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Lindsey Paek

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Université Bordeaux Montaigne  
École Doctorale Montaigne Humanités (ED 480)  
THÈSE DE DOCTORAT EN « ÉTUDES ANGLOPHONES »

# **Hybrid Identities in Canada: A Case Study of the Korean Canadian Identity**

Présentée et soutenue publiquement le 15 juin 2023 par

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## Abstract

Following the state's effort to utilize immigration and multiculturalism as a means to forge a national identity, hybrid identities have become a salient component of the Canadian society, enriching discussions centered on defining *Canadianness*—especially concerning the English-speaking Canadian identity. To investigate Canadianness reflected in hybrid identities, this study is built on a case study of Korean immigrants in Toronto and focuses on ethnic and national attachment of individuals that contribute to their self-identification. In the quantitative part of the research, a questionnaire survey was circulated among 240 participants belonging to the first, 1.5, and second generations to examine the generational effect on ethnic salience embedded in their self-identity. Then, in the qualitative part of the research, one-on-one interviews were held with ten 1.5-generation participants to examine their identity journeys through life stories. Diverse aspects of the notion of identity (i.e. sociocultural, ethnic/national, individual/group, in-/out-group) were explored.

First and foremost, the generational effect on sociocultural integration was evident, and—despite varied levels of ethnic language maintenance of offspring generations—intergenerational transmission of ethnic salience appeared successful, involving cultural maintenance at home, within ethnic communities and peer networks, and through the media. Furthermore, in the case of the 1.5 generation, some key factors shaping ethnic/national attachment were highlighted. Firstly, among others, family socialization and time spent in Canada were the most constant factors that influenced ethnic/national attachment and identities. Secondly, cultural resources, including language proficiency, facilitated ethnic/national group membership, affecting social identity and confidence in self-identities. Thirdly, marginalized sentiments were associated with self-identities when one was unable to confidently identify with the national identity. Multiculturalism seemed to have helped many to positively perceive the Canadian identity and how they cope with racial discrimination; however, along with constant negotiation of identities in-between home vs. societal settings and the perceived White Canadian stereotype, it also made it difficult for some to identify a *solid* national identity. What remained central was the inherent sense of duality/plurality embedded in the Korean Canadian identity. Future research should further explore imagined qualities of the Canadian identity in the minds of those who claim other forms of hybrid identities and how these individuals' identification with the ethnic/national identities can be better facilitated across bi-/multi-cultural contexts.

*Keywords:* hybrid identity, Canadian identity, Korean Canadian identity, ethnic attachment, national attachment, self-identification, identity negotiation, immigrant generations, 1.5 generation, Korean immigrants



## Résumé

Suite aux efforts de l'État pour s'appuyer sur l'immigration et le multiculturalisme comme moyen de forger une identité nationale, les identités hybrides sont devenues une composante saillante de la société canadienne, enrichissant les discussions centrées sur la définition de la *canadianité*—plus particulièrement en ce qui concerne l'identité canadienne anglophone. Pour étudier la *canadianité* reflétée dans les identités hybrides, ce travail est basé sur une étude de cas des immigrants coréens à Toronto et se concentre sur l'attachement ethnique et national des individus qui contribue à leur auto-identification. Dans la partie quantitative de la recherche, une enquête par questionnaire a été diffusée auprès de 240 participants de première, 1,5, et deuxième générations, afin d'examiner l'effet générationnel sur la saillance ethnique intégrée dans leur identité. Ensuite, dans la partie qualitative, des entretiens individuels ont été menés avec dix participants de la génération 1,5 pour examiner leurs cheminements identitaires à travers des histoires de vie. Divers aspects de la notion d'identité (c'est-à-dire socioculturel, ethnique et national, individuel et groupe, endo- et exo-groupe) ont été explorés.

Tout d'abord, l'effet générationnel sur l'intégration socioculturelle était évident et, malgré des niveaux variés de maintien de la langue ethnique des générations descendantes, la transmission intergénérationnelle de la saillance ethnique semblait réussie, impliquant le maintien de la culture à la maison, au sein des communautés ethniques et des réseaux de pairs, et par les médias. En outre, dans le cas de la génération 1,5, certains facteurs clés façonnant l'attachement ethnique et national ont été soulignés. Premièrement, entre autres, la socialisation familiale et le temps passé au Canada étaient les facteurs les plus constants qui influent sur l'attachement et les identités ethniques et nationales. Deuxièmement, les ressources culturelles, y compris la maîtrise de la langue, ont facilité l'appartenance aux groupes ethniques et nationaux, affectant l'identité sociale et la confiance en soi. Troisièmement, les sentiments marginalisés étaient associés à des identités de soi lorsqu'on était incapable de s'identifier pleinement à l'identité nationale. Le multiculturalisme semble avoir aidé de nombreux participants à percevoir positivement l'identité canadienne et la façon dont ils font face à la discrimination raciale ; cependant, avec la constante négociation des identités entre le foyer et les milieux sociaux et les stéréotypes perçus des canadiens blancs, il a été difficile pour certains d'identifier une identité nationale *solide*. Ce qui restait central était le sens inhérent de dualité / pluralité ancré dans l'identité coréenne canadienne. Les futures recherches devraient explorer davantage les qualités imaginaires de l'identité canadienne dans l'esprit de ceux qui revendiquent d'autres formes d'identités hybrides et comment l'identification de ces individus aux identités ethnique et nationale peut être mieux facilitée dans des contextes bi- et multi-culturels.

*Mots clés* : identité hybride, identité canadienne, identité coréenne canadienne, attachement ethnique, attachement national, auto-identification, négociation identitaire, générations d'immigrés, génération 1,5, immigrants coréens

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# **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In the year 2000, I moved from Jeonju, South Korea, to Toronto, Canada, with my parents and my brother, as my parents wanted me and my brother to be raised in English-spoken educational settings. I think that my brother and I were too young to understand what it meant to be immigrating to a country so far away—he was only six years old, and I was ten. I remember feeling sad to say goodbye to the rest of my family in Korea and feeling excited upon arriving in Canada.

I lived my life as a 1.5-generation immigrant in Toronto until the year 2012. I was about to graduate from York University with the bachelor's degrees when my parents pushed me to go to France to explore the world more before settling. They wanted me and my brother to live and work globally, especially because that was the reason why they left their life back in Korea behind to come to Canada. Through the exchange English teaching program in place between my university in Toronto and the Université Bordeaux Montaigne in Bordeaux, I arrived in France for the first time in my life.

Being an immigrant for the second time in my life—and this time, as a first-generation immigrant in France—was not what I had planned. Initially, I was sure that I would stay for up to two years at most to make the most out of the French experience before going back home to Canada. However, the past years of being in France have made me grow in ways that have led me to adopt France as my home, as much as Canada and Korea. In a new country and its surroundings, I have been faced with a vast range of cultural differences throughout my adaptation. One of such challenges was the questions and/or assumptions about my identity, as perceived by others. In Toronto, I had been well sheltered among Korean Canadian 1.5-generation friends, as well as (non-Korean) Canadians, and had never been questioned about my identity. At times when I was asked in Canada where I was from or what my background was, I used to be able to answer “Korea” or “Korean” without trouble. In France, there was no longer the shelter of friends who shared the same culture and background with me, nor those from different backgrounds who nevertheless understood that I also identified with Canada; instead, I was consistently meeting new people and making friends in France who did not seem to have the same view of *Canadians* as the ones with whom I had been used to interacting.

Often enough, I have been asked where I was from, and have been told that I could not be Canadian, as my origin is Korean. The culture shock that I felt each time I found myself in

such occasions still is fresh in my memory, as I was suddenly faced with the kinds of questions that I had never been asked before: why, in France, do I feel the need to say that I am Canadian or Korean Canadian, when I willingly identify myself as Korean when I am asked the same question in Canada? Why do I care to explain that I am not *just* Korean, when I do, in fact, identify with Korea to a certain degree? What does Canadian identity mean to me? Just because I lived in Canada, does that make me Canadian?

While adjusting to life in the new country, I felt uneasy when I was asked such kinds of questions related to my identity as a Canadian. I was soon able to see that the prejudice comes from an outdated perception of Canada as the country of the Whites, originating from European settlers. Compared to the other countries where my expat friends were from, such as the UK or the US, it seemed that Canada was generally far less known in France, aside from the French-speaking part of the country. Multiculturalism, a policy that the Canadian government continuously seeks to promote in its policy did not seem to be so well incorporated into people's conception of Canada/Canadians, either.

Based on these experiences and the resulting questions that grew in my head, my research questions arose:

- What does it mean to be Korean Canadian? What kinds of experiences shape one to feel Korean Canadian?
- What is Canadian multiculturalism, and how is it lived and perceived by Korean immigrants?
- What is the modern-day multicultural, English-speaking Canadian identity?

As a person who has lived part of her life as a Korean immigrant in Canada, I share closely many kinds of experiences of acculturating to and integrating into the Canadian society with the Korean immigrant population. This gave me an advantage in identifying some of the common profile traits of the immigrants and the difficulties that they may encounter. In an attempt to avoid bias as much as possible in directing my research, I tried to develop research questions in a comprehensive manner, targeting overall life experiences of individual immigrants. It was worth keeping in mind that what I know about Korean immigrants from the first-handed experiences may not be the representative of the overall Korean Canadian population, and that, throughout the years that I have spent living in France, life in my hometown, Toronto, has evolved, and so have various aspects of life of immigrants in Toronto.

Therefore, this research journey was based on the questions that arose from my personal experiences of probing into my own perceived sense of *the Korean Canadian identity*—in

which the use of *the* is intended to represent the identity as one particular example of many hybrid Canadian identities which exist nowadays, rather than to imply that there exists only one single identity associated with Korean Canadians. I wish to dedicate this study to the growing body of studies focusing on, not only Korean, but also overall visible minority immigrants in Canada, and moreover to the ongoing discussions about contemporary Canada: examining Canadian multiculturalism as the state policy and how it is perceived in lived experiences of the members of the Canadian society. I realize that aiming to explore the notion of identity at individual, group, and national levels is an ambitious challenge that I took on through this study—and it is far from being perfect. Nonetheless, I see this study as a starting point, and hope to be able to use it as a groundwork for my research journey of further exploring the intricate links between the individual members of the society, communities, and the nation, composed of diverse cultural, linguistic, and social ties that connect one to another.

This study is divided into three parts. In the first part, the background research findings will provide some contextual information and data. Chapter 1 presents a preliminary exploration of themes related to the research journey, as well as the theoretical framework of this study. In Chapter 2, a brief history of immigration and multiculturalism—related policies and the current situation in Canada—will be discussed. Then, the history of immigration of Korean immigrants and overall profile traits of Korean Canadian immigrants will be discussed in Chapter 3. This last chapter in Part 1 will moreover end with the introduction of Korean immigrants in Toronto, in particular, which will be used as the case study.

Part 2 will present the quantitative part of the study, based on the questionnaire survey of 240 Korean immigrants of the first, 1.5, and second generation in Toronto. This part of the study will seek to target global characteristics and generational differences related to ethnic salience embedded in the self-identities of Korean immigrants. Some of the key components of ethnic/national attachment that will be explored include family, ethnic community, peer networks, homeland visits, language proficiency and use, ethnic/national pride, and self-identification tendencies. The methodology and findings—presented in generational comparisons between the first, 1.5, and second generation—will be introduced in Chapter 4, and ethnic profiles by generational categories will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The last part, Part 3, will present the qualitative part of the study, which is based on ten individual interviews of the focus group—1.5-generation Korean immigrants in Toronto. The life stories and narratives will demonstrate correlations between different components of

identity negotiation of this generation group, which will be explored in depth. In Chapter 6, the methodology and participant profiles will be provided, and the findings will be discussed throughout Chapter 7, 8, and 9, encompassing diverse domains of public and private spheres and peer groups, that shape one's self-identification: socialization experiences across the domains of school, family, and ethnic community; transnational cultural experiences and practices involving homeland visits and the media, as well as language proficiency and practices; and life in Canada (e.g. discussing discrimination, multiculturalism, integration, etc.). This third part of the study is intended to represent the core of this study and will thus seek to provide direct responses to the main research questions on which this study is built.

*The seventh edition of APA formatting and style guide was used in this study to provide citations and references.*



**PART 1**

**BACKGROUND RESEARCH:  
CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE RESEARCH  
SUBJECT**

## **INTRODUCTION TO PART 1**

This first part of the dissertation is aimed at providing a contextual overview of the research journey. The first chapter will demonstrate a preliminary exploration of various aspects of the notion of identity—in-/out-group, individual/group, sociocultural, ethnic/national—and introduce the theoretical framework that helped the process of navigating through the research questions. Chapter 1 will demonstrate the need for the research and highlight the theoretical notions that shaped the overall study. Furthermore, Chapter 2 and 3 will present the background research that was conducted on the subjects of immigration, multiculturalism, and Korean immigrants in Canada. Examining the demographic reality of Canada as a nation, as well as Korean immigrants among a diverse body of immigrant Canadian populations, will help establishing a contextual understanding of the research subjects.

## CHAPTER 1

### PRELIMINARY EXPLORATION AND RESEARCH OVERVIEW

#### 1.1 Preliminary Exploration of Notions

##### 1.1.1 Nation-Building

Inevitably, the subject of nation-building becomes salient in the discussion of Canadian identity. The term refers to a process through which the nation is formed, enabled by the citizens who share common interests, goals, and preferences which bring them together. In short, it alludes to the “construction of a national identity” (Alesina & Reich, 2015). Different approaches have been taken to identify the bonds that unite members within a nation in previous literature: ethnocultural scholars have focused on objective characteristics such as language, religion, and customs, while modernist scholars have emphasized subjective factors such as attitudes, perceptions, and sentiments (Bekus, 2010).

Modernist scholars saw nation-building as a conscious invention or construction of a nation, as well as a process of modernization (Anderson, 2006; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1992), and argued that the state plays an important role in nation-building. Eric Hobsbawm (1992), for example, postulated that political campaigners’ attempt to raise awareness of the nationalist idea is necessary in order for national consciousness to be developed (p. 12). In this regard, the Multiculturalism Policy can be perceived as a tool adopted by the Canadian state to shape the national identity of Canada, as well as the meaning of what it is to be Canadian.

However, it is impossible for nation-building to be imposed on a people (Watson, 2004, p. 11). Nation-building strategies projected by the state need to be accepted and embraced by the people to yield the desired results. For example, Benedict Anderson’s (2006) definition of the nation as an imagined political community emphasizes the role of the people in the process of nation-building. He argued that the *imagined* qualities of their nation in the minds of the citizens are what bind them together within the society and moreover define and distinguish the nation among others. In parallel with this view, Hobsbawm (1992) argued that nationalism is constructed from above, but it must be studied from below, where it stems from (pp. 9-10). Thus, while Canada’s Multiculturalism Policy and the related institutional efforts may help shaping the national identity, the Canadian population is ultimately the actors who drive and foster the imagination of what Canada and *Canadianness* represent. Therefore, examining how



Canada is imagined and perceived in the minds of the people becomes an imperative task in understanding the contemporary Canadian identity.

### 1.1.2 Canadian Identity/*Canadianness*

Sarah V. Wayland (1997) argued that a strong Canadian identity has never been established since the birth of Canada as a self-governing nation on July 1, 1867, due to factors such as “regionalism, language issues, a large foreign-born population, and a weak federal government” (p. 34). Moreover, Canadian nationalism has been referred to as *quiet nationalism* in previous literature (Cook, 2006). Efforts to promote a national identity and pride at the institutional level have seen the school curriculum transition from projecting British values to multicultural *Canadian* values, linked with celebrating “pride in democratic institutions” (pp. 591-592). Taking an example from school curriculum, Anne Cook (2006) referred to Social Studies curriculum guidelines published by Ontario Department of Education in 1952. She highlighted the use of “tolerance, respect and good will,” encouraging training the students to become “informed,” “purposeful,” and “active” citizens (Ontario Department of Education, 1952, pp. 9-10, as cited in Cook, 2006, p. 592)—which she noted were “vague qualities” that nevertheless are successful derivation from “overt patriotism” (p. 592).

Nonetheless, the project of nation-building of Canada—with the ultimate aim of creating a Canadian identity—has been an ongoing concern for policymakers. From John Alexander Macdonald, the first prime minister from the Conservative Party, to Justin Trudeau, the current prime minister from the Liberal Party, the political leaders in Canada have striven to establish and recapitulate what their party believed would best represent and unite the nation and the people. The project has been carried out across different economic, social, political, linguistic, and cultural domains.

In numerous occasions in the past, before the Multiculturalism Policy was adopted, Canada’s immigration legislators based their selection of immigration applicants on their *compatibility*, seeking to promote a united sense of nationhood in only accepting the desired applicants to become residents of Canada. For example, the Wilfrid Laurier government (1896-1911) forbade “any immigrants belonging to the Negro race,” whom they “deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirement of Canada” (Yarhi, 2016, as cited in The Nudge Report, 2014); the Edmonton Board of Trade stated in 1910, “we want settlers that will assimilate with the Canadian people and in the negro we have a settler that will never do that”

(as cited in Thomas, 2017); and later, Nazi-fleeing Jews, who were seen as “unassimilable and threatening for the Canadian community” (R. A. Jones, 1984, p. 90) were turned down during the 1930s.

Canada as it is known today began to be constructed with Pierre Trudeau, who was the prime minister of Canada during the years 1968 to 1979 and 1980 to 1984. His government passed the Official Languages Act in 1969, which gave French and English languages equal official status in the government of Canada. He furthermore brought fundamental changes to the Canadian institutions and made an impact on defining the Canadian identity through the Constitution Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Eisenberg, 2014, p. 231). More precisely, the patriation of the Canadian Constitution in 1982<sup>1</sup> redirected the power which the British parliament held to the Canadian parliament—allowing the Canadian state to be able to amend the Constitution of Canada. Moreover, The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was created and added to the Constitution. Throughout such efforts, Trudeau sought for a better unified Canada as a nation, engaging Quebec “more fully in the Canadian federation” and moreover articulating “a national vision of Canada through the shared values of liberal rights” (Harder & Patten, 2015, p. 4).

Following the Immigration Policy introduced and extended in 1960s, Canada has been admitting growing numbers of immigrants from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In an attempt to effectively manage the growing diversity apparent among the Canadian population, the Canadian government adopted multiculturalism as an official policy in 1971, and enacted the Multiculturalism Act in 1988, which “acknowledged multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and integral to the federal decision-making process” (Wayland, 1997, p. 49).<sup>2</sup> These efforts successfully contributed to shaping civic nationalism, which the state sought to advocate as the key element of the Canadian culture and identity. As Michael Dewing (2009) explained, multiculturalism as an ideology would bring together Canadians of different backgrounds, creating a bond based on their shared set of ideas and ideals pertaining to celebrating the cultural diversity of Canada (p. 1). This ideal was clearly

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<sup>1</sup> Canada *patriated* its Constitution by amending the British North America Act (which was also renamed to *Constitution Act, 1867*) with the aim of transferring the powers of the governing authority from the British Parliament to the Canadian federal and provincial governments (Sheppard, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> The enactment of Multiculturalism Act in 1988 was aimed at providing a clearer *direction* to promote multiculturalism as the national heritage. It promoted “cultural and language preservation, anti-discrimination efforts, the enhancement of intercultural awareness and understanding, and culturally sensitive institutional change at federal levels” (Wayland, 1997, p. 49).

expressed in Pierre Trudeau's speech that he gave at the Ukrainian Canadian Congress on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1971:

There is no such thing as a model or ideal Canadian. What could be more absurd than the concept of an "all-Canadian" boy or girl? A society which emphasizes uniformity is one which creates intolerance and hate. A society which eulogizes the average citizen is one which breeds mediocrity. What the world should be seeking, and what in Canada we must continue to cherish, are not concepts of uniformity but human values: compassion, love, and understanding. (as cited in Trudeau, 1998, p. 146)

In education curriculum documents that are in effect currently, the focus remains on citizenship education, broken down in ways that are visibly more specific when compared to the past. For example, in the Canadian and World Studies Curriculum for grade 10, the targeted elements of citizenship education are centered on building links between structures, communities, and self—through one's understanding of societal structure and systems, relationships within and in-between communities, attributes of a good citizen, and self-identity in relation to local, national, and global communities (The Ministry of Education, 2018). Moreover, the continued focus placed on multiculturalism is illustrated across the curriculum. A few examples include the following:

By the end of this course, students will:

E1.1 describe various social and cultural trends and developments in Canada since 1982 (e.g. [...] developments related to multiculturalism and pluriculturalism; the growth of social and cultural advocacy groups), and assess their significance for people in Canada [...] (The Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 125)

D3.4 describe some key developments in immigration and immigration policy in Canada during this period, and assess their significance for Canadian heritage and identities in Canada (e.g. with reference to the points system, origins of immigrants and refugees, the development of Canada as a multicultural society, cultural festivals) (The Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 144)

Thus, it is evident that the Canadian citizenship that the state aims to promote has become strongly associated with multiculturalism.

Yet, beyond discussing institutional efforts in promoting multiculturalism as a national identifier, defining the Canadian identity appears to remain complex within the modern context. On the one hand, while comparisons between Canada and the United States can shed light on distinct elements of the Canadian identity (Quanquin et al., 2021), cultural similarities that are shared between the two countries can nevertheless result in blurred distinctions between the Canadian, American or North American identity, which can be detrimental to the Canadian national identity (Meisel, 1986; K. Yoon, 2017). On the other hand, even though many societies

in the world have become multicultural and/or multi-ethnic in the modern decades, there still exist presumptions associated with one's identity (Howard-Hassmann, 1999; C. S. Taylor, 2007; K. Yoon, 2022). Christopher Stuart Taylor (2007) named a number of social characteristics that are typically associated with the Canadian identity:

Here's my checklist of a *typical* Canadian: he or she was born in Canada, speaks English and/or French, celebrates Christmas, is Christian, plays hockey, owns a snow shovel, drinks Canadian beer, has a barbeque on Canada Day, watches hockey every Saturday night, is friendly and polite, has liberal views, dislikes American hegemony but watches American TV shows, loves thy neighbour, and generally cares about the wellbeing of others. (C. S. Taylor, 2007, p. 127)

Furthermore, in contrast to the aforementioned identity traits, C. S. Taylor (2007) expressed his account of identifying and being identified as a second-generation immigrant in Canada as the following:

I may think that I'm Canadian, and inherently and consciously do the things that a Canadian is supposed to do, but if you took one look at me none of that would matter. Why is that? I forgot to add the most important element of Canadian identity: you must be white. (p. 127)

Indeed, the problem, as Rhoda E. Howard-Hassmann (1999) argued, in contrast to other ethnicities such as Chinese or Indians which allow an immediate recognition of one's ethnic and racial background, one's ethnic/racial identification of being *Canadian* fails to provide a specific ethnic/racial description of the subject other than the White race of a European-descent. Simultaneously, one's biological entity is often confused with social entity; everyone's true identity is presumed to be rooted somewhere else (p. 523). However, upon examining Canada's multicultural society and its ethnically heterogeneous groups of citizens, one must be judicious in making such presumptions: its population has become more ethnically diverse than ever due to the immigration patterns and intermarriage throughout the years, which have created a melange of citizens. Hence, ethnically heterogeneous societies such as the one found in Canada are "not supposed to, and cannot, require ethnic, religious or other types of ascriptive conformity" (Howard-Hassmann, 1999, p. 528).

Despite the adoption of the Multiculturalism Policy in 1971, the scholars have expressed that there is a lack of a common identity that can be embraced by (English) Canadians (Howard-Hassmann, 1999; Ives, 2018; Roy, 1995; C. S. Taylor, 2007). In this respect, Howard-Hassmann's (1999) introduction of the term, *ethnic-Canadian*, as a new ethnic category to refer to those who are from multicultural groups within the Canadian society, can be seen as an attempt to re-define *Canadianness*. One's identity as an ethnic Canadian does not necessarily

correspond with his or her legal status as a citizen. Rather, it may be claimed by anyone who is English-speaking, non-Aboriginal Canadians who are born in or emigrate to Canada at young ages, but whose ethnic background is other than English or British (Howard-Hassmann, 1999, p. 523 & 528). Furthermore, Howard-Hassmann (1999) argued that identity is a “state of mind (p. 534)”: to think of oneself as Canadian is the core constituent and the essence of being Canadian, which demonstrates and further heightens his or her sense of loyalty to each other and the nation.

### 1.1.3 Addressing Hybrid Identities

Discussing identities is a complex task: not only does it involve singular and dual identities, it also entails putting into question the transcription of dual identities—with or without hyphens. In her article, “The Politics of Hyphenated Identities,” Snéha Khilay (2014) postulated the following: “The hyphenated identity is a term that implies a dual identity. It evokes questions regarding which side of the hyphen the person belongs to, giving the impression that the person is oscillating between two cultures.” Such questions have indeed continuously incited discussions and debates in both the political and public discourse.

In the political discourse, hyphenation has been used to address plurality of identities, which have increasingly become diverse over time. Faced with the major waves of immigration to the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the former American presidents, Theodore Roosevelt (in office from 1901 to 1909) and Woodrow Wilson (in office from 1913-1921) first made the use of this term in the public discourse, by discouraging what Roosevelt referred to as *hyphenated Americanism* (as cited in The Associated Press, 1915, p. 8). Beyond asking the growing body of newly arrived immigrants to fully assimilate into the American culture, they implemented a new project of nation-building in which the American identity was sought to remain singular, without hyphens (Lang, 2005, p. 2). Roosevelt announced:

There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americans. When I refer to hyphenated Americans, I do not refer to naturalized Americans. Some of the very best Americans that I have ever known were naturalized Americans, Americans born abroad. But a hyphenated American is not an American at all. This is just as true of the man who puts German, Irish, English or French before the hyphen. Americanism is a matter of the spirit and of the soul. Our allegiance must be purely to the United States. (as cited in The Associated Press, 1915, p. 8)

However, in contrast to the single-identity ideology which the American state adopted, the gap between the ideals and reality concerning identities claimed by visible minority groups

in America has been addressed in the public discourse. For example, Toni Morrison, an African American writer, expressed in 1992 that “In this country [the United States], American means white. Everybody else has to hyphenate” (as cited in Venkataramanan, 2018). Indeed, there have been growing concerns expressing that the use of hyphenated identities may be linked to discrimination (Fuhrmann, 2018; Hwang, 2017). Hyphenated identities were associated with placing the same level of importance on both the adjective and the noun (e.g. Asian-American identity), which implies that “people of colour are somehow not full citizens or fully American” (Fuhrmann, 2018). An example of visible minority groups’ opposition to hyphens can be traced back to the years leading to the Second World War: as tensions between the United States and Japan increased, the Japanese American Citizens League decided to drop the hyphen, as it did not want to give the idea that Japanese Americans might be disloyal and untrustworthy (Khatri, 2019; Fuhrmann, 2018). Seunghyun Hwang (2017) furthermore argued that hyphenated categories make room for discrimination by distinguishing minority groups from the mainstream society. Offspring generations of immigrants, in particular, were believed to be faced with discrimination based on stereotypes that are attached to hyphenated categories (p. 114).

Throughout the debates that have been taking place regarding hyphenation in identities, there have also been discussions that sought to address the actual *language* of using hyphenation in literature. According to Henry Fuhrmann (2018), leading U.S. news organizations used to hyphenate identities when indicating the dual heritage of the subjects. However, faced with growing acknowledgement of the power of language in expressing power and identity, as well as growing voices of visible minority groups who disagreed with the practice (E. Liu, 2014; Fuhrmann, 2018; Hwang, 2017), journalism has been reflecting the evolving perceptions of hyphenation in recent years. For example, the Associated Press announced in 2019 that it would no longer use the hyphen in dual heritage identifiers, such as African American and Asian American (AP Stylebook, n.d.). For some organizations, the preference for dropping the hyphen was not based on the representation of bias in hyphenation; rather, it originated from their belief that the hyphen does not aid comprehension in the dual heritage identities, as expressed in the case of the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Perlman, 2019). While some organizations, such as *The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, continue to use hyphens in identities, dropping the hyphen has increasingly become a common practice (Fuhrmann, 2018; Perlman, 2019; Khatri, 2019). This trend reflects the growing level of ethno-cultural

diversity, as well as awareness of diverse self-perceptions and representations, being observed in societies.

In the context of Canada, multiculturalism policy and ideology project the essence of plurality embedded in the envisioned Canadian identity, which implies that dual identities are encouraged and celebrated. Like in the United States, the use of hyphenated identities in transcribing dual identities has also been the subject of debates in political and public discourse in Canada. Previously, like American leaders, one of the former prime ministers of Canada, John Diefenbaker (in office from 1957 to 1963), viewed hyphenation in Canadian identities as a barrier. However, unlike Roosevelt and Wilson who saw it as a sign of un-Americanness and disloyalty, Diefenbaker saw it as a manifestation of prejudice, which delegitimizes one's place in the national community, making them less than a full citizen (Medford, 2020; Andrew-Gee, 2015; Vought, 1994; Boschetti, 2021). Mirroring Diefenbaker's perception of hyphens, critics of hyphens such as Neil Bissoondath (1994) are concerned with its divisive nature, which they believe leads to discrimination, and hinders fostering a sense of belonging of hyphenated-Canadian individuals.

In fact, Wil M. Verhoeven (1996) posited that hyphenated identities were increasingly placed under attack in Canada, as shortcomings of multiculturalism policy and ideology were becoming noticed. In other words, multicultural mosaic, which the state had been promoting, did not seem to be removing the actual problems that minority groups were experiencing: on the one hand, the dominant culture saw hyphens in identities as “dissolvants rather than as the mortar in Canada's social and political fabric”; and, on the other hand, ethnic minorities began to perceive the biases that are reflected in hyphenated identities (p. 97). Like Americans, Canadians also became aware of the potentially discriminatory nature of hyphenation used in identities—despite the state policy and institutional efforts at promoting social cohesion by celebrating diversity.

Nevertheless, in spite of the negative connotations, dual/hyphenated identities have been largely perceived in a positive manner, often deemed an important element of Canadian identity. In fact, comparing the contrasting manners in which the notion of hyphenated identity has been perceived in the United States and Canada is one of the factors that helps differentiating the Canadian identity: compared to the United States, where the hyphen has been seen as an assimilative process of being *melted* into a true American, the hyphen has been treated as a representation of *cultural pluralism* in Canada, helping maintaining the

multicultural mosaic (Verhoeven, 1996, p. 97). For example, at the state level, Diefenbaker, argued against hyphenated identities, in the belief that hyphenation was not an adequate means to address ethnic diversity in Canada nor to promote inclusion within Canadian society. Such a perspective clearly demonstrated a contrasting standpoint of Diefenbaker, compared to that of Roosevelt and Wilson (Boschetti, 2021, p. 44). Additionally, the former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau highlighted that, besides the two official languages, “there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other” (Library and Archives of Canada, 1971, p. 8545). Thus, the state’s effort to emphasize the key role that multiculturalism plays in shaping the Canadian identity appears to be aligned with *dual*—mixed and multiple—identities.

In line with multiculturalism policy and ideology that have been projected by the state, dual identities have also received support from the Canadian public. Often, hyphenated identities are also perceived as an adequate means of expressing cultural richness embedded in self-identities—including the French-Canadian identity—and addressing the unique culture and history of Canadians, as well as reflecting personal struggles and traumas that may be associated with an individual’s life in Canada (Andrew-Gee, 2015; Medford, 2020). For instance, Joy Kogawa (1990), a Canadian poet and novelist, advocated hyphens in representation of Canadian identity, which she believed helps establishing bridges between individuals belonging to different hyphenated categories.

Across numerous discussions and debates, what remains central is the sense of plurality embedded in the notion of Canadian identity. For this reason, hybrid identities—with or without hyphens—are often perceived as synonymous to multiculturalism and are commonly associated with the Canadian identity in the modern-day context. In this study, the focus will be placed on whether an individual identifies with a single- or dual-identity label, as well as how s/he interprets the label for self. That is to say, diverse viewpoints regarding dual or hyphenated identities will be kept in mind when examining hybrid identities, without the actual use of hyphens in transcribing them.

#### **1.1.4 Exploring the Notion of Identity in Literature**

In essence, identity is self-consciousness of an individual in relation to his or her surrounding world. In literature, a range of lenses—including, but not limited to, psychological, ethnic, cultural, social, national, and intersectional—have been used to examine different elements of identity. The perception of identity as a social, as well as a cultural product, was



introduced in Charles H. Cooley's (1902) publication of *Human Nature and the Social Order*. He equated the notion of *looking-glass self* with self-identity, which was constructed based on one's own perception of self in relation to how he or she is perceived by others. Other scholars have also postulated that identities can be ascribed (imposed by others) or avowed (claimed by individuals) (J. N. Martin & Nakayama, 2010), as well as personal (i.e. stemming from life experiences) and social (i.e. stemming from social memberships) (Spreckels & Kotthoff, 2009).

Moreover, Erik Erikson (1994) placed importance on ego identity for individuals, which he identified as “the awareness of the fact that there is a self-sameness and continuity to the ego's synthesizing methods, the *style of one's individuality*” (p. 50). He emphasized that the process of ego identity formation is initiated during adolescence—more precisely, upon exploring different roles and values—and that the perceived *style* must be in line with how he or she is perceived by others in the immediate community. While ego identity is related to the sense of continuity and coherence across different situations throughout one's life narratives, personal identity is shaped by both social and cultural context of identity formation, and self-identity<sup>3</sup> can be understood as self-sameness that is constantly revised throughout one's life (Erikson, 1994). Therefore, the notion of identity is understood to be multi-dimensional, fluid, and contextual, shaped by experiences and information one acquires through social interactions and cultural exploration across the lifetime.

Beverly D. Tatum (2000) furthermore highlighted the multidimensional aspect of the notion of identity within the societal context. What is commonly referred to as the dominant and subordinate social groups, as described in the following excerpt, become global structures that form social hierarchy:

People are commonly defined as other on the basis of race or ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, and physical or mental ability. Each of these categories has a form of oppression associated with it: racism, sexism, religious oppression/anti-Semitism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, and ableism, respectively. In each case, there is a group considered dominant (systematically advantaged by the society because of group membership) and a group considered subordinate or targeted (systematically disadvantaged). (p. 11)

He furthermore added that every individual has multiple identities, among which both dominant and subordinate identities exist. The dominant identities tend to be taken for granted, whereas

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that Erikson (1994) did not explicitly use the term *self-identity* in his theory. Nonetheless, in consideration of his extensive exploration of identity formation and development, self-identity can be interpreted as a broader identity construct of which ego identity is part, more dependent on an individual's self-awareness and perceptions.

the subordinate identities hold attention (p. 11). Identifying the group status within the society is an important task in exploring the construction of identity, because the dominant group plays a significant role in shaping the norm within the society which affect subordinate groups. In other words, as the dominant group has “the power and authority relative to the subordinates,” their attitudes and views toward subordinate groups become the societal norm (pp. 11-12).

One dimension of identity that this study will focus on is ethnic identity. As Robert Winder (2004) explained in his book, *Bloody Foreigners*, geography used to be “a handy marker of national identity,” and, moreover, “an essential driver for ethnic differences” (p. 244). In this respect, ethnic identity used to be understood as a *static* entity that was often confused with national identity, distinguished by linguistic markers particular to different ethnic groups. However, as the phenomenon of global migration causes “convulsive drifting of the world’s population” (p. 244) by bringing flocks of immigrants from different ethnic backgrounds to the receiving society, the notion of ethnic identity was often challenged—upon examining identity negotiation of immigrants during their acculturative experiences in the host society. Like Winder, Richard Alba (1990) argued that there is “a fundamental erosion of the structural basis of ethnicity” (p. 38), which renders the modern-day notion of ethnicity a social phenomenon.

In literature, ethnic identity, along with racial identity, is one of the most frequently studied cultural identities (Worrell, 2020), and, across numerous disciplines, it is increasingly being understood as a complex, multidimensional construct. Nevertheless, the definition of ethnic identity is different across the literature, as there is no set definition that is widely agreed on. In attempts to define the notion of ethnic identity and measure its salience, previous research has employed different approaches. Firstly, some scholars have focused on the *content* of ethnic identity by examining attitudes and feelings regarding self (i.e. related to self-identification) and group membership (i.e. feelings of belonging and commitment, the sense of shared values and attitudes, and attitudes towards one’s group—referred to as *ethnic affirmation and belonging* (Phinney, 1992; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Secondly, some have focused on the *process* of ethnic identity by studying the social aspect of identity (i.e. treating ethnic identity as a group identity in relation to the dominant group within a society) or by looking at the cultural aspect of identity (i.e. examining the language, behaviour, values, and knowledge of ethnic group history). This developmental component of ethnic identity has been referred to as *ethnic identity exploration* (Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001; Phinney, 1988).

Moreover, ethnic identity is closely correlated with acculturation of an individual. Jean S. Phinney, Gabriel Horenczyk et al. (2001) believed that ethnic identity can be perceived as an aspect of acculturation—which they defined as “a broader construct, encompassing a wide range of behaviours, attitudes, and values that change with contact between cultures” (p. 495)—that “focuses on the subjective sense of belonging to a group or culture” (Phinney, 1990, as cited in Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001, p. 495). What must be noted is the two-dimensional nature of acculturation: the first dimension concerns one’s retention or rejection of his or her native culture; and the second dimension concerns the adoption or rejection of the host culture (Berry, 2008). These two aspects of acculturation have been found to be distinct and independent, and can vary across groups and contexts (Phinney, 1990). Therefore, examining the acculturation of the subjects can help generating a useful, contextual understanding of ethnic identity by providing in-depth insights into the process of ethnic journey, as well as the content of the achieved ethnic identity.

