey by CAPLS (2007), almost 80 percent of ESL students (out of 1,734 international students who participated in the survey) chose the home-stay option. Among 25 student and parent interviewees for my research, 17 also answered that they used the home-stay option at some point during their study period in Canada. Students typically pay \$700-800 per month for local home-stay. In the case of Korean family home-stay, the cost is higher, ranging between \$1,000 and \$1,500, as students can expect familiar food and cultural understanding.

For younger students, Korean parents often prefer the latter setting because they can communicate freely with home-stay parents. In addition, they can receive a guardian service from the host family if the person is fluent in both English and Korean. The guardians play a mediator role between the students, their parents in Korea, and the local schools. Currently, nearly all of the municipal school boards in Greater Vancouver require K-12 international students to have a legal guardian, for which their parents typically pay

between \$4,000 and \$6,000 per year.⁵⁰ Because of the intimacy of the role, parents often rely on close social networks to search for a possible guardian for their children. When asked, my interviewees often started with a typical story to explain how they became involved with the business. Ms. Do and Mr. Lim, who provide home-stay and guardian service for their friends' sons and nephews, speak of their experiences:

It all started with one of my friends' request. In 2001, my friend in Toronto asked me if I could take care of her nephew to study in Vancouver. His parents really wanted to educate their son in Vancouver. So, I looked for a school for him nearby my home. Since he was only in 6th grade, he needed a lot of attention and care. Anyway, he now went to the U.S. to attend high school. Then, another mom asked me if I could take care of her friend's son. He was in grade 11 and used to stay with a Canadian home-stay family. He had a hard time in adjusting his appetite to Canadian foods and lifestyle. At that time, I was so busy running a grocery business. So, I declined the request. But, his mom kept phoning me. So, I took him. He spent a year and some months in my home. Then again, his friend came after him. That's how it worked: one student after the other by friends' request and on and on.

(Ms. Do, a home-stay operator providing guardian service as well)

Initially, I was planning to do a trade business. In the first year when I came to Canada, I imported hats from Vietnam, investing about \$20,000. But, it wasn't successful at all. While I was disappointed by the result, one of my wife's friends in Korea asked us to take care of her son, who was the same grade as my younger one at that time. She wanted to educate her son in Canada for a year. So, I looked for some school information and registered him in one of the private schools nearby my house. It wasn't too difficult to do so. I liked the work experience because I enjoyed

⁵⁰ Actually, students in primary school are required to be accompanied by at least one parent. In practice, however, this regulation is often ignored and is not monitored by the school boards. The price for guardian services varies because some school boards have more elaborate requirements than others. The school districts of Surrey, Burnaby, and Coquitlam, for example, mandate that guardians must be at least 25 years old and either landed immigrants or Canadian citizens. This is not the case in other school districts.

being with children. Also, I could teach students as a private tutor. So, I decided to expand and continue the work.

(Mr. Lim, an education agency owner who provides tutoring, home-stay and guardian service)

Mr. Lim's education service business has been expanding steadily since he successfully managed a short winter camp program at a private Christian school for 20 Korean students. The students were immersed in the regular school program while visiting Canada during their long winter vacation from their Korean schools. He told me that the teachers and local parents of the small Christian school located in suburban Vancouver were quite receptive to the idea of housing one or two Korean students in their home with their own children who attended the same school. In addition to the international tuition fee to the school, the students paid monthly home-stay fees to the family and various service charges to Mr. Lim. After the two-month-long program, some parents of the international students flew from Korea and spent some time traveling around Canada. More positive referrals were made back in Korea, and new students were recruited through the referrals. When I spoke with one of Mr. Lim's customers in Korea, I found that she was considering sending her son back to Vancouver for a longer program. This is a snapshot of how ordinary immigrant families begin to engage with the mix of home-stays, recruiting agencies and guardian businesses. The wider implications of this trend are quite impressive because both direct and indirect economic impacts to the local economy have been significant. In the following sections, I discuss the transnational scope of the business in detail.

C-2. Going Global

As the institutionally receptive and relatively permissive regulatory environment in Vancouver meets with a growing demand from Korea, this opportunity structure has enabled a great deal of economic activities ranging in scale from small, home-based businesses owned and operated by a single person to medium-sized firms. In the process, global business networks are emerging that focus on recruiting, serving and educating international students worldwide. The larger firms often reach beyond the primary market of Korea. The owner of one of the most successful education agencies in Vancouver explains the scope of her business:

Currently, we have in total 22 branches [that is, offices]. Korea has the most branches, a total of 8. Among the others, 6 are in Vancouver and 2 of them are in other Canadian cities, Toronto and Calgary. We also have one in Mexico and 2 in Japan. Basically, our international branches collect students and send them here [to study in Vancouver]. Locally, we provide a variety of services that students need here.

(Ms. Lee, an education agency operator)

The story of Ms. Lee, who initially came to Vancouver as a visa student in 1991 and started her business from her small downtown apartment, is a telling reminder of how globalization actually works. Globalization is not only led by multi-national corporations but also by these small entrepreneurs. Her company has operated globally by trying to reach students around the world and recruit them to come to Vancouver. Another interviewee who worked for a Korean-owned ESL school shared a similar marketing strategy:

We started as a small ESL school in Surrey in 1996. I think we were one of the fastest growing schools in Vancouver. We opened two more campuses in downtown Vancouver in 1997. We have another campus that just opened in Toronto this year. [...] Marketing is important. We do traditional marketing [through education agencies] as well as our own. Although Korean students are our main customers, we also have our own marketing offices in Japan, China, and Brazil other than Korea. We also maintain business partnerships with 300 agencies in Korea.

(Ms. Park, an ESL school coordinator and marketing manager for Korean students)

Because of the nature of a business that recruits globally and serves international students in the local setting, it is important for these businesses to develop and maintain global partnerships. Mr. Chun, who has a business partner in Korea, explains this:

My partner in Korea used to be an international student in Vancouver. Upon return, I asked him to establish a branch office in Seoul, as I needed some help in recruiting students from Korea. We don't have many problems. But, since he is in Korea, he sometimes doesn't understand the real situation in Vancouver. He lacks English capacity so has limited access to the information. I think those are some challenging issues. Instead, he has a very good network in Korea so that he can contribute to our transnational business. So, it is a very helping relationship to each other.

(Mr. Chun, an education agency operator)

The scope and scale of the transnational partnership varies depending on the type and size of the business. During field research, I found three distinctive styles of transnational business partnerships for Vancouver's international education agencies. First, a head office is located in Vancouver and expands its business to different Canadian cities and/or other countries, including Korea. Most well-established Korean-owned agency firms in Vancouver fall into this category. The businesses in this category are operated

independently under the consortium style of business management, even if they share the same business title between branches in different cities and countries. Second, a head office is located in Korea and a Vancouver branch is set up later. Among my 31 Korean business professional informants, there was only one case that fell into this category. Although the manager of the education agency is an immigrant in Vancouver, her salary and the office management costs are paid by the Seoul head office. Finally, abundant in numbers, there are many small-scale operations based in home offices that mainly depend on close social networks. Their business partnerships are not as formalized as the businesses in the other two categories. This category includes home-stay operators and home office agents who started their business to help a friend, family or relative. Overall, it seemed apparent that the educational agency businesses in Vancouver have been largely developed by immigrants.

Some agencies share a business title and do marketing together (mainly through managing a united company website). The cost and profit is also shared between Korean and Canadian operations. However, nearly all businesses were operated as independent enterprises, which suggests a high level of economic fragmentation in terms of ownership, profit sharing and network strategies. Mr. Chun, who asked his close friend to establish and operate his partnership agency in Seoul, for example, explained how he shares the profit with his business partner, and in the process, why the close friendship becomes so critical for this flexible business relationship.

[In terms of profit sharing] there is no fixed rate for that. We usually talk over and reach an agreement. Since we are close friends, we haven't had much problem with that. (Mr. Chun, an education agency operator in Vancouver)

C-3. Network, Network, Network: The socio-cultural embeddedness of immigrant entrepreneurship

As Mr. Chun's story implies, it is critically important to build trust and mutual understanding between partner agencies. During my field research in both Korea and Canada, I often found that the key to a successful partnership was the existence of close friendships or familiar networks. The previous literature on immigrant entrepreneurship has shown ample evidence that these network strategies are prevalent everywhere in immigrant businesses. Immigrants often rely on social networks and cultural linkages in establishing and maintaining businesses in their new home (Light and Gold 2000). This is also the case for transnational entrepreneurs in the international education sector. Mr. Ahn, an international education agency owner who has three branch offices in Vancouver and Toronto, explained how his personal networks have been utilized and are critically important to maintain his business successfully over time:

MJK: How important are personal linkages? Do you have any partner agencies that you have never known personally before?

Mr. Ahn: Yes, of course I have. But mostly, even in these cases, our business relationship becomes closer when we find that we went to the same school in the past or something. Sometimes, friends who studied here [in Canada] went back to Korea and started to work in an agency. Those are the cases that we can maintain long term business partnerships. You know, otherwise it would be difficult. Some of them are people who used to work for me as well. They went back to Korea and worked for

some companies. They have co-workers and friends whose relatives want to study in Canada. Then, they might as well recommend me, because they know that I am trustworthy. So, this business is all about connections. That is not something you can build up in a day. It should be built up on the basis of good personal relations and trust.

(Mr. Ahn, an international education agency owner in Vancouver)

Mr. Kong, an ESL school coordinator also told me that:

Of course, there exist some stronger bonds between people with similar backgrounds or characteristics. In that case, it is easier to do business together. For example, I am from the southern part of Korea. I found that people from the same region became friendlier to me. I can't say that is all, but an important part of doing business though. But still, it helps.

(Mr. Kong, a Korean student coordinator and marketing manager who works for a Korean-owned ESL school in Vancouver)

This point is emphasized by almost all interviewees in this study. Regardless of the differences in type and size of their businesses, careful management of existing business networks and developing new ones were considered to be the biggest challenges for them. The strategies to overcome these challenges are not unique either. All the international program managers and coordinators of ESL schools and public school boards told me that they regularly visit Korea in order to attend international education fairs. During their visit to Korea, they always meet (potential) partner agents in person to build and assure stronger business relationships. It is interesting to find that, even on the global scale, international education businesses still rely heavily on face-to-face meetings and personalized

relationships. As Nigel Thrift (1996:214) argued in his edited book, *Spatial Formations*, despite the use of innovative electronic telecommunications, global space has become “more social, more reflexive and more interpretive.”

Ms. Smith, the international program director of a community college in Vancouver, for example, mentioned that “certainly in a country like Korea, where I’m in Korea three times a year, we do not have a single agent in Korea whose office I haven’t been to.” Mr. Gu, who is a Korean-Canadian himself, elaborates on his face-to-face networking strategy and reflects on its importance in relation to the cultural way of doing business with Korean agencies. His comments hint in a reason that most agencies and private ESL and trade schools are centered in the downtown district of Vancouver rather than any other part of the city or the province. As a central business district, downtown Vancouver has locational advantages in attracting more businesses and consumers to the area. In downtown, they can maximize opportunities for daily contacts with their business partners and consumers.⁵¹

Mr. Gu: We get to rely on local agencies more. Communication is direct and fast. When a school is small like ours, it is hard to deal with the agencies in Korea. However, because Korea has been the largest market, I can’t completely ignore the agencies there. So, I am planning to go to Korea this October to meet agency people and promote our school.

MJK: Can you do email or phone marketing?

Mr. Gu: In our culture, we have to meet and make conversation face to face. After the

⁵¹ Because most international students use public transportation as their mode of travel, good accessibility is an important factor for these schools and agencies when they choose their business location. Many ESL student informants told me that they used to live in downtown or nearby the direct bus routes to downtown.

meeting, I can do follow-ups through emailing. But, at least once, we have to meet in person. For local agencies, I frequently visit different agencies to build up a personal network. Since there are so many schools and similar programs, you have to be a good friend to the agencies to yield a better business outcome.

The indirect benefit of a social network is its influence in attracting more Korean international students to Canadian institutions. According to my interviewees, many admitted that the strong presence of a Korean-Canadian community in Vancouver has been helpful in their indirect marketing. Ms. Smith, the international education program director of a community college in Vancouver, speaks on this point:

Ms. Smith: Our biggest source of students is through word of mouth. On our surveys and our applications, when we ask students how did they learn about our college, was it through an education fair, through an advertisement or through an agent or a Canadian education centre, the majority, about 60 or 65% of our students tell us that they learn about us from a friend or a family member.

MJK: So it could be like Korean families or relatives or even friends [who are] already here and they learned about our college and then recommended the school to...

Ms. Smith: Absolutely, in fact, that's exactly what happens. We have many permanent resident families, and when their friends and families say, "OK, I want to come to Vancouver to study English, where would I go?" This college has a brand recognition that a family here would probably say, "The XXX college is the biggest college for that kind of training"

C-4. The Other Side of Ethnic Embeddedness

Accounting for both the direct and indirect contributions of Korean immigrants to the growth of the education industry, it seems obvious that their strong presence has been effective in attracting international students from Korea and other parts of the world. Benefiting from the steady flows of students and visitors from Korea and their strong networking strategies, the visibility of Korean immigrant businesses in the industry has become larger than ever. In terms of the educational agency businesses in downtown Vancouver, it has become nearly an ethnic niche economy. Ms. Yoon, who established her tourist agency business in downtown Vancouver in 1994 and has expanded her business to include educational services as well, told me that she once relied on the mainstream market but now primarily serves the Korean market.

Our previous office was in the same building where the embassy was [in downtown]. So, embassy people and Canadians were our main customers. But, more and more Korean people come to Vancouver and they now take up the major proportion of our business. They generate enough business so that we don't even need a Canadian staff. Another reason is that marketing for Canadian travelers is more difficult and the business with them leaves us a very small profit.

