KOREANS' IMMIGRATION TO THE U. S: HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

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1. Introductory Remarks

I consider the most important task of the Research Center for Korean Community analyzing census data and other public documents on the Korean population and release them to the Korean community at regular intervals. This is the third report the Research Center has released since its establishment in September 2009. The first research report was "An Annotated Bibliography on Korean Americans" released in December 2009. A revised version of the report was published in a special issue of *Studies of Koreans Abroad* (Volume 21, 2010) focusing on Korean Americans. The second report titled "Growth of the U.S. Korean Population and Changes in Their Settlement Patterns, 1990-2008" was released in March 2010.

This third report, which is somewhat late in release, examines the history and contemporary patterns of Korean immigration. For the analytic convenience, we can divide the history of Korean immigration to the United States into three periods: the old immigration period (1903-1949), the intermediate period **(**1950-1964**),** and the contemporary (1965-present) immigration period. More than 95% of Korean Americans now consist of immigrants who entered the United States in 1965 and after, and their descendants. Thus this report focuses on patterns of Korean immigration in the post-1965 immigration period. In analyzing contemporary Korean immigration patterns, I have used *Annual Reports and Statistical Yearbooks, 1965-2001,* published by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and *Yearbooks of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2009, published by Office of Immigration Statistics. These statistical yearbooks give data on Koreans admitted to the United States or legalized as immigrants in the denoted year. Thus 25,859 Korean immigrants in 2009 means that such a number of Korean immigrants were

admitted to the United States as legal immigrants (new arrivals) or legalized in the United States (status adjusters).

2. The Old Immigration Period (1903-1949)

After the diplomatic relations between the United States and Korea were established in 1884, a small number of Koreans, mostly students and politicians, came to the United States at the end of the nineteenth century. But it was approximately 7,200 Koreans who came to Hawaii between January 1903 and July 1905 to work on sugar plantations in Hawaii that composed the first wave of Korean labor migrants. In 2003, Korean communities throughout the United States performed a number of events to celebrate the centennial of Korean immigrations.

The **"**push**"** factor for immigration was famines in Korea at the turn of the twentieth century while the **"**pull**"** factor was the demand for cheap labor in Hawaii. To understand the demand for cheap labor in Hawaii, we may need basic information about Asians' immigration to Hawaii and other parts of the West Coast. A large number of Chinese laborers were brought to California after the Gold Rush in California in 1948. But their labor migration to the West Coast came to an end in 1882 when Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. Hawaii became the U.S. territory in 1990 after its annexation to the United States two years before. Thus bringing Chinese laborers to Hawaii was out of the question because the Chinese Exclusion Act barred their immigration to the U.S. territory. Large numbers of Japanese laborers were brought to Hawaii and California beginning in 1885, after the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed. Japanese workers composed the dominant workforce on Hawaii plantations in the

beginning of the twentieth century. Sugar plantation owners preferred to bring Korean workers to counteract frequent strikes organized by Japanese workers (Patterson 1988). Finally, the intermediary role Horace Allen, a medical Presbyterian missionary sent to Korea, played between the Korean government and plantain owners was central to the movement of pioneer Korean immigrants to Hawaii.

Beginning in 1884, American Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries were active in converting Koreans to Christianity. About 40% of pioneer Korean immigrants were converts to Christianity, and they chose to come to Hawaii for religious freedom as well as for a better economic life (Choy 1979). The majority of pioneer Korean immigrants were non-farming workers who came from cities, such as Seoul, Inchon, Suwon and Wonsan (Patterson 1992: 103). In contrast, earlier Chinese and Japanese immigrants in the nineteenth century were predominantly farmers. Most of the Korean labor migrants were single young men between the ages of 20 to 30 (Patterson 1992: 105).

Plantation owners in Hawaii needed far more Korean laborers, especially to counteract frequent strikes by Japanese laborers. But the Korean government was pressured to stop sending more Korean workers to Hawaii by the Japanese government, which tried to protect its own laborers in the Islands. After its victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, Japan made Korea its protectorate, gaining a free hand in influencing the Korean government. In February 1906, the Japanese government advised that all Koreans abroad be placed under the jurisdiction of Japanese consulates. Koreans in Hawaii and the U.S. mainland organized protest rallies, passing a resolution condemning Japan's aggressive policy in Korea (Choy 1979: 143). In this way, Korean

immigrants in the United States started the anti-Japanese movement even before the annexation of Korea by Japan.

Between 1905 and 1924, approximately 2,000 additional Koreans came to Hawaii and California. The majority of them were "picture brides" of the 1903-1905 bachelor immigrants.[1] Another 600 of them were political refugees and students who were involved in the anti-Japanese independence movement. When Congress passed the National Origins Act of 1924, the most conservative immigration law, the immigration of Koreans as well as other Asians to the United States almost completely ended. The main goal of the 1924 immigration act was to drastically reduce the influx of Eastern European immigrants whom U.S. political leaders of predominantly Northwestern European Protestant ancestries considered unfit for the fabric of America. But it had a special provision banning Asian immigration completely. As a U.S. colony, the Philippines was the only Asian country that was able to send immigrants to the United States after 1924.

Japan annexed Korea in 1910 and colonized it until it was defeated in the Asian and Pacific War in 1945. Most of Korean political refugees/students studied at universities in New York and other East Coast cities, such as Columbia, Princeton and New York Universities. A small number of these students constituted the core of the earlier Korean community in New York whereas pioneer labor migrants, their picture brides, and their children made up the majority of the Korean population in Honolulu, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Most of the political refugees/students returned to Korea, after Korean had won its independence in 1945, playing leading roles in the newly establish government and universities.

[1] Hurh (1998: 34) reports that about 1,100 Korean picture brides came to the United States between 1910 and 1924.

3. The Intermediate Period (1950-1964)

Immediately after independence from Japan in 1945, Korea suffered U.S.-Soviet struggles over hegemony over Korea and internal struggles between political leaders leaning toward the United States and those depending upon the Soviet Union. In 1948, Korea was divided into two political entities, a rightist government in South Korea supported by the United States and a communist government in North Korea supported by the Soviet Union. The two Koreas went through the first major ideological conflict in the Cold War period, known as the Korean War, between 1950 and 1953, and maintained hostile relations until 1990s. The United States has been deeply involved in South Korea militarily, politically, and economically since the Korean War.

The strong military, political, and economic linkages between the United States and South Korea contributed to a steady increase in the annual number of Korean immigrants beginning in 1950 (see Table 1). During the period between 1950 and 1964, approximately 15,000 Koreans immigrated to the United States. The McCarran and Walter Act of 1952 abolished the ban on Asian immigration, giving Asian-Pacific countries a small number of immigration quota (100 for each country) and making Asian immigrants eligible for citizenship. An overwhelming majority of Korean immigrants during this interim period were either Korean women married to U.S. servicemen in South Korea or Korean orphans adopted by American citizens. The War Bride Act of 1946 helped American servicemen in Korea to bring their Korean wives and children to the United States. Many Korean orphans adopted during this period were biracial children from the intermarriages between American servicemen stationed in Korea and

Korean women (Jo 1999: 9). While the pioneer Korean immigrants were predominantly men, these two groups of Korean immigrants admitted during the interim period were heavily women. But they lived in American families and were not much visible in the Korean community. These two groups of Korean immigrants continued to increase until the early 1980s.

Also, many Korean international students, predominantly men, entered the United States for graduate education during the period. Warren Kim (Kim 1971: 26) estimated that approximately 6,000 Korean students entered the United States between 1950 and 1964. The vast majority of them found professional occupations, especially as professors, in the United States after completing their graduate education. Almost all of them have retired now. Their children typically grew up in predominantly white neighborhoods with little contact with other Koreans or even other Asians. Thus they were highly assimilated to American society, losing much of their ethnic identity (Park 2010).

Table 1: Number of Korean Immigrants (by Country of Birth) to the U.S, 1946-1964

Year	Number of Immigrants
1946-1950	107
1951-1955	581
1956	703
1957	648
1958	1,604
1959	1,720
1960	1,507
1961	1,534
1962	1,538
1963	2,580
1964	2,362
Total	14,884

Source: Herbert Baringer, Robert W. Gardener, Michael J Levin, 1995, PP.24-25.