Furthermore, it is important to note Phinney’s (1993) three-stage developmental model of ethnic identity in adolescence, which is one of the most frequently cited literature on the subject. During first stage of *unexamined ethnic identity*, it is assumed that individuals belonging to racial and ethnic groups have not explored their ethnicity. Some may initially accept attitudes of the dominant culture, and many can be categorized as either diffused (when there is no interest in his or her identity) or foreclosed (when one’s understanding of ethnicity is solely based on the perception of others such as family and ethnic community). When individuals encounter a particular experience or event such as discrimination or racism, they enter the second stage of *ethnic identity search*, where they explore and experiment with their ethnic identity by engaging in conversations with family and co-ethnic peers and cultural activities (e.g. attending cultural events and learning cultural customs). It is possible that individuals remain in this stage without advancing to the next for a very long time. Only if one reaches the third stage, individuals will have internalized their ethnicity and reached an integrated sense of their self as a minority. This resolution is built upon resolved ethnic identity conflicts, acceptance of their membership in the minority group, and being open towards other cultures. Those who have reached this stage are described as confident and proud of their ethnic identity. Phinney (1993) called the resulting ethnic identity as *achieved ethnic identity*. As the wording suggests, having developed an achieved ethnic identity can be rewarding for an individual, as it enhances his or her self-concept.

Ethnicity is increasingly found to be a symbolic entity in the modern context. The notion of symbolic ethnicity is relevant in the cases of modern-day individuals who “retain a sense of being ethnic, but without any deep commitment to ethnic social ties or behaviours” (Alba, 1990, p. 306). In other words, *symbols* of ethnic cultures—rather than cultures, themselves—are present in the lives of the individuals who have maintained a sense of identification with their ethnicity. In her study of ethnic choices of Americans of mixed ancestry, Mary Waters (1990) argued that symbolic ethnicity is adopted by individuals to fulfil their needs and yearnings for belonging to a community without forsaking their individuality (p. 150). It is also understood as a psychological—rather than a social—construct, whose primary feature is its voluntary quality, enabling flexibility for individuals. In this respect, it can benefit both the individual and the group, as it can become one of many traits that help one to define his or her identity, and, at the same time, it renders ethnic groups *loosely structured* (L. W. Roberts & Clifton, 1982, pp. 90-91). Therefore, these findings indicated that the salience of ethnic identity is likely to be symbolic in essence, which renders the notion of ethnic identity highly contextual, dependent on situations and the resulting needs of the subjects. The notion of symbolic ethnicity can thus be useful in understanding contemporary dynamics of post-modern societies and its impact on the individuals and ethnic groups/communities.

It is also worth noting the impact of gender on ethnic identity of immigrants. Previous literature has revealed that gender differences influence the identity journey of offspring generations of immigrants and influence their behaviour—and this finding was especially true in the case of female immigrants, on whom different expectations were often held compared to sons within the context of immigrant families (Qin, 2009; Dion K. K., & Dion, K. L., 2001; Dion K. K., & Dion, K. L., 2004; Noh, 2012). However, gender may not have a direct impact on the achieved identity of an individual. For example, Karen K. Dion and Kenneth L. Dion (2004) found that ethnocultural identity (e.g. pride and attachment to the ethnocultural group) did not appear to be dependent on gender. Likewise, Marianne S. Noh (2012) found that, while perceived gender constructs and stereotypes can significantly shape one’s experiences of ethnic identity exploration, they are not defining elements of how he/she perceives ethnicity.

### **1.1.5 Ethnic and National Attachment**

Exploring levels of attachment an individual feels to his or her ethnic group and the nation is the key drive in navigating the process of his or her identity negotiation. Following Milton Gordon’s (1964) approach to assessing the degree of assimilation by breaking it down

into cultural and social assimilation, Pyong Gap Min and Youna Choi (1993) examined the level of ethnic attachment of Korean American high school students by focusing on their cultural ethnic attachment and social ethnic attachment (pp. 168-169). The two terms were defined as the following: cultural ethnic attachment as the degree to which one is integrated into the ethnic cultural tradition; and social ethnic attachment as the degree to which one is involved in ethnic social networks (p. 169). Min and Choi's (1993) approach of drawing a distinction between cultural and social dimensions of ethnic attachment proved to be useful, as it demonstrated that the two components can vary independently. For instance, it was found that the Korean American adolescents in their study lost their ethnic subculture to a certain degree, but they maintained Korean networks.

Moreover, among numerous cultural and social elements that contribute to one's ethnic and national attachment, ethnic/national pride provides an interesting subject of discussion. A sense of pride that an individual feels for the ethnic or mainstream culture/group can be understood as a cognitive-emotional construct, which represents an individual's belonging to and affiliation with respective cultures/groups (Cebotari, 2009; Castro et al., 2009). On the one hand, in cases of those who belong to ethnic minority groups, expressing ethnic pride can be understood as one's feeling of attachment/belonging to the ethnic group, correlated with emotions, attitudes, interest, and loyalty that he or she feels (Valk & Karu-Kletter, 2001; Castro et al., 2009). On the other hand, national pride is a component of national attachment, which, not only ties into an individual's sense of attachment to the mainstream culture and society on the personal level, but also reflects a certain degree of patriotism and national cohesion on the collective level (Cebotari, 2009, p. 8).

Furthermore, previous literature used to be built on the assumption that an immigrant's acculturation in the host society is correlated with their regressive ethnic attachment (Hurv & Kim, 1984). In parallel, a poor level of acculturation/integration—visible in the form of ethnic segregation and marginalization within the mainstream society—was often expected of an individual in case of his or her strong ethnic attachment. However, potentially additive or adhesive nature of immigrants' adaptation to the host society was revealed in Won Moo Hurv and Kwang Chung Kim's (1984) study: the authors found that American culture and national social ties were not taking away from, but were being added to, the Korean immigrants' heritage culture and ethnic social networks throughout the process of their adaptation. For example, the degree of ethnic attachment of the subjects did not seem to be related to their English

proficiency; and those who were more exposed to American newspapers regularly were also proportionally more exposed to Korean newspapers regularly. Therefore, it should not be assumed that the notions of ethnic and national attachment are conflicting with one another; rather, they should be understood as outcomes of socio-cultural explorations of individuals that can positively influence each other.

The interface between ethnic and national attachment can be considered through different lenses, as explained by Jim Sidanius et al. (1997). The multicultural/ethnic pluralism perspective is built on the principle that an individual is situated within a society in which ethnic distinctiveness is encouraged, which leads to developing dual loyalties to both ethnic and national cultures, groups, and identities. Thus, this model implies a positive relationship between ethnic attachment and national attachment of an individual, across all ethnic groups (p. 104). The “group dominance” perspective, in contrast, is founded on the principle that there exists the dominant group in multi-ethnic societies, resulting in varying interface types between ethnic and national attachment. For example, the national attachment of those belonging to the dominant group is expected to be stronger than those from subordinate groups, and/or there should be a stronger correlation between one’s ethnic attachment and national attachment for those from dominant groups than subordinate groups (p. 105). In consideration of Canada’s multicultural ideals and the reality of its multi-ethnic population, the multicultural perspective would be deemed the most adequate to predict the interface between ethnic and national attachment of ethnic groups in Canada. In other words, Canadians across various ethnic groups can be hypothesized to have retained ethnic distinctiveness and a sense of an equal standing within the society; and, most importantly, they should be expected to have developed a positive and simultaneous sense of both ethnic and national attachment.

Overall, the factors that influence ethnic and national attachment of an individual are diverse, including, but not limited to: family,<sup>4</sup> ethnic community,<sup>5</sup> language proficiency and use,<sup>6</sup> discrimination and racism,<sup>7</sup> political engagement/civic participation,<sup>8</sup> homeland<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See: Alba et al., 2002; Danico, 2004; Hughes et al., 2006; H.-S. Kang, 2013; Rumbaut, 1994; Sok, 2012; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> See: Cebotari, 2009; M. J. Kwak, 2004; Portes & Zhou, 1993.

<sup>6</sup> See: Imbens-Bailey, 1996; Jeon, 2012; Phinney, Romero et al., 2001; Soehl & Waldinger, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> See: Chung, 2016; Danico, 2004; Esses, 2021; Hwang, 2017; Yeh et al., 2003.

<sup>8</sup> See: Soehl & Waldinger, 2012; Terriquez & Kwon, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> The term, *homeland*, will be used in this study to refer to the country of origin. It is not intended to be interpreted literally in the case of offspring generations—especially concerning second-generation immigrants, who are born in the host country.

memories/transnational ties,<sup>10</sup> interracial marriage tendencies,<sup>11</sup> as well as ethnic and national pride.<sup>12</sup> Each component plays a significant role in shaping ethnic and national attachment, correlated with one another in intricate manners.

### 1.1.6 Self-identification

In previous literature, self-identification has often been used to inquire into ethnic identity that individuals develop. In fact, it is treated as one of the definitive factors in prescribing one's achieved identity. For example, John Charles Turner et al. (1987) and Kyeyoung Park (1999) equated self-identification to identity; Howard-Hassmann (1999) argued that ethnic-Canadianness involves one's "willingness to identify themselves as Canadian when given the chance" (p. 531); and Phinney (1990) saw self-identification as one of the prerequisites of ethnic identity formation, along with positive feelings and attitudes one has towards his or her group of origin. In essence, self-identification provides the ethnic label that an individual uses for him/herself, and is also referred to as *self-definition* or *self-labelling*.

Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner's (2004) Social Identity Theory suggests that one's social identity is shaped by his or her group membership, which is correlated with perceived definitions of *us* (in-group) and *them* (out-group). This model is built on three distinct steps of identity development: social categorization (i.e. categorizing and identifying group traits), social identification (i.e. adopting the in-group identity), and social comparison (i.e. in- and out-group comparisons related to self-esteem of the individual). In essence, stereotyping is the core component of Tajfel and Turner's (2004) conception of social identity, and is closely linked to in-group bias and favouritism over out-groups<sup>13</sup> and the resulting self-esteem. In fact, the authors postulated that developing or achieving a positive social identity is the objective of all individuals, which is only possible if an individual's in-group is perceived as favourable compared to out-groups. Thus, in the process of categorizing and comparing, individuals' tendency to negatively perceive out-groups is observed, with the aim of enhancing their own self-esteem and achieving/maintaining a satisfactory social identity. In cases in which one's

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<sup>10</sup> See: Ben-Rafael & Sternberg, 2009; Dunn, 2005; Huang et al., 2011; Lacroix, 2013; Lotf et al., 2013; Noh et al., 2013; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988; Yi, 2009; K. Yoon, 2017; K. Yoon, 2019; K. Yoon, 2022.

<sup>11</sup> See: Anyawie & Lichter, 2022; Sidanius et al., 1997.

<sup>12</sup> See: Bornman, 2022; Cebotari, 2009; Castro et al., 2009; Hernandez et al., 2014; B. L. Jones et al., 2022; Ramasubramanian et al., 2017; Valk & Karu-Kletter, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> In-group bias and favouritism represent one of the key features of intergroup relations, through which discrimination against out-groups can be triggered, and self-esteem of an individual identifying with the group can be maintained (Tajfel et al., 1971; Turner, 1978; Brewer, 1979; Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990).

social identity is deemed unsatisfactory, leaving the in-group to join a more favourable group and/or enhancing the in-group qualities would be the outcomes.

Furthermore, Turner et al. (1987) extended the self-categorization process, which was implied in the principles of in- and out-group formation and memberships in Social Identity Theory, by focusing on intra-group processes rather than inter-group processes to a much greater extent. As well, unlike Social Identity Theory, which focuses on one's group membership as the decisive factor that shapes his or her intergroup behaviour and self-esteem, Self-Categorization Theory emphasizes the salience of categorization process by distinguishing between personal (i.e. sense of self as a unique individual) and social identity (i.e. perceived in-group identity).

The process of self-categorizing is a highly complex phenomenon, facilitated by various social comparisons and references. For example, it is *hierarchical*—occurring on both personal and collective level—and *situational*—dictated by the salience of the category in a given situation (Turner et al., 1987; Reimer et al., 2020; Oakes, 1987; Rumbaut, 2005). Moreover, there are two conditions that are required for self-categorization to occur: *accessibility* (i.e. the degree to which group membership is identified as a category) and *fit* (i.e. the suitability of a given category within the given situational circumstance) of a group (Oakes, 1987; Oakes et al., 1991). Examining how self-categorization operates can be vital in understanding in depth specific group behaviours, such as intergroup differentiation and discrimination, in-group favouritism, and stereotypical perceptions of in- and out-groups (Valk & Karu, 2001, p. 585). Hence, self-categorization can be an extremely useful tool in assessing an individual's sense of self in relation to others, as well as exploring the resulting attitudes and behaviours.

Furthermore, ethnic self-identification entails an intricate process, especially for those who are visible minorities. For them, as their physical and cultural features remain distinctive from the dominant group, their resulting self-identification is “at least partially imposed” (Phinney, 1990, p. 504). The contributing factors to self-identification for these groups of individuals include the *social structure* (i.e. involuntary factor) and the *ethnic attachment* (i.e. voluntary factor)—two of which reinforce one another. In other words, immigrants are faced with issues of their limited adaptive capacities as seen in limited languages and/or economic resources, and depend on the presence of ethnic enclaves, the dominant group's acceptance of immigrants, as well as the general economic and political climate of the host society (Hurh & Kim, 1984). In the case of children of immigrants, their ethnic self-labels can stem from the



interplay of racial and ethnic labels and categories imposed by the society and the ancestral attachment that are asserted by newcomers. Often, the resulting ethnic self-identification of children of immigrants are quite plural: some may retain their parents' national identities, with or without a hyphen, while others may adopt an unhyphenated identity (Rumbaut, 2005, p. 144).

Self-identification is one of the most studied components of ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990); however, the complex notion of ethnic identity keeps it from representing an infallible means of assessing one's achieved identity. For instance, there are numerous aspects of ethnic identity that affect one's self-identification: firstly, while ethnic identity can be understood as both a heritage as well as a personal choice, one's choice to have an ethnic identity is a response to the culturally based need for belonging to a community without losing his or her uniqueness (Waters, 1990, p. 150); secondly, an individual's self-identification may be contextually contingent when presented to others, while internal ethnic identities may remain consistent (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2018); and thirdly, owing to contextual contingency of the nature of self-identification, one may attach little emotional value to his or her ethnic self-identification, and only use it in narrowly defined settings (McKay & Lewins, 1978). Therefore, under the influence of ethnic identity, the notion of self-identification becomes further fluid and multi-faceted, highly dependent on an individual's interpretation of the given situation. Different contextual situations that influence self-identification must be inquired into, to be able to understand a self-identity label that one provides.

### **1.1.7 Immigrant Generations**

Numerous assimilation scholars have reported the salience of immigrant generations in discussions of acculturative processes and results (Aydemir et al., 2009; Chen & Hou, 2019; Danico, 2004; Dion & Dion, 2004; Min & Kim, 2005; Park & Burgess, 2019; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The classical model of assimilation was formulated at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the scholars of Chicago School of Sociology, who were studying European immigrants and their integration into the American society over successive generations (Water et al., 2011). For example, William Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole (1945) introduced the concept of straight-line assimilation, which dictates upward social mobility of immigrants over time, along with their increasing level of integration into the American mainstream society and a

decreasing level of ethnic distinctiveness.<sup>14</sup> Then, as the American society became increasingly diverse, the concept of segmented assimilation emerged in the work of Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou (1993), which, in contrast to the classical model of assimilation, postulated that different groups are prone to achieving different outcomes.<sup>15</sup> Across different literature and perspectives, the findings have consistently demonstrated that immigrant generations, not just the length of residence of immigrants, are an important factor to consider when studying ethnic change observed among immigrants.

There are three different categories of immigrants and their descendent generations that are referred to, as highlighted by Statistics Canada: first generation refers to people who were born outside the host country; second generation refers to those who were born in the host country and had at least one foreign-born parent; and third generation refers to those who were born in the host country with both parents born in the host country (Statistics Canada, n.d.a). Another prevalent category that is often lumped together with either the first- or second-generation immigrants is *1.5 generation*. This term was coined with the aim of drawing distinctions between foreign-born adult immigrants and their foreign-born children, as well as foreign-born and native-born children of the first-generation immigrants, since the differences in age at arrival and nativity in the host country are linked to significant variations in one's acculturative patterns (Danico, 2003; Harklau, 2003; Rumbaut & Ima, 1987).

Moreover, it is important to note Grace J. Yoo and Barbara W. Kim's (2004) findings which demonstrated that the lives of Korean American families are intergenerationally linked in intricate ways. Through the values that are created and/or transmitted from first-generation parents to offspring-generation children through family histories and past relations, the authors presented narratives of adult children of Korean immigrants in the United States to reveal the indispensable role that they play in supporting their aging parents. Throughout the narratives, offspring generations' navigation in-between the Korean and American cultural norms appeared evident. Similarly, Abdurrahman Aydemir et al. (2009) reported the correlation

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<sup>14</sup> Warner and Srole's (1945) treatment of classical assimilation was controversial, as the authors' assessment of an ethnic/racial group's successful integration was based on their ability to assimilate into the "white Protestant, middle-class American society" (as cited in Feldmeyer, 2018, p. 38).

<sup>15</sup> Segmented assimilation theory presents three possible outcomes for second-generation immigrants: upward assimilation (i.e. adoption of the mainstream language and culture, paired with the loss of the heritage language and culture), downward assimilation (i.e. being faced with challenges such as discrimination, while lacking in parental/community support), and selective acculturation (i.e. biculturalism and economic integration attained by both offspring of immigrants and their parents, while retaining ties in the ethnic community) (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Portes, & Rumbaut, 2001).

between paternal education and integration of the second generation in the Canadian labour market: the earning patterns of children appeared to be correlated to that of their parents. Hence, while investigating generational differences that are present among immigrant populations is of interest, it is important to note that there exists links between them that heavily shape one another, especially in the context of parent-child relationships.

### **1.1.7.1 First Generation**

The first-generation immigrants are pioneers to arrive in the host country with objectives they wish to fulfil. Previous literature has consistently revealed the cultural and language barriers that this immigrant generation is faced with, which inevitably affect their acculturative experiences within the host society. Notably, these barriers lead to difficulty experienced by the immigrants in accessing social and health services, as well as developing personal social networks (G. Kwak & Lai, 2012, p. 215). Furthermore, acknowledging and understanding the language and cultural barriers that this generation group is faced with is important, as they ultimately represent obstacles in their sociocultural/economical integration in the mainstream society. In the case of first-generation Korean immigrants, their limited language proficiency and lack of work experiences obtained in the host country often result in status inconsistency—in other words, their educational level is often met with lower occupational status (Min, 1992b; I.-J. Yoon, 2012).

As a result of such challenges, first-generation immigrants tend to experience higher levels of acculturative stress compared to offspring generations. Thus, their psychological well-being within and sense of belonging to the host society are directly affected. In cases of minority groups whose racial status, culture, and skin colour differ from the majority group, higher levels of discomfort are experienced by first-generation immigrants when compared to other generations (Wu et al., 2012). Additionally, the first-generation homesickness is prone to affecting first generation, especially those who are recent immigrants (Noh & Moon, 2012).

Therefore, in the case of first generation, one's retention of the ethnic culture and language provides a valuable pool of resources which he/she can use as a coping mechanism to manage acculturative stress. First and foremost, they are heavily dependent on the mother tongue in their daily life and often do not use the mainstream language unless it is required (Soehl & Waldinger, 2012, p. 786). Speaking the mother tongue at home is especially beneficial for the well-being of the first-generation immigrants, as it promotes a sense of comfort for the

subjects (Berardi-Wiltshire, 2018, p. 8). Moreover, using the mother tongue, first-generation immigrants demonstrate high levels of co-ethnic peer socialization, as they often lack in cross-ethnic social ties and demonstrate lower rates of intermarriage when compared to offspring generations (Brown, 2006; Lee & Boyd, 2008, as cited in Soehl & Waldinger, 2012, p. 385). The presence of ethnic enclaves can be explained by this socialization pattern: Zheng Wu et al. (2012) found that, among first-generation immigrants in Canada, the bigger the proportion of co-ethnic peers there is, the less frequently they are subject to feeling uncomfortable.<sup>16</sup>

In the discussion of ethnic identity, first-generation immigrants play a significant role in shaping ethnic salience in their children's identities. In fact, as parents, first-generation immigrants are the primary source of ethnic cultural reference for the children, who pass on the heritage values, cultures, and language (Danico, 2004; H.-S. Kang, 2013). There has been ample literature that provides the evidence: Jean S. Phinney, Irma Romero et al. (2001) found that parents' values and attitudes in promoting cultural maintenance play a critical role in enhancing the children's ethnic language proficiency; Soehl and Waldinger (2012) reported that parents' cross-border activities, as well as the language used at home, are correlated with the second-generation children's retention of cross-border ties into their adulthood (p. 807); likewise, Rumbaut (1994) argued that the ethnic socialization patterns that immigrant parents demonstrate significantly affect self-perceptions of the children, as well as the level of attachment that they feel to the parents and to the national origins of the parents. Rumbaut (1994) postulated that immigrant youths' ethnic identity is "a measure of the degree of the children's sense of identification with their parents" (p. 756). Therefore, examining the salience of ethnic identity in the case of first-generation immigrants and investigating the links that exist within the family are important in examining the transmission of the heritage culture and language that affect offspring generations' identity journey.

### **1.1.7.2 Second Generation**

Traditionally, the term, second generation, has been used to refer to children of immigrants who were born in the host country, with at least one foreign-born parent. However, recent research has concluded that having only one or both of the parents that are foreign-born shapes the child's experiences in significantly different ways. In this respect, S. Karthick

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<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, the authors also found that the high level of presence of co-ethnic peers appears to negatively affect one's sense of belonging to Canada. Therefore, co-ethnic concentration could both facilitate and hinder integration of first-generation immigrants by allowing them to feel sheltered to a certain degree, and, at the same time, feel less attached to Canada (Wu et al., 2012).

Ramakrishnan (2004) argued that those who were born in the host country for whom only one of the parents is foreign-born should therefore be called 2.5 generation. In light of this finding, the use of the term in this study will be limited to referring to those who are native-born, whose parents are both foreign-born.

The second generation began to attract attention of scholars as their settlement and adaptation patterns became salient in the discussion of the long-term character of ethnic communities and the impact of the immigrant flow on the receiving nation. Depending on the group with which they identify, ethnicity may become a matter of personal choice for some second-generation immigrants: it may continue to be a source of strength that promotes the upward economic and social mobility based on solidary communities; or it may become a factor that surrenders one to a feeling of inferiority (Portes & Rumbaut, 2005, p. 986). In previous literature, second-generation immigrants are often described as distanced from the heritage culture and fully adapted to the mainstream culture (Rumbaut & Ima, 1987; Warner & Srole, 1945). In fact, Rubén G. Rumbaut and Kenji Ima (1987) emphasized on second-generation immigrants' memory of the *homeland* as “a representation consisting of parental memories and memorabilia” and argued that they become “fully part of the ‘new’ world” (p. 7).

The impact of first-generation parents on the ethnic identity journey of the second-generation children is palpable. For second generation, the parental use of the heritage language is often the only link that they have with the heritage language, as the mainstream language becomes the dominant language in all domains outside of home (Soehl & Waldinger, 2012). Second-generation immigrants are influenced by the parents' cross-border activities, through which home country loyalties and attachments can get transmitted (Itzigsohn, 2009, as cited in Soehl & Waldinger, 2012, p. 780). More recent studies have found that the second generation tends to develop strong ethnic identity and attachment, regardless of cultural and structural assimilation—albeit to significantly lesser degrees than the first generation (I.-J. Yoon, 2012, p. 47; Itzigsohn, 2009, as cited in Soehl & Waldinger, 2012, p. 780).

In contrast to popular belief, discussing integration of second-generation immigrants within the mainstream society presents a number of challenges with which they are often faced. First and foremost, Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut (2001) reported that the majority of second-generation youths in their study felt discriminated against in school and other settings (p. 38). Moreover, in consideration of their socio-economic performance in the labour market, the degree of their generational mobility tends to differ, depending on various factors such as

the father's education and host society (Aydemir et al., 2009).<sup>17</sup> These findings indicated that, while being identified as better acculturated and integrated into the mainstream culture and society than their foreign-born parents, the second generation is likely to be faced with acculturative challenges which may differ from those experienced by the first generation.

### **1.1.7.3 1.5 Generation**

Using nativity as the decisive factor, defining the first and second generation is a simple task, in contrast to the 1.5-generation, who were—and still are—often lumped together with either the first- or second-generation category. In essence, 1.5-generation immigrants are seen as foreigners in the country of birth, yet as immigrants in the host country (B. S. K. Kim et al., 2003, p. 164). However, as differences in nativity and age at arrival in the host country generate some of the fundamental differences in one's acculturation (Rumbaut, 2012), it becomes clear that these immigrants who arrive in the host country at a young age must be distinguished from the other generation groups.

In the 1960s, Rumbaut coined the term, 1.5 generation, to describe the children of Cuban exiles who were born in Cuba and raised in the United States (Rojas, 2012). Later, Ruben Rumbaut and Kenji Ima (1987) defined the 1.5 generation as those who are born in their country of origin like their first-generation parents but complete their education in the host country during the key formative periods of adolescence and early adulthood. In contrast to the second generation, the homeland is not mainly based on the “representation of parental memories and memorabilia” (p. 7) for the 1.5 generation, but on their own memories prior to migration. In this regard, the 1.5 generation is a group that is situated in-between the first- and second-generation groups.

However, there is a lack of consensus on the age definition when describing the 1.5 generation. Rumbaut (2004) classified the 1.5 generation by limiting it to those who immigrated between the ages of 6 to 12, arguing that whether migration occurs during early or middle childhood or adolescence yields different adaptation processes in different social contexts (p. 1167). In contrast, Won Moo Hurh (1990) defined the 1.5 generation as those who arrive in the

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<sup>17</sup> Although Abdurrahman Aydemir et al. (2009) affirmed a rapid integration of the second-generation immigrants into the Canadian labour market, they found that the most successful second-generation children of low-income backgrounds do not earn as much as those of high-income backgrounds. In particular, paternal education was found to be an important factor that affects socioeconomic integration of second-generation children, as “more educated communities are able to steer their children” (p. 394) through broader societal constraints that pose obstacles, such as discrimination.

host country between the ages of 11 and 16, and some scholars such as Elaine H. Kim and Eui-Young Yu (1996) simply described the generation as those who immigrated before finishing high school. Furthermore, Mary Y. Danico (2004) argued that, while it is not important to set the minimum age of immigration, setting the maximum age is crucial in defining the 1.5 generation: after pre-teenage years, immigrants are more likely to have a Korean accent and therefore less likely to *pass* as native English speakers, which would affect their ability to “switch between generational boundaries” (p. 5). Despite different conceptions of who is to be considered as the 1.5 generation, the general understanding is that the term applies to those who arrive in the host country during formative years and have memories of the homeland.

Indeed, age at the time of immigration can greatly affect the acculturative experiences and identity negotiation of the 1.5 generation, as it predicts one’s “prior educational experience, native and English language proficiency, language dominance, and academic literacy” (Harklau, 2003). Furthermore, those who arrive in the host country as adolescents have greater adjustment challenges as they are faced with both adolescence and acculturation at the same time (Pyon, 2010). What moreover distinguishes them is their experiences of bicultural adaptations to the host country, facilitated by both the heritage and mainstream languages—and these experiences tend to be uniquely different from those that are encountered by the first/second generation. The resulting heterogeneity of this generation is another aspect of the notion that renders it complex, which has been indicated in previous studies (Rumbaut & Ima, 1987; Danico, 2004). As Danico (2004) described, the 1.5 generation is a “heterogeneous group shaped by experiences” (p. 4-5).

What was accentuated in the description of the 1.5 generation in previous literature was marginality. According to Rumbaut & Ima (1987), 1.5-generation immigrants are “in many ways marginal to both the new and old worlds, for while they straddle both worlds they are in some profound sense fully part of neither of them” (p. 167). Indeed, in contrast to the first- and second-generation labels which had been in use for hundreds of years, the 1.5-generation label is relatively recent and unknown—thus perceived to be different and problematic. Hence, being 1.5 generation was often associated with unique needs that create problems within educational institutions (Benesche, 2008, p. 298). This was also true for Koreans’ usage of the term (B. S. K. Kim, 1980; Ryu, 1991). For instance, according to Danico (2004), Charles Kim, a reporter for The Korean Times/Hankook Ilbo English edition, was the one who used the term, 1.5 generation—or *ilchom ose* in Korean—in his article in 1970s to write about “people like

himself, who are neither first nor second generation” (p. 1). As the term became increasingly used among Koreans, intergenerational and cultural issues associated with this generation began to emerge, portraying the 1.5 generation as marginalized and lost (Danico, 2004, p. 2). For example, Bok-Lim C. Kim (1980) portrayed the 1.5-generation Korean immigrants as being overwhelmed with problems adapting to the host society, unable to become bicultural, despite the desire to do so.

While 1.5-generation immigrants are likely to be bilingual and bicultural, they are prone to receiving acculturative stress during the process of becoming so. In fact, 1.5-generation immigrants are faced with pressure to become bilingual and bicultural, while taking on the role as language/cultural brokers<sup>18</sup> for their parents. Such pressure and the resulting stress are particularly correlated with their identity journey, as well as the resulting self-perceptions (G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014; Tse, 1996; Chao, 2006). For instance, Nadia A. Benyamin (2018) found that 1.5-generation immigrants experienced limited parental support at home (e.g. a minimal amount of supervision), financial struggles, challenges with self-doubt and confidence which lasted into adulthood, as well as difficulties which were linked to language proficiency (pp. 158-159).

Thus, unless the 1.5 generation has an adequate amount of support coming from the family, community, and the peer networks, they are subject to becoming *lost* in-between the two worlds, unable to claim a sense of belonging to either culture. In fact, Christine J. Yeh et al. (2003) found that the 1.5-generation immigrants are more prone to experiencing acculturative stress than their second- or third-generation counterparts. As a positive sense of identity is crucial in development of self-esteem (Pulido-Tobiassen, D., & Gonzalez-Mena, 1999), such stress puts the level of self-esteem and confidence of the 1.5 generation at stake.

However, in consideration of the notion of hybrid and transnational identities of immigrants, a positive light has also been shed on the 1.5 generation over the years. For instance, bilingualism and biculturalism have been highlighted in previous studies as the key characteristics that represent the 1.5 generation (Sok, 2012; Danico, 2004; Y. Yi, 2009).

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<sup>18</sup> Cultural brokering can be defined as “the act of bridging, linking, or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds” to reduce conflict or produce change (Jezewski, 1990, p. 497). Language brokering, on a similar note, is a term used to refer to the role that language-minority immigrant children play as translators and interpreters—mediating between their parents and English-speakers—who tend to become fluent in the mainstream language more quickly than their parents (Tse, 1996).



Furthermore, as language and culture are closely associated with an individual's sense of identity, the bilingual and bicultural identity influences the way that the 1.5 generation "see and express themselves" (Danico, 2004, p. 2). In light of these findings, it can be assumed that expectations and pressures that are placed on the 1.5 generation can indeed be positively met with favourable outcomes on the condition that they perceive their bilingual and bicultural abilities as an asset.

To sum up, 1.5-generation immigrants, compared to their first- or second-generation counterparts, are likely to be able to navigate between the two cultures and operate proficiently, using the fluency in both the heritage and mainstream language (Danico, 2004; Yeh et al., 2005; B. S. K. Kim et al., 2003). How this *in-betweenness* is interpreted by individuals can present an interesting subject of discussion. In consideration of the fact that this generation may, on the one hand, be at risk of developing a marginalized sense of identity, and, on the other hand, have the potential of developing a positive sense of a dual identity, the process of identity negotiation and outcomes of the 1.5 generation appear to be a highly complex phenomenon.

### **1.1.8 Korean Immigrants**

Korean immigrants can be described as *voluntary immigrants*, whose decision to immigrate was not forced, but was based on their will, in search of better opportunities—whether it be in jobs, political, or religious practices (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Another description which often accompanies the profile of Korean immigrants is *education migrants*, whose primary purpose of immigrating is education opportunities for the children (E. Lee & Johnstone, 2014). In particular, the zeal of Korean parents for their children's English education, as well as better educational opportunities, has been identified in numerous studies (J. Cho, 2017; J.-K. Park, 2009; Rüdiger, 2019; I.-J. Yoon, 2012).

In-Jin Yoon (2012) presented a number of traits which adequately describe socio-economic profile traits of overseas Koreans. Faced with disadvantages and discrimination, Korean immigrants strive to obtain upward mobility in the host country by adopting some of what the author describes as *survival strategies*. Firstly, driven by their strong work ethic and aspiration one of the ways they cope with acculturative challenges is finding employment in the labour market which would offer a sheltered space from discrimination and governmental authority (e.g. independent work). As well, Korean immigrants tend to invest in their children's

education by living in urban centres and middle-class suburbs which are well known for having good schools (pp. 46-47).

Furthermore, as discussed previously, first-generation immigrants and their children demonstrate varying degrees of attachment to the heritage culture and integration into the host society (Wu et al., 2012). Korean immigrants are no exception to this pattern: offspring generations, both the 1.5 and second generations, attain different levels of bilingualism/biculturalism and social integration into the mainstream society, which affect their integration (Danico, 2004; Jeon, 2012; Sok, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). At the same time, it has been found that Korean immigrants across the generations maintain a strong sense of ethnic identity while adapting to the mainstream culture and opportunity structures (I.-J. Yoon, 2012, p. 47).

### **1.1.9 Model Minority**

The myth of the model minority is based in stereotypes. It perpetuates a narrative in which Asian American children are whiz kids or musical geniuses. [...] Tiger Moms force children to work harder [...]. This myth characterizes Asian Americans as a polite, law-abiding group who have achieved a higher level of success than the general population through some combination of innate talent and pull-yourselfes-up-by-your-bootstraps immigrant striving. (Blackburn, 2019)

The model minority is the term that was coined in 1966 by sociologist, William Petersen. In his article, "Success Story, Japanese-American Style," he promoted the image of Japanese Americans, who, despite the discrimination with which they were faced post the Second World War, achieved success in America. Their success was associated with their cultural values such as high levels of educational aspiration and attainment, strong work ethic, family values, and respect for authority (as cited in Shin, 2016). This article has given way to the widely perceived notion of Asian immigrants to be hardworking and well educated, among other characteristics. Evidently, such traits were deemed positive, especially when compared to some of the negative traits associated with other ethnic/racial minority groups and the resulting discrimination that they encounter (Benyamin, 2018).

The problem with the model minority, nevertheless, is that Asian immigrants are often assumed to be more prone to upward social mobility. Therefore, the struggles and difficulties they are faced with are often overlooked. Numerous scholars have reported that the notion of the model minority has become a stereotype in itself, depriving the subjects of the attention and

help that may be necessary for their successful integration—thus, further segregating them into the minority category (Benyamin, 2018; Chung, 2016; Francis, 2021; Hwang, 2017; Noh, 2012; Shin, 2016). Above all, the pitfall of the model minority is that it marks Asian immigrants as *ideal*, as deemed so by the standards imposed by the White majority; at the same time, it categorizes them as the Other, and therefore, less powerful.

Furthermore, in her article, “The ‘Model Minority’ Myth Explained. What You Need to Know about How It Has Propped Up Anti-Asian Racism in Canada,” Angelyn Francis (2021) argued that the model minority is a myth, and that it causes the public to overlook the overt racism that Asian communities experience in Canada. For instance, Avvy Go, director of the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, reported that anti-Asian racism was not even mentioned in Canada’s 2019 anti-racism strategy (as cited in Francis, 2021). There was renewed awareness of anti-Asian sentiment following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Francis’ (2021) interviews illustrated the negative impact of the model minority on the subjects. Firstly, there is a critical discrepancy between the ideals which are embodied in the model minority perception of Asians and the reality in which Asians feel like *perpetual foreigners* in the host society. Secondly, the model minority bedims diversity which exists within the Asian community. Thirdly, the high pressure which is placed on Asians to live up to the standard can negatively affect the mental health of Asian youths, causing them to feel depressed and embarrassed if they do not meet the standards (Francis, 2021; S. J. Lee, 1994).

Conforming to the model minority, Korean immigrants in Canada tend to adapt to the host society by striving to do well in school and the labour market (I.-J. Yoon, 2012; S. J. Lee, 1994). Korean students, for instance, work hard to try to live up to the model-minority standards, believing that education would provide them with a defence against social inequalities (S. J. Lee, 1994). Furthermore, in the labour market, many first-generation Korean immigrants seek to overcome disadvantages by choosing occupations that are *sheltered* from systematic discrimination and government authority (i.e. self-employment). Often, they are engaged in economic activities that are not often sought after by the members of the dominant group (e.g. dry cleaning and grocery stores), which inevitably generate low levels of income (I.-J. Yoon, 2012, p. 47). Thus, despite high levels of educational attainment of these immigrants, the first generation’s socio-economic mobility tends to be limited: in fact, “they seldom enter the upper classes of the host country” (p. 47).

Moreover, perceptions of discrimination are more common in the case of second-generation children of visible minority immigrants than their parents (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007, as cited in Wu et al., 2012, p. 404). Especially in the case of Asian immigrants, second-generation Asians may encounter conflicts linked to differences between the heritage values which their parents project and the mainstream culture which they face outside of home (Farver et al., 2002; Lay & Nguyen, 1998). It has been suggested that Asian families encounter higher levels of psychological distress when compared to other ethnic minority families (Rumbaut, 1994).