Mainly dealing with education agencies in downtown Vancouver, Ms. Goh adds that the representation of Korean-owned agencies has become more significant over time.

I had to visit as many agencies as possible to advertise our school. Since I am responsible for the Korean market, I get to meet all the Korean agencies. The share of Korean agents in Vancouver is quite large, accounting for about 70% in all. But, in fact, most Korean agencies have Japanese agents who serve Japanese students. So, I

would say that the real representation of Korean agencies is much larger, reaching almost 90%.

Examining the career background of the business professional interviewees, all of them had some experience studying in Vancouver or other parts of the English-speaking world. In addition, all but one had some working experience in international education or had a close relationship with someone who was already working in the industry. Korean ESL school coordinators often find their work through social networks, and many Korean education agency owners learn how to establish and maintain their businesses from other Korean business owners. Considering the degree of clustering and the incubation effect, this small part of the Korean-led economy can be regarded as a form of an ethnic niche economy.⁵² It seems obvious that ethnic embeddedness has been helpful for Korean business professionals in Korea as well as Canada by expanding the share of the Korean market in Vancouver's international education industry and by strengthening the representation of Korean entrepreneurship.

Not so obvious has been the inner struggle among those ethnic-oriented businesses that mainly target international students with Korean and Japanese backgrounds.⁵³ As Roger

⁵² Light and Gold (2000:23) suggest differentiating an 'ethnic controlled economy' from an 'ethnic niche economy' by arguing that not all ethnic niches yield an ethnic-controlled economy. In this project, I instead follow Waldinger's (2001) general usage of ethnic niche economy referring to the significant clustering of people with same ethnic background in a certain occupation or certain sector of an industry.

⁵³ According to a special report on international students in Canada by CIC (2003), the highest source of international student stock is China, where most students come to Canada to pursue either post-secondary or

Waldinger (1995) cautioned earlier, this embeddedness of ethnic businesses can have baneful effects. In his case study of New York's ethnic construction industry, Waldinger observed that the economic advantages of ethnic ties tend to work as barriers for outsiders. It is also true that while Korean-owned and managed educational institutions have been somewhat successful in reaching beyond their ethnic market, the strong social and cultural embeddedness of the businesses prevented other immigrant or ethnic groups becoming active in the industry. Although I expected a strong coalition of ethnic business relationships that were closely connected across international borders, I found that there were widespread feelings of mistrust and disappointment among Korean immigrant entrepreneurs towards their partners in Korea as well as their co-ethnic consumers in the industry.

As the market has matured rapidly over the past decade, growing competition between the agencies and schools over a limited number of consumers seemed unavoidable. While it is often critical for local educational agencies in Vancouver to have partner agencies in Korea in order to recruit students, I found that the Seoul agency operators tend to have less enthusiastic attitudes towards their partners and competitors in Vancouver. Ms. Lee describes the uneasy relationship over serving customers:

post-graduate degrees. With sufficient language proficiency to access highly specified information related to their subjects and educational institutions, students in this group generally do not need the information service that is provided by small education agencies. They are also unlikely to seek a home-stay option as it is more expensive than campus housing and other long-term housing options outside campus. Instead, these services are typically demanded by post-secondary ESL learners and K-12 education seekers who are mainly from South Korea, Japan and Latin American countries.

The reason we maintain our partnership with local agencies is to take care of our students studying in Vancouver. But, once students settle in Vancouver, they get to rely more on local agencies. So, later on, we found that we are losing our customers and even potential customers to our partner.

(Ms. Lee, Canadian market manager of an international education agency in Seoul, Korea.)

Ms. Park, who once took an ESL program in Vancouver and now operates a small international education agency in downtown Seoul, told me that she has maintained a more successful business relationship with her Canadian friend. For her, the convergence of ethnic ties and her business does not work too well. Rather, she benefits from a more egalitarian business partnership with her friend who does not have a Korean background. When Ms. Park deals with Canadian home stay families, she told me that the Canadian way of doing business works better for her.

In terms of profit, we share completely half and half with her. She takes good care of students, checking around each home-stay family. She is always sending me pictures of those homes and the everyday lives of students. Since she is a Canadian, she is not afraid of making complaints to home owners on behalf of students. For my Korean partner, it is not like that. He takes a bigger share of the profit by arguing that he has more work to do over there. It is hard to argue with him because he is much older than me. When students face troubles, he can hardly fight for students. He is a typical Korean immigrant who is passive and reluctant to make complaints. I prefer working with my Canadian friend because I could see a different attitude coming out from some Canadian home stay families.

(Ms. Park, a former student in Vancouver and an education agency owner in Seoul, Korea)

Those who work for private ESL schools in downtown Vancouver were the most cynical about the business relationships with Korean educational agencies, particularly with the local agencies in Vancouver.

A real irony is that the flexible commission policy is only applicable to the Korean market. In the case of Japanese agencies, we don't have to make difficult deals and play around the commission all the time. Once we became partners, they consistently send us students without asking more and more. They are happy with a certain amount of commission. And that's it. That's mainly because, not like Korean agencies, they are charging students a good amount of service fees. So, they don't have to bother us for more profit making. I just don't understand why Korean agencies do not charge the proper amount of service fees to students and instead want to deal with us all the time. Sometimes, it is really annoying.

(Mr. Gu, Korean student coordinator of a downtown private ESL school)

This uneasy relationship over ethnic trust and cultural understanding is often most predictable between educational service providers and their clients. Most local international education agencies owned and operated by Koreans do not charge service fees to clients. Instead, they survive on commissions from various types of private schools and several public schools that selectively pay commissions. Referring to the thorny issue over commissions between local agencies and schools, many small agency owners complained about Korean consumers' attitudes. Mr. Bai's comment was representative:

To Korean customers, it is very hard to make them believe social networks and services are payable. They often complain to me how I can charge money for a referral service. They want me to drive around and help them for the sake of

friendship and ethnic bonds. Running this kind of business, this kind of mentality has been very hard to deal with.

(Mr. Bai, an international education agency owner in Vancouver)

D. The Messiness of Globalization

For the last two decades, the rapid growth of the international education industry in Vancouver has often been praised by media and political leaders. Little understood, however, has been how industrial growth has actually been led by small business people and how this form of globalization has affected the everyday lives of ordinary migrants between Seoul and Vancouver. To answer these questions, I examined how immigrant entrepreneurs have become involved with the industry and played significant roles in promoting Vancouver as a global destination of international education. Their transnational business activities were often buttressed by social networks and familiar knowledge based on co-ethnic culture. The socially and culturally embedded nature of the industry, however, reveals that such benefits can easily turn into disadvantages, generating rather unexpected baneful effects as well.

Beyond the concerns associated with an ethnic economy, I also found that there are particular aspects that call for imminent policy attention. The seemingly lucrative and smooth growth of the international education industry around the world has been associated with many messier outcomes at local scales. This point is well situated within critical scholarship, especially arising from a group of scholars who study transnationalism (e.g., Bailey 2001). They argue that taken-for-granted categories often conceal important social

processes behind globalization. While I emphasized the role of governments in creating a favourable political economic structure for the development and growth of the industry, it is equally important to recognize that many aspects of the industry have come to defy the traditional categories and regulatory practices imposed by states.⁵⁴

First, traditional definitions of migrant status such as forced vs. voluntary migration or temporary vs. permanent have become increasingly blurred as migrants are strategically employing different statuses when they cross borders. In this case study, I found two especially relevant aspects of this blurring of categories. Due to the six-month visa exemption policy between Korea and Canada granted in 1994, many international students now can come to Canada without a student visa. According to one international education agency owner, the proportion of non-visa students can be as high as 50 percent during the summer season. Clearing immigration customs at the Canadian border, they are categorized as temporary visitors or tourists. In fact, they are students as well as tourists who take a short-term language program in one downtown ESL school during weekdays and take a ferry to Victoria for sightseeing on the weekends.⁵⁵ Currently, the government of Canada does not keep an exit record of international students (or anyone else). This makes it hard for the Canadian government to trace the actual numbers and activities of international students both within and outside Canada. Another irony is that although the relaxation of the visa exemption policy has created a positive environment for the rapid expansion of the

⁵⁴ Although these issues are not necessarily problems, they hold significant implications for policy making.

⁵⁵ This point is further investigated in Chapter 7 focusing on the educational and living experiences of international students and their families in Canada.

industry, it has created a problem for workers in the industry. Ms. Chun, who is operating a partner agency of Vancouver's education agency in Seoul, mentioned that:

Visa exemption provides freedom to students. Within 6 months, they can change schools and visa status, everything. Although the system generated a big market for us, it also became a huge headache for our work. Refund requests are so common. We have to work out with schools with the thorny issue. Because students can change their schools and visa status during their stay in Vancouver, the local agencies try hard to attract the students who are already there and even steal the business from other agencies. It has caused enormous competition among agencies and senseless discount wars. After all, the agencies are hurt by those unruly activities. (Ms. Chun, an education agency operator in Seoul, Korea)

Second, another visa category, between temporary and permanent, has provoked a question of clarity. During my field research, I observed several cases of transition from status of student to that of permanent resident, and in other cases, intentions to do so. Of the 21 Korean-Canadian business professionals interviewed, 9 individuals reported that they originally came to Canada as either international students (5) or temporary workers (4). Another immigrant education agency owner, Mr. Cho, told me that he was not a student himself but sent his children first to study in Vancouver and then applied for permanent residency afterwards. Now, operating his own business in Vancouver as a business immigrant, Mr. Cho noted that this is not an unusual thing to happen for transnational families.

A fair number of people have shown interest in staying in Canada permanently. Once they are here, they get to know that Vancouver is a beautiful place to live. And, they can save the cost for education. As international students, you pay \$12,000/year but once you become a permanent resident, you don't have to pay. In many cases, fathers keep staying in Korea making and sending money here. Mother and children can live here taking advantage of free education. Also, if you raise your son here, you don't have to send him to the Korean army [which is mandatory for men in Korea]. So, in many ways, I think they find beneficial aspects of earning permanent residency rights.

(Mr. Cho, an international education agency owner in downtown Vancouver)

A third form of blurring has been most noticeable in the industry of various information-provision services. As hinted in the first section, more and more businesses began to provide clients mixed sets of services that cross the boundaries between education, tourism and immigration. Education agencies typically provide highly personalized service, including school placement, visa processing, air ticket purchase, sightseeing information, home-stay arrangement and various degrees of information provision related to immigration. While the term 'international education industry' implies a coherent and contained form of economic activity, the reality is much messier. Observing these agencies, it is hard to discern if they are education institutions, travel agencies, real estate agents or immigration consultants, because in many cases they are all of these things. Among business professionals, this is often referred to as the outcome of severe competition between agencies. Ms. Chun, who studied in Vancouver and is currently operating her own education agency in Seoul, speaks of her observation on Vancouver's agencies:

Vancouver's education agencies are so unique in that they provide everything and anything to students. They try so hard to reach out to students. Providing free

computer access is so basic. So, every agency has facilities for that. Some agencies even sell Kim-chi [the most important staple side dish for Koreans] and provide hair cut services. Most agency reps need to be young and joyful so that they can be friends with students. In Vancouver, I was particularly close to one agency owner. She has tried so hard to build good relationships with students. At one point, the agency started an English conversation club. This business strategy became so popular among other agencies as well. She invited a good teacher and paid good attention to the quality of the conversation club.

(Ms. Chun, an education agency owner in Seoul, Korea)

The last form of blurring is the most difficult to discuss as it involves an emerging system of an informal economy. The last quotation by Ms. Chun illustrates how pseudo ESL schools have begun to emerge in downtown Vancouver and gain popularity among students. Officially, however, they are unregistered educational programs (closer to private tutoring) and unregulated by the government. Investigating the business activities of educational agencies, schools and home-stay providers, I could sense that a significant proportion of the money is exchanged without documentation and clear taxation. This is especially true of the home-stay business sector. Most home owners charge fees for room and board without issuing receipts or declaring their income at the end of the tax year. Minimal paperwork is involved between students and home-stay providers, as money is often directly transferred from Korea. It is interesting to note that several government sponsored research reports that examine the economic impact of the international education industry fully recognize that this type of business generates a significant amount of income for the province.⁵⁶ With this

⁵⁶ For example, the Vancouver Economic Development Commission (2003) reported that ESL students in Vancouver pay about \$500 million in tuition and accommodation costs. BC Progress Board (2005) estimated that about two-thirds of the \$2 billion generated annually by all ages of international students cover the cost of

growth of the industry, it is still true that the bulk of economic activities are operated as fully registered parts of the formal economy. However, parts of the industry exist more informally as well. Mr. Lim, who works as an education agent, guardian and tutor in his home office, shared his view on this informal economy:

In my understanding, those who are running a business with a business license need to pay GST. But, so many people are doing the work without a license. I think people in the education industry are supposed to pay GST because the work includes a variety of services. But, no one does that. Money for home-stay, guardianship, consulting fees pass around without GST calculated. I got commission from school boards. But, on the check, there is nothing written but the amount of commission. Probably, I have to calculate the GST by myself every time, but I would be the only one doing that. [I] wish there were proper guidelines... As I still have a business license for my trade business, I have been paying a little bit of tax for the guardian and tutoring work. Still, I can't say that I have been 100 percent accurate for the amount. I have been paying just out of my guilty feeling. Since I educate and raise my children here, I think I should pay at least some.

housing, food and leisure activities. Similarly, RKA Inc. consulting company (2006) reported to the BC Ministry of Advanced Education that international students who attend public post-secondary educational institutions (around 28,000 students enrolled) spend an average of \$538 per month for accommodation. (Unless noted, all figures are annual.)

