Koreans in the Diaspora
Identity development of Korean immigrant students in a multicultural context
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Abstract

The objective of this study is to approach the lived experiences and the identity development of Korean immigrant students in Canada. The concept of diaspora suggests to look at the new style of identity in a global world.

In order to describe Korean students' transnational experience, the study attempts: 1) to determine the influence of immigration on the development of students' identity, 2) to examine the cultural and racial experience in different situations, 3) to discuss how Korean students situate themselves and develop their self-concepts in relationship to others.

The study employed a qualitative method and conducted ten individual, semi-structured interviews. In the study, ten Korean immigrant students were asked about their immigration backgrounds, their experiences at school and home, their friendships with Korean friends and non-Korean friends, and their future plans.

My analysis attempts to examine the discrepancy between: 1) how Korean students see themselves, 2) how they think they are viewed by others 3) what they aspire to become in the future. Most Korean students identified themselves as “Korean” while others described themselves as “Asian” or did not wish to identify themselves. However, their self-definitions did not always coincide with how others saw them in different situations. At school, students tended to be seen as Asians by the mainstream, and shared the experience of being victims of racism. This shared experience along with the cultural similarity allowed them to have closer relationships with Asians. However, physical, cultural and historical “invisibility” of Koreans among Asians contributed to create a sense of inferiority. At home, students try to reward their parents’ sacrifices by being “successful” at school, planning a future career, as well as maintaining Korean traditions at home.

Korean students develop new identities in their country of settlement, but at the same time, they are still mentally connected to their country of origin. The source of Korean identity
is readily accessible in a multicultural society, and globalisation facilitates a connection for Koreans to their homeland.

The concept of diaspora presents a new look at the minority students’ special relationship to their countries of settlement and their country of origin. It can give a deeper understanding of the social reality in which minority students live.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Autobiographical Location of the Research

"Can't they simply be like Koreans in North America?" This is the common question raised by Japanese educators who encounter the "problem" of Korean students in Japan. They say, Koreans in North America enjoy a full life both with the citizenship of their host country and their original culture. Koreans in Japan are often compared to their counterparts in North America. While the ethnic identity of Koreans in Japan is at issue, Koreans in North America seem not only to be maintaining their ethnic identity, but are also successful in the host country.

I am a third generation Japanese resident of Korean descent in Japan, or Zainichi. Reflecting on my experiences, school life was not easy for a Zainichi student. Everyday I was jeered at being called "Cho-sen-jin !(Korean)" and bullied inside and outside of school. Some teachers just ignored these events, some simply said to the class "Stop bullying against Ih Hwa" and others said "She also has human rights even though she is a Korean." I was alone.

I was miserable outside of home, but fortunately, I have never been ashamed of being a Korean, and I was never obsequious to my Japanese classmates. That was because my parents often talked about how wonderful Korea was, how proud we were to be Korean. Their story always ended with "Be a fine Korean, be better than the Japanese." My parents expected me, just like any other Korean parents, to do well at school, run faster, win any children's game, and so on. I tried my best, but I often wondered, "Why should Koreans always be perfect like dad says?" "Why are Koreans so miserable in Japan?"

My parents knew what I was experiencing at school. After long discussions between the school and my parents, the teacher gave us a "special class" when I was in grade four. At that time, even the word "Korea" was scrupulously avoided. When one really needed
to use the word, it was called “there” as if “Korea” was a vulgar word, or it was whispered. But the teacher clearly said “Korea” out loud and explained why Koreans had been living in Japan. “Look at Ihhwa, she looks the same as you. You are all the same, thus, equal.” Something about what he said did not sit right, but after this class, my life became a little better. Looking back on this experience now, I think it was then that I began to consider the potential of education.

Unlike other Korean parents, my parents gave me only a Korean name. Most Korean children are given Japanese names, both the first and family name by their parents to avoid possible discrimination. It is not difficult. Since Koreans are similar to Japanese physically, and the third and fourth generations speak perfect Japanese, they are hardly distinguishable as Koreans unless their name reveals this. It is not surprising that they themselves do not know they are Korean, since their parents conceal their origins.

When I became sixteen years old, I had to report to city hall to register my fingerprints. I defaced my fingerprints using a needle one night before as my small resistance to this system. All foreign residents, including the third, fourth, even the fifth generation of Koreans, have to report to city hall for "alien registration" when they become sixteen. As they arrive at the age of adolescence, Korean students have to face the reality of who they really are, and begin to struggle with their identity. Some students decide to “come-out” as Korean, being encouraged to do so by teachers but discouraged by parents.

One Korean student stands up in homeroom hour and says, "Let me tell you something, I am a Korean, and my name is...." This emotional ceremony is called "Honmyo-sengen," or literally "the declaration of the real name." Since my school district covered a few Korean

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1 In the colonial age, the Japanese government forced Koreans to change their family (clan) name into a Japanese family name. Most Koreans in Japan still continue to use the Japanese name today.
2 Today, foreign permanent residents are “exempt” from registering fingerprints, but the “alien
communities, I saw many classmates suddenly “transformed” into Korean in this way. But every time I witnessed the ceremony, I wondered, "Why do we need this “ritual” just to say our own name?" Teachers working with this sensitive, difficult and troublesome issue, wondered as well "Why do they need this?" Then they ask, "Can't they simply be like Koreans in North America?"

I arrogantly thought that I was better than other Koreans who hid themselves by using their Japanese names. I used to call them "losers." I tried to be a "fine" Korean. I had already been using my Korean name but that was the only thing I had. I pretended to be able to speak Korean, to know everything about Korea. I glorified Korea as much as possible when I had an opportunity to talk about it to my friends.³

At the same time, I was frustrated. Even though I was successful in making people believe that I could speak Korean, I knew the truth: I was not the "fine" Korean my parents expected. Teachers and friends also expected me to be Korean. I was supposed to know everything about Korea. Moreover, people did not know anything about Zainich. They asked, "When did you come to Japan? Your Japanese is excellent!" How can I be a "fine" Korean? How can I make people understand Zainich?

I tried to find the answer. At university, I majored in history to study the relationship between Japan and Korea, joined a Korean student association, and started learning Korean traditional dance. I met all sorts of Korean youth with different types and degrees of "Koreaness." On the other hand, I faced obvious discrimination at job interviews even for part time jobs. I could be successful only if I used a Japanese name so that no one could tell I was Korean. How can I blame Koreans who are using Japanese names for life? I

³ This experience reminds me of a common experience of Yi Sun-Kyung. She reflects her memory of immigration to Canada in her autobiographical essay, Inside the Hermit Kingdom: a memoir (1997).
realized what it was like to be Korean in Japanese society. I released myself from becoming a "fine" Korean. It was an emotional and significant moment for me. After I quit looking at "how I want to be," I started looking at who I really was. I do not speak Korean, but so what? I felt as if I found a new kind of creature. My life became easy. But I started wondering what it would be like to "be myself."

Lastly, I should like to add my experience as a teacher. The position of full-time teacher was closed to foreign residents. Thus, as a part-time teacher, I taught Japanese history at a high school. It was a very sensitive job. There has been a lot of controversy around the historical perspective on relations between Japan and Korea. Moreover, since the public school system was established in the late 19th century, education in Japan has been devoted to making people "good Japanese" to build up a strong unity of nation-state conformity. Textbooks were censored by the government whose members often assert that Japan is a "mono-ethnic country." Japanese assimilationist education policy makes Korean students feel out of tune with school. There was no room for minority students and minority teachers.

These experiences brought me to Canada. Why can't we be like Koreans in North America? Koreans in North America are almost the dream and the object of the admiration of Japanese educators. I arrived in Vancouver where I found more Asians than I expected. I was surprised to see that Korean retail stores and restaurants are more "Korea-like" than we have in Japan, which is geographically closer to Korea. Korean television programmes and free Korean newspapers are readily available. Even though I had never heard about "Korean town" or "Little Seoul" like those in the U.S, I noticed small Korean communities here and there.

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4 The Japanese government censors all textbooks published each year. Statements about "comfort women" in history textbooks have been at issue.
5 Assimilationist nature of Japanese society is evident in the legislation related to the introduction of national flag and national anthem to public schools in 1999.
How do these stores and media function in the Korean community? My experiences have shaped my own personal interests and perceptions which constitute a “lens” for this study.

**Koreans in Two Different Spaces**

*Historical Situation*

There are huge differences between the situation of Koreans in Canada and Japan in terms of the history, population, social location and the social structure of their host country.

Briefly speaking, Korea is close to Japan geographically and thus these two countries have interacted with each other historically. Significant immigration history began when Korea was colonized by Japan in 1910. Many Koreans moved to, or were forced to come to Japan. Today, seven hundred thousand Korean descendants (one million, if those who obtained Japanese citizenship are included) are living in Japan. Korean immigrants have lived in Japan for generations, the fourth and fifth generation live there today.

On the other hand, Koreans were quite invisible in the immigration history of Canada. Korean immigrants are generally categorized as 'Asian' but this category is usually reserved largely for Chinese and Japanese Canadians. That is probably because Koreans were few in number before and during the Second World War; Koreans are a relatively new immigrant group. It was in the 1960s that the government of South Korea officially encouraged an exodus to Canada, the U.S, Brazil, West Germany and other countries. The movement to the United States began in 1965 and at the same time Koreans began to settle in Canada. (Yoo, 1999).

*Korean Population in Canada*

The Korean immigrant population has increased significantly during the last decade.
According to the Korean embassy in Canada, in the year 2000, 9,295 Koreans entered Canada representing 4.2 per cent of the total immigration. As of December 2000, the Korean community, totaling 140,896, has largely been concentrated in three areas of Canada. In Ontario, there are about 80,000 Koreans, mostly in the Toronto area. In British Columbia and Alberta, there are roughly 50,000 Koreans, mainly concentrated in Vancouver. In Montreal there are about 3,000 Koreans and about 1,300 in the Ottawa capital region. These statistics show that Vancouver is a significant destination for the Korean community in Canada.

The B.C. government reports that over the last decade, 43,200 immigrants arrived in Canada from South Korea. Approximately, 30% of them, or about 14,500 persons settled in British Columbia. Since 1992, Korea has always been ranked within the top ten immigrant sources to the province. Last year, Korea was ranked second in the number of immigrants under the self-employed class and third in the investor class. A majority of Korean immigrants came as members of a nuclear family, which is made up of middle-aged parents and teenaged children.

Of all the Korean immigrants who are 25 years or older and landed in B.C. between 1996 and 2000, almost 60% held a bachelor's degree or higher post graduate education. On the other hand, during the same period of time approximately 60% of immigrants landed without the ability to speak English. Most immigrants from Korea have settled in the Greater Vancouver area. About 95% of them who were destined for B.C. have reported an initial place of settlement within Greater Vancouver.

The number of persons who reported Korean as their single ethnic origin in the 1996 census was about 20,000 which is more than double that recorded in the 1991 census.

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6 http://www.emb-korea.ottawa.on.ca/html/overview.htm
7 Infoline Report, Oct. 5, 2001
The Korean language ranks tenth in B.C. as non-English mother tongue. This statistic indicates that Korean immigrants form a significant part of the population of B.C.

**Social Structure**

Japan and Canada are different in terms of diversity and self perception of their societies. The government and many Japanese citizens believe that Japan is a homogeneous country. In fact, Japan seems more homogeneous than Canada. The Korean population, the biggest minority group in Japan, is no more than one percent of the whole Japanese population. In addition, most of the foreign residents are physically indistinguishable from the Japanese. They are from close Asian countries such as Korea and China, and have lived in Japan for generations. Lately, more "visible" groups come from South America and South-East Asia, but they are referred to as "illegal workers." Japan denies the fact that it relies on immigrant workers who are not considered a part of Japanese society. In such a conformist society, any "difference" is rarely and individual ethnic identity is nothing but an impediment to social unity.

On the other hand, Canada is an immigration-based society. The immigration and citizenship policy differs from that of Japan. Canada consists of immigrants from all over the world and officially declares that it is a multicultural country. Individual ethnic identity is respected under the policy of multiculturalism.

Reflecting upon my own childhood experience, I used to wonder why people look at me differently though in my self-perception I look the same as other people. Now I wonder, How are Koreans perceived within a multicultural society, like Canada, as compared with the

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8 Citizenship in North America is given based on a person’s birth place while Japanese citizenship is given only to a descendant of a Japanese citizen. Though the issue of citizenship is an important factor in discussing the different social contexts of North America and Japan, it calls for more detailed study which I do not plan to enter into here (see Kennedy, 1997).
perception of them within a more homogeneous society like Japan? What difference does the location make?

Having recognized these differences between Japan and Canada, I return to the initial question which drives this study. How do the different national contexts have such vastly varied impacts on a similar cultural group or national minority such as Koreans? How do these contexts affect the group’s self-perception and behaviour?

**Study Objectives**

It was not until recently that the concept "multicultural education" was introduced in Japan. However, it is often misunderstood as we view the meaning ascribed through Japanese language. "Zainichi Gaikokujin Kyoiku" or “Foreign students education” focuses only on Zainichi to regain Korean students’ ethnicity in Japan. "Kokusai rikai kyoiku" or “International understanding education” tends to emphasize the importance of English education to communicate with foreigners. Under the name of “Tabunka Kyousei” or “multicultural co-living,” Koreans in Japan are targeted as “others” where the similarities tend to be emphasized rather than the differences. Nakajima (1998), who is one of the scholars to introduce studies on multicultural education to Japan, points out that Japan needs to employ the perspective of multicultural education for “all.” She further argues that multicultural education is not a model of education but an educational perspective. Thus, multicultural education in one country cannot simply be applied to another country since Japan does not share the same social system and underlying values as immigration-based Western countries. However, she suggests that comparative educational research is needed to discuss the broader picture of multicultural education.

Recognizing this point, I shift my focus to the Canadian counterpart. My first and foremost objective is to see how Korean students develop their identity in a multicultural
society. How do Korean students see themselves in Canada? How are Koreans seen by others? Are Korean students understood as "them" or as "us" in Canada?

Researchers in Canada in comparison with researchers in the U.S. have paid little attention to the identity issue of Korean immigrant students. Moreover, in North America there is a tendency to perceive all Asians as a homogeneous group without looking at the diversity of ethnicity, language, and immigration history. In the discourse of race, Asians in North America are talked about as a successful minority group both in Japan and North America, but this successful image masks the "problems" they face.

Under the homogenized image of Asians, less powerful minority groups such as Koreans are often ignored, or confused with other major Asian minorities such as Chinese and Japanese. I became interested in this "invisibility" of Koreans within the Asian group. How does this invisibility influence Korean students' self-concept? How are they incorporated into the larger "racial group" and society? Do they retain or lose their distinctive identity in Canadian society?

What distinguishes Korean students in Japan from their counterparts in Canada is the differential power held by these minorities. In Canada, as compared with Japan, there is public space made for difference through the policy of multiculturalism even though this is not perfectly and equitably implemented in ensuring equal life chances to all. Minorities have and can lay claim to greater equality of recognition. In Japan, minorities are peripheral groups who are non-assimilable regardless of how long they have been there. This is formal and traditional. The minorities are labelled 'aliens.' So, the power relations constitute a critical difference. Koreans in Japan occupy the position of a low status group. By contrast, Korean Canadians can appeal to the discrepancy between what the Canadian policy of multicultural professes and what it delivers. Another difference is that Korean Canadians move in and out of spaces in which they link with other minorities who are seen to be culturally similar. Such connections
are also fostered by the dominant group’s mistaken homogenisation of them as Asians. This together with the increasing critical mass of such homogenised Asian groups in parts of the city strengthens group ties and young children don’t always see themselves as a minority. This is evident in the greater use of Asian languages informally in the public sphere which is unlike earlier waves of immigrants who were embarrassed to use their languages in public. This thesis looks at the way in which Korean Canadians negotiate their identities between different reference groups and draws some comparisons with the residents of Korean descent in Japan.

Recognizing these points, this study aims to investigate how Korean students in Canada develop their identity in relationship with others in a multicultural society. The study objectives are:

1) to determine the influence of immigration on students’ identity development
2) to examine the cultural and racial experience in different situations
3) to discuss how Korean students situate themselves and develop their self-concepts in relationship with others. In order to do so, the study will explore how Koreans in Canada see themselves, how they think they are viewed by others and what they aspire to become in the future.

**Overview of the Chapters**

This study consists of six chapters. Chapter one gives an overview of the focus of the study and provides the historical situation of Korean immigrants in Canada. Chapter two presents an extensive literature review in the areas relating to the study. Chapter three outlines the design of the study and the interview procedure. Chapter four introduces the research participants for this study and presents the findings from Korean students’ stories of immigration experience and cultural and racial encounters in daily life. Chapter five discusses
the construction of Korean students' identities. Chapter six presents the conclusion and the implications of this study.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the relevant literature for this study. This literature review mainly focuses on the formation of identity. Firstly, I examine the approaches to the study of ethnic minorities. Secondly, I examine the concepts of "diasporic identity" and "globalisation." Thirdly, I review the theoretical perspectives of "symbolic interactionism" to explore the construction of one's identity in relation to others. Finally, I look at the literature on identity in terms of a broader "Asian" identity and a narrower "Korean" ethnicity.

Theoretical Framework of Identity

A substantial literature exists on the issue of identity. It would be an overwhelming task to review all of this here. Therefore, I review (1) approaches to the study of ethnicity, (2) the concept of ethnic minority, (3) I delimit my attention to two central concepts and processes: "diaspora" and "globalisation" to re-examine the questions of culture and identity formation.

Ethnicity and Ethnic Minorities

The term "ethnicity" is the one most frequently used in the literature on identity issues. Isajiw (1999) explains four approaches to the study of ethnicity which is conceived as 1) a primordial phenomenon, 2) an epiphenomenon, 3) a situational phenomenon and 4) a subjective phenomenon.

