Korean and Asian Immigration Data: Recent Trends

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Research Report No.3 (issued on January 27, 2011) provided the history of Korean immigration to the United States and its contemporary trends. It has been already more than four years since I released Korean immigration data in 2011. I believe that the Korean community and Korean government agencies need data on recent immigration trends. Thus, I have updated Korean immigration trends by adding data on the subsequent four years (2010 through 2013) in this statistical report (Statistical Report 7). Moreover, this statistical report includes immigration data not included in the previous report. They include a table showing immigration trends from other major Asian source countries of U.S. immigrants (Table 2), five major destination states of Korean immigrants (Table 4 and Figure 1), number of naturalized Koreans from 1965-2013 (Table 7 and Figure 2).

As shown in Table 1, the annual number of Korean immigrants gradually increased beginning in 1965. The annual immigration flow of Koreans reached the 30,000 mark in 1976, and maintained an 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 opportunities, was the major factor that pushed many Koreans to seek emigration to the United States in the 1960s through the early 1980s. Per capita income in Korea was only $251 in 1970. By 1980, it had increased to $1,355, but it was only about 1/8 of the per capita income in the United States in the same year (Min 2006: 15).

Table 1: Number of Korean Immigrants (by Country of Birth) to the U.S., 1965-2013

Year	Number of Immigrants	Year	Number of Immigrants
1965	2,165	1990	32,301
1966	2,492	1991	26,518
1967	3,956	1992	19,359
1968	3,811	1993	18,026
1969	6,045	1994	16,011
1970	9,314	1995	16,047
1971	14,297	1996	18,185
1972	18,876	1997	14,239
1973	22,930	1998	14,268
1974	28,028	1999	12,840
1975	28,362	2000	15,830
1976	30,803	2001	20,742
1977	30,917	2002	21,021
1978	29,288	2003	12,512
1979	29,248	2004	19,766
1980	32,320	2005	26,562
1981	32,663	2006	24,386
1982	31,724	2007	22,405
1983	33,339	2008	26,666
1984	33,042	2009	25,859
1985	35,253	2010	22,227
1986	35,776	2011	22,824
1987	35,849	2012	20,846
1988	34,703	2013	23,166
1989	34,222	Total	1,092,029

Sources: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Report*, 1965-1978 and *Statistical Yearbook*, 1979-2001; Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2013

Also, political instability and lack of political freedom associated with the military dictatorship between 1960 and 1987 in South Korea was the second major push factor to the massive Korean immigration to the United States. Additionally, the military and political tensions between South Korea and North Korea, and fear of another war on the Korean peninsula

also pushed many higher-class Koreans to take refuge in the United States. Finally, the various difficulties associated with 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. However, we cannot explain the mass migration of Korean immigration to the United States by Koreans' individual psychological motivations alone. As previously pointed out, we also need to pay attention to the fact that the strong military, political, and economic linkages between the U.S. and Korea served as important structural factors that significantly contributed to Koreans' mass migration to the United States. South Korea probably has maintained closer military and political relations with the United States than any other Asian country, which has contributed to the influx of Korean immigrants. The continuing presence of sizeable U.S. forces (approximately 40,000) 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.

Going back to Table 1, in 1991, there was a big reduction (almost 8,000 from the previous year) in the annual number of Korean immigrants. With the exception of 1978 and 1979, 1991 marked the first time that the annual number of Korean immigrants (26,518) fell below the 30,000 mark. The number continued to decline in the 1990s, reaching its lowest point

(12,840) in 1999. By contrast, the total number of immigrants to the United States and immigrants from other Asian countries increased phenomenally in the 1990s compared to the previous decade. The increase in the U.S. immigration flow in the 1990s was due mainly to the effect of the Immigration Act of 1990, which raised the total annual number of immigrants to 675,000. This means that Korean immigrants became a smaller group relative to other major immigrant groups.

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 pushed far fewer Koreans to seek international migration in the United States or other Western countries. First and foremost, South Korea improved its economic conditions significantly, which is reflected by the per capita income of nearly $6,000 in 1990 (Min 2006: 15). Korea's per capita income continued to increase and 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. Before that, many American-educated Koreans had been reluctant to return to Korea for their careers due to lack of political freedom.

Also, as Korea improved its economic conditions, increasingly fewer Korean women married American servicemen beginning in the late 1980s. In addition, South Korean media coverage 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). Increased access to the U.S. via popularization of air travel enabled many Koreans to visit

their friends and relatives settled in American cities and witness the long work hours and difficult conditions in the new country of residence. By the early 1990s, Koreans' perceptions of the United States as a land of prosperity and security had already begun to change.