4. The Contemporary (post-1965) Immigration Period

More than 95% of Korean Americans consist of post-1965 immigrants and their children. The influx of a large number of Korean immigrants to the United States since the late 1960s was made possible by the Immigration Act of 1965 that was in full effect in 1968. The Immigration Act of 1965 abolished the previous racist immigration law that gave preference for people from Northwestern European countries and gave equal opportunity to all countries for immigration to the United States. In the pre-1965 period, Northwestern Europeans were allowed to immigrate to the United States in almost unlimited numbers, but they did not need the U.S.-bound migration because their countries did well economically. People in the rest of the world, especially Third World countries, were highly inclined to immigrate to the United States, but the discriminatory immigration law and other factors restricted or almost prohibited their immigration. As a result, the immigration flow to the United States during the period of three and a half decades between 1930 and 1965 dropped to the lowest level in American history (see Table 2).

The number of immigrants to the United States has gradually increased since the 1960s, reaching about nine million in the last decade of the twentieth century and 9.5 million in the first decade of the twentieth-first century. Moreover, the regions of immigrants' origins have gradually changed from Europe and Canada to Third World countries. Over 75% of total immigrants have originated from Latin America/ the Caribbean and Asian/Middle East over the last three decades, with only about 12% originating from Europe and Canada. More than one-third of total immigrants have come from Asian countries over the last four decades.

Table 2: Number of Immigrants to the U.S. by Region of Origin (%), 1841 – 2009

	Northern and Western Europe	Southern and Eastern Europe	Canada and Newfoundland	Latin American / Caribbean	Asian / Middle East	Others*	Total N (in 1,000s)
1841-1850	92.9	0.3	2.4	1.2	0.0	3.1	1,713
1851-1860	93.6	0.8	2.3	0.6	1.6	1.1	2,598
1861-1870	88.1	1.1	6.6	0.5	2.8	0.9	2,315
1871-1880	75.9	4.9	13.6	0.7	4.4	0.5	2,812
1881-1890	76.3	13.9	7.5	0.6	1.3	0.4	5,247
1891-1900	50.9	45.5	0.1	1.0	2.0	0.5	3,688
1901-1910	29.3	62.3	2.0	2.1	3.7	0.6	8,795
1911-1920	25.3	50.1	12.9	7.0	4.3	0.4	5,736
1921-1930	32.0	27.9	22.5	14.4	2.7	0.5	4,107
1931-1940	38.1	27.6	20.5	9.7	3.1	1.0	528
1941-1950	49.6	10.4	16.6	17.7	3.6	2.1	1,035
1951-1960	39.4	13.3	15.0	24.6	6.1	1.6	2,515
1961-1970	18.2	15.7	12.4	**39.2**	12.9	1.6	3,322
1971-1980	**6.6**	**11.2**	3.8	**40.3**	**35.3**	2.8	4,493
1981-1990	**5.2**	**5.2**	2.1	**47.1**	**37.3**	3.1	7,338
1991-2000	**4.5**	**10.5**	2.1	**47.2**	**30.7**	5.0	9,095
2001-2009	**4.4**	**8.6**	2.3	**40.5**	**33.9**	10.3	9,458

Source: Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2009
* Category 'Others' Includes Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and other Oceania), Africa and Not Specified Persons.

The Accelerating Period (1965-1990)

South Korea is one of the major source countries of contemporary immigrants. As shown in Table 3, the annual number of Korean immigrants gradually increased beginning in 1965. It reached the 30,000 mark in 1976 and maintained the annual number of over 30,000 until 1990. Between 1976 and 1990, Korea was the third largest source country of immigrants to the United States, next to Mexico and the Philippines. To explain the expansion of Korean immigration to the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, we need to emphasize push factors from Korea. The low standard of living in Korea, characterized by lack of job opportunity, was the major factor that pushed many Koreans to seek to emigration to the United States in the 1960s through the early 1980s.

Per capita income in Korea was only $251 in 1970. It increased to $1,355 in 1980, but it was about 1/8 of per capita income in the United States in the same year (Min 2006b: 15).

Table 3: Number of Korean Immigrants (by Country of Birth) to the U.S, 1965 – 2009

Year	Number of Immigrants	Year	Number of Immigrants
1965	2,165	1988	34,703
1966	2,492	1989	34,222
1967	3,956	1990	32,301
1968	3,811	1991	26,518
1969	6,045	1992	19,359
1970	9,314	1993	18,026
1971	14,297	1994	16,011
1972	18,876	1995	16,047
1973	22,930	1996	18,185
1974	28,028	1997	14,239
1975	28,362	1998	14,268
1976	30,803	1999	12,840
1977	30,917	2000	15,830
1978	29,288	2001	20,742
1979	29,248	2002	21,021
1980	32,320	2003	12,512
1981	32,663	2004	19,766
1982	31,724	2005	26,562
1983	33,339	2006	24,386
1984	33,042	2007	22,405
1985	35,253	2008	26,666
1986	35,776	2009	25,859
1987	35,849	Total	1,002,966

Sources: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Reports*, 1965-1978 and *Statistical Yearbook*, 1979-2001; Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2009

Political insecurity and lack of political freedom associated with military dictatorship between 1960 and 1987 in South Korea was the second major push factor to the massive Korean immigration to the United States. In addition, the military and political tensions between South Korea and North Korea and fear of another war in the Korean peninsula also pushed many high-class Koreans to take refuge in the United

Stated at that time. Finally, unusual difficulties in giving their children a college education in Korea due to extreme competition in admissions and high tuitions played another important role in the exodus of many Koreans to the United States during the period.

No doubt, better economic and educational opportunities in the United States than in South Korea served as major push-pull factors in Korean immigrants' personal decisions for U.S.-bound emigration. But we cannot explain the mass migration of Korean immigration to the United States by Koreans' individual psychological motivations alone. We also need to pay attention to the fact that strong U.S.-Korean military, political and economic linkages served as important structural factors that significantly contributed to Koreans' mass migration to the United States (I. Kim 1987; Min 2006b). As shown in Table 4, between 1975 and 1990, the Philippines and South Korea respectively sent the first and second largest immigrant groups to the United States among all Asian countries. The fact that these two Asian countries with much smaller

Table 4: Number of Asian Immigrants to the U.S by Country of Last Residence, 1965-2009

Year	China	India	Japan	Korea	Philippines	Vietnam
1965	1,611	467	3,294	2,139	2,963	*
1970	6,427	8,795	4,731	8,888	30,507	1,436
1975	9,201	14,336	4,807	**28,100**	**31,323**	2,701
1981	25,803	21,522	3,896	**32,663**	**43,772**	55,631
1985	33,095	24,536	4,552	**34,791**	**53,137**	20,367
1990	40,639	28,809	6,431	**30,964**	**71,279**	14,755
1995	41,112	33,060	5,556	15,053	49,696	37,764
2000	41,804	38,938	7,688	15,107	40,465	25,159
2005	**64,887**	**79,139**	9,929	26,002	**57,654**	30,832
2009	**60,896**	**54,360**	8,218	25,582	**58,107**	28,397

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Reports*, 1965-1978 and *Statistical Yearbook*, 1979-2001; Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2009

* No Data are available.

populations than China and India sent far more immigrants indicate the importance of structural linkages between the United States and Asian countries for Asian immigration to the United States.

The Philippines sent the largest number of immigrants among all Asian countries during the given period mainly because of its cultural and military ties to the United States as a legacy of its earlier colonial status. In particular, the presence of major U.S. air and naval bases in the Philippines until 1990 contributed to the prevalence of intermarriages between U.S. servicemen and Filipino women and Filipino civilian workers at U.S. military bases eligible for immigration to the United States (Min 2006b: 20).[2]

South Korea has maintained closer military and political relations with the United States than any other Asian country with the exception of the Philippines, which has contributed to the influx of Korean immigrants. The continuing presence of the sizeable U.S. forces (40,000 to 50,000) in Korea until recently contributed to the migration of many Korean women through their marriages to American servicemen. The migration of Korean wives of U.S. servicemen provides the basis for subsequent kin-based immigration. Moreover, close U.S.-Korean ties, the presence of U.S. forces in Korea, and the postgraduate training of many Korean intellectuals in the United States popularized American culture in Korea. The exposure of Koreans to American culture, especially through AFKN (American Forces of Korean Networks), a TV network established in South Korea for American servicemen, led many middle-class Koreans to view the United States as a country of affluence and prosperity at least up to the early 1980s. No

[2] Under the weight of growing nationalism among Filipinos, the Filipino government did not approve the U.S. government's use of major military bases in the Philippines beginning in 1991. This contributed to the great reduction of the Filipino immigration flow in the 1990s.

doubt, pro-American sentiments in Korea, along with military and political ties between the two countries, pulled more Koreans toward U.S.-bound emigration.