E. Discussion: Still a promising story to tell?

In the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship, many scholars have observed that the enterprises established and operated by immigrants and ethnic minorities are generally found in the competitive sectors of the economy such as restaurants, grocery stores, laundry shops, construction and taxi transportation (e.g., Li 2001). These businesses typically deal with a geographically constrained market serving mostly local consumers and/or co-ethnic populations. They are rather small in size and generate low profits and incomes with higher rates of failure. With the precarious nature of this economy, many ethnic/immigrant businesses have been categorized into the second tier of the economy. Immigrant businesses in the international education industry are, however, considered to be rather different from their older counterparts. First, education is one of the core sectors of the knowledge economy, a sector rarely associated with immigrants and ethnic minority entrepreneurship before. Second, their market is not only local but crosses international boundaries, linking consumers around the world and local educational institutions, and accommodating international demand at local settings.

In fact, the owners and managers of educational institutions and agencies often voiced a degree of pride in their business, which they see as more of a respected vocation than the businesses traditionally owned by Korean immigrants such as grocery, fast food and dry cleaning shops. Ms. Choi, an education agency owner, for example, said: “I am proud of what I am doing. Helping students is a spiritually fulfilling profession.” However, considering their economic return as an ethnic economy, the picture is rather grim. In the past two decades, only a small number of Korean-owned agencies and schools have

survived several economic downturns and emerged as serious global market players. While a few have been successful in diversifying their market around the world, the majority of small agencies and educational institutions are still strongly dependent on the local market and on the ethnically confined markets of Korean or Japanese students. As shown above, this has created a severely competitive environment for small business owners and has made these businesses vulnerable to external changes. The high failure rates of the businesses in Vancouver demonstrate this point (see Table 6-1). Korean immigrant entrepreneurs have enabled the process of globalizing Canadian education from below, but it is hard to confirm that their experiences can be told as a success story. Some responded that the real problem has derived from endogenous factors of Korean ethnic businesses. I argue that there are three equally important structural factors to consider for business professionals in the industry and for policy makers.

First, while the industry as a whole has generated significant economic benefits to the local economy, there are many indications that the industry will not be a prominent sector for small entrepreneurship in the long run. The Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s and the outbreak of SARS caused a sharp decline in the number of students coming to Canada. Events like 9/11 have also affected the overall attitude towards international students from different parts of the world. Closely affected by the political economic climate of the U.S., the appreciation of the Canadian currency in recent months has become a major concern for transnational families and international students in Canada. These unpredictable and seemingly disparate events make it difficult to assess the long term health of Vancouver's international education industry.

Second, the market for international education between Korea and Canada has been created and grown so far on the basis of a neo-liberal approach. Relaxed currency and visa regulations stimulated the flows of international students. In general, the application of passive regulations on the industry has contributed to its rapid growth. However, weak regulations on quality assurance of academic programs and various forms of education related service provisions have resulted in a high number of unqualified businesses. This is the case for both Korea and Canada. Ms. Kong, a marketing manager of a Korean education agency in Seoul, mentioned that, in the long run, this can not help anyone in the business.

Like many other businesses, this international education industry is quite vulnerable to economic downturn. But, most of all, the business is not really regulated by government. There is no quality requirement for the sector. The sector is simply overcrowded. I heard that there are about 1,000 international education agencies listed in the business directory of Korea. Even in this 14-story-building, there are 7 agencies operating. With so many competitors, agencies get involved in price wars. I think this is not good for anybody. I heard that this is quite similar in Canada as well.

(Ms. Kong, a marketing manager of Korean education agency in Seoul)

Finally, I would like to return to the question of why so many Korean immigrants become involved with the industry in the first place. During my research, many interviewees told me that their entry into the field was quite accidental as they helped their nephews, nieces and children of their friends study in Vancouver. However, an equally large number of people observed that the limited labour market opportunities for Korean immigrants are to blame. Those who arrived as skilled workers could not get their credentials recognized fully

by professional organizations in Canada and they were shunned by potential employers. With a lack of local knowledge about business regulations and systems in Canada, those who came under the investor and entrepreneur programs tended to choose a low-risk business like an education agency business at home. When a few successful individuals began to dominate the market, there was little room left for petty entrepreneurs. When I asked informants whether they were satisfied with their work and income, most of them answered negatively. Ms. Bai, who feels that her office work is not any better than more traditional Korean immigrant jobs, complained:

Sitting in the office, meeting with people and working on the computer throughout the day..... It all looks like I am a white collar worker. But, sometimes, I think that my situation is a lot worse than that of the small greengrocer across the street. The profit is so small. Dealing with a variety of people is not too easy. Some treat me as a taxi driver [when she does airport pick up] or a maid [when she takes care of a student's mess].

(Ms. Bai, an education agency operator in downtown Vancouver)

Korean immigrant entrepreneurship in the international education industry will probably be seen as another form of second tier and ethnic niche activity in the end. All these vulnerable and negative aspects of the industry require us to think about broader implications for migration, settlement and labour market policies. For the last decade and a half, Canadian policy makers and scholars have been especially attentive to the economic downturn that recent immigrants have experienced in the Canadian labour market. Many suggest that the system of foreign credential recognition needs to be improved for new immigrants (e.g.,

Bauder 2003, Li 2001). Others reach the conclusion that there needs to be more extensive technical and emotional support for newcomers who wish to retrain themselves in the Canadian way and learn about the Canadian system (e.g., Pratt 1999, Salaf et al. 2002). Among many solutions, some advise that the Canadian government needs to target a different pool of human resources (e.g., Collacott 2002, Wilson 2006). They emphasize how important it is to consider international students as a pool of future immigrants to Canada. This opinion is often preached by business professionals in the international education industry. In fact, the government of Canada has responded somewhat positively towards this policy option in recent years and has implemented several new policies. In Chapter 7, I will examine these policies, paying particular attention to various socio-economic aspects of the transition from temporary to permanent migration. This will be done through testimonials of international students and their families. Analyzing their studying and living experiences in Vancouver, I also reconsider their identity formation in the spaces of global education.

CHAPTER 7

Consuming Canadian Education:

International student experiences of migration, education and living between Seoul and Vancouver

A. Introduction

B. Cultural Logic of Consuming Global Education

B-1. Cultural Capital and Spatial Mobility

B-2. Why Study Abroad?: Three stages of the decision-making process

B-3. The Geographically Specific Value of International Education

C. Transnational Spaces of International Education

C-1. Returnee Students in Seoul

C-2. International Education and Transnational Family Experiences

C-3. Transnational Space of Identity Formation

D. Discussion and Policy Recommendations

A. Introduction

Now we are living in a global world. Dealing with international markets, many Korean companies now want to hire workers with good communication skills. It has become very critical to understand the other's living culture as well as business culture. When the companies hire a person with experience studying abroad, I don't think they are expecting the person to be just a fluent English speaker. They'd like to see if the person has some understanding of the other culture. Thus, I think this kind of labour market atmosphere in Korea has made so many students take English programs overseas and pursue real living experiences there.

(Mr. Chang, who works for a trading company in Seoul, Korea)

For Mr. Chang, who was once an international student in Vancouver, learning English and obtaining knowledge of Western culture in Canada were necessary steps to take for his career development. He is now working for an international trading company and frequently travels between the U.S. and Korea. After one year of study in Vancouver, he did not consider himself a fluent English speaker, but the experience gave him some confidence to face foreigners without anxiety. As Mr. Chang noted, many Korean companies now think that learning English means more than improving their capacity to speak another language; it means gaining the ability to understand other cultures. His experience explicitly illustrates how achieving a form of human capital (studying English) can be coupled with cultural capital gain (knowing Western culture). International students believe they will accumulate cultural capital through consuming Western cultures. Their expectation is that this capital gain will eventually benefit Korean companies in the increasingly competitive international market.

I argue, however, that this seemingly simple objective of international students is accompanied by a complex process of production, consumption and reproduction of cultural capital. For example, we need to ask why Korean students specifically choose Canada rather than any other Western country as the destination for their studies. In that regard, why has Vancouver been more attractive to them? Are they merely passive learners of “superior” Western culture, or do they carry significant agency as powerful global capitalists? How do they utilize their cultural capital? What kinds of roles do international

students and their families play in shaping and reshaping the Canadian education industry? I probe these questions by exploring identity formation of international students through their everyday activities. I also consider how the process of consuming Canadian education is spatially bounded and shaped by social networks.

In chapters 5 and 6, I examined the interplay between structure and agency in the growth of the international education industry. This chapter explores the consumption side of the same process. Drawing upon interview data with 19 international students and 6 of their mothers, I explore the transnational experiences of students between two politico-cultural societies. The remaining parts of the chapter consist of three main sections. First, by probing the reasons for studying abroad, I explore the cultural logic of consuming Canadian education. This involves considering why the commodification of education and culture is seen as necessary and how its usage has become more important than ever in a newly emerging global economy. In the second section, I examine the ways in which Canadian education has become institutionalized and embodied as ‘cultural capital’ by Korean students and their parents. I am particularly interested in how their transnational identity formations cross multiple boundaries of place, ethnicity and culture. Finally, by reflecting upon the narratives of migration provided by both international students and their parents, I consider the policy implications for these questions: how can we improve the welfare of international students and families, and how can we further improve the industry and make it more beneficial to Canadian society?

B. Cultural Logic of Consuming Global Education

B-1. Cultural Capital and Spatial Mobility⁵⁷

In the past few decades, we have witnessed the intensified commodification of nearly every form of good or service with the advance of global capitalism (Nash 2000). Especially in the most advanced post-industrial economies, cultural competence has taken on significance as an economic resource. From high culture to street fashion, cultural practices are invested, developed and put into the market for sale just like any other consumer good. As I demonstrated in previous chapters, education has become a commodity, and Canadian educational programs (products) are widely sold in the international market. I emphasized that the developmental process of the Canadian education industry is in fact a form of globalization and highlights the often hidden roles of different players in the market. Turning analytical focus on the consumption side of the process, I find that it is important to examine the ways in which Canadian education is selected, consumed and reproduced by international students and their families. This set of inquiries necessitates critical assessment of migration and living experiences that are bound to specific conditions of mobility and spatiality.

Bourdieu (1984) argued that consumption preferences in a so-called *culture of consumption* are closely related to the process of social reproduction. What you consume is what you are, Bourdieu claims, and is often what you will become. In the process of learning and practicing culture, cultural resources are therefore consumed, invested and accumulated. By

⁵⁷ This discussion of the flexible accumulation of cultural capital is partially drawn from Kwak and Hiebert (2007).

accumulating cultural capital, members of the middle class have sought to reproduce their social status and, in the process, have tacitly excluded others (Waters 2006). Such cultural capital tends to maintain a classic form and value that is often transferable through time and place (e.g., high culture). While Bourdieu explains the process of accumulation in close relation to the hegemony of power in society, Zukin (1990) and Ong (1999) modify the theory, challenging a rigid interpretation of capital accumulation. They argue that, in certain contexts, cultural capital becomes 'elastic' and 'flexible' as resources are negotiated and reproduced involving different actors. Following Bourdieu's rigid treatment of cultural capital, immigrants and ethnic minorities have often been viewed only as bearers of inherited culture and traditional values. I argue that immigrants, international students and temporary visitors can be viewed as flexible consumers/capitalists who actively seek out and learn other experiences from a foreign culture and utilize them, mixing them with their own knowledge base.

In Waters' (2006) reading of Bourdieu, cultural capital exists in three forms: first, academic institutions grant diplomas and degrees that can be seen as 'institutionalized' capital; second, capital is 'embodied' through the process of being obtained, attributed and characterized by individuals; and last, such capital can also be 'objectified' in material forms (e.g., books, music and art forms). In her case study of Hong Kong migrant students, Waters (2006) demonstrated how Asian middle-class families were able to accumulate a more valuable form of cultural capital by obtaining a Western university degree. Upon their return to Hong Kong, the returnee graduates were able to gain easier access to good jobs. Their skills and qualification are well received not only because they are competitive but

also because they carry the symbolic value of cultural capital (a Western university degree). Their transnational social networks also played an important role. This example shows how the hegemony of class can be reproduced through cultural capital as Bourdieu discussed.

Focusing solely on the social reproduction of cultural capital easily demonstrates the rigid quality of a Western degree as a more valuable form of cultural capital. It is equally important, however, to scrutinize the process of ‘embodiment’ and ‘reproduction’ of a Canadian degree. The hierarchical relationship between the assumed superior Western cultural resources and inferior cultural resources of Asian migrants needs to be deconstructed through the agency of migrants who are spatially conscious and network driven. In that regard, Waters (2006) highlights the importance of place-based transnational social networks in this process. This chapter adds to her discussion of a geographically sensitive account of cultural capital by examining the case of Korean students and their families who choose to consume overseas education for specific purposes and within changing political-economic contexts. Beyond their consumer roles, I also explore the ways in which international students and families have come to play an important role in reshaping the Canadian education industry.

B-2. Why Study Abroad?: Three stages of the decision-making process

Between Seoul and Vancouver, I interviewed 19 Korean international students and 6 of their mothers: ten short-term ESL program students; nine full-time undergraduate and graduate students (6 undergraduate and 3 graduate students); and 6 of their mothers (2

mothers in Korea and 4 geese mothers⁵⁸ in Vancouver). All the ESL students were met in Seoul after finishing their short-term study (3 months to 1 year) to discuss their learning and living experiences in Vancouver. All the university and graduate students were met in Vancouver. The six undergraduate students told me that they first came to Vancouver as high school students and were enrolled in programs for between three and eleven years (in many cases this included several programs taken sequentially). The graduate students who participated in my study had spent much less time in Canada, typically two years. Two mothers whom I met in Seoul sent their children to Vancouver for short-term programs (3 months and 6 months). The other four geese mothers living with their children in Vancouver had various plans for a longer stay, between two years and permanent residency.