The annual number of Korean immigrants steadily decreased in the 1990s, dropping to 12,840 in 1999. However, beginning in 2000, it began to increase again, and by the latter half of the 2000s, the annual number hovered around 25,000, with the exception of the 2003 anomaly (only 12,512). In the early 2010s, the annual number of Korean immigrants dropped slightly and remained fairly constant within the range of 21,000 to 23,000 per year. The annual numbers of Korean immigrants in the late 2000s and the early 2010s were much smaller than those of Korean immigrants during the peak years between 1976 and 1990 (30,000 to 35,000 per year), but substantially larger than those in the 1990s.

I believe there are two major factors that contributed to the significant increase in the annual number of Korean immigrants beginning in 2000. One factor seems to have been the difficulty of Korean college graduates in finding meaningful occupations in South Korea. Major Korean corporations have annually hired smaller numbers of new employees during recent years than they did in the 1990s, while the number of college graduates has rapidly increased. Many Korean college graduates who could not find acceptable occupations in Korea have come to the U.S. as specialty-occupation immigrants or H1B temporary workers. Many others have come to the U.S. for further studies, and upon completing their graduate educations, many have found meaningful occupations and remained in the United States. Some have changed their legal status to permanent residents or are in the process of changing their status.

The other more important contributing factor is a radical increase in the number of Korean temporary residents in major Korean immigrant communities in the United States. Under

the impact of globalization and by virtue of technological advances, relocation from one country to another has become much easier than before. During recent years, large numbers of Koreans have visited the United States for various purposes: to study, to get training and internships, to see their family members and relatives, for temporary work, for sightseeing, and so forth. Many of them stay in the U.S. beyond the original intended time periods. Many others have changed their status to permanent residents. Because of the presence of a large number of Korean immigrants in major Korean communities in the U.S., the annual number of Korean immigrants is likely to maintain the current number, a little more than 20,000 per year.

We noted above that the economic and political problems in Korea that pushed many Koreans out of the country for emigration in earlier years were greatly mitigated in the early 1990s, which contributed to a significant reduction in the Korean immigration flow. However, one push factor that motivated Koreans to migrate out of Korea remains unchanged. That is the difficulty in providing their children with a college education. The number of colleges and universities has greatly increased in Korea during recent years. Thus, unlike twenty-five years ago, high school graduates can now gain admission to a college if they choose. But there is even more intense competition for admissions to decent universities than before, and without graduating from decent universities, they have little chance to find meaningful occupations in Korea. Therefore, many parents in Korea try to send their children to the United States and other English-speaking countries in order to obtain better college educations than in Korea. Better opportunities for their children's college educations and their own graduate educations are now the most important motivation for Koreans' decisions to immigrate to the United States.

As noted above, the immigration of Koreans to the United States peaked in the 1980s, radically dropped in the 1990s, and slightly increased in the 2000s and 2010s. However, in Table

2, we can see opposite trends in the immigration flows from other major Asian source countries of immigrants. Table 2 shows the annual numbers of immigrants from all of Asia (including the Middle East) and five major Asian source countries of immigrants between 2000 and 2013. First of all, we can see a radical increase in the total number of annual immigrants to the United States from all countries from about 841,000 in 2000 to over one million in 2001. We can also see a phenomenal increase in the annual number of Asian immigrants as the proportion of total immigrants beginning in 2010. Before 2010, total Asian immigrants comprised 30-35% of total immigrants to the United States. However, beginning in 2010, the proportion increased to 39%-41%. This increase in the share of Asian immigrants has been due mainly to the U.S. government's change in immigration policy, which raised the proportion of specialty-occupation immigrants with a concomitant reduction in family-sponsored immigrants. As will be discussed below, this change in policy has particularly helped increase the numbers of immigrants from three major Asian source countries—China, Indian, and Vietnam—to send more and more immigrants in the early 2010s. Prior to the 2000s, Latin American countries sent the largest numbers of immigrants to the United States. However, the U.S. government's policy of prioritizing highly-educated immigrants enabled Asian countries to send an equal or even higher proportion of immigrants to the United States in the 2000s. The numerical advantage of Asian countries over Latin America in the annual number of immigrants has slightly increased in the early 2010s. It will continue to increase in the future, as the U.S. government is expected to put increasingly more priority on getting well-educated immigrants.