Additionally, according to recent studies, there may be increasing levels of socio-economic disadvantages that are experienced by visible minority groups that affect their integration into the mainstream labour market. In fact, the economic performance of first- and second-generation visible minority immigrants in the Canadian labour market do not measure up when compared to the second-generation non-visible minority immigrants, despite their higher level of education (Grady, 2011; Fitzsimmons et al., 2020; Picot & Hou, 2009). In the case of Korean offspring generations of immigrants in Canada, they tend to be overrepresented in high-skill occupations and have higher average annual income when compared to the third-and-plus generation Whites; but their labour market outcomes show a decrease when controlling factors (e.g. province or territory of residence, major census metropolitan area, and educational level etc.) are considered (Chen & Hou, 2019; I.-J. Yoon, 2012).<sup>19</sup>

Consistent with Phinney's (1990) argument, Korean ethnic identity is significantly influenced by the minority status of the subjects and can be interpreted as "a reactive and emergent response to an externally imposed distinction and societal discrimination" (I.-J. Yoon, 2012, p. 48). Therefore, the ethnic identity retention of Korean immigrants across generations suggests that the disadvantages in various forms and varying degrees with which Korean immigrants are faced are likely to persist throughout the time and across generations. These findings affirmed that Korean immigrants are not exceptions to the model-minority stereotype.

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<sup>19</sup> Wen-Hao Chen and Feng Hou (2019) posited that, despite the intergenerational progress in educational attainment, visible minority groups fare differently when examining their labour market outcomes. Some of the factors that may be involved include various aspects related to family background, such as family investment strategies associated with the community (Aydemir et al., 2009). However, there has not yet been a study that profoundly investigated and successfully identified precise factors that contribute to this phenomenon.

### 1.1.10 Family Socialization

Family provides meaningful contexts of linguistic and cultural socialization,<sup>20</sup> through which children of immigrants are significantly influenced. Throughout the process of learning and absorbing the heritage language and culture, children develop various types of ethnic ties that positively contribute to their ethnic identity. In the context of Korean immigrant families, parental sacrifice and high levels of parental expectations for the children's academic, social, and cultural achievement have been profoundly discussed in the literature (Danico, 2004; J. Jeong & Bélanger, 2012; J. Kim & Duff, 2012; S. J. Lee, 1994; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Unsurprisingly, high levels of parental expectations may cause psychological distress for immigrant children. Nonetheless, Korean immigrant children often observe and recognize parental sacrifices and seek to repay their parents by trying to meet the expectations (G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014; Danico, 2004). Therefore, the impact of immigrant parents within the domain of home is profound on the retention of ethnic identity of the children.

Furthermore, in previous literature, the focus has often been placed on immigrant children's maintenance of the Korean language and culture through family cultural socialization. The findings have consistently revealed the Korean immigrant parents' strong wish for their children to maintain ties to the heritage culture through the ethnic/heritage-language proficiency (H.-S. Kang, 2013; S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2007; Sok, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Moreover, Korean immigrant parents tend to provide support to enhance the Korean proficiency of their children, in the form of daily communication at home in Korean, bringing them to the Korean church, and reading Korean books, for instance. Such positive parental attitudes and desire for their children to retain the Korean language contributes to shaping the children's own attitudes towards the language (Sunah Cho, 2008; Jeon, 2012; H.-S. Kang, 2013; Li, 1999; S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2007; Sok, 2012).

In fact, family is considered as one of the major contributing factors to the heritage-language maintenance of immigrant children (Alba et al., 2002; Döpke, 1992; Phinney, Romero et al., 2001). If first-generation parents have a limited level of English proficiency, the children often grow up speaking in the heritage language at home (Goldschmidt & Miller, 2005;

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<sup>20</sup> In the article, *Parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for future study*, Diane Hughes et al. (2006) identified cultural socialization as one of many aspects of ethnic-racial socialization, which involves preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism. In the discussion of family socialization, ethnic-racial socialization represents a significant aspect of child rearing, aimed at promoting children's sense of pride, as well as cultural knowledge and traditions.

Harklau, 2003; C. M. Smith, 2014), and they often use English or a mix of both English and the heritage language between siblings (C. M. Smith, 2014). Asian immigrant families are no exception to this tendency: at home, the language choice of parents and siblings significantly affect one's heritage-language proficiency (Jeon, 2012; Cheng & Kuo, 2000), and parental teaching, especially, is the deciding factor of the children's heritage-language retention (Cheng & Kuo, 2000). For example, it has been reported that the use of English of parents, as well as older siblings who learn English in school, can contribute to the loss of the heritage language of younger children (Hinton, 1999; Fillmore, 1991). In the case of Korean Canadians, later-born children tend to use less Korean than the earlier-born, even within the same generation (Jeon, 2012, p. 166).

The perceptions of children of their family relations are correlated with their tendency and preference to use the language of their parents: the more positively they perceive their family to be, the more likely they are to maintain the heritage language, both practically and attitudinally; and, the more negatively they view their family, the less likely they are to prefer and/or use the heritage language. This is due to the fact that the child tends to associate the parents with the heritage language, understanding the personal importance that the language bears (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002; Sok, 2012). For example, Sarah Y. Sok (2012) found that Korean immigrant mothers associated the Korean language with the Korean ethnicity, pride, and responsibility that come with the Korean identity, and their daughters appeared to understand the high level of parental expectation for them to speak Korean—but without having adopted the same perceptions of the heritage language maintenance (pp. 37-38). Therefore, the children's retention of the heritage language is often “out of agreement and good will on the part of the child, rather than simple compliance with parents' demands” (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002, p. 419). A positive parent-child relationship, in this regard, seems crucial for children to retain the heritage language.

Moreover, the children of Korean immigrants play an important role in supporting their parents' lives in the host country by “bridging communication gaps and negotiating the structural and institutional disparities that immigrants typically encounter” (G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014, p. 14). In doing so, they tend to take on the role as a cultural/language broker. Indeed, helping parents by being an English translator or educator about cultural norms and administrative tasks in the host country has been observed in numerous studies which explored the lives of offspring generations of immigrants—and especially the 1.5 generation (Chao,

2006; B. S. K. Kim et al., 2003; Roh & Chang, 2020; Tse, 1996; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). For children of immigrants, such practices are often considered as a normal, everyday task, in response to the perceived parental sacrifice (Chao, 2006; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014).

Cultural/language brokering can have both positive and negative impact on children's development. Firstly, the parent-child relationship evolves through language/cultural brokering, which enhances the mutual understanding between them. For example, as parents become dependent on the children's assistance—requiring their linguistic and cultural proficiency—the children become appreciative for their parents' struggles as immigrants and learn the Korean values of hard work and obligation to family (Danico, 2004, pp. 191-192). Secondly, language brokering may contribute to one's self-identity: language brokering was found to have a positive impact on self-esteem, interpersonal skills, and language abilities of children of immigrants (Tse, 1996; Chao, 2006; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Children of immigrants can therefore develop meaningful ties to their sense of ethnic identity and self through family socialization.

Nevertheless, as previous literature has reported, offspring generations—especially the 1.5 generation, due to their bilingual and bicultural abilities—are subject to being faced with pressure to fit into both worlds by switching between sets of norms that are deemed culturally acceptable. A large part of such pressure tends to stem from parental expectations for them to become obedient, bilingual and bicultural, and to act as a language/cultural broker by successfully connecting the first-generation parents and the host society (Chao, 2006; B. S. K. Kim et al., 2003; Roh & Chang, 2020; Tse, 1996; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Hence, as G. J. Yoo and Kim (2014) posited, the parental pressure and resulting responsibilities may be perceived by offspring generations of immigrants as burdensome or stressful if they lack confidence in their ability to successfully take on their role as language/cultural brokers (p. 18).

Family socialization is moreover significant in the discussion of immigrant children's ethnic exploration, as it enables and enhances cultural socialization—which, as part of family socialization, “refers to both the explicit and implicit parental practices that teach children about the positive aspects of their race, ethnic heritage, cultural customs, and traditions” (Aldoney et al. 2018, p. 500). In cases of ethnic minority families, cultural socialization seems to be a common practice. Additionally, although it is not a defining factor, family socialization is a strong predictor of children's ethnic exploration and resolution that contributes to their ethnic affirmation (Aldoney et al., 2018; Supple et al., 2006). In particular, mothers have been reported

to have a stronger influence than fathers on the children's exploration of ethnic identity through cultural socialization (Knight et al., 2011; Phinney, 1990; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014).<sup>21</sup>

A prevalent example of cultural socialization that occurs in the context of Korean immigrant families is the cultural practices related to celebrating Korean holidays and traditions, as well as eating Korean food (G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014, p. 106). Yoo and Kim's (2014) study provided a number of examples that involve eating special Korean food linked to Korean holidays and traditional ceremonies, through the narratives of the 1.5- and second-generation Korean immigrants (e.g. the New Year's Day (설날 ("Seollal"))) and the first (돌 ("dol")), sixtieth (환갑 ("hwangap")), and seventieth (칠순 ("chilsoon")) birthdays) (pp. 106-107). Such examples of cultural socialization are important, as they are seen as "a way of reclaiming culture" (p. 107) by offspring generations.

Another prominent example of cultural socialization related to the Korean culture is the cultural values related to filial piety which are passed onto the children. Such values are crucial in understanding the dynamics of Korean families, as they are deeply embedded into everyday lives of Korean immigrant families throughout different stages of their lives. While young, children learn to recognize the hierarchy which exists between parents and children—as their parents teach them to be obedient, and they develop a sense of obligation to the parents. In adulthood, children tend to take on the responsibility of caring for their aging parents (Y. I. Kwon & Chuang, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014).

Furthermore, family socialization may shape immigrant children's perceptions of gendered roles. Within Korean families, being a good father is associated with being hard workers, whereas and being a good mother is associated with being caregiving and nurturing (Park & Cho, 1995, as cited in Y. I. Kwon & Roy, 2007, p. 286). Such gender differences can also be observed in the interactions of sons and daughters with their parents: while sons are expected to provide a sense of security to their parents, daughters are the ones who provide emotional support and engage in more intimate relationships with their parents (G. Kwak & Lai, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Therefore, the children of Korean immigrants may become

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<sup>21</sup> This is not to downplay the impact which cultural socialization practices of fathers have on the children's ethnic identity development/maintenance. For example, Maciel M. Hernandez et al. (2014) indicated in their study of Mexican-origin families in the United States that both mothers and fathers have a distinct role in shaping ethnic pride of the children. The authors argued that the father's role in the cultural socialization process must be further explored.



gender sensitive as they grow up, influenced by how their parents behave and express their views on being a good father/mother, as well as son/daughter.

The question of gender is an important element to examine when studying ethnic identity negotiation, as an individual's perceived ethnic or cultural experiences are "highly influenced by his or her perceptions of gender norms, roles, and stereotypes" (Noh, 2012, p. 193). In arguing that racialized gender stereotypes that are imposed by dominant groups represent an acculturative challenge for individuals belonging to ethnic minority groups, Marianne S. Noh (2012) provided the following example:

[...] dominant views of Asians as quiet and obedient are transferred to gender stereotypes of Asian men and women. Asian men are stereotypes as emasculate, weak, and physically less endowed compared with the "average" male. Furthermore, Asian women are depicted as hyperfeminine—anti-feminist, and sexually and domestically subservient to men. (p. 193)

Therefore, gender roles and responsibilities which the offspring generations of immigrants observe and experience through family socialization can be put into question when they clash with the dominant group's perception of their ethnic and gender status (Noh, 2012, p. 193). Examining such challenges and the ways they are managed would be important in understanding the identity journey of children of immigrants.

A source of distress that may affect both the first-generation and their children within the domain of home is cultural/language barriers that are experienced in parent-child communication and interaction. In the case of the first-generation parents whose mother tongue is different from the primary language of the host country, their limited mainstream-language proficiency may affect their parenting and the parent-child relationship. It has been reported that acculturation gaps tend to grow throughout time between parents and children, affecting family dynamics. For instance, communication difficulties may affect immigrant parents' parenting and participation in parenting programs in school, as well as parent-child relationships (Buki et al., 2003; Fillmore, 1991; Nesteruk, 2010; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002; Vaydich & Keown, 2018). These findings indicated that, while first-generation immigrants struggle with adapting to the mainstream language and culture, their children are faced with multiple challenges in, not only adapting to the mainstream culture and society, but also finding ways to navigate between the two cultures and groups—while likely lacking in parental guidance which is necessary to facilitate their acculturation.

### **1.1.11 Ethnic community**

A vital ethnic community can be advantageous for immigrants, as it facilitates co-ethnic networking among the members that are useful in their acculturation and adaptation (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Cebotari, 2009). Moreover, various forms of socio-economic resources that are exchanged through co-ethnic networks ensure that immigrants have adequate support for their needs. Some examples of the resources which are offered within well-established ethnic communities include educational help for second-generation youths in the form of college grants and loans, as well as private school system that promotes ethnic values (Portes & Zhou, 1993, p. 86).

A vital and supportive ethnic community is one of the strongest indicators of a positive outcome of an immigrant's ethnic identity (Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001, p. 494). At the same time, vitality of an ethnic community is correlated with perceived discrimination of its members—hence, ethnically distinct individuals are more likely to interact with their ethnic peers within their ethnic community and less with the mainstream society (Cebotari, 2009). In this respect, first-generation immigrants, who are faced with language and cultural barriers within the host country, are more likely than their children to identify with and be involved within the ethnic community. In the case of offspring generations, ethnic community is a useful site that enables ethnic exploration and involvement of immigrant youths within the public sphere. The socialization experiences that occur within the ethnic community are as meaningful as those that take place throughout family socialization at home (Phinney, Horenczyk et al., & Vedder, 2001, p. 501). Therefore, ethnic community is a valuable space within the public sphere that enhances ethnic identity journey of its members.

While it holds true that a vital ethnic community can be a valuable pool of resources for immigrants and their children, how an ethnic community is viewed within the mainstream society significantly affects its impact on the immigrants' ethnic identity and self-confidence in relation to the mainstream society. As Portes and Zhou (1993) argued, “the existence of a large but downtrodden co-ethnic community may be even less desirable than no community at all” (p. 87). Mirroring their argument, Victor Cebotari (2009) postulated that positive links of an ethnic community with the nation is the condition that is required for individual members belonging to the ethnic community to feel national pride (p. 8). Therefore, there is evidently a correlation that exists between an immigrant's perception of the ethnic community and the nation.

Most of the literature that discusses the Korean ethnic community is heavily concentrated on the Korean church. Outside of the church, it has been reported that the Korean Canadian community may be fragmented between new and old immigrants who require varying resources (M. J. Kwak, 2004, p. 30). Indeed, the Korean church is often the “only social institution that most immigrants turn to for useful information and services” (Min, 1992b, p. 1385), and many Korean immigrants are affiliated with the Korean church (Min & Choi, 1993; G. Kwak & Lai, 2012; M. J. Kwak, 2004; J. Park, 2012). The kinds of services that it provides range from help coming from head pastors and other religious leaders on an individual basis in domains of employment, business, housing, health care, and children’s education, to formal programs such as the Korean language classes, the Bible study groups, as well as seminars and conferences (Min, 1992b, p. 1385). Furthermore, the Korean church is an extremely accessible community site that provides a comfortable and safe place to meet and interact with other Koreans, especially those who may be struggling with discrimination and language/cultural barriers (Hurh & Kim, 1984; G. Kwak & Lai, 2012; J. Park, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Thus, social interactions that are facilitated within the domain of Korean church positively contribute to one’s adjustment of social network in the host country.

Furthermore, the Korean church plays an important role in transmitting the heritage culture and language down the generations, while enabling co-ethnic networking, hence contributing to the long-term vitality of the ethnic community. As it provides a valuable bilingual and bicultural context for immigrant children, Korean immigrant parents often bring their children to the Korean church with the aim of providing them with opportunities to engage with other Korean peers in the Korean culture and language (S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2007; Min, 1992b; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014; Joo, 2010). Celebrating Korean traditional holidays is one of many examples of how the Korean church helps the immigrants and their children retain the heritage culture (Min, 1992b), while recreational and cultural programs, athletic activities, picnics, and summer retreats that the church organizes create occasions for them to socialize with one another (Min & Choi, 1993, p. 168).

To accommodate varied language preferences of its members, the Korean church provides the service in the Korean language (Korean Ministry (KM)), and in English language, (English Ministry (EM)). As Jennica Y. Kwak (2011) highlighted in her study of Korean churches in the US, some of the distinguishing features of the KM and EM include: the entire service—sermon/Mass, as well as other religious activities such as the Bible study—delivered

and executed in the respective languages; the members adhering to using the respective languages; and the use of honorifics used to varying extents between the two ministries.<sup>22</sup> Throughout the service offered by each ministry, Korean immigrants are able to engage in co-ethnic peer socialization without the language barrier.

Indeed, Korean churches appear effective at bringing Korean immigrants together, constituting the Korean community. Nevertheless, the literature that has examined the extent to which the Korean church enables the retention of the heritage culture and language has yielded varying results. On the one hand, Kelly H. Chong (1998) found that the second-generation Korean American immigrants who attended the Korean church sought to retain co-ethnic networks and/or the Korean culture and language. On the other hand, Pyong Gap Min and Dae Young Kim's (2005) reported that, although Korean Protestants successfully transmitted the religion to their child generations, they seemed to have failed at transmitting the Korean culture and traditions through the religion. For instance, two-thirds of the 1.5- and second-generation participants in their study who attended church during their childhood continued to attend church into their adulthood, but the English-language congregations for the participants were found to "have almost entirely eliminated Korean cultural components from worship services and other socio-cultural activities" (Min & Kim, 2005, as cited in Paek, 2022, p. 73). Therefore, it should not be assumed that the heritage language and cultural maintenance is the sole primary function that gives the Korean church a meaning within the context of the Korean community; rather, Korean churches help retaining the Korean ethnic community across generations by engaging their members through religion, as well as co-ethnic peer socialization.

### **1.1.12 Language Proficiency**

Language shift is an important phenomenon to examine when studying ethnicity and identity, as it represents "an indicator and a mechanism of the blurring of ethnic boundaries" (Soehl & Waldinger, 2012, p. 786). The mother tongue of the 1.5 or second generation is the heritage language, regardless of the generation. Nevertheless, intergenerational transmission of the heritage language appears to be failing: both offspring generations have been found to mostly become English-dominant as they acculturate, as they become exposed to the dominant language used in school, peer networks, and the media. In fact, those who arrive in the host country at a very young age or who are native-born may not acquire nor retain their heritage

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<sup>22</sup> Kwak (2011) also indicated that the honorifics are not as strictly employed by the members in the EM than those in the KM.

language (Jeon 2012; Harklau, 2003; Hinton, 1999; Kasinitz et al., 2008; Nesteruk, 2010; Phinney, Romero et al., 2001; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). As they acquire the English language, their language proficiency and use start to shift. For example, Mihyon Jeon (2012) observed that there was a pattern of the language shift among Korean immigrants in Canada, as both the 1.5- and second-generation participants in her study almost exclusively used English with siblings and friends. It was found that Korean was used only with family and relatives (p. 159).

As the language shift occurs, some distinctive language patterns start to emerge (J. Y. Kwak, 2011; Yeh et al., 2005). Switching between the dominant and ethnic languages in communication with co-ethnic peers and family is a common occurrence, which is referred to as code-switching.<sup>23</sup> On the one hand, it has been associated with language proficiency, based on the understanding that an individual's language proficiency in one or both languages is limited (Heredia & Altarriba, 2001; Hinton, 1999). On the other hand, it has been described as a means of negotiating and marking one's identity on sociolinguistic and ethno-racial levels (De Fina, 2007 Tang, 2014). Some examples of the resulting language patterns are Hinglish (English and Hindi), and Konglish (Korean and English), and can typically become the main language used at home, as well as with co-ethnic peers, in the case of individuals coming from immigrant backgrounds (Hinton, 1999; Danico, 2004). Another example of language patterns that follow a language shift involves the children responding to their heritage-language-speaking parents in the dominant language (Nesteruk, 2010, p. 273). Faced with parental expectations, as well as the evident need to communicate with the parents, offspring generations tend to adapt their language patterns.

There are numerous factors that contribute to the loss of the heritage language of offspring generations, often referred to as *language attrition*. As Seong Man Park (2013) postulated, it is normally a gradual process, often initiated as immigrant students acquire the mainstream language and start using it more exclusively for convenience. However, it may also occur quite rapidly, if there is a pressure for a rapid mainstream language acquisition: such pressures can arise from one's schooling experience, for example, if the immigrant youths are made to feel different, or their language or accent is mocked (p. 45). The resulting sense of shame about the language and culture may lead to the heritage language attrition. Likewise,

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<sup>23</sup> The notion of code-switching that will be referenced in this study is borrowed from Anna De Fina's (2007) definition: "an umbrella expression for different phenomena including word insertion and intrasentential and intersentential switching" (p. 380).

non-fluent children may feel discouraged from speaking the language for the fear of being criticized or laughed at by those who speak it better (Hinton, 1999, pp. 5-6). Wong Fillmore (1991) indicated that language-minority children are met with “powerful forces of assimilation” as soon as they are faced with the mainstream, English-spoken outside world (p. 342). In the effort of seeking for a sense of belonging and acceptance, their motivation to learn English, which is perceived as the high-status, societal language, increases, while their motivation to use the heritage language, spoken at home, decreases (p. 342).

The most cited factor contributing to the heritage language attrition is the lack of bilingual education and appropriate language maintenance program at home, which hinder the heritage language literacy of immigrant children (Roberge, 2002, p. 123). In fact, enhancing the heritage language proficiency of immigrant youths requires reading practices to improve literacy, and not only oral interactions (pp. 121-122). Furthermore, there were strong correlations between Korean proficiency and use at home, exposure to Korean media and literacy practices, and attendance at Korean language schools. Likewise, Danico (2004) argued that those who acquired literacy skills before migrating or those who attended special heritage language programs may continue to improve their heritage language proficiency (Danico, 2004, pp. 8-9). Thus, adequate support for the heritage language maintenance seems crucial in helping immigrant children to retain interest in the heritage language, while they are faced with increasing levels of pressure to acquire the mainstream language.

In the case of Korean Canadian immigrants, Jeon (2012) found that both 1.5- and second-generation immigrants mostly use English in literacy practices, and the use of Korean was especially low in the categories of textbooks and written homework. Christine J. Yeh et al.’s (2005) study of 1.5-generation Korean American immigrants also revealed that 1.5-generation immigrants, while demonstrating bilingual tendencies, may report concerns about their language proficiency—especially in Korean vocabulary (p. 177). Therefore, language shift and attrition are no exception to Korean immigrants.

Examining the language shift and language proficiency and use is important, as language plays an important role in shaping an individual’s identity. In fact, ethnic language proficiency and in-group peer interaction have been identified as one of the key predictors of ethnic attachment and the resulting identity (Imbens-Bailey, 1996; Phinney, Romero et al., 2001). Indeed, language is a cultural resource and an ethnic symbol, which enables an individual to

adhere to a cultural, social, or ethnic group—thus enhancing his or her affiliation with the ethnic community (Alba, 1990; Imbens-Bailey, 1996; Soehl & Waldinger, 2012).

Indeed, previous studies which examined linguistic abilities of offspring generations of immigrants have identified the language shift and imperfect bilingualism that they tend to attain. These two tendencies have furthermore been associated with, not only ethnic identity of those of foreign backgrounds (Alba, 1990; Danico, 2004; Imbens-Bailey, 1996; B. S. K. Kim et al., 2003),<sup>24</sup> but also with their cognitive and academic abilities (Fillmore, 1991; Harklau et al., 1999; Roberge, 2002; Thonus, 2003). Therefore, investigating the levels of bilingualism that offspring generations of Korean immigrants tend to demonstrate would be useful in exploring the impact of their language proficiency and ethnic/national identification—including their academic and socio-economic integration and mobility.

### **1.1.13 Peer socialization**

Peer socialization is a significant indicator of integration of immigrants within the host society, which reflects their ethnic/national attachment and affiliations such as cultural values, practices, and language proficiency (Danico, 2004; Döpke, 1992; Roh & Chang, 2020). Korean offspring generations demonstrate various patterns of peer socialization: some engaged in Korean cliques, some keeping separate groups of Korean and American friends, some mostly socializing with peers who are White and/or of various ethnic backgrounds (Yeh et al., 2005). Regardless of peer socialization patterns, a number of studies have found that the resulting social interactions continuously engage the individuals in the process of cultural adjustment. For example, cultural adjustment that Korean youths encounter throughout peer socialization involves negotiating between activities, languages, values, and one's appearance (e.g. way of dressing) that are culturally adequate for each/either group (pp. 178-179). The experiences of Korean immigrant youths in negotiating in-between Korean and American cultural groups have been identified as the deciding factors that shape their conception of self—described as “multiple and often contrasting” (p. 179).

Co-ethnic peer socialization provides useful occasions for immigrants to engage in ethnic cultural socialization outside of home. This is especially the case for immigrants whose access to social networks within the mainstream settings is limited due to language and/or

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<sup>24</sup> At the same time, it should be noted that ethnic identity of those belonging to some groups, particularly those of non-European origin, remains unaffected by the language use (Phinney, 1998, as cited in Phinney, Romero et al., 2001, p. 149).

cultural barriers (Brown, 2006; B. S. K. Kim et al., 2003; G. Kwak & Lai, 2012; Vietze et al., 2019). In fact, it has been found that native-born immigrants are more likely to engage in a greater number of cross-ethnic ties when compared with their foreign-born counterparts (Brown, 2006).

Furthermore, co-ethnic peer socialization has been identified as one of the principal factors that can significantly shape the acculturative experiences of Korean immigrants. According to Danico (2004), the co-ethnic peer socialization patterns of 1.5-generation Korean immigrants can be understood as a means to cope with the stereotypes that are imposed by the mainstream society. Additionally, it stems from their perception of co-ethnic peers who they perceive as similar as themselves, who are more likely to accept them into their circle, and with whom they can be proud of being associated (pp. 13-15). The presence of a vital ethnic community has been found to be positively correlated with co-ethnic peer socialization, as it is more likely to provide a rich pool of sociocultural resources based on the shared heritage culture (Cebotari, 2009; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

The impact of co-ethnic peer socialization on ethnic identity of an individual presents an interesting subject of discussion. On the one hand, Richard Alba (1990) saw social interactions as an important factor that shapes acculturative experiences of an individual, through which his or her ethnicity could be experienced and expressed. On the other hand, Anny Bakalian (1993) reported that ethnic identity can be retained second generation among Armenian American immigrants whose co-ethnic peer socialization tends to decrease when compared to their previous generation counterparts (as cited in Phinney, Romero et al., 2001, p. 139). Therefore, while co-ethnic peer socialization is likely to enhance ethnic identity of immigrants, it should not be assumed as the predominant socialization pattern that is associated with their ethnic identity.

As highlighted in Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory, an individual's choice to adhere to social groups appears to be linked to his or her self-identity in an intricate manner. For example, Danico (2004) found that interactions with co-ethnic and co-generational peers create and further enhance a collective 1.5-generation identity for Korean Americans in Hawaii (pp. 13-15). Beyond the group labelling, the in-group identity is reinforced through peer networking and interactions, which, in turn, distinguishes the in-group from out-groups, and moreover affect the way in which the members behave and perceive themselves.



#### 1.1.14 Transnational Experiences

Transnationalism is a recent concept, which was first coined in migration studies in the early 1990s as a result of increased levels of interconnectivity between people across nation states and decreased economic and social significance of the borders (Faist, 2010, p. 11). Transnationalism concerns “distinct types of activities and communities that illustrate transnational interests and allegiances,” and differs from internationalism in the sense that it conveys “an association with a condition of dispersal in different states and societies of social entities and actors that share an allegiance to some common attributes” (Ben-Rafael & Sternberg, 2009, p. 1). The notion of transnationalism is extremely elastic and is built on cross-border ties and incorporation of those who live outside of the origin country (Faist, 2010, p. 20). Moreover, it is a salient topic of research in the discourse of immigration studies, since it can represent coping strategies that immigrants employ in the host society and/or convey affective dimensions such as nostalgia and patriotism (Lacroix, 2013; Dunn, 2005). Therefore, transnational behaviours and activities can be useful indicators of ethnic and attachment of immigrants.

In regard to Korean immigrants in Toronto, Samuel Noh et al. (2013) identified a number of characteristics that reflect the levels of transnationalism of the immigrants. Transnational informal ties (e.g. regular telephone or online contacts with family members, relatives, and friends in Korea), visits, as well as social and economic ties (i.e. remittances and gifts, and assets in Korea), were prevalent, whereas transnational political participation was limited to the minority. Transnational informal ties were especially salient in the case of younger and more recent immigrants.

Globally, some of the commonly cited examples of transnational experiences that directly affect families in the literature based on Korean immigrants revolve around *Kirogi kajok* (also known as *wild-geese family*).<sup>25</sup> It is a term that refers to a transnational family arrangement and phenomenon which is not so uncommon in the context of Korean families: driven by the parents’ strong wish to provide the children with ideal educational opportunities and environment, the mother and children migrate to the host country, while the father remains in Korea to financially support the family (Y.-J. Jeong et al., 2013; J. Jeong & Bélanger, 2012;

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<sup>25</sup> The reference to wild geese stems from the traditional Korean symbolization of the virtues of married couples (Portal, 2000, as cited in J. Jeong & Bélanger, 2012, p. 298). Such “split-household transnational families” became a phenomenon following the English-boom in the 1990s, and the term, *Kiroki kajok*, was coined by the Korean media (Yeoh et al. 2005, as cited in J. Jeong & Bélanger, 2012, p. 259),

G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Loneliness, isolation, and other practical and emotional difficulties that mothers feel, in particular, are the kinds of risks that are willingly taken by the parents seeking to provide the children with education in English (Waters, 2002). In contrast to traditional migrants who arrive in the host country with the aim of establishing permanent settlement, *kirogi gajok* families tend to consider family separation as temporary, and plan on reuniting in Korea (S. H. Lee, 2021, p. 3).

The transnational family separation in the context of *Kirogi gajok* significantly shapes the experiences that the members of the family go through. Family members maintain contact by engaging in high levels of communication using technological platforms such as Skype, FaceTime, and KakaoTalk,<sup>26</sup> as well as regular trips between the two countries. Such experiences help them maintain transnational interest and ties (Y. Yi, 2009; Jeong & et al., 2013; J. Jeong & Bélanger, 2012). As for mothers, in particular, they engage in frequent communication to cope with the difficulties that they experience, such as the sentiment of loneliness and insecurity that result from the loss of financial independence and support networks (Y. J. Jeong et al., 2013). As this transnational family arrangement is a relatively recent phenomenon, there are varying arguments and findings as to whether its benefits outweigh cons on its impact on children, parents, and the overall family (G. Jung & Wang, 2018; D. H. Lee, 2010; J. Jeong & Bélanger, 2012; Yeom, 2008). This phenomenon exemplifies the extent to which education—especially English education—matters for Korean parents in the modern-day context, as well as the strong links between the origin and host countries that are maintained through such transnational family settings.

Moreover, in line with the low-cost internet which has become widely accessible, the rise of *Korean Wave*<sup>27</sup> (e.g. internet cartoons, TV programs, dramas, movies, and Korean pop music (“K-pop” in short)) significantly shapes transnational and diasporic identities of Korean migrants (J.-S. Park, 2004; Y. Yi, 2009; K. Yoon, 2022; K. Yoon, 2019; K. Yoon, 2018). Previous research has shown that Korean immigrants are highly engaged in daily internet use to access ethnic media and to communicate with other Koreans transnationally or locally (K. Yoon, 2017, p. 552). Consumption of Korean popular culture positively contributes to one’s

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<sup>26</sup> KakaoTalk, commonly referred to as *KaTalk* in Korea, is a popular mobile application for smartphones, which allows text messages and audio/video calls.

<sup>27</sup> *Korean Wave* is a term that refers to the global popularity of the Korean culture that emerged in the mid-2000s, especially centered around the pop culture such as music and dramas. For detailed exploration of Korean Wave and its implications in transnational and diasporic identities of the Korean Canadian youth, see K. Yoon, 2022.

ethnic exploration and identity by providing occasions for literacy practice (e.g. through internet cartoons and subtitles used in videos), facilitating social exchanges with peers who share the same interests, as well as mediating generational relationships between the parents and children (J. Kim & Duff, 2012; Jeon, 2012; J.-S. Park, 2004; Y. Yi, 2009).

For example, Jeon (2012) highlighted the strong relationship between 1.5- and second-generation immigrants' exposure to the Korean media and their Korean proficiency. Likewise, in both studies conducted by Youngjoo Yi (2009) and Jean Kim and Patricia A. Duff (2012), the 1.5-generation participants demonstrated the tendency to communicate with each other using their knowledge about the latest news in Korean popular culture. Moreover, Jung-Sun Park (2004) found that consumption behaviours and patterns can mediate generational relationships by, for example, parents and children watching Korea TV dramas together, and furthermore make occasions for friendship-building beyond the ethnic boundary. Therefore, while Korean popular culture appears to play a favourable role in facilitating ethnic exploration and enhancing ethnic attachment of immigrants across generations, it seems to especially affect the cultural practices and identities of young Koreans (K. Yoon, 2022; K. Yoon, 2019).

Nonetheless, it should be noted that Korean popular culture is no longer a mere representation of *ethnic* media. In fact, Kyong Yoon (2022) postulated that Korean popular culture has gradually shifted from being perceived as ethnic media to global media in the perception of Korean Canadian youths. Through the consumption, immigrant youths are able to navigate between the two cultures and build connections—not only imagining the homeland and connecting with co-ethnic peers, but also be part of the “global youth cultural form” and growing body of overseas fan audiences (pp. 117 & 135). In light of these findings, Korean popular culture appears to be a useful indicator of how Korean immigrant youths negotiate their transnational—and moreover hybrid—identities.

Besides the online spaces and content that provide transnational occasions for Korean immigrants, Koreatown (also known as *K-town*) is an excellent transnational source of economic and sociocultural capital, attracting both new and old Korean immigrants (Hurh, 1993; I.-J. Yoon, 2012). This form of Korean ethnic enclave has developed in numerous metropolitan cities, such as Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, which are home to many Korean immigrants. Furthermore, high rates of self-employment that are identified among Korean immigrants are the most visible in Koreatown. The socio-economic transactions that

take place within this site are built on human interchanges and the movement of capital (Hurh, 1993; K. Yoon, 2012).

Koreatowns found in metropolis have become the kind of place that represents ethnic and cultural distinctiveness within the mainstream society. In the case of offspring generations of Korean immigrants, J.-S. Park (2004) explained their transnational usage of the Koreatown in Los Angeles and Chicago as the following:

Korean cafes, billiard halls, PC bangs (Korean-style internet cafes) and comic book stores [...]. They hang out at those ethnic public spaces either with friends or by themselves, looking for something to do or a place to belong to. Some do that as a temporary pastime during a transitional period between job changes or post-graduation, whereas others do it regularly, full-time. [...] Young professionals, students, and even travelers frequent those spaces as well. (p. 154 & 167)

Replicated forms of *Korean* social activities that are offered in Koreatowns are what bring together individuals of the same ethnicity and heritage.

In the discussion of the acculturation and identity negotiation of the children of immigrants, Koreatowns have been described as a transnational site that offers linguistic, cultural, and stylistic resources for immigrants to utilize as strategies of self-distinction. For example, Koreatowns enable individuals to combine ethnic and mainstream cultures, occasionally organizing and hosting transnational cultural events (Y. Lee & Park, 2008; Min, 2017; Shin, 2012; I.-J. Yoon, 2012). As J.-S. Park (2004) stated, there is a “unique ‘sense of fun’” that only Korean immigrant youths can understand and share by hanging out at ethnic public spaces and consuming ethnic popular culture (p. 158).

The transnational activities and behaviours demonstrated by Korean immigrants help understanding their retention of ethnic ties related to the heritage culture. Moreover, their implications in facilitating national attachment can also be an interesting subject of inquiry. Exploring the salience of transnationalism in the lives of immigrants appears crucial in understanding their identities which appear to be increasingly hybrid.

## **1.2 Room for Research**

South Korean immigrants<sup>28</sup> do not have a long history in the literature as a research subject. As explained by Pyong Gap Min (2012), the literature on Korean immigrants in the United States started in the early 1970s, and, as of 2010, the body of literature covering the

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<sup>28</sup> Hereinafter, the word, *Korean*, will be used to refer to Koreans from South Korea, unless otherwise specified.

subject was assessed to be more than 110 books and close to 500 journal articles and book chapters. Research on Koreans in Canada is, due to the shorter immigration history and a much smaller population size, even more of a recent practice which began in the early 1990s. As a matter of fact, only five or six dozen journal articles on the subject had been published as of the year 2010 (loc. 121-125). *Korean Immigrants in Canada: Perspectives on Migration, Integration, and the Family*, edited by Samuel Noh, Ann H. Kim, and Marianne S. Noh, is one of the first collections of the work of scholars focusing on the Korean Canadian population. It represents a valuable resource in studying the current Korean immigrants in Canada and is a significant step taken forward towards an increasing interest and body of works treating the subject.

Korean immigrants make up one of the largest and fast-growing non-European ethnic groups in North America—especially in Canada. According to an analytical paper published by Statistics Canada, the Korean community was the seventh-largest non-European ethnic group in the country, which grew by 53% from 1996 to 2001 (Colin, 2001, p. 7).<sup>29</sup> The presence of Korean immigrants is especially vibrant in metropolitan cities: the biggest majority have settled in Toronto, which is one of the largest metropolitan cities of the country (Press, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2016a).