The primordialist approach argues that ethnicity is something given, ascribed at birth, deriving from the kin- and clan structure of human society, hence something more or less fixed and permanent. Ethnicity as an epiphenomenon was derived from Marxist theory. It argues that ethnic or race relations are merely one aspect of framing exploitation of labour by the capitalist class. Ethnicity and race are viewed as false consciousness. They have no reality of
their own, but are categories constructed for exploitation and profit. The situational approach focuses on the shifting nature of identity as something that can be asserted or downplayed by members of a minority group. Individuals may choose to be regarded as members of an ethnic group if they find it to their advantage. The subjectivist approach sees ethnicity as basically a social-psychological reality or a matter of self-identification and perception of “us” and “them.” This study applies a subjectivist approach, focusing on how people see themselves, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The term “minority group” is frequently used synonymously with ethnic minorities, yet there are endless types of minorities. Although minorities are sociological in nature, they are assumed to be numerical minorities. This is not always the case. In apartheid South Africa for instance, the minority constituted the majority population, who, despite their numbers, were politically powerless.

Definitions of minority include the following features: 1) shared disadvantage, 2) common discrimination, 3) sense of belonging and ‘fictive kinship’ based on their experience of discrimination, 4) a common spatial location.

In the literature on ethnicity, an ethnic minority group is often regarded as being defined by its relation to and interaction with other groups. According to the power-dominance criterion, we can distinguish between majority ethnic groups and minority ethnic groups (Isajiw 1999). Thus, ethnic minority is defined in relation to the ethnic majority within a specific society. There are differentiations as well, based on the structural location and political context of the place of settlement.

**Categories of Ethnic Minority— Ogbu’s Framework**

One study tries to describe the different experiences of the same ethnic group in different contexts. Lee (1994) explains the different levels of academic achievement between
Koreans in the U.S. and in Japan. Applying Ogbu's theory (Ogbu, 1978), she categorizes Korean-Americans as a "voluntary minority" and Koreans in Japan as an "involuntary minority." She carefully analyses differences in immigration history, social structure and the status of Koreans. This comparative study, however, only poses additional questions: What makes the difference between their identity development in North America and Japan?

Different levels of achievement among minority groups have sometimes been analysed in terms of the differing historical and structural contexts in which they are located. Ogbu distinguishes voluntary minorities and involuntary minorities (Ogbu, 1978; Ogbu & Simons, 1998). "Voluntary minorities" are those who have generally moved to their present societies because they believed that the move would lead to economic well-being, better overall opportunities or greater political freedom. They are willing to accommodate and to accept less equal treatment in order to improve their chances for economic success. "Involuntary minorities" include those who were brought into their present society through slavery, conquest or colonization. Ogbu argues that involuntary minorities experience more difficulty in dealing with cultural, linguistic, and structural barriers in school than voluntary minorities. Ogbu's theory has two major parts: the way minorities are treated or mistreated in education and the way minorities respond to schooling.

Structural barriers and school factors affect minority school performance; however, minorities are also autonomous human beings who actively interpret and respond to their situation. Minorities are not helpless victims. (Ogbu & Simons, 1998, p.158)

He points out the different reactions to dominant white school culture from minority groups, and argues that differences among minorities cannot be explained only by cultural differences. He suggests "community forces" also constitute a factor influencing minority school performance.

Ogbu's typology has influenced many studies focusing on different academic
achievement among minority groups. However, many recent qualitative studies have pointed out that patterns of variability between and within ethnic minority groups cannot be explained by the voluntary/involuntary minority framework. Gibson (1997) notes that first, it does not explain the success of many minority students, second, it ignores language, and finally, it lacks empirical evidence. She challenges Ogbu's framework and points out that categorizing groups in voluntary (immigrants) or involuntary minorities is not an appropriate approach. She also suggests that students' school performance is influenced by their assimilation patterns—upward, downward or without assimilation—and by gender and generation. Treuba (1988) points out that Ogbu's theory does not acknowledge significant differential responses within a single ethnic group and its categorization is not supported by enough empirical evidence. He insists that intellectual development is socially and culturally based and that what happens in the home, school, and local community is crucial to understanding the learning processes and academic achievement of all children, including minority children. Social forces alone are not the full explanation for differential achievement within and between minority groups.

Based on Ogbu's theory, Korean immigrant students in Canada are categorized as a "voluntary minority." Ogbu's categorization poses a question: can it be said that children of an immigrant family voluntarily came to a new country? Many studies have addressed the question of minority group school performance. Good school performance ameliorates the problems which students may experience.

This way of looking at ethnic relations, in terms of academic achievement and a relation between strictly localised minorities and majorities, is inadequate to describe a minority student group's experiences. Also, "culture" is used uncritically to address concepts of 'adaptation' and 'acculturation' in the process of transformation of identity.

Different groups of people move from place to place at different times. It has become much easier to cross borders in the contemporary world. Not only people, but also materials
and information can fly in a short time due to the development of technology. The past century can be said to be the age of mass movement, and the movement has changed the notion of time and location. Hall (1992) argues that a distinctive type of structural change is transforming modern societies in the late twentieth century, and these transformations shift our personal identities. There is a need for more adequate concepts in order to describe the specific experiences of minority students in a modern world.

**Diasporic Identity**

Originally, the concept of diaspora referred to the dispersal of the Jews from their historic homeland. Today, it is often used to describe various well-established communities which have an experience of 'displacement.' As defined by a workshop of political scientists meeting in Jerusalem in 1982, diaspora refers to “a minority ethnic group of migrant origin in a host country which maintains sentimental or material links with its land of origin” (Sheffer, 1986; Landau, 1986). The contemporary meaning of “Diaspora” makes it a useful concept to understand the relationship between identity and space. The study of immigration and assimilation has largely given way to this new diasporic discourse which is interested in transnational networks and communities (Lie, 1995).

Scholars such as Safran (1991) and Cohen (1997) suggest the following list of key characteristics of diaspora as:

1) Dispersal from their homeland to two or more foreign regions;
2) A collective memory and myth about their original homeland;
3) The belief that they are not fully accepted in the host societies;
4) Idealizing the ancestral home and the belief that their descendants should return, if conditions allow;
5) The belief that all members of the diaspora should be committed to the maintenance or restoration of the original homeland;
6) Continued relations to the homeland and their ethnic consciousness and solidarity are in an important way defined by the existence of such a relationship.

In sum, the contemporary meaning of diaspora refers to one ethnic group in the place
where one lives, but still having the memories and shared histories of the place--imaginary homeland--from which one or one's ancestors have come.

The concept of diaspora is the notion of border and the reference to the theme of location. Diasporic space is the point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of 'us' and 'them' are contested (Brah, 1996, p.209). Home is remembered as a mythic place, a place of origin to which one can return, and also as the lived experience of a locality. According to Brah, the question of home is linked with the way in which the process of inclusion or exclusion operates. She distinguishes between "feeling at home" and "home." The homing desire is not the same as the desire for a 'homeland.' The multi-placedness of home in the diaspora does not mean that diasporian subjectivity is 'rootless' (p.197).

Diaspora has a common memory and history of homeland. Cohen (1997) discusses that diaspora has a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including location, history and achievement. Brah (1996) explains that diasporas are "often composite formations made up of many journeys to different parts of the globe, each with its own history, its own particularities" (p.183).

Brah further maintains that the concept of diaspora signals "the process of multi-locationality across geographical, cultural and psychic boundaries" (p.194) and specifies "a matrix of economic, political and cultural inter-relationship which contrasts the community between the various components of a dispersed group" (p.196). It is no longer assumed that immigrants "make a sharp break from their homelands" (Lie, 1995).

Diaspora has transnational experience as a very basic dimension, and lives in transnational networks, with mental connections to their homeland. Thus, diasporic identities are at once local and global. They are networks of transnational identifications encompassing 'imagined' and 'encountered' communities (Brah, 1996, p.196).

The word 'diaspora' often recalls the images of separation and dislocation. However, it is
not confined to memories of dislocation. Brah further discusses that diasporas are also sites of hope and new beginnings for the future. Hall (1990) argues that identity belongs to the future, as well as the past. He argues the aspect of cultural identity is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. He views cultural identity as:

not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical they undergo constant transformation... Far from being grounded in a mere ‘recovery’ of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (p. 225)

The concept of diaspora challenges the old form of ethnicity. Hall uses the word “diaspora” as experience:

not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference, by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. (emphasis in original, p. 235)

Diasporic identity shifts by place and time and is waiting to be found. The concept of diaspora helps us to understand the difference that the spaces make, and the complex processes of making multi-locational identities and cultures of diasporas. It can give us a deeper understanding of the social reality in which minority students live.

Globalisation

The establishment of transnational communities is facilitated by globalisation in the contemporary world. “Globalisation” refers to the internationalization of capitalism and the rapid circulation and flow of information and visual images around the world. Technological developments enable these movements to cut across the border of nations. Modern technology has clearly made it easier to sustain transnational social networks. McGrew (1992) explains that globalisation is “the multiplicity of linkages and
interconnections that transcend the nation-states (and by implication the societies) which make up the modern world system” (p. 65). “Globalisation” is significantly theorized by two authors, Giddens and Harvey. Giddens (1990) argues that “modernity increasingly tears space away from place by fostering relations between ‘absent’ others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction” (p.18) and refers it as “time-space distanciation” (p.14). Harvey (1989) points out the “speeding-up” of the economic and social processes of the world and labels the “time-space compression.” He argues that “time-space compression” has had a “disorienting and disruptive impact upon political–economic practices, the balance of class power, and social life” (p. 284).

Globalisation has changed the notion of time and space, and this change affects the formation of cultural identities; it challenges the notion that identity is fixed in time and space. Globalisation interconnects two different spaces and as a result, new identities of hybridity take place. Thus, it weakens and undermines national identities, yet, there are frequently counterassertions of identity in resistance to the push for homogenization induced by globalisation. Mathews (2000) redefines the meaning of culture by combining the earlier idea of culture, “the way of life of a people,” with a more contemporary concept of culture, “the information and identities available from the global cultural supermarket” (p. 9). He introduces the aspect of identity influenced by the “market” and suggests that the market is the greatest force to erode national identity in the world today.

[ETHNIC IDENTITY IS OFTEN BASED ON THE IDEA OF A PARTICULAR PEOPLE BELONGING TO A PARTICULAR PLACE. MARKET IDENTITY, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS BASED ON BELONGING TO NO PARTICULAR PLACE, BUT RATHER TO THE MARKET IN BOTH ITS MATERIAL AND CULTURAL FORMS- IN MARKET-BASED IDENTITY, ONE’S HOME IS ALL THE WORLD. (P.9)]

The concept of “globalisation” helps us to understand how different spaces are interconnected and how a “smaller world” affects the shaping of identity.

As a result of the massive population movement from Korea to Japan and China during
the Second World War, to North and South America and Europe in 1960s, and to Middle-East Asia recently, Koreans have been settling all over the world. How do Koreans fit into each space? The concepts of "diaspora" and "globalisation" lead us to raise several questions: How have Koreans adapted to Canada and Japan? How does a "place" shape Korean identity? How does the policy of location influence identity development? What is the difference between being a minority in a multicultural society and in an assimilationist society? How do Korean immigrants respond to the pressure to integrate? (Kymlicka, 1998) How do they 'imagine' their place of origin and how do they live in an 'encountered' community? What is the relationship between an individual and society?

**Formation of Identity: Symbolic Interactionism**

As I mentioned above, there are four approaches to looking at ethnic identity. One, symbolic interactionism, explains that identity is formed in the interaction between "self" and "society" and what Mead (1934) terms "significant others." Language and symbols play an important part in how people construct their identities. Hewitt (1984) explains "symbolic interactionism":

Knowing and acting, in the pragmatist view are intimately linked: we act on the basis of our ideas about the world. The reality of the world is not merely something that is "out there" waiting to be discovered by us, but is actively created as we act in and toward the world. (p.9)

Symbolic interactionism asserts that we can see ourselves only through the other's eye. Self is always the object to oneself as "me," as well as to others.

We know ourselves indirectly and socially by imaging the responses of others to us. Likewise, we are able to grasp the situation of which we are a part by assuming the perspectives of others. (Hewitt, 1984, p.75)

An individual internalises the outside society, and changes the society one belongs to as well. Individuals are shaped subjectively through their membership of, and participation in,
wider social relationships. The individual internalises the outside, and externalises the inside. The processes and structures are sustained by the roles which individuals play in them. Mead (1934) argues:

As a man adjusts himself to a certain environment he becomes a different individual; but in becoming a different individual he has affected the community in which he lives. It may be a slight effect, but in so far as he has adjusted himself, the adjustments have changed the type of the environment to which he can respond and the world is accordingly a different world. There is always a mutual relationship of the individual and the community in which the individual lives. (p. 215)

Thus, symbolic interactionists argue that self-concept is “the images of themselves people see reflected in others” (Hewitt, 1984, p.117). We see ourselves through the eyes of others. This concept which explains the relationship between self and society is useful in discussing the diasporic identity.

**Portrayals of Identities**

A more recent variant of the description of minorities relates to their achievement profile. This has given rise to ranking minorities hierarchically and, at the same time, homogenising groups into newer collectivities. In this section I look at Korean immigrant students in light of “race” and “ethnic” identity and present the portrayals of Korean students.

**Portrayals of Asian Students**

*Model minority.* The body tells who you are. Physical attributes can be the first information about a person to others (Omi & Winant, 1994). The racialised body is seen to anchor the imaginative identifications of “Asian” (Palumbo-Liu,1999). In school, Korean students are more likely to be categorized as “Asian students.” There also seems to be a fixed image of Asian students. Many studies focus on the different profiles of school performance among minority groups. This contributes to the creation of new stereotypes of Asian students.
as a "model-minority" despite studies showing the potential danger of stereotypes and
generalizations. According to the model-minority stereotype, Asian students are quiet and
polite, they value education and work hard. Also, there seems to be a general tendency to
consider all Asian students as one group because Asian students seem alike to many teachers.
As Pang (1990) and McCarthy (1995) state, there is a need to focus more on the diversity
within race and minority groups.

minorities respond to the dominant school culture. She points out, "By describing Asian
Americans as model minorities, the diverse and complex experiences of Asian Americans
remain hidden" (Lee, 1996, p. 5) She argues that Ogbu's work does not explain the problems
of Asian American students who are low achievers:

Asian Americans do not see themselves as being the same, they do not share a common
attitude regarding future opportunities and they do not share a common attitude toward
schooling. (Lee, 1994, p. 428)

Lee describes the pressure that the model minority stereotypes place on Asian students
and how these stereotypes influence how they see themselves. However, Lee still tends to link
them all as "Asian." Though many studies admit there is a problem with ignorance of diversity
(Pang, 1990; Lee, 1993), most fail to give specific examples of the diversity within the group
labelled “Asian.” As Hartman and Askounis (1989) point out, it is also important to recognise
diversity within each national group as well as inter-group differences.

Despite the wide ranging distribution of educational achievement among Asian groups,
it is usually the high achievers that receive publicity and media attention and contribute to the
creation of the myth of "model minority." This perception of "model minorities" led to an
indifference toward Asians as victims of racial intolerance and hostility rather than being
racially motivated harassment (Do, 1996). Despite the myth, the "model minority" image does
not reflect the social reality for most Asians (Lee, 1991).
Sleeter and Grant (1994) maintain that members of the dominant group are often comfortable with the "accepting" attitude of minority groups—those who accept teacher authority and a euro-centric curriculum. Thus teachers who hold favorable attitudes toward these groups affect Korean students’ self-expectation. Not only students' perceptions of teachers' expectations of their educational achievement, but also peer groups' educational expectation affect their self-expectation of educational achievement (Lee, 1991).

**Homogenized categorization and pan-ethnicity.** “Pan-ethnicity” is the shared identity among different ethnic groups within one racial group. “Asian,” “Oriental,” “Yellow,” and “Mongolian” have been used as convenient labels by outsiders in North America to refer to all Asians. Lott (1998) points out that the homogenizing feature of the racial classification of Asians in America is rooted in their geographical origins from the Asian continent. On the other hand, Blacks were not identified initially by their African origins, but by their skin colour (p.27). How then do Asians identify themselves? Do they share an Asian identity? How do they form this pan-ethnic identity?

Espiritu (1992) defines Asian American pan-ethnicity as evolving from the categorisation of Asian national groups by dominant groups, as well as in response to the categorisation by Asian-Americans themselves. Although pan-ethnicity originated in the minds of outsiders, she further states that by adopting the dominant group’s categorisation of them, Asian Americans have instituted pan-Asianism as their political instrument in order to enlarge their own capabilities to challenge and transform the existing structure of power. At the same time, Asians feel pressure to link with other like groups and to consider themselves Asian Americans.

Espiritu refers to the political nature of pan-ethnicity. Using Espiritu’s study, Lee (1996) argues that Asian-identified Korean students share the identity of other Asian students through
the experience of racism. In the literature on pan-ethnicity, the shared experience of being a victim of racism is considered vital in the formation of a pan-ethnic identity.

On the other hand, Trottier (1981) argues that Asian-Americans are not a pan-ethnic group because they do not share a common culture. In reality, “Asians” are comprised of dissimilar peoples with different linguistic, cultural, geographical, and historical interactions, and yet they are seen as having the same, or similar characteristics to one another. Asians in North America rarely conceive of themselves as a single people. Võ (2000) explores which groups actually “belong” in this racialised category. Asian Americans disagree about including South Asians or Pacific Islanders in the Asian American group. Even those who agreed to include “boat people” in the Asian group, tried to distance themselves from this group. Võ discusses the complexities of exclusion and inclusion of Asian American boundaries and concludes that the boundaries of Asian Americans are multiple and situational.

How then are these boundaries generated? Who is included and who is excluded? In the larger group of Asians, what connects their diverse backgrounds to each other? What differences disappear in the affiliation of different cultural groups (Cohen, 1981) and how do new forms of culture generate? Who dominates? What is the position of Korean students in an “Asian” group?

**Portrayals of Korean Students**

Little research has been done on Korean immigration and Korean identity in Canada in comparison with research in the U.S. As I have discussed, this study aims at investigating the difference that location makes. Therefore, it is relevant to review studies on Korean identity in the United States because Canada and the U.S. are geographically close and have similar Korean immigration histories. Both are immigrant-based countries and, to some extent, share North American culture. In this section, I will review the literature focusing on cultural
experiences and the development of Korean identity.