Table 2: Immigration from Major Asian Countries by Country of Last Residence, 2000-2013

Year	Total U.S. Immigrants (A)	Asian Total (B)	(B) as % of (A)	China	India	The Philippines	Vietnam	Korea	Other Asia
2000	841,002	260,107	30.9%	41,804	38,938	40,465	25,159	15,107	98,634
2001	1,058,902	343,056	32.4%	50,677	65,673	50,644	34,537	19,728	121,797
2002	1,059,356	332,874	31.4%	55,901	66,644	48,493	32,372	19,917	109,547
2003	703,542	240,699	34.2%	37,342	47,032	43,133	21,227	12,076	79,889
2004	957,883	326,362	34.1%	50,280	65,507	54,651	30,074	19,441	106,409
2005	1,122,257	392,977	35.0%	64,887	79,139	57,654	30,832	26,002	134,463
2006	1,266,129	428,084	33.8%	83,590	58,072	71,133	29,701	24,472	161,116
2007	1,052,415	370,903	35.2%	70,924	55,371	68,792	27,510	21,278	127,028
2008	1,107,126	380,899	34.4%	75,410	59,728	52,391	29,807	26,155	137,408
2009	1,130,818	394,874	34.9%	60,896	54,360	58,107	28,397	25,582	167,532
2010	1,042,625	410,209	39.3%	67,634	66,185	56,399	30,065	22,022	167,904
2011	1,062,040	438,580	41.3%	83,603	66,331	55,251	33,486	22,748	177,161
2012	1,031,631	416,488	40.4%	78,184	63,320	55,441	27,578	20,802	171,163
2013	990,553	389,301	39.3%	68,410	65,506	52,955	26,578	22,937	152,915

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Statistical Yearbook*, 2000-2001; Office of immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2013

Table 2 also shows immigration trends for five major Asian immigrant groups separately in the 2000s and 2010s. Between 2000 and 2001, the annual number of immigrants from all Asian countries and five major Asian source countries radically increased. In particular, the immigration flows from four Asian countries—China, India, the Philippines, and Vietnam—increased by over 10,000 from each country. The U.S. government's increase in the number of specialty-occupational immigrants, especially the number of computer specialists, in 2001 seem to have been the major contributing factor to the drastic increase in the immigration sizes of the five major Asian immigrant groups. In particular, the annual numbers of Chinese and Indian immigrants have continued to increase in the 2000s and 2010s; in the early 2010s, over 70,000 Chinese and 60,000 Indians immigrated to the U.S. annually. These two Asian immigrant groups have become the second and third largest immigrant groups, respectively, in the U.S. after

Mexicans. China and India, which are the two most populous countries in the world, have enough highly-educated people specializing in STEM and healthcare who are eligible for the specialty-occupation immigration. As will be shown later in Table 6, the numbers of Chinese and Indian international students have increased to 270,000 and 100,000, respectively, during recent years. Many of these international students seem to have found specialty occupations when they complete their graduate education in the United States. This is one major factor that has contributed to the radical increases in the numbers of Chinese and Indian immigrants during recent years. Immigration data also show that large proportions of Indian and Chinese immigrants had professional, technical, and managerial/administrative occupations at the time of immigration (Min 2011). Census data also indicate that Chinese and Indian immigrants include unusually large proportions of workers in STEM (Min and Jang 2015).

The other two major interrelated reasons why China and India have sent far more immigrants than South Korea since 2000 are their much larger population sizes and much lower standards of living than South Korea. Chinese and Indian immigrants have greater incentives to immigrate to the United States than Koreans to improve their economic conditions. In particular, recent Chinese immigrants include a large proportion of lower-class workers with no high school education. They include many undocumented residents (Kwong 1997).

Table 3 shows the annual number of adoptees admitted to the United States, the number of Korean adoptees as the proportion of total adoptees, and the five largest source countries of adoptees between 1976 and 2013. The Immigration and Naturalization Service began to include statistics on adoptees beginning in 1976. We find that the annual number of Korean adoptees, numbering about 2,500 to 5,500, comprised the majority of adoptees admitted to the United States between 1976 and 1985. We can see why South Korea gained the label of a "baby-

exporting country" during those years and after. Between 1976 and 2013, about 77,000 Korean adoptees were admitted to the United States. However, according to data released by the Korean government (Ministry of Health and Welfare 2014), approximately 36,000 more Korean adoptees were admitted between 1950 and 1975 (see Kim 2010: 21). Thus, altogether, about 112,300 Korean orphans immigrated to the United States as adoptees of American citizens.