The Declining and Leveling-Off Period (1990-Present)

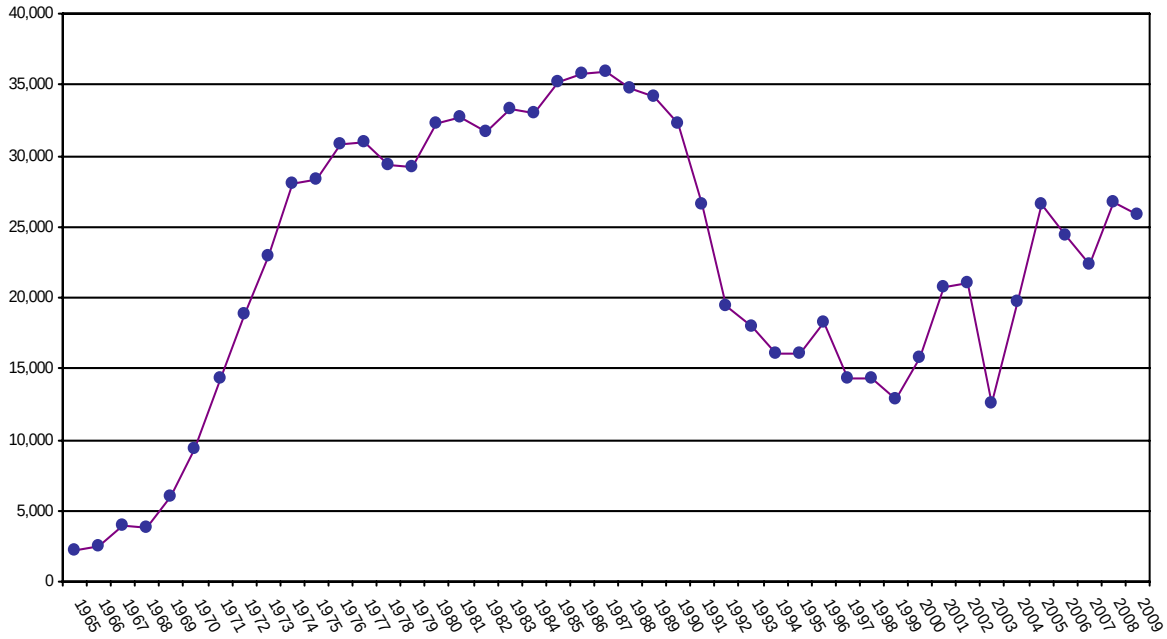
Going back to Table 3, in 1991 there was a big reduction, well below 30,000, in the annual number of Korean immigrants (almost 8,000 from the previous year). The number continued to decline in the 1990s, reaching the lowest point (12,840) in 1999. By contrast, the total number of immigrants to the United States and numbers of immigrants from other Asian countries increased phenomenally in the 1990s compared from the previous decade (see Tables and 4). The increase in the U.S. immigration flow in the 1990s was due mainly to the effect of the Immigration Act of 1990 that raised the total number of immigrants to 675,000. This means that Korean immigrants became a smaller group relative to other major immigrant groups. We previously noted that between 1976 and 1990, annual Korean immigrants, numbering over 30,000, composed the third largest immigrant group. But the Korean group was not even among the seven largest immigrant groups for the rest of the 1990s.

It is not difficult to explain why the Korean immigration flow declined drastically in the 1990s. To put it simply, the great improvements in economic and political conditions in Korea did not push too many Koreans to seek international migration in the United States or other Western countries. First of all, South Korea improved its economic conditions significantly, which is reflected by per capita income of nearly $6,000 in 1990 (Min 2006: 15). Korea's per capita income reached almost $10,000 in 2000. The advanced economy in Korea was able to absorb college-educated work forces

and even attract American-educated professionals and managers. South Korea also improved its political conditions through a popular election in 1987, putting an end to the 26-year old military dictatorship. Many American-educated intellectuals had been reluctant to return to Korea for their careers due to lack of political freedom in the previous years. Also, as Korea improved its economic conditions, fewer and fewer Korean women married American servicemen beginning in the late 1980s. In addition, the media exposure in South Korea of Korean immigrants' adjustment difficulties in the United States discouraged Koreans from seeking U.S.-bound emigration. In particular, the victimization of more than 2,000 Korean merchants during the 1992 Los Angeles riots was widely publicized in Korea (Min 1996: 156). Popularization of air travels enabled many Koreans to visit their friends and relatives settled in American cities and witness the latters' long hours of work under difficult conditions. Already in the early 1990s, Koreans' perception of the United States as a land of prosperity and security began to change.

Going back to Table 3, summarizing contemporary Korean immigration trends, the annual number of Korean immigrants steadily decreased in the 1990s, dropping to 12,840 in 1999. But it began to increase beginning in 2000 and was hovering around 25,000 in the latter half of the 2000s, with the exception of the 2003 anomaly (only 12,512). This annual number of Korean immigrants is substantially smaller than the numbers of Korean immigrants during the peak years between 1976 and 1990 (30,000 and 35,000), but much larger than the numbers in the 1990s. It is not easy to read changes in the annual number of Korean immigrants over time from Table 3. Figure 1 captures the changes from 1965 to 2009 more effectively.

Figure 1: Annual Number of Korean Immigrants (by Country of Birth), 1965 - 2009



Sources: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Reports*, 1965-1978 and *Statistical Yearbook*, 1979-2001 ;
Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2009

I believe there are two major factors that contributed to the significant increase in the number of Korean immigrants beginning in 2000. One factor seems to be a high unemployment rate in Korea that started with the financial crisis in 1998. According to Korean real estate agents, a large number of people who had lost their jobs in Korea came to the United States in 1999 and the ensuing years to find jobs in Korean-owned stores or even to explore the possibility of starting businesses. Many of these temporary residents seem to have changed their status as permanent residents in later years.

The other and more important contributing factor is a radical increase in the number of temporary Korean residents in major Korean immigrant communities in the United States. Under the impact of globalization and by virtue of technological advances, people's move from one country to another has become much easier than before. During

recent years, large numbers of Koreans visited the United States for various purposes: to study, to get trainings and internships, to see their family members and relatives, for temporary work, for sightseeing and so forth. Many of them continue to stay here beyond the time period for which they originally intended to stay. Many others have changed their status to permanent residents. This will be discussed in more detail in the next subsection.

We noted above that the economic and political problems in Korea that pushed many Koreans out of the country for emigration in the earlier years were greatly mitigated in the early 1990s, which contributed to a significant reduction of the number of Korean emigrants. But one thing that has pushed Koreans out of the country for emigration remains unchanged. That is the difficulty in providing their children a college education. The number of colleges and universities has greatly increased in Korea during recent years. Thus unlike 25 years go they can now gain admission to a college if they choose any one. But there is even more excessive competition for admissions to decent universities than before, and without graduating from decent universities, people even with a college degree have little chance to find meaningful occupations in Korea. Therefore, many parents try to send their children to the United States and other English-speaking countries for a better college education than in Korea. Better opportunity for their children's college education and their own graduate education is now the most important motivation for Koreans' decisions to immigrate to the United States.