With the rapidly increasing presence of the Korean Canadian population, which remains concentrated in urban centres across Canada, studying this ethnic group in Canada, particularly in Toronto, would prove useful. First, it would further shed light on the patterns of adaptation and acculturation of Korean immigrants in Canada, as well as the evolving characteristics of the overall Canadian population. At the same time, it would contribute to the growing body of Korean Canadian studies, which remain visibly limited when compared to that of Korean American studies (Min, 2012).

Furthermore, in consideration of hybrid identities, Korean immigrants in Canada can provide an adequate model for a case study. As a visible/ethnic minority group, the following questions become especially salient in the discussion of their identity negotiation (Phinney, 1990; Hurh & Kim, 1984; Rumbaut, 2005): between the single (i.e. Korean or Canadian) and hybrid (i.e. Korean Canadian) identity, which identity label do Korean immigrants across

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<sup>29</sup> This population growth is especially significant when compared to the increase of 4% in the total Canadian population during the same period (Colin, 2001, p. 7).

different generations tend to claim? Which factors shape the Korean Canadian identity, and what meaning does it hold for individuals? These questions do not seem to have yet been explored in depth in previous literature.

In particular, 1.5-generation Korean immigrants in Canada, are an interesting research subject. As indicated previously, the notion of 1.5 generation is more of a recent phenomenon (Rumbaut & Ima, 1987). Previous studies have found that, compared to their first- and second-generation counterparts, the 1.5 generation is inherently heterogeneous, due to the varied ages at the time of arrival in the host country and their impact on the sociocultural integration of individuals (Danico, 2004; Pyon 2012; Rumbaut, 2012, 2004; Rumbaut & Ima, 1987). Exploring this inherently heterogeneous aspect of this generation becomes especially significant in the Canadian context, in which the national identity is assumed to be rooted to multiculturalist ideals and values—fostering and celebrating cultural diversity and hybrid identities.

Currently, the ethnography of the Canadian population has become more diverse than ever due to the continuous influx of immigrants. For example, the National Household Survey 2016 revealed over 250 ethnic origins or ancestries that were reported by Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2017a, p. 1). Therefore, it cannot be denied that Canada's population is only going to get more and more diverse culturally and ethnically; and their identity is likely to become increasingly hybrid. This reality is likely to bring more questions into the ongoing discussions of what constitutes a Canadian, moreover putting into question the state of Canadian multiculturalism. Furthermore, in light of previous literature which consistently highlighted the lack of a distinct identity that can be embraced by English-speaking Canadians (Howard-Hassmann, 1999; Ives, 2018; Roy, 1995; C. S. Taylor, 2007), discussing the Canadian identity that can be embraced by English-speaking Canadians—which represents the majority of the Canadian population—seems necessary.

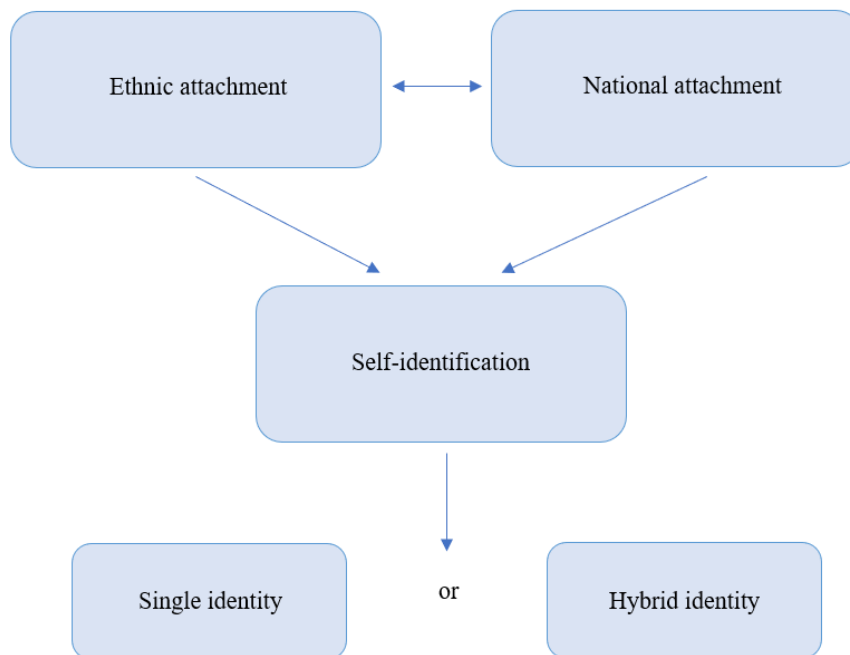
In this regard, exploring the notion of Korean Canadian identity can enrich the ongoing discussions surrounding the subject of hybrid identities, especially those of visible minority groups. The findings will help illustrating a fraction of the reality of Canadian multiculturalism, based on the lived experiences and resulting identity that these immigrants tend to claim. Ultimately, the notions of *Canadianness* and Canadian identity can be re-examined and re-evaluated through the case study of Korean immigrants' perceptions of self, society, and nation.

### 1.3 Theoretical Framework

The aim of this study is trifold: examining the identity journey of Korean immigrants within the context of Canadian multiculturalism; exploring the meaning of their self-identities; and inquiring into the notion of Canadian identity through the imagined qualities of Canada in the minds of these immigrants. To effectively explore the identity journey of Korean immigrants, it must be kept in mind that acculturative experiences and the resulting identity journey of individuals vary greatly, depending on immigrant generations (Park & Burgess, 2019; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Warner & Srole, 1945). Additionally, the intergenerational links between the lives of Korean immigrants must not be overlooked (G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2004). Therefore, generational analysis appears crucial in adequately identifying and understanding different characteristics related to identity journeys of individuals.

**Figure 1**

*Theoretical framework—identity negotiation*



To effectively navigate identity negotiation of individuals, three core elements of identity will be focused on: ethnic and national attachment and self-identification of individuals. Ethnic and national attachment, in various types of interfaces with one another, shape one's self-identification, leading to a single or hybrid identity label. This process is envisioned and illustrated in Figure 1.

Previous literature has shed light on the following factors that contribute to ethnic and national attachment of individuals, often focusing on the impact of family, peers, ethnic community, as well as ethnic and mainstream language proficiency and use. Nonetheless, more diverse elements linked to ethnic/national attachment have been increasingly explored, such as discrimination and racism, dating and marriage tendencies, transnational ties, for example. These elements represent useful references for exploring identity journey of individuals.

Furthermore, self-identification will be utilized as a tool to explore self-identities of the participants, in line with previous studies which have focused on the willingness of an individual to claim an identity label as the core element of their identity (Howard-Hassmann, 1999; Turner et al., 1987). It can also reflect an individual's attachment to the homeland and hostland, to varying degrees (Phinney, 1990). The narratives that fill one's identity label with a contextual meaning will illustrate an interplay between various factors that contribute to his or her sense of attachment to ethnic and national cultures and identities and moreover demonstrate conception of diverse categorizations of self and surrounding groups. In the cases of those who have a strong sense of identity, continuity of their self-perceptions, along with various synthesizing methods, are likely to be observed (Cooley, 1902; Erikson, 1994).

Previous literature has highlighted strong levels of ethnic identity maintenance in the case of Korean immigrants, across generations (I.-J. Yoon, 2012, p. 47). Therefore, this study will be developed on the hypothesis that Korean immigrants in Canada are likely to maintain their ethnic identity throughout their identity negotiation, which becomes an integral part of their hybrid identity. Investigating how these individuals—especially 1.5 generation—navigate between the two cultures and groups while developing various perceptions related to identity categories would help revealing the correlations between life experiences and identities of in- and out-groups and self. Throughout the process, the imagined qualities of *being* Canadian—whether reflected in their self-identity—will shed light on the national identity of Canada in the minds of the individuals.





## CHAPTER 2

### IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURALISM IN CANADA

#### 2.1 Immigration in Canada

Canada is a nation built on immigration. Ever since the settlement of the West during the late 19th century, when large numbers of immigrants from the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States flocked into the country, there has continuously been a migratory increase in Canada's population, except during the First World War and the Depression years of the 1930s. Since then, the Canadian government has opened its doors to welcome immigrants from all parts of the world. As a result, Canada is renowned for the ethnic and racial diversity of its population.

The immigrant population in Canada has not always been as ethnically diverse as one would see today. At the time of the Confederation in 1867, it was mainly comprised of British and French settlers, and, during the years following the Second World War, non-European—particularly non-white—immigration applicants were often discouraged and rejected due to the immigrant policies, which were racist and selective in its favour of European immigrants (Dewing, 2009; Wayland, 1997). The following examples, among many, demonstrate the discriminatory and exclusive nature of the Immigration Act and policies during the time:

- The Chinese Immigration Act (known as the Head Tax and Exclusion Act) of 1885 and 1923 imposed a fixed fee charged to each immigrant of Chinese origin entering Canada, and furthermore did not admit immigration of Chinese immigration applicants wanting to enter Canada for the reason of family reunification. The new Act of 1923 virtually restricted all Chinese immigration to Canada; (Dyk, n.d.)
- Provisions made in 1906 to the Immigration Act of 1869 introduced a more restrictive immigration policy by expanding the categories of prohibited immigrants, formalizing a deportation process, and granting the government-enhanced discretionary powers to make arbitrary judgments on admission—based on prevailing ideologies about race, desirability and assimilation; (Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, n.d.) and
- The Gentlemen's Agreement (known as the Hayashi-Lemieux Agreement) of 1908 was negotiated by the Canadian Minister of Labour, Rudolphe Lemieux, and the Japanese Foreign Minister, Tadasu Hayashi, to restrict Japanese immigration to Canada, following an influx of Japanese labourers in British Columbia and the rise of anti-Asian sentiment in the province. (Dyk, n.d.)

In fact, prior to the adoption of the Multiculturalism Policy, Canada's immigration legislators had based their selection of immigration applicants on their *compatibility*, seeking to promote a united sense of nationhood centered on race and cultural similarity among the residents

(Wayland, 1997). For example, the Wilfrid Laurier government from 1896 to 1911 forbade Blacks from immigration, because they deemed the Black race “unsuitable to the climate and requirement of Canada.” Similarly, the Edmonton Board of Trade stated, in 1910, that they were seeking for settlers that would assimilate, which they did not believe the Blacks would ever do (The Nudge Report, 2014).

Hence, most of the immigrants admitted to Canada at the time were from the United States, the Great Britain, and North-western European countries. While encouraging for a wave of immigration to promote the post-war boom and growth in Canadian community, the state sought to keep the balance across Canada by upholding immigration policies that were discriminatory (Canada History, n.d.). However, during the 1960s, there were increasingly evident forces advocating for a better representation of Canada’s Aboriginals, *First Nations*, Quebecois, as well as ethnic minorities within the Canadian society (Dewing, 2009, p. 5). Additionally, some of the international political issues at the time put further pressure on the Canadian government to change its policies.<sup>30</sup> Such factors eventually led the state to make its immigration policy less discriminatory. As a result, the Federal Government’s Immigration Policy in 1962 and further extension of this policy adopted in 1967 placed emphasis on economic factors, such as education, training, and job opportunities, rather than the origins of immigrant applicants in the admittance system used in immigrant selection. Additionally, the new immigration offices were opened in more countries to allow easier access for non-European, non-North American immigrant applicants (Wayland, 1997).

The current Canadian immigration system offers a number of economic and family immigration programs for permanent residency. Table 1 highlights each program and provides brief descriptions. These programs, whose main criteria concerns the skills of immigrant candidates, clearly reflect the importance that the Canadian government places on bringing in immigrants who seem useful in maintaining and enhancing the Canadian economy. Through such efforts to eliminate all discrimination based on race, religion, and national origin, Canada has become one of the countries, among the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom and Spain, that admits the highest number of migrants each year. As can be observed in Figure 2, the number of immigrants admitted to Canada has remained quite high since the early 1990s—

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<sup>30</sup> For instance, interest groups were asking the Canadian government to play a more active role in resolving the world’s refugee problems, and the racist provisions of Canadian immigration policy impeded Canada’s role in the United Nations and as well as the multiracial Commonwealth (Wayland, 1997, p. 44).

with more than 225,000 immigrants allowed entry each year on average (Statistics Canada, 2008). In 2016 alone, as many as 296,346 permanent residents were admitted to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017d).<sup>31</sup>

**Table 1**

*Economic and family immigration programs*

Express Entry	Point-system based on the language ability, education, skills, and experience of the candidate. Those with the most points are able to apply for permanent residence.
Provincial Nominee Program	Each province, except Quebec, can nominate the immigrant candidates of their choice, based on criteria which would meet their needs.
Quebec-Selected Skilled Workers	The province of Quebec selects skilled candidates who can provide the work they need.
Start-up Visa Program	Entrepreneurs with business ideas and the support of Canadian investors are able to apply for permanent residency to start their business in Canada.
Caregiver Program	Candidates who have experiences working in Canada providing in-home care to children or people with medical needs are able to apply for permanent residency.
Family Class	Family members, such as, spouses, common-law partners, dependent children, parents, and grandparents of Canadian citizens and permanent residents can be sponsored visa.

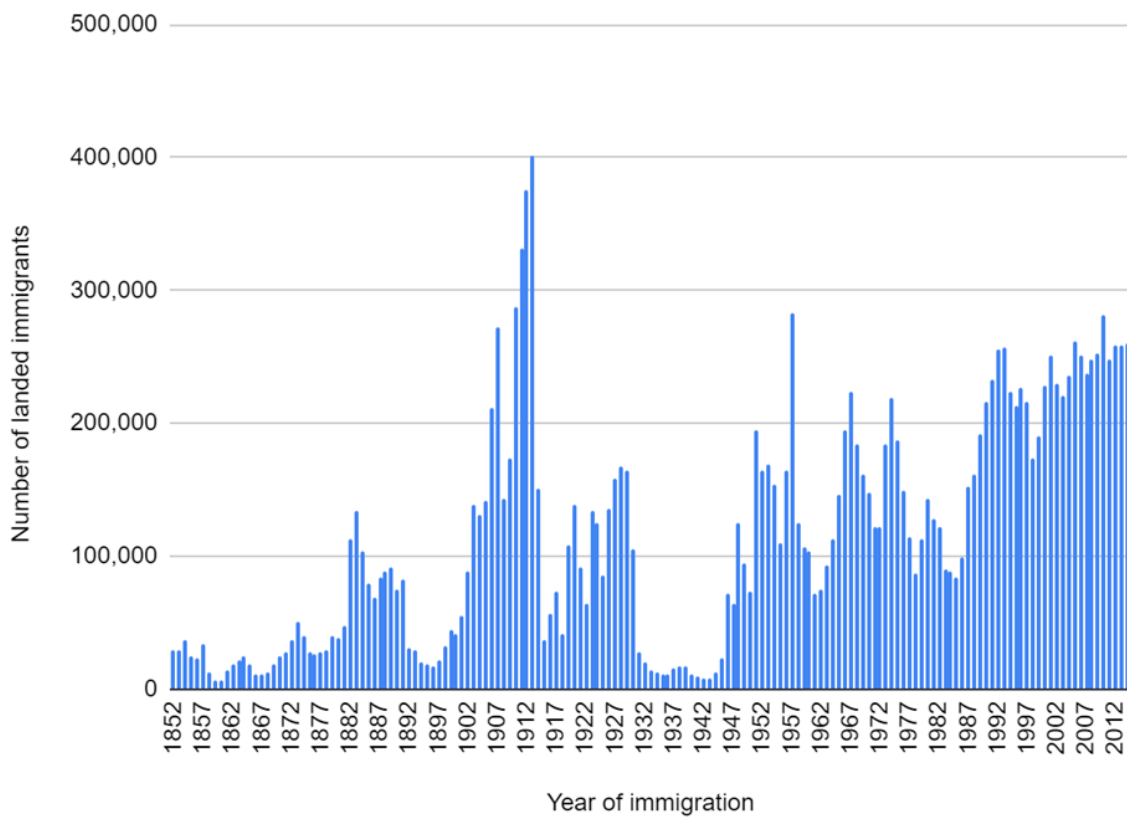
*Adapted from Statistics Canada, Understanding Canada’s immigration system, 2018. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

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<sup>31</sup> This number was heavily influenced by the Canadian government’s commitment to resettle Syrian refugees (Statistics Canada, 2017g).

**Figure 2**

*Number of immigrants who landed annually in Canada, 1852 to 2014*



*Adapted from Statistics Canada, Chart 1 Number of immigrants who landed annually in Canada, 1852 to 2014 (Data sourced from: (from 1852 to 1979) Employment and Immigration Canada, 1982. (For 1980) Immigration Statistics, Immigration and Demographic Policy Group, Catalogue no. MP22-1/1980. (From 1980 to 2014) Immigration Refugees Citizenship Canada), 2018. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

## **2.2 The Multiculturalism Policy in Canada**

According to Michael Dewing (2009), multiculturalism can be described as “the management of diversity through formal initiatives in the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal domains” (p. 1). The Multiculturalism Policy in Canada involves the following:

- First, resources permitting, the government will seek to assist all Canadian cultural groups that have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada, and a clear need for assistance, the small and weak groups no less than the strong and highly organized;
- Second, the government will assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society;
- Third, the government will promote creative encounters and interchange among all Canadian cultural groups in the interest of national unity; and

- Fourth, the government will continue to assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society. (Library and Archives of Canada, 1971, pp. 8545-8546)

Inarguably, the current Canadian population reflects multiculturalism as a social reality, as well as a political and cultural ideology, promoted and sustained by the state as a means of shaping the national culture and identity (Wong, 2015; Dewing, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2017f).

The Canadian state's adoption of the Multiculturalism Policy in 1971 was significant, as, Canada became the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy. Furthermore, in its aim to grant equality to all citizens regardless of their racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious background, the policy also confirmed the rights of Aboriginal peoples, as well as the status of Canada's two official languages, English and French. This soon led to the Parliament adopting the Multiculturalism Act in 1988, which made Canada the first country in the world to pass a national multicultural law (Dewing, 2009, p. 4). By providing a statutory framework for the Multicultural Policy, this Act acknowledged multiculturalism as the fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. Simultaneously, multiculturalism as an ideology was promoted with the aim of preserving pluralistic cultures and languages while reducing discrimination within the society, increasing cultural awareness and understanding in the minds of citizens, and endorsing the culturally sensitive efforts of the state institutions (Dewing 2009; Wayland, 1997). The ultimate objective of the Multiculturalism Policy and Act was to encourage participation of Canadian citizens in social, political, and economic spheres to allow incorporation of cultural differences into the functioning of Canadian society.

Driven by the Multiculturalism Policy, the Canadian state has continuously been promoting multiculturalism throughout the years. For instance, in 1971, it established the Cultural Enrichment Program, whose primary objective was to create heritage language classes—thus supporting the education of non-official languages—and, in 1996, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, which is a government agency in charge of fostering racial harmony and cross-cultural understanding to help eliminating racism (Canadian Race Relations Foundations, n.d.). More recently, Canadian Multiculturalism Day, the 27<sup>th</sup> of June each year, was founded in 2002 (Government of Canada, n.d.), and the Prime Minister delivered an apology in 2006 for the Federal Government's imposition of the Chinese Head Tax and other discriminatory immigration policies against the Chinese that had been in place until the mid-20th century. Moreover, the government created two Grants and Contributions (G&C) programs in 2008 (i.e. the Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP) and the

National Historical Recognition Program (NHRP)), which provided funding for projects that would help raising awareness of the public about historical experiences of ethno-cultural communities affected by wartime discriminatory measures and immigration restrictions applied in Canada (Government of Canada, 2017d).

The Multiculturalism Policy is deeply embedded in the Canadian education, as it aims to find effective ways to foster learning experiences of those who are of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Acar-Çiftçi, 2013). The ministers of education and training departments of all provincial states have formed policies to bring the necessary changes to the curriculum to promote multiculturalism. Throughout the years, the English as a Second Language (ESL) has been implemented into the curriculum, as well as the celebration of different cultures and religions, such as the Lunar New Year and Channukah in school practices (James, 2004).

What is worth noting is the liberal approach that the Canadian state has been taking in promoting multiculturalism. Liberal multiculturalists treat cultures as *voluntary associations*, by prioritizing one's subjective and self-ascriptive nature of cultural identity. Such a focus on the voluntary aspect of individuals in choosing the cultural associations is in line with the value that liberals place on personal autonomy (Fernández, 2013, p. 57). The emphasis that the Canadian government places on one's *choice* of associations with cultural groups is especially salient in the speech that Pierre Trudeau gave on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1971, during the announcement of implementation of the Multiculturalism Policy within the bilingual framework:

It was the view of the royal commission, shared by the government and, I am sure, by all Canadians, that there cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples and yet a third for all others. For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly. The royal commission was guided by the belief that adherence to one's ethnic group is influenced not so much by one's origin or mother tongue as by one's sense of belonging to the group, and by what the commission calls the group's "collective will to exist." The government shares this belief. (Library and Archives of Canada, 1971, p. 8545)

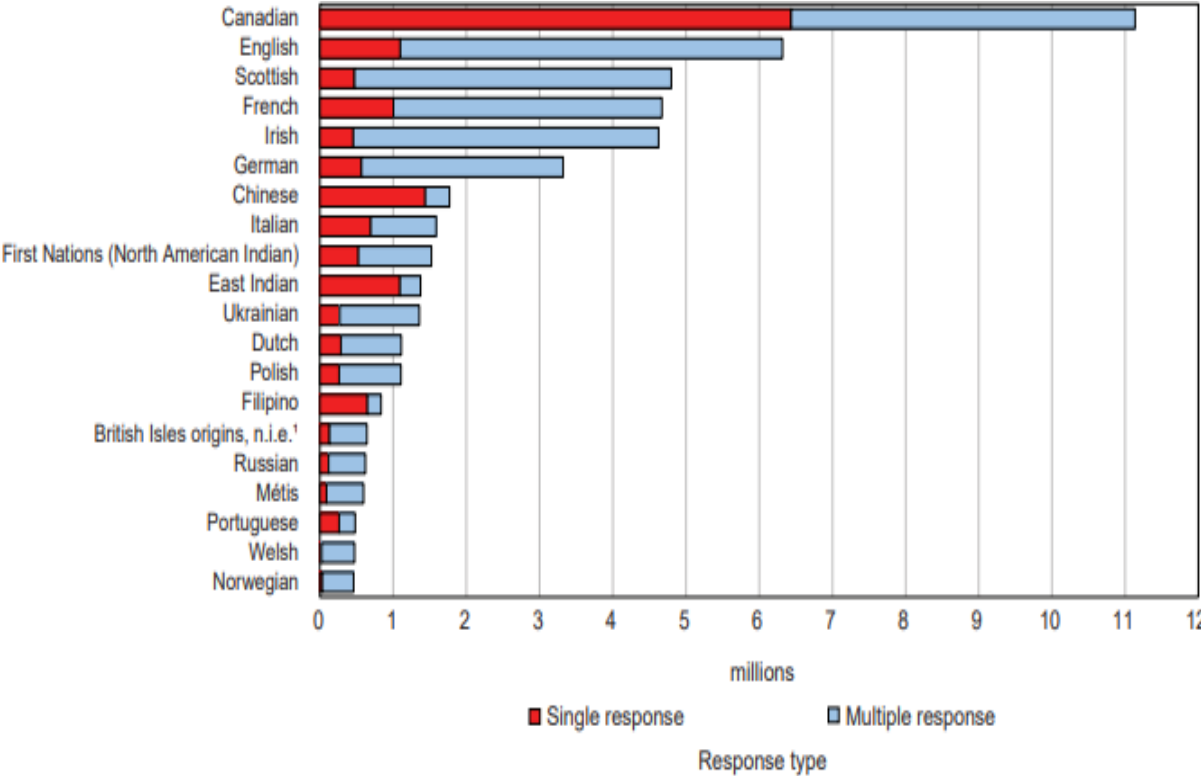
Therefore, the liberal multiculturalist ideology that the Canadian state projects clearly sets out the type of Canadian citizen it wishes to promote: an individual who is able to negotiate his or her identity by freely exercising membership to ethnic/cultural groups without feeling marginalized.

### 2.3 Ethnic Diversity in Canada

As a result of the changes made to Canada’s Immigration Act and Multiculturalism Policy, the ethnography of its population has now become extremely diverse. The findings published in the National Household Survey (NHS) in 2011 and 2016 consistently supported this fact. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, close to 200 countries were reported as a place of birth, as well as over 250 ethnic origins, among the Canadian population. Moreover, the share of immigrants of European descents, which used to represent the majority of immigrants arriving in Canada prior to 1971, has steadily decreased over the years. Simultaneously, there has been an overall increase in the share of immigrants coming to Canada from other regions of the world (NHS, 2011, as cited in Fong, 2013, p. 2).

**Figure 3**

*The top 20 ethnic origins reported alone or in combination with other origins (single or multiple response), Canada, 2016*



*Source: Statistics Canada, The top 20 ethnic origins reported alone or in combination with other origins (single or multiple response), Canada, 2016, 2016. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada.*

For example, more than three-quarters of the immigrants who reported coming to Canada before 1971 (78.3%) were from Europe, and, since 1971, Asia has remained Canada’s largest source of immigrants (Fong, p. 2, 2013). Regardless, the origins of the French and



British Isles remain one of the most commonly reported ancestries as a single ancestry or in combination with other ancestries. Out of visible minority<sup>32</sup> groups, Chinese (1.8 million people), East Indian (approximately 1.4 million people), and Filipino (837,130 people) have become the most common ancestries identified among the Canadian population (Figure 3) (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Furthermore, Statistics Canada (2017d) reported that the two current largest visible minority groups in Canada, South Asians (e.g. those from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, among others) and Chinese (i.e. those from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong) are projected to continue to represent the largest visible minority groups in Canada (p. 44). The population of visible minority groups would reach between 12.8 million and 16.3 million by the year 2036, and their projected growth appears much more rapid than that of the rest of the population. In fact, visible minority groups are likely to continue to increase in numbers and in proportion, representing between 31% and 36% of the total Canadian population by 2036 (p. 43).

## **2.4 Geographic Distribution of Immigrants in Canada**

Between 1991 and 2000, more than three-quarters of immigrants settled in Ontario and British Columbia alone. From 2006 to 2011, however, there was an increase in the proportion of the immigrants settling in the Prairies Provinces. According to Fong (2013), there are two reasons for this shift: firstly, the economic outperformance of those provinces has implied better job and economic opportunities for newcomers; secondly, the development of Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs) has had a substantial impact on immigration flows (p. 2). As a result, the three Prairie Provinces combined have nearly doubled their share of immigrants from 10.3% to 19.7% over the timeframe. Meanwhile, Quebec has seen a consistent increase in its share of immigrants over time, and now constitutes 20% of the immigrant population in Canada (p. 2).

It is worth noting that immigrants tend to locate in Canada's urban centres, regardless of the province. For example, 62.5% of newcomers reside in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver—among which Toronto stands out as home to the largest immigrant community (Fong, 2013, p. 2). Moreover, geographical distributions of immigrant and Canadian-born populations are “markedly different”: while most immigrants live in large cities, less than one-half of the Canadian-born live in urban centres (Government of Canada, 2005). For instance,

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<sup>32</sup> *Visible minority* is defined as “persons who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour and who do not report being Aboriginal” by Statistics Canada (2016).

while 70% of recent immigrants live in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, there are only just over one-quarter of Canadian-born who live in these three cities. The preference of immigrants for settling in big cities stems from the fact that they are in need of certain conditions related to housing, education, language instruction, public transportation, and jobs, which can be more easily met in urban centres (Ray, 2003). Big cities are also more likely to have established ethnic communities, and thus to have better social infrastructure and sociocultural support system that would make one's adaptation and integration easier.

## 2.5 Critics of Multiculturalism

Since the Multiculturalism Policy was adopted, it has been criticized by academics, ethnic activists, and policymakers. First and foremost, it has been argued that the ideology of multicultural mosaic is sociologically not attainable, as multiculturalist ideals that are promoted through the policy would have a detrimental effect on societal and national cohesion. As Lionel Larré (2006) posited, the concerns surrounding the possible consequences of multiculturalism include fears of ethnic separatism and having to accept values that contrast with national values, which would lead to fragmentation and ghettoization of the society and the nation. Furthermore, critics believe that the ideals projected by the multiculturalism policy overlooks the pressing needs with which minority groups are faced (e.g. social barriers in accessing employment, housing, education, and social services), and that it is a mere rhetoric, used as a tool for buying ethnic votes (Wayland, 1997, p. 48).

Among policymakers, the Reform Party of Canada<sup>33</sup> represented the strongest criticism to multiculturalism as the official policy. Unlike the other Canadian political parties who were in favour of relatively open immigration policies, the Reform Party of Canada was committed to projecting populist ideals regarding controversial issues, such as immigration, the hyphenated Canadian identity (e.g. French-Canadians residing in Quebec), as well as the rights of the Aboriginals and homosexuals. Thus, they outrightly disagreed with the immigration policy in place, both in theory and in practice. For example, the Reform Party of Canada disagreed with the annual admission target of approximately 250,000 immigrants which was in place at the time, regardless of the country's economic conditions (Farney & Rayside, 2013, p. 103). Their opposition was clearly expressed in a policy pamphlet called *Blue Sheet* in 1991: the Reformers refused "any immigration based on race or creed or designed to radically or

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<sup>33</sup> The Reform Party of Canada was a right-wing populist federal political party in Canada in the 1990s, before it merged with the Progressive Conservative Party to form the present-day Conservative Party.

suddenly alter the ethnic makeup of Canada” (The Nudge Report, 2014). They also argued for ending the funding for the multiculturalism program and abolition of the Department of Multiculturalism (Kirkham, 1998, as cited in Wong, 2015, p. 76). Indeed, there were opposed reactions from both the other political parties and the public to these controversial policies and some of the xenophobic and racist comments that Reformers made. Nevertheless, the Reform Party of Canada drew support from the widespread anti-immigrant and anti-multiculturalism sentiment, receiving approximately 20% of the popular vote nationally, in federal elections held in 1993 and 1997 (Farney & Rayside, 2013, p. 104).

Currently, the Liberal Party of Canada is the oldest federal political party in Canada, whose signature policies and legislative decisions include official multiculturalism. In turn, a number of opinion polls following the introduction of the Multiculturalism Act have shown the majority of the Canadian population supporting multiculturalism (Reitz, 2010). Nonetheless, even after the adoption of the Multiculturalism Act, the pre-existing fear of admitting immigrants who may not be compatible with the adoption of Canadian values persists in the minds of some of the Canadian public. The sentiment of anti-multiculturalism in Canada—albeit expressed by the minority—is closely associated with the opposing sentiment against the ultimate goal of multiculturalism, integration. Integration encourages greater recognition of the Canadian society as a *mosaic* of cultures rather than a melting pot through its emphasis on differences among ethnic communities and their identities. For this reason, some fear that encouraging integration could potentially lead to a clash of cultures and thus fragmentation of Canada’s national identity. Additionally, the critics of multiculturalism believe that embracing multiculturalism could also give way for the French-Canadians in Quebec to appeal as one of the equal contributors to the Canadian ethnic mosaic, which would moreover make it impossible to establish a single Canadian identity (Harles, 1997, p. 715).

One of the most prominent subjects for a debate surrounding the issues of immigration and multiculturalism has been social, economic, and political integration of immigrants, as well as the visible minorities and their children (Howard-Hassmann, 1999, p. 526). Newcomers, especially who retain their ethnic heritage, are perceived as being reluctant to learn and adopt Canadian values in the eyes of the critics. Furthermore, the public’s negative sentiment towards visible minority groups who seek to preserve their ethnic identity has heightened, as the newcomers demand changes in the existing policies to maintain their own heritage within the mainstream society. As Tom McConaghy (1995) noted, the critics are “disgruntled with the

demands of many new immigrants for recognition of their own values and customs” (p. 499). A number of demands that ethnic groups have previously made in Canada, such as the following, have been widely publicized in the media and have led to a huge national debate:

- In 1990, many Canadians were furious at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for allowing Sikhs to enlist and wear their turbans instead of regular RCMP hats;
- In 1993, Sikh veterans were barred from participating in Remembrance Day ceremonies with a branch of the Royal Canadian Legion in Surrey, British Columbia, because they refused to remove their turbans which were prohibited by the Legion’s by laws in wearing of headgear;
- In 1994, Islamic Schools Federation of Ontario threatened to take the Ottawa Board of Education to court, unless it closed its two high schools with large Muslim student populations on two Muslim holy days (p. 499).

One of the more recent debates related to minority groups that is taking place in Canada questions the boundary of religious and cultural practices within the public domain, such as public schools. The Peel District School Board (PDSB), which is based in the Greater Toronto Area in the province of Ontario, serves 257 schools, consisting of 154,000 students. As indicated on their website, the school board seeks to “create safe, positive climates for learning and working—environments that prepare students to be empathetic citizens of the world” (Peel District School Board). Stemming from their core value to be inclusive, the school board has been accommodating Muslim students to hold voluntary Friday prayer sessions on school grounds for more than 15 years. Consequently, opposing voices have risen, arguing that allowing Muslim students to pray on school grounds is “taking accommodation a step too far” (Murphy, 2018). This has led to the parents to found the group, *Religion Out of Schools*, as well as a public meeting of the Peel District School Board, which descended into chaos over the policy in March 2017.

In the eyes of the critics among policymakers, the incidents involving ethnic groups that seek to gain recognition for their cultural and religious beliefs and practices, which attract significant levels of media attention, are viewed as the result of Canada’s flawed Multiculturalism Policy. The critics argue that multiculturalism “promotes ghettoization and balkanization, encouraging members of ethnic groups to look inward, and emphasizing differences between groups rather than their shared rights or identities as Canadian citizens” (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 7). The emergence of the People’s Party of Canada in 2018, led by the former-Conservative member of the Parliament, Maxime Bernier, as well as the growing support it gained, stand as evidence that the Multiculturalism Policy remains under attack.

Bernier’s open attacks against Trudeau and his Liberal administration involving the subjects of immigration and multiculturalism attracted lots of media attention and gained support of numerous far-right public members, activists, and groups online (Figure 4). His modern populist ideals involve a strong stance against Canada’s Multicultural Policy and the high annual inflow of immigrants. For example, his prime ministerial campaign included drastically cutting down the annual immigrant intake from about 300,000 to as low as 100,000 and cutting all funding that support other cultures, just to name a few (Ling, 2019).