Table 3: Number of Korean Adoptees Admitted to the U.S. as Immigrants by Country of Birth and Five Largest Source Countries of Adoptees, 1976-2013

Year	Total Number of Adoptees	Korean Adoptees	Korean Adoptees as Percentage of Total Adoptees	Largest Source Country	Second Largest Source Country	Third Largest Source Country	Fourth Largest Source Country	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 (247)	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	14.0%	China (3,318)	Russia (2,328)	Korea	Romania (554)	Guatemala (420)
1997	12,596	1,506	12.0%	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 (4,210)	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)
2010	11,100	875	7.9%	China (3,361)	Ethiopia (2,548)	Russia (1,079)	Korea	Ukraine (445)
2011	9,504	741	7.8%	China (2,607)	Ethiopia (1,734)	Russia (964)	Korea	Ukraine (631)
2012	8,619	621	7.2%	China (2,709)	Ethiopia (1,540)	Russia (759)	Korea	Ukraine (365)
2013	6,574	176	2.7%	China (2,268)	Ethiopia (910)	Haiti (327)	Ukraine (320)	Uganda (260)
Total	407,278	76,673	18.8%	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Report*, 1976-1978 and *Statistical Yearbook*, 1979-2001; Office of immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2013

*Data on adoptees are not available for 1986-1988.

The adoption of Korean orphans by American citizens started during the Korean War (1950-1953) when tens of thousands of Korean children lost their parents. Initially, married U.S. servicemen who served in South Korea began to adopt Korean orphans. After the Korean War, many American citizens, especially white Christian families, preferred to adopt Korean orphans. Kim (2010: 53-54) suggested that the combination of paternalism and anti-communism influenced American Christian families to selectively adopt Korean orphans. Although the majority of Korean orphans were adopted by American citizens, more than one-third were adopted to European countries and Australia (Kim 2010: 21). Initially, many orphans in Korea were up for adoption to the United States and other Western countries long after the Korean War because poverty and broken homes forced many Korean parents to abandon their children. According to data released by the Korean Ministry for Health, Welfare and Family Affairs, the majority of Korean overseas adoptees became available for adoption between 1958 and 1980 mainly because of poor parents or broken homes, with the other 35% given up by single mothers (Kim 2010: 25).

However, the same data source indicates that, beginning in 1981, being a single mother gradually became the main contributing factor to the large number of orphans in Korea, many of whom became overseas adoptees. By 2001, when South Korea had achieved major economic development, few Korean parents abandoned their children for financial reasons. Thus, being a single mother has become the most important factor to the availability of orphans for adoption. Confucian patrilinealism in Korea emphasizes blood relations along the father's line. Thus, when couples needed to adopt children, they usually adopted the sons of the husbands' brothers. But as this Confucian custom has weakened during recent years, many childless Korean couples have adopted other orphans in Korea. This is part of the reason why only a small number of Korean

children have been adopted overseas during recent years. However, many unwed mothers continue to put their children up for adoption because of the strong stigma that remains even in contemporary Korea.

Going back to Table 3, China has become the largest source country of adoptees to the United States since 1995. The annual number of Chinese adoptees increased to about 2,000 in 1995 and has continued to increase, reaching about the 8,000 mark in 2006. China's one-child policy may have forced many parents to give up their children, more often their daughters, for overseas adoption. The annual number of Chinese adoptees has continued to decrease since 2006, dropping to about 2,300 in 2013. This decrease seems to be partly due to the reduction of the abandonment of children in China by virtue of its economic improvement, and partly due to the Chinese government's relaxation of the one-child policy. The fact that white American couples have shown a strong tendency to adopt Korean and Chinese orphans suggests that they prefer to adopt East Asian children.

Table 4 and Figure 1 show five major destination states for Korean immigrants every five years from 1970 to 2013 to capture changes over time in their settlement trends in the United States. As expected, for all of the years in question, California has been the most popular destination state for Korean immigrants, with 21% to 34% of all Korean immigrants settled there. The Los Angeles, San Francisco-San Jose, and San Diego areas have become major metropolitan areas in California where Korean immigrants are highly concentrated. Under the impact of suburbanization movements, Orange County and Riverside County have also witnessed big increases in the Korean-American population since 1990. It is interesting to note that the proportion of Korean immigrants settled in California declined between 1990 and 2005, but increased again between 2005 and 2013, reversing the trend in the previous time period.