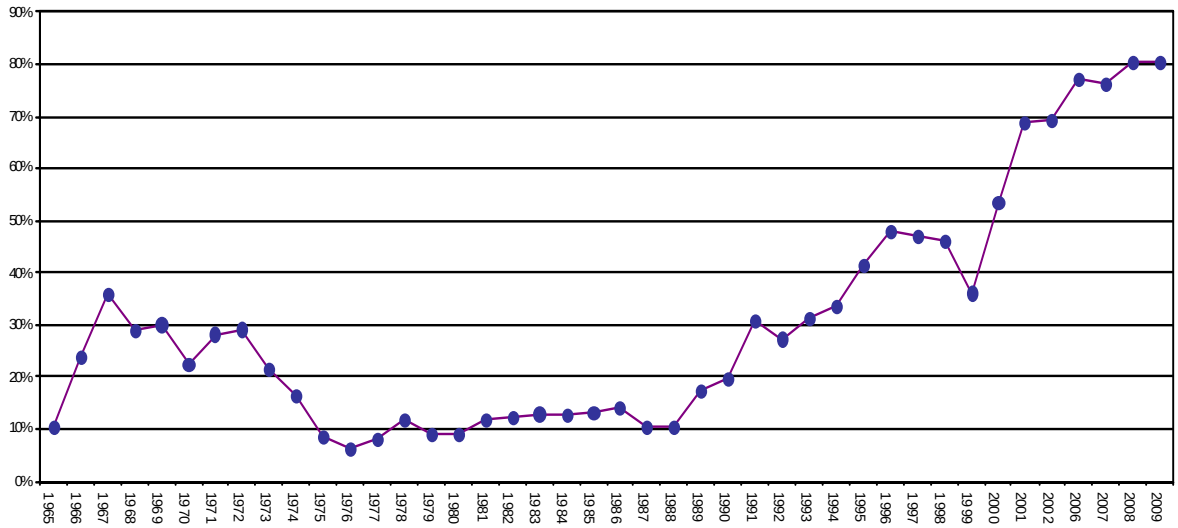
Many Temporary Residents and the Increase in Status Adjusters

Annual immigrants in the United States each year consist of two groups: (1) new arrivals and (2) status adjusters. Status adjusters are those who entered the United States previously on another, non-immigrant status and changed their status to permanent residents in a given year while new arrivals are those who have been admitted as immigrants to the United States directly from a particular source country of immigrants. Figure 2 shows changes over the years in the proportion of status adjusters among Korean immigrants.

Status adjusters comprised 20% to 35% of annual Korean immigrants 1967 and 1972. But the proportion declined gradually, reaching the lowest proportion (about 5%) in 1976. The 1967-1972 Korean immigrants included a fairly high proportion of status adjusters mainly because many Korean professionals, especially medical professionals, who had received graduate education or training (internship) in the United States, legalized their status to permanent residents using the Preference 3 category of the Immigration Act of 1965. But the percentage of status-adjusted Korean immigrants decreased in the 1970s and 1980s because many state governments' laws in the early 1970s and ultimately the 1976 Amendments to the Immigration Act of 1965 made it difficult for professionals eligible for immigration to the United States. [3] The financial crisis in the mid-1970s in the United States led U.S. policymakers to take measures to make it difficult for alien professionals to legalize as immigrants. Lobbies by medical professional associations also contributed to the change.

[3] Before 1976, foreigners with medical certificates were eligible for immigration to the United States. The 1976 Amendments to the 1965 Immigration Act required foreign medical professionals to get job offers from American companies to be eligible for immigration. They also needed to gain satisfactory scores in TOEFL to get medical licenses in the United States.

Figure 2: Percentage of Status Adjusters among Korean Immigrants (by Country of Birth), 1965-2009



Sources: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Reports*,1965-1978 and *Statistical Yearbook*,1979-2001 ;
Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2009
* Data on status adjusters are not available for 2003~2005.

The percentage of status adjusters among Korean immigrants gradually increased beginning in 1988 and skyrocketed in the new century. This increase in the 1990s and later seems to have been due mainly to the fact that many Korean international students changed their status after completion of their education in the United States. The 1990 Immigration Act raised the number of professional and managerial immigrants to 140,000--three times as high as before-- to help American companies to compete successfully in the global economy. It made Korean and other Asian international students easier to legalize themselves to permanent residents when they completed their undergraduate or graduate education.

Status adjusters have increased over the years for almost all major immigrant groups as a result of globalization. But Table 5 shows that Korean immigrants have a substantially larger proportion of status adjusters (81%) than total immigrants to the United States (59%) and all Asian immigrants (56%). We need to explain why over 80% of the most recent Korean immigrants consist of status adjusters, compared to only about 55% for other major immigrant groups. There seem to be two major reasons for the Korean group's extremely high proportion of status-adjusted immigrants. One is the presence of a huge number of Korean international students in the United States many of whom change their status after completion of their undergraduate or graduate education here. The other is the presence of many Korean short-term or long-term visitors to the United States, many of whom also change their status to permanent residents. The presence of extremely large numbers of Korean students and non-student visitors in the United States relative to the Korean population is possible mainly because of the strong long-term ties between the United States and South Korea.

Table 5: Percentage of Status Adjusters among Korean Immigrants (by Country of Birth) Compared to Others by Region of Origin, 2009

	Number of Total Immigrants	Number of Status Adjusters	Percentage of Status Adjusters
Korea	25,859	20,805	**80.5**
Asia	413,312	229,293	**55.5**
The Caribbeans	146,127	76,345	**52.3**
Latin America	150,746	100,899	**66.9**
All Countries	1,130,818	667,776	**59.1**

Source: Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2009.

As shown in Table 6, the number of international students enrolled in U.S. undergraduate and graduate programs steadily increased since 1995, reaching 72,000 in 2009. Including their family members, Korean international students enrolled in U.S.

colleges and universities in 2009 are estimated to have been approximately 86,400.[4] South Korea is not far behind of China and India, in the number of international students, although the Chinese and Indian populations are larger than the Korean population by about 29 and 25 times, respectively. The statistics give us an idea of the overrepresentation of Korean international students in the United States. Korean students' visits to foreign countries for an undergraduate and postgraduate education are not limited to the United States. There are large numbers of Korean college students in other English-speaking countries, such as Canada, Australia, and Great Britain. English-language skills and the rank of the college are probably the two most important factors for the job market in Korea. Thus parents are anxious to send their children to English-speaking countries for their children's college education, as an alternative to a college education in second- or third-class colleges in Korea.

Table 6: Annual Number of International Students for Top Three Countries of Origin

Year	Total Number of International Students in the US (A)	Annual Number of Chinese Students (B)		Annual Number of Indian Students (C)		Annual Number of Korean Students (D)	
		N	% of (A)	N	% of (A)	N	% of (A)
1995/96	453,787	39,613	8.7%	31,743	7.0%	not available	-
1996/97	457,984	42,503	9.3%	30,641	6.7%	not available	-
1997/98	481,280	46,958	9.8%	33,818	7.0%	42,890	8.9%
1998/99	490,933	51,001	10.4%	37,482	7.6%	39,199	8.0%
1999/00	514,723	54,466	10.6%	42,337	8.2%	41,191	8.0%
2000/01	547,867	59,939	10.9%	54,664	10.0%	45,685	8.3%
2001/02	582,996	**63,211**	**10.8%**	**66,836**	**11.5%**	**49,046**	**8.4%**
2002/03	586,323	**64,757**	**11.0%**	**74,603**	**12.7%**	**51,519**	**8.8%**
2003/04	572,509	**61,765**	**10.8%**	**79,736**	**13.9%**	**52,484**	**9.2%**
2004/05	565,039	**62,523**	**11.1%**	**80,466**	**14.2%**	**53,358**	**9.4%**
2005/06	564,766	**62,582**	**11.1%**	**76,503**	**13.5%**	**59,022**	**10.5%**
2006/07	582,984	**67,723**	**11.6%**	**83,833**	**14.4%**	**62,392**	**10.7%**
2007/08	623,805	**81,127**	**13.0%**	**94,563**	**15.2%**	**69,124**	**11.1%**
2008/09	671,616	**98,235**	**14.6%**	**103,260**	**15.4%**	**75,065**	**11.2%**
2009/10	690,923	**127,628**	**18.5%**	**104,897**	**15.2%**	**72,153**	**10.4%**

Source: Institute of International Education

[4] On average, one Korean international student has 1.2 household members including themselves.