**Figure 4**

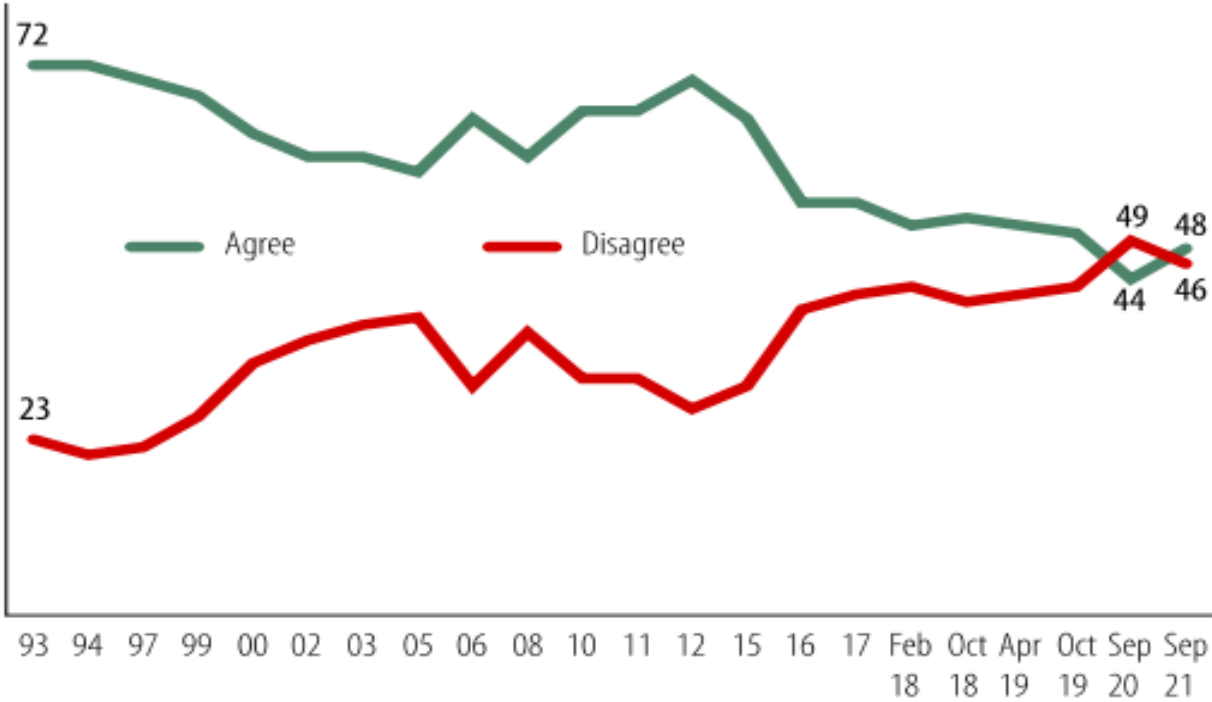
*Maxime Bernier’s publications on Twitter in 2018*



*Berner, Maxime. (Maxime Bernier), “Trudeau’s extreme multiculturalism and cult of diversity will divide us into little tribes that have less and less in common, apart from their dependence on government in Ottawa. These tribes become political clienteles to be bought with taxpayers \$ and special privileges.” 13 August 2018, 1:34a.m. Tweet.*

**Figure 5**

*Too many immigrants do not adopt Canadian values 1993-2021*



**Q.7c Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree:**  
*There are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian*

*Source: The Environics Institute, Too many immigrants do not adopt Canadian values 1993-2021, 2021. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Environics Institute.*

Moreover, the ongoing concern of the public that immigrants retain their heritage identity and do not integrate is the most clearly demonstrated in the reports published by The Environics Institute.<sup>34</sup> One of the most recent reports from the year 2021 that inquired into the Canadians’ perceptions of immigration highlighted that, despite generally positive attitudes that Canadians hold toward immigration and immigrants, many remain concerned about the integration of immigrants. For example, 48% of the respondents agreed with the statement, “There are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values” (Figure 5) (The Environics Institute, 2021, p. 8). Compared to previous years, it is evident that there has been a shift in the public’s sentiment on this issue: although more people appear to positively perceive the integration of immigrants over time, the public opinion seems

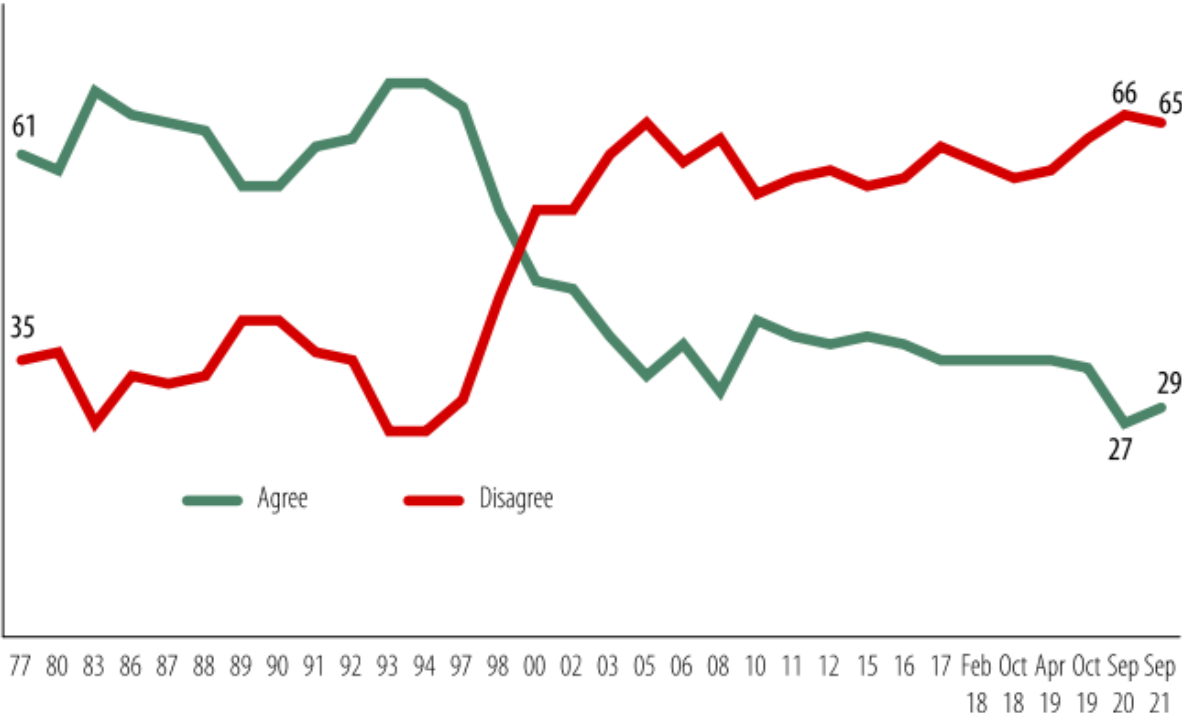
<sup>34</sup> The Environics Institute has been engaged in the Focus Canada research program to help shedding light on Canadians’ opinions surrounding diverse issues, including immigration, discrimination and racism, and climate change.

to have become more visibly divided in the recent years. There were numerous factors that seem explain the findings, according to the report: the level of education, age cohort, household income, as well as political views of the respondents. For example, positive sentiments towards the integration of immigrants appeared most prevalent among younger Canadians (ages 18 to 29) with most education and income, who are Liberal Party and NDP supporters, residing in Atlantic Canada. At the same time, the correlations that are observed between an individual’s perspective on the integration of immigrants and their political views appeared to be becoming weaker (p. 1).

**2.6 Continued Support for Immigration and Multiculturalism in Canada**

**Figure 6**

*Immigration levels are too high*



*Q.7a Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree: Overall there is too much immigration to Canada*

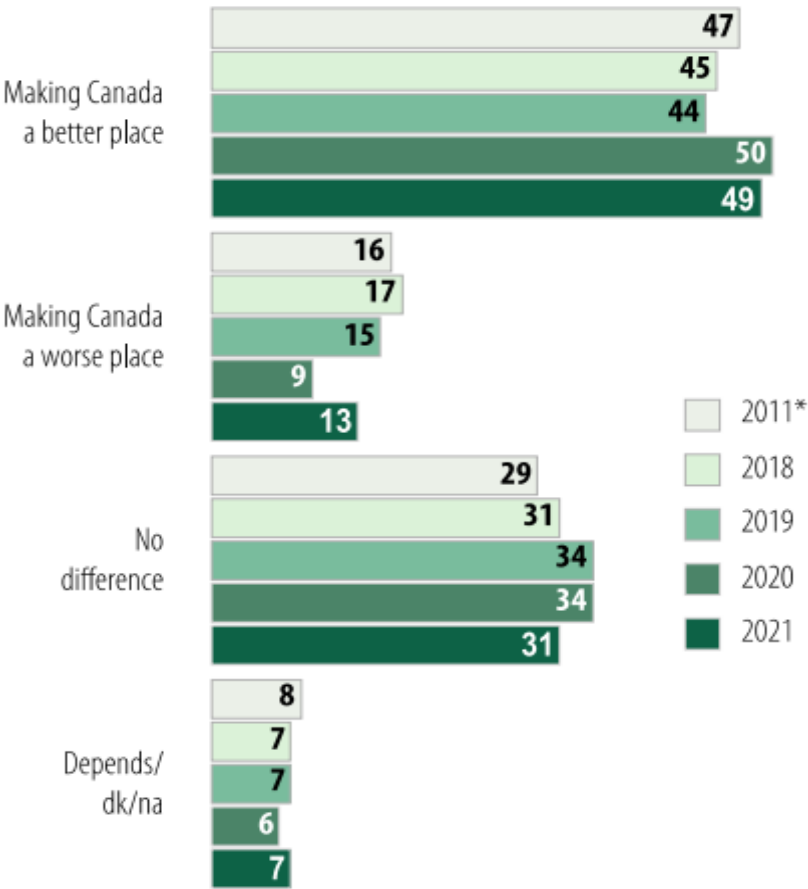
*Source: The Environics Institute, Immigration levels are too high, 2021. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of The Environics Institute.*

Indeed, despite the critics of immigration and multiculturalism policies in Canada, the majority of the Canadian public remain supportive. The Focus Canada reports prove useful in observing this trend: since around the year 2000, the majority of the respondents have remained in favour of the current immigration levels (Figure 6). Moreover, while the respondents

considered immigration and refugees as one of the most important problems for Canada, it was the very last one on the list—representing only 1% of the top mentions among the responses. Thus, the 2021 report concluded that immigration and refugees is, despite the topicality, of low importance in the minds of Canadians when compared to other issues (The Environics Institute, 2021, pp. 2 & 11).

**Figure 7**

*Impact of immigration on Canada, 2011-2021*



\*Trudeau Foundation survey 2011

Q.8 Canada accepts about 400,000 new immigrants each year. Do you think that on balance the effect of these individuals coming into the country is making Canada a better place, a worse place, or doesn't make a difference?

Source: The Environics Institute, *Impact of immigration on Canada, 2021*. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of The Environics Institute.

In addition, the Focus Canada reports have continuously demonstrated the overall positive attitudes of Canadians toward immigration (Figure 7). The opinion that immigrants



make Canada a worse place remained among the minority of the respondents, and they were concerned about the weakening of Canadian—notably Quebec—identity, the extent of tolerance toward differences, or the lack of integration of immigrants. Regardless, the majority appeared to be supportive of immigration, mostly based on the perceived benefits that it brings to Canadian multiculturalism/diversity and economy (The Environics Institute, 2021, pp. 7-9).

The 43<sup>rd</sup> Canadian federal election results clearly mirrored the findings of the Focus Canada reports: not only were immigration and refugees not the prominent feature of election campaigns, but the People’s Party of Canada also received less than 2% of the votes, and consequently failed to elect a single MP to Parliament (The Environics Institute, 2019, p. 1). The Liberals, led by Justin Trudeau, won the election.<sup>35</sup> Hence, as the 2019 Focus Canada report concluded, immigration does not appear to be “an issue that strongly divides Canadians,” which is contrasting to the political scene in other western countries (The Environics Institute, 2019, p. 1).

Among academics, Will Kymlicka (2003, 2010) stands out as one of the most renowned supporters and advocates of the multiculturalism policy and measures. Contrary to the critics who saw multiculturalism as a deterrent to integration of immigrants and the cause of disunification of society, he argued that it is an aiding factor that facilitates social integration of immigrants without forsaking their ethnic distinctiveness. Therefore, for him, multiculturalism was not only a feasible ideology, but also a social reality and reflection of Canadian society, which represented the Canadian national identity. Extending on such positive evaluation of multiculturalism policies, Larré (2006) also highlighted that ethnic groups asking for rights for a better or improved representation within the dominant society should be understood as their attempt to integrate, seeking to find their place as equal citizens as non-immigrant members of the society. Therefore, he postulated that it is the absence of multiculturalist measures that would lead to marginalization and ethnic segregation within societies, and not the measures, themselves.

Criticisms of multiculturalism seem to be derived from limited levels of understanding of what multiculturalism offers to heterogeneous societies such as Canada at the level of nation-building. To begin with, some of the elements that were typically considered as the main factors

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<sup>35</sup> The Liberals won the 43<sup>rd</sup> federal election, albeit as a minority government. The fall in their popularity, however, is said to have stemmed from criticisms that Trudeau faced for his ability to deliver what the Liberals had promised on issues such as climate change (BBC News, 2019).

that help defining a national identity (e.g. race, language, religion, and geography, etc.) are no longer considered as much significant when it comes to ethnically diverse and heterogeneous societies, such as the one found in Canada. Thus, modern nationalism theorists have shifted the focus from the elements of national identities such as the ones mentioned above to the significant role that the members of a nation play in nation-building, as active agents that *construct* a nation (Richter, 2011, p. 10). For example, Anderson's (2006) definition of the nation as an *imagined political community* emphasizes the role of the population in the process of nation-building:

I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (p. 10).

The sense of being part of a nation without knowing one's fellow citizens, as evoked in Anderson's (2006) definition, suggests the importance of a shared culture for a country's national identity. However, in examining Canada, identifying the shared culture can be a complicated matter. The English and French languages that stand as the two official languages of Canada, for instance, are one of the limited cultural symbols that readily exists for the identification of Canada as a nation; yet, they do not appear to have a significant impact on helping individuals to distinguish Canada from other nations, given that there are close to 60 countries whose official language is English, and 29 countries whose official language is French. Moreover, as R. Kenneth Carty and W. Peter Ward (1986) postulated, the *essence* of Canadianness is often conflicted and ambivalent, due to divisions among different groups of citizens: anglophone and francophone, old and new, immigrant and aboriginal. These divisions exist because "there is no common meeting ground, no agreement on what constitutes a Canadian" (as cited in Harles, 1997, p. 712). Therefore, it could be argued that the only common ground that binds them together is their citizenship, which requires understanding of and abiding by the law stated in the Canadian Constitution. In this regard, multiculturalism, as declared in the Multiculturalism Act found in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, becomes another item of the national identity for all Canadian citizens. Hence, multiculturalism as an ideology seeks to provide a cultural reference for one to be able to identify with other fellow members of the nation. The multicultural mosaic of the population within the Canadian society becomes the common memory and history that bind the Canadian people together.

Furthermore, there seems to be no solid evidence to support claims that multiculturalism has discouraged immigrants' integration into a Canadian way of life. The statistics on the rates related to naturalization and linguistic integration of immigrants, as well as political participation and intermarriage among ethno-cultural groups, demonstrate that the multiculturalism program has worked, and there is no evidence that it has promoted ethnic separateness (Dewing, 2009, p. 9). An international study of acculturation has also shown the constructive role that multiculturalism plays in enabling healthy processes of sociocultural adaptation of individuals (Berry et al., 2006). For example, according to the OECD, Canada is among the top five countries with the highest share of nationals among its foreign-born population: 9.4% of its foreign population was naturalized in 2010, compared with 2.9% across OECD countries (OECD, 2012).<sup>36</sup> Canada also has a competitive foreign-born participation rate: 78.1% of the foreign-born population was found to be participating in the labour market in Canada, which is comparable to the average participation rate of 74.3% across OECD countries (OECD, 2019a). Thus, the criticisms that perceive multiculturalism as the cause of the lack of social cohesion and fragmentation of national identity appear invalid; rather, the statistical data demonstrate that immigrant populations have taken an active role in contributing to the Canadian society across various spheres.

As Lloyd Wong (2015) posited, Canadians have never had a set of common values and have diverged on matters such as abortion, capital punishment, gun control, the welfare state, same-sex marriage, just to name a few examples (p.86). Regardless, through multiculturalism, shared acknowledgement, acceptance, and tolerance of such vibrant ethnic and cultural diversity seemed to have managed to bind many Canadians together over time. As Kymlicka (2010) argued, there is a strong, communal sense of pride and identification with a multicultural character of Canadian nationhood that is formed in the minds of Canadians. For example, based on the 2015 Focus Canada report, 54% of the Canadian population viewed multiculturalism as one of the main national symbols of Canada (Figure 8) (The Environics Institute, 2015, p. 2). In parallel, the 2002 Focus Canada report showed that multiculturalism was widely perceived

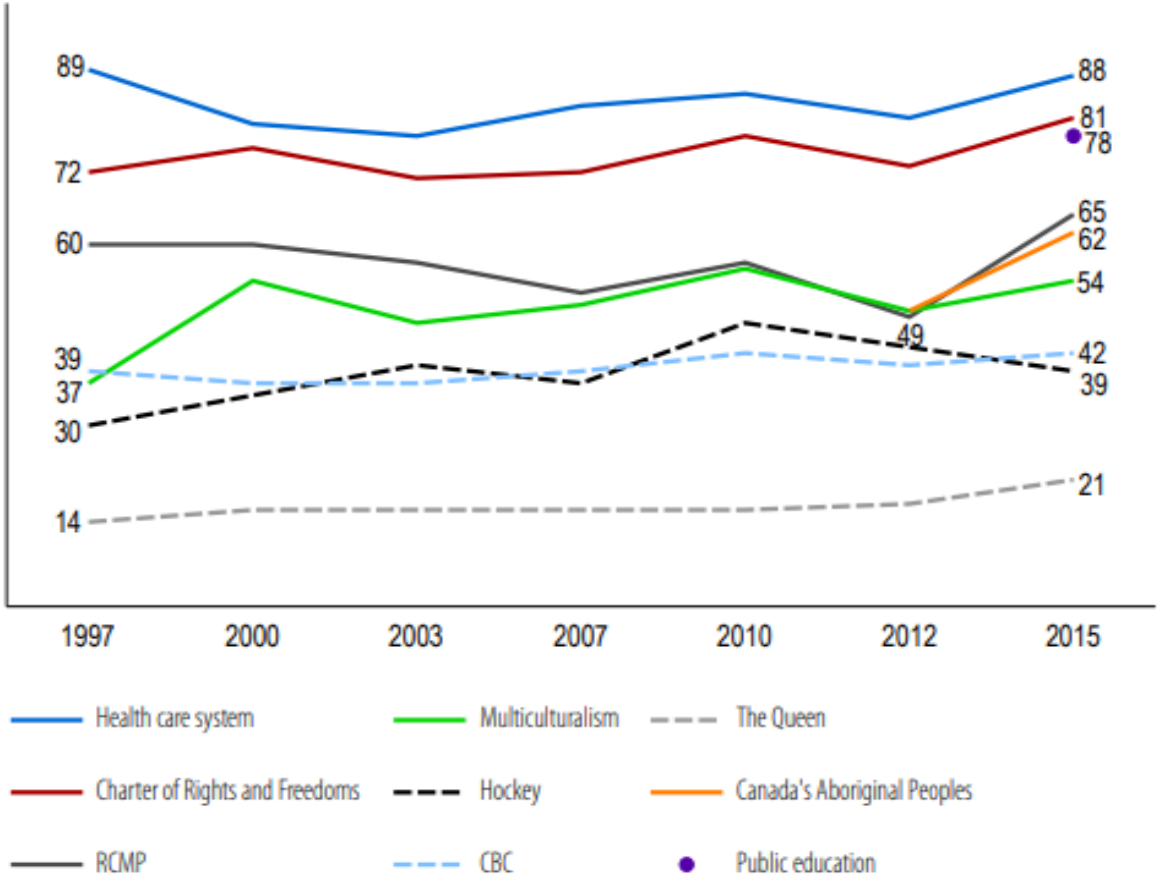
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<sup>36</sup> While Canada remains as one of the top Western countries who boasts high citizenship rates (Statistics Canada, 2019), Statistics Canada (2019) reported that the citizenship rates of recent immigrants peaked in 1996 and have been declining since then. The socio-demographic characteristics of the immigrants appear to have played a role in this trend, which include family income, knowledge of official languages, the level of education, as well as the source region. There seems to be a significant decline among the more disadvantaged group, who have a low income, high school or less education, and mother tongue which is not English or French. The citizenship rates among immigrants from East Asia demonstrated the most significant decline, mainly China—improvement in China's economy is mentioned to have potentially influenced this trend (p. 5).

as the “cornerstone of Canadian culture,” as well as a source of national pride (as cited in Kymlicka, 2010, p. 38).

**Figure 8**

*Important symbols of Canadian identity, very important, 1997-2015*



Source: The Environics Institute, *Important symbols of Canadian identity, very important, 1997-2015, 2015*. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of The Environics Institute.

Simultaneously, multiculturalism has become one of the main attributes which other nations associate with Canada. Not only does it distinguish the Canadian cultural mosaic from the American melting pot society, but multiculturalism also projects a positive impression of Canada to the world. For instance, in celebrating Canada Day in 2012, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) News conducted interviews with 11 people from outside of North America to share their views on Canada’s image abroad. In these interviews, a range of Canadian cultural elements related to Canadian identity were mentioned (e.g. maple syrup, moose, and the cold), including its multilingual and culturally diverse society and multiculturalism. In fact, one of the interviewees, Eugene Lee from South Korea, identified

multiculturalism as one of the things that are ‘regarded highly’ about Canada among Koreans (Stastna, 2012). These findings evidently show that Canadian national identity is closely linked with multiculturalism, and, in consideration of the positive correlation between how one’s culture is esteemed by others and his or her self-esteem, also suggest the positive influence that Canadian multiculturalism has on self-perceptions of individual Canadians (Margalit & Raz, 1990, p. 449). As Wayland (1997) predicted, these findings suggest that Canadian identity—albeit not definitive nor assertive in nature—is strengthening over time (p. 56).

As discussed, multiculturalism can indeed represent a controversial subject of discussion related to social cohesion and national identity in Canada. Shaped by one’s perception of immigrants and their integration to Canada, multiculturalism as a cultural ideology, state policy, and social reality is constantly debated for its merits and flaws—centered around the perceived levels of integration of immigrants. In this respect, examining the process of acculturation and integration of immigrants within the Canadian society would prove useful, which would enable an exploration of how multiculturalism is, not only pictured in the minds of Canadians, but also lived by individuals within the Canadian society.

## CHAPTER 3

### KOREAN IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA

#### 3.1 History of Korean Migration

The Korean society can be defined by its homogeneous ethnic identity and culture which have been sustained over 5,000 years of history, amidst invasions from China and Japan. Owing to its geographical location and ethnic homogeneity, Korea developed into and remained “a self-sustained, closed society” (T. Kwon, 1997, p. 1). In fact, no visible Korean community is known to have formed outside of the Korean territory until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when movements of a significant volume began to take place. The Korean government’s strict control of northern regions to prevent uprisings in the region, as well as China’s prohibition of the cross-over of Koreans into southern Manchuria, are the main reasons that explain low migration at the time (p. 1). Thus, the Korean diaspora is of much shorter history compared with other ethnic diasporic groups, such as the Jews, Chinese, Greeks, and Italians (I.-J. Yoon, 2012, p. 38).

The history of Korean migration can generally be divided into four periods. The first one extends from 1860s to 1910. During this period, Koreans were faced with a difficult political, economic, and social unrest, which involved a series of extremely poor harvests in the northeastern provinces, as well as peasant uprisings all over the nation that led to the Dong-hak peasant war in 1894-95. Additionally, the support of the British and American government through the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and Taft-Katsura Agreement made way for the Japanese annexation of the Korean peninsula to take place beginning in 1910 (T. Kwon, 1997; Rigal-Cellard, 2021). Poverty was the major factor that drove Koreans out of the country during this period: faced with the population growth, which especially disrupted the land distribution among the population, migration was a choice that Koreans had to make to survive (T. Kwon, 1997, p. 4). Many farmers left Korea to find a fertile land in Manchuria and Siberia, and labourers settled in Hawaii to work in sugar plantations in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Wayne Patterson (1988) reported, along with 7,226 Korean migrants to Hawaii, almost a thousand Korean women accompanied them as “picture brides” to marry the men and have families. These Korean populations became the first generation of Koreans in China, Russia, and the American continent.

One of the most significant periods in the Korean history in the discussion of Korean migration was the second period, from 1910 to 1945, marked by the Japanese colonization of

the Korean peninsula. Throughout this period, there was a continuous migratory movement of Koreans—mainly to Manchuria, Japan, and Siberia. The volume of the migration depended on a number of factors, such as economic conditions of Korea, the labour policy in Japan, the Japanese invasion of China, as well as Japan’s waging of the Second World War (T. Kwon, 1997, p. 4).

Firstly, Manchuria saw a rapid increase in the number of Korean migrants during this period. Korean farmers from rural villages, whose land and other means of production were ruthlessly exploited by Japan, migrated. Moreover, due to geographical proximity, many from South Korea went to Japan and most from North Korea to Manchuria. Japan also forced mass migration of Koreans in 1930s to assist in the development of Manchuria, as they sought to use Manchuria as a military supply base for the invasion of China and an agricultural base of Japan (I.-J. Yoon, 2005, p. 203). Additionally, political refugees and activists migrated to Manchuria, some of whom left for Siberia and the United States, seeking to lead the independence movement against the Japanese colonial rule. Chae-Jin Lee (1986) indicated that the number of Korean migrants in Manchuria grew from 10,000 in 1881 to close to 1.5 million in 1943 (as cited in Min, 1992a, p. 6).

Secondly, Japan was another destination for a significant number of Koreans during the colonial era. Prior to 1939, the surge in this migratory trend was caused by the Japanese colonial economic policy and the resulting under-development of cities in Korea that offered limited jobs (Kwon 1997; Min 1992). Furthermore, between the years of 1939 and 1945, more than 800,000 Koreans were forcefully brought to Japan as labour and military conscripts (C. Lee & De Vos, 1984, p. 193). The cheap—and, in many cases, free and forced labour—that the Korean workforce provided was exploited by Japanese industries and government to fill the manpower vacuum, linked with ongoing wars.<sup>37</sup> Beyond the male conscription in coal mines, war industries, and military support, 724,787 Korean women between the age of 17 and 20 years were also forced to serve as sex slaves during the years 1939 and 1945 (Han, 2001, p. 107). As a result, the number of Korean migrants in Japan was close to 2 million in 1945—more than half of whom returned to Korea after the end of the Second World War (Lee, 1986, as cited in Min, 1992a, p. 11).

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<sup>37</sup> During this period, Japan was engaged in numerous wars, including the invasion of Manchuria (1931-1932), Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), the invasion of French Indochina (1940), the Second World War (1941-1945), and Operation Masterdom (1945-1946).

Thirdly, Siberia also received a continuous flow of Korean migrants during this period, albeit limited in volume. While some chose Siberia to seek better economic opportunities, many others were forced by the Japanese government to work in coal mines in Sakhalin. In the late 1930s, the Soviet Union deported the majority of Koreans in the bordering Maritime Provinces to Central Asian regions in order to segregate them from their fellow Koreans in the Korean peninsula, fearing that Koreans were working as spies for the Japanese government (T. Kwon, 1997, p. 6).

Following Japan's defeat in the Second World War and liberation of Korea in 1945, Korea became divided between capitalist South Korea and communist North Korea. This period saw high numbers of return movements of overseas Koreans. The number of those returning from Manchuria was much less significant than that of those returning from Japan, whose Korean population plummeted from 2.3 million in 1945 to 598,507 by 1947 (S. Lee, 2008, pp. 66-70). On the other hand, the postwar Soviet occupation on Sakhalin forbade Koreans from returning to Korea, which left the Korean migrant population in Siberia, on the border with Manchuria. Then, the Korean War broke out in 1950 between the two political entities that were governing northern and southern Korea and lasted until 1953. This event brought South Korea and the United States together as allies, and, consequently, Koreans were given opportunities to emigrate to the United States (T. Kwon, 1997, p. 8).

The third period is from 1945 to 1962, when the newly established South Korean government adopted its first immigration policy that significantly shifted immigration objectives and destination countries of Koreans. In other words, in contrast to the predecessors who were immigrating to nearby countries to escape from the poor living and working conditions in the home country or to lead the independence movement, a new wave of emigration took place in the 1960s (T. Kwon, 1997, p. 8). For instance, the new immigration policy allowed Korean students to go abroad to study, war orphans to be adopted abroad, and interracial children and wives of the military officers to move to the United States or Canada to join their families. The students who stayed, along with the adopted orphans and the women who married American military officers, made the way for the subsequent immigrant generations. Moreover, the American immigration policy permitted the sponsorship of family members in 1965 (Yu, 1983, as cited in I.-J. Yoon, 2012, p. 40).

The fourth period dates from 1962. The early 1960s saw a heavy population pressure that the government sought to relieve by encouraging emigration. In doing so, the Korean state



also wished to secure foreign currencies sent home by those working or living abroad. Consequently, the Korean government arranged labour contracts with a number of countries in Latin America, Western Europe, the Middle East, and North America. While some were sent as agricultural immigrants to Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, as well as coal miners and nurses in Western Germany, some ended up in places that were different from their initial destinations, for better job opportunities and permanent settlement after the end of their contract (I.-J. Yoon, 2012, p. 40). Throughout the following years, the annual outflow of Korean migrants increased steadily (T. Kwon, 1997, p. 9). Furthermore, the change that took place in 1965 in the American immigration policy, which used to be discriminatory against those coming from countries other than European countries, led to more Koreans to move to North America in search of upward social mobility. Most of the Korean immigrants arriving in North America were coming from the educated middle-class background (I.-J. Yoon, 1997).

After 1975 and throughout the 1980s and 1990s, most Korean immigrants moved to the United States. This trend was on the increase, except for the period of the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, when the economic and social conditions in Korea began to improve. First and foremost, throughout this period, the Cold War was coming close to the end, which altered the nature of international relations and foreign policy in Korea (J. E. Oh et al., 2011, p. 27).<sup>38</sup> According to the Korean National Bureau of Statistics (1984), the per-capita income of Koreans increased from \$843 in 1977 to \$2,199 in 1987 (as cited in H. Kim & Min, 1992a, p. 126). Additionally, in 1987, a civilian president was elected for the first time, following three decades of authoritarian regimes (Kwan, 2000; Rigal-Cellard, 2021). Korea also began to play an active role in the international political and economic scene, as it joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Kwan, 2000, p. 4). In response to such improved conditions of living in Korea, many overseas Koreans moved back to the home country, and many reconsidered their plans to emigrate during this period (I.-J. Yoon, 2012, p. 41).

Moreover, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) crisis in Korea, which broke out in 1997,<sup>39</sup> significantly influenced the Korean immigration within the more recent context. Faced

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<sup>38</sup> As the Korean government began to focus on an economic agenda rather than a security one, it began to invest in diplomatic relations with former and present communist countries, such as Russia, China, Vietnam, as well as Eastern European countries (J. E. Oh et al., 2011, p. 27).

<sup>39</sup> The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis erupted in Thailand in mid-1997 and spread over East and Southeast Asia. It led to sharp declines in the values of currencies, stocks, and other assets. In the case of Korea, large contractions in economic activity resulting from the crisis were met with soaring numbers of unemployment and homelessness.

with the extremely difficult economic situation of Korea, the number of immigrants increased again. Simultaneously, ethnic conflicts began to intensify in the United States, and resulted in a decrease in the number of Koreans migrating to the United States in the 1990s (T. Kwon, 1997, p. 10). Hence, the trend during this period demonstrates the preference of Korean migrants for Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to the United States, as host countries. Employment and business opportunities also became the principal goal of immigration rather than family reunification for Koreans.

Lastly, the significant push factor for Korean migrants that has remained to this day is a strong desire of many parents to teach their children English—often referred to as the *English boom*. The two key events initiated this trend in the 1990s: the South Korean government’s promotion of the globalization campaign (*sekyehwa woondong*), as well as the country’s admission to the OECD in 1996 (J. Jeong & Bélanger, 2012, pp. 259-260). Faced with globalization and the job market, which was becoming increasingly competitive, the status of English as a global language and its importance in education and employment led to “exponential amounts of investment in English education” for children (Paek, 2019, p. 37). It has therefore become extremely common for Korean families to immigrate with their young children to English-speaking countries, and many others to send their children overseas.

According to the publication of the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the estimated number of overseas Koreans is continuously on the rise. From about 7 million that were reported in 2013, the population figure has grown to approximately 7.5 million in 2019, scattered across 193 countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Korea, 2019, p. 43) (Table 2). There are 27 countries with more than 10,000 Koreans, and nine countries with more than 100,000. Overseas Korean populations are concentrated in the United States, China, Japan, and Canada, representing roughly 6 million (81%) of all overseas Koreans (Table 3). Thus, it is evident that various trends of migration—reasons for migration, preferred destination countries, and migration flow—have continuously been shaped across time by numerous factors related to the political, economic, and social conditions of the origin and destination countries.

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For more information regarding the governance of the South Korean state during the 1997 financial crisis, see Kwan (2000).

**Table 2***Overseas Koreans, by country and region of residence, 2019*

Region/country		Number as of 2019	Percentage share (%)
Northeast Asia	Japan	824,977	11.01
	China	2,461,386	32.85
	Total	3,286,363	43.85
South Asia		592,441	7.91
North America	United States	2,546,982	33.99
	Canada	241,750	3.23
	Total	2,788,732	37.21
Latin America		103,617	1.38
Europe		687,059	9.17
Africa		10,877	0.15
Middle East		24,498	0.33
Total		7,493,587	100

*Adapted from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Korea, 2019. This does not constitute an endorsement by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Korea of this product.*

**Table 3***Five countries with the highest numbers of overseas Koreans*

Country	Number of overseas Koreans
United States	2,546,982
China	2,461,386
Japan	824,977
Canada	241,750
Uzbekistan	177,270

*Adapted from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Korea, 2019. This does not constitute an endorsement by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Korea of this product.*

### **3.2 History of Korean Migration to Canada**

To distinguish the evolving patterns of Korean migration to Canada, A. H. Kim et al. (2012) highlighted four periods: the period prior to 1963, 1963 to 1985, 1986 to 2003, and 2004 to the present. The pre-migration period prior to 1963 does not involve a movement of a significant number of people, but rather, an initiation of a migratory movement. The first known contact between the people of Canada and Korea was established in the late 19th century through Canadian missionaries and teachers who went to Korea to contribute to the development of Korean society (I.-J. Yoon, 2005, p. 210). Some Koreans immigrated to Canada through church connections with the aim of further studying Christianity, who became the first

known Korean immigrants to arrive in Canada. Therefore, the Korean migration to Canada was first initiated by education migrants who visited Canada on a temporary basis: most of them were not permitted to stay on a permanent basis and moved back to Korea or on to the United States (A. H. Kim et al., 2012, pp. 4-5). The pioneering Korean immigrants who settled permanently in Canada include Dr. Tae-yon Whang, among other Koreans who entered Canada to pursue education and settled permanently after (Kim, 1984).<sup>40</sup>

Overall, the Korean migrants from this period mainly included church ministers, medical doctors, and scholars, whose profiles as sojourners contrasted from the Korean migrants—who began to enter Canada for the purpose of permanent residence starting in the 1960s (I.-J. Yoon, 2005, p. 211). This period is furthermore marked by the start of political contact between Canada and Korea: the Canadian government sent 26,971 military personnel to the Korean peninsula as part of the United Nations force during the Korean War (Global Affairs Canada, 2020). Nonetheless, as mentioned previously, the number of Korean immigrants in Canada was not substantial at this time, and this remained as the case until decades later.

The period from 1963 to 1985 saw the beginning of diplomatic relations between the Canadian government and the newly established Korean government (Y.-S. Yoo, 2002). Taik-bo Chun—who had been a member of the Syngman Rhee government and was then the President of a trading company in South Korea—believed that emigration was necessary for the Korean society, which was experiencing an ever-increasing population pressure. In 1964, he met with the Deputy Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in Ottawa and requested the opening of the Canadian immigration policy to Koreans (I.-J. Yoon, 2005, p. 211). Coincidentally, the Canadian government—which had also been seeking for new sources of manpower for economic growth—dismantled its discriminatory immigration policy in 1962 by eliminating national origin as a criterion for immigration and introduced the points system in 1967 to focus on economic factors. Thus, the Korean government's wish to relieve the heavy population pressure and to secure foreign exchange for economic development during this period was matched with emigration to Canada becoming a viable option for Koreans (A. H. Kim, 2012, p. 6).

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<sup>40</sup> Whang arrived in Canada in 1948 as a mission-sponsored medical intern, and eventually became the first recorded Korean to settle permanently in Canada. His permanent settlement was significant, as many other mission-students had tried earlier without success (Kim, 1984).

Nonetheless, it was not until 1973 when the Canadian Embassy opened its doors in Korea that the number of Korean migrants arriving in Canada began to grow significantly. For example, while hundreds of Koreans arrived in Canada each year after 1965, thousands began to arrive in Canada after 1970 (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2010). The Korean migrants landing in Canada during this period were permitted through two primary statuses: sponsored family members (i.e. family class) and those with educational and occupational qualifications (i.e. independent class). In fact, the majority who arrived in Canada between 1980 and 1985 were family-class migrants, while the independent class was the second-largest category of entrants (A. H. Kim et al., 2012, p. 7).

After reaching the peak in 1975 with the annual count of 4,331 migrants, the number of Korean migrants to Canada dropped dramatically and remained low until the end of this period. This could be explained by the economic recession that Canada experienced during this time. Due to the financial slowdown, Canada's immigration policy was adjusted with a new quota system for family reunification in 1976—and this led to a stagnation in the overall migration numbers, including those representing Korean migrants to Canada. It was not until the year 1986 that the Canadian economy improved, and the Canadian immigration policy was re-adjusted, that Korean migration to Canada began to grow again (Cobb, 2006, p. 10). Furthermore, this change in the Canadian immigration policy demonstrated a shift in demographics in the Korean Canadian community, as well: as the newly revised immigration policy sought to attract affluent migrants from Asian countries including Korea, those who were immigrating to Canada from Korea during this period were affluent potential entrepreneurs and well-educated, middle-class families (M. J. Kwak, 2004, as cited in Cobb, 2006, p. 10).<sup>41</sup>

In the following years, from 1986 to 2003, Canada and South Korea established economic links through trade. For example, the trade relations between the two countries strengthened with the creation of the *Canada-South Korea "Special Partnership"* in 1993 (Bohatyretz, 2004; Y.-S. Yoo, 2002). As economic conditions in Korea went through a dramatic improvement, the migration outflow to Canada did not see a substantial increase while the inflow more than doubled: overseas Koreans were going back to their homeland, and Koreans did not deem emigration necessary at the time (A. H. Kim et al., 2012, p. 10; I.-J. Yoon, 2012, p. 41). However, the impact of the 1997 IMF crisis led to a change in the profile of Korean

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<sup>41</sup> For a more detailed account of the evolution of profiles of the Korean migrants throughout the years 1980 to 2005, see A. H. Kim et al. (2012).

migrants arriving in Canada: the majority were the professional class with educational and occupational qualifications, leaving the home country to escape harsh economic times and seek better economic opportunities (A. H. Kim et al., 2012, p. 11).

Moreover, the permanent migration from Korea was therefore on the increase. In fact, the annual number of Korean migrants in Canada reached its peak at approximately 9,600 in 2001, and there were more than 78,000 Korean immigrants arriving in Canada in total throughout this period.<sup>42</sup> This increase was in response to the business-class immigration program in Canada through which the Canadian government sought to promote. The majority of Korean immigrants arriving in Canada were business class during the first half of this period, and those arriving with family sponsorship demonstrated a decline in number over the years (A. H. Kim et al., 2012, p. 10). This shift in trend suggests an improved amount of capital that these more recent Korean migrants in Canada possessed compared to previous periods.

Since 2004 to the present, there have been numerous recent changes in Canada's immigration policies, including the Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP), resulting in subsequent dispersion of immigrants across Canadian cities. For instance, besides Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg have also become popular destinations for Korean migrants in Canada (A. H. Kim et al., 2012, p. 13). Additionally, there has been less popularity of the business class for immigration and more of migrants who are arriving with the independent status or PNP over the years. Nonetheless, it appears evident that there is a continued trend of Korean migrants arriving in Canada with educational and financial capital in the modern context.