When I asked my interviewees why they decided to study abroad and particularly in Vancouver, Canada, I noticed that their answers were largely structured around a traditional model of migration that concerns push and pull factors. The push factors focused on negative aspects of Korean society and its educational system, and the pull factors involved considering Canada as a good destination for international education. Neo-classical economic approaches assert that international students actively weigh the pros and cons of studying abroad and the possible return of the human capital they acquire (e.g., Bojars 1989, Chen 2006). I found, however, that this binary approach conceals the complex process of

⁵⁸ In the context of educational migration and transnational family organization, the term 'geese mothers' refers to the mothers who are living with, and primarily responsible for, taking care of children in the absence of a father who works and lives in another country. The term is similar to the 'lone mother' of an astronaut family for Hong Kong Chinese migrants (Waters 2002).

their decision making. Analyzing their responses, I could see how social networks and cultural linkages work together as another set of important determining factors that are often transnational, involving various linkages between Seoul and Vancouver. In weighing the negative aspects of being educated in Korea and the positive return of studying abroad, Korean students and their parents in my study narrowed their choice to Vancouver, relying upon their social networks and cultural linkages. The role of mediators becomes critical as many informants choose Vancouver because someone they knew provided credible information and/or helped them settle. For those who did not have close social networks, Korean-Canadian agents played similar roles, negotiating cultural understanding with students and their families from Korea. Considering these factors, I identified three stages of the decision-making process: the decision to leave (push); the decision to choose Vancouver (pull); and the decision to utilize and rely on transnational social networks.

Similar to most East Asian countries, Korea is known to have a highly competitive and stressful educational system. In Korea, education is believed to be the only way to elevate one's social status. Reflecting this popular belief, the number of young people attending university has climbed from 40 percent to 86 percent in the past two decades (Wall Street Journal 2005). In Korea, there are over 350 universities and colleges. To be regarded as successful, however, students need to excel in standardized tests and enter one of the top three universities, known as 'SKY' (acronyms for Seoul National University, Korea University and Yeon Sei University). As one parent interviewee noted, 'reaching SKY' is not that easy. To enter these schools, students need to be ranked in the top five percent of their cohort. Evaluating students for university entrance has been highly controversial, and

the Korean Ministry of Education has frequently changed the method of evaluation. Most parents who had enrolled their children in elementary or high schools in Vancouver at the time of the interview mentioned that this was an important push factor in their decision to leave Korea. With the growing need for early English education, the highly stressful school environment in Korea was another reason for seeking overseas education. Mrs. Jung, who accompanied her grade-12 son and grade-10 daughter to Vancouver two years ago, spoke of her son's experience:

My son really didn't like the standardized and highly competitive education system in Korea. In his first year of high school, he had to study 'til 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. The result wasn't rewarding either. So my son wanted to leave Korea and study abroad. Respecting my son's decision, my husband and I began to talk about where to send him.

(Mrs. Jung, a mother of two international students in Vancouver)

In speaking about the public education system of Korea, Mrs. Lee's opinion was not too different from Mrs. Jung's. In the case of Mrs. Lee, sending her two sons abroad was also considered to be a cost-effective option. Because the cost of private education is climbing, mothers told me that sending children overseas can be slightly more expensive but a worthwhile investment.

Most close friends of our family have sent their children abroad. Mostly to the U.S., though. Anyway, I should say it was not a difficult decision to make from the beginning. In Korea, competition is so fierce that it is very hard to send your children to those top universities, those so-called SKY universities, and for girls, Ewha Woman's University. The cost of private education and extra curricular activities is so high that we might as well think about investing in international education. I didn't like the education style either. Education in Korea is not just about studying hard but

becoming a good exam taker. So, I didn't want to raise my children in this kind of environment. (Mrs. Lee, a mother of two international students in Vancouver)

Two broad pull factors of Canada as a study destination were mentioned. First, my informants recognized that Canada has many general advantages. Canada is known to be a beautiful and safe country. Located geopolitically close to the U.S., Canada is believed to share many cultural traits with American society. In Canada, Vancouver is preferred because of its natural beauty and geographical proximity to Korea. For many students, Vancouver is a great place to live and enjoy many natural amenities. For those who were considering the "geese family option," which requires at least one parent to travel frequently between Korea and Canada, Vancouver is a particularly attractive city to send their children. Mrs. Jung's remark illustrates the positive pull factors of Vancouver as a destination city:

Comparing the U.S. and Canada, we thought that the U.S. is far more dangerous to educate our son in. Vancouver seemed safer. Since there is no visa requirement for Koreans, I can spend several months here with my kids and travel back and forth. The weather is nicer than other parts of Canada. So after long contemplation with my husband, we decided Vancouver would be the location. Since we didn't have anybody here, we had to rely on an education agency's service. Through an internet search, I got some more information about Vancouver and I found one local agency in Vancouver, one that has a branch office in Korea. We paid everything in Korea.

(Mrs. Jung, a mother of two international students in Vancouver)

Secondly, Canada was chosen because of its good reputation for educational programs. Examined closely, however, it is interesting to see how Korean students and parents value

international education differently in relation to geographical location and level of study. For example, while obtaining English skills and other academic credentials from a Western country is generally well regarded back in Korea, Korean students and parents value American accents more than British. In Vancouver, different school districts are compared in relation to those of Seoul, and the west side of Vancouver has long been considered the 8th school district in Seoul. Many informants pointed out that Canada is particularly popular because of the higher standard of educational programs for younger (K-12) students. On the other hand, university students and post-graduate students had a different perspective. Most university students agreed that Canadian universities offered good programs with excellent scholarships. However, many of them complained that Canadian universities are undervalued among the general public and employers in Korea. In Korea, a second-tier state university in the U.S. is often regarded higher than a top Canadian university. The quality of institutions and possible return value of international education are largely shaped by existing social networks, educational agents and returned students who provide information to potential international students.

Social networks, education agents and other information providers proved to be important mediating factors. While most Korean students and parents recognized Canada as a good destination country, oftentimes social networks played a key role in settling on a destination city. Many mentioned that they had friends, relatives and/or acquaintances in Vancouver. The parents of younger students especially rely on these networks for information about the city, schools and the settlement process. As Mrs. Jung's remark hinted above, those who do not have anybody to rely on typically hire an agent to help them. In many cases, parents

utilize existing social networks in addition to hiring the professional services of an educational agency. Ms. Ahn, an international educational agent who helps place students in Canadian destinations, emphasized this point:

Dealing with my clients, I have hardly seen people who do not know anyone there in Vancouver. Usually, they have someone who can help them. That is especially the case for younger students' families. So, we process visas for them. Then, the family utilizes their personal network to enroll children in school and look for home-stay or a place to stay. That is so typical.

(Ms. Ahn, a Canadian market manager of an international education agency in Seoul, Korea)

While close social networks are always helpful for Korean students, weak ties are also helpful. Of the interviewees, all the university students who took ESL programs in Vancouver told me that they were able to establish some contacts before leaving for Vancouver. Although several students did not know anyone in the first place, they told me that it was easy to find someone who could share information about schools and accommodation. This was mainly done through referrals and/or internet forums. In Korea, the latter form of social networking has become increasingly popular, and a large number of returned students began to work as pseudo educational agents steering others toward Vancouver, which imparts an important structural advantage for the international education industry in Vancouver. In the virtual space of internet forums, former and potential international students gather and exchange hands-on information about schools, accommodation and travel. In addition to relying on educational agents, many students and parents told me that they have obtained a lot of useful information through such internet

forums.⁵⁹ For those students and parents who lack a direct social network in Vancouver, these internet forums play an indirect but seemingly unbiased mediator role in their decision-making. In the case of post-secondary students who pursue Master's or Doctoral degrees, this role was often played by the Korean alumni association and/or faculty members. Jessica, a Ph.D. student at UBC, told me that her experience of coming to Vancouver was rather unusual because many Korean students choose to go to a U.S. university where strong Korean social networks have been established.

Many people have asked the question. I think it was kind of accidental. When I applied for a Ph.D. program, UBC was the only Canadian school. The others were all U.S. schools. Usually, you get to choose a school where your friends were and are attending. Most of my friends go to a certain school in the U.S. [where there is a well-established Korean alumni association]. I was almost convinced to go there. As you have to consider the career path after graduation, you can't ignore the power of social networks. It is very important in Korea. But I was a bit tired of studying the same subject for so long. I did my B.A. and M.A. in Education Engineering, but I wanted to study something different. While searching, I got to know about this UBC program and corresponded with a faculty member here. So, that's how I applied here.

⁵⁹ As mentioned in the previous chapter, some of these forums even work in the format of a pseudo business, which is a virtual education agency making profit without a formal business licence. Several internet forums are known to be more successful than others, with active participation of students and other business partnerships. During my field work in Seoul, I participated in two off-line meetings of such internet forums. In both meetings, I could meet and talk to around 10 university students who wished to obtain useful information about studying in Vancouver. The forum organizers always brought their business partners to the meetings and introduced them as reliable service providers to the students. Using such services, students were often offered special discounts on agency fees and exchange rates. The typical partner businesses include private ESL schools, formal education agencies, travel agencies, moving companies and banks. Although it was hardly discussed in the meetings, I later learned from the business partners that they provide commissions to the forum organizers. Based on successful internet forum management, I have also seen one of the forum organizers establish his own education agency business in downtown Vancouver.

It was a new opportunity for me but also a risky choice too because I had no one I knew here....

(Jessica, an international student at UBC)

B-3. The Geographically Specific Value of International Education

In her discussion of the geographies of cultural capital, Waters (2006) demonstrates how a Western degree is recognized and utilized as cultural capital for Hong Kong graduates when they search for jobs upon their return. She examines the ways in which employers in the Hong Kong financial services industry valued the UBC (University of British Columbia) degree and how this value was mediated through transnational social networks like the UBC alumni association. The role of social networks can be significant as they influence the hiring process and further disseminate the reputation of certain institutions. In the case of Korean students, it is too early to see this kind of effect. The number of Korean students at UBC began to rise only in recent years, and its transnational alumni association has not been as firmly established as that of Hong Kong students. We may see a different picture in the near future, but so far American degrees have carried a higher value for Korean employers, leading Korean parents to highly regard Canadian education for their elementary and secondary school aged children but to send them to a U.S. university. For Korean students and parents, the value of international education is geographically specific depending on the level of study.

Because of a long political-economic relationship with the U.S., Korea has maintained strong academic linkages with American institutions. Since the 1960s, the U.S. has been the primary destination for Korean emigrants and international students. In Korea, the most well known and valued degrees are usually from U.S. universities. The faculty lists of

Korean universities are often dominated by U.S. degree holders. When I interviewed UBC students and mothers of younger students, their expectations of a Canadian education were limited. For them, Canada is a good place to learn English and enjoy a good natural environment. Canada is known for decent public education programs for elementary and secondary students; however, higher education in Canada is under-valued. The myth of the American degree was so prevalent in the minds of my interviewees that it affected their strategy of cultural capital accumulation. For example, their decision-making in terms of when and where to send their children revolved around how they utilized their education and financial capital and eventually turned them into a form of cultural capital.

According to a Korean newspaper article, the pattern of international education has become more transnational, that is, a process that involves steps in several countries (Vancouver Chosun Ilbo 2004a). If students are capable, the ideal academic track would be spending a year or two of elementary school in an English-speaking country, returning to Korea for three years of junior high school to enter the most competitive private high schools in Korea, and then applying to renowned American universities for undergraduate and graduate degrees. The eventual terminus of this transnational circuit of international education is most likely to be in Korea, where this type of mixed educational cultural capital can yield maximum returns. The following narrative also testifies to the nationally specific nature of cultural capital and the transnational circuit of Korean consumption of international education:

Most elementary students who accompany their mother spend about a year or two in Vancouver. When teenaged students decide to go to Canada, they are aiming to finish

university there. In most cases, however, Korean students want to go to American universities. You see, if you can't get in to UBC or U of T, the most famous ones in Canada, it is better for them to go to U.S. universities because of their name values back in Korea.

(Ms. Moon, an international education agent in Seoul, Korea)

C. Transnational Spaces of International Education

C-1. Returned Students in Seoul

When I asked students and mothers of young international students about their experiences of studying and living in Vancouver, their responses were quite mixed. Some described their time in Vancouver positively and with great enthusiasm, whereas others recollected it with disappointment. Those who were interviewed in Vancouver also gave me mixed responses. In many ways, preconceived notions about studying abroad and the lifestyle of Vancouver seem to greatly affect the ways in which students enjoyed their new opportunities as well as coped with unexpected challenges. The varying objectives, levels and durations of their study were also important ingredients in their assessment. Although it is hard to generalize from my small number of interviewees, I found that younger students who took a shorter program at the elementary level enjoyed their time in Vancouver most. Including these younger students, I will first focus on the experiences of the students who took a shorter program (from 3 months to one year) in Vancouver and returned to Seoul.

Without particularly high expectations, the young students were expected to enjoy the atmosphere of Canadian schooling and the friendship of local students. The parents of the children back in Korea often told me that their child(ren) easily blended into the new

environment and came back with enjoyable memories. Mrs. Paek, a mother of two elementary school students, sent both of her children to the U.S. and Canada at different times. Using summer and winter programs, she wanted her children to experience different school environments and cultures. Even though she did not accompany her children, she told me that she could sense how much her children enjoyed the experiences. She spoke of her son, who initially planned a three-month stay but later extended his stay for another three months in Vancouver:

He [her eleven-year-old son] just loved the school [in Vancouver]. He didn't want to come back to Korea, spending 6 months there. My son asked me to come to live in Canada (smile). I think he liked the school system, which is very understandable. He didn't have to go to *hakwon* [after-school programs]. He didn't have much homework to do. He could go to bed earlier. No wonder he liked the system a lot better than here.