Statistics on international students in Table 6 do not include early-study students who came to the United States for elementary and secondary education. As shown in Table 6, more than 25,000 Korean elementary- and secondary-school students left Korea annually for studies abroad during recent years. Nearly 5,000 additional elementary- and secondary-school students also left Korea annually, accompanied by their parents who were dispatched abroad as exchange visitors, trainers, temporary workers or intra-company transferees. About one-third of early-study and parent-accompanied students (about 10,000 each year) seem to have come to the United States annually (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology 2010). Early-study students include those who came here with their mothers while their fathers make money in Korea. These internationally split families are commonly referred to as *kirogi gazok*. Most early-study students return to Korea after a few years of education in the United States. But a significant proportion of them continue to stay here for a college education. When we include these early-study students, the total number of Korean international students and their family members in the United States in 2009 may have been over 110,000. They account for more than 11%

Table 7: Annual Number of Korean Elementary and Secondary Students Who Went Abroad for Study

year	Elementary-school Students	Middle-school Students	High-school Students	Total Number of Students
2003	4,052	3,674	2,772	**10,498**
2004	6,276	5,568	4,602	**16,446**
2005	8,148	6,670	5,582	**20,400**
2006	13,814	9,246	6,451	**29,511**
2007	12,341	9,201	6,126	**27,668**
2008	12,531	8,888	5,930	**27,349**
2009	8,369	5,723	4,026	**18,118**

Sources: Center for Education Statistics, Korean Educational Development Institute, 2008
(Statistics on Elementary and Secondary School Students who went Abroad; http://cesi.kedi.re.kr)

of Korean immigrants in this country.[5]

A huge number of Korean international students mainly contributed to the presence of an unusually large number of temporary residents in the Korean immigrant community. Although there is no hard data, it can safely be said that a significant proportion of Korean international students has found their professional or managerial jobs in the United States and have thereby changed their status to permanent residents. As will be shown in the next subsection, the proportion of Korean occupational immigrants has increased since 1988, becoming the majority of annual Korean immigrants since 2005 (see Table 10). Consistently, the proportion of Korean professional and managerial immigrants has steadily increased since 1990 (see Table 11). Moreover, many other Korean international students are likely to become permanent residents through their marriages to Korean or non-Korean partners in the United States. Those Koreans who came to the United States at early ages and completed their undergraduate or graduate education here are more likely to change their status than Korean adult international students to live here permanently. Accordingly, the proportion of Korean status adjusters may comprise a higher proportion in the coming years.

The presence of many other Korean non-student visitors also contributes to the exceptionally high proportion of Korean status-adjusted immigrants. Due to close U.S.-Korean relationships, not only many Korean students, but also huge numbers of other Koreans visit the United States each year and many of them stay as temporary residents for a short or a long period of time. These non-immigrant and non-student temporary residents include exchange scholars and trainees, temporary workers, visitors for

[5] It is estimated that single-race Korean Americans composed approximately 1.4 million in 2009. Assuming about 70% of Korean Americans were immigrants, there were approximately one million Korean immigrants in the year.

businesses or sightseeing, and intra-company transferees with their family members. Table 8 shows that there were less than 5,000 visitors to the United States in 1965. But the number rapidly increased, jumping to over 100,000 in 1985 and reaching almost 700,000 in 1995. It rose to 0.9 million in 2009. The U.S. government accepted South Korea as a visa waiver country in 2008. That has definitely encouraged more Koreans to visit the United States. But the economic recession in 2008 and 2009 seems to have had a neutralizing effect on the visa-waiving advantage for Koreans' travels to the United

Table 8: Number of Korean Visitors (Non-immigrants) to the U.S., 1965 – 2009

	Year	Number of Korean Non-Immigrant Visitors	Number of Temporary Workers In Specialty Occupations
By Country of Birth	1965	4,717	92
	1970	13,171	12
	1975	30,554	91
	1979	41,982	104
By Country of Citizenship	1985	115,361	221
	1990	278,842	1,008
	1995	673,272	1,674
	1996	849,581	1,934
	1998	519,898	2,595
	1999	605,225	4,015
	2000	**807,198**	5,647
	2001	**841,863**	6,887
	2002	**804,403**	8,000
	2003	**840,142**	8,550
	2004	**829,031**	9,111
	2005	**876,554**	10,041
	2006	**942,341**	11,370
	2007	**1,028,253**	11,479
	2008	**1,007,466**	9,956
	2009	**906,006**	8,719

Sources: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Reports*,1965-1978 and *Statistical Yearbook*,1979-2001 ;
Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*,2002-2009
* Data on non-immigrants are not available for 1980, 1997.

States. More than one million Koreans are likely to have visited the United States in 2010, as the economy was better than in the previous year.

Members of all non-immigrant temporary residents are potential status-adjusted immigrants in the future. Many Korean international students find jobs as temporary workers when they complete their undergraduate or graduate education, and then become permanent residents by legalizing their status through sponsorships by their employers. Middle-aged and elderly invitees by their immigrant children can apply for green cards when their children become naturalized. Moreover, members of all groups of temporary residents, including international students, can change their status as permanent residents by marrying Korean or non-Korean partners.

The Immigration Act of 1990 raised not only the number of professional and managerial immigrants, but also the number of temporary workers (H-1B) in the same high-status occupations up to 195,000.[6] Computer-based professional occupations make up the majority of temporary-work specialty occupations. As shown in Table 8, Korean immigrants included a small number of temporary workers in the early years. But the number jumped to over 5,000 in 2000 and continued to increase until it reached over 11,000 in 2007. South Korea has become one of the six or seven top sources countries of temporary workers in the United States in specially occupations, following India, China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Germany, and Canada.

Some H-1B temporary workers directly came from Korea to the United States. Others are international students in the United States who have changed their status to temporary workers. Still other temporary workers previously entered the United States as

[6] The U.S. government raised the number of temporary workers in specialty occupations in order to help American corporations become globally competitive by hiring needed workers in particular specialty areas quickly on a temporary basis and cheaply, and then discard them easily when they do not need them.

visitors and have received temporary work visas. The implication of the increase in Korean temporary workers in specialty occupations is that temporary workers can change their status to permanent residents more easily than other groups of Korean temporary residents. Considering that such large numbers of temporary visas were given to Koreans in the decade of the 2000s, the immigration flow of Koreans in the 2010s is likely to rise beyond the 2009 level of 25,000.

Table 9 shows previous entry mechanisms of Koreans who changed their status to permanent residents in the given years. For all the years, status adjusters who previously entered the United States as visitors comprised the largest proportion, ranging from 31% to 50%. The next important entry mechanism is the category of international students. 15-18% of status adjusters previously entered the United States as international students. The third most important entry mechanism for Korean status adjusters is the temporary work category. The proportion of Korean status adjusters who previously entered the country as temporary workers significantly increased in the new century as the number of temporary workers radically increased (see Table 8). Office of Immigration Statistics did not provide data on entry mechanisms of status adjusters after 2002. But the proportion of Korean status adjusters who previously entered the United States as temporary workers seem to have composed a substantially higher proportion of status adjusters in the latter half of the 2000s. Because of the importance of college education for social mobility, there has been a rapid improvement in education in South Korea during recent years. But many college graduates and even people with advanced degrees have been unable to find meaningful occupations in Korea. A significant proportion of them seem to have come to the United States for further education or as temporary workers during recent years.

Many Korean international students also seem to have changed their status to temporary workers after completion of their education in the United States. Some of these temporary workers are likely to have changed their status to permanent residents. Others will legalize themselves as immigrants in the coming years. Accordingly, a substantially larger proportion of Korean international students seem to have changed their status ultimately to permanent residents than the statistics in Table 9 indicate.

Table 9: Previous Entry Mechanisms among Korean Status Adjusters (by Country of Birth), 1985 – 2002

Year	Total Number of Status Adjusters	Percentage of Visitors	Percentage of Students	Percentage of Temporary Workers	Percentage of Others	Percentage of Unknown and Not Reported
1985	4,721	45	**15**	3	37	-
1990	6,335	31	**18**	5	9	37
1995	6,650	50	**18**	7	6	20
2000	8,498	36	**16**	**11**	10	27
2002	14,380	32	**15**	**17**	13	23

Sources: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook*, 1985,1990,1995,2000;
Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002.