### **3.3 Demographic Profile of Korean Immigrants in Canada**

The book chapter, "A demographic profile of Koreans in Canada," written by Jungwee Park (2012), effectively highlights the general social and economic profile features of people in Canada that share a Korean ancestry, mostly using the data provided by the government publications. As many elements that are presented in Park's (2012) work still prove pertinent in describing the current Korean community, this current chapter will closely refer to the

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<sup>42</sup> However, if the number of international students were included, the yearly volume of Korean migration would be equivalent to approximately 20,000 in the early 2000s (A. H. Kim et al., 2012, p. 10).

framework that she used and moreover provide updated information using the latest census data published by Statistics Canada in 2016.<sup>4344</sup>

In the analytical paper published by Statistics Canada, Lindsay Colin (2001) provided the following definition of Canadians, on whom the data were based:

- Canadian citizens (by birth or by naturalization) and landed immigrants with a usual place of residence in Canada (including those who are abroad, either on a military base or attached to a diplomatic mission; or who are at sea or in port aboard merchant vessels under Canadian registry).
- Persons with a usual place of residence in Canada who are claiming refugee status and members of their families living with them.
- Persons with a usual place of residence in Canada:
  - Who hold a student authorization (student visa or student permit), an employment authorization, or a Minister's permit (including extensions);
  - and members of their families living with them. (Colin, 2001, p. 8)

Thus, Colin (2001) highlighted that the term, *Canadians*, is used to refer to one's usual place of residence in Canada, rather than his or her citizenship status (p. 8).

### **3.3.1 Population Growth**

As mentioned previously, the Korean community in Canada is the seventh-largest non-European ethnic group in the country, according to the census from the years between 2001 and 2016. The Korean community is moreover considered to be a fast-growing community compared to the overall population of Canada. For example, between 1996 and 2001, it grew by 53% while the overall population grew by 4% (Colin, 2001, p. 7). Comparing these data to the most recent census data published in 2016 reveals that the increasing growth of the Korean community continues to this day, as can be seen in Figure 9.

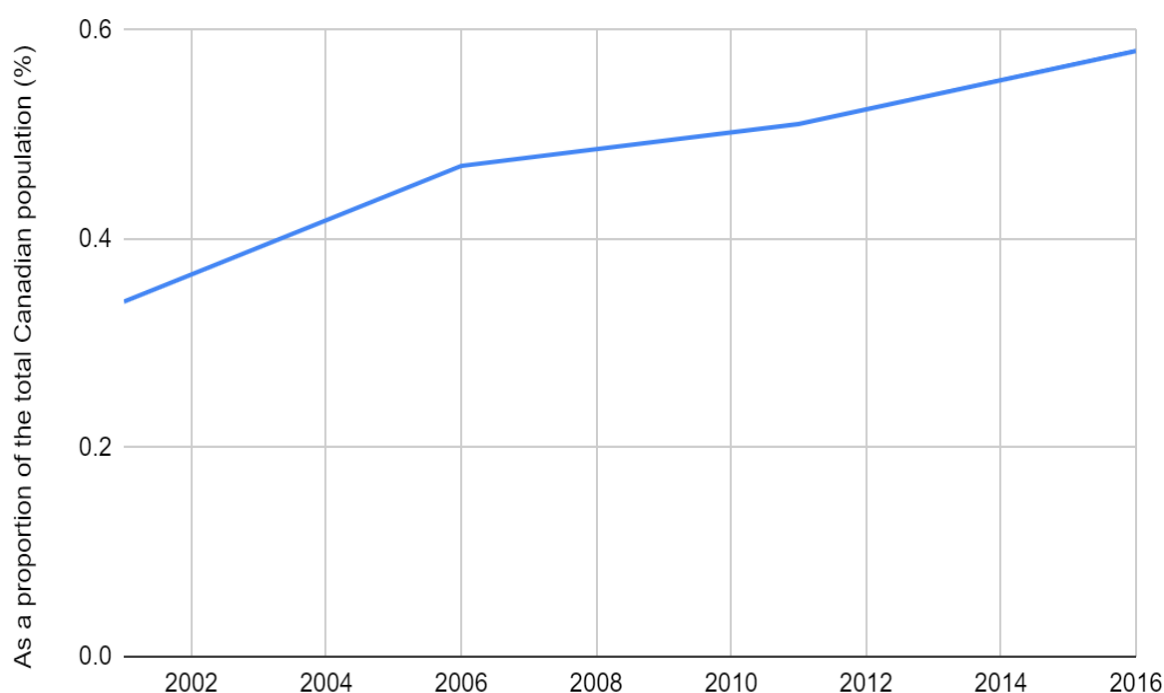
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<sup>43</sup> The census data provided by Statistics Canada are based on the sample size of 20%-25% of the overall population, depending on the publication.

<sup>44</sup> At the time of drafting this part of the study, the 2016 census was the most recent census data that was available. Since then, the 2021 census data have been published.

**Figure 9**

*Growth of the Korean ethnic origin population, 2001-2016*



*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2001a, 2006a, 2011, & 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

**Table 4**

*Korean ethnic origin identification of Canadians*

	Total—single and multiple responses	Single responses	Multiple responses
2001 census (20% sample data)	101,715	95,200 (94%)	6,510 (6%)
2016 census (25% sample data)	198,210	177,925 (90%)	20,290 (10%)

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2001c, 2016e. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

What is interesting to note from Colin’s (2001) paper is that almost all participants of Korean origin who reside in Canada (94%) reported only having Korean origin, while only 6% indicated having other ethnic origins. This can be contrasted to the overall Canadian population, among whom almost 40% reported having multiple ethnic origins (p. 9). When the data are compared between the 2001 and 2016 census (Table 4), the vast majority of Canadians of Korean origin continued to report a single Korean ethnic origin, despite a slight increase in the



percentage of those who report multiple ethnic origins. This could be an indicator of cross-ethnic unions between Canadians of Korean origin and the members from outside of the Korean community, as well as the children from cross-ethnic relationships.

**3.3.2 Immigrant/Citizenship Status**

**Table 5**

*Immigrants who landed in Canada on or prior to May 10, 2016*

Total - 25% sample	Non-immigrants	Immigrants	Non-permanent residents
198,215 (100%)	43,280 (21.8%)	129,650 (65.4%)	25,280 (12.8%)

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

As can be seen in Table 5, most Canadians of Korean origin<sup>45</sup> are immigrants,<sup>46</sup> whereas non-permanent residents<sup>47</sup> (12.8%) and non-immigrants—those who are Canadian citizens by birth—represent the minority (21.8%). In fact, the 2016 census data showed that as many as 79.3% of the 25% sample data of Canadians of Korean origin were born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016f). Indeed, Korean immigrants is a recent and young immigrant group in Canada—mostly composed of the *first* generation (i.e. the first and 1.5 generation) (79%), followed by the second (19%) and third generation and more (2%)<sup>48</sup> (Statistics Canada, 2016e).

Furthermore, the largest proportion of Korean immigrants (39.4%) arrived in Canada during the years 2001 to 2010 at 25 to 44 years of age (44.9%) (Figure 10 & Table 6). According to Park, this trend can be explained by this particular age group, which she describes as the “core economic age,” as well as Canada’s immigration points system, which favours applicants between ages of 21 and 49 (p. 21). Hence, the statistical evidence is in line with the point-based system of immigration of Canada and the average profile of Korean migrants within the

<sup>45</sup> To simplify referencing, the term, Korean Canadian, will be used in this chapter to refer to Canadians of Korean origin as a factual description based on the ethnic origin and the residence, rather than one’s self-identity.

<sup>46</sup> The total count of those that are referred to as *immigrants* in the census data include persons “who are, or who have ever been, landed immigrants or permanent residents,” (Statistics Canada, 2016c) and thus includes immigrants who obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization.

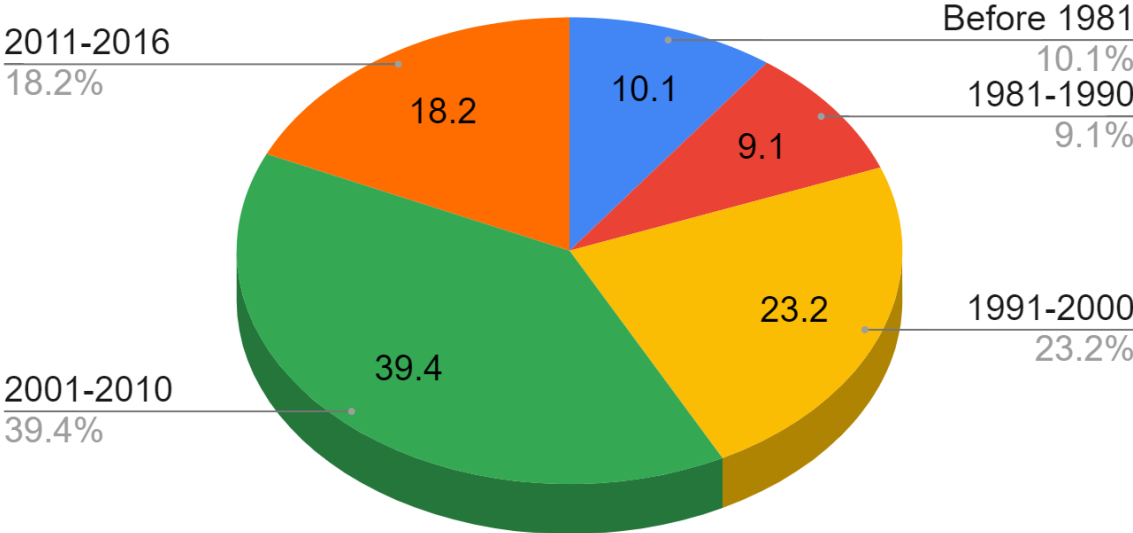
<sup>47</sup> According to Statistics Canada (2016b), the term, *non-permanent resident*, refers to those from another country who “have a work or study permit or who are refugee claimants, and their family members sharing the same permit and living in Canada with them.”

<sup>48</sup> “Third generation or more” includes persons who were born in Canada with both parents born in Canada.

modern-day context—driven by motivations to seek economic opportunities and/or English-spoken environment, allowed entry into Canada based on their occupational qualifications.

**Figure 10**

*Period of immigration: Korean Canadians*



*Note: the cited data include immigrants who landed in Canada on or prior to May 10, 2016.*

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

**Table 6**

*Age of Korean Canadians at the time of immigration*

Age at the time of immigration	Percentage (%)
Under 5 years	7.3
5 to 14 years	21.3
15 to 24 years	15.1
25 to 44 years	44.9
45 years and over	11.4

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

When compared to the overall Canadian population, Korean Canadian population demonstrates a lower proportion of citizenship rate. According to the 2016 census data, roughly 40% of the Canadians of Korean origin were not Canadian citizens, in contrast to 7% of the overall population (Table 7). This trend is likely linked to the South Korean laws that forbid

double nationality for Korean citizens: those who obtain foreign citizenship must choose a single nationality by the age of 22. For this reason, many Koreans may prefer to hold a permanent resident status rather than obtaining a Canadian citizenship (J. Park, 2012, p. 22).

**Table 7**

*Citizenship status and place of birth of Korean Canadians (%)*

Place of birth	Canadian citizens	Canadian citizens only	Citizens of Canada and at least one other country	Not Canadian citizens
Canada	93	88.8	4.2	7
Korea	67.9	65.7	2.2	32.1

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

### 3.3.3 Geographic Distribution

**Table 8**

*Provincial/Territorial distribution of the Korean Canadian population vs. total Canadian population—2001 vs. 2016 (%)*

Province/Territory	Distribution of the Korean Canadian population		Distribution of the Canadian population	
	2001	2016	2001	2016
Ontario	53.72	47.13	38.02	38.26
British Columbia	31.66	31.94	13.02	13.22
Alberta	7.79	11.31	9.91	11.57
Quebec	4.39	4.41	24.12	23.23
Manitoba	1.09	2.29	3.73	3.64
Saskatchewan	0.63	1.02	3.26	3.12
New Brunswick	0.08	0.85	2.43	2.13
Nova Scotia	0.51	0.8	3.03	2.63
Prince Edward Island	0.08	0.11	0.45	0.41
Newfoundland and Labrador	0.02	0.05	1.71	1.48
Northwest Territories	0.02	0.05	0.12	0.12
Yukon	0.01	0.04	0.1	0.1
Nunavut	0.01	0.01	0.09	0.1

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2001b, 2016b, 2016d. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

As indicated previously, immigrant populations are concentrated in Canada's urban centres across provinces—and the Korean Canadian population is no exception to this trend.

As displayed in Table 8, in 2016, the largest Korean Canadian communities were present in Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, and Quebec, where the largest Canadian metropolitan cities are located. Indeed, there was a clear correlation between the provincial/territorial population growth and Korean Canadian population: the more populous a province/territory was, the more populous Korean Canadian community tended to be. The only exception to this trend was demonstrated in the case of the Quebec province, where, despite the fact that it is home to almost one-quarter of the overall Canadian population, only 4.4% of Korean Canadians had settled.

**Table 9**

*Korean Canadian population in major cities in Canada*

City	Population figure	Distribution of the Korean Canadian population (%)
Toronto, ON	73,385	37.02
Vancouver, BC	55,505	28
Calgary, AL	11,615	5.86
Edmonton, AL	7,985	4.03
Montreal, QB	7,625	3.85
Winnipeg, MN	3,935	1.99
Ottawa, ON	3,550	1.79
London, ON	3,380	1.71
Hamilton, ON	3,300	1.66
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo, ON	2,570	1.3

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016a. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

Furthermore, Ontario remained as home to the largest Korean Canadian population, despite the slight decrease over the years, followed by British Columbia and Alberta,<sup>49</sup> whose said populations saw a small increase. Nevertheless, outside of Ontario and British Columbia, the Korean Canadian population was sparse, especially in the Atlantic Provinces and the North. The Korean Canadian population in major cities across Canada reflected this trend: in 2016,

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<sup>49</sup> According to the 2016 report published by the Alberta provincial government, Alberta has been seeing a continuous economic growth between 1985 and 2015, linked to diverse sectors—notably oil and gas sector (Alberta Economic Development and Trade, 2016). This finding appears to be positively correlated with the overall population growth in the province, which was the most significant across the country. In parallel, as can be seen in Table 8, the increase in the population of those of Korean origin in Alberta was the biggest across the nation and moreover exceeded the overall population growth of the province. Therefore, the role that the scale of potential economic opportunities play in attracting immigrants, among other factors, seems evident.

over 65% of the overall Korean immigrant population was found in Toronto and Vancouver, followed by Calgary, Edmonton, and Montreal (Table 9). Beyond economic opportunities that these urban centres offer, J. Park (2012) highlighted that the sociocultural environment that Toronto and Vancouver provide are ideal for Korean immigrants, as a well-established network of people of Korean origin is readily available in these metropolitan cities (p. 24).

### 3.3.4 Age and Gender Distribution

**Table 10**

*Age distribution of the Korean Canadian population vs. total Canadian population (%)*

	Korean Canadian			Total Canadian		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Under 15	18.6	52.8	47.1	16.6	51.3	48.7
15 to 24	16.3	1.5	48.5	12.1	51.2	48.8
25 to 34	16.2	48.4	51.6	13.1	49.7	50.3
35 to 44	15.7	40.3	59.6	12.9	48.9	51.1
45 to 54	14.9	41.8	58.2	14.3	49.2	50.8
55 to 64	10.1	45.9	54.2	14	48.9	51.1
65 to 74	5.1	48.1	51.9	9.7	48.1	51.9
75 and over	3	50	50	7.23	41.9	58.1

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016e. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

In Canada, Korean immigrants make up a recent and young immigrant group, most of whom arrive in Canada at 25 to 44 years of age. Therefore, Canadians of Korean origin are relatively younger than the overall Canadian population, as can be examined in Table 10. According to 2016 census, those under 24 years of age represented 35% of the total Korean Canadian population, whereas 29% of the total Canadian population belonged to this age group. Moreover, the most economically active age group, 25 to 44 years of age, represented 32% of the Korean Canadian population and 26% of the overall Canadian population. In parallel, there were proportionally less of Korean Canadians aged 55 and over compared to the national average (31%), and it was also the case for the seniors who are aged 65.

In line with the overall Canadian population, there were slightly more women of Korean origin living in Canada than men: in 2016, 53% of Canadians of Korean origin and 51% of the total Canadian population were female. This trend was especially visible in the age groups 35

to 44 and 45 to 54, which made up 18% and 16% of the total female population in the Korean community, respectively.

**3.3.5 Language Proficiency and Use**

**Table 11**

*Official language proficiency of the Korean Canadian population vs. total Canadian population (%)*

	Korean Canadian					Total Canadian
	Under 25	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 and older	Total	
English only	86.5	93.8	85.4	68.9	88.5	74.8
French only	3.5	1.4	0.4	0.1	1.4	22.2
English and French	2.6	1.3	0.8	0.4	1.7	1.2
Neither	7.4	3.5	13.5	30.6	8.5	1.8

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

Almost all Korean Canadians can speak at least one of the Canadian official languages: according to 2016 census, close to 92% of people of Korean origin could speak English or French or both. At the same time, the proportion of Korean Canadians who did not speak either language was higher than the national average. Regardless, this percentage can be interpreted as a positive indicator of their linguistic integration, overall, especially of those who represented the working age population (Table 11).<sup>50</sup> Parallel to the settlement patterns in English-speaking provinces across the country, the vast majority of Korean Canadians spoke English.

Furthermore, while most Korean Canadians were proficient in at least one official language, almost 80% had a mother tongue other than English or French. For instance, in 2016, about 79% of Korean Canadians reported that their mother tongue was a non-official language (Statistics Canada, 2016f). This finding was positively associated with the language used at home, since 56.2% spoke a non-official language, 32.6% spoke English, and 9.7% spoke both English and a non-official language at home. Outside of home, however, their language patterns tended to be different: English was the language most often used at work by the majority (Table

<sup>50</sup> Language proficiency was not inquired into in the census.

12). As J. Park (2012) highlighted, the proportion of those who use the non-official language at work—albeit small—affirms the involvement of Korean Canadians in economic activities that involve Korean clientele and/or partners (p. 26).

**Table 12**  
*Languages most often used by Korean Canadians (%)*

	At home	At work
English	32.6	81.9
French	1.1	1.2
Non-official language	56.2	11.6
English and French	1.4	0.7
English and non-official language	9.7	4.7
French and non-official language	0.1	0
English, French, and non-official language	0.2	0.1

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

It is also interesting to note the change in data over the years regarding the language proficiency of Korean Canadians. The comparison of the 2001 and 2016 census data suggests that a higher proportion of the Korean community in Canada appears to be adopting at least one of the official languages over time. Firstly, there was an increase in the proportion of those who are proficient in English or French or both (89% in 2001 and 91.6% in 2016). Secondly, those whose mother tongue is a non-official language represented a smaller percentage of the population (85% in 2001 and 79% in 2016). Thirdly, although there was a slight increase in the proportion of those who used both a non-official language and English or French at work (3% in 2001 versus 4.7% in 2016), English continued to be the dominant language used at work. Lastly, there was a decrease in the proportion of those who spoke only a non-official language at home (67% in 2001 and 56.2% in 2016), but an increase in the proportion of those who spoke a non-official language in combination with English or French at home (3% in 2001 and 10% in 2016). These findings indicated that, despite the language barrier that first-generation Korean immigrants are often faced with (Danico, 2004; G. Kwak & Lai, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014), they nevertheless tend to integrate within the mainstream Canadian labour market. As well, it is probable that the data reflect changes that are likely linked to cross-ethnic/racial marriages, and/or to the offspring generations acquiring the mainstream language as they grow up.

### 3.3.6 Family Status and Household Types

Comparing the 2001 and 2016 census data concerning family status reveals that, although married couples continued to represent the majority, the total Canadian population saw a decrease in the proportion of married couples and an increase in the proportion of common-law union throughout this time frame. Moreover, there were more female Canadians who were separated from their partners, divorced, or widowed. Generally, the population of Korean Canadians also reflected these trends, but the 2016 census data highlighted some distinctive traits related to marital status of Korean Canadians.

**Table 13**

*Marital status of the Korean Canadian population vs. total Canadian population—by sex (%)*

Marital status for the population aged 15 years and over in private households—25% sample data	Korean Canadian			Total Canadian		
	As a proportion to the total population	Male	Female	As a proportion to the total population	Male	Female
Married or living common law	57.9	44.9	55.1	58.4	48.8	51.2
– Married	54.5	45.3	54.7	46.2	50	50
– Living common law	3.4	39.5	60.5	12.3	50.1	49.9
Not married/not living common law	42.1	47.5	52.5	41.6	47.2	52.8
– Never married	35.1	52.4	47.6	28.2	53.8	46.2
– Separated	1.8	23.6	76.4	2.4	42.4	57.6
– Divorced	2.9	28.1	71.9	6.1	39.6	60.4
– Widowed	2.3	14.4	85.6	4.8	21	79

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

Firstly, Korean Canadians were more likely to marry than the overall Canadian population (Table 13). Secondly, Korean Canadian women were more likely to marry than the men, to be separated, divorced, or widowed, when compared to the national average. Thirdly, living common law did not seem to be a popular option for Korean Canadians. For example, there was a slightly higher proportion of Korean Canadians in common-law unions compared to 2001 (1.4%) in 2016 (3.4%); but the percentage remained low—almost four times less than that of the overall Canadian population. Furthermore, while there were little differences in the proportions of those who were not married nor living common law among both populations,



Korean Canadians were likely to be single and have never been married than the total Canadian population. In parallel, there were smaller rates of Korean Canadians who had been separated, divorced, and widowed.

**Table 14**

*Household types of the Korean Canadian population vs. total Canadian population—by sex (%)*

Household type of person for the population in private households—25% sample data	Korean Canadian			Total Canadian		
	As a proportion to the total population	Male	Female	As a proportion to the total population	Male	Female
Persons in one-census-family households without additional persons	76.7	47.4	52.6	72.1	49.7	50.3
– In a couple census family without children	13.3	44.8	55.2	21.1	50.1	49.9
– Persons in a couple census family with children	52.9	50.1	49.9	41.8	51.3	48.7
– In a lone-parent census family	10.5	37.7	62.3	9.2	41.2	58.8
Persons in multigenerational households	5	44.5	55.5	6.3	45.8	54.2
Persons in other census family households	6.9	47.5	52.4	6.2	49.4	50.6
Persons in two-or-more-person non-census family	4.9	48.8	51.2	3.9	55.9	44.1
Persons living alone	6.6	45.8	54.2	11.5	46.2	53.8

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

Furthermore, the census data indicated numerous household characteristics of Korean Canadians compared to the total population. Among the overall Canadian population, Korean Canadians were more likely to be in one-census family households, especially with children (Table 14). At the same time, there was a growth in the proportion of lone-parent families among Korean Canadians, from 3.4% in 2001 to 10.5% in 2016, in parallel to the total population which also saw an increase during the same period, from 5.5% to 9.2%. In fact, the lone-parent family proportion of Korean Canadians surpassed that of the total population in 2016. Another tendency of Korean Canadians was that they were less likely than the total

population to live alone. Additionally, there were less multigenerational households among Korean Canadians when compared to the national average—which can be explained by the fact that Korean immigrants are a recent immigrant group in Canada, and that seniors make up a very small minority of the Korean Canadian population (Table 10). For the overall Korean Canadian and Canadian populations, single mothers were more frequently reported than single fathers, and the proportion of one-person households increased throughout the time.

Higher rates of unions—especially marriage—and one-census family households with children, as well as lower rates of common-law unions and separation/divorce, suggest traditional family values that Korean Canadians tend to retain. However, it appears likely that the Korean Canadian population may be developing similar patterns in family settings and household types as the total Canadian population in certain aspects over time, such as growing proportions of lone-parent family settings and one-person households.

### 3.3.7 Religion

**Table 15**

*Religious affiliations of the Korean Canadian population—in 1991, 2001, and 2011 (%)*

	1991	2001	2011
Buddhist	2.2	3.9	3.3
Protestant or non-Catholic Christian	57.5	51.2	47.4
Catholic	24.4	24.6	20.9
Other religions	0.3	0.6	0.1
No affiliation	15.7	19.9	28.2

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 1991,<sup>51</sup> 2001d, 2011. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

In 2011,<sup>52</sup> almost half of Canadians of Korean origin were Protestant or non-Catholic Christian (Table 15). Over 20% were Catholic, 3.3% Buddhist, 0.1% reported “other religions,” while 28.2% stated no religious affiliation. Comparing the data published in 1991, 2001, and 2011 census demonstrates that there have been some changes in trends regarding religious affiliations of Korean Canadians over the years, such as a gradual decline in Protestantism or

<sup>51</sup> As cited in J. Park (2012) p. 26.

<sup>52</sup> Since 1871, the question on religion has only been included in the National Household Survey every ten years. Therefore, at the time of drafting this chapter, the most recent Census data on ethnic communities in Canada was the 2011 census.

non-Catholic Christianity, as well as a consistent increase in the number of those with no stated religion. Nonetheless, the majority of Korean Canadians appeared to be Christians, especially Protestants/non-Catholics.

**Table 16**

*Religious affiliations of the Korean Canadian population vs. total Canadian population (%)*

Religion	Korean Canadian	Total Canadian
Buddhist	3.3	1.1
Protestant or non-Catholic	47.4	28.3
Catholic	20.9	39
Hindu	0	1.5
Jewish	0.1	1
Muslim	0.1	3.2
Sikh	0	1.4
Traditional (Aboriginal) Spirituality	0	0.2
Other religions	0.1	0.4
No religious affiliation	28.2	23.9

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2011. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

As demonstrated in Table 16, some similarities can be drawn between religious affiliations of the Korean Canadian and the total Canadian populations: high rates of Christian faith, low rates of non-Christian faith, and a significant minority who had no stated religion were reported in 2016. The differences between the two groups laid in minority religions, as, unlike the total population, all minority religions other than Buddhism appeared to be almost non-existent among the population of Korean Canadians.

**Table 17**

*Religious affiliations of the Korean Canadian population vs. total Korean population (%)*

Religion	Korean Canadian	Korean
Buddhist	3.3	15.5
Protestant or non-Catholic	47.4	19.7
Catholic	20.9	7.9
Other religions	0.3	0.8
No religious affiliation	28.2	56.1

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2011, Statistics Korea, 2016. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada/Statistics Korea of this product.*

It is worth noting that religious affiliations of Korean Canadian resembles more closely to those of the total Canadian population than the total Korean population. According to the 2015 census data published by Statistics Korea, while the Christianity represented the dominant faith in Korea, it was reported by approximately 28%—which is notably contrasting to the 70% of Korean Canadians Christians (Statistics Canada, 2011) (Table 17). In fact, the proportion of Koreans who had no stated religion were almost double that of Korean Canadians.

Therefore, the religious profile of Korean Canadians is marked by significantly prominent Christian beliefs, which proves to be one of the differentiating traits when compared to the total Korean population. This suggests a certain role that the Korean ethnic church plays within the Korean community, bringing together its members in ways that are likely to be different from the church in the homeland. Indeed, the contribution of Korean churches to maintaining Korean ethnic communities has been consistently discussed in numerous studies. For many Korean immigrants, ethnic churches provide, not only religious, but also social support that they seek (Chong, 1998; Joo, 2010; J. Y. Kwak, 2011; Min & Choi, 1993; Min, 1992b; J. Park, 2012; S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2007).

### **3.3.8 Education**

As illustrated in Table 18, Korean Canadians are more likely to attain higher levels of education than the average Canadian. In fact, in 2016, a higher proportion of Korean Canadians obtained postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree than the total population, and the overall Korean Canadian population demonstrated a preference for university for bachelor and above levels of education over other postsecondary pathways. For example, almost half of the Korean Canadians population had university certificate, diploma, or degree at bachelor level or above—almost doubling that of the overall population. In contrast to 18.3% of the national average, only 8.7% of Korean Canadians had no certificate, diploma, or degree.

**Table 18**

*Highest level of education of the Korean Canadian population vs. total Canadian population (%)*

Highest level of education for the population aged 15 years and over— 25% sample data	Korean Canadian			Total Canadian		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
No certificate, diploma or degree	8.7	47.6	52.5	18.3	50.9	49.1
Secondary school diploma, or equivalency certificate	25.9	46.3	53.8	26.5	48.7	51.3
Postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree	65.3	45.7	54.3	55.3	48.2	51.8
– Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	2	56.4	43.6	5.4	56.8	43.2
– Other non-university certificate or diploma (e.g. college)	11.7	42.3	57.6	19.4	41.9	58.1
– University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	5.8	41.9	58	2.8	40.8	59.2
– University certificate, diploma, or degree at bachelor level or above	45.8	46.5	53.5	23.3	46.1	53.9
– Bachelor’s degree	33	43.9	56.1	15.5	44.3	55.7
– University certificate or diploma above bachelor level	2.9	43.1	56.9	1.6	44.1	55.9
– Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, or optometry	1	58.1	41.9	0.7	53.7	46.3
– Master’s degree	7.5	54.1	45.9	4.6	48.9	51.1
– Earned doctorate	1.4	66.4	33.6	0.8	62.5	37.5

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

Beyond the level of education, professional degrees in areas such as medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, or optometry, were commonly sought after, as well as master’s degree and doctorate, when compared to the national average. Moreover, business, management and public administration, architecture, engineering, and related technologies, and social and behavioural sciences and law were some of the domains of education that were popular among Korean Canadians. At the same time, consistent to their recent immigration profile, almost 60% of Korean Canadians obtained their postsecondary degree outside of Canada. This is a sharp

contrast to 17% of the total population who pursued their postsecondary education abroad (Statistics Canada, 2016f).

According to the 2016 census, the first- (i.e. first and 1.5 generation) and second-generation Korean Canadians demonstrated significantly high educational attainment when compared with subsequent generations (Statistics Canada, 2016f). This finding is not surprising, as the third and older generations only represented 4.2% of the overall Korean Canadian population that participated in the 2016 census. The fact that close to 60% of Korean Canadians arrived in Canada from 2001 to 2016 (Figure 10) (Statistics Canada, 2016f) accounts for the small pool of third-generation individuals in the census data who were old enough to have pursued postsecondary education in 2016. These data affirm that Korean immigrants who arrive in Canada tend to be highly educated in professional domains, and it appears likely that their children demonstrate similar traits.

**3.3.9 Employment and Occupations**

**Table 19**

*Labour market participation and unemployment rates of workers aged 15 years and over—the Korean Canadian population vs. total Canadian population (%)*

Employment characteristics	Korean Canadian			Total Canadian		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Participation rate	61	66.8	56.1	65.2	52.1	47.9
Unemployment rate	8.5	8.3	8.6	7.7	56	44

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

Despite their high levels of educational attainment, Korean Canadians are less active in the national labour market when compared to the total Canadian population. For instance, in 2016, their participation rate was lower and unemployment higher than the general population, (Table 19). Female Korean Canadians demonstrated the highest unemployment rate across both groups. Moreover, in comparison to the total Canadian population, smaller percentages of Korean Canadians were employed<sup>53</sup> (61.9% versus 67.6%) and worked full time (41.3% versus 49.7% out of the working population) (Statistics Canada, 2016f).

<sup>53</sup> Statistics Canada (2016f) indicates that this category includes “persons aged 15 years and over who never worked, persons who worked prior to 2015 and persons who worked in 2016, but not in 2015.”

Another trait of Korean Canadians in comparison to the total Canadian that stands out is their higher rate of self-employment. While those who were employed from both groups mostly consisted of employees, the proportion of those who were self-employed was significantly greater, regardless of sex, among the Korean Canadian population than that of the total Canadian population. J. Park (2012) postulated that Korean Canadians demonstrate a much higher rate of self-employment than other visible minority groups, and that most who are self-employed are members of the first generation, working in retail and food service industry (p. 30).

Many studies have highlighted the factors that account for the tendency of Korean Canadians towards self-employment. Before all, Neil M. Coe et al. (2020) explained that ethnic and racial minorities may respond to marginalization in the labour market by starting their own businesses and their own commercial neighbourhoods. This phenomenon results in distinctive ethnic neighbourhoods in numerous major immigrant cities: Chinatown, Koreatown, and Little India, just to name a few examples (p. 438). This argument is consistent to the findings of Pyong Gap Min's (1984) study, based on interviews with 159 Korean businessmen in Atlanta, USA. The author posited that recent Korean immigrants who are often highly educated and are of white-collar background are faced with status inconsistency, through which their high level of education is met with low income or occupation. These "underrewarded status inconsistencies" acknowledge the problem of underemployment and "strive to achieve social mobility in order to create status equilibrium" (Min, 2013, p. 90). Additionally, faced with the perceived disadvantages in non-business occupations and environments (e.g. the language barrier, ignorance of customs of the host country, and discrimination), Korean immigrants turn to small businesses in the hopes of achieving economic and social mobility (Min, 2013, p. 91). Moreover, self-employment is more common for immigrant groups, such as Korean, who have arrived with sufficient capital, and for whom the cultural barriers to employment in the host country appear difficult to overcome (Coe et al., 2020, p. 438).

Indeed, high rates of self-employment are reflected in the occupation choice of Korean Canadians. The occupation categories and the labour force distribution demonstrate that management was the second-most popular occupation choice for the Korean community (Table 20). Sales and service occupations was the biggest occupation category (33.2%), which was also the most popular occupation for both male and female Korean Canadians. Such popularity in sales and service work could be explained by job changes that Korean immigrants had to

encounter, due to their unrecognized education and skills in the Canadian labour market (J. Park, 2012, p. 30).

**Table 20**

*Labour force population aged 15 years and over—by occupation and sex (National Occupational Classification (NOC))*(%)

Occupation	Korean Canadian			Total Canadian		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Management occupations	16.8	19.4	14.1	11	13.1	8.7
Business, finance, and administration occupations	12.6	9.6	15.7	15.7	9.1	23
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	7.6	11.9	3.1	7	10.4	3.2
Health occupations	6.2	4.2	8.3	6.8	2.6	11.5
Occupations in education, law and social, community, and government services	11.2	8.6	13.8	11.7	7.1	16.8
Occupations in art, culture, recreation, and sport	4.4	3.5	5.2	3.1	2.7	3.5
Sales and service occupations	33.2	29.1	37.5	23.4	19.3	27.7
Trades, transport, and equipment operators, and related occupations	5.8	10.7	0.8	14.6	26.3	1.9
Natural resources, agriculture, and related production occupations	0.5	0.6	0.3	2.3	3.5	1
Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	1.8	2.4	1.2	4.5	6	2.7

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

Outside of the sales and service occupations category, most male Korean Canadians were engaged in management occupations (19.4%) and most female Korean Canadians in business, finance, and administration occupations (15.7%). When compared to the total Canadian population, the data reveal that Korean Canadians were more present in management occupations and sales and service occupations, but less engaged in occupations related to natural resources, agriculture, and related production, as well as trades, transport, equipment operations and the like. Sex distribution across occupation categories appear similar among Korean Canadians and the total population.



### 3.3.10 Income

**Table 21**

*Average income and the prevalence of low income after tax of the population aged 15 years and over—the Korean Canadian Population vs. Total Canadian Population*

	2001 Census		2006 Census		2011 Census		2016 Census	
	Total Korean	Total Canadian	Total Korean	Total Canadian	Total Korean	Total Canadian	Total Korean	Total Canadian
Average income (\$)	20,065	29,769	21,421	35,498	28,020	40,650	31,793	47,487
Prevalence of low income after tax (%)	42.9 (LICO)	14.7 (LICO)	37 (LICO)	8.6 (LICO)	35.2 (LIM)	14.9 (LIM)	25.2 (LICO) 32 (LIM)	9.2 (LICO) 14.2 (LIM)

*Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2001e, 2006b, 2011a, 2016f. This does not constitute an endorsement by Statistics Canada of this product.*

The Korean Canadian population has systematically demonstrated a lower-income profile compared to the national average. In 2001, the gap in the total annual incomes of Korean Canadians and the total Canadian population over the age of 15 was as big as \$9,704, and the annual income of Korean Canadians was equivalent to 67.4% of the national average (Statistics Canada, 2001e). As can be seen in Table 21, the average total income has increased for both groups over the years, but especially for the total population: between 2001 and 2016, the income of the Korean Canadian population has grown by \$11,728, and the national average by \$17,718. Thus, despite the noticeable growth of the average income of Korean Canadians, the income gap between them and the total population does not appear to be decreasing.

In addition, the average total income of Korean Canadians is lower than that of other visible minority groups (J. Park, 2012, p. 31). For example, the average total annual incomes of Canadians of Arabic (\$37,376), Filipino (\$38,918), Chinese (\$47,164), and Japanese (\$47,164) origin were all higher than the total income that Korean Canadians made, on average (\$31,793). While it is true that Korean immigrants are considered as one of the more recent immigrant groups, the gap between the average incomes of Korean Canadians and other ethnic groups appears significant.

The low-income rates<sup>54</sup> of Korean Canadians seem to remain considerably higher when compared to the national average, as consistently reported in the census data (Table 21). Nonetheless, the prevalence of low income after tax has decreased by a significant amount among Korean Canadians over the years. While almost 43% of those aged 15 and over were considered as low income using the Low-Income Cut-Offs, after tax (LICO-AT) measure gradually decreased from 2001 and reached as low as 25.2% in 2016. Respectively, while the difference between the low-income rates of Korean Canadians and the national average was as big as 28.2% in 2001, this gap was reported to have narrowed to 16% in 2016 using LICO (Table 3.20) (Statistics Canada, 2001e & 2016f).

Thus, there is a significantly less proportion of Korean Canadian children under the age of 15 that live in families with incomes below the Low-income Cut-offs in Canada than before. In 2001, this rate was as high as 48%, which was significantly higher than 19% of all children in Canada (29% of difference). In 2016, however, the percentage of Korean Canadian children who were living in low-income families was found to be the smallest since the 2001 census, at 24.1%. Although this rate was still 13.9% higher than the national average of 10.2%, it is a positive indicator that the gap is growing smaller over time. This finding also suggests that younger parents—including 1.5-generation immigrants that are counted as first generation in the census data—may be attaining higher levels of income than their parents.