(Mrs. Paek, a mother of two former international students)

On the other hand, the students who attended private ESL schools and expected to improve their English skills within a short period of time were the ones who often expressed various levels of disappointment. Their negative comments about Vancouver as a study destination were threefold: first, Vancouver turned out to be not Western enough; second, they did not have enough interactions with 'real Canadians;' lastly, the quality of private ESL education and other international education-related services was below their expectations. I found that these resentments were largely expressed about the unsettling gaps between imagination and reality as well as higher expectations and disappointment. Their imagination about a superior Western society and expectations of effortless gain in cultural capital did not match

reality. Interestingly, their frustrations were explicitly expressed with their socio-economic position as global consumers. When asked about his first impression of Vancouver, Mr. Han, who is now working in the film industry in Korea, openly expressed his disappointment. His idea of Vancouver as a Western city was shattered when he walked around downtown of Vancouver one day. He recalled:

At first, I thought that it [Vancouver] was good in a way. But, once I walked around the streets of [Vancouver] downtown, I realized that Vancouver is not really that glamorous. It wasn't the Western city that I have long dreamed of. What I saw were so many Asians on the street. I should admit that I was a bit disappointed.

(Mr. Han, a former ESL student in Vancouver)

Mr. Han's remarks reveal his faulty imagination about Vancouver as a Western city and a white society. In terms of its cultural representation, in fact, the international education industry of Vancouver has advertised and promoted the city as a multicultural destination where you can meet and make friends from all around the world. The reality is a bit different from the expectation because many recent international students have arrived from Asian countries. Unless a school is determined to maintain and control the diversity of the student population, the school is easily dominated by one or two Asian nationalities. Some ESL student interviewees admitted that they tried to avoid enrolling in the schools with a large proportion of co-ethnic students because they believed that such an environment would not be helpful for improving their English skills. This preference for diversity has made some school coordinators pay a higher commission to European agencies for bringing more 'white students' into their classrooms. Anthony, an international program coordinator

of a well-known ESL school in Vancouver admitted such a practice:

Well, we have a mix. As my staff probably told you, there are commissioned and non-commissioned agents, and in Korea, mostly non-commissioned. We would not pay money to people for students who are going to come here anyway. We would like to see a lot more students from Europe, for example, so there we may pay commissions.

(Anthony, an international program director)

The disappointment of ESL students was also strongly expressed when they emphasized their role as consumers of Canadian education. With the influx of international students to British Columbia since the mid 1990s and their significant economic contribution to the local economy, the quality of private ESL education, private career-training institutions and related services for international students have drawn heightened attention from both the media and policy makers. While discussing the problem of Vancouver's fly-by-night schools with Chinese consular officials, the former Immigration Minister, Judy Sgro, emphasized that "Canada has to do more to guarantee international students get the education they are paying for if Canada wants to continue attracting more of them" (Sutherland 2004). Despite this apparent commitment at the federal level, there was no strong evidence that all levels of government were working together to ensure a high quality of private ESL education and career training for international students. Instead, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the BC provincial government decided in 2004 to release around 200 private ESL schools in BC from the control of PCTIA. The PCTIA, which oversees around 600 career-training institutions in BC, has limited capacity, which

has been demonstrated by a number of overnight failures of Vancouver's private business colleges, and many complaints from affected international students (the Globe and Mail 2005).

The most typical complaints about private ESL schools and trade schools in Vancouver were focused on the unsatisfactory quality of the programs. For most Korean international students, admission is guaranteed with tuition payment, and earning program certificates is relatively easy. Mr. Chang told me that they were 'all meaningless certificates' that no one really regards seriously even back in Korea. Mr. Kwon recollected that he was taught like an elementary school student in his English communication class at a private ESL school in Vancouver. Their complaints extended to the housing issues and public attitude towards international students as well. Despite her own positive experiences of studying and living in Vancouver, Ms. Kang summarized the major issues that Korean students often faced:

I was so lucky to meet such a good home-stay family. But I have seen so many friends suffer from bad home-stay experiences. In general, we Korean students are not that fussy. Not enough food and no communication at all is a common story. The main problem is many Vancouver home-owners do home-stay for a living or to make extra money. The business is usually not documented. Since it is mostly an under-market operation, there is no proof or record. With a lack of English proficiency, many students can't even complain. That is why, after a month or two, so many Korean students instead choose to rent their own place and share the place with other friends.

(Ms. Kang, a former ESL student in Vancouver)

While many ESL students complained about limited contacts with 'real Canadian culture,'

their negative assessments of studying and living experiences in Vancouver were often balanced by new friendships built within the social circle of Korean students. Returning from Vancouver, most students admitted that they maintained close contacts with Korean friends they met during their study. Mr. Chang told me that he and six other friends who returned from Vancouver have been meeting regularly and socializing over a couple of drinks in Seoul. Some of them were maintaining transnational networks with those who are still studying in Vancouver or decided to stay permanently in Canada. Such transnational social networks are often easily extended to the Korean-Canadian community in Vancouver as well. Knowing someone in Vancouver is useful when other friends and relatives inquire about studying in Vancouver and need someone who can assist. As discussed in the previous chapter, this kind of transnational social network was also essential for establishing business partnerships for agency operations between Seoul and Vancouver. International students are not only consumers of Canadian education but also mediators for and contributors to the production side of the industry.

C-2. International Education and Transnational Family Experiences

The informants whom I met in Vancouver included six undergraduates, three graduate students and six mothers of younger students. Compared to the ESL students who returned to Korea, their experiences in Vancouver encompassed a different dimension of student and family lives. Nearly everyone (thirteen out of fifteen families) I spoke with was maintaining some form of the transnational family. Two graduate students were living with their families (including their spouse and children), and the third graduate student was living alone in a school dormitory. All six undergraduate students had been studying in Vancouver

since high school. Two sister undergraduate students had lived by themselves, and their mother frequently traveled between Seoul and Vancouver. Three other undergraduate students lived with home-stay families since their high school years. The last undergraduate student and six mothers of younger students told me that they are living as 'geese families,' which consists of a father who remains in Korea providing financial support while a mother and school aged children stay in Canada. With a strong emphasis on the children's education, this form of transnational migration has been increasingly visible among immigrants and international student families from Hong Kong, Taiwan, P. R. China and recently Korea.

Researchers in international migration studies have paid attention to the rise of split family settings among immigrants with Chinese backgrounds (e.g., Ong 1999, Waters 2002, Yeoh et al. 2003). While celebrating their mobility and flexibility as global capitalists, transnational families are known to face costly challenges. According to Waters (2002), many Hong Kong 'parachute kids' and 'lone mothers' in Vancouver have gone through various stages of emotional and physical difficulties related to the separation of the family. In many cases, parachute kids and lone mothers reported that they had suffered from profound lonely feelings in their first years in Vancouver. Some women even experienced a break-down of their marriages due to extramarital relationships established by their spouses at home. However, their family and gender relations cannot be strictly interpreted in terms of either deterioration or improvement because many women claimed that they enjoyed certain degrees of freedom and independence living away from more traditional patriarchal relationships. Indeed, my informants who maintained transnational families provided me

with evolving and complex pictures of their early years in Canada.

Compared to the experiences of Hong Kong and Taiwanese transnational immigrants, my informants' experiences add another aspect to our understanding of transnational migration because they are mostly temporary migrants to Canada. Matthew, who just entered UBC with a scholarship after three years of study in a Vancouver high school, told me that he has seen many emotionally unstable and misbehaved international students. His remarks alluded to the fact that the negative effects are not only caused by the absence of parents but also by a lack of support from the local society.

Matthew: I had some bad years, but I got a good result so I am happy now. But, I think there are so many Korean students who are still struggling to adjust themselves here. Many young international students are left alone to study here without parents' supervision. Since they don't see and talk to their parents on a daily basis, those students easily forget what kinds of effort their parents are putting into their success. Money flows into their bank account. It is up to them to budget and spend wherever they want to. They skip classes. No one cares. I think too much freedom is given to those young students.

MJ: Are there school counsellors you can talk to?

Matthew: Yes, but they are not that helpful. They basically don't care. They seem to think that we are burden to the school system. When I got involved in a fight with a Canadian student, no one, not even the Korean coordinator in my school district sided with me. As a result, I was expelled from the school. Since there is no one to talk to, international students get to hang out with other international students a lot. 'Cause they are lonely... Because students get lonely and frustrated with school work, they are easily drawn into problems.

The socio-economic effects of the geese family phenomenon in Korean society have been

unsettling. The rise of the geese family has drawn attention from the popular media. It is interesting to note that the Korean mass media have been sympathetic to ‘geese fathers’ left in Korea and condemned ‘geese mothers’ and ‘their spoiled children’ in Western countries. The Korean ‘geese fathers’ are often described as mere money making machines who lose conjugal support and children’s respect. News reports about the miserable deaths of geese fathers have occasionally appeared in the major newspapers (e.g., Chosun Ilbo 2005). In several nationally televised documentary films that pictured the transnational lives of geese families between Seoul and Vancouver, the mothers and children were, on the other hand, viewed as extravagant consumers who enjoy affluent and disorderly lives (e.g., MBC 2004b, SBS 2006). The popular representation of geese families in the mass media requires further investigation, as it reflects a reshaping of traditional gender norms and family values in the context of global capitalism and local resistance.

The geese mothers’ experiences largely reflect a slow adjustment process as they overcome the initial stage of emotional instability and physical separation from their spouses. Often later, they settle themselves in a new setting while taking care of the children and making important household decisions in their daily lives. Most geese mothers agreed with the comment by Mrs. Lin, who said, “first, things were difficult but we got used to the situation [of the father’s absence].” In a focus group meeting, Justin’s mother told me that “mothers get stronger once they come here because it is for the sake of the children.” However, their adjustment to the new society is not the end of the story, as there are many continuing issues and social implications related to this phenomenon. As an educator, Ms. Onstad’s inquiry warrants further research on this topic:

A question I have is what the social effects of this phenomenon are for Korea. I told you that we have over 200 elementary students from Korea; that's shocking to me. It has been, ever since it started. And they'd come with a parent, usually mom, and in very few cases there might be grandparents or aunt or uncle, but mostly it's mom with their kids. They're separated families. It's not to do with my position but because I'm witnessing this... I think, "What are the effects of this?" Like there is an absent father figure, and what's the effect of this on children? And not to mention to the wife or the marriage, what kind of marriage can it be that way? (Ms. B. Onstad)

C-3. Transnational Space of Identity Formation

In the previous literature on international migration and ethnic studies, immigrant identities have often been studied within a binary and linear framework. The identities of migrants are believed to be spatially bounded in one place, and their experiences are examined within either the context of their origin country or that of their destination. For example, people who live in Korea are believed to be Korean and imagined to have a Korean identity. In the same vein, 'Canada' or 'Canadian identity' is often used with lack of specificity or appropriate caution. Rouse (1995) problematizes the concept of collective identity, which ignores individuality and represents hegemonic cultural identity. He further claims that the identities of migrants should be examined on the basis of multi-local and transnational affiliations. Gupta and Ferguson (1992) similarly argue that the spatial assumptions embedded in 'culture,' 'society,' 'community,' and 'nation' should be reconsidered when theorizing increasingly fragmented and hybridized cultural identities in the modern world. Instead, they adopt the metaphorical spatial concept of 'border lands' for hybrid identities. In the border lands, seemingly separated and distant identities overlap and are infused and

redefined. Thus, transnational space is where a new identity is formulated and isomorphic representation is contested.

In this section, I discuss how the identities of international students and temporary visitors should be reconsidered in the context of transnational migration. While analyzing their experiences as consumers of international education and temporary migrants to Canada, I find that three realms of identities are blurring. This challenges the existing views on the binary divisions of culture/economy, production/consumption and temporary/permanent migration.

First, it is interesting to examine how cultural and economic identities intersect. Are international students a cultural minority or powerful global capitalists? As discussed earlier, my informants told me that they had certain ways of imagining Canadian education and the living environment. They often viewed themselves as a cultural minority whose cosmopolitan desire was fulfilled by obtaining globally competitive language skills and cultural understanding in Canada. However, their vision of consuming Canadian education was not only based on this cultural desire but also derived from strategic objectives. Canadian education is a commodity (institutionalized cultural capital) for international students, and learning is investing in a form of cultural capital. Immersing themselves in a Western environment and acquiring a better understanding of Western culture are acts of cultural capital embodiment. Observing the relationships between white English tutors and Korean students, Michelle pointed out this blurring of identities. In her statement, Korean international students are described as a ‘cash cow’ as well as an ‘easy cultural minority.’

Some of my Canadian friends are teaching English for international students. It is good that they make extra money, but sometimes I feel that they simply consider Korean students as a cash cow. It is also true that Korean students prefer white Canadian tutors to other ethnic minority tutors. Probably, that's why those white English teachers think that Korean students are easy. But, I don't know. I don't think it is right.

(Michelle, an international graduate student at UBC)

The capitalist identity of international students is often explicitly declared when they negotiate for their rights as consumers. Recalling an unpleasant encounter with customs officials at Vancouver's airport, Mr. Chang complained:

Even at the airport, the immigration officials treated me like an illegal immigrant. It was not a pleasant experience at all. At one point, I was thinking "why on earth am I here spending so much money, while they treat me as a criminal?" I heard similar experiences from many other friends.

(Mr. Chang, a former international student)

There are not enough job opportunities here. Especially for international students, it is really hard. I have spent \$13,000 a year in high school. And, now I am paying \$14,000 a year for university tuition. I heard that UBC charges much more, about \$18,000 a year for international science students. But, what do we get after all? If you are lucky, you get a co-op opportunity. But, most job openings are directed to local students, so you are most likely to return to Korea. I think I should get some return from what I have spent.