Classification of Korean Immigrants by Entry Mechanisms and Gender

According to the Immigration Act of 1965, aliens are eligible for immigration to the United States using one of the three mechanisms: (1) family reunification, (2) occupational immigration, and (3) the refugee/asylum status and other categories of aliens eligible for immigration by special measures. Koreans can become immigrants to the United States using mainly two mechanisms: family reunification and occupational immigration. The Immigration Act of 1965 has gone through three major revisions, respectively in 1976, 1986, and 1990. Among them, the Immigration Act of 1990 has brought the most significant changes to the original immigration act passed by Congress

in 1965. It raised the annual number of total immigrants to 675,000 and also the annual number of professional and managerial immigrants to 140,000. In addition, it also allowed for admission of 195,000 temporary workers in specialty occupations, heavily in professional and managerial fields.

Table 10 shows mechanisms of immigration for total U.S. immigrants and Korean immigrants between 1965 and 2009 by year. The Immigration Act of 1965 determined immigration mechanisms for 1966 through 1991 while the Immigration Act of 1990 affected mechanisms for 1992 through 2009. Under the 1965 Immigration Act, spouses and unmarried children of naturalized citizens (1st Preference) and immigrants (2nd Preference) were allowed to immigrate to the United States exempt from the numerical limitation of 20,000 per year per country. Naturalized citizens' married children (4th Preference) and siblings (5th Preference) were admitted subject to the numerical limitation. It assigned two categories to occupation immigration: 3rd Preference (professional/technical and administrative/managerial immigrants) and 6th Preference (other skilled occupational immigrants).

Table 10 reveals that the majority of annual immigrants to the United States for most of the 1965-1991 years were immediate family members of naturalized citizens and permanent residents who were not exempt from the numerical limitation. The second category of immigrants consisted of those who used two relative preference categories (naturalized citizens' married children and siblings). This category was smaller than the category consisting of immediate family members, but much larger than the category consisting of two occupational-preference immigrants. Occupational immigrants on the third columns composed less than 10% of total immigrants to the United States for every

Table 10: Mechanisms of Koreans' Immigration to the United States, 1966 – 2009 (%)

Year (Country of Last Residence)	Immigrants Exempt from Numerical Limitation Total (A)**		Relative Preference Immigrants (B)		Occupational Immigrants (C)		Others (D)*	
	U.S. Total	Koreans	U.S. Total	Koreans	U.S. Total	Koreans	U.S. Total	Koreans
1966	60.9	78.1	17.0	3.2	3.3	18.2	18.8	0.5
1967	55.2	55.3	23.3	11.0	7.4	33.3	14.1	0.4
1968	65.6	56.9	15.0	13.6	5.9	29.4	13.4	0.1
1969	56.1	50.8	25.8	18.2	8.9	21.5	9.2	9.5
1970	53.8	43.1	24.8	24.7	9.1	13.0	12.3	19.2
1971	58.5	33.9	21.6	22.5	9.1	16.3	10.9	27.3
1972	57.2	28.6	21.6	24.4	8.8	15.8	12.5	31.2
1973	58.5	29.6	23.0	37.3	6.7	12.1	11.8	21.0
1974	59.7	28.2	24.0	37.6	7.2	15.2	9.0	19.0
1975	58.5	30.2	24.8	**47.4**	7.6	14.9	9.1	7.5
1976	58.3	35.1	25.6	**50.2**	6.6	13.1	9.5	1.6
1977	40.2	35.3	28.3	**56.1**	5.1	8.5	26.4	0.1
1978	43.3	35.9	31.6	**52.0**	5.1	**9.1**	19.9	3.0
1979	39.3	37.6	46.4	**56.7**	8.2	**5.3**	6.1	0.4
1980	45.4	38.4	40.9	**58.7**	8.4	**2.9**	5.3	0.0
1981	27.2	30.8	55.4	**60.9**	7.4	**8.3**	10.0	0.0
1982	56.3	43.5	34.7	**53.1**	8.6	**3.4**	0.4	0.0
1983	51.9	40.7	38.1	**51.0**	9.9	**8.3**	0.0	0.0
1984	51.8	42.1	39.0	**48.9**	9.1	**9.0**	0.0	0.0
1985	53.6	44.2	37.4	**48.0**	8.9	**7.8**	0.0	0.0
1986	55.6	45.2	35.4	**46.2**	8.9	**8.6**	0.1	0.0
1987	54.9	44.0	35.2	**52.6**	9.0	**3.4**	0.9	0.0
1988	58.9	40.9	31.2	**50.2**	8.3	**8.9**	1.5	0.0
1989	74.3	42.0	19.9	**48.7**	4.8	**9.3**	1.0	0.0
1990	83.7	39.9	11.7	**49.8**	2.9	**10.3**	1.6	0.0
1991	83.9	49.1	11.8	38.5	3.0	12.4	1.2	0.0
Year (Country of Birth)	Immediate Relatives of U.S Citizens (A)		Family-sponsored Preference (B)		Employment-sponsored Preference (C)		Others (D)**	
	U.S. Total	Koreans	U.S. Total	Koreans	U.S. Total	Koreans	U.S. Total	Koreans
1992	24.2	42.0	21.9	32.4	11.9	24.3	42.0	4.2
1993	28.2	39.3	25.1	29.1	16.3	29.1	30.5	2.4
1994	31.0	40.6	26.3	29.6	15.3	28.8	27.3	1.0
1995	30.6	37.7	33.1	33.1	11.8	28.4	24.5	0.7
1996	32.8	33.9	32.1	31.8	12.8	33.7	22.3	0.6
1997	40.2	37.8	26.7	28.7	11.3	33.1	21.7	0.4
1998	42.9	36.0	29.0	30.4	11.7	33.4	16.4	0.3
1999	40.0	38.3	33.5	32.8	8.8	28.5	17.7	0.5
2000	40.9	41.8	27.7	22.5	12.6	35.2	18.8	0.5
2001	41.6	45.4	21.8	14.1	16.8	40.3	19.7	0.2
2002	45.7	45.5	17.6	10.3	16.4	44.0	20.3	0.2
2003	47.1	52.7	22.5	12.8	11.6	34.3	18.7	0.2
2004	42.9	43.5	22.7	12.5	16.4	43.9	18.0	0.1
2005	38.9	32.4	19.0	**7.5**	22.0	**60.0**	20.2	0.1
2006	45.8	45.3	17.5	**9.9**	12.6	**44.6**	24.0	0.2
2007	47.0	39.5	18.5	**9.9**	15.4	**50.5**	19.0	0.1
2008	44.1	31.6	20.6	**7.7**	15.0	**60.6**	20.3	0.1
2009	47.4	38.7	18.7	**6.4**	12.7	**54.7**	21.2	0.2

Sources : Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Reports*,1965-1978 and *Statistical Yearbook*,1979-2001 ; Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2009.

* Others include refugees/asylum adjusters, diversity immigrants, and non-preference immigrants for all years.

** Beneficiaries of IRCA were included in the A category for 1966-1991, but in the D category for 1992 - 2009.

year. These immigrants composed a larger proportion of total immigrants to the United States than occupational preference immigrants during the 1996-1991period. Korean immigrants are significantly different in immigration mechanisms from U.S. immigrants as a whole in the 1966-1991 period. In the later 1960s and the early 1970s, immediate family members of naturalized citizens and permanent residents comprised the majority of Korean immigrants. The immigration of large numbers of Korean adoptees and war brides during the period mainly contributed to this trend. Also, occupational immigrants composed a larger share of Korean immigrants than total U.S. immigrants during this early stage of the post-1965 immigration period. This is due to the fact that many Korean professionals, especially medical professionals, started the Korean immigration chains in many American cities outside of the West Coast during the period.

But Korean immigrants experienced changes in their immigration mechanisms after mid- 1970s. While the proportion of relative-preference immigrants (naturalized citizens' brothers and sisters) achieved a gradual increase since the mid-1970s, the percentage of occupational immigrants decreased to less than 10 percent. The increase in the proportion of relative-preference immigrants was due mainly to the fact that many Korean immigrants had become naturalized citizens by the mid-1970s and thus were able to invite their brothers and sisters. The 1976 Amendments to the 1965 Immigration Act that made alien professionals more difficult to immigrate to the United States is mainly responsible for the great reduction of the number of occupational immigrants in the late 1970s and the 1980s.