Unsurprisingly, seniors are the most likely to be low-income among the Korean Canadian population, especially those who live alone. For instance, in 2000, 80% of unattached Korean Canadians aged 65 and over had incomes below the Low-income Cut-offs, which was almost double the rate of the seniors of the total population. Unattached female seniors were the most likely to have low incomes, 85% among whom were low income in 2001 and 76.7% in 2006. The high prevalence of living below the Low-Income Cut-offs has been the case for the overall senior Korean Canadian population. In 2016, 38.5% were low income (versus 14.8% of the total population) according to the LICO-AT measure, and 18.3% according to the LIM-AT measure (versus 4.8%). Compared to the 57.4% of the low-income rate of senior Korean Canadians reported in 2001, the 2016 census data of 38.5% demonstrates an improvement.

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<sup>54</sup> The Low-Income Cut-Offs After Tax (LICO-AT) are a measure of income below which a family or unattached individual will likely spend a 20% more of their income than the average on food, shelter, and clothing. LICOs are based on family and community size that affect the cost of living (Statistics Canada, 2015). The Low-Income Measure, After Tax (LIM-AT) are also a measure of income that “refers to a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted after-tax income of private households” (Statistics Canada, 2017e).

Moreover, it may be worth noting that in metropolitan cities of Canada such as Toronto and Vancouver, the low-income rates of the inhabitants are higher than the national average. The rates are 17.4% (LICO-AT) and 20.2% (LIM-AT) in Toronto, and 17.2% and 18.8% in Vancouver, in contrast to 9.2% and 14.2% of the national average. As the Korean Canadian population is concentrated in economic powerhouses such as these two cities, their low-income rate is speculated to be relatively higher, as well.

Despite some improved economic attainment throughout the years, it appears evident that Korean Canadians continue to have a lower income level than the national average. Previous literature has shed light on this phenomenon by providing some possible explanations. Firstly, the fact that Canadian employers tend to value work experiences and schooling in the host country in the future employees (J. Park, 2012, p. 32) is likely to work against many Korean Canadians who obtained their degrees outside of Canada. However, this may not be a sufficient reason, as second-generation Korean Canadian workers who received university education in Canada also had an average income that was significantly lower than their Canadian counterparts with the same education levels. Secondly, the high percentage of Korean Canadian workers who are self-employed may be associated with the lower income levels, as those who are self-employed are often able to under-report their income and over-report their expenses to reduce taxes (Schuetze, 2002). Nevertheless, J. Park (2012) concluded that the lower income levels of Korean Canadians is puzzling, since there is no reason to assume a systemic misrepresentation of income within the national census by certain population groups (p. 33).

What appears to be the case for the Korean Canadian population is that an increasing proportion seems to be making the total average income—albeit to smaller numbers and extents when compared to the national average. The fact that they have high levels of education and yet are often unable to make as much as their Canadian counterparts suggests that they have yet to fully integrate into the mainstream labour market, at least in sectors that are deemed desirable for upward social mobility. Meanwhile, the continuous demographic growth of the Korean Canadian population indicates the growth of the community, which can provide its members with the support needed for them to be able to access the labour market and earn better income than previously.

### 3.4 Korean Immigrants in Toronto

According to the 2016 Census, Toronto was largest city in Canada, as well as the fourth-largest city in North America, where reside about 2.7 million people, representing 7.8% of the total Canadian population. It is known to be one of the world’s most multicultural cities, home to many young and recent immigrants. By far, Toronto has the largest share of immigrant population (35.9%) out of other largest urban centres in Canada, such as Montreal (12.4%) and Vancouver (13.1%). First-generation immigrants make up more than half of the overall immigrant population in the city, and 25 to 44 years is the biggest age group of immigrants (44.1%), followed by 15 to 24 years (21.5%), 5 to 14 years (16.3%), 45 years and over (10.6%), and under 5 years (7.6%) (Statistics Canada, 2017f).

**Figure 11**

*Map of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)*



“File: Greater toronto area map.svg” by Martadelo2005 [edited by Ibagli] is marked with CC 2.5. The image can be visited by the link [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greater\\_toronto\\_area\\_map.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greater_toronto_area_map.svg).

Ethnic diversity is evident, not only within the City of Toronto, but also widespread across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) (Figure 11).<sup>55</sup> The GTA is projected to be the fastest-growing region of the province of Ontario, whose population is projected to increase from 6.8 million in 2018 to over 10.2 million by 2046. Its share of the provincial population is moreover expected to rise from 47.8% in 2018 to 51.8% in 2046 (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2019, as cited in STOREYS Editorial Team, 2020).

According to the Toronto District School Board (2013), the four largest racialized groups among its student population are White (29%), South Asian (24%), East Asian (15%), and Black (12%). Each of these four largest ethno-racial groups tends to live in different pockets of the city. The populations of students, parents, and guardians who identify themselves as White generally live in the central area and areas along the lake, whereas those of East Asian backgrounds tend to settle in North York and Scarborough areas (p. 1).

Toronto has numerous symbolic ties with Korean immigrants in the context of Korean migration to Canada. The earliest Korean immigrants made their way to Canada by the 1960s, particularly to Toronto. Dr. Tae-yon Whang, who is the first recorded Korean who settled permanently in Canada, also made Toronto home, and is described as “the pioneer of the present-day Korean community in Canada” (J.-G. Kim, n.d.). Many students and independent immigrants from Korea followed in his footsteps until the mass Korean immigration to Canada began later on. In 1966, approximately 100 Koreans had settled in Toronto area, and the community more than doubled in size in the following year—representing the largest group of Korean Canadians at the time. In 1967, the Alpha Korean United Church was formed, providing a valuable site for Korean immigrants to practise faith and strengthen a sense of the Korean community, and in 1975, around 10,000 Koreans were estimated to be living in the Toronto area (Wetmore, 2013).

In her article, “Korea Town and the History of Koreans in Toronto,” Nicole Wetmore (2013) identified church and entrepreneurship as the two fundamental elements that have shaped Korean immigrant experiences in Canada, particularly in Toronto. The earlier Korean community had its origin in the religious missions of Korean Christians; but the mass migration that followed involved Koreans coming from a broader range of backgrounds—many among

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<sup>55</sup> Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is an administrative area of the province of Ontario, consisting of the census Divisions of Toronto, Peel, York, Durham, and Halton. In the remainder of this study, the GTA will be referred to as *Toronto*, which is to be distinguished from the *City of Toronto*.

whom started running small businesses in their new lives as immigrants in the host country. An example that the author presented is of Korean grocery and convenience stores: in 1993, more than 1,000 corner stores in Toronto were estimated to be operated by Koreans (Wetmore, 2013), and by 2010, the number of convenience store owners who were of Korean-immigrant background in the province of Ontario was estimated to be over 2,000 (Coe et al., 2020, p. 439).

Furthermore, Wetmore (2013) highlighted that there are “so many different aspects to the story of the Korean community in Toronto” beyond the church and entrepreneurship. The neighbourhoods in Toronto that are known as Koreatown—also known as K-town—provide one of the most prominent settings of the Korean community, for instance. The first Koreatown was formed in the mid-70s along Bloor Street in downtown Toronto, between Christie and Bathurst Street, consisting of retail businesses such as restaurants and supermarkets. The second Koreatown is located along Yonge Street, between Finch and Sheppard avenues in the North York district. Not only do these Koreatown sites provide valuable cultural, ethnic, social, and economic resources for the Korean Canadian community, but they also contribute to the overall multicultural picture of Toronto, where can be found numerous other distinctive ethnic neighbourhoods.

To this day, Toronto remains as home to the biggest Korean Canadian community in Canada, hosting 73,385 Korean Canadians, comprising of 37% of the overall population of Canadians of Korean origin. In 2016, the Korean community was the sixth-biggest ethnic community present in the city of Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2017f). Needless to say, the wealth of social resources and networking opportunities available within the Korean Canadian community in Toronto would be abundant, making the location a rich pool of data needed to study the subject. For such reasons, among Korean immigrants across Canada, those in Toronto will be the subject of the case study.



## CONCLUSION TO PART 1

This first part of the study sought to present the starting point of the research journey. The fundamental questions surrounding the notion of personal identity of individuals and the national identity of Canada led to exploring various notions of identity and the impact of ethnic, national, and generational factors that are at play. Moreover, Canadian multiculturalism was examined as the political and social ideology and the demographic reality, and Korean immigrants were illustrated as one of numerous visible-minority groups contributing to Canadian multiculturalism.

One of the most prevalent themes that emerged in the discussion of the notion of identity was its transitional nature. In the context of the national identity of Canada, the envisioned Canadian identity, which had been limited to the White, European-descent individuals, transitioned over time to reflect the evolving political agenda, which sought to promote social cohesion, and economic and population growth, through the open immigration policy and multiculturalist ideology. As a result, the Canadian identity has become increasingly associated with hybridity in the modern-day context. On the level of personal identity, immigrants' perceived sense of identity tends to shift throughout acculturation. The most evident transitions can be observed in their linguistic profiles, as well as cultural and social affiliations.

The second theme that appeared to be prevalent in this part of the study was the multi-layered nature of identity. Firstly, ethnic and national attachment of individuals can develop in varying types of interfaces. Secondly, cultural and social dimensions must be considered when examining one's identity journey. Thirdly, the hierarchical structure of groups, in- and out-group perceptions, and self-definition are positively correlated with one another. Fourthly, among each ethnic immigrant group, there exist distinctive traits related to the individuals' acculturation experiences and resulting identities that are associated with generation groups. These aspects of identity proved to be useful notions that helped navigating throughout this study, highlighting the highly complex and intricate process of identity negotiation of individuals.

Furthermore, the background research on immigration and multiculturalism in Canada and Korean immigrants helped establishing global profile traits of the Canadian and Korean Canadian population—adding onto the findings of previous literature the most recent available data at the time of the research. Canada's immigration policy went through drastic changes in the past, increasingly becoming reflective of the nation's need for welcoming *qualified*



immigrants based on their skills rather than race. In parallel, the adoption of the Multiculturalism Policy and Act marked a milestone in the nation-building project of Canada. Despite the criticisms that have persisted throughout the years, multiculturalism has become one of the significant national symbols and character with which the people identify, thus representing an integral part of the national identity.

Examining the migration patterns of Korean immigrants to Canada moreover provided valuable insights into various push and pull factors, as well as the government relations between the two countries, that are at play. In fact, the emigration patterns that were observed in Korea across the years clearly demonstrated migration motives that reflected evolving needs of migrants—related to economic, political, and social stability and/or the pursuit of economic and/or education opportunities. While Christianity, especially Protestantism, played a key role in initiating Korean migration to Canada, long-term migration was mostly facilitated by the aligned needs of both governments: firstly, the Korean government sought to relieve the population pressure and to secure foreign exchange while the Canadian government was in the need for manpower; and secondly, economic links were established between the two countries through trade, which significantly boosted Korean migration to Canada. Currently, Canada is one of the most popular destination countries for Korean migrants. This phenomenon can be explained by the English-speaking culture and environment that it provides, as well as by the Multiculturalism Policy which helps establishing an attractive appeal for visible minorities. Additionally, paired with multiculturalism, the immigration system which welcomes skilled immigrants helps making Canada an attractive destination country for immigration.

In the current-day context, Korean immigrants in Canada can generally be described as educated and skilled individuals from the middle-class background in Korea, who, upon immigrating, tend to experience some significant changes in their religious affiliations and social status. One of the most striking features of Korean immigrants in Canada is their adoption of Christianity, especially Protestant, upon immigrating. This tendency is likely linked with the fact that the Korean community was first established by education migrants who arrived in Canada in the pursuit of education in theology in the 1960s: to this day, Korean churches provide support for immigrants and promote a sense of community by bringing them together. As well, despite the levels of their educational and professional backgrounds that tend to be higher than the national average, Korean immigrants seem to be faced with downward social mobility in Canada. Indeed, higher rates of self-employment and participation in sales and

service occupations, along with lower labour-market participation and annual incomes, are likely to be associated with the language and cultural barrier and the employers' preference for Canadian education qualifications—which moreover affirm the model minority.

While there may be some significant changes in profile traits that Korean immigrants in Canada tend to encounter, traditional family values seem to persist in many cases. High rates of marriage and couple-census-family-with-children arrangement, and low rates of divorce and common-law arrangement indicate this tendency. Nevertheless, the census data suggest that the family settings and household characteristics among the Korean Canadian population may be evolving, becoming more resemblant of the national average.

Korean Canadians are one of the fastest-growing minority groups in Canada who tend to settle in urban centres. As they make up a relatively recent immigrant group in Canada, the Korean Canadian population is mostly represented by first-generation immigrants. Across the vast amounts of Census data which are available, the flaw seems evident: the census data group both the first- and 1.5-generation immigrants into the same, *first-generation* category, despite the salient impact of the 1.5-generation category that have been highlighted in previous literature. Consequently, with the over-representation of first-generation immigrants, the 1.5-generation immigrants are overlooked in the Census data. However, it is important to note that, as time passes, 1.5-generation children age and become adult members of the Canadian society, contributing to its economic and societal functioning. In this regard, the findings affirmed that an in-depth study of the 1.5 generation is indeed an interesting research project that would further shed light on their distinctively heterogeneous acculturation and integration patterns, as well as the resulting identity.

Throughout this first part of the study, it became evident that a sense of ambiguity is embedded in a number of identity constructs, such as (multicultural) Canadian, dual/hybrid, and 1.5-generation identities. Despite heated discussions and debates surrounding these subjects, the consensus appears to have been established: there seems to be the mainstream support for hybrid Canadian identities, in parallel to the overall support for multiculturalism; and the interpretation of the 1.5-generation identity is no longer limited to marginalized self-identities like it used to be in the past in literature. The preliminary explorations of notions related to identity and the background research on both Canada and Korea therefore highlighted the need to pursue an in-depth study of Korean immigrants in Toronto—1.5 generation, in particular—within the context of Canadian multiculturalism.



**PART 2**

**QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH:  
GENERATIONAL STUDY OF ETHNIC  
IDENTITY MAINTENANCE OF KOREAN  
IMMIGRANTS IN TORONTO**

## INTRODUCTION TO PART 2

In the form of questionnaire survey analysis, this quantitative part of the study seeks to probe into ethnic salience and self-identities in the case of Korean immigrants in Canada. With approximately 240,000 Korean Canadians who have settled in Canada (Embassy of the Republic of Korea to Canada, n.d.), the factors that shape identity journeys of individuals who are of the Korean immigrant background are anticipated to be numerous and too great in variety. On this note, previous research has shown that some of the major differences related to varying degrees of acculturation and integration are associated with immigrant generation groups (Park & Burgess, 1925; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Warner & Srole, 1945)—therefore, immigrant generations provide a reliable framework that can be used to try to dissect and categorize Korean immigrants into sub-groups. The ethnic change that occurs throughout identity journeys of immigrants must be examined in relation to their immigrant generation—and not just the length of residence—to yield data that would best represent the subjects in an adequate manner. Therefore, drawing generational distinctions in collecting and analyzing data seemed essential.

As indicated previously, Toronto is home to the largest Korean population across Canada (Press, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2016a). Therefore, it is undoubtedly a location that would offer an ample amount of data related to this population. The aim of this second part of the study is to generate an ethnic profile of each generation group in Toronto that would adequately reflect varying levels of ethnic salience in self-identities of the subjects. The results will help establishing key differences, as well as illustrating the transmission of cultural similarities across the parent (i.e. first) and offspring (i.e. 1.5 and second) generations.

## CHAPTER 4

### QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH: METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Methodology

##### 4.1.1 Design

According to Robert M. Groves et al. (2009), quantitative research methods are a powerful means of generating statistical generalizations that represent large populations. Such methods are most effective when there are some basic language and cultural knowledge that are shared within the sample. Nonetheless, they would not be useful in demonstrating “intricate mechanisms that affect human thought and behaviour” (p. 406). Furthermore, the authors posited that the research objectives should be the decisive factor in choosing the research method for collecting data (p. 406).

This quantitative study seeks to examine general profile traits pertinent to each immigrant generation with the focus placed on their ethnic salience in their identity. The questionnaire survey method was chosen for the standardized questions and measurement constructs that it offers, with the aim of facilitating the comparison of the collected data (E. Martin, 2006, p. 2). The targeted sample size was 80 participants per generation category—thus representing 240 in total, across all generation groups. Due to the distance between the researcher and the subjects of this study, the questions were designed to be self-administered online, using Google Forms. Therefore, it was important that the questions would be expressed in simple and clear language for the participants to understand easily (Groves et al., 2009; Marin, 2006).

As clear instructions had to be provided, an information notice was prepared. Firstly, a brief cover letter was provided, introducing the researcher and the overall aim of the questionnaire survey.<sup>56</sup> The estimated duration of time needed to complete the survey was indicated, and the anonymity was ensured. Secondly, a section of the notice consisted of

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<sup>56</sup> At the time of designing the questionnaire survey, I was aiming to focus on the transnational identity of Korean immigrant generations and their community in Toronto that shaped the Korean Canadian identity within the Canadian multicultural context. However, while the survey was circulating, I decided to study the Korean Canadian identity using ethnic and national attachment and identities as the core elements of the theoretical framework, thus shifting the focus from the transnational social identity to a broader content of identity on both individual and group levels. For this reason, the description of the research project that was provided in the information notice of the survey was adequately modified. The initial and modified versions can be seen in Appendix A. The content of the questionnaire remained the same.

eligibility criteria for participation. In case one has accessed the version of the survey that was designated for a generation group other than his or her own, the notice provided a list of all three versions of the survey for each generation group, so that s/he could be redirected. Thirdly, the contact information section encouraged the participants to get in touch with either the researcher or her research supervisor in case of any questions or concerns. To accommodate varying levels of language proficiency of the participants, the entire content of the cover letter and the questionnaire survey was expressed in both Korean and English.

To keep the questionnaire survey relatively short for the participants, the questions were carefully selected to only focus on some of what has been treated as central components of ethnic identity content (ethnic affirmation and belonging) and process (ethnic identity exploration) (Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001; Phinney, Romero et al., 2001; Phinney, 1992; Phinney, 1988). In total, 22 questions were included in the questionnaire survey. Completing the survey was estimated to take approximately five to ten minutes.

Furthermore, some questions targeted the basic profile traits of the participants (e.g. age, sex, length of residence in Canada, residence/citizenship status, and motives for immigrating to Canada). Most questions were centered around some of the most prominent components of ethnic identity. Firstly, some investigated the kinds of links that the participants had maintained with Korea and the Korean culture by inquiring into their visits to Korea, the perceived importance of their (future) children maintaining proficiency in the Korean language, and the kinds of transnational activities and behaviours they may be/may have been engaged in in their lives in Toronto. Secondly, the level of proficiency and use of both English and Korean in different spheres of life were also examined. Thirdly, some questions inquired into socialization patterns of the participants to observe the degree of their dependence on co-ethnic peer socialization and varying extents of their integration into the mainstream social groups. Lastly, the survey questioned the participants' sense of pride in their ethnicity<sup>57</sup> and asked them to provide a self-identification—as Korean, Canadian, or Korean Canadian.

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<sup>57</sup> Often, ethnic/national pride is inquired into by asking multiple questions related to the feelings of the participants regarding their in-group (Hernandez et al., 2014; Ramasubramanian et al., 2017) or by utilizing a numerical scale (Cebotari, 2009). The question that tackles ethnic pride in this study asked whether the participants felt proud of their ethnic origin and provided three response categories: “Yes,” “No,” and “Indifferent.” Therefore, it should be kept in mind that the primary aim of this question was not to illustrate a contextual depth of the sentiment of pride, but rather, to demonstrate a positive sentiment that the participants feel globally in regard to their ethnic origin. The sentiment of pride that the 1.5 generation feels will be contextualized in the qualitative part of the study.

To regulate the comparability of the responses and facilitate the analyzing process, the majority of the questions were closed questions, offering precise response categories. Attention was given to ensure that the participants would be presented with as many adequate response categories as possible. Nonetheless, “other” response category was also offered in some questions (e.g. inquiring into the primary reason for immigration, the main purpose of homeland visits, and transnational activities and behaviours) in order for the respondents to be able to express themselves adequately. The responses that were written in Korean or in both Korean and English were translated by the author into English.

Different types of ordered response scales and categories were incorporated into the questions to structure the responses of the participants. Firstly, evaluative ratings were used to ask the participants to roughly express the level of importance that they place on the children’s maintenance of the heritage language (e.g. “very important,” “important,” “not so important,” “does not matter”). Secondly, numerical scales were employed in questions that required the participants to evaluate their perceived level of proficiency in Korean and English (e.g. 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest)).<sup>58</sup> Thirdly, a mix of absolute and relative frequencies were indicated in the question that probe into the frequency of the participants’ visits to Korea (“never,” “rarely,” “often/regularly (i.e. every 2-3 years),” “very often (i.e. every year or less).” Additionally, “I don’t know” or “I am unable to respond” response option was included in two of the questions that asked the participants to identify the primary motive for immigration to self-identify.<sup>59</sup>

Additionally, open questions were deemed advantageous in capturing answers that were not anticipated in the questionnaire-designing process. Undoubtedly, the responses that are

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<sup>58</sup> It is worth noting that the fluency self-assessment has been put into question in previous literature. While it is easily obtained, the scores are generated based on subjective, self-perceived level of proficiency. Thus, the results can be inaccurate when compared to the actual proficiency level obtained through standardized testing (Edele et al., 2015; Ma & Winke, 2018; Reuland et al., 2009). Therefore, self-assessment should be used with caution and not be utilized as the sole method of evaluating language proficiency (Edele et al., 2015). The self-assessment method was adopted in this questionnaire survey with these precautions in mind. It was intended to generate numerical values that would help establishing a global picture of the participants’ self-perceived language proficiency for comparative purposes between the generation groups.

<sup>59</sup> The opinions regarding the efficiency of response options such as “I don’t know” are varied: on the one hand, some argue that it is an effective way of filtering out those who do not have an opinion, and that “I don’t know” response category does not influence the proportions of those choosing substantive response categories; on the other hand, some believe that it only increases the likelihood of losing data (E. Martin, 2006; Schuman & Presser, 1981, as cited in E. Martin, 2006, p. 7). In the context of this study, immigration is not their choice but their parents’ for offspring-generation children—therefore, it cannot be assumed that the reason for immigrating has been communicated from the parents to the children. As well, feeling lost in-between the two cultures has been identified as a phenomenon which is not uncommon in discussing ethnic identity (B. S. K., Kim, 1980). For these reasons, “I don’t know” response category was utilized in this survey.



expressed in participants' own words can represent a rich source of data (E. Martin, 2006, p. 6). In this survey, there were two questions that were expressed in an open-question format: asking the participants to explain why they considered the future generation's maintenance of Korean language proficiency to be important, as well as asking for their general thoughts or comments at the end of the survey. This way, the participants could be given a chance to freely express their opinion. Not only did the gathered responses to open questions provide some contextual understanding of the participants' sentiments, but they were also useful in highlighting recurrent responses and themes. Furthermore, the narratives that these responses offered facilitated an understanding of the correlations between varying components of identity, which proved to be a useful exercise prior to taking on the qualitative research part of this study.

To facilitate the process of data analysis, three different versions of the questionnaire survey were prepared on Google Forms, designated for the first-, 1.5-, and second-generation groups. In terms of the content, there was barely any difference among the different versions, except for a slightly different wording of one of the questions tackling the motive for immigration (e.g. "What was your primary reason [...]?" and "What was your parents' primary reason [...]?"). The three separate links to each version of the survey on Google Forms were communicated, enabling the collection of data to occur and accumulate as per each generation group of the participants.

#### **4.1.2 Participants/Eligibility Criteria**

To participate in the survey, one had to make sure that s/he meets all the criteria which were listed in the participant eligibility criteria section of the information notice. One criterion that had to apply to all participants across the generations was that, upon immigrating to Canada, they had to have been exclusively/mostly residing in Toronto. Regarding arrival age or nativity, the following was the criteria that were highlighted:

First generation

- The participant was born in Korea and spent his or her adolescence in Korea.

1.5 generation

- The participant was born in Korea and immigrated to Canada when he/she was a child, before age 13.

Second generation

- The participant was born in Canada.

In the case of the 1.5 generation, age at the time of immigration needed to be clearly defined, as ambiguity which surrounds the scholars' attempt to define the 1.5 generation stems

from the age factor. Previously, researchers have concluded that age is correlated with the level of acculturation and integration, as well as the resulting ethnic identity, of an individual (Danico, 2004; Hurh, 1990; Rumbaut, 2004). In respect to Danico's (2004) argument that setting the maximum age is crucial when defining 1.5 generation, one had to have arrived in Canada before age 13 to be able to participate in the survey as the 1.5 generation.

When it comes to defining the second generation, one of the standard criteria of defining the group requires only one parent of the participant to be foreign-born. However, recent research has concluded that having only one or both parents that are foreign born significantly shapes the child's experiences differently (Ramakrishnan, 2004). For this reason, this survey was dedicated to those whose parents were both born in Korea; and this requirement was indicated in the participant eligibility criteria section of the information notice.

#### **4.1.3 Data Collection**

The questionnaire survey was made accessible in September 2020 and was left open until December 2020, until all three versions of the survey reached the targeted sample size of 80 participants, each. As the internet has become an extremely popular space used for community building for immigrants—offering social support, companionship, and an ample amount of information (Bruhn, 2011; Paek, 2022; Yang et al., 2020)—the survey was primarily circulated among various types of online communities. Across various social media platforms (e.g. Facebook and Instagram) and popular Korean domains (e.g. Naver and Daum),<sup>60</sup> there was a vibrant presence of online Korean Canadian communities, encompassing a vast range of interests and hobbies. For example, a number of websites of/related to Korean churches, Christian fellowship groups, and Korean student associations in universities located in Toronto, as well as hobby and interest groups (e.g. fishing, poetry etc.), were found online. A brief description of the survey and the links were posted in groups and community pages that are public and private across various social media platforms, and group leaders (e.g. pastors in Korean churches) were contacted by messaging services through different social media platforms or by email. In addition, there exist numerous Korean news media outlets, on and offline, which were contacted to ask for help in circulating the survey. One who responded

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<sup>60</sup> Naver and Daum are the most popular online platforms that Korean people use, and their weekly use was estimated to be the first (Naver, 64%) and second (Daum, 36%) in the market. Both platforms offer a service that enables the users to create their own online communities, and the online spaces that are created are referred to as *Cafés* (i.e. Naver Café/Daum Café) (S. Kim, n.d.). There are over 500 cafés on both platforms that are related to different groups of users in Toronto.

positively was Arirang Korea TV,<sup>61</sup> who helped promoting the survey by making a post on their Facebook page.

## 4.2 Findings

### 4.2.1 Profile Traits of Participants

**Table 22**

*Participant profile (%)*

		First generation	1.5 generation	Second generation
Age	15-24 years of age	0	11.3	15
	25-34 years of age	12.5	<b>70</b>	<b>80</b>
	35-44 years of age	<b>31.3</b>	13.7	5
	45-54 years of age	<b>31.3</b>	5	0
	55-64 years of age	20	0	0
	65-74 years of age	5	0	0
Sex	Female	<b>71.3</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>65</b>
	Male	28.7	32.5	35
Length of residence in Canada	1-5 years	11.3	0	N/A
	6-10 years	<b>32.5</b>	5	
	11-15 years	25	16.3	
	16-20 years	25	38.8	
	21 years and more	6.3	<b>40</b>	
Residence/citizenship status	Permanent resident	37.5	7.5	0
	Canadian citizen	<b>53.8</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>100</b>
	Temporary resident	8.8	0	0
	Refugee	0	0	0

*Note: The response categories that were chosen by the majority are indicated in bold.*

The participants were 240 adults (163 female (67.9%), 77 male (32.1%)) who were residing in Toronto at the time of the survey. All the participants were of Korean origin and were aged between 15 and 75. There were 80 participants associated with each one of the three generation groups—first, 1.5, or second.

As can be seen in Table 22, first-generation participants appeared the most variant in age, and the oldest on average, across all generation groups: the age groups “35-44 years of

<sup>61</sup> Arirang Korea TV is a Korean Canadian television network “founded to promote and preserve the Korean identity, language and customs” among Korean Canadians (Arirang Korea TV, n.d.). It is the only Korean Canadian television program aired on OMNI Television—offering self-produced media content, covering the latest news and community updates and events.

age” (31.3%) and “45-54 years of age” (31.3%) were the most identified, in contrast to “25-34 years of age” being the most prominent age group among 1.5- and second-generation participants (70% and 80% respectively). The second-generation participants were the youngest on average compared to the other two generation groups.

Moreover, the length of residence in Canada seemed more various in the responses gathered from the first generation when compared to the 1.5 generation. While 32.5% of them lived in Canada for six to ten years, 25% indicated “11-15 years” and another 25% “16-20 years.” In contrast, most of the 1.5-generation participants lived in Canada for a longer period of time compared to the first generation, on average: close to 80% had lived in Canada for at least 16. The second-generation participants were exempt from answering this question as they were born in Canada.

The residence status furthermore reflected the varying profile features of the first-generation respondents who participated in the survey. Just over half of them were Canadian citizens, but a significant minority of them held a permanent resident status. There were also few participants (8.8%) who were temporary residents, who held a student, work, or working holiday visa. On the other hand, the vast majority of 1.5 generation, as well as every one of the second generation, were Canadian citizens.

#### 4.2.2 Motives for Immigrating

**Table 23**

*Primary motives for immigrating to Canada (%)*

	First generation	1.5 generation	Second generation
Better educational opportunities for children	<b>42.5</b>	<b>66.3</b>	<b>55</b>
For a better way of life	28.7	24.9	12.5
Family reunification	16.2	2.5	5
Job opportunities	8.7	1.2	10
To pursue one’s studies	3.7	1.2	0
Others/personal reasons	0	2.4	0
Unknown (“I don’t know”)	N/A	1.2	17.5

*Note: The response categories that were chosen by the majority are indicated in bold.*

To inquire into the motives for immigration, the first generation was asked to identify their primary reason for immigrating, and the offspring-generation participants were asked to

indicate their parents' motive for immigrating. Across all groups, "better educational opportunities for children" was found to be the dominant motive, especially in the case of 1.5-generation participants (66.3%) (Table 23). The second-most frequent response across all generations was "for a better way of life." "Family reunification," "job opportunities," and "to pursue one's studies" were also chosen by a small proportion of each generation group.

The 1.5 generation's responses demonstrated that the vast majority were aware of the reason for their parents' immigration to Canada—in fact, there was only one who was unable to respond. Most of the second-generation (82.5%) also seemed aware of the reason for immigrating; nevertheless, there was a higher number of the second generation who were unsure as to why their family immigrated than the 1.5 generation. This finding suggests that, compared to the 1.5 generation, there is less of the parent-child communication on this subject and/or decreased levels of interests of the children interest in their parents' lives before immigrating to Canada among the second-generation participants.

While a small percentage of the first-generation immigrated to pursue their own studies (3.7%), most came to Canada in the pursuit of better education opportunities for their children (42.5%). This finding appeared pertinent to the education fever that resided in the Korean society starting in the 1990s, especially centered around teaching English. Jin-Kyu Park (2009) explained the foundation of English boom in Korea by referring to the "long tradition of education fever in the country" (p. 50): traditional Confucian values which associated education with one's status, the modern egalitarian ideas which were introduced from the West, as well as the collapse of the traditional class system following the end of the Japanese occupation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, altogether pushed Koreans to perceive education as a tool to advance in society (p. 50). Faced with globalization and the job market, which has become increasingly competitive, teaching children English has become the biggest priority for Korean parents, for which exponential amounts of investments are made. In addition, South Korean education system is "intense, competitive, and a major source of stress for students and families" (Jarvis et al., 2020, p. 1), in which students are faced with high levels of stress and pressure from devoting a significant portion of their early lives to studying (p. 2). Hence, the high response rate yielded by the education factor in this survey is not surprising. From these findings, it can be presumed that Korean first-generation parents are likely to hold a certain level of expectation for the educational attainment of the children.

As mentioned previously, South Korean immigrants represent a case of what John U. Ogbu and Herbert D. Simons (1998) described as voluntary immigrants. Eunjung Lee and Marjorie Johnstone’s (2014) description of Korean immigrants as education migrants also seemed to be adequate for the majority of the participants in this study.

### 4.2.3 Homeland Visits

**Table 24**

*Frequency of visits to Korea and primary purposes of visits (%)*

		First generation	1.5 generation	Second generation
Frequency of visits to Korea	Very often (i.e. every year)	7.5	5	5
	Often/regularly (i.e. every two to three years)	<b>42.5</b>	41.3	30
	Rarely	<b>42.5</b>	<b>48.8</b>	<b>52.5</b>
	Never	7.5	5	12.5
Primary purposes of the visits	To visit family and friends who reside in Korea	<b>98.6</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>70</b>
	Vacation	0	23.7	25.7
	Work	1.4	1.3	4.3

*Note: The response categories that were chosen by the majority are indicated in bold.*

In the light of numerous studies which demonstrated the correlation between visits to the homeland and ethnic attachment of immigrants (Hinton, 1999; Huang et al., 2011; C. M. Smith, 2014), the participants were asked to communicate how often they visit Korea and identify the primary motive for the visits. As shown in Table 24, the visits were often described as occasional, and the results did not show noticeably different trends across the generation groups. Firstly, almost half or at least a significant minority among each generation group visited Korea “often/regularly (i.e. every two to three years)” and “very often (i.e. every year”): 50% of the first generation, 46.3% of the 1.5 generation, and 35% of the second generation indicated so. Nonetheless, most of the participants from the 1.5 and second generation responded that their visits to Korea were rare, spaced out to more than three years in frequency. The second generation, in particular, seemed less likely to visit Korea on a regular basis, if at all, compared to the other generation groups.

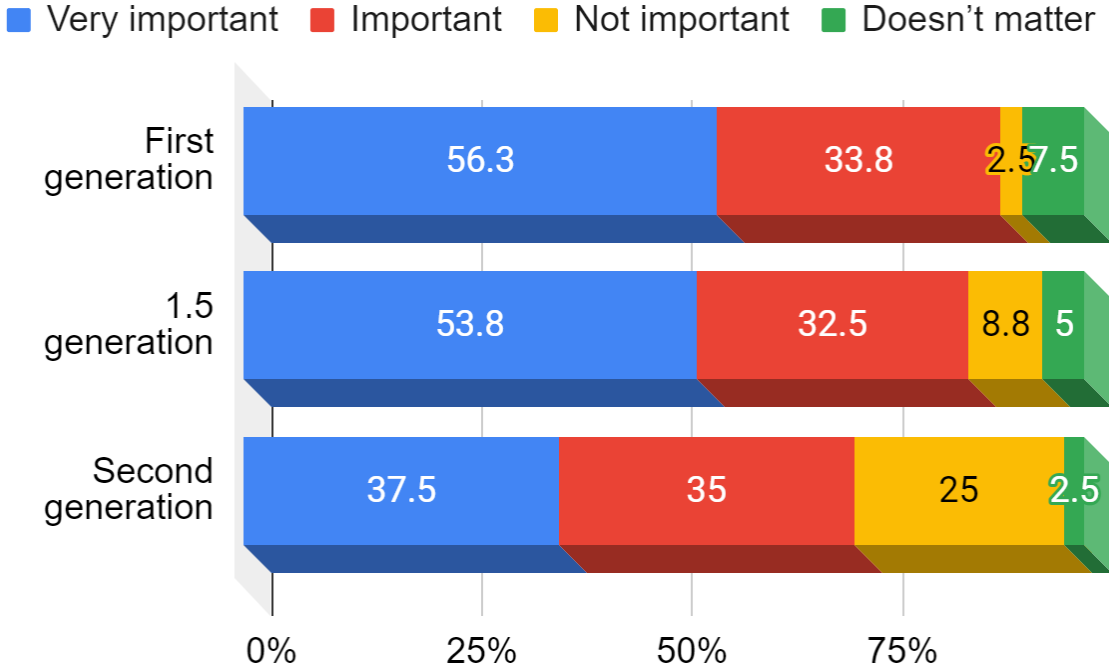
The main purpose of the visits to Korea appeared consistent throughout the responses, as well. The vast majority of the first generation (98.6%) identified visiting family and friends

in Korea as the primary reason for the visits, which was also the most frequent response selected by the 1.5 and second generation (75% and 70%, respectively). Approximately one-quarter of the 1.5- and second-generation participants responded that they mostly visited Korea for vacation purposes. Work was the main purpose of the visits for only one to three participants in each generation group. It is interesting to note, however, that the largest proportion of the respondents who had professional ties with Korea through work visits was observed among the second generation. Albeit much less frequent across the generations, the practice of visiting Korea appears to be retained, which indicates successful transmission and maintenance of the interests in the *homeland*—or parental homeland, in the case of offspring generations.