Table 4: Five Major States of Korean Immigrants' Destination in Selected Years Every Five Years

Year	Largest Destination State	Second Largest	Third Largest	Fourth Largest	Fifth Largest	Others	Total
1970	California	New York	Hawaii	Illinois	Maryland	Others	9,314
	21%	11%	6%	6%	5%	50%	100%
1975	California	New York	Maryland	Illinois	Hawaii	Others	28,362
	23%	8%	7%	6%	5%	50%	100%
1979	California	New York	Illinois	Texas	Maryland	Others	29,248
	22%	9%	6%	4%	4%	55%	100%
1985	Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	New York	Washington, DC-MD-VA	Chicago, IL	Philadelphia, PA-NJ	Others	35,253
	13%	7%	4%	4%	3%	67%	100%
1990	California	New York	New Jersey	Illinois	Virginia	Others	32,301
	31%	14%	5%	5%	5%	41%	100%
1995	California	New York	New Jersey	Virginia	Maryland	Others	16,047
	30%	11%	6%	5%	5%	43%	100%
2000	California	New York	New Jersey	Maryland	Virginia	Others	15,596
	27%	11%	7%	6%	6%	42%	100%
2005	California	New York	New Jersey	Georgia	Texas	Others	26,562
	25%	9%	8%	6%	6%	46%	100%
2010	California	New York	New Jersey	Texas	Virginia	Others	22,227
	34%	9%	8%	6%	5%	39%	100%
2013	California	New York	New Jersey	Texas	Virginia	Others	23,166
	34%	9%	7%	6%	5%	39%	100%

Sources: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Report* 1970, 1975 and *Statistical Yearbook*, 1979, 1985, 1990, 1995, and 2000; Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2005, 2010, and 2013

New York State has been the second largest destination state for Korean immigrants in all of the given years, with 7% to 11% of total Korean immigrants in the U.S. settled there. Between 1985 and 1990, the proportion of total Korean immigrants in the U.S. settled in New York doubled, from 7% to 14%. During that same time period (1985-1990), New Jersey suddenly emerged as the third largest destination state for Korean immigrants (5%). I cannot explain why the proportion of Korean immigrants settled in New York State doubled within the five-year period. However, I know that better schools and lower crime rates in suburban areas were a couple of the major contributing factors to the emergence of New Jersey as the third largest

destination state for Korean immigrants in 1990. In fact, as shown in Table 4, it has remained the third most popular state for Korean immigrants. In the 1980s, many Korean immigrants settled in New York City began moving to Bergen County in New Jersey, as well as to Long Island and upstate New York for the reasons mentioned above. I will discuss other factors for the emergence of New Jersey as a popular state for Korean immigrants in the following paragraph.

As many branches of Korean firms located in Manhattan moved to Bergen County, New Jersey in the 1980s and early 1990s, their Korean employees who had previously settled in New York City moved there too. As re-migrated Korean immigrants in Bergen County invited their siblings and parents from Korea for permanent residence, the Korean population in New Jersey increased rapidly, eventually making it the third most popular destination state for Korean immigrants. In addition, the creation of Korean business districts in Fort Lee, Palisades Park, Ridgefield, and Leonia in Bergen County beginning in the late 1980s further attracted new Korean immigrants from Korea and Korean immigrants already settled in New York City. As we can see in Table 4, the proportion of new Korean immigrants settled in New Jersey has gradually increased since 1990, with a concomitant decrease in the proportion of new Korean immigrants settled in New York State. In 2013, New York attracted more new immigrants from Korea than New Jersey only by 2%. This reflects how much the Korean population in New Jersey, especially in Bergen County, has expanded over the past thirty years. The New York-New Jersey metropolitan area has the second largest Korean population with about 250,000, next to the Los Angeles area.

According to Table 4, the third and fourth most popular destination states for Korean immigrants between 1970 and 1985 were either Hawaii, Illinois, or Maryland. However, since 2000, they have been replaced by Texas, Virginia, and Georgia since 2000. There has been a big

drop in the proportion of new Korean immigrants who have chosen to settle in the Chicago area or Hawaii since 1990. Thus, Chicago has experienced only a moderate increase in the Korean population during recent years. By contrast, Dallas, Seattle, the Northern Virginia area, and Atlanta have witnessed radical increases in the Korean population (see Min and Kim 2013).

Annual immigrants to the United States consist of new arrivals who have immigrated from their home countries in the given year and those who had entered the United States in previous years on another status and changed their legal status to permanent residents in the given year. In the late 1960s, when the Immigration Act of 1965 was enforced for the first time, almost all annual immigrants were new arrivals from their home countries. However, as more and more foreigners visited the United States as temporary residents (e.g., international students and interns/trainees) and changed their status to permanent residents, the proportion of status adjusters has gradually increased, with a concomitant decrease in the proportion of new arrivals.