We previously noted that the Immigration Act of 1990 not only raised the total number of immigrants to the United States, but also revised entry mechanisms, especially

by elevating the number of occupational immigrants. We can see the effects of the revised immigration law in U.S. immigration patterns during the 1992-2009 years. Before 1992, immediate relatives (spouses, unmarried children and parents) of U.S. citizens and immediate relatives (spouses and unmarried children) of permanent residents were included in the same broad category that was exempt from the numerical limitation of 20,000 immigrants from each country per year. But from 1992 onward, immediate relatives of U.S. citizens were included in one category, with immediate relatives (spouses and unmarried children) of permanent residents, along with married children and siblings of naturalized citizens, included in another category. By separating immediate relatives of naturalized citizens from those of permanent residents, the Immigration Act of 1990 emphasized the importance of immigrants getting American citizenship.

As a result of this revision in classifying immigrants, the proportion of immigrants in the first category was reduced significantly from 1992 on. In turn, the family-sponsored preference category was supposed to increase, but did not. This means that the annual number of immigrants admitted through the mechanism of naturalized citizens' siblings decreased in the 1992-2009 period. American citizens' brothers and sisters have been discouraged to immigrate to the United States by making them wait for twelve years or so now. In the meantime, the third category, the proportion of occupational immigrants, achieved a substantial increase. The proportion of refugee/asylum immigrants also increased significantly in the 1992-2009 period, which reflects the U.S. government's active military and political interventions in world affairs in the post-cold war era. .

The distinctive pattern of Korean immigrants in the change in immigration mechanisms is that the proportion of family-sponsored preference immigrants (especially those based on the mechanism of U.S. citizens' siblings) decreased significantly, especially in the 2000s, with a concomitant increase in the proportion of occupational immigrants. The proportion of Korean occupational immigrants doubled between 1991 and 1992, and continued to increase every year until it reached 60% in 2005. In all but one year between 2005 and 2009, occupational immigrants comprised the majority of Korean immigrants. In every year between 1992 and 2009, the proportion of Korean employment-sponsored immigrants was much larger than that of total U.S. immigrants, by two to four times. It can safely be said that employment-sponsored immigration has replaced family-sponsored immigration as the dominant form of Korean immigration to the United States during recent years.

Table 11 compares Korean immigrants' occupations at the time of immigration (legalization of their status) with other Asian immigrant groups based on annual immigration data. Most immigrants reported they did not have occupations or did not report their occupations. Thus data do not accurately indicate immigrants' occupations in the given year. But they still roughly reflect their occupational background. The 1990 and 2000 Censuses showed that Indian and Taiwanese immigrants had the highest occupational and educational levels among all immigrant groups, substantially higher than other Asian immigrant groups (Min 2006; Rumbaut 1995). But beginning in 2000 the proportion of Korean immigrants in two specialty occupations reached 60% and slowly increased, overtaking Indians in 2006 and after.

Table 11: Percentage of Immigrants in Technical/Professional and Administrative/Managerial Occupations among Asian Immigrants by Country of Birth, 1965-2009

Year	China		India		Korea		Philippines		Taiwan		Vietnam	
	Professionals and Technicians	Managerial	Professionals and Technicians	Managerial	Professionals and Technicians	Managerial	Professionals and Technicians	Managerial	Professionals and Technicians	Managerial	Professionals and Technicians	Managerial
1965	14.9	1.4	**59.1**	**0.6**	**59.2**	**0.6**	40.4	1.0	*	*	*	*
1970	50.9	0.2	**88.7**	**0.4**	**68.3**	**0.0**	65.0	3.8	*	*	51.8	0.0
1975	30.5	16.8	**76.9**	**6.0**	39.9	11.6	54.6	6.0	*	*	39.1	13.9
1979	28.2	17.4	**54.2**	**13.8**	25.5	19.0	30.7	10.1	*	*	15.5	4.8
1985	19.2	10.3	**46.7**	**15.5**	23.8	21.5	30.2	12.5	**38.6**	**26.4**	8.6	2.1
1990	18.5	11.2	**35.7**	**18.5**	22.2	18.2	33.4	12.4	**35.7**	**30.0**	4.9	1.1
1995	20.7	12.3	**50.5**	**16.4**	33.4	14.9	38.8	12.5	**34.6**	**31.0**	3.8	0.8
2000	37.6	13.2	**62.9**	**12.0**	**39.0**	**16.7**	53.9	5.8	**50.0**	**22.4**	7.9	2.4
2001	55.5	13.6	**73.6**	**11.3**	**40.8**	**20.5**	48.7	7.4	**57.6**	**20.5**	8.1	1.4
2003	26.8	12.4	**58.8**	**13.5**	**38.6**	**18.7**	49.2	7.6	**41.0**	**37.1**	9.8	2.7
2004	43.1	11.9	**69.2**	**12.2**	**38.8**	**21.4**	48.0	9.3	**45.9**	**33.3**	10.6	3.2
2005	40.2	10.5	**63.2**	**14.2**	**43.7**	**22.4**	49.8	8.8	**47.4**	**31.8**	9.8	3.0
2006	27.4		**57.2**		**64.8**		57.8		**70.5**		12.7	
2007	33.3		**68.8**		**69.7**		49.6		**71.8**		12.8	
2008	35.7		**70.7**		**77.5**		43.0		**77.3**		15.0	
2009	35.4		**69.4**		**75.4**		43.6		**75.2**		16.6	

Sources : Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Reports*, 1965-1978 and *Statistical Yearbook*, 1979-2001; Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2009

* No data are available for Taiwanese immigrants for 1965, 1970, 1975, 1979 and Vietnamese immigrants for 1965.

* No data are available for occupations in 1980 and 2002.

As already suggested in the previous section, two major factors have contributed to recent Korean immigrants' exceptionally high occupational characteristics. First, the Immigration Act of 1990 raised the numbers of immigrants and temporary workers in specialty occupations to make U.S. corporations competitive in the global labor market. Given that the proportions of Korean and other Asian immigrants in specialty occupations have radically increased with a concomitant decline in the proportions of family-sponsored immigrants during recent years, the U.S. government seems to have taken special measures to bring highly educated immigrants and to discourage family-

sponsored immigrants. Second, as discussed in detail in the previous section, the number of Korean international students, including early-study students, rapidly increased during recent years. The change of their status to permanent residents by these Korean students educated in the United States, as well as by those educated in Korea who could not find meaningful jobs there, seem to have also significantly contributed to upgrading Korean immigrants' occupational statuses.

The great tendency of American citizens to adopt Korean children has become an important mechanism for Korean children's immigration to the United States. During the Korean War, American servicemen began to adopt Korean orphans. The adoption of Korean children by American citizens was expanded after the Korean War. We can estimate that more than 100,000 Korean children have been adopted (Shiao, Tuan and Rienzi 2004). Annual Reports/Yearbooks of Immigration began to include statistics on adoptees beginning in 1976. As shown in Table 12, Korean adoptees composed the majority of adoptees by American citizens between 1976 and 1985. As South Korea improved its economic conditions, the number of Korean adoptees began to decrease in 1989, but until 1994 it was the largest source country of adoptees to the United States. Beginning in 1995, China emerged as the largest source country of adoptees for American citizens, with South Korea taking the third place. Even in the 2000s, South Korea remained as one of the five largest source countries of adoptees, but the number of Korean adoptees was reduced to about 1,000 in the last two years. Altogether, Korean adoptees still compose the largest alien group of adoptees to American citizens. But Chinese adoptees soon will outnumber Korean adoptees in the United States, as a huge

number of Chinese adoptes have annually immigrated during recent years and will continue to do so in the nearest future.[7]

Table 12: Number of Korean Adoptees Admitted to the U.S. as Immigrants by Country of Birth and Five Largest Source Countries of Adoptees, 1976-2009