**Korean identity at home.** Studies on Korean-Americans show that Korean family ties and kinship are strong and the Confucian tradition is maintained. (Kim & Hurh, 1993; Kim, 1993) Thus, parent opinion has a great impact on Korean students' behaviour. In particular, parents expect them to do well in school and to be successful in the host country and this influences their children's school performance.

As Ogbu and Simons (1998) note, community force is important in determining minority students' school performance. Kim (1993) uses Ogbu's framework to discuss Korean students in the U.S. and shows us the effect of a strong community force on Korean students as a voluntary minority. She interviewed 40 Korean-American college students, examined the pattern of career choice among them, and analyzed how that pattern reflects their immigrant parents' cultural model of success. Korean students internalize their parents' values and work ethics, and choose the high status occupations such as doctor, lawyer or engineer. In order to do so, "doing well at school" almost always means being Korean. "Career identity (defined as being a good student) is, then, equated with Koreaness or ethnic identity" (Kim, 1993, p.241). These studies view Korean students' academic achievement as influenced primarily by family and community pressure to succeed academically.

However, conflicting identities are sometimes seen at home between students and their parents. Parent-child conflict happens because of the differences in speed of assimilation between children and their parents (Kim, 1990; Kim & Hurh, 1993; Hynie, 1998).

Family migration from a traditional collectivist culture to a highly individualistic culture could change family values, especially those of young children. Children are quicker to absorb the new culture's individualistic values than their parents are and thus may find themselves in direct conflict with their parents' values and expectations (Hynie, 1998; Yoo, 1999).
Immigration affects gender roles in the family. Women's employment and their income changes the husbands' dominance in the family. But Hynie (1998) argues that immigrant women from collectivist countries try to maintain their traditional women's roles and their conflict is not visible at home because "most immigrant families have access to psychological mechanisms for coping with acculturation that ease them through the transition to the new culture and maintain family harmony" (5.1). Traditional gender roles are maintained in the Korean family. Kim's (1993) study shows us that Korean parents expect the same high academic success of both their sons and daughters but different future careers. That is, parents expect their daughters to have "good" but less stressful jobs because they are supposed to be good wives as well.

In Korea the daughters are more closely supervised by their parents than are the sons. Korean males and females have quite different experiences in their relationships with their parents. Kim (1980) argues that "a small amount of behavioral change, as a result of assimilation, in the female immigrant adolescents may create a great amount of expectancy-reinforcement discrepancy between the parents and daughters" (p.237). Korean females may create a more intensive value conflict with their parents than males. Kim's study also states that the parent-child value conflict is reduced by the mother's acculturation, not by the father's. Kim and Hurh (1993) point out that the employment of immigrant wives change the family-kinship system that Korean immigrants brought with them from their native country. Mothers' roles and their value shifts seem to have an impact on the value conflict experienced by children.

**Korean identity at school.** According to Ogbu, Koreans as a voluntary minority group are willing to accommodate and to accept the dominant culture in order to be successful. Do they then assimilate to the dominant culture to be successful at school? How do they negotiate
these two identities?

Kim (1993) observed Korean students in U.S. and argues that Korean students view their *dual* identity as additive and complementary, not as oppositional and conflicting. Becoming American does not cause conflict for most Korean immigrants. On the other hand, Lee (1994) examined Asian students' identity and points out that Korean students identified themselves not as Asians or Asian Americans, but *solely* as Koreans.

Ogbu argues that voluntary immigrant students fit easily into the host society because of their ability to assimilate into the host culture. Gibson (1997), on the other hand, argues that "accommodation and acculturation without assimilation." Preserving the immigrant culture and adopting selective acculturation can lead to rapid upward mobility.

Students may resist what they perceive as acts of oppression within school while at the same time pursue strategies that enable them to be academically successful. High academic performance need not imply conformity, nor must it entail the rejection of one's identity. (Gibson, 1997, p. 442)

Nieto (1999) also asks “whether it is necessary to give up part of oneself to be successful” (p.290). She emphasizes the fact that:

*The more students are involved in resisting assimilation while maintaining their culture and language, the more successful they will be in school.* That is, cultural maintenance, even if conflicted, seems to have a positive impact on academic success. (emphasis in original, p.290)

Schools participate in creating the students' self-esteem, and self-concept is the reflection of policies and practices of school and society. School curriculum is a central concern of the study of multicultural education. However, in school curriculum, more "visible" cultures tend to be represented (Nieto, 1999). Is Korean culture represented in school curriculum and other school activities? How is it represented? What is it like to be a Korean in a Canadian school?

*Korean identity and socialization.* Lee (1994, 1996) discusses the formation of
immigrant students' identities focusing on Korean students. She categorises the students she observed into four categories such as a) Korean students who identified themselves as Koreans, b) students who identified themselves as Asians, c) New Wavers who are relatively recent immigrants, and d) students who identified themselves as Asian-Americans.

Students identifying themselves as "Koreans" see differences between themselves and other Asians and tend to think Koreans are better than other Asians in terms of social class. These students attempt to distance themselves from other Asians and get closer to white students. Their parents encourage their children to learn the "American way" and to accommodate to the white majority, but still encourage them to maintain Korean traditions. Korean identified students develop "dual identities."

In general, students who identify themselves as "Asian" associate solely with other students of Asian descent. These students said that they were more comfortable being with other Asians because they shared similar cultures. They internalise the Asian-American model minority myth and make efforts to realise it. Even though these students express a pan-ethnic identity, language differences and the political situation of their native countries often become the source of interethnic tensions.

"New Wavers" are ethnic Chinese, Vietnamese, or Cambodian students who came to the United States in the second and third waves of refugee arrivals. Unlike Korean-identified and Asian-identified students, they do not consider education as the key to success. They are criticised by high-achieving, Asian-identified students for giving Asians a bad name.

Students who identify as "Asian-American" are mostly those who came to the U.S. when they were young children. Unlike Korean-, Asian-, and New Wave-identified students who refer to white people as Americans, Asian-American identified students see themselves as Americans as well as Asians.

Lee's study shows us the complexity of, and ethnic relations within one racial group
and the various Korean, Asian and American identities. Lee’s categorisation of Asian students based on self-identification gives this study a useful framework in order to see how Korean students see themselves. In addition, her study shows that students in each category have different socialisation patterns. However, her discussion tends to focus on academic achievement and does not show us how these identities have emerged and developed.

**Summary and Questions**

In summary, studies on identity state that:

1) Koreans who tend to accept the dominant culture as a means of achieving success in the host society are categorized as a “voluntary minority.”

2) The concept of diaspora looks at the relationship between identity and space. Diasporic identity maintains connection to the country of origin as well as establishing a connection to the country of settlement. Thus, diasporic identity is local and global, and has multiple homes. Globalisation has interconnected different places to facilitate the emergence of diaspora.

3) Identity is formed in the ‘interaction’ between self and society. We see ourselves the way others see us.

4) There is a tendency to see Asian students as a “model minority.” This hinders a nuanced understanding of the diversity of Asians and the problems they may encounter apart from school performance. This homogenized categorization by the dominant group and the shared experience of racism among Asians lead them to create a pan-ethnic identity.

5) Korean students tend to internalize their parents’ values and work ethics, but their values influenced by the new culture’s individualistic values, sometimes conflict with their parents’ traditional values and expectations.

6) Students’ identity development emanates from (a) family and community culture, (b)
school culture such as curriculum and expectations from teachers, and (c) students' own peer group experiences and the way these three cultural forces interact with one another.

Then, how have Korean students' transnational experiences influenced their identity development? How do they develop their identity in the country of settlement? In the new country, how do Korean students see themselves? How do they view their future? How are Korean students in Canada seen in different situations? How do these perspectives of others influence the shaping of Korean students' own identity? Which identities are encouraged and which are discouraged by the school? (Lee, 1996) And, how are Korean students connected to the country of origin? What do Korean student identities tell us about the formation of ethnic/racial identity?
Chapter Three: Research Design and Method

Recognizing the fluid nature of identity development, this study aims at explaining one minority group's daily experience using "culture." In order to describe and understand the complex nature of identity development, this study applies a qualitative methodology. The interview method was used as the main means of data collection.

Interview Method and Life History

Ethnography attempts to grapple with the understanding of an “other” (Palys, 1997, p.207). Ethnography involves describing a cultural perspective rather than an individual perspective (Fetterman, 1998). While literary, quantitative, and historical analyses have contributed to looking at the social life of Asian Americans, Manalansan IV (2000) points out that ethnography has not contributed much to the study of Asian American communities.

Although this study is not strictly speaking an ethnography, I try to describe the lived experience of the diaspora as ethnographers do. Hence, I conducted ethnographic interviews in order to describe one cultural group's patterns of thought and behavior which influence their identity development. Symbolic interactionists argue that we can report our inner experiences, and thus, they become observable. In order to observe "unobservable" human behavior, the research was conducted through in-depth interpretive interviews. Students' stories spoken in their own words, that is, "self-reflective autobiographical accounts" portray their border crossings across multiple positionings (Brah, 1996).

Life histories are quite personal, and the individual cannot completely represent the group. But life histories provide "a unique look at how the individual thinks and how personal and cultural values shape his or her perception of the past" (Fetterman, 1998, p.51). Goodson and Sikes (2001) distinguish “life history” from “life story.” “Life stories” are lives interpreted
by the informant and made textual. They are already removed from life experiences, and life history work is interested in the way people narrate their lives. "Life history" adds a further interpretation employing a new range of interviews and documentary data.

The distinction between life stories or narratives and life histories is, then, a crucial one. By providing contextual data, the life stories can be seen in the light of changing patterns of time and space in testimony and action as social constructions. (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 17)

Lie (1995) points out that personal experiences and narratives occupy a singularly important role in the transnational diaspora literature. Therefore, it can be said that life history method is useful to investigating Korean students' diasporic identities.

**Selecting a Target Population**

This study focuses on Korean students who are currently enrolled in universities and who have graduated from secondary schools in British Columbia. Participants were selected through a snowballing approach.

The data were collected by formal and informal interviews conducted with each participant. I asked questions about: (1) students' school experiences and perspectives of school, (2) students' experiences at home, (3) students' future plans, (4) students' experiences with other ethnic groups, (5) students' experiences with other Korean students, and (6) students' views and experiences relating to Korean culture.

First, I expected participants to describe their experience in both Korean and Canadian school and their adjustment to a new school. Secondly, due to the researcher's limited grasp of the Korean language, students had to be able to speak English well enough to communicate with me who speaks English as a second language. Then, I targeted university students as I believed they would be guaranteed to be able to express themselves in English. First or second year university students, whose memories of high school days were still fresh and who
possibly maintained a relationship with their high school friends were preferred. Thirdly, those students who had to immigrate with their family were sought out in order to approach their experience at home. Korean international students were excluded from this study. In addition, the gender balance was considered in order to investigate the gender issue.

Thus, the criteria to select the participants of this study were established as follows: In order to investigate the experience of Korean immigrants students, ten (five male and five female) Korean university students were selected for the study. All students 1) had graduated from a secondary school in Greater Vancouver, 2) were older than 18 years (first or second year university students preferred), 3) remembered having some experience at schools in Korea, and 4) had immigrated to Canada with their family. The number of students whom I interviewed is small. However, what I hope to emanate from this thesis are insights which I hope to gain from the in-depth probing of how their identities are constructed. The aim of this study is to reveal shared patterns of experiences or interpretation within a group of people who have some characteristic, attribute or experience in common. Adequacy depends not upon quantity, but upon the richness of the data and the nature of the aspect of life being investigated (Morse 1994; Goodson & Sikes, 2001).

**Data Collection and Procedures**

To collect the data needed for this project, some archival research was conducted first to understand the historical dimension of Korean immigration.

Initial contact letters, which described the purpose of the study, were sent to students. Students were asked to phone or e-mail the researcher if they were willing to participate.

I sent out 45 contact letters. I selected ten (five male five female) qualified students out of 12 students who responded to the contact letter. I received my first reply in April, 2001 and the last interview was completed in October, 2001. Selecting participants and arranging a
meeting place and time were influenced by the transit strike at the time. Students were asked to fill in an informed consent form which I handed to participants.

I conducted open-ended interviews with each participant. Each formal interview, lasting between one and two hours, took place at an agreed-upon location, such as a cafeteria on the university campus, a coffee shop near campus, or the researcher’s home. In the beginning, I outlined the focus and purpose of my study and asked students to reply to each sub-question. The interviews were tape-recorded with students’ permission. In order to produce “thick description” (Geertz 1973), I wrote down the language dynamics, embodied interactions, and influence of the public sphere in my field notes.

After the interview, a letter or e-mail was sent to the student to thank him or her for participating. Students were asked to return any changes of what they talked about in the interview. Two students did so after the interview.

**Researcher's Position and Role**

The most important work for the researcher was to develop a healthy rapport with participants. Being a Korean can provide one with entrée, yet that does not give one instant rapport with other Koreans (Võ, 2000). As a third generation person of Korean descent in Japan, I have inner knowledge of Korean culture, including some language and behaviors. In an interview or any other interaction, researchers are asked to be sensitive to the group's cultural norms.

Võ (2000) reviews the debates regarding the ethnic “insider-versus-outsider” perspectives in ethnographic studies. She criticizes this simplistic binary framework for reproducing essentialized notions of the racial and cultural group while glossing over other important issues, such as class, generational and political differences. In agreement with Võ, Kang (2000) discusses the aspect of researching co-ethnics and suggests that:
An ethnographic “insider” is one who enters reflectively into the world of the research subjects and excavates situational knowledge from close involvement in interactive social processes. The ethnographic “outsider” would then be one who asserts the separation of participant and observer, refrains from influencing the field site and the lives of the respondents, targets a standardized, representative sample of the population, and strives for the elimination of any context effects. (pp.39-40)

Being one of the Koreans from the diaspora who shares the tie to a certain place, culture and history, and an international student from Japan who may leave Canada after the completion of the study, my position as a researcher can described neither as “insider” nor “outsider.” My loss of Korean language and the impression of Koreans in Japan, which participants may have, may have interfered with building of participant-researcher rapport.

Researchers must be aware of the power dynamics that lie between the researcher and the participants. Participating in official academic research, and the researcher’s position of being an M.A. student and being older than the student-participants, may intimidate young undergraduate students. In order not to arouse unnecessary tension between the researcher and participants, I tried to avoid any authoritative words and tried to create a casual atmosphere. I also tried to make participants comfortable thorough pre-interview interaction. The meeting place for the interview was selected carefully. I asked the participant his or her choice of convenient time and place, or I gave them some options from which to choose. I arranged the environment for participants to comfortably reveal deeper layers of information and themselves.

**Ethical Consideration**

Participants were given a clear explanation of the proposal, the reason for the study, and the important role they played within this process. As for the protection of the rights of participants, all the participants filled out an informed consent form at the beginning of the interview. All the data were treated as confidential and participants were given alternative
names in the data. Their interviews were recorded only when the researcher received permission to do so from the participants. The data has not and will not be shown to anyone but the researcher and the supervisory committee.

**Data Analysis and Writing**

Interviews were transcribed in the order they occurred. The data was reviewed intensively to find the patterns and "themes" throughout each individual case study and across case studies.

First, the researcher looked for "themes in personal narrative" from each case study in order to see coherent discourses in his or her story with a variety of topics which might characterise each case;

To date, the method has consisted of an informal content analysis, where statements with a related focus are abstracted from the text and examined for pattern. The foci used to abstract statements have been the fundamental categories of human experience so often discussed in a variety of social sciences and humanities. Typical categories include areas such as space, time, social others (both individual and institutional) and religion. (Agar, 1980)

The researcher identified each case study's themes, categories and coherent discourse and then aimed to find "cultural themes" (Spradley, 1979) in order to classify the data into domains according to the events and perspectives. The themes from each case study were compared with each other in respect to the essential events, the same and different perspectives toward the same event, and other personal stories. The case studies shared some similar characteristics and showed some differences.

The cultural themes that appeared from each case study and among case studies were contrasted repeatedly to find the relationship with other domains and the relationship to the whole in order to draw a whole map of the Korean students' identity development in a multicultural society.
Significance of the Study

This study describes one minority group's identity development in a multicultural context. Shedding light on Korean students, an invisible minority among minorities, the data tells us the complex nature of identity development, and the study emphasizes the diversity within and between minority groups to move beyond a stereotypic image.

Despite the fact that Korean students' numbers are increasing in Canadian schools, few Canadian studies pay attention to Korean students. I have found no empirical study on Korean students in Canada, although a few studies allude to the formation of Korean-American student's identity by looking at their school performance. A qualitative analysis of this study will show the dynamic cultural relations between school, community, and students, and how minority students develop their identity. The results of this study may be used to increase school staff awareness of the variation of Korean and Asian immigrant students who are viewed as “successful” students. This educational implication moves multicultural education beyond the high academic achievement of minority groups and helps us think what the success in education is.

This study paves the way for future research with similar designs in different contexts. The findings raise questions for future comparative research, such as Korean students in North America and in Japan with respect to the role of multicultural education in a broader perspective.

Limitations of the Study

There are some possible limitations to this study. I conducted this research in English. The interviewees might not have been able to convey their subtle feelings. I saw them struggling to find the right words to describe certain events and to describe their emotions.
Their experiences may have been too painful to discuss. However, those students who chose to participate may be different from those who did not agree to participate. In addition, participants were informed before the interview that they had the right not to talk about what they did not want to disclose.

Lastly, some students might need more than one interview session before they feel comfortable disclosing information they consider sensitive. Due to the time limitation, I was not able to conduct a follow-up interview. Instead, participants were informed that they could contact me by e-mail or telephone anytime after the interview.

A Note on the Texts

Throughout the study, the term "Korean students" means Korean immigrant students in Canada regardless of citizenship, and excludes those who are international students. Students used the term "Asian students" to indicate East-Asian ethnic groups such as Chinese, Taiwanese, Cantonese, Japanese and Korean.

As Espiritu (1992) argues, the term "Asians" was originally imposed on people of any Asian descent by the dominant group because Asians were viewed as a homogenous group. In this study, they are referred to as ethnic groups - such as Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Cambodian.