Figure 1 shows a gradual increase in the proportion of status adjusters among Korean immigrants between 1965 and 2009. Only 10% of Koreans who were legalized as permanent residents in 1965 were status adjusters. Most of them seem to have been Korean medical interns/students who changed their status to permanent residents when the new liberal immigration law was partially enforced (Kim 1981). The proportion continued to increase in the late 1960s, as many Korean international students and medical interns changed their status to professional immigrants. However, the proportion of Korean status adjusters gradually declined in the 1970s because Congress revised the Immigration Act of 1965 in such a way that it restricted the immigration of professionals, especially medical professionals.

Figure 1: 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

Note: Data on status adjusters are not available for 2003-2005.

However, the proportion of Korean status adjusters has continued to increase since 1980 as a result of many Korean temporary residents' legalizing their statuses to permanent residents; Figure 1 illustrates this escalating trend effectively. Significant proportions of Korean international students, employees of U.S. branches of Korean firms, trainees/interns, visiting scholars, and long-term visitors have changed their status to permanent residents. The proportion of Korean status adjusters has skyrocketed since 1990 when, as already indicated, the Immigration Act of 1990 greatly raised the numbers of specialty-occupation immigrants and temporary workers (H1B). Under the new law, Korean international students who completed their undergraduate and graduate education have changed their status more easily than before. Many others have worked as temporary professional workers and then changed their status to permanent residents after completing their three-year term.

As a result of global linkages, the movement of populations from one country to another has become increasingly easier. This means that the proportion of status adjusters has rapidly increased for all other immigrant groups as well. However, as we can see from Table 5, the proportion of Korean status adjusters comprises a much larger proportion of 2009 Korean immigrants than total U.S. immigrants and total Asian immigrants. Compared to 59% of total 2009 U.S. immigrants and 56% of total Asian immigrants, 81% of Korean immigrants were status adjusters in 2009. Due to unusually strong linkages between the United States and South Korea, an extremely large number of Koreans live in the United States as temporary residents. Many of these Korean temporary residents account for the majority of the Korean immigration quota every year. As a result, only a small number of people in Korea can directly immigrate to the United States in the given year.

Table 5: Percentage of Status Adjusters among Korean Immigrants (by Country of Birth) Compared to Other Groups 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 Caribbean	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.

Among Korean temporary residents in the United States, international students comprise the largest group. Table 6 provides statistics on Chinese, Indian, and Korean international students in the United States since the 1995/96 academic year. They are the three largest international student groups in the United States. There were nearly 900,000 international students in the United States in the 2013-2014 academic year, and Asian students comprised the

vast majority. Students from the aforementioned three Asian countries alone—China, India, and South Korea—comprised over 50% of total international students in the United States in the 2013/14 academic year. Japan and Taiwan are two other major source countries of international students to the United States.

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

Year	The 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%	N/A	-
1996/97	457,984	42,503	9.3%	30,641	6.7%	N/A	-
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%
2010/11	723,277	157,558	21.8%	103,895	14.4%	73,351	10.1%
2011/12	764,495	194,029	25.4%	100,270	13.1%	72,295	9.5%
2012/13	819,644	235,597	28.7%	96,754	11.8%	70,627	8.6%
2013/14	886,052	274,439	31.0%	102,673	11.6%	68,047	7.7%

Source: Institute of International Education, 1995/96-2013/14

Chinese international students, numbering approximately 275,000, comprised about one-third of all international students in the 2013/14 academic year. Over 100,000 Indian

international students comprised the second largest group. Chinese students outnumber Korean students by more than four times, while the Indian student group is also much larger than the Korean group. However, given that South Korea's population is dwarfed by those of China and India, which have populations that are more than 20 times larger, South Korea has sent an unusually large number of international students to the United States. Statistics in Table 6 do not include Korean early-study students who are enrolled in U.S. elementary and secondary schools. In proportion to the population size, Korea has sent more international students to the U.S. than any other country in the world. The presence of a huge number of Korean international students in the United States reflects Korean parents' extraordinary efforts to invest in their children's education, especially in English-speaking countries. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Great Britain also have large numbers of Korean international students. However, we see a slight reduction in the number of Korean international students in the United States since the 2008/09 year, which can be attributed to that year being the beginning of a global economic depression/recession. Korean parents began to have greater difficulties in 2008 due to economic downturns in South Korea. In particular, the increase in the value of the U.S. dollar in recent years has created more difficulty for Korean parents who have children studying in the United States.