Year	Total Number of Adoptees	Korean Adoptees	Korean Adoptees as Percentage of Total Adoptees	The Largest Source Country	The Second Largest Source Country	The Third Largest Source Country	The Fourth Largest Source Country	The Fifth Largest Source Country
1976	8,550	**4,847**	**56.7**	**Korea**	Vietnam (747)	Colombia (732)	Philippines (401)	Thailand (202)
1977	6,493	**3,858**	**59.4**	**Korea**	Colombia (575)	Vietnam (347)	Philippines (325)	Mexico (156)
1978	5,315	**3,045**	**57.3**	**Korea**	Colombia (599)	Philippines (287)	India (152), Mexico (152)	
1979	4,864	**2,406**	**49.5**	**Korea**	Colombia (626)	Philippines (297)	India (231)	Austria (141)
1980	5,139	**2,683**	**52.2**	**Korea**	Colombia (653)	Philippines (253)	India (319)	El Salvador (179)
1981	4,868	**2,444**	**50.2**	**Korea**	Colombia (628)	Philippines (278)	India (314)	El Salvador (224)
1982	5,749	**3,254**	**56.6**	**Korea**	Colombia (534)	Philippines (345)	India (409)	El Salvador (199)
1983	7,127	**4,412**	**61.9**	**Korea**	Colombia (608)	Philippines (302)	India (409)	El Salvador (240)
1984	8,327	**5,157**	**61.9**	**Korea**	Colombia (595)	Philippines (408)	India (314)	El Salvador (224)
1985	9,286	**5,694**	**61.3**	**Korea**	Colombia (622)	Philippines (515)	India (496)	El Salvador (310)
1989	7,948	**3,552**	**44.7**	**Korea**	Colombia (735)	India (677)	Philippines (481)	Peru (269)
1990	7,088	**2,603**	**36.7**	**Korea**	Colombia (628)	Peru (441)	Philippines (423)	India (361)
1991	9,008	**1,817**	**20.2**	Romania (2,552)	**Korea**	Peru (722)	Colombia (527)	India (448)
1992	6,536	**1,787**	**27.3**	**Korea**	Soviet Union (432)	Guatemala (423)	Colombia (403)	Philippines (353)
1993	7,348	**1,765**	**24.0**	**Korea**	Russia (695)	Guatemala (512)	Colombia (416)	Paraguay (405)
1994	8,200	**1,757**	**21.4**	**Korea**	Russia (1,324)	China (748)	Paraguay (497)	Guatemala (431)
1995	9,384	**1,570**	**16.7**	China (2,049)	Russia (1,684)	**Korea**	Guatemala (436)	India (368)
1996	11,316	**1,580**	**13.9**	China (3,318)	Russia (2,328)	**Korea**	Romania (554)	Guatemala (420)
1997	12,596	**1,506**	**11.9**	Russia (3,626)	China (3,295)	**Korea**	Guatemala (725)	Romania (558)
1998	14,867	**1,705**	**11.5**	Russia (4,320)	China (3,988)	**Korea**	Guatemala (938)	India (462)
1999	16,037	**1,956**	**12.2**	Russia (4,250)	China (4,009)	**Korea**	Guatemala (987)	Romania (887)
2000	18,120	**1,711**	**9.4**	China (4,943)	Russia (4,210)	**Korea**	Guatemala (1,504)	Romania (1,103)
2001	19,087	**1,863**	**9.8**	China (4,629)	Russia (4,210)	**Korea**	Guatemala (1,601)	Ukraine (1,227)
2002	21,100	**1,713**	**8.1**	China (6,062)	Russia (4,904)	Guatemala (2,361)	**Korea**	Ukraine (1,093)
2003	21,320	**1,793**	**8.4**	China (6,638)	Russia (5,134)	Guatemala (2,327)	**Korea**	Kazakhstan (819)
2004	22,911	**1,708**	**7.5**	China (7,033)	Russia (5,878)	Guatemala (3,252)	**Korea**	Kazakhstan (824)
2005	22,710	**1,604**	**7.1**	China (7,939)	Russia (4,652)	Guatemala (3,748)	**Korea**	Ukraine (841)
2006	20,705	**1,381**	**6.7**	China (6,520)	Guatemala (4,093)	Russia (3,710)	**Korea**	Ethiopia (711)
2007	19,471	**945**	**4.9**	China (5,397)	Guatemala (4,721)	Russia (2,301)	Ethiopia (1,203)	**Korea**
2008	17,229	**1,038**	**6.0**	Guatemala (4,082)	China (3,852)	Russia (1,859)	Ethiopia (1,666)	**Korea**
2009	12,782	**1,106**	**8.7**	China (2,990)	Ethiopia (2,221)	Russia (1,580)	Korea	Guatemala (773)
Total	371,481	**74,260**	**19.99**	-	-	-	-	-

Sources : Sources : Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook*, 1979-2001;
Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2009
* Data on adoptees are not available for 1986-1988.

[7] The one-child policy of China has recently led many Chinese parents with two or more children to give up their children for adoption by American citizens.

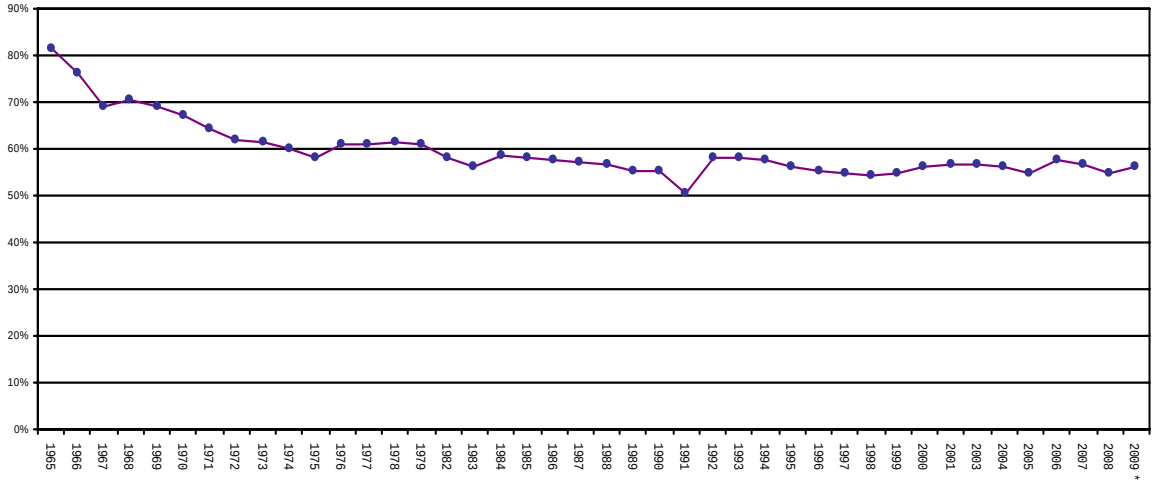
Figure 3 shows the change over time in the proportion of Korean female immigrants between 1965 and 2009. Women composed over 80% of all Korean immigrants in 1965, but it continues to decline, reaching less than 60 in 1975. We can explain women's overrepresentation among Korean immigrants by looking at particular mechanisms of Korean immigration, which is why this topic is discussed in this section.

Women composed the vast majority of Korean immigrants in the latter half of the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s because wives of U.S. servicemen, adoptees, and nurses made up the majority of Korean immigrants during the period. But as previously noted these three groups of Korean immigrants grew smaller and smaller as time passed. Korean immigrants maintained a complete gender balance in 1981, but the proportion of women hovered around 55% between 1982 and 2009.

Two major factors seem to have contributed the slight numerical advantage of Korean female women over men during recent years. First, as noted in Table 12**,** although reduced significantly during recent years, more than 1,000 Korean adoptees continued to annually immigrate to the United States. About two-thirds of Korean adoptees are girls, which contributes to the moderate gender imbalance in favor of women among Korean immigrants. The other important contributing factor is a greater tendency of Korean women both in Korea and in the United States to marry non-Korean partners. Korean women's marriages to U.S. servicemen in Korea have been drastically reduced during recent years, as Korea has made a significant improvement in economic conditions and also the U.S. forces in South Korea have been scaled down to less than 20,000. However, many women in Korea have married American citizens in Korea and many of them have immigrated to the United States. Also, regardless of their generation,

far more Korean American women than men have married non-Korean partners (Min and Kim 2009). This means that more Korean American men than women have brought their spouses from Korea.

Figure 3: Proportion of Women Among Korean Immigrants (by Country of Birth), 1965-2009



Sources : Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Reports*,1965-1978 and *Statistical Yearbook*,1979-2001 ; Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*,2002-2009

* Data on gender are not available for 1980,1981,2002.

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