Most students had trouble with the "Canadian" label. Some students used "Canadian" meaning "white students," other students used it for any friends in Canada. I asked my participants to describe the background of their "Canadian" friends when they were mentioned. I will attempt to pay attention to the ways they talk about "Canadian." Recognizing these points, I do use the word with full awareness of the usage.
Chapter Four: Students’ Stories

This chapter presents the data from the interviews with Korean students. First, I introduce the participants of this study, and a portrait of the population. Then, I examine students’ experiences in different situations: at school, with friends, and with family. In each situation, students’ stories show us major changes in their lives caused by immigration, and the way students responded to those changes.

Introduction of the Students

Students’ Background

Aaron. Aaron, a 19 year-old university student who is majoring in finance, is a talkative and sociable student. He was born in Canada when his father was in Edmonton, Canada for his study. His family went back to Korea when he was four, and he went to elementary school in Seoul, Korea. All his family, his parents, an older sister and his grandmother, moved back to Canada when his father was invited to Vancouver as a visiting scholar. First, he went to an English as a Second Language (ESL) school for six months in Calgary where his aunt's family lived; then, he came to Vancouver to start secondary school at grade seven.

Aaron attended a relatively small school, and actively participated in extra curricular activities which had not been available at his Korean school. There were not many Korean students, but the number of Korean students started to increase when he was in grade 11. He did not want to be with other Korean students very often. He often had discussions with his parents about his future. He always appreciated the advice from his father, who is a professor in the field of animal science.

Alice. Alice immigrated to the suburbs of Vancouver four and a half years ago at the
age of fourteen with her parents. Her father owned a grocery store in Seoul, but for medical reasons, he became interested in immigrating to Canada to start a new life. The family started a dry cleaning store in Canada. Alice says that her parents are quite comfortable in this society and feel more secure about her father's health, but her mother misses Korea very much. As their only child, she has tried to help them as much as possible.

When she started going to secondary school in Surrey in grade ten, there were many immigrant students in school, but Koreans were only 5% of the whole population of students. She enjoyed talking to people but she was unable to talk without embarrassment or frustration for the first six months. She talked to me about how badly she wanted to talk to people.

Alice wished to work for a theatre, but she gave up her dream. She majors in Political Science in the university to study the relationship between North America and Asia. She is also interested in journalism and works for a Korean newspaper.

**Chang-ae.** Chang-ae is a 22-year-old university student who moved to Vancouver eight years ago. She lives on the West side of Vancouver with her parents and one younger brother. She is one of two students in this study who uses a Korean name. She started talking in a soft voice, but as the interview went on, she became more eager to share her family story with me. After immigrating, she found that her family became closer and began to care for each other more than ever.

She found that school in Canada was freer, but she felt pressure to be responsible. She is majoring in economics in university. In the future, she wants to be a housewife like her mother, who would rather she go to graduate school.

**Jay.** Jay and I talked in English, but he behaved in a Korean way. He bowed when he first saw me, passed me the consent form with one hand with the other hand under his elbow. Before he reached for a cigarette, he said, "I am not supposed to smoke in front of you, but may I?" He started smoking but his hand was always under the table, I hardly saw him
smoking. As a Korean, he was to show his respect to me, his elder.

Jay's family moved to Canada thirteen years ago when he was twelve, and settled in the suburbs of Vancouver. His father, who was a recognized person as an engineer in Korea, runs a restaurant in Canada. At that time, Jay said, there were not many Asian students in school, and even fewer Koreans. But as the number of Korean immigrants increased, Jay began to hang around with Korean friends.

Jay studies computer science and also is also working toward a degree in Japanese. He is interested in working in a foreign country in the future.

**John.** John answered my questions in a few words or in short sentences. First, I got the impression that he is a shy student, but it may have been a language issue. Our conversation after the interview went smoother because we spoke in Japanese, which he is learning at university.

John is a tall, 23-year-old university student who loves paintings and Korean pop music. John majors in fine arts at university. He feels that he expresses himself through his paintings and talking about his work, which often focuses on representing Korea and Korean immigrants. He moved to Canada eight and a half years ago with his parents and a younger brother. His father traveled back and forth between Canada and Korea for his business, so he feels closer to his mother. His girlfriend gave him his English name, John.

He found that the Canadian school which he attended in Vancouver, had more diverse backgrounds of people and was more relaxed than his Korean school. He "did not get any culture shock" because 80% of the students were Chinese.

**Julia.** Julia’s goal is to be a Japanese language teacher in the future, so she majors in Japanese in university. She is Jay's younger sister and went to the same school as Jay. She was ten years old when her family moved to Canada, and thus is the youngest in this study. Her mother once told her that her personality had changed after immigrating; she did not
smile as much as she used to.

Julia became a little emotional when she talked about her parents. She appreciates her parents’ support and feels sorry that her parents have sacrificed their lives to raise their children.

**Mike.** Mike looks like a serious student, and in fact, he participated in this research very seriously. He often asked me if he got my question right, if his answer was enough or not.

Mike came to Canada eight and a half years ago with his parents and one older brother. Mike has had a dream to become a pilot since he was a little child. He did not like school at all, mainly because of the language problem. Mike experienced three different secondary schools in and around Vancouver. The majority of students at his first school were Caucasian, so he described that he always felt alone. The next school that John attended was a large school with 80% Chinese students. After he finished grade 9, he transferred to another school on the west side of Vancouver and spent the rest of his high school days there.

**Shannon.** Shannon is a little shy, but a cheerful girl. She came to Canada nine years ago with her parents and a younger sister. At that time, her father still had a business in Korea so he went back and forth between Korea and Canada.

Shannon started schooling in Canada in grade seven in the suburbs of Vancouver, then she moved to another city in grade 11. She was very excited and happy when she first moved to Canada, but after she started going school, she became disappointed. That was because she could not get the attention she had expected. She highlighted her high school days by “the career planning programme” held by the secondary school. It helped her to shape her career plan to work at a hospital, hopefully as a doctor.

**Sara.** Sara has been in Canada for eleven years with her parents and a younger brother. Her parents run a small restaurant. Sara went to a secondary school in North Vancouver. She has been a hard working student. She used to aim at entering one of the Ivy
League universities. She said, "study is my mission." Thus, even though she did not like school at all, she "had to be there." For the first three months, she cried every single day because she was scared of her new environment. In order to improve her English, she wanted to be with Chinese and Japanese friends rather than with Koreans.

Sara majors in Asian studies and computer science. She is not sure about her future yet, but at least she wants to be "financially independent."

Yong. Two months before the interview, Yong got his Canadian citizenship and became a "Canadian." Being a little nervous, he spoke a little quickly and in a small voice. He is a 19-year old university student majoring in science, with the goal of becoming an optometrist. He is one of two students who kept a Korean name. His sister gave him his English name but he stopped using it soon after because he did not feel that it was his name.

Yong came to Canada with his parents and a younger sister when he was in grade seven. His father was a businessman selling equipment to dentists in Korea. Now, he runs a grocery store with his wife, who used to be a typical homemaker.

Yong's first impression of Canada was "more depressed that excited," seeing his parents argue over their new life in Canada. However, he came to think that it was a good idea to move here for his education, considering the highly competitive entrance examinations of universities in Korea. He repeated, "Canada is a pretty good place to live."

Portrait of the Population

The following characteristics fit the image of a typical family of immigrants from Korea who arrived in Canada within the last ten years: a nuclear family with middle-aged parents and teen-age children who immigrated under the categories "self-employment" or "investor," and who settled in the Lower Mainland of B.C. (See Chapter 1). However, all ten students vary in terms of their length of stay in Canada, their age on arrival, their English
ability and family background.

Students ranged in age from 19 to 25 at the time of the interviews. They came to Canada between the age of 10 and 16. Six of them were twelve years old or younger at their arrival. Six students have Canadian citizenship while the rest of them keep their immigrant status. The oldest immigrant student has stayed in Canada for 13 years, and the most recent is four years in Canada.

Students are from various home environments. Six of the students' fathers made career changes to become self-employed once they immigrated to Canada. Their mothers help their husbands' businesses. The remaining three students were living with their mothers in Canada while their fathers travelled between Canada and Korea. These students' mothers are homemakers. One student's father is a visiting scholar at the university.

Response to the School System and Culture

Different Style of Schools in Canada and Korea

Canadian schools are different from Korean schools in every respect. First, all students describe Canadian school as "flexible," "free" or "relaxed," compared with Korean schools which are more strict and regulated. Although students enjoyed the flexibility of school, some were confused by "too much freedom." Alice had no idea how to use that free time other than studying. Mike and Chang-ae felt pressure to be independent.

In Korea, everything was under the teachers' control. Teachers took care of everything from making class schedules to passing around the handouts. As Yong said, "In Korea, students sit in the same classroom all day and teachers come in to give them a class. In Canada, teachers have their room and students go there to have a class. Teachers don't move!" Many students point out that Canadian teachers are friendlier than Korean teachers. Alice thought that teachers in Canada were given a lot of freedom as well as the students. The student-
oriented school seemed not to be organized according to Aaron and Mike. Chang-ae was bothered by her classmates who talked "too friendly, rather, almost rudely" to teachers. Korean teachers are, they described, more strict, someone to whom one showed respect. Korean students did not know how to approach Canadian teachers.

Secondly, Canadian schools have more diversity than Korean schools in terms of the ethnic backgrounds of students. Some students felt lonely in this new environment. Other students did not experience any "culture shock" because of the large population of Chinese students.

On the theme of multicultural education, "food fair" and "fashion show" have been criticized for their superficiality. However, Shannon felt that she could find a place for herself through these school events.

*Shannon: I didn't really participate but I mean, the fact they had this kind of stuff, it was like, I was not an outsider! Everyone can join during the events.*

Shannon appreciated these events and emphasized the importance of multiculturalism at school. After the interview, she sent me a "Code of Conduct" printed on her high school agenda by e-mail. It states, "Racism and sexism of any kind will not be tolerated at [school name]. Mistakes of this kind will be dealt with seriously." Quoting this sentence, she wrote,

*Canada offers such a great education system, that allows everyone to feel equally important regardless of racial difference.*

On the other hand, some students questioned the word "multicultural." There were different kinds of people in the classroom but they did not mix with each other; they separated into ethnic groups, as I will discuss later in this chapter.

Facing these new situations, students struggle to fit in the new school environment by changing a part of themselves, such as their language, name, and personality.
Language. All students referred to a language issue. Students went to ESL for the first two years. They tried their best to "get out of ESL" to move forward, to join regular classes to prepare for university. Students had a bigger problem with speaking English than with writing and listening to English. However, ESL courses did not help Yong with speaking English.

Yong: ESL didn't help so much. It helped grammar but it didn't help speaking English. There were only Chinese and Korean. They always speak Chinese and Korean.

Among non-fluent English speakers in ESL courses, students did not bother to speak English with each other. ESL students spoke only their own language with friends from their home country.

After they moved to a regular course, they still had a hard time expressing themselves in English. They did not have many problems in mathematics and science classes, but they did in arts classes such as English literature and drama, which require the use of spoken English. John did well in math class but not so well in his English class because he was unable to give any of his opinions in class. He thought his language and way of thinking were much different than others, and his ideas did not seem to fit in class.

Students had to devise strategies to survive in this new language environment. Alice said that "high school days was a kind of surviving days" struggling with the language problem. She explained her frustration:

Alice: I was really frustrated by English. I was really shocked that I cannot say anything. Oops! I was not the kind of person so I really wanna talk to the people. So I really didn't have much free time first three months. I actually, honestly, studied from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. That's only thing that I could (do to) survive.

Taking advantage of the lighter workload in Canadian schools, Alice studied English hard to catch up. Sara, who was also a hard working student, used a different strategy. In order to practice English, she kept a distance from Korean friends and chose to be with Chinese friends.
But for Julia, there was no choice: she did not have any Korean friends around at that time.

This environment gave her a chance to learn English.

*Julia:* Because I didn't know how to speak, I was somewhat teased by other students who can speak English. Because I was an Asian...In my brother's class, there were a lot more Asians, but for me, there was no Asian at all. So in someway, it was good for me, because I was to learn English and new environment. I think I learned English a little bit quicker than my brother.

She thinks that this English-speaking environment helped her to learn English, and the teasing stopped once she learned “OK English.”

On the other hand, some students did not have many chances to use English at school. Even during class, Korean students could remain quiet if they wanted to. It was not until he entered university that Yong started using English. Because of the language, Mike thinks that he missed something. Language was the main issue of Mike’s high school days. Looking back at his high school life, Mike felt sorry that he missed chances to know other people better and to let other people know him:

*Mike:* I also had a hard time to get to know people in Canada. I had a language problem. I think they also had a problem to feel close to me, to speak to me because I was from other country. More they spoke to me, more they would know about me.

As we have seen here, the language issue affected Korean students’ schooling and determined their socialization pattern. This learned pattern also affects the improvement of their English ability in a negative way.

**Name.** Name is strongly connected to one’s identity. Name is what represents you, what people call you. However, many Korean students have chosen to use English names because they found that Korean names sound "weird" in English contexts.

Eight out of ten students in this study use their English name, but they are still called by their Korean name by their family and Korean friends. Two of them kept using their Korean
name in Canada. Both of these students used an English name for awhile but stopped using it soon after. They were not comfortable with been called by a "made-up" name and they often failed to respond. Yong explained:

Yong: I used to have one (English name) but I didn't feel comfortable. Using this is...different.  
IK: Why did you feel uncomfortable?  
Yong: My English name is Kenny. When they call me, I didn't feel like they were calling me. I didn't response. I didn't used to.  
IK: You didn't feel like it's your name.  
Yong: No. That's why I didn't like.

Now Yong uses the first syllable of his Korean name, Yong-sam, as his nickname. Chang-ae decided to use her Korean name, but she gave up expecting people to pronounce her name correctly.

John, Jay, and Aaron said that they feel close enough to their English names. John and Aaron have their English name written on their Canadian passport as their middle name. "Jay" is the "Christian name" he has become familiar with.

In the beginning of the interview, Julia also said clearly that her English name had become more like her name than her Korean name. However, at the end of the interview, she brought up the name issue again:

Julia: You know what? First I thought that I feel more familiar with my English name right? But now I think about it. I am called Julia a lot, more often in my life now. That's why I feel familiar with been called by English name. And my Korean name is warm, easy to understand, feels like my family calling my name, feels like my closest people calling my name, yeah!
IK: Korean friends?  
Julia: How do they call me? Yeah, they call me by Korean name! Some call me Julia and only Korean people call me my Korean name right? Even though [I am] the same person...  
IK: feel different?  
Julia: Yeah, when they call me by my English name, it feels more official. But Korean name is less official, more intimate.

Julia feels she is a different person when she was called by a different name. Her world is divided into two “official” and “intimate” worlds. Her English name is used in the public sphere, and her Korean name in the private sphere.
Shannon also has two different names; her Korean name was given to her by her grandfather, and her English name was suggested by her English teacher in Korea. She feels more comfortable with, and proud of her Korean name than her English name. However, she decided to use an English name.

Shannon: But tricky thing is, I was kinda embarrassed by using Korean name in Canada, because it's different, you know.
IK: You mean, it sounds like weird name?
Shannon: Now I am so proud of my name right? My Korean name. But if I use the same name, I don't know if I would still feel good, because it sounds...different.
IK: In English, in English context?
Shannon: Yeah, I think you know what I am saying, right? Because your name is different than Japanese name. You have only one name, but if that means kinda difference, you feel something like, you being outcast. I mean it's good to have only one name. People remember you as one person.

Shannon pointed out that her “Korean name” does not fit in the English context. She explained that an English name fits better in English when it is spoken and people easily understand it as a name. Interestingly, as Julia felt, Shannon also thinks that she is living two different lives by using two different names. She spoke her desire to live and to be remembered as one single person.

Korean students showed stronger attachment to their Korean names, which have “family’s love” behind it. Two different names give students two different worlds: a “formal world” and an “informal world.” The use of two names symbolizes the different identities of Korean students in different contexts.

**Personality Change.** Julia was so little when she moved to Canada that she does not remember the move well, but her mother once told her that she began not to smile. Her worried mother often visited school to see how she was doing. This is also true for Sara. In the new environment of a Canadian school, Sara felt alone and cried every single day.

Sara: I felt lonely and out of place. Because of that, I got the point that I have to change my personality. In Korea, I was studying hard, you know, and very shy person. Here, when
I was young, I felt that since I don't even speak English, if I don't change my personality, like much brighter person who I wanna be, like my friends...right? So after crying three months, I became outgoing.

In order to fit in to school, she decided to change herself more "brighter" and "outgoing" like her friends. Shannon also found that her personality had changed.

Shannon: I have a changed personality now, compared to when I was in Korea. I think my personality change was a beneficial one, luckily, because I now have acquired more social and talkative side to myself. Maybe, I acquired these characteristics because these allowed me to fit into a completely new society. Prior to immigration, I was an extremely quiet person, who never gets noticed. (e-mail report from Shannon)

From these students' stories, we can see that students needed to be more "outgoing" and "sociable" to adjust to a new environment. It was not easy for students who were from a collective society. Alice felt that she was acting like a different person when she spoke English at school. In her words;

Alice: I say something and they listen. If they agree with me and they have something similar with my opinion or they are against me...it's a very strange experience but...When I was in Korea, whenever we are trying to discuss in classroom or outside the classroom, even though it's about academic topics, if someone is telling about something against my opinion, I felt bad. [I took it] personally. Emotionally... But here, I have never felt like that. Because I am not worrying about my opinion here. But in Korea I really worry about that... I really hate that point. I [needed] big personality conversion. It's very difficult.

She found a different rule of conversation. In an individualistic society, Alice did not have to care how others would take her opinion. But when she spoke Korean with Korean friends, she still had to care if people would be offended by her opinion.

Students needed to obtain a "more social" and "outgoing" personality and still had to keep the "self-effacing" part of themselves. Students had to use two separate personalities depending on the occasion, which Alice called "personality conversion."

Under the Image of Asian

Homogenized image of Asians. There is a homogenized image of Asian students in
North America, such as quiet, hardworking, being good at math and science. Previous research shows that this image of "model-minority" ignores the diversity within Asians and keeps Asian students from getting the attention they need (Lee, 1996). Then, how does this image that outsiders have affect their daily school life?

All students mentioned that they were seen as Asians, rather than as Koreans at school. Chang-ae found that some teachers shared the idea that "Asians are more polite than white kids." She admitted that "white students seemed really rude to teachers," but she did not like the generalized idea: "they [teachers] look at Asian people, something common to all Asian people."