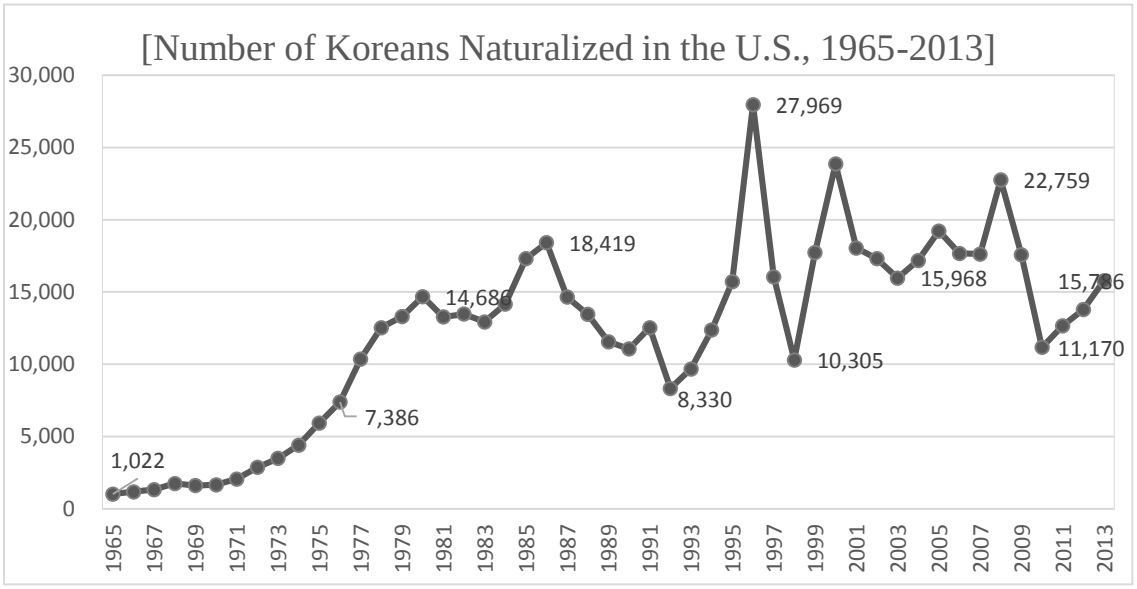
Table 7 and Figure 1 show trends of Korean immigrants' naturalization in the United States. The vast majority of Koreans legalized as permanent residents choose to become American citizens when they are eligible for naturalization after five years of residence in the United States. We can see fluctuations in the annual number of Koreans naturalized over the years. In 1977, twelve years after the enforcement of the Immigration Act of 1965, the annual number of Korean legal immigrants who were naturalized reached the 10,000 mark. The number

Table 7: The Number of Naturalized Koreans in the U.S., 1965-2013

Year	Number of Koreans Naturalized	Year	Number of Koreans Naturalized
1965	1,022	1990	11,061
1966	1,183	1991	12,538
1967	1,332	1992	8,330
1968	1,755	1993	9,681
1969	1,607	1994	12,367
1970	1,671	**1995**	**15,709**
1971	2,061	**1996**	**27,969**
1972	2,870	**1997**	**16,056**
1973	3,491	**1998**	**10,305**
1974	4,413	**1999**	**17,738**
1975	5,944	**2000**	**23,858**
1976	7,386	**2001**	**18,053**
1977	**10,372**	**2002**	**17,307**
1978	**12,541**	**2003**	**15,968**
1979	**13,305**	**2004**	**17,184**
1980	**14,686**	**2005**	**19,223**
1981	**13,277**	**2006**	**17,668**
1982	**13,475**	**2007**	**17,628**
1983	**12,932**	**2008**	**22,759**
1984	**14,161**	**2009**	**17,576**
1985	**17,311**	2010	11,170
1986	**18,419**	2011	12,664
1987	14,651	2012	13,790
1988	13,456	2013	15,786
1989	11,562	Total	597,271

Sources: Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Annual Report*, 1965-1978 and *Statistical Yearbook*, 1979-2001; Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2013

Figure 2: The Number of Naturalized Korean in the U.S.A, 1965~2013



continued to increase until 1986, when it surpassed 18,000. Beginning in 1987, the annual number began to steadily decline. As noted in Table 1, the Korean immigration flow also reached its peak in 1986 and 1987 and began to decline in 1988. As the economy in South Korea was doing well in the latter half of the 1980s and Korean immigrant merchants had a lot of conflicts with black customers, people in Korea were hesitant to immigrate to the United States, while many Korean immigrants who were already in the United States were reluctant to get naturalized. Part of the reason they were reluctant to get naturalized was because they wanted to have an option to go back to Korea in case things did not work out well for them. In fact, many Korean immigrants, including those already naturalized, began to return to Korea in the latter half of the 1980s (2013: 127). The low naturalization of Korean immigrants continued in the early 1990s. However, the number began to increase in the mid-1990s, and it skyrocketed in 1996, with about 28,000, and remained fairly high until 2009, hovering around 18,000 to 23,000 per year. In 2010, the number of Koreans naturalized dropped to about 11,000 and remained low

in the early 2010s. Nevertheless, the number began to gradually increase again beginning in 2010, and in 2013, over 15,000 Korean immigrants became naturalized as U.S. citizens.