(Helen, a fourth-year university student in Vancouver)

Secondly, my previous research (Kwak and Hiebert 2007) indicates that the consuming role

of international students is not limited to educational products. These students are everyday shoppers of local stores, restaurants, housing and public transit. They are also tourists. Furthermore, the roles of international students and their families are not confined to consumer activities. They actively make choices and often relay their consumption experiences to other potential consumers in Korea. In so doing, they play an important role in shaping and reshaping the production system. According to an international education director of one of Vancouver's local colleges, word of mouth is noted as an important advertising tool for Canadian education. In the virtual world of the internet, information about studying abroad in general and the educational programs and living environment of Canada in particular is freely exchanged. International students and their families are major contributors to these indirect forms of advertisement.

I registered through an education agency. But I should say that I mostly relied on the information given by other students. If you go to any internet forums created by Korean international students, there is lots of information available. The students provide information based on their own experiences without any profit. So I think that it is a quite reliable source of information. After collecting information from the forums, I chose about three schools and went to an agency to register.

(Mr. Chin, a former international student in Vancouver)

The international students who studied and are currently studying in Vancouver exercise significant agency in influencing the decisions of potential consumers. Most private ESL school coordinators and educational agency operators agreed that they pay close attention to assessments of their programs posted on the web. Ms. Oh, Korean coordinator of a

private ESL school, told me that “it is very hard to satisfy the needs of every student. You can’t neglect any student because it will appear on the internet forums the very next day and hurt our business.” These internet forums, created by international students familiar with local settings, have become an important structural advantage for the Canadian education industry. In the previous chapter, I illustrated how some of the former international students have become engaged with transnational businesses operating between Seoul and Vancouver. The role of international students and their families in the industry of international education is much more complex than we once imagined.

The third form of blurring identity among international students probably requires the most imminent attention from policy makers. During fieldwork, I noticed strong interest among international students and their families in permanent migration. The post-graduate students who are pursuing higher education with families in Vancouver tend to consider permanent migration more positively. In these families, children have become an important indicator of whether the family will permanently immigrate. Michelle, a graduate student at UBC, for example, told me that it is hard to imagine raising her American-born children in Seoul. During her study in Vancouver, children became accustomed to a more relaxed educational and living environment. After earning her degree, Michelle’s plan is to return to Korea for now. However, considering the cultural shock and different degree of pressure that her children would face in Seoul, she told me that it is not an easy decision to make. In a similar situation, Michelle has seen many graduate student families with children applying for immigration to Canada later on.

Geese families constitute another group that considers permanent immigration seriously. Facing many difficulties of raising and educating their children in the absence of one parent, many geese mothers told me that they considered the possibility of immigration with their husbands. Dealing with her son's disorderly behaviour by herself, Mrs. Chun persuaded her husband to immigrate to Canada in order to end his absence in the household.

There have been many cases that we need his father's presence. As my son gets older, the need becomes greater, I find. My son listens to his father better. For my son, his father's discipline has worked a lot better than mine. After two years, I heard that everyone considers immigration. I think we have to consider that too. We were thinking of going to the U.S. But, things were not that easy. Canada is not too bad either. In fact, these days, we are looking for a way to apply for immigration to Canada and reunite our family here. The kids are very happy about the decision. One concern is getting a job here once we move. But yeah, I guess that is the problem to worry about later.

(Mrs. Chun, a geese mother of two international students in Vancouver)

Despite strong interest towards permanent migration, Korean emigration to Canada has drastically decreased in recent years (see Figure 4-1). As hinted in Mrs. Chun's comment, many people in Korea now realize that successful application does not guarantee smooth settlement in Canada. The hardship of the Canadian labour market has become a major reason to make an adverse decision for many who are qualified. Many international students told me that they changed their mind once they got to know more about the reality of the Canadian job market. Mr. Han, who is working as an accountant in Seoul, told me that:

I thought about immigration before. But, I changed my mind. My Korean CPA credential is hardly useful there. In order to get the certificate again, it will take a lot of time and energy for me. It is especially difficult for immigrants. So to live there permanently? I don't know. I have seen many young Korean-Canadians working in Vancouver. It seemed to me that they don't have equal opportunities as white Canadians. I understand, though. If foreign migrant workers took our jobs here in Korea, I wouldn't be so happy about it. So I don't know. I don't think I will live there [Canada] permanently. (Mr. Han, a former ESL student in Vancouver)

Witnessing economic struggles of recent immigrants to Canada, federal and provincial governments in Canada are increasingly viewing international students as a potential source of skilled labour. After spending several years in Canada, international students are believed to integrate better, since they have gained facility in one or both official languages and possess domestic educational credentials. The emerging desire to convince international students to become permanent immigrants intersects with another objective of government, generating a more regionally dispersed pattern of immigrant settlement. Pilot projects to encourage "regionalization" have been established, such as the Off-Campus Work Permit (OCWP) and Post-Graduation Work Programs (PGWP) for post-secondary international students, which were pilot tested and proven successful in the Prairie and Atlantic regions between 2003 and 2005 (BC Ministry of Advanced Education 2006). Both programs allow international students to gain Canadian work experience and thus encourage them to remain in Canada, and both are now being fully implemented nationwide.

The political and demographic vision has become even clearer with the implementation of a

new immigration program called the Canadian Experience Class (CEC), first announced in the annual report to parliament on immigration in 2007 and scheduled to be implemented in the following year (CIC 2008a). Under the program, qualified skilled temporary workers and international students will be able to apply for permanent resident status while they are in Canada.

So far, however, the transition from temporary to permanent migration has not been easy for everyone. In the case of fresh graduates from university, it has been nearly impossible to apply for immigration to Canada in their own capacity. Ms. Kang, who spent 2 years as an ESL student, told me what she observed in Vancouver:

I have seen many mature students who were interested in immigration. Most of them have some work experience in Korea but not extensive. They don't see a good future in Korea so they want to settle in Canada. But, as you know, things are not that easy. Even getting a work permit in Canada is difficult. I heard that some travel agencies and education agencies are hiring people who are willing to pay the cost of applying and paying extra tax for a work permit up front, like \$10,000. That's how desperate some students are.

(Ms. Kang, a former international student in Vancouver who is currently working as an education agency operator in Seoul)

The implementation of the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) program may ease such difficult situations faced by some international students. For successful implementation of the program, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration has changed the two existing work permit programs for international students. Under the new Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) program, international students who graduate from eligible programs at

certain post-secondary institutions are able to acquire an open work permit without restrictions on the type and places of employment (CIC 2008b). Qualified individuals can apply for a work permit without a job offer, and once they obtain a job, they can work for up to three years.⁶⁰ With a minimum of one year of Canadian work experience in managerial, professional or technical positions, international students can apply for permanent residency rights through the proposed CEC program.

Working together with the provincial government of BC, the Ministry also announced a pilot expansion of the existing Off-Campus Work Program (OCWP) (CIC 2008a).⁶¹ While the previous OCWP program only benefited international students who study at public universities and colleges in the province, the new program has expanded to private institutions. This four-year pilot project will be tested and analyzed at the province level. All of these changes are believed to enable more international students to obtain Canadian work experience easily and eventually choose to stay in Canada permanently.

This kind of political response follows precedents by the Australian and New Zealand governments (Ho 2005, Bedford and Ho 2006). It seems apparent that researchers now need to consider the two seemingly separate categories of ‘temporary’ and ‘permanent’ migration more in connection to each other.

⁶⁰ The previous PGWP only allowed a maximum of two-year work permit depending on location. With a federal vision of regionalization, the program gave a longer work permit to those who find employment outside Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto. In addition, the job needed to be matched with the area of their education in Canada.

⁶¹ The provinces of Manitoba and Alberta also agreed to participate in the pilot project.

D. Discussion and Policy Recommendations

Position Canada as a destination of choice for talented foreign students and skilled workers by more aggressively selecting and recruiting through universities and in key embassies abroad.

(The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson Governor, from the 2002 Speech from the Throne: The Canada We Want)

Accepting around 60,000 international students annually, Canada has become a popular study destination (CIC 2006). Business leaders and policy makers in many English-speaking countries have begun to pay close attention to the temporary movement of international students. The Speech from the Throne given in 2002 confirms this point in the Canadian context. International students and their families are welcome to Canada because they can contribute to revenue generation for school boards and enrich cultural diversity in our classrooms. Policy makers in immigrant-accepting countries have come to consider the transition from international students to permanent residents more seriously (Ho 2005, Bedford and Ho 2006). If the international education industry is beneficial to the national and local economies and if international students are considered an important source of future immigrants, what can be done to promote the industry and attract more talented international students to Canada? Drawing upon everyday experiences of international students and their families, I suggest the following recommendations.

First, it is important to maintain high-quality educational programs and service provision for all levels of international students. Weak regulations on the educational industry in general have been pointed out as the key problem. As noted earlier, many career-training

institutions and especially the private language schools in Vancouver were typical targets of student complaints. With the rise of neo-liberal governance, the regulatory system of these private schools has become relaxed and privatized. Inconsistent policy approaches between education (provincial and municipal) versus immigration policies (federal) of Canada have also worked as a disadvantage for global market promotion. In countries like Australia and New Zealand, international education has been developed, regulated and promoted at the national level. The future success of the industry as a whole will most importantly depend on a more integrated approach between education, migration and international trade.

Second, the well-being of international students needs to be considered more seriously. Many students and families told me that they were only seen as ‘cash cows’ and that their basic rights are largely neglected. As temporary migrants, international students have limited access to social services. In school, there has been a significant lack of educational and emotional support. With drastic budget cutting in BC public schools, ESL classes have been disappearing. Where available, I have been told that international students are often placed into the same classroom regardless of their different language and learning capacities. It is essential to place more counsellors who actually work on behalf of international students in schools. Mr. Jin, who has worked for Korean international students as an agent in Vancouver, noted such needs:

I think there should be more extensive government input to the industry. It seems that Canadian schools are just accepting international students without any serious preparation to welcome them. More ESL classes need to be operated, and more international counsellors need to be placed. They are paying for the education, so I

believe that they deserve much better treatment than now. Basically, we have to try harder to make our clients happy about their experience in Canada. Otherwise, the long term prospective of the industry will suffer.

(Mr. Jin, an international education agent in Vancouver)

Third, currently the public school boards in BC require all international students from six to twelve years old (grades 1-7) to be accompanied by at least one parent as a caregiver. Often leaving their father in Korea, mothers and children are the ones who come to Canada to study. The hardship of maintaining a transnational family is elevated with the lack of consideration given to these families within the local society. When asked about policy recommendations, my informants pointed out two critical policy issues related to the wellbeing of lone mothers in Vancouver: a stable visa process and reliable health care. While it is required by local school boards that a parent should accompany their child, the duration of the visa given by an immigration official at the airport has been unpredictable. Some receive one month, and others receive one year; there is no consistency. In addition, many expressed the need for reliable health care, arguing that provincial governments should extended the MSP (Medical Services Plan) option to temporary visitors who are parents of international students. Their unstable status and absence of reliable health care affect their everyday lives. The comments of Mr. Lim, an education agent, and Mrs. Chun, a goose mother with two children in Port Coquitlam, are instructive.

In most cases, mothers with young international students become so bored and lonely here. After sending their kids to school, they don't have many things to do. It is not that they don't want to do anything. Under the strict visa restriction, they have

a very limited freedom of what they can do. I had a client who wanted to study English after taking care of her children for one year. After the first year in Vancouver, she wanted to improve her English. So, she registered at an ESL school and applied for a student visa. Not only was her visa rejected, but her further stay was prohibited in Canada. The message for visa rejection was something like this. 'If you come to Canada to take care of your children, concentrate on the responsibility. Why would you want to study? If you think the children don't need your attention anymore, you have no reason to stay here anymore. So, get out.' She was so upset and pulled both her children out of school and returned to Korea. I think Canada is very interested in making money from accepting international students but doesn't care much about their wellbeing, especially that of mothers.

(Mr. Lim, an international education agent in Vancouver)

As a mother of an international student, I can't be sick. Under the student visa, my children can purchase a care card with \$700 a year. But, since I came here as a visitor and guardian, I hold a one-year visitor's visa. I am not eligible for medical insurance. So, it could be a very big problem if I get sick. I am worried all the time. Since I can't go to hospital easily, I usually treat nearly every symptom with over-the-counter medicines instead of consulting a doctor. I have traveller's insurance, but it only covers an emergency. So, when I don't feel well, it really concerns me. I wish there were some consideration about this medical insurance for guardians.

(Ms. Chun, a geese mother with two children)

Lastly, there has been an increasing political consensus that talented international students should be a potential source of immigrants to Canada. However, most international students and industry workers told me that there are many barriers to prevent them from applying for permanent residency. Limited work and educational opportunities for international students are pointed out as the most significant issues. Helen, who wished to apply to a medical school in Canada, told me that she realized it was nearly impossible for her to

pursue the career path in Canada as an international student. Most medical schools have residency requirements, and only a limited number of medical schools in Canada have accepted a handful of international students. She was surprised by the career barrier. She complained about the reality that excludes international students as permanent others. Mr. Park, an immigration consultant, also noted that the current immigration policies of Canada are not realistic for international students.

I know a lot of them want to stay here in Canada. As you know, many of them come here when they are young like me. They have become familiar with the Canadian system as they grew up and got educated here. Maybe, become unfamiliar with the Korean system at the same time. But why do they return after finishing their university degree? It is simply because there is no opportunity for them here. If there are opportunities, they would stay and contribute to the Canadian society.

(Helen, a fourth year university student in Vancouver)

In order to bring more skilled workers to Canada... In my view, the current program at the federal level is not really that effective. Without any work experience, it is impossible for applicants to get more than 67 passing points for the skilled workers program. That means it is impossible for students to apply for immigration. In order to get extra points for the later process, international students have to obtain good jobs before applying for immigration. In many cases, it is not too easy.