On the other hand, Jay is one of the students who internalized the "good reputation" of Asian students. When he was writing his mathematics examination, he encouraged himself by saying: "I am an Asian, I am supposed to answer this. I will be OK...." He was encouraged by the racial image of "being good at mathematics and science."

**Racial experience from teachers.** Even though Jay was encouraged by the positive image of Asians, he "sensed some funny attitude" from teachers as well. One day, he got into a fight with Caucasian classmates to save his Chinese friend. He was called to the Principal’s office, but "the white kid" he fought with was not. The school put Jay under detention. He explained that it was because he was an "Asian" and the other boy was "Canadian."

Jay: *They saw me rather Asian. I think they were proud to be Canadian. I am a Canadian but I don't consider myself totally Canadian, but Canadian Korean.*

IK: *You mean, a Korean with Canadian citizenship?*

Jay: *Yeah, but I was always proud to be a Korean. There wasn't really a time that I expected to be treated as a Canadian. But there was a time that I thought it wasn't fair that the way he did only because I have black hair.*

Jay expressed his frustration. He was a "Canadian" but he wanted to be recognized as "Korean Canadian." However, he was seen as one of these "Orientals," who were not respected and
treated unfairly. Julia, Jay's sister, experienced a similar situation. She said,

*Julia: At my grade 6, my teacher had some bias toward Asians. Because he wasn't entirely equal to Canadians and Asians. Asians were really minority then, right?*

These “biases” are hardly explained. Yong also mentioned some teachers’ “funny attitudes” toward Asian students. When I asked him to explain more, he said that it was too subtle to point out, but he could sense it.

*Invisible among “Asians.”* Korea is geographically located between China and Japan. These three countries have both similarities and differences. To their surprise, students found that Korea was not well known among people in Canada. It was quite shocking to them.

*John: Until I came to Canada, I didn't know how world, how Canadian people were looking at Korea. But since I came here I realized that. It was shocking to me to realize how differently people are looking about (Korea). When I was in Korea, I thought it was O.K, my country was pretty developed country, but I came here, people are taking Korean still as a country recovering from war. That was shocking.*

Korea was not in people's minds or misunderstood. Korean students also found that Korean immigrants are invisible in the immigration history of Canada.

*Shannon: I don't think they know much about Korea. They know a lot about Chinese immigrants.*

*IK: Yeah, they have long immigration history here.*

*Shannon: Yeah, and they know Japanese too, but I don't think they really know us.*

Students did not have many chances to learn about Korea in Canadian school. Korea was almost ignored in the school curriculum. Chang-ae, Sara, and Julia think that schools should offer Korean language and literature courses like they do Japanese and Chinese. At the best, Korea appeared in Social Studies about the Second World War and the Korean War. Chang-ae became interested in Korean history, but the class did not go further than the Korean War. Yong was upset with the social studies class:

*IK: Have you ever had a chance to learn something about Korea at school?
Yong: At school? Not really. No, one thing. Korean was belonged to Japan, right? There's not much stuff there. I hated teacher.

IK: Why?

Yong: Only thing he talked was like Korean was occupied by Japan.

IK: You didn't like it.

Yong: No. He never talked about good stuff.

Yong is afraid of students receiving the wrong impression of Korea from their teacher.

Students think that this situation reflects Korea's status in the international arena. Julia and Shannon explained their views of why Canadian schools teach Chinese and Japanese languages and histories but do not teach Korean:

Julia: Maybe because (there are) major (numbers) of Japanese people living here. Although we still have a lot of Korean people, but because even economically, Japanese are more considered higher. Maybe that's the reason. And Chinese, too. Lots of Chinese here, nothing argue about. Because that's the reality. If Korean can, I guess, work harder and become like how Japanese are, (we can be) like that.

Shannon: Why? Um...economically and internationally, I don't think Korea is that much known because we don't have... (she wrote down "national power" in Chinese characters)

Interestingly, these students think that the economic power in the home country reflects the status of Korean immigrants in the host country. While students were uncomfortable with the misrepresentation of Korea in the school curriculum, they accepted it as a "reality."

Review: Korean Students' Experiences at School

Once Korean students immigrated to Canada, they started to use a different language and name, and changed part of their personality in order to adjust to the new school environment. Without distinctive ethnic features, only their physical attributes were seen by outsiders: Korean students were seen as "Asians."

As a result of ethnic aggregation by the dominant group, Korean students, who were from a homogeneous country, became aware of being a racial subject in a multicultural school, rather than an ethnic subject.

Korean students realized that they were a minority within Asian groups. Korea was not
known well among people in Canada, and not represented in the school curriculum. In their perspective, this was because of Korea's shorter immigration history and lower economic status than China and Japan.

**Peer Culture**

In this part, I am going to address the friendships which Korean students established in Canada. Korean students encountered "multicultural" classmates, but they became separated into ethnic groups during their upper grades. I will try to approach the interaction within and outside of the ethnic group, and Korean students' perspectives of friendship. In each domain, who was included and who was excluded? Which identity was reinforced, and which identity was discouraged?

**Grouping — "Cultural Natural Segregation"**

Students from Korea, who were accustomed to people looking similar to one other, were surprised to see "multicultural" classmates in Canada. Friendships were established in a different way and had a different meaning from those in Korea.

In comparison to the style of school, students in Canada seemed more independent than Korean students. Students did not "help each other." Yong said that everybody could be his friend in Korea, but students kept a distance from each other in his Canadian school. Shannon could not get the amount of attention that she expected as a new student from abroad.

During their younger years, students hung around with anybody regardless of one's ethnic background. However, as they moved to the upper grades, students found that all students separated into ethnic groups.

*Julia: It's a kind of weird but I was hanging around with all sorts of people in elementary (school). but as I went into high school, people were going into a certain cultural group, separate groups. So automatically, I was into Korean Canadian group.*
Students felt discomfort with this tendency which John called "cultural natural segregation."

In this new situation, some students enjoyed the old, familiar style of friendship with fellow Koreans, others sought new friendships outside of a Korean group.

However, although students wished to be more "exposed" to people from other backgrounds, it was difficult to establish, or maintain, friendships with other groups once all students were settled in ethnic groups. John felt sorry that he could not have a chance to establish a friendship with other groups. Jay explained:

Jay: When we got in senior year like grade 10, 11, 12, we tended to break apart like, Italians only make friends with Italians, Korean hung around with Korean. So it became multicultural...not multicultural. We tend to separate our own nationalities. I was here in my early age so I had Chinese friends and Canadian friends, I had variety of friends but at some point, I got involved with mostly Korean people. That does not mean I lost my other friends but...most people they hung around with, Caucasian-Caucasian, Chinese-Chinese...so distinctive. That's one thing I don't like about school...

Even though Jay maintained relationships with his friends in other ethnic groups, he lost opportunities to hang around with them. Interestingly, Jay pointed out that friendships became “not multicultural.” Students responded to this tendency in three ways: 1) to stay with Korean friends, 2) to stay with Asian friends, 3) to stay with no particular group of people. Then, what interaction took place among friends in each of these groups?

**Friendship with Korean Friends**

As a result of the grouping, most Korean students ended up staying in a Korean group. Some Korean students “automatically” stayed with Korean students without question, others stayed with Korean friends while still maintaining, or seeking friends outside the group. In any case, what made Korean students get together?

*Shared culture and experiences.* All students mentioned that Korean friends were
more comfortable to be with than friends from other ethnic groups. Students went out for dinner, shopping, attended movies together, and visited each other's houses. Korean students provided several reasons why they stuck together. Understandably enough, they shared the same linguistic and cultural background and they had much in common such as the food and music they enjoyed, their immigration backgrounds and their childhood experiences. Shannon explained:

*Shannon: I think people always like to hang around with people who is really comfortable with and similar...think about the same kind of stuff.*

Then, how did that shared language and culture function in the friendship? Jay explained that Koreans, who often hung around in restaurants, Karaoke room and shopping malls, were less active than Canadians, who enjoyed outdoor activities. Female students said that it did not matter where they went, as long as they could sit and talk when they met with Korean friends. Friendship with Korean friends focused on verbal communication. Students said they talked about different topics with Korean and non-Korean friends.

*Yong: When I talked with Koreans we talked about all Korean stuff. Korean singers and Korean drama. But when I talked to Chinese, it's not interesting for Chinese to talk about Korean stuff. I couldn't talk about Korean singers. I had to talk something both share, like movies, you know, more common stuff.*

As Yong explains above, topics of conversation with other ethnic groups were more general so they felt more difficulty to be close with each other. Mike talked with Korean friends about more personal matters, such as romantic relationships. Students gave two examples to highlight their friendships with Korean friends. One is "Karaoke," the destination place where students hang around with Korean friends. The other is "Jeong," an emotional feeling which Korean students believe is essential for friendship.

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1 "Karaoke," originally from the Japanese word, is the place where people sing a song with music tapes or DVDs with the vocals erased. Karaoke occurs in a small room where foods and
**Karaoke culture.** Karaoke, or “noleban” in Korean, became popular when students were in high school. All students talked about Karaoke as a meeting place with Korean friends. It was the best place for students to get together and exchange the information of popular songs and singers in Korea. Julia explained,

*Julia:* We went up to movie or, when I was in high school there was a new place called “noleban” small Karaoke bar. We used to go and we were there all the time.

*IK:* When you went to Karaoke, did you sing Korean songs?

*Julia:* Mostly, Korean songs.

*IK:* I haven't been to Karaoke here, but do they have English songs, too?

*Julia:* Yeah, there are lot of English songs. But because I hang around with Korean Canadian and Korean songs were hit around us. We always listened to the Korean songs. It had become a part of my life. I listened to every day.

*IK:* You got those CDs from Korea?

*Julia:* Yeah, from friends who had and recorded for you. It circled around because it was the only method that Korean songs turned out. We didn't know any Canadian songs. That's why we had nothing to talk with non-Korean people at that age. Those are the main things to you talk about.

Popular songs and singers were always the centre of Korean students’ attention, even though they were far away from Korea. Students exchanged music CDs and video obtained from their Korean friends who came back from Korea, or from rental Video shops.

Students did not go to Karaoke with non-Korean friends. Alice said that Canadian friends did not enjoy Karaoke, which is “almost Korean culture.” Korean students did not want to see their non-Korean friends not enjoying Korean songs and feeling awkward when Koreans were enjoying Korean songs. For this age group, popular songs and singers were the most common topic to talk about among students. Korean students share a moment in a Karaoke room only with Korean friends.

**Jeong (attachment).**

*Jay:* Basically we go to the same places but...I see the different bondage, really hard to describe in English. I don’t think there is a word, but in Korean language, "Jeong."

drink are served. Some Karaoke places provide the newest hit songs using the internet.
"Jeong" literally means "emotion" or "affection." According to Shannon, "In Korea, friendship is a lot more than what is meant in here." Friendship should always come with "Jeong." Friendship is almost equal to brotherhood, especially among boys. It is believed that one has to be honest and faithful to the friendship. You have to try to put all your "Jeong" into anything you say, or do with your friends.

For example, Koreans do not usually split the bill when they go out together. The time to pay the bill is the time to show your "Jeong" by taking care of the bill. But if you let someone pay the bill many times in succession, you will be judged that you lack "Jeong." In keeping balance, they establish a trustworthy relationship. But friendship here in Canada does not work in this way.

Yong: I had some white guys [as friends, but the relationship didn't go too deep. If I borrow 10 bucks, he always goes, "where's my 10 bucks?" But when he was a Korean and if I borrowed 10 bucks, he is like "pay me back later" and forgets [about the money] or when he has no money to spend, I take care. We trust...I think we trust each other more.

It is not always the matter of money, but Yong's story shows the tacit agreement among Korean students, which is not shared by non-Koreans. Sara said that it was hard to express her "Jeong" when she spoke English. Lack of expressing Jeong created physical distance among friends.

Sara: The body position would be different. With Korean, we go "hey hey" (she patted my shoulder) you know? More physical contact. But with non-Asian, little bit more lose contact.

Korean students still valued this close friendship which may be seen as too thick to outsiders. Students felt that the friendship with non-Koreans was "cold" and less frank without "Jeong" so that it was hard to feel close to them.

Inner difference within a Korean group. Korean students see differences within their
own ethnic group as well. Based on Korean students’ categorization, they were separated into three groups: “Canadian born Korean,” “old immigrants,” and “new immigrants.”

According to students’ descriptions, Canadian born students could be in any group. Some of them were in a Korean group and others were in a “Canadian” group. “Old” and “new” immigrants are relative categorizations. If one has stayed in Canada longer than the other, he or she is part of the “old immigrants.” “Old immigrants” tended to be critical of new immigrants. Chang-ae told that “new immigrants” were different from herself because “they had different interests” and she did not get along with “new immigrants.” Sara found that “new immigrants” tend to keep “bashing each other” because they were from a competitive country. Aaron was bothered by new immigrant students who intentionally avoided Korean students in order to socialize with other ethnic groups.

However, these inner boundaries were easy to cross over. “New immigrants” were qualified as “old immigrants” when they welcomed newer immigrants. As time passed, the time differences became blurred. Korean-Canadians who were born in Canada were in an English-speaking group, but some of them were willing to speak Korean and approach the Korean group. Yong said,

Yong: Most of time, even if Koreans born here, naturally they hung around with everybody else, you know, white people. But [when] they got into high school, they joined Koreans and they talked about Korean stuff.

Therefore, Korean-Canadian students and Korean-immigrant students had a chance to learn the language and the way of thinking from each other. In Shannon’s words;

Shannon: Some (Canada-born Korean) are really Canadianized and they don’t really know Korean. Some are totally 100% Canadian. They never speak Korean at home and they don’t understand Korean culture. I mean, they would listen what their parents say but they never speak. They feel so embarrassing to speak Korean because they are not fluent. But Korean Canadians hang around with Korean immigrant, they learn a lot and we learn a lot from them too.

It was less difficult for Korean immigrant students to relate to Canadian-born-Korean students
who knew some language and cultural norms. In a Korean group, they could learn each other’s language and perspectives.

Friendship with Asian Friends

Korean students had a closer relationship with other Asian students such as Chinese and Japanese than with non-Asians. Korean students had personal or inter-group friendship with other Asian students. Some students in the Korean group had a relationship with Asian students, and other students chose to be in an Asian group. Then, what made these Asian students get together? Students’ stories give three reasons: the same physical appearance, shared experiences of racism, and similar culture.

Similarities among Asians. First of all, physical similarities of Asians gave comfort to new immigrants from Korea. John explained that he did not have culture shock because 80% of his classmates were Chinese. Without being a “visible” minority among white students, as he had imagined, he felt at home among physically similar students. The shared physical attributes contributed to creating a sense of security, but confused other people, especially non-Asians who see all Asian students as the same.

Secondly, Korean students shared with other Asians the experience of being victims of racism. Because of their similar appearance, Korean students had some experience of being called “chink.” Another example, Jay and Yong realized that Asian students were treated differently by teachers and white students. Jay ran into a fight with white students when trying to help his Chinese classmates. He explained his reason: “I just thought that I should protect Orientals.” Korean students thought that all Asians were in the same boat.

Lastly, students appreciated the shared culture among Asian students. Yong “got along with Chinese guys” and played basketball with Chinese friends after school, and had
several chances to go out together. It was because:

Yong: Even we spoke English, we sort of shared culture. They understood the way we talked, and what [we talked about]. White guys didn't understand.

Despite the language differences, Korean students had a shared culture with Chinese and Japanese. Julia explained that it is not language, but culture that could create a “barrier” among people.

Julia: Um...not language barrier. Your way of thinking, your perspective (could be.) Our certain things didn't go through, they didn't understand the way I thought about a certain thing. I didn't understand the way they think. For example, in high school, Canadian [white] students start dating. They (Canadians) feel more open about sexual relationship right? That's we didn't really understand well about maybe, difference. Cultural difference, cultural barrier. Not language.

This shared cultural value that students raised, such as male-female relationships and respect for teachers and parents, is related to Confucianism, which is shared among Asian people.

Even those Korean students who belonged to a Korean group, sometimes went out for a movie (English), to a shopping mall, and played games with Asian friends, and enjoyed personal, or collective friendships with Asian students.

**Boundaries within Asian students.** It might be perceived that all Asians got along with each other. However, even though Korean students had much in common with Asian students, Korean students had to deal with difference.

Sara was a student who chose to be in an Asian group. Sara did not have many Korean friends, and did not want to be with them in order to practice her English. When I asked if she had had any experience of being mistaken as Chinese or Japanese, she said;

Sara: Actually, I liked that. Because as I told you, I didn't have any Korean friends in high school, all my friends were Chinese and Japanese. I always wanted to be a part of them. I didn't want to separate myself as a Korean and they were Chinese or something. I wanted to be a part of them. I always saw myself Asian more than Korean. But among the group, I was always a Korean. From Caucasian's view, I am sure that I was an Asian, but within Asian group, I was a Korean.
She wished to be looked upon like other Asian friends, and was successful, for white students viewed Sara as one of the “Asians.” Sara wished to have a fuller membership in an Asian group; however, she was distinguished as a Korean no matter what how she wanted to be seen. She explained her frustration;

*Sara:* [In an Asian group] I was treated as a Korean. Because I hanged around with Oriental people, right? They were Chinese and Japanese. I was a Korean among them. We don’t speak the same language so I didn't understand what they say though we had similar sense of values.

Language created the major boundary. Sara could not fully participate in the Asian group.

Among Asian students, even though they tried to speak English as the "common language," they could not stop their own language naturally coming out of their mouths.

*Alice:* With Chinese friends, because they are immigrants, they sometimes speak Taiwanese or Cantonese. Sometimes they were talking among themselves. They were trying not to make me feel that they were excluding me from the group, but sometimes, they naturally spoke their language.

Chinese students were dominant in number; therefore, Chinese was the dominant language in an Asian group. It overwhelmed Korean students, and made them feel excluded. In this way, cultural “similarity” sometimes emphasized “differences” between ethnic groups within the Asian group, and resulted in creating a boundary within that group. Yong described a lunchtime scene in high school:

*Yong:* Well, Korean and Chinese get along right? But they were still like Korean AND Chinese. They had lunch separately you know, here Korean eating lunch and there Chinese eating lunch. [White kids] go to MacDonald. They go out!