Table 8 shows the increase in the total number of Korean visitors to the United States between 1965 and 2013. The number of visitors in 1965 was less than 5,000, but gradually increased over the years. It jumped to 115,842 in 1985 and nearly tripled between 1990 and 1995. The number continued to increase in the 2000s, reaching over 1.33 million in 2010, and further increasing each subsequent year. The number of Korean visitors in the most recent year in the study (2013) was 1.66 million, which was 350 times more than the number of Korean visitors in 1965.

Those who come to visit the U.S. for sightseeing (which are included in the numbers in the last column in Table 8) comprise the largest group of annual Korean visitors. The U.S. gave South Korea visa-exemption status in 2008, which has facilitated increased visits to the U.S. by Koreans. We can see the direct impact of this measure on the number of annual Korean visitors to the United States. In 2010 and after, there were over one million annual Korean visitors for sightseeing, business trips, and other reasons compared to about 750,000 in 2009. International students, exchange visitors, and trainees/interns comprise the second largest group, which suggests that many Koreans come to the U.S. for education. However, even most exchange visiting professors seem to choose to stay here for at least one year for their children's education rather than for their own research and training experiences. The wives and children who come as dependents of Korean male visiting professors often remain in the U.S. when the husband/father returns home, starting their *gireogi* wild geese family lives. Employees of U.S. branches of Korean firms and their family members comprise the third largest group of Korean visitors. Many of these employees also choose to become permanent residents in the U.S. for the benefit

Table 8: Number of Visitors (Non-immigrants/Korean Citizens) from Korea to the U.S., 1965-2013

	Year	Total	Students and Exchange Visitors	Temporary Workers in Specialty Occupations	Others**
By Country of Birth	1965	4,717	1,720	92	2,905
	1970	13,171	2,221	12	10,938
	1975	30,554	1,843	91	28,620
	1979	42,982	1,593	104	41,285
By Country of Citizenship	1985	115,361	18,889	221	96,251
	1990	278,842	29,753	1,008	248,081
	1995	673,272	50,757	1,674	620,841
	1996	849,581	62,065	1,934	785,582
	1998	519,914	61,838	2,595	455,481
	1999	605,225	62,531	4,015	538,679
	2000	807,198	79,549	5,647	722,002
	2001	841,863	88,742	6,887	746,234
	2002	804,403	93,687	8,000	702,716
	2003	840,142	103,895	8,550	727,697
	2004	829,031	108,992	9,111	710,928
	2005	876,554	117,755	10,041	748,758
	2006	942,341	135,265	11,370	795,706
	2007	1,028,253	155,178	11,479	861,596
	2008	1,007,466	163,845	9,956	833,665
	2009	906,006	146,468	8,719	750,819
	2010	1,332,387	172,532	11,815	1,148,040
	2011	1,460,972	159,218	11,728	1,290,026
	2012	1,527,085	142,206	11,197	1,373,682
	2013	1,656,795	135,839	9,692	1,511,264

Sources: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Annual Reports, 1965-1978 and Statistical Yearbook, 1979-2001; Office of Immigration Statistics, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 2002-2013.

* Data on non-immigrants are not available for 1980, 1997.
** Others include employees of Korean firms, visitors for business Investment and visitors for sightseeing.

of their children's college educations.

Table 8 also shows that the number of Koreans who have come to the U.S. with temporary-work visas (H1B) has continued to increase since 1990, when the U.S. changed immigration laws to increase the quota of specialty-occupation immigrants and specialty-

occupation temporary workers. The number reached over 10,000 in 2010, and has maintained a similar number in subsequent years. The number of Korean specialty-occupation temporary workers each year is larger than the number given in the table, because many Korean international students get temporary-worker status in specialty occupations when they complete their college or graduate education in the United States. Since most of these Korean temporary workers become legal immigrants as specialty-occupation holders after three years, their large number every year indicates the magnitude of Korean specialty-occupation immigrants. As already pointed out earlier, the majority of annual Korean immigrants during recent years consist of specialty-occupation immigrants and their immediate family members (spouses and children).

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