(Mr. Park, an immigration consultant in Vancouver)

Considering these complaints, it seems apparent that the implementation of the CEC program will shed new light on Canadian immigration as a whole. As designed, this plan will make Canada a more attractive place for international students and potential

immigrants. Once implemented, around 18 percent of all Korean students will be the first beneficiaries of the program.⁶² Later on, more potential immigrants will consider the path of obtaining Canadian education first and then applying for permanent residency. The CEC program will certainly benefit a small proportion of international students immediately, but this will entail many challenges as well. First, all levels of educational institutions in Canada, especially those at the secondary and post-secondary levels, need to respond well to the growing interest of international students in Canadian education and their different needs. Secondly, will Canadian employers and foreign students understand and work well with the program? Who is more willing to work with the program? In the early stage, there could be many misuses of the program and labour disputes between Canadian employers and international student workers. Third, what does this mean to existing immigrant populations and the general public in the Canadian labour market? If successful, how would the program change the public attitude towards international students and temporary foreign workers? Fourth, in relation to the previous question, the government needs to work harder to provide more efficient economic integration programs for recent immigrant populations. Finally, for researchers, all these questions warrant more investigation into the program and its future impacts on international students, immigrant communities and the broader society.

In this chapter, I examined the consumption side of the international education industry. Everyday experiences of international students and their families reveal that they are not

⁶² According to the 2003 special report on foreign students in Canada (CIC 2003), about 18 percent of Korean students were receiving post-secondary education in Canada (see Figure 4-2).

passive cultural minorities but rather active agents of transnational migration. Utilizing strong social and cultural networks, they pursue a strategic economic decision of consuming Canadian education. Their everyday experiences of studying and living in Vancouver demonstrate a blurring transnational space of multiple identity formations. The suggested policy recommendations urge policy makers, business professionals and the local community to approach international students and their hardships with more consistent and egalitarian attitudes. The reputation of the city as a place for international students depends on the provision of adequate housing, health services and the creation of a safe study and living environment. It is equally important for policy makers to pay close attention to the successful integration of incoming immigrant populations as well. Temporary migrants often envision their future in terms of the socio-economic status of permanent migrants and this will affect their vision of Canada as a place to work and live.

In Chapter 8, I conclude the case study by reconsidering the interplay of different actors in the international education industry between Seoul and Vancouver. While it is important to analyze the rise of the international education industry in the macro political economic framework of globalization and neo-liberalism, I argue that such grand theories easily conceal the complex dynamics of socio-economic phenomena. Critiquing such approaches, I assert the ways in which local institutional actors, small business entrepreneurs and ordinary migrants together have played important roles in developing and promoting Canadian education. Drawing upon a transnational framework, I emphasize a more balanced and integrated approach towards the growth of the international education industry between Seoul and Vancouver. Avenues for future research are also discussed.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

The Government of Canada is committed to attracting newcomers to Canada, and helping them succeed once they arrive. This pilot [a pilot expansion of the existing Off-Campus Work Program (OCWP)] will provide more international students with opportunities to work off-campus and to gain Canadian work experience. It complements our recent improvements to the post-graduate work program and our efforts to make Canada a more attractive choice for international students.

(The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CIC 2008b)

The Province of British Columbia sees increases in immigration, temporary workers and international students as key to helping BC achieve its economic goals for the coming decade. The expansion of this program will assist international students in our province to obtain work and potentially to choose British Columbia as their future home.

(The Honourable Wally Oppal, B.C. Attorney General and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, CIC 2008b)

The pilot will provide international students with more options to help further their studies. We appreciate the enrichment international students bring to British Columbia and encourage potential students to experience BC as the best place on earth to live, work and play.

(The Honourable Murray Coell, B.C. Minister of Advanced Education, CIC 2008b)

In Vancouver on May 20, 2008, three government ministers announced that a pilot expansion program of the Off-Campus Work Permit would be implemented in BC Moving one step closer to implementation of the new CEC (Canadian Experience Class) program, both federal and provincial governments acknowledged not only the important contribution that international students have brought into the local and national economy but also their

positive potential to become permanent residents of Canada. It is too early to study the full impact of this policy. However, it can be regarded as a primary example showing that governments have positively responded to the demands from various actors in the international education industry. Many international students, business professionals and educational institutions have advocated such policies over the years.⁶³ This new pilot program shows how local institutions, small business operators and ordinary migrants can influence the policy domain.

This thesis explores the interplay of structural factors and the agency of migrants in driving the growth of the international education industry between Seoul and Vancouver. The intensification of globalization in general, and the rise of neo-liberalism in particular, have introduced macro structural changes in the political economies of both Korea and Canada that have had important implications for growth in the education industry. The role of nation-states is critical in that both Korean and Canadian national governments have delivered more relaxed policies regulating international migration and educational flows between the two countries. The provincial government of BC has also become increasingly attentive to the benefits of bringing in more international students to the region. At the local level, both public and semi-public educational institutions in Vancouver have become actively engaged in recruiting fee-paying international students.

⁶³ Many international program managers in private ESL schools as well as public post-secondary institutions told me about their effort (and frustration) in lobbying the governments to implement more favourable visa policies for international students. The CECN has been one of the most representative organizations that called out for a more relaxed work-permit program for international students in Canada.

The successful recruitment activities of local schools (and school boards) have been facilitated by Korean international education agencies operating in Vancouver. Relying on close social and cultural linkages between Korea and Canada, the transnational entrepreneurial activities of Korean immigrants demonstrate how globalization actually works in practice. Some agencies have shown great success operating as many as 22 branch offices in four different countries. The rising demands of Korean students and their parents have also been an important precursor of recent industrial growth. With strong motivation and spatial mobility, these “global citizens” strategically choose to consume Canadian education. By sharing their experiences with potential migrants back home, their strategic accumulation of cultural capital is also utilized in another production cycle of the industry. Ordinary migrants, both permanent residents and temporary visitors, play an important role in promoting Canadian education in the global market.

The tension between structure and agency has been a prominent theme within the academic fields of international migration, transnationalism and immigrant entrepreneurship. This study contributes an important example of the interplay between structure and agency, demonstrating how the two sides influence each other reciprocally. On the one hand, a series of policy changes in Korea and Canada has provided fertile ground for potential immigrant entrepreneurs, who have pursued business opportunities in the international education industry. Once these businesses were established, though, Korean immigrant entrepreneurs began to reshape the overall structure of migration between Seoul and Vancouver. Therefore, on the other hand, the active agency of these entrepreneurs, as well as the agency of international students and their families, became influential enough to

prompt recent changes in immigration programs for international students (e.g., the presence of a large number of international students has helped justify the creation of the Canadian Experience Class). In sum, structure shapes the conditions where agency can become effective and, in return, agency reshapes the structural environment.

This seemingly smooth growth of the international education industry between Seoul and Vancouver, however, masks more complex dynamics of the process. It is necessary to reconsider the taken-for-granted approach towards neo-liberalism and economic globalization. In sum, I provide three critiques. First, I argue that the neo-liberal cliché of ‘more market/less state’ does not explain the increasingly important roles played by nation-states in the global education market. Secondly, the approach often disregards human agency in the process of globalization by typically treating ethnic minorities, ordinary migrants and local actors as victims of the system. Thirdly, whereas transnational immigrant entrepreneurship in the international education industry has shown moderate success over the past two decades, I argue that there is also enough evidence that such benefits can easily turn into disadvantages, generating unexpected negative consequences. The industry has been vulnerable to rapidly changing conditions of the global economy and has become increasingly competitive. Lastly, the growth of the international education industry has been associated with many messier outcomes at local scales. For example, traditional categorical definitions such as students versus visitors or temporary versus permanent migration have become increasingly blurred. Service categories between education, tourism and immigration are hard to separate, as many international education agencies provide all these services under the same roof. The growing informal segment of

the industry can be seen as another form of blurring. These blurry constructions have come to defy the traditional categories and loose regulatory practices imposed by states.

Based on these findings, it is important to reconsider if Korean immigrant entrepreneurship in the international education industry truly represents a ‘break-out’ of traditional ethnic enclave economies. According to Engelen (2001), markets are the crucial aspect of the opportunity structure, and a ‘break-out’ implies moving out from a less desirable market to a more promising one. In the context of post-industrial urban economies, Kloosterman and Rath (forthcoming) suggested three kinds of market openings for immigrant entrepreneurs. Depending on the level of human capital that individual entrepreneurs possess and the growth potential of the market, immigrant enterprises are found in one of the following markets: vacancy-chain openings, post-industrial/low skilled and post-industrial/high skilled markets.

According to Kloosterman and Rath (forthcoming), immigrant enterprises in the ‘vacancy-chain openings’ do not require much higher human capital. Most businesses in this market are small scale, low-skilled, labour-intensive and highly competitive. Due to limited profit earning potential, this market often becomes a fertile environment for the informal economic activities. This character further reinforces a strong embeddedness in the ethnic community that is rooted in ethnic trust or close social networks. Here, there has been rich evidence of the ‘other side of embeddedness’ in play by excluding other ethnic groups (Waldinger 1995). The markets are the traditional and typical incubating grounds for immigrant entrepreneurs in advanced urban economies. In general, chances of becoming

successful are rather vague. While relatively easy access is guaranteed, most businesses in vacancy-chain openings are easily trapped in the confined markets of co-ethnics even after reaching the point of saturation. These businesses are representative examples for traditional ethnic enclave economies.

The market of ‘post-industrial/low skilled’ contains businesses that specialize in personal services. With a high potential for market growth, this segment of the economy attracts many innovative entrepreneurs. Because of the innovative nature of these businesses, the regulatory regime often lags behind the actual developments and, since regulations are weak, entrepreneurs can enter this segment relatively easily. The markets tend to include many sectors that were previously monopolized by the state such as child-care in European countries and K-12 education in many OECD countries. With the effects of post-industrialization, the sectors are in many cases the product of privatization and deregulation. The markets in this category are usually known to cater to more affluent customers. There is much less pressure on entrepreneurs to compete with price or reduce labour costs in informal ways. The chances of being firmly rooted in an ethnic community are much less, and the chances of being promoted to better sectors are greater.

The last ‘post-industrial/high skilled market openings include many high tech industries that require high human capital of entrepreneurs with positive growth potential. As shown by Saxenian (2002), Chinese and South Asian immigrant entrepreneurs were active in Silicon Valley’s technology businesses. Small firms in producer services such as consultant, law and advertising firms also belong to this category. Their reliance on social networks is

equally important as the other two categories; however, the nature of their social capital is often heterogeneous in nature. They often reach out to other ethnic origin customers and co-ethnic suppliers in home countries.

In terms of the nature of business, most educational agencies and home-stay businesses run by Korean immigrant entrepreneurs shown in this study fit well into the second category of post-industrial/low skilled market openings. Korean immigrants were innovative in breaking into a new business sector and indeed successful in moving beyond the local constituency base. My findings in this study, however, demonstrate that most Korean entrepreneurs have expressed dissatisfaction over their business outcomes. While education is not a typical ethnic enclave economy sector, most Korean immigrant entrepreneurs were heavily relying on co-ethnic market and suppliers using transnational social networks. The market has become increasingly competitive and volatile over the years. At the time of the interviews, most small business owners in the international education industry were not sanguine about its market potential. Although it is evident that Korean immigrant entrepreneurs have played an important role in the growth of the industry, it is hard to argue that this can be extended to individual success in their business operation.

While several scholars (e.g., Portes 2003, Wong and Ng 2002) shed positive light on transnational immigrant entrepreneurship, my research findings in this study show that transnational linkages were an important precondition to survive in the industry but not a

decisive factor of entrepreneurial success.⁶⁴ Transnational linkages work as a complementary factor when entrepreneurs can utilize the resource beyond co-ethnic clientele. Successful business owners were either a few pioneers of the industry or large investors who were able to inject significant financial capital to diversify their markets at the global scale. The true 'break-out' from the traditional ethnic enclave economies to mainstream markets is only applicable to small sector of the industry. .

Mainly exploring the recent growth of the international education industry and the transnational business activities of Korean immigrants, this study warrants further investigation into transnational families, migration and education. While there have been several reports on astronaut families from Hong Kong and Taiwan (e.g., Ong 1999, Waters 2002, Yeoh et al. 2003), few studies were found on Korean geese families. Although it is hard to generalize experiences of Korean geese families, the data drawn from seven families in my study share some similarities with the Chinese counterparts. Most geese mothers complained about emotional and physical difficulties related to the absence of husband and father in the family. However, they also admitted that they were slowly adapting to a new environment and gaining confidence in living independently. Compared to the experiences of Hong Kong and Taiwanese astronaut families, Korean geese families are mostly maintaining temporary migrant status. Their experiences are largely shaped by

⁶⁴ Explaining variation in business performance among business immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea, Ley (2006) also suggested that not all transnational linkages are beneficial for immigrant enterprises in Canada. In his study, transnational motif was negatively related to business success. For example, he found that Korean immigrants were the ones with the highest satisfaction because they were more likely committed to their business in Canada and less involved in transnational business activities.

their legal status in study destinations. In Canada, for example, the mothers complained about limited opportunities and lack of a social welfare system for guardians of international students. In future research, it would be interesting to compare the experiences of geese families in different immigration systems (e.g., the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines and China). An exploration of media representation of geese families in Korea is another intriguing research subject.

Gaining popularity only in recent years, it would be too early to assess the full impact of the international education of Korean students. In the next few years, Korean society has to deal with an increasing number of returned students with Western degrees. Building upon this study and adding to the burgeoning literature on migration and education, the future research should address the following questions. First, to what extent would those new elites be able to utilize their cultural capital? Second, what kind of roles would they play in future Korea? These questions can be replicated in receiving countries like Canada too. With a growing interest in international students as a future source of immigrants to Canada, it would be important to investigate why international students decide to stay (or leave) and what kind of factors influence their decision making.