*IK:* Did you bring lunch your mom made?

*Yong:* Yeah.

*IK:* Other Korean students too?

*Yong:* Usually, yeah, Chinese had fanciest lunch, all Chinese food! I usually got sandwich. But they got Chinese food! Looked good, smelled good!

The Korean group Yong belonged to had a good relationship with the Chinese group, but as we can see in Yong’s story, the Korean group and the Chinese group did not mix with each
other. Within an Asian group, which may be seen as one homogeneous group, Asian students were in separate groups.

"Multicultural Group"

Some Korean students were able to hang around with any ethnic group. Shannon called this group the "multicultural group." Aaron was one of those students.

Aaron was bothered by the tendency of grouping, but in a different way. When he saw most Korean students joining in a Korean group, he thought, "I am a Korean, but it doesn't mean I have to hang around with Koreans." For him, grouping was just like "building a wall" among students. Even though he knew some of people in other group, he was unable to talk to them once he settled in a certain group. He did not mean to avoid Koreans, but chose to keep away from the Korean group. As a result he did not have as much experience as the other Korean students had with Korean activities shared by Korean youth. For example, he has a different opinion about going to the Karaoke room:

Aaron: I didn't like it (Karaoke) at all. Because there are lots to do in Vancouver other than Karaoke. Enjoy great nature! You can go to skiing, hiking, beach. In Korea, that's all you can do because we don't have such things.

He rather enjoyed the outdoor activities which could be shared with Canadian friends. He commented that if he was in Korea, he would go to Karaoke but he “did not see the point” to go to Karaoke in Vancouver. He thinks “you should enjoy something you cannot do any other place than Vancouver.”

Review: Students' Experiences with Friends

Korean students encountered different styles of friendship in Canada. First, they were bothered by the tendency that classmates had of separating into ethnic groups. Most students
tried to maintain friendships with Korean students with whom they were familiar. They could enjoy the same taste of food, music, and activities, not to speak of the language, and they shared similar immigration backgrounds and childhood experiences. But Korean students saw "difference" inside their group as well. They could have close relationships with Asian students, such as Chinese and Japanese, who have a similar physical appearance, and similar experiences of racism. Also, Korean students enjoyed the similar cultural values with Asian students which non-Asians could not understand. However, differences in language and small cultural differences resulted in creating a boundary between Korean students and Asian students. A Korean student who chose not to be with a particular group, enjoyed friendship with anyone from any ethnic background, but did not enjoy what Koreans did.

On the whole, most Korean students failed to establish or maintain a friendship in groups outside of their own ethnic group even if they wished to do so.

Response to Family Pressure

In this part, Korean students will share their stories of their experiences at home. The immigration experience changed their lives at home. Two significant themes arose from their stories. One is the discussion they had with their parents about their future, and the other is the maintenance of family tradition and values. I will also describe Korean students' perspectives of gender difference with respect to these themes.

Impact of Immigration on Home Life

The dynamics of family have changed due to the father's change in occupation. Alice, Jay, Julia, Sara and Yong's fathers, who were businessmen in Korea, started their own businesses in Canada such as operating a grocery store, a dry cleaning shop, and a restaurant. Mothers, who were homemakers in Korea, started helping in their husbands' businesses.
Fathers of two of the students, Chang-ae and Mike, continued in the same or similar business after immigrating and their mothers continued as homemakers. In both cases, children, who used to be "just a kid" in Korea, began to help in the family business, and to support their parents' language problems.

Students were aware of the hardship their parents were going through. Jay was almost "angry" with the occupational change of his father, who was a recognized engineer but now runs a restaurant. Besides, students worried about their mothers who were alone without their relatives and friends and had to help their husbands with their businesses, and who did housekeeping as well.

Although students were frustrated with this new situation, they found that the family spent more time together and became closer than before. Fathers cared more about their children's education; students supported their parents by helping in their businesses and helping with the language. At the same time, they wanted to support their parents emotionally as well. They could do so by doing well at school. The parent-child relationship had become stronger, and it affected who they were becoming.

"Freedom within Their Standards"—Shaping Future Plans

After immigrating, students had a closer observation of their parents' hardships, and a closer relationship with their parents. Kim (1993) writes that Korean immigrant parents believe that their children's success will make up for the hardships and sacrifices they made in the host country. Yong knew that his parents did not expect him to take over their grocery store.

Yong: I think my mother cares [about my future] the most. Father just goes like "do something you want, make you happy." My parents don't want me to be like them. Owning a grocery store is, what they think is, too hard. [They want me to] try to get professional stuff. My mom says like, be a doctor or something. I guess she says very important things for me.
Yong’s mother insisted that he should have a professional job. Parents expect their children to be successful in the host country, and emphasize the value of education to their children, and invest in their children’s future. Students are aware that their parents’ hardship is for their education. Julia became emotional when she talked about her parents:

Julia: I have feelings that if I lived in Korea, I might not have very family things like, thanking to parents and (appreciating) the importance of the family. Korean parents worked so hard and in Korea, my dad just went to the company and I didn’t see him working hard, I didn’t see him actually working because he went and came back. I didn’t feel anything like, feel sorry for working for us. [Now I] see all sorts of people coming into restaurant. See, customers are the most important, most highest people you treat, right? Even a hippie coming into restaurant to buy a cup of coffee, my parents thank them for buying things like that. It makes me angry.

After their immigration, Julia and her older brother, Jay, faced their parents’ hardship in working at a restaurant. They had never seen their parents’ hardship in Korea. Jay explained:

Jay: My parents [influenced my decision making on future]. I have to admit I was a very problem child. But looking at my parents working, I used to say "parents work like dogs." They didn't have any life. That's pretty sad. They get up, they go to work and back and sleep. Next day, work, which is awful. I looked at them I figured, "O.K, maybe I shouldn't fool around much." I wanted to be a nice son. I studied a bit and was becoming a good boy. I used to play a lot of sports. I was very violent. Playing rugby makes you violent but I managed to become good mood for... my parents. They showed us they are hard-worker. [I want to have a] better job later on, in the future, be nice to them financially and emotionally.

In Jay’s perspective, “being a nice son” is equal to “getting a better job” and he wants to have a better job in order to support his parents both “financially and emotionally.”

Even if their parents did not show their desires, students sensed this strong expectation from their parents. Julia, Jay’s younger sister, feels strong pressure from her parents.

Julia: They are always overestimating me. They are giving me pressure. They always say that like, "I am proud of what you actually are." They believe that but sometimes it's really frustrating. But I am happy that they are happy with me, so...

IK: How did you feel pressure? What they said?
Julia: "You are smart, you can do anything." "Whatever you want to do, you can always do it, anything is possible." When I want to do something, anything is possible, which is not true for me. It's something to my dad, right? That kind of thing gave me pressure.
This strong expectation of their parents conflicted with students' own dreams that they had had since they were little children. Alice wanted to be a theatre producer. When she told her parents, they showed their disappointment. She knew that her parents would support her as much as possible and give her freedom, but "within their standards." Her parents encouraged her in a roundabout way to go to law school. She now majors in Political Science and gave up her dream of becoming a theatre producer. Alice explained the reason she changed her mind:

_Alice: You know, I am only child. I have a feeling that I am the only one to care them. I want to give them "status." That's kind of Korean thing, right?_

Alice is aware that she is the only child who can reward her parents' hardship, and "having a faithful child" is recognized by other Koreans and gives parents "status" within the Korean community.

Students discussed with their parents about their future plans, and tended to follow the advice of their parents. When Aaron was unable to decide which he should major in, finance or economics, his father, who is a professor in animal science, did some research for him and gave him advice.

_Aaron: We discussed so often and even we argued, but I would know my father was right. He knows what's best for me...He is always right. My parents are pretty reasonable. Well, don't take it as if he brain-washed me!_

After discussing with his father, Mike gave up his old dream of becoming a pilot. He started studying commerce to help his father's business in the future. But Mike tried to negotiate with his parents one more time:

_Mike: When I was in high school, when I was grade 12, I asked my parents. Because tuition fee is quite high and my dad told me that he was unable to pay. And my dad didn't like my idea. So I gave up and I decided to study commerce. But I didn't want to give up my original dream to be a pilot. After studying commerce for two years, I wrote a letter to my dad. "Please trust me." He finally said O.K. I actually talked to my mom first. And two years later, my mom suggested me to write a letter to my dad. My mom agreed with that first._
Students had discussions with their parents in order to gain their permission or agreement. Their parents never forced them to do anything, but Korean students discussed with their parents what to major in and what to do in their future. Students had no intent of deciding their future plans without the involvement of their parents:

Shannon: They don't really wanna "oh, you gotta become a somebody." I ask, "would it be O.K., becoming a geneticist, would be O.K.?" or "lab technician would be better?" and they go "I think..."

IK: And do you take their advice?
Shannon: Yeah of course! I think their advice is more important than my school adviser I think.

IK: Yeah? Why is that?
Shannon: Because (laughing) I want to become a good daughter! I think they have expectation but they don't push so much. If they pushed, I think I've been not as good as what I am now. (laugh)

The advice from parents was taken more seriously than professional opinions. Students are aware of parents’ expectations, and tried to satisfy them in order to be “a good child.”

**Gender Issue.**

John: As a boy, I have to make money to raise family. But if I was not a boy but a girl, I wouldn't be much that way. I would get in university and that would be good enough for me, you know?

IK: uum...
John: I still have this Korean tradition.
IK: True!
John: Thinking about rasing family, so...
IK: Raising family is a big issue. Do you feel a pressure?
John: They (parents) don't pressure me but I feel that by myself naturally. That's everybody is getting.

This is a shared view about being a boy in Korea. When they think about the future, male students had to take into consideration that they have to “raise a family” in the future. They are aware of “responsibility” as a boy in the family, and they often said to me, "You know what being a boy in Korea?" "You know what Korean parents are, don't you?"

Being a boy in his family, Yong feels pressure and said, “I am a boy so I should become a something, right?” Some students pointed out that their parents have different expectations
for boys and girls.

_Yong_: My mom says boys should get a better job. But she said to my sister that she should get a better husband. I don't know... You know what Korean parents are like.

Female students are also aware that being a daughter is different than being a son to their parents. As Alice said, being a boy means something, especially to mothers.

_Alice_: I have seen many Korean mom with her son, they look more confident. I mean, they have more confidence because they have a son.

Female students noticed that parents had different expectations for boys and girls, especially for their future careers. For example, Chang-ae’s parents did not seem to care about what she does, but they strongly hoped her brother would go to medical school “as first boy” in her family. Chang-ae called it “discrimination.” Similarly, Shannon felt the same way:

_Shannon_: Once [I felt the difference], it was my first year or something, then, my dreams were so high, and then I told my dad, "I really want to try to go to Med school" or something. He was like, "why don't you become a pharmacist instead? Because it's gonna be hard on you" kind of thing... I don't know, is it because I am a daughter? I don't know, he said "go for it" if I was a son.

Shannon was a little discouraged by her father’s comment, but she still thought about going to medical school. Korean parents expect their daughters to have a career, but tend to suggest less difficult jobs as they have the additional responsibility of housekeeping in the future (Kim, 1993).

**Maintenance of Korean Culture**

Korean students maintain the same lifestyle as they had in Korea, and want to keep practicing Korean customs in the future: They enjoy "basically everything" such as Korean foods, language, traditional ceremonies and Korean pop culture. In particular, their talk centred on the value of family.
Taking care of parents. When Julia was asked about Korean tradition which she wanted to maintain in the future, she raised Korean foods, music, traditional family gathering, and finally added "the way of respecting parents."

Julia: I think, the way of respecting our parents, because in Canada, most people call their parents mom and dad but some call their name... The way of respecting...because in Canada, it's more like friends instead of (being) mom and dad, they become like friends.

Korean students think it important to keep the virtue of respect for their parents. Especially, taking good care of old parents is considered children's duty in Korean society. Parents and children in Canada live independently after children get married, but all Korean students are willing to take care of their parents, though none of their parents ever told them to do so. Yong thinks he "should because they don't have so much money." John thinks:

John: as an older person, the oldest son in the house...even I came here, I think I still have to, you know, take care of my parents getting older.

Even though it is considered as the first son's duty in Korea, female students are also ready to take care of their parents. In order to do so, they need to have a "professional job."

Sara: I would like to [take care of my parents]. This is one of my main reasons that I just changed my second major to computer science. That's the reason why I am doing, to support my family, my parents.

Having said so, female students still agree that boys should take care of their parents.

Julia: I think they want to live with my brother to show other people. It looks better living with son taking care of his parents. It's kind of ironic because my parents don't want me to get married and take care of other's family. They want me to be more free.

Some interesting points are seen in Julia's comments. Though she is ready to take care of her parents in the future, she is still concerned with what other Korean people will think. If she lived with her parents, people in the Korean community will wonder what is wrong with the son. Parents will lose their face. She wants to keep her parents from being the centre of gossip among Korean people. Moreover, Julia's parents hope that their daughter will not take a
daughter-in-law’s duty in Korean tradition.

Related to this issue, male students wants to keep “Che-sa,” a ritual for greeting ancestors on the anniversary of their ancestors’ death, New Year’s day and Korean Thanksgiving Day. An altar is set for a ceremony to greet the ancestors, and after the ceremony, relatives sit together, talk and eat special foods. This ceremony is supposed to be done in the first son’s household where all the relatives get together. Since Jay’s and Chang-ae’s fathers are the first sons, these ceremonies are still done in their houses. As the oldest son, Jay is ready to carry on these ceremonies.

Jay: In Korea, you know, it was practiced in my family. And my relatives were invited. My dad is the oldest so that was held in my house. They are still doing in Korea, too. My grandma and my uncles do it. But my dad figured that he needed to do it (here, too.)

IK: It will pass on to you.
Jay: Yeah, I am the oldest, too.
IK: You don't mind it?
Jay: I don't mind it.
IK: Isn't it a big trouble?
Jay: No.. I don't know. Something that I have to do, I want to do. I don't really think it is necessary, but I feel the need of doing it to consider about, you know, my dad is doing it for my grandfather who passed away about seven years ago. So I should do it for my dad.

Aaron also wants to keep Korean traditions such as Chu-sok (Thanksgiving) and Sol-la (New Year’s day). He recognizes that these traditional ceremonies are all for the family-gathering and he emphasized the importance of the family connection.

However, all the female students seem to be indifferent to continuing these ceremonies. Shannon does not think it is “something joyful.” Sara does not see the point of doing ceremonies, being far away from Korea. Alice had the same opinion:

Alice: I don't enjoy as much as I enjoyed in Korea. And sometimes I kind of make excuse to get out of it.
IK: Is that because you have to help in the kitchen?
Alice: Beside the work, I feel that weird at some point, having ceremony here. When I was in Korea last year, I was eager to go. But when I came back to Vancouver, um... I don't know.

Male students are more willing to continue symbolic rituals than are female students.
This may be because practicing these ceremonies is considered the son’s obligation to succeed the lineage.

**Dating and marriage.** Although Korean students raised many Korean customs they wished to continue, students were not sure how Korean culture could be maintained in the future. John thinks that even though his generation enjoys Korean culture, it will disappear in twenty years. Julia does not have confidence to pass it on to the next generation,

Julia: I don't feel confidence carrying that on. If married to Korean guy, my parents-in-law hope things like that. Then, I am willing to help them to carry that on. But If I don't live with them, and if I have to carry it on all by myself, I don't feel confident. I don't even know...

Julia’s words show that maintaining Korean culture depends on the partner with whom they start a family. Jay himself does not care about the ethnic background of his partner, but he believes that he would prefer to marry a Korean partner to pass Korean culture on to his children.

Jay: One thing I want to marry to Korean woman is that we can work it out to children. Yeah, I don't think it gonna be too much fun, say when I marry to a Chinese woman. Then she might want to have her own culture.

IK: Yeah. Would it be a problem for you?
Jay: um... It would be a problem if I marry to a Chinese woman and my kids don't have... It would be easier if I marry to a Korean woman, you know, let them know how to be a Korean.

Yong has the same opinion as Jay. Yong thinks “it’s more fun” to have a Korean wife, so that he “should marry to a Korean girl.”

Yong: I think Korean should marry to Korean and Chinese should marry to Chinese.
IK: Is there any reason that you think like that?
Yong: I don't know. Maybe, well, I think...I like my culture right? Korean, that's who I am, I don't wanna become too much like other people. That's why. I don't wanna act like white people.

In the students' viewd, they need to find a Korean partner to maintain Korean culture. Mike thinks that “getting married to the western” is a “problem” because cultural difference would
create problems at home. Chang-ae also wants to avoid this cultural conflict at home.

Chang-ae: I used to think about Chinese people. But I have a cousin who got married with Chinese guy. But she felt a kind of cultural difference. So I was like "O.K, I don't want it." But Korean guys, like my friends are controlling. You know, they are bossy, right? My dad [wants] definitely Korean.

In order to avoid cultural conflict, and to pass their culture on to their children, Korean students want to marry Koreans. More specifically, Aaron and Sara hope to marry a Korean-Canadian or Korean-American. Interestingly, they try to avoid cultural conflict even with Chinese, who seem to have similar culture. As in Yong’s words, Yong’s mother hopes for a “definitely Korean” partner for Yong and “Even Chinese or Japanese are not acceptable yet. She's so strict.” When it comes to marriage, slight differences between Koreans and other Asians do matter. Students are ready to live with their parents in the future so they think it is important to make them comfortable. Julia said:

Julia: Yeah, I have to [marry a Korean man]! My parents are gonna consider him as a family seriously. They said that since I was little. I sometimes ask how about Asian guy, but not Korean, right? They don't know how to act to him. For me, not that much problem. There's a slight chance for myself to get into living with Asian guy who is not a Korean person. But they don't like this so I try not to.

The issue here is “family bond.” Julia is afraid that her parents would not include her future partner as a new family member if his behavior toward her parents were culturally inappropriate. Students try to avoid cultural conflict for their parents’ sake. Like Julia, most students have been told by their parents about their marriage since they were young. Alice is "trying not to fall in love with non-Koreans," and she would marry someone her parents like. Shannon is also concerned about the relationship between her parents and her future partner. She “would try going out” with non-Koreans but “a right man [she is] waiting for would be a Korean.”

Shannon: If he is an Asian at least, they[parents] are like, it wouldn't be as bad as having Caucasian. Because they cannot communicate with the guy. They wouldn't feel a kind of family bondage...at least Asians have some similar custom. Food and how they would
do to elders. But Caucasians are so different. (laugh) Yeah, it's totally different. What is it...common marriage or something? Common-law, but for Korean, it is something you are not supposed to do, right?

When they think about their marriage, what their parents think has priority over what they think. They think that they need to create a solid cultural environment at home by having a Korean partner in order to pass Korean culture on to their children and to make their parents comfortable. They believe that it is important to share the same culture to create a strong family bond.

**Review: Students' Experience at Home**

After their immigration, Korean students came to have closer relationships with their parents, helping to support their new businesses and giving them help with language problems. It gave students an opportunity to internalize the work and family ethics of their parents. Looking at their parents' hardship, students tried to reward their parents' sacrifices by being successful in school and finding "a good job" before considering self-achievement. Students are ready to take care of their parents in the future. They hope to have a Korean spouse to avoid any cultural conflict at home, and to establish a strong family bond. Male students feel responsibility as boys, but female students felt resistant to lower expectations than that male students could have from their parents. Korean students involve their parents when they shape their future image.
Chapter Five: "1.5 Generations" of Koreans in Canada

As we have seen, Korean immigrant students' stories are full of cultural and racial experiences in various daily situations. In this chapter, I discuss how Korean students develop their identity in the country of settlement, and how their identity is connected to the country of origin. In the new country, students found a discrepancy between how they see themselves, how they think how they are viewed by others, and what they are becoming. I then examine how Korean immigrant students' identity is shaped in relation with others. Next, I discuss how the cultural 'self' of the Korean diaspora is maintained and developed in a place far away from the home country. I will also approach the future image of the Korean diaspora from their perspective. What will Korean students' stories tell us about the formation of diasporic identity in a multicultural society?

Identity Development in the Country of Settlement

Korean students call themselves "the 1.5 (one point five) generation," which means they are almost the second generation since they immigrated at a young age, although they are actually the first generation of immigrants. They were born in Korea but they grew up and spent the most formative years of their adolescence in both Korea and Canada. They absorbed the Canadian way of life, acquired English as a second language, but not as much as the second generation who were born in Canada. They speak Korean as their first language and maintain a Korean way of life, but not as much as their parents who were part of the first generation.

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1 The term "1.5 generation" was coined by Rumbaut and Ima (1988) for the South East Asian refugee youth in the U.S, who spend a good portion of their adulthood in their home country.
These Korean students have been categorised as a "voluntary minority" to use Ogbu's formulation. They are willing to accommodate and to accept less equal treatment in order to improve their chances for economic success. Earlier, some doubt was cast on whether the children of "voluntary minorities" could also be considered to have been voluntary immigrants. The response of the 1.5 generation to immigration has not been discussed thus far.

So, how do 1.5 generation Koreans in Canada talk about themselves? Findings from the data show how Korean students have developed their identity in relation to others. Students' stories show the discrepancy between a) how they see themselves, b) how they are seen, and c) what they are becoming. In this part, I would like to discuss how Korean students' identities are shaped by other's perspectives which differ from their own self definition, and then address how the other's perspective encourages or discourages the establishment of Korean students’ strong self-esteem.

**How Do They See Themselves?**

Lee (1996) observed Asian students in high school and categorized students according to their self-definitions: "Korean identified," "Asian identified," "American identified" and "New waves." This study applies these categories as a framework. However, findings from this study do not support Lee's categorization and findings. None of the students interviewed clearly identified as themselves "Canadian." In this study, based on their self-definitions, I examine the perspectives of: 1) those who identified themselves as Korean, 2) those who identified themselves as Asian, and 3) those who identified themselves as others, or did not wish to categorize themselves at all. In this part, I would like to investigate how Korean students identified themselves in their own words and how the world looked to them.
**Korean identified students.** Most students described themselves with some variant of Korean identity, using different descriptors such as: "Korean," "Korean Canadian," "Canadianized Korean," "Korean and part-time Canadian." Two students, Yong and Jay, strongly identified themselves as Koreans.

When students called themselves "Korean" in their stories, I could not help asking the question: "What makes you Korean?" They seemed to be rattled by the unexpected question as if it should be obvious to me, or as if I were questioning their taken for granted authentic identity. The common response I got after the silence was "I don't know," but they gave me two types of definitions.

The first one may be described as a primordialist\(^2\) definition. Jay explained:

Jay: What makes me Korean? I don't know. Maybe I was brain-washed by my parents. I just am Korean no matter what. If I lack Korean language and lost my people...I still think myself Korean. I think your mom is Korean, my parents are Korean. I guess it makes me Korean. I am living in Canada. It isn't gonna make any difference. I think I am Korean.

In his definition, all immigrants of Korean-origin in any place are considered "Korean." Jay emphasized the kinship bondage of one ethnic group based on blood ties. Hence I view this as a primordialist perspective.

The other definition is behaviour based, namely through contact and interaction. Students explained that speaking Korean, enjoying Korean food and following Korean culture make a person Korean. As Yong said,

Yong: I hang around with Korean[s]. All parents worry about kids [who] aren't able to speak English. Because kids didn't have white friends, right? Their children almost all [the time] speak Korean, so, you know, we just think [of] ourselves [as] Korean, not Canadian.

\(^2\) I used the term “primordialist” based on Jay’s explanation, however, Eller and Coughlan (1993) criticise the concept of primordialism which explains that ethnic attachment is “from the beginning, a priori, ineffable.”
To these students who identified themselves as Korean, everyday life goes on in a Korean community where Korean friends, language, food, music, and the like are always accessible.

Importantly, those students who identified themselves as Korean distinguished themselves from "Korean-Korean," in their words, meaning those who recently emigrated from Korea, even though they "are born from Korean parents" and "speak Korean, enjoy Korean music." Then, what makes the difference between "Korean-Korean" and these Korean students?

New immigrants do not share the same information and interest with less recent immigrants. New Korean immigrants tend to talk about local topics pertaining to happenings in Korea; what goes on in their home country is something about which less recent Korean immigrants are hardly well informed. Thus, there is a gap between what recent immigrants know about Korea and what less recent immigrants "imagine." In another way, recent immigrants "encounter" a different type of Korean community in Canada.

Each student has a unique definition of "Korean." It determines who is included and who is excluded. "Korean" and "Korean culture" do not tie to a location. There is no fixed "Korean identity." It is already partial and fluid.

In addition, Lee (1996) concludes that Korean students who identified themselves as Korean in the U.S. adopt a "dual identity." In order to absorb the dominant white culture, Korean-identified students often "imitated what they considered to be white American behavior" (p. 24) and tend to keep a distance from other Asian students, believing that Koreans are better than other Asians. Unlike the students in Lee's study, Korean-identified students in this study, did not show the desire for being close to white students. Yong, for example, insisted, "I don't act like totally different people, like white kids." Students in this study also talked about having a good relationship with Chinese and Japanese friends at school.
These different results might come from the different nature of Canadian multiculturalism as compared to the assimilationist nature of American society.

**Asian identified students.** In her story, Sara often chose the word "Asian" to describe herself. She described her struggle to fit into "white" Canadian society. But she was, "anti-white and anti-Canadian." When I asked why she thinks of Canada as a "white" society, her response was:

*Sara: But somehow, speaking English...and I had kind of image, maybe I created by myself, but enforce[d] [by] my family and myself... I was kind of struggling myself to find myself. More than necessary, but now, I kind of getting freaked. Because I wanted to know if I was more Asian or if I could live in Canada as a Canadian.*

Her image of Canada was of a “white” “English-speaking” country. She struggled to find herself in Canada, and desperately wanted to find a place for herself outside of the Korean community to fit into the new society. To this Asian-identified student, society is constructed in a white and non-white binary. Sara's mind and body are obviously positioned on the non-white side. She chose to be in an Asian group and kept an "ethnicless" position inside the group. Her choice to hang around with non-Korean Asian students helped her to practice English, which is the common language of a multi-ethnic Asian group.

However, she faced the boundaries she could not cross such as language and popular culture of the dominant group among Asians. When she faced these boundaries, she realized her “self.” This is what Mead (1934) refers to as “a social self” that is relationally constructed. It is recognized “by others to have the very values which we want to have belong to it” (p.204).

*Inferiority complexes arise from those wants of a self which we should like to carry out but which we cannot—we adjust ourselves to these by the so-called inferiority complexes. (Mead, 1934, p.204)*

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Sara struggled with a different language and culture within an Asian group to which she wanted to belong. In order to be a part of an Asian group,
she suppressed talking about herself and her home country. Her story expressed the insecurity of being an outsider in an otherwise homogeneous Asian group. Her "Asian identity" was not a solid identity supported by shared culture with the others but a fragile "ethnicless" identity.

Moreover, from within the inclusive Asian group, she was looking at the "white Canadian" world outside. In order to fit into "Canadian" society, Sara first settled in an Asian group. The second step to go into "Canadian" society would be full of anxiety.

In the above reading of the situation, the student also indicates the importance of having a critical mass of people like him or herself to experience a feeling of personal reinforcement in a situation where identity is so nebulous. This is a story about being different kinds of insiders and outsiders.

"Others." Aaron described himself as "nothing." He also recognized the Korean part of himself but he said, "I am Korean but it does not mean that I have to hang around with Koreans." He did not mind going out with Korean friends, but he did not enjoy what Korean students usually enjoyed. He also felt a certain resistance to the non-Korean students who "overreacted to ethnic boundaries" and chose not to hang around with Korean students. Since he came to Canada when he was very young, he "had no problem with talking to any kind of people" so that he "could be in any [ethnic] group." Aaron's positionality is "ethnicless" and "raceless"; he did not define himself and therefore could cross boundaries between ethnic groups with ease.

On the other hand, John is a student who always hung around with Korean friends. John said even though he felt more comfortable with Korean culture, he wanted to be exposed more to "multicultural" friends. He explained that his "Korean part" is from his past, and also found himself seeking and discovering something "new" in himself. He noticed that he has another identity as well, other than a Korean identity.
John: I was in fine arts programme so I paint. I paint something related to Korea, or Korean immigrants. When I talk about my work, I cannot escape from my past. At that time, I think about my own past identity, I think. I am falling in to such a situation, I am not sure why I feel that way. I think there must be one more identity.

Then, could John's "one more identity" be "Canadian"?

John: I think Canadian is ambiguous. [It is ambiguous] to say [who is] Canadian... I think it's good that lots of Koreans are in Vancouver. Vancouver is so open to different culture. Sometimes I think it could be bad, could be totally flipped. Vancouver has a little bit own identity and share[s] so many identities. But I think not having [an] identity could [itself] be one identity.

These students are aware that "Canadian" could mean any identity, so being “Korean” is not incompatible with being “Canadian.” They were unable to explain themselves by using existing identity categories. These students’ stories tell us identity is partial and is in process. Identity tells us something, but does not tell us all (Yon, 2000). Identity continuously demands new categories. John's point about not having an identity itself constituting a form of identity offers an interesting view.

**How Are They Seen?**

Physical attributes can be the first information about a person to others. Omi and Winant (1994) state:

One of the first things we notice about people when we meet them (along with their sex) is their race. We utilize race to provide clues about who a person is. (p. 59)

"How their body is read" however, does not always coincide with what they really are (Yon, 2000). Korean students found a discrepancy between how they see themselves and how they are seen.

First of all, English names erase the most cultural and personal attributes. Students did not feel authentic when they were called by an English name. Their “true-selves” are invisible to others. Changing names brought them a great sense of loss.
Second, from the external appearance of Asians, the "model minority" image of Asians is applied to Korean students as well. Some students gave us an example of positive effects of this image; it helped Jay to have confidence in math. However, it can also send negative message to students who do not fit this image, and the model minority stereotype hides the reality of the many Asian students who are not “successful” (Pang, 1990; Lee, 1994, 1996). Students were aware that they were one of the "quiet Asian students" (Chang-ae) in the teacher’s view. They refused to fit in and break this image, and in order to do so, they struggle to make their personality brighter and more outgoing to fit in their new environment.

Third, Koreans are invisible among Asian minority groups. Even though Korean immigration history started as early as that of the Chinese and Japanese, it has not been emphasized because Koreans were very few in number. Historically, Korean immigrants do not share the experiences that highlight Canadian immigration history, such as the "concentration camp" of Japanese history and "railway and head tax" of Chinese history in Canada. The "Korean War" was almost the only topic which surfaced when Korea was mentioned in Canadian schools. As Yong complained, since his social studies teacher always talked about the negative aspects of Korea, Korean students were discouraged by the messages sent by teachers. They were concerned that other students would also form negative impressions of Korea.

In addition, Korea is located close to China and Japan. This geographical closeness also confuses people who are not familiar with East Asia. Historical and geographical invisibility, along with physical similarities, makes Korean students feel invisible, vulnerable and insecure. Students came to know that Korea is not well known and is misunderstood by people. John was surprised and Yong was upset about this ignorance or lack of understanding. Aaron makes the case to "stand up and fix!" However, most students accept the “reality” that Korea is not well known. Interestingly, students think the reason for this "invisibility" derives from their
home country's positioning in the international arena. China and Japan's long histories and national power overwhelm Korean students.

This sense of inadequacy and invisibility affects students' self-esteem and makes them avoid talking about themselves. The ignorance of, or different image of, Korea that others had affected the students' self-image.

*Sara:* We never learn about Korea. They just taught Japanese but not Korean. People even don't know where it is... When I just came here, I wasn't proud of Korea, you know. I don't know. It's just I didn't hide or anything but at the beginning, I just felt people don't know and everything about me, I was very insecure, and I didn't have self-esteem. I didn't think about country, being proud of the country, when I was a child. I don't think I had any conscious. I just felt insecure, and I didn't want to be with anybody. Even if I talked about it, I don't know what to say. I hope they wouldn't ask, they don't know how to ask anyways.

Friends' ignorance of her country gave Sara a sense of powerlessness. She was afraid of talking about a part of herself and then became less proud of being Korean. Her story shows her desire to be understood fully, including the Korean part of herself. This "invisibility" as a Korean created the sense of powerless, insecurity and low self-esteem. This supports Lee's agreement: Korean students formed their identities in "response to social conditions" (Lee, 1996, p. 15). But students believe that, if one day, Korea would be as "powerful" as Japan economically, as China historically, they too could be more "visible" to others.

Lastly, I wanted to see if students have a racial identity of "Asian," or what Lee (1996) called "pan-ethnic identity" shared among Asian students. In Lee's study, Asian-identified students explained that "non-Asians treated all Asians in the same way and that therefore they should stick together for support" (1996, p. 30). Do students develop pan-ethnic identity as a result of ethnic homogenizing by others? Do Korean students themselves forge a shared identity by seeking support from Asian students who have had similar experiences? (See
Tatum (1997) discusses the racial development of Black youth and argues that Black youth can benefit from seeking support from those who have had similar experiences. See “Why all the black kinds sitting together in the cafeteria?”

Let us go back to Jay's story. He became involved in a fight with white students to help other Asian students. He felt that he should help his fellow Asians without knowing why he felt that way. As a result, he was suspended from school while the white students were not. One student said that "being a Korean does not mean any disadvantage," but being seen as an Asian does. This shared experience caused by racism brings Asian students together. This story supports Lee's finding that "pan-ethnicity is not always chosen by ethnic groups but rather is often imposed by members of the dominant group" (Lee, 1996, p.114.)

The data in this study also reveal that physical and cultural similarities sometimes give them comfort. They share the somatic norm image of other Asians, feel close to Asian students since they share similar cultural attributes and codes and they are labelled as one and as outsiders by the mainstream. Therefore, Korean students can have a "good friendship" with Asian students. This boundary between "Asian" and "Non-Asian" was made by the dominant group's inability to distinguish the subtleties of intra-Asian differences and therefore see them all as one. But, they also share other bounds such as “familiar,” "similar culture" which, as Yong said, "white guys never understand." However, does this "familiarity" and "closeness" develop into a "shared identity"? Asian students seem to play together in the playground, or may be seen sitting together in the cafeteria. But they do not cross the boundaries and mix with each other.

Inside the boundary of "cultural similarities" of Asians, Korean students "get along with" Chinese and Japanese friends. How they are seen, however, is not congruent with what they really are. We see another boundary inside the group. For example, we see Asian students playing basketball in the playground, but they are playing in two ethnic groups - Chinese
versus Korean. A group of Asian girls are talking to each other. One of them seems confused and feels isolated because she does not understand what her friends are talking about. Despite the physical and cultural similarities, many differences create boundaries, for instance, language, childhood experience, immigration background and preference of music create boundaries. These differences emerge and subside depending on the situation.

Sara’s story shows us an example of feeling ambivalent about being part of a wider Asian group. Sara wants to be one of the Asians, but in the Asian group, she was seen as a Korean. She was happy to be seen as Asian by non-Asians, but she is also aware that she cannot be seen just as "an Asian" in the Asian group. A more specific identification is needed within a wider racial group.

To summarize, Korean students were seen under the umbrella term of “Asians” based on physical attributes; but they were categorized into a more specific identification within the wider Asian group. Their invisibility as Korean makes them lose confidence. This is not only because they are Koreans, but because they feel that they are seen as a devalued, lower status group.

**What Are They Becoming?**

When Korean students describe the future image of themselves, they are aware of the "eyes" of parents and the Korean community. Self-image of Korean students is produced in the relationship with their parents.

All students in this study seek the image of their future self as "successful." They want to be "successful" in two ways: They desire success in a career choice and success in maintaining family harmony.

First, Korean students look at their future through their parents' eyes. They need their parents' approval when they make decisions about their future, their career choice and choice
of major in university to achieve that career goal. Their parents' satisfaction is as important as, or sometimes more important than, students' individual satisfaction. This finding supports Kim's study, which points out that "career identity is equated with Koreaness or ethnic identity" (Kim, 1993, p. 241).