Based on these research findings, four policy recommendations have been identified. First, it is important to impose a certain level of regulation on the industry in order to maintain high-quality education programs and service provision for all levels of international students. Secondly, the welfare of international students requires more serious attention, especially in school settings. The reduction of ESL classes and absence of multicultural

counselling will result in a poor assessment of Canadian education in the future global market. Thirdly, governments should recognize the difficulties that the guardians of international students have had. Geese mothers noted that a stable visa process and reliable health care were the most critical programs they need. Lastly, there has been a growing political consensus that skilled international students should be considered as a future source of immigrants to Canada. The implementation of the CEC demonstrates this vision well. While it is a welcome policy for many interest groups, I argue that it is also important for the government to pay close attention to the successful integration of the existing and incoming immigrant populations as well.

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APPENDIX 1

Contact Letter

Contact Letter Type A: Government Officials

(Written on UBC letterhead)

Date

Dear. _____

My name is Min-Jung Kwak. I am a Ph.D. student in the department of Geography, University of British Columbia. I am writing this letter to ask for your help in my Ph.D. dissertation research project.

The project is titled “**Globalizing Canadian Education from Below: International education links between Seoul, Korea and Vancouver, Canada**”. Under the guidance of Professor Daniel Hiebert, I am planning to explore the international education industry in Vancouver and Seoul to understand immigrant entrepreneurs’ economic activities and contributions to the regional economy. I am particularly interested in Korean immigrants’ participation in the international education sector which has grown in significance in recent years.

To obtain information, I decided to conduct several interviews. During the one-hour-long interview, I will ask such questions as: the roles of your ministry or institution within and beyond the community; difficulties and opportunities that you face.

Your decision to participate in this project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to your own interests. However, I would much appreciate it if you kindly allow me to have a chance to learn from you about your ministry or institution. To confirm your participation in the project, I will contact you again soon, by telephone.

If you have any questions or concerns on the project, my supervisor, Professor D. Hiebert, would be happy to discuss them with you. You may reach him at 604-822-4500. In addition,

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.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Contact Letter Type B: Business Professionals

(Written on UBC letterhead)

Date

Dear. _____

My name is Min-Jung Kwak. I am a Ph.D. student in the department of Geography, University of British Columbia. I am writing this letter to ask for your help in my Ph.D. dissertation research project.

The project is titled “**Globalizing Canadian Education from Below: International education links between Seoul, Korea and Vancouver, Canada**”. Under the guidance of Professor Daniel Hiebert, I am planning to explore the international education industry in Vancouver and Seoul to understand immigrant entrepreneurs’ economic activities and contributions to the regional economy. I am particularly interested in Korean immigrants’ participation in the international education sector which has grown in significance in recent years.

To obtain information, I decided to conduct several interviews. During the one-hour-long interview, I will ask such questions as: the roles and services that your business provides within and beyond the community; difficulties and opportunities that you face.

Your decision to participate in this project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to your own interests. However, I would much appreciate it if you kindly allow me to have a chance to learn from you about your business. To confirm your participation in the project, I will contact you again soon, by telephone.

If you have any questions or concerns on the project, my supervisor, Professor D. Hiebert, would be happy to discuss them with you. You may reach him at 604-822-4500. In addition, 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.

Thank you very much.
Sincerely yours,

Min-Jung Kwak

Contact Letter Type C: International Students and Parents

(Written on UBC letterhead)

Date

Dear. _____

My name is Min-Jung Kwak. I am a Ph.D. student in the department of Geography, University of British Columbia. I am writing this letter to ask for your help in my Ph.D. dissertation research project.

The project is titled “**Globalizing Canadian Education from Below: International education links between Seoul, Korea and Vancouver, Canada**”. Under the guidance of Professor Daniel Hiebert, I am planning to explore the international education industry in Vancouver and Seoul to understand immigrant entrepreneurs’ economic activities and contributions to the regional economy. I am particularly interested in Korean immigrants’ participation in the international education sector which has grown in significance in recent years.

To obtain information, I decided to conduct several interviews with students and parents as consumers of the industry. During the one-hour-long interview, I will ask such questions as: your expectations or experiences of having Canadian education; difficulties and opportunities that you face; and your future plans.

Your decision to participate in this project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to your own interests. However, I would much appreciate it if you kindly allow me to have a chance to learn from your experience. To confirm your participation in the project, I will contact you again soon, by telephone.

If you have any questions or concerns on the project, my supervisor, Professor D. Hiebert, would be happy to discuss them with you. You may reach him at 604-822-4500. In addition, 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.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Min-Jung Kwak

APPENDIX 2

Consent Form

Globalizing Canadian Education From Below: **International Education Links Between Seoul, Korea and Vancouver, Canada**

Principal Investigator

Daniel Hiebert
Professor
Department of Geography
University of British Columbia
Tel: 604-822-4500

Co-Investigator

Min-Jung Kwak
Ph.D. Program
Department of Geography
University of British Columbia
Tel: 604-513-0128

Purpose: This project explores the international education industry that is being developed in both Seoul, Korea and Vancouver, Canada. It seeks to understand the entrepreneurial activities of Korean-Canadians in this new sector of the global economy. To obtain expert information about the industry, government officials, business professionals and international students like you are invited to participate in the research project. The collected data in this study will be primarily used for the Ph.D. dissertation of Min-Jung Kwak. The data may also be used for other publications by Dr. D. Hiebert and Ms. Kwak later on.

Study Procedures:

If you decide to participate in the research project, you will be interviewed by Min-Jung Kwak. The interview will take place only once and will last for about an hour. During the interview, you will be asked questions about your experiences related to the international education industry. If you are agreeable, the interview will be audio-recorded. If not, your

remarks will be summarized as written notes by Min-Jung Kwak. After the interview meeting, you will receive a summary of the meeting for your review. If you wish, you can suggest changes to this summary. Finally, if you wish, you will receive a copy of the final report.

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be kept strictly confidential at all times. The records of your interview will be identified only by code and will be kept in a locked cabinet at the department of Geography at UBC. You will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study, except by a pseudonym. We, Professor D. Hiebert and Min-Jung Kwak, are the only ones who will have access to the data. We will only use computers with security log-in systems to protect any data records on the computer hard disk.

Contact for information about the project:

If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this project, you may contact Professor Daniel Hiebert.

Contact for information 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 participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any time without jeopardy to your employment and personal interests.

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

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this research.

_____	_____
Subject Signature	Date

APPENDIX 3

Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule Type A: Government Officials

Introduction and Background

1. What is your position in this ministry or institution?
2. How did you get involved with, and how long have you been in this position?
3. Can you give me a brief description on your work in the ministry/ institution?

Questions about the ministry/ institution

1. What are the main roles of your ministry/ institution?
2. With regard to linkages between Canada and Korea, do you recognize any significant flows of people, capital and business information?
If so, in your understanding, what is the scope and scale of the flows?
And, what kinds of relevant policies and services do you provide to control these flows?
What are the advantages or disadvantages associated with these flows?
3. Do you maintain any direct connections with Korean/ Canadian governmental institution?
If so, how are these linkages maintained?
Are these linkages weak/ strong/ developing into a new stage?

Questions about the international education industry

1. What does the recent growth of the industry mean to your ministry/ institution and furthermore your country? Do you see it as positive or negative?
2. What do you think as main factors of the industrial growth?

3. What roles do you think that Korean immigrants play in the industry?

Is it significant or secondary to other factors?

4. If you think that immigrants do play a role, what are some of the advantages or problems associated with such development?

(e.g. Business linkages between two countries, Informality, Different power relations, Cultural impacts, Socio-economic impacts, etc...)

5. Do you see any positive relation between international students studying in Canada and their intention of immigrating to Canada?

Is this good or bad?

If you think the phenomenon positively, what kinds of policies should be implemented in order to stimulate the process?

If you don't think the phenomenon positively, what kinds of policies should be implemented?

6. What are the advantages or problems associated with the issue and such policy development?

Overall Assessment

1. Do you see the linkages between Canada and Korea as strong or weak? How do you see them developing in the future?

2. Do you think Korea and Canada can gain from an expanded political economic relationship?

If so, what kind of policies will be helpful?

3. Do you have anything else you would like to tell me that we have not already covered?

Interview Schedule Type B: Business Professionals

Personal Data

(Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Vancouver)

1. When did you come to Canada, and under which (im)migration program?
2. Who did come with you?
3. Why Canada? Why Vancouver?
3. Did you sponsor any family members or relatives after your immigration?

(Business partners in Seoul, Korea)

1. With a little about your own background, can you tell me how did you get to involve with and how long have you been in this business?

Questions about the Business

1. Can you tell me brief background of business establishment? (History, Location, Size development process, etc.)
2. What kinds of services do you provide to customers?
3. Who are your customers?
4. How does your company operate on a daily basis?
5. Do you have any connections with other companies in Vancouver, Canada or in Korea?
If so, what is the nature and purpose of these linkages?
And, how are those linkages maintained?
6. Who are your business partners? How did you get to know them?
7. Does your own social network help your business?

If so, how does it help?

8. What are some of the advantages or problems of the network-dependent business operation?

Questions about the international education industry in general

1. What does the recent growth of the industry mean to your business and furthermore to the local economy? Do you see it as positive or negative?

2. What do you think as main factors of the industrial growth?

3. What roles do you think that Korean immigrants play in the industry?
Is it significant or secondary to other factors?

4. If you think that immigrants do play a role, what are some of the advantages or problems associated with such development?
(e.g. Business linkages between two countries, Informality, Different power relations, Cultural impacts, Socio-economic impacts, etc...)

5. Do you see any positive relation between international students studying in Canada and their intention of immigrating to Canada?

Is this good or bad?

If you think the phenomenon positively, what kinds of policies should be implemented in order to stimulate the process?

If you don't think the phenomenon positively, what kinds of policies should be implemented?

Overall Assessment

1. What do you think about the general atmosphere of Vancouver's economy related with the operation of your business?

2. What are the difficulties and opportunities that your business faces in general/recently?

3. What kind of programs/policies would be helpful for you and to your business?
4. Do you see the linkages between Canada and Korea as strong or weak?
How do you see them developing in the future?
5. Do you have anything else you would like to tell me that we have not already covered?

Interview Schedule Type C: International Students and Parents

Personal Data

1. Can you tell me a little about your own (your children's) background? (Education and job experience in Korea)
2. When did you come (go) to Canada (and return to Korea) under which visa category?/
When do you plan to go to Canada under which visa category?
3. How long have you been in Vancouver, Canada?/
How long were you there in Canada?/
How long do you plan to stay in Canada?
4. Who did come (go) with you/ Who is going with you?
5. Why Canada? Why Vancouver? (Social network, Advertisement, etc.)

Questions about Consumer Experiences

1. How did (do) you collect information about educational institutions and living conditions in Vancouver and Canada? (Personal network, Commercial agency, Internet etc.)
2. What kind of services have (were) you been provided?
3. Can you tell me about your experience of using the information source(s)?
What were the advantages and problems of the source(s)?
4. What do (did) you (your children) study in which school?
Why do (did) you choose the school?
5. How do you (your children) like schools in Vancouver?
Compared to schooling in Korea, what are the benefits and disadvantages of studying in Canada?

Questions about the international education industry in general

1. What does the recent growth of the industry mean to you and furthermore to the local economy? Do you see it as positive or negative?
2. What do you think as main factors of the industrial growth?
3. What roles do you think that Korean immigrants play in the industry?
Is it significant or secondary to other factors?

Questions about Living Experiences in Canada

1. Where do (did) you live in Vancouver, Canada?
If you have traveled, which part(s) of Canada did you go?
2. Why and how do (did) you get to choose the accommodation?
Did anybody help you?
3. Could you tell me about your typical day in Vancouver, Canada?
4. Other than studying, what do you (and your children) do for your (their) leisure time?
(e.g. working, playing sports, meeting friends, sightseeing, etc...)
5. Have you established any new social network after moving to Vancouver, Canada?
Who are (were) they?
Do you still maintain the network (even after coming back to Korea)?
6. How often do (did) you talk to people in Korea?
How do (did) you maintain the network?
7. Do (did) you (your children) like living in Canada?
What are the advantages/ disadvantages/ difficulties living in Canada?

Questions about Future Plan

1. What are your future plans?

2. Have you ever considered immigration to Canada?

If so, what does the prospect look like to you?

Why did you consider to study (educate your children) first before immigrating to Canada?

Do you foresee any difficulties? What kinds of policies would help for the plan?

3. If you did not consider about immigration to Canada, what are (were) the main reasons?

Overall Assessment

1. From the perspective of Koreans (Korean-Canadians), what do you think about the overall prospective about the international education industry and its transnational economies?

2. What kinds of policies would be helpful for wellbeing of international students?

3. Do you have anything else you would like to tell me that we have not already covered?

APPENDIX 4

UBC Research Ethics Board Certificates of Approval

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

Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR Hiebert, D.J.	DEPARTMENT Geography	NUMBER B03-0248
INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT		
CO-INVESTIGATORS: Kwak, Min-Jung,		
SPONSORING AGENCIES		
TITLE: Understanding New Economies of Immigration: An exploration of Korean-Canadian community in Vancouver		
APPROVAL DATE MAY 27 2003	TERM (YEARS) 1	DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL: May 26, 2003, Consent form / May 1, 2003, Initial Contact letter/ Questionnaires
<p>CERTIFICATION:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The protocol describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Committee and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 20px 0;"> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Approval of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by one of the following:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr. James Frankish, Chair, Dr. Cay Holbrook, Associate Chair, Dr. Joe Belanger, Associate Chair</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures</p>		