Secondly, there is the factor of students' desire to maintain family harmony. The immigration experience has brought family members closer to one another. Students have seen the hardships their parents experienced in Canada, which is as Shannon said, "something I wouldn't know if I were in Korea." It changed traditional gender roles. Not only male students, but also female students showed their willingness to take care of parents in the future. This supports the study of Kim, Kim and Hurh (1993) on Korean's cultural norm of filial piety in the U.S. To be able to take care of their parents, both male and female students need to be "successful" in finding a recognized, financially secure job. Moreover, in order to make parents comfortable in another way, marriage to a Korean is almost considered a "duty" by most of the students. At least their partner should be able to communicate with their parents to avoid any cultural conflict. This image of a "successful family" helps to gain recognition by Korean community.

On the whole, students' future self-image is seen through the eyes of parents and the Korean community. Their future self-image is related to internalized cultural value from their parents. They are aware that their success means the success of immigration, the reward for their parents. Their "successful future" is viewed from their parents' and Korean community's eyes. This aspect of identity is shared among all Korean students regardless of their self-identification.
Connected to the Country of Origin

Opportunities for Cultural Maintenance

This study aims to study the formation and maintenance of Korean identity of the Korean diaspora. Some students maintain, and still develop, Korean identity, and others abandon part of their Korean identity. What helps them to maintain Korean culture? What makes it possible to develop Korean identity so far away from the home country?

These questions remind me of what Gordon Mathews (2000) argues about a "cultural supermarket" and "layered identity." He looks at the way of life of a particular people in a particular culture and focuses on the potential for any culture to be infused with other influences. He argues that the information and identities are available from the cultural supermarket as a result of globalisation. Mathews explains the "market" in the global age:

There are two forms of the market: the material supermarket, bringing a flood of products from all over the world into every corner of the world, and the cultural supermarket, bringing a flood of information and potential identities into every corner of the world. (p.9)

Further, he distinguishes three levels of shaping the cultural self: 1) the first basic level where deep shaping takes place beyond the self's control and beyond all but indirect comprehension, 2) middle-level shaping which takes place beyond the self's full control but within its comprehension, and 3) shallow which takes place with what the self sees as full control and comprehension. The third level is the shallowest level but is determined by the two deeper levels (p.15).

Applying these three levels, the maintenance and development of Korean students' cultural self can be explained as follows: Students' preference of food, language, the way of life (customs) belongs to the first basic level, which is shared among all students in this study. The sense of obligation to their parents, which is to try to satisfy their parents' expectations, belongs to the second level. Students cannot stop feeling guilty about the hardship endured by
their parents, and they are aware that the hardship of parents is related to immigration which is for their better life. Their chosen identity, such as "popular culture" identity, is the most superficial composition of their identity, yet this is affected by a deeper level of identities. Any type of ethnic food and popular music is now available in "every corner of the world," especially in such a “multicultural” society as Greater Vancouver. Thus, Korean students can readily access their source of identity in Canada. In other words, Korean students choose to pick up Korean popular culture such as Korean popular music, artists, drama, to fit into the Korean peer community.

What is "imagined" (Anderson, 1993) is talked about here. Instead of talking about what is going on here in Canada, they “imagine” what is going on “there” in Korea by picking up any available information—hit songs, popular actors-- from the “cultural supermarket” as well as any available products—CDs, videos, foods-- from the “material supermarket.” Korean students share the image of home country; however, their image does not exactly coincide with the realities in the home country itself. Not all Korean students “imagine” their home country. Some chose not to “imagine,” but simply to fit in to a diasporic Korean community as it is; or, they sought another independent identity.

In sum, by applying Mathews’ framework of “layered identity,” the 1.5 generation of Koreans’ identity development can be explained. The deepest level of identity--“What you do without thinking”--was shaped before immigrating. The immigration experience strengthened the second level of identity--“What you do because you have to.” And, the shallowest level of identity--“What you choose to do”-- is open to students and allows them to decide their self-definition. 1.5 generation Korean students share an identity at the bottom levels, but “Korean identity” in its appearance is not a homogeneous, fixed identity. It is always partial and fluid. While some pick up a “Korean identity” in Canada, others disregard it.
**Korean Community in the Future**

No matter how they see themselves, students find themselves in the Korean community through their Korean friends, church activities, the family's business associations and so on. It may also be meaningful to state here how these students think about the future of the "Korean diaspora" in Canada.

As we have seen, Korean students seemed to accept the reality of being a minority among other Asian minorities. Students said that being Korean does not mean any disadvantage in society, but they think that the disadvantage comes from being Asian (non-white). Some students are also quite self-critical about their own Korean community. As we have seen before, students are afraid of the “invisibility” of Koreans among other minority groups. Jay said,

*Jay: Compared to other group like Indonesian, like other Brown people. Chinese Vietnamese...I think Koreans are increasing right now but still a minority. We don't have much authority.*

Alice said that there is a great need for Koreans to serve as models of success.

*Alice: I know we are kind of weak, ourselves as Koreans, and as a group of Koreans. But individual Korean[s] are totally different. I mean, the history of Korean immigration is a lot shorter than that of Taiwanese and Chinese and Japanese and any other Asians. We don't have a technique [to build] a powerful community. But in Vancouver, there are many Korean[s] who have social positions in this society, but they keep their power in a different place. They cannot return it Korean community.*

Students see the problem as inside the Korean community rather than as with other minority groups. This insider perspective is expressed in the following way:

*Sara: it's a multicultural society, so I don't think there's a problem to any particular ethnicity. But as for me, just for my personal opinion, I always think that Koreans have problems... They are always like kind of bashing about each other. Not always but it happens so frequently. For example, I went to high school right? I can see Chinese people hanging out in group of 20 with no problem. But Koreans are always in three or two, you know. I really hate it. I think that always happen here. If somebody bother you, you just hated [him] so much. I always hanged around Chinese and Japanese. Even they hated each other, they never showed that. I think Korean society makes people so competitive.*
In a more individualistic society, students see the need to be united from the outside as other minority groups seem to be. Sara believes that Koreans need not be a "competitive" but a cooperative community.

These students insist that the Korean community needs to be more powerful, more cohesive from the inside, in order to make their voices heard and to survive in a multicultural society. This also shows the Korean students' desire to be "visible." Korean students are being "active agents" rather than simply victims (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). As a whole, students have given me positive, optimistic responses to the questions about the future of Koreans in Canada. Yong made his final comment at the end of interview: "I think I can deal with things (tensions and strains)... I think it's gonna be fine later on." Korean students are not afraid of being Koreans, but move forward toward their better future with family, seeking a way to maintain part of themselves as Korean. As Brah (1996) writes, "diaspora" does not always mean separation and dislocation, but also sites of hope and new beginnings.
Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion

The term “Diaspora” challenges the notion of ethnicity as fixed. Diasporic identity is shaped through and after a long journey, and still mentally connected with the homeland. This study attempts to investigate the diasporic identity of Korean immigrant students who are newly emerging as a significant minority group in B.C. through last decade. How are they connected to their homeland? How does “place” function in their identity development? The concept of diaspora describes the lived experience of one ethnic minority group in a global age. I will go back to my original questions, and conclude the discussion about diasporic identity of the 1.5 generation Korean immigrant students. Lastly, I will compare the Korean diaspora in Canada with their counterpart in Japan.

Where I Started

In this study, I have attempted to 1) determine the influence of immigration on students’ identity development, 2) examine the cultural and racial experiences in different situations, and 3) discuss how Korean students situate themselves and develop their self-concepts in relationship with others.

The Influence of Immigration on Students’ Identity Development

Although Korean students felt a little excited about moving abroad, students had to face significant changes in their daily lives. Language was the biggest issue for all students. In order to fit into new schools, Korean students changed their names to English names, and changed their personalities by becoming more outgoing. They were overwhelmed by the more independent and relaxed school atmosphere with students from various backgrounds. At home, students were upset with their father’s downward career change and worried about their
mother being busy and lonely. Students participated in the family business by helping their parents to communicate in a new language. All these created stronger family bonds.

The Cultural and Racial Experience in Different Situations

Korean students, who were from a homogeneous country, encountered a culturally diverse society in Canada. At school, students felt close to physically similar Asian students, and experienced being victims of racism. Students became aware of being a racial subject in society. Classmates began to separate into ethnic groups in upper grades. Even though they wished to develop friendships outside of the Korean group, it was difficult for most Korean students because of cultural differences. Korean students could have good relationship with other Asian students who had similar cultural values; however, the degree of friendship with Asians varied and could not be as close as with Korean friends with whom they shared an unspoken universe as well as a common language and all the symbols that evoke. At home, they maintain a Korean lifestyle, and hope to keep practicing Korean culture at home. While male students are eager to carry on traditional rituals, female students seemed less interested in carrying on the symbolic rituals. This poses a gendered division on the maintenance of cultural practices in the new homeland. Traditionally cultural maintenance was considered part of the female domain, often entailing labor-intensive practices. So, when competing claims for work in the new homeland emerge, conflicts arise.

How Korean Students Situate Themselves and Develop Their Self-Concepts?

In order to investigate this question, the study looks at how Korean students see themselves, how they are seen, and what they want to become in the future.

The results show that students identify themselves in various ways. Most students identified themselves as "Korean" to some extent, but they distinguished themselves from
"Koreans" in their home country. Those students belong to the Korean group and enjoy the youth culture of their homeland. One student identified herself as Asian, and tried to be part of an Asian group. Students who did not wish to categorize themselves refer to their identity as a "Canadian identity" which may include any ethnic identities; at the same time these students recognize the Korean "part" of their own identity.

Regardless of these nuanced self-identifications, students are seen as Asian at school. Koreans are invisible physically, culturally, historically, and geographically to the dominant group. However, among Asians, Korean students are seen as "different," and as a minority group among Asian minorities.

Their future self-image is strongly related to their parents’ expectations. They hope to be "successful" in the future to reward their parents’ physical and emotional hardships. They also feel it necessary to create a culturally homogeneous home in order to pass Korean culture on to the next generation, and to maintain family bonds. In other words, they think they will be able to maintain Korean traditions and culture away from their home country. Students hope that the Korean community will become more powerful and visible to Canadian society, as an outcome of each individual’s success.

"Diasporic Identity" of Koreans

I have attempted to describe the lived transnational experience of Korean immigrant students using the concept of diaspora. What is their relationship to their countries of settlement and the countries of origin? How do they picture their homeland?

Diaspora reflects a mental connection to the homeland. Most students have not visited Korea since their immigration, but the country of origin is in their mind as a place to which they can return. Korean students do not have ongoing, direct interaction with their home country; however, Korean students picture their homeland in their minds mainly through
Korean youth culture. Korean students also have lived experiences in the country of settlement, and have a sense of “feeling at home.” There is a tug of dual attachment to here and there.

Diasporic identity draws upon a collective memory. Korean students share a similar memory of dislocation with their Korean peers. This collective memory decides the boundary of inclusion and exclusion.

Diasporic identity is historically constructed. However, the history of this newly growing community of immigrants is not articulated in public space. This invisibility contributes to creating a sense of marginalisation in the country of settlement. Thus, Korean students also hope to make the Korean community more powerful and visible in Canadian society in the future, by highlighting each individual Korean's success.

Diaspora encompasses the duality of continuity and change. Though Korean students are related to their homeland, they encounter “others” in new Korean immigrants. Korean students believe they will be able to continue Korean traditions, but rituals are often refashioned. While Korean students internalized the cultural values of their parents to carry on their traditions, female students are becoming more independent and indifferent to symbolic rituals. This most certainly has to do with the competing claims on the time of working Korean women, drawn between workplace demands and the domestic domain.

Korean students in Canada displayed these features of the diasporic relations. The concept of diaspora gives a more detailed description of Korean immigrant students who live in a transnational community. It also helps us to understand their traditions before and after migration.

**Implications of the Study**

The study presents the diasporic identity which challenges the essentialist notion of ethnic minority. This study also shows the diversity within one racial group and one ethnic
group, and helps to understand that the multiple, fluid nature of identity move beyond national (local) identity. Identity is created in relation with others by resisting and internalizing the other’s view. Multiple identities are shaped through multiple eyes in a multicultural society. The study describes not all, but some aspects of Korean diasporic identity.

The findings of this study include the emergence of pan-ethnic identity. The source of this identity can be the shared position of minority status. The findings of this study imply that Korean students also shape “pan-ethnic” identity which can be explained with “shared culture” with other Asian students. The cultural commonalities may be "taken for granted" understanding such as parental pressure and duty to older generations. Also, “small culture” which was influenced by ancient China may be assimilated into the “great culture” of China. Further research needs to be done to investigate the formation of “racial identity” of Asians.

Revisiting My Question—Diaspora in Different Spaces

Let us go back to my first question, as many Japanese educators believe, "Are Koreans in North America in an ideal situation?" Are they "doing well" in Canadian society and in maintaining Korean culture? The study shows the daily struggle of Korean students in Canadian schools. After immigration, they faced significant changes in their daily lives. Korean students in Canada experience a sense of loss of their original name, even though they could keep their family name. Being a minority among minorities, they have to deal with other people’s ignorance and struggle to talk about themselves. They failed to make friendships outside of their own ethnic group even though they wished to do so. I question if this is the ideal situation which Japanese educators try to achieve.

The depiction of Korean students in North America as being in an "ideal situation" which is what is believed in Japan, is a myth. However, there are some implications that Japanese educators can learn: Korean students in Canada show positive attitudes towards their
culture and future which is hardly seen in Korean students in Japan. This might be because of the immigration and citizenship policy in Canada which is more open and relaxed than that in Japan. A second reason may derive from the different historical context. The Korean diaspora in Japan has more opportunity to communicate with old hatreds from older generation. This attitude is often transmitted from one generation to the next. On the other hand, minorities in a multicultural society are freer from feeling a marginalised status and they do not have quite the same historical "deep" hatreds and generational oppression which earlier generations of Koreans in Japan have experienced. There is also a need to investigate the identity of the Korean minority in Japan in light of the concept of diaspora and in the context of Japanese society and history.

The structural location of minorities and their historical experience in a given political context is extremely important in the way they see themselves. In this regard, Korean students in Canada seem to have greater self-confidence in themselves, judging from they way they speak of themselves, as compared to Koreans in Japan. Korean students in Canada form alliances with other Asians, at times arising out of shared cultural universes, shared empathies, and a feeling of acceptance. They also feel sheltered in this broad umbrella from their position of being "outsiders." Yet there are times when they also experience feelings of not really belonging to this group, when language enters into the picture and they cannot participate fully as insiders. In addition, Koreans are willing to maintain their culture in the new country.

Koreans in Japan occupy a very different political and historical location. They have been the eternal outsiders; they have been stigmatised as second class citizens. In an assimilative society, Koreans in Japan often identify themselves with Japanese, or they are willing to assimilate into the society, giving up their culture. Lacking the ethnic attributes such as name and language, Koreans in Japan hesitate to refer to themselves as "Koreans."
Diasporic communications are those groups who have migrated to other geographic locations, yet retain linkages with one another. These communities have a sense of connection to each other and their homeland. However, each community imagines the homeland in a different way. The Korean diaspora in Japan often compare themselves to, relate to, and sometimes idealize their counterparts in North America. Then, how does the Korean diaspora in Canada see me, as a member of the Korean diaspora in Japan? This study has challenged my own identity. I found myself being unable to speak proper Korean, talking about what is going on in Japan, but still trying to present the Korean part of myself by mentioning my experience in Korea (as a traveler), my favorite Korean food, and Korean traditions I manage to continue in Japan. Some students gave me their Korean names when I first contacted them, others their English names. Some showed their interest in the situation of Koreans in Japan, others wanted to know more about traditional and popular culture in Japan from me. Did they identify with me, who does not speak Korean well, who knows nothing about Korean popular songs, who just calls herself "Korean"?

All these reconfirm the relational aspects of identity formation in diasporic communities. Identities are constructed in relation to the way groups are viewed by the broader society but at the same time, reconstructed through their own attempts at self-assertion.
References


Stanford University Press.


Appendix C

Interview Question Sample

Date of Interview:
ID:
Age:

* Background Information:
  1. How long have you been in Canada?
  2. Who do you have in your family?
  3. Do you use English name? Korean name?:
  4. Do you go to church?
  5. What is your experience of moving into a Canadian neighbourhood?

1) Students' experiences with schools in Canada:
  1. How did the Canadian school you entered differ from school in Korea?
  2. How did the Canadian teachers you encountered differ from the Korean teachers?
  3. What did you like most about Canadian schools, which you attended?
  4. What did you dislike most about Canadian schools, which you attended?
  5. Have you had a chance to learn something about Korea at school?
  6. Did people (peers, teachers) treat you as Korean, or Asian, Canadian, or someone else?
  7. What kind of situation made you realize that you are Korean at school?

2) Students' experiences at home:
  1. How has moving to Canada changed your role in the family?
  2. Do you have many/any relatives in Canada?
     --How often do you see them?
     --Do you have elderly relatives who are part of your family?
  3. Does your family expect that you will take care of parents in the future?
  4. What Korean customs do you continue to practice here, at home?
  5. How is Che-sa (Korean memorial service) practised?

3) Students' future plans:
  1. What are you future plans for a career?
  2. Do you have discussions with your parents about your future plans?
  3. Who has influenced you most in shaping your future plans?
  4. Are your parents' expectations for your future different for boys and girls?

4) Friends
  1. Do you hang with both Korean friends and non-Korean friends?
     --at the same time, or separately?
  2. Where did you get to know with your Korean friends?
     What do you do with Korean friends? Where do you go?
     How often do you see them?
  3. Where did you get to know with your non-Korean friends?
     What do you do with non-Korean friends? Where do you go?
How often do you see them?
Does your family feel comfortable with your non-Korean friends?
Is language a barrier?
4. How does your friendship with Korean friends differ from your friendship with non-Korean friends?

5) Students' view and experiences with Korean culture:
(0. to Canadian citizen: How did you feel when you became Canadian citizen?)
1. What is the difference between using Korean name and using English name?
2. Do you consider Korean tradition to be an important part of your life in Canada?
3. Are you likely to pass on Korean tradition and ways of living to your children?
4. Are there any tensions and strains in your experience as a Korean-Canadian, living in a society like Canada?

* Any last comment?