**4.2.4 Importance of Maintaining the Ethnic Language**

**Figure 12**

*Importance of transmission of the Korean language*

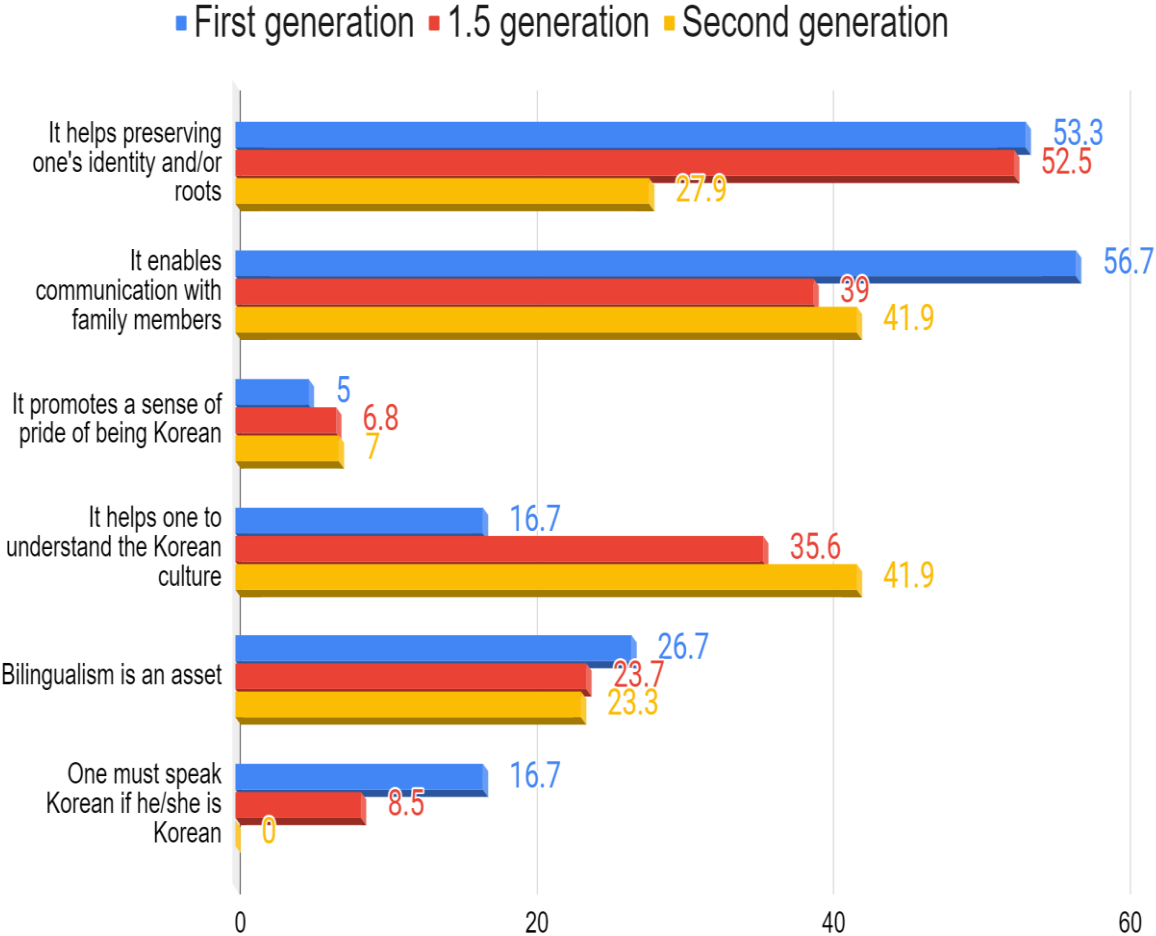


Korean immigrant parents tend to have a strong wish for their children to be able to speak Korean, and their attitudes toward the heritage language plays an important role in shaping the children’s own attitudes towards the heritage language (Cho, 2008; Jeon, 2012; Li, 1999; S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2007; Sok, 2012). As illustrated in Figure 12, most participants believed that it is important for their children to be proficient in Korean—but to varying degrees. In particular, the first generation and 1.5 generation seemed to share extremely similar

views concerning the maintenance of the Korean language: the vast majority indicated that it is “important” or “very important” (over 90% and 86%, respectively). The responses from the second generation also mirrored this trend, but a more noticeable proportion did not consider the transmission of the Korean language as important (25%). Across all generation groups, a very small minority indicated that it did not matter.

**Figure 13**

*Reasons why the transmission of the Korean language is important (%)*



Moreover, 83.3%, 85.5%, 74.1% of the first-, 1.5-, and second-generation participants, respectively, considered intergenerational transmission of the Korean language to be important and many expressed in their own words the reasons why. (Figure 13). Generally, all participants seemed to perceive the retention of the heritage language as advantageous. The most frequent responses across all generations indicated that speaking Korean helps communicating with family and preserving one’s identity and roots. Understanding Korean culture and being



bilingual were also frequently cited. What stood out is the fact that almost the exact same proportion of the participants from the first- and 1.5-generation groups (53.3% and 52.5%, respectively) associated Korean language proficiency with Korean identity, whereas a visibly less among the second-generation group had the same view (27.9%).

Furthermore, each generation group demonstrated some differences in responses when compared with one another. What is worth noting is that the perceptions of the 1.5 generation vis-à-vis retention of heritage language appeared to be *in-between* those of the first and the second generation, for the most part: on the one hand, many of both the first and 1.5 generation saw the correlation between one’s retention of the heritage language and identity/roots; and on the other hand, the proportion of the 1.5 and second generation mirrored one another in expressing the link between the heritage language and communication abilities between family members/cultural understanding, as well as the value of bilingualism in the modern society (i.e. in the job market/within the host country/Canadian multicultural society).

#### 4.2.5 Proficiency of the Mainstream and Ethnic Languages

**Table 25**

*Self-assessed proficiency scores for English and Korean (score out of 10)*

		Mean			Mode		
		First generation	1.5 generation	Second generation	First generation	1.5 generation	Second generation
English	Spoken	6.4	9	<b>9.9</b>	5, 6	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
	Written	6.8	8.9	<b>9.7</b>	8	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
	Mean	6.6	9	<b>9.9</b>	N/A		
Korean	Spoken	<b>9.9</b>	8.6	4.6	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	3
	Written	<b>9.8</b>	7.7	3	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	1
	Mean	<b>9.9</b>	8.2	3.8	N/A		

*Note: The highest values are indicated in bold.*

All participants were asked to evaluate their level of spoken and written proficiencies in Korean and English, using a scale of one (least proficient) to ten (most proficient). As displayed in Table 25, the findings implied varying degrees of bilingualism of the sample. The first generation was the most proficient in Korean but the weakest in English: they rated their

proficiency in Korean with 9.9 (mean score of 9.9 and mode of 10 for speaking & mean score of 9.8 and mode of 10 for writing) and in English with 6.6 (mean score of 6.4 and modes of 5 and 6 for speaking & mean score of 6.8 and mode of 8 for writing). The second generation's average scores appeared to be contrasting to those of the first generation, as they were the most fluent in English (mean score of 9.9 and mode of 10 for speaking & mean score of 9.7 and mode of 10 for writing) but the weakest in Korean (mean score of 4.6 and mode of 3 for speaking & mean score of 3 and mode of 1 for writing). The second generation's self-assessment score of their Korean proficiency was indeed the lowest across all generations, especially for written proficiency. Moreover, the findings of this study affirmed that the 1.5 generation is the most bilingual. They were slightly more confident in their English proficiency (mean score of 9) than in Korean (mean score of 8.2) and assessed their written proficiency level in Korean with the lowest score, 7.7 out of 10 in mean. The mode values related to the 1.5 generation's speaking and written proficiency in both languages were 10. Therefore, despite the fact that most of the 1.5 generation-participants were between ages of 25 and 35 and lived in Canada for 16 years and more, their maintenance of the heritage language appears to be overall successful.

The differences in proficiency in the heritage language that the findings demonstrated can help understanding the correlation that the participants perceived between Korean language proficiency with the Korean identity, which was discussed previously. It can be assumed that the first and 1.5 generation, who tend to be fluent/proficient in Korean, are able to ground at least part of their sense of the Korean identity to their proficiency in Korean. In contrast, the second generation, whose proficiency in Korean is limited, are less likely to associate the language with the perceived sense of the Korean identity.

#### **4.2.6 Languages Used at Home and Work and with Friends**

Beyond the levels of proficiency in languages, one's choice of language in different situations demonstrates the language shift that takes place across generations. The participants were asked to indicate which languages they use in daily life: at home, work, and in social groups. The results are summarized in the Table 26. In most situations, there seemed to be a positive correlation between language proficiency and use.

**Table 26***Languages used at home and work and with friends (%)*

Languages used		First generation	1.5 generation	Second generation
At home	Korean	<b>77.5</b>	50	26.2
	English	2.5	5	<b>21.3</b>
	Both	20	45	<b>52.5</b>
At work	Korean	10.1	0	0
	English	71	88.5	<b>94.9</b>
	Both	<b>18.8</b>	11.5	5.1
With friends	Korean	<b>53.8</b>	18.8	0
	English	3.7	28.7	<b>75</b>
	Both	42.5	<b>52.5</b>	25

*Note: The highest values are indicated in bold.*

At home, the use of Korea seemed to prevail. This was especially true in the case of the first generation, who were the most fluent in Korean and least fluent in English, close to 80% used Korean and only 2.5% used English at home. Furthermore, the parental preference for the Korean language seemed to be linked with the offspring generations' language choice at home: half of the 1.5-generation participants, who were the most bilingual, used Korean with their family and 45% used both languages; and, even in the case of the second generation, who were the most fluent in English and least fluent in Korean, around one-quarter used Korean and almost half used both Korean and English at home. At the same time, the highest proportion of the second-generation participants used English to communicate with family at home (21.3%).

In contrast, at work, English was the language that was used by the majority across all generations. The first generation was the only generation among whom a small minority (10%), exclusively used Korean at work. The percentage of those who used both languages appeared to decrease across the generations: close to 19% of the first generation, 12% of the 1.5 generation, and 5% of the second generation.

Furthermore, the findings showed that one's language choice in social groups best reflects his or her language proficiency. Slightly over half of the first generation used mostly Korean and over 40% used both languages with friends. Less than 4% mostly used English, which mirrored their limited English proficiency. As for the 1.5 generation, more than half used both languages with friends, close to 30% mostly used English, and almost 20% mostly used Korean with friends—thus demonstrating bilingual tendencies the most. Lastly, the biggest

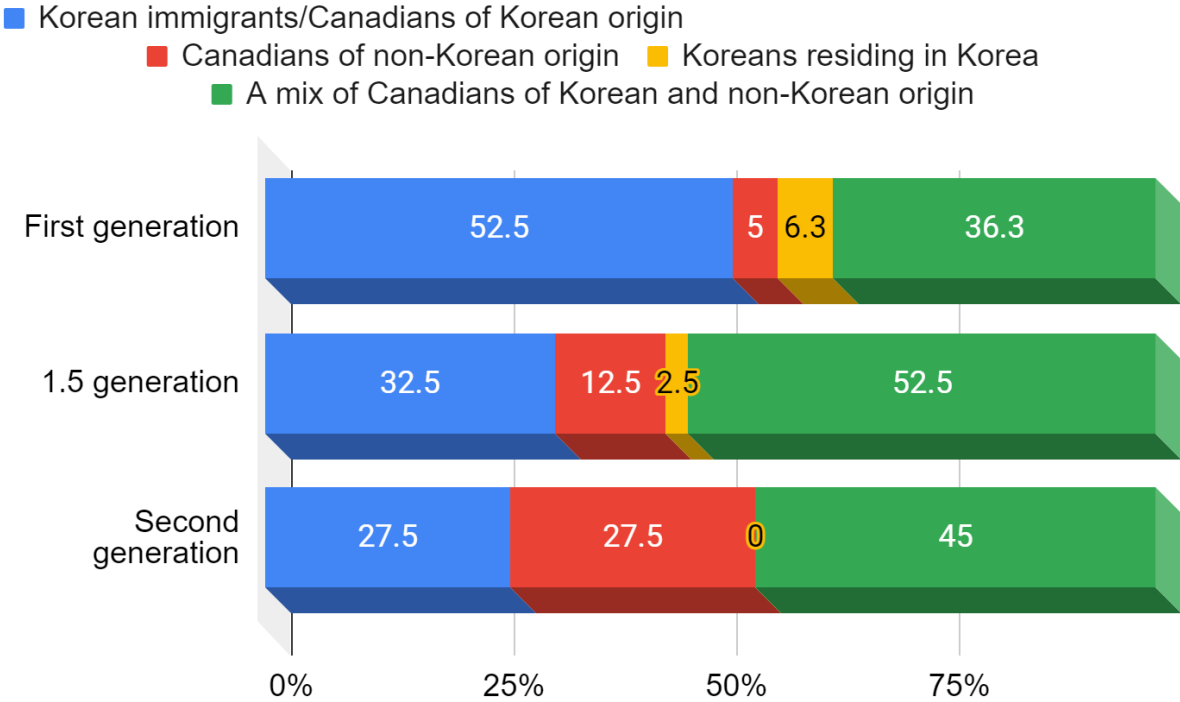
majority (75%) across all generations were the second generation who used mostly English with friends. In fact, none of the second generation exclusively used Korean with friends, which furthermore affirms their low proficiency and preference for the language.

The findings demonstrated that that the retention rate of the heritage language declines sharply beyond the 1.5 generation. For most of the second generation, home is the only sphere where they ever use Korean daily. In other words, in spite of the strong parental wish for their children to be able to speak Korean, the intergenerational transmission of the heritage language seems to be only partially successful—it even appears to be failing when examining the case of the second generation.

**4.2.7 Friend Groups**

**Figure 14**

*Friends of the first-, 1.5-, and second-generation Korean immigrants*



The socialization tendencies of the participants demonstrated that their friends were of various backgrounds: Koreans residing in Canada, Korean immigrants/Canadians of Korean origin, and Canadians of non-Korean origin (Figure 14). The findings indicated a salient level of co-ethnic peer socialization across generations—and this was especially case for the first generation, many of whom answered that their friend groups were mostly made up of Korean immigrants/Canadians of Korean origin (52.5%), followed by a mix of Canadians of Korean

and non-Korean origin 36.3%. Albeit a very small minority (6.3%), the highest proportion of the first generation maintained Korean friends who reside in Korea, and only 5% mostly socialized with cross-ethnic peers. These findings continued to reflect the first generation's limited English proficiency and language use in daily life. Moreover, despite a slight intergenerational decline, most of the 1.5 (87.5%) and second generation (72.5%) also had co-ethnic friends in their friend groups.

Although the co-ethnic peer socialization tendency persisted across generations, more cross-ethnic ties were observed in socialization tendencies of offspring generations. Firstly, those who had mixed groups of friends, including Koreans, were more numerous (52.5% of the 1.5 generation and 45% of the second generation) when compared to the parent generation (36.3%), as well as those who mostly socialized with Canadians of non-Korean origin (12.5% of the 1.5 generation and 27.5% of the second generation). While both groups appeared to be engaged in co-ethnic peer socialization, the second generation was slightly less dependent on co-ethnic peer groups than the 1.5 generation: the highest percentage of the second generation (27.5%) of the second generation was mostly friends with Canadians of non-Korean origin. They also had no friends who resided in Korea in their friend groups. The overall findings affirmed the offspring generations' higher levels of social integration when compared to their parent generation.

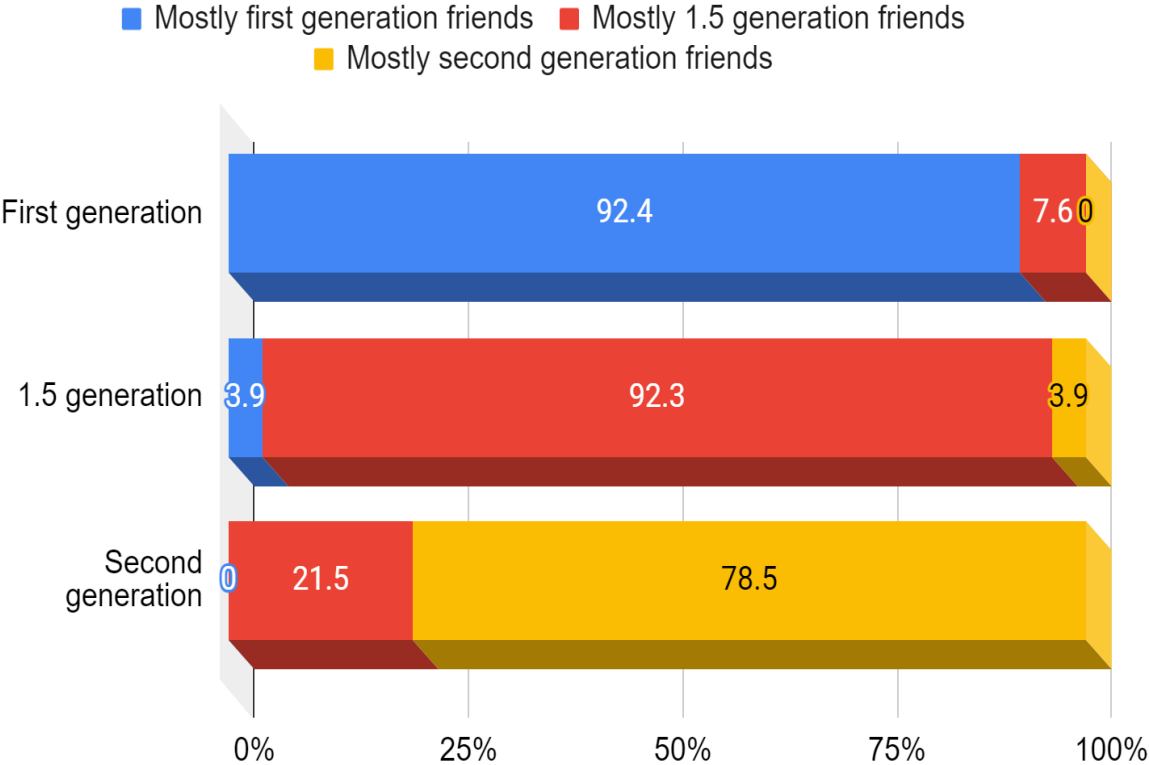
Again, the 1.5 generation was shown to be in-between the first and second generation in terms of socialization tendencies. Firstly, 32.5% responded that their social circles were mostly made up of Korean immigrants, which was smaller than the first generation but higher than the second generation. Secondly, 12.5% of these respondents indicated having mostly Canadians of non-Korean origin in their social groups, which also appeared to be in-between when compared with the 5% of the first generation and 27.5% of the second generation. Thirdly, 2.5% of the 1.5 generation was friends with Koreans residing in Korea, and, while slightly more of the first generation (6.3%) gave the same response, none of the second-generation participants did. Additionally, the highest proportion of the 1.5 generation socialized with peers of mixed backgrounds, including Korean (52.5% compared to 36.3% and 45% of the first and second generation, respectively).

Overall, it is visible that an increasing proportion of later generations was engaged in cross-ethnic peer socialization. In particular, the second generation seemed to be the least dependent on co-ethnic peers for socialization, compared to other generation groups. Hence,

the rate of intergenerational social integration seems gradual in the case of Korean immigrants: they are likely to continue to socialize with co-ethnics across the generations—exclusively or mixed with other cross-ethnic peers.

**Figure 15**

*Co-ethnic friends—by generation*



Moreover, the participants were asked to indicate the immigrant generation of their friends of Korean origin, if applicable. The results can be seen in Figure 15. Overall, all generations demonstrated the tendency to socialize with the peers from the same generation—and this was especially true in the case of the first (92.4%) and 1.5 generation (92.3%). While most of the second-generation participants (78.5%) were also engaged in the same-generation peer socialization, approximately one-fifth had friends that were 1.5 generation. Therefore, the socialization patterns of the Korean immigrants seemed to be mostly intragenerational.

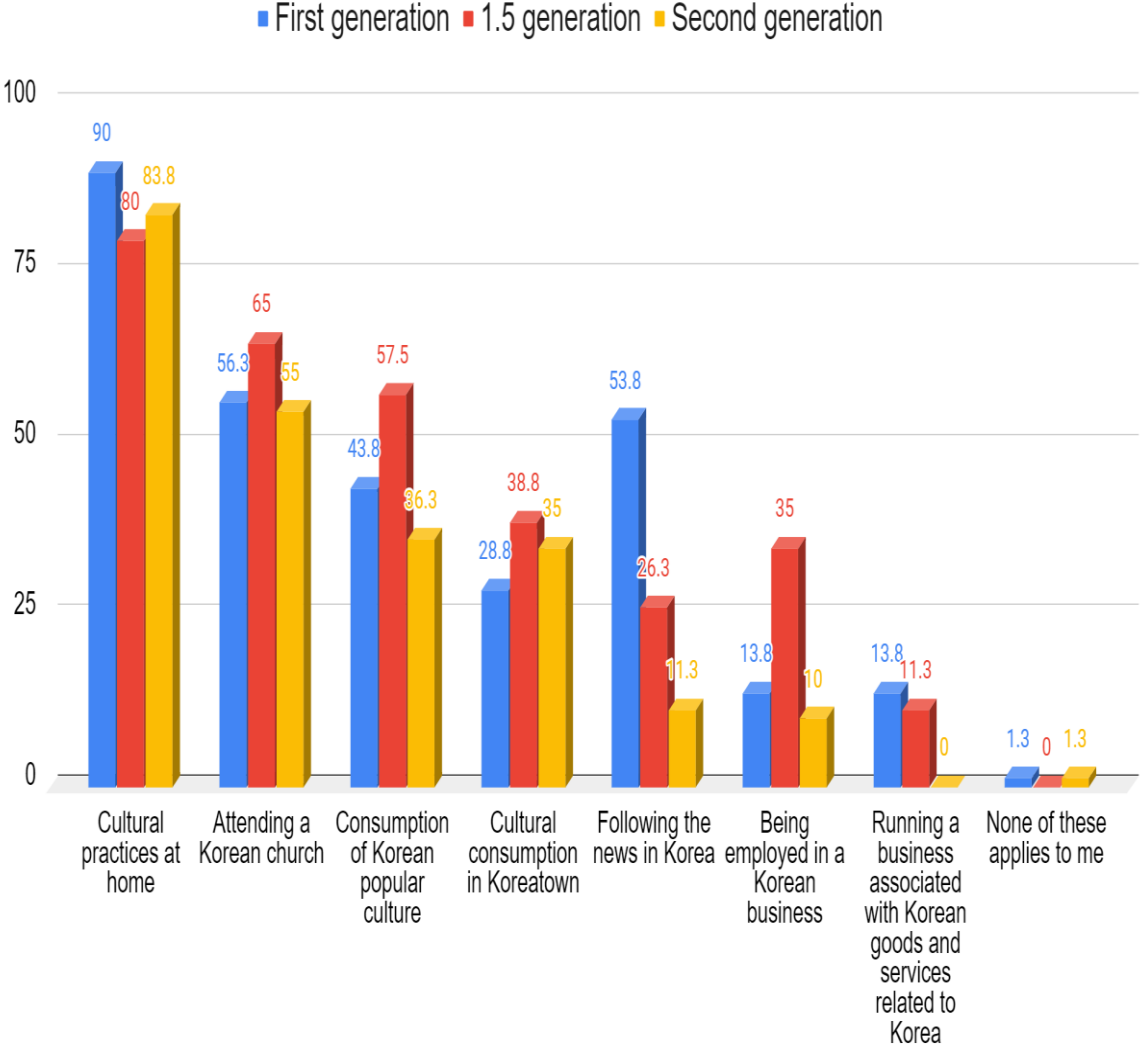
**4.2.8 Transnational Experiences**

To inquire into the kinds of activities in which they had been engaged in their lives in Toronto that tie them to the heritage culture, the participants were asked to identify such activities in the list provided. Responses from the three generation groups mostly demonstrated

similar trends, illustrating transnational activities<sup>62</sup> that they were personally familiar with, based on both previous and ongoing experiences. The findings are displayed in Figure 16 and Table 27.

**Figure 16**

*Transnational activities related to past and present experiences (%)*



*Note: Multiple responses were possible.*

<sup>62</sup> Visits to Korea can also be seen as an example of transnational activity. In this survey, the visits were treated in a separate question to be able to inquire into precise reasons for the visits.

**Table 27**

*Transnational activities of the participants related to their past and present experiences—total number of responses per response category vs. response rate per generation category (%)*

	Total number of responses per response category	First generation	1.5 generation	Second generation
Cultural practices at home (e.g. consuming Korean food/practising Korean traditions)	203	<b>35.5</b>	31.5	33
Attending the Korean church	141	31.9	<b>36.9</b>	31.2
Consumption of the Korean popular culture	110	31.8	<b>41.8</b>	26.4
Cultural consumption in Koreatown	82	28	<b>37.8</b>	34.1
Following the news in Korea	73	<b>58.9</b>	28.8	12.3
Being employed in a Korean business	47	23.4	<b>59.6</b>	17
Running a business associated with Korean goods and services related to Korea	20	<b>55</b>	45	0
None of these applies to me	2	<b>50</b>	0	1
Total number of responses	678	35.5	<b>37</b>	27.4

*Note: Multiple responses were possible; the highest values are indicated in bold.*

“Cultural practices at home” (e.g. consuming Korean food/practising Korean traditions) and “Attending the Korean church” were the two response categories which the majority of all three generation groups selected (Figure 16). Thus, these factors appeared to have a significant presence in the cultural transmission across the generations. Moreover, “Cultural practices at home,” “Attending the Korean church,” “Consumption of Korean popular culture,” and “Cultural consumption in Koreatown” were the most popular responses gathered across the generations (Table 27).

The highest percentage of the first generation (90%) identified with “Cultural practices at home,” representing 35.5% out of the total responses. The first generation was also the group among whom a noticeably higher proportion followed the news in Korea (53.8%, representing 58.9% of the total responses (Figure 16 & Table 27)). Interestingly, the first generation was the most numerous to indicate that they had experiences of running an ethnic business (13.8%,



representing 55% of the total responses); but they were less likely to have been employed in an ethnic business (13.8%, representing 23.4% of the total responses).

Concerning the second generation, they were also mostly engaged in cultural practices at home (83.8%, representing 33% of the total responses) and/or they had experiences of attending the Korean church” (55%, representing 31.2% of the total responses). A significant minority identified with consuming Korean popular culture (26.3%, representing 26.4% of the total responses) and/or going out to Koreatown (35%, representing 34.1% of the total responses)—but they were less numerous when compared to the first and 1.5 generation. The smallest proportion among the second generation was the least interested in following the news in Korea (11.3%, representing 12.3% of the total responses) and were/had been involved (i.e. running/working) in a Korean business (10%, representing 11.9% of the total responses). Overall, 185 out of the total 678 responses (27.3%) were gathered from the second generation, which were the lowest across the generations.

The 1.5 generation seemed to be the transnational out of all generation groups, as 37% of the total responses were gathered from this generation group. Across the generations, the highest percentage of the 1.5 generation had experiences of attending the Korean church (65%, representing 36.9% of the total responses), consuming Korean popular culture (57.5%, representing 41.8% of the total responses), going out to Koreatown (38.8%, representing 37.8% of the total respondents), and/or working in a Korean business (35%, representing 59.6% of the total respondents).

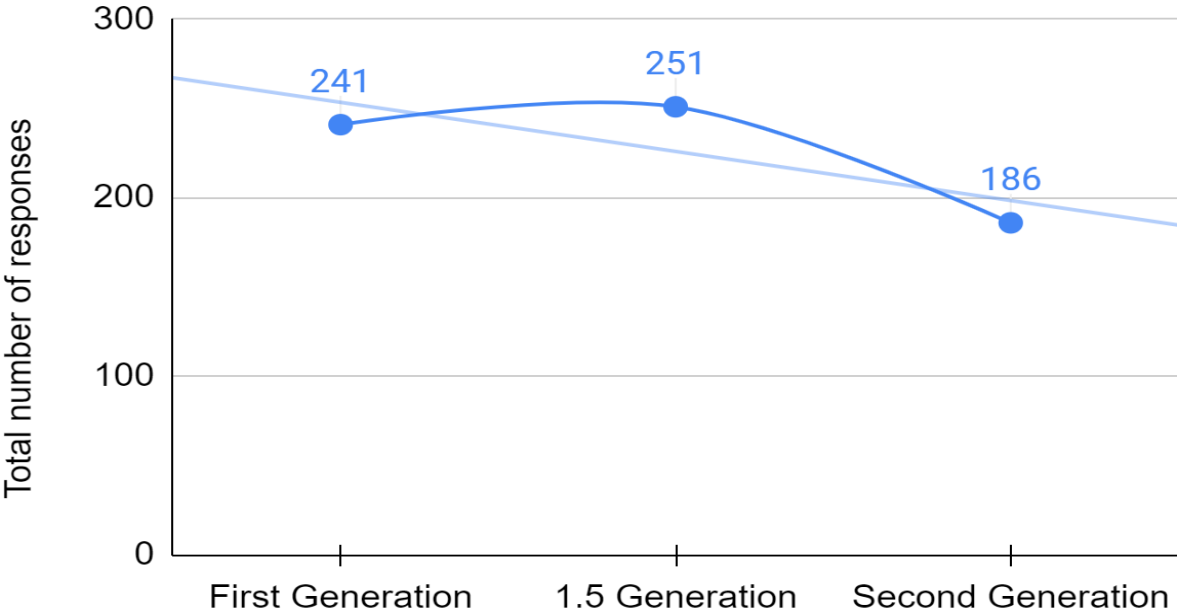
Hence, it seemed clear that offspring generations had maintained at least some transnational experiences in their lives in Toronto, to varying extents. The cultural practices at home and the experiences of attending a Korean church were especially a common memory for many. In fact, albeit second to the first generation, a higher percentage of the second generation were engaged in cultural practices at home than the 1.5 generation, and the highest percentage of 1.5 generation had Korean church experiences. Hence, the findings suggest a significant amount of influence that family practices within the domain of home and ethnic church practices in the public sphere have on shaping the ethnic experiences of Korean immigrants in Toronto.

Furthermore, cultural consumption through Korean popular culture and Koreatown were also a noticeable trend that was identified by the offspring generations. In particular,

“Cultural consumption in Koreatown” was the only response category with which both offspring generations were more numerous than the first generation in choosing. Most of the consumers of Korean popular culture were the 1.5 generation, as well. In contrast, smaller proportions of offspring generations—especially the second generation—were interested in the news in Korea, when compared with the first generation.

**Figure 17**

*Transnational activities related to past and present experiences*



*Note: Multiple responses were possible*

When the responses gathered from the first and second generation were compared, the rate of transnational responses among the participants showed an intergenerational decline (Figure 17). As the trendline shows, it can be assumed that this decrease will continue further down the generations. The 1.5 generation’s level of transnationalism was therefore remarkable: it seemed to surpass that of the first-generation parent generation, although they left Korea at a young age. This implies that such transnational experiences help re-creating the image of the homeland for this generation group, whose imagination of Korea is often based on and limited to childhood memories and visits, which are often infrequent.

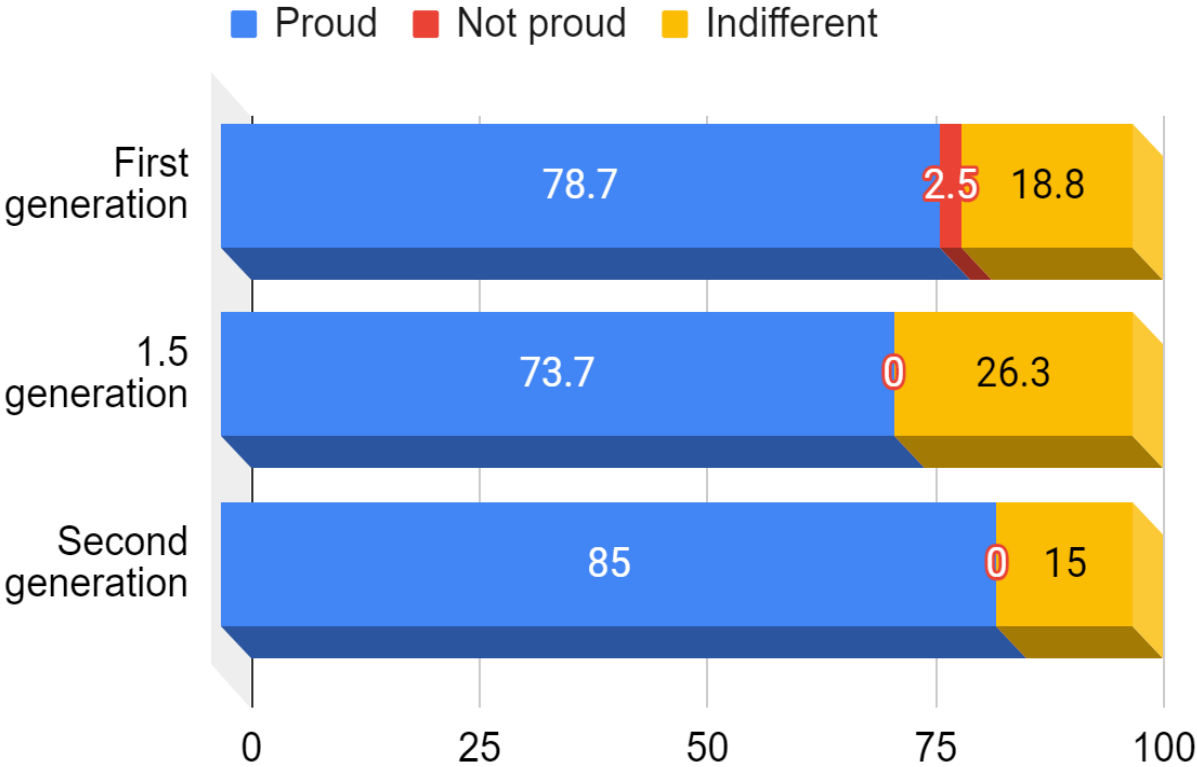
What is worth noting is that the vast majority of the respondents across generations were able to identify at least one type of transnational activity in their lives in Toronto. In fact, only two out of the 240 participants responded that they were not engaged in any of the listed

activities. Many Korean immigrants have retained multiple links to the heritage culture through transnational experiences that take place across different sites and domains—that is to say, home and online and offline ethnic communities, which encompass various social groups. Thus, the maintenance and intergenerational transmission of the interests in the Korean culture, as well as the related networks and activities, seemed intact, for the most part, through transnationalism. The only exception was the interests of the offspring generations in the political affairs of Korea: the intergenerational decline was the most significant in this category among the overall response categories.

**4.2.9 Ethnic Pride**

**Figure 18**

*Pride in ethnic origin (%)*



As Figure 18 shows, most participants expressed a sense of pride in their ethnic origin: 190 out of the total 240 participants (79.2%) indicated that they were proud, in contrast to two out of the total 240 participants (>0%) who did not feel proud. Moreover, albeit represented by the minority, feeling indifferent was not an uncommon response (20%). While there did not appear to be a significant difference between the responses gathered from all generation groups,

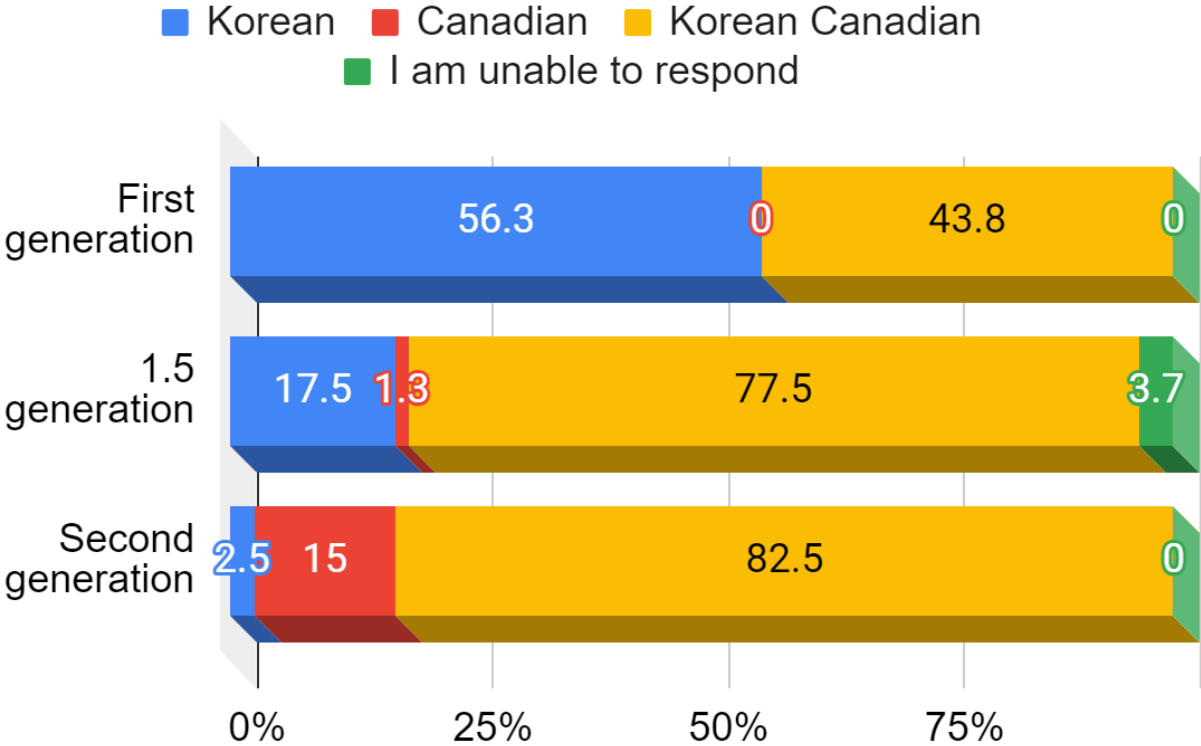
the 1.5 generation represented slightly less of those who were proud (73.7%) and more of those who felt indifferent (26.3%) about their origin when compared to the other generations. This finding can especially be contrasted with the second generation, the largest majority of whom were proud (85%), and the least felt indifferent (15%).

Although the second-biggest majority among the first generation were proud of their origin, the only two participants across the generations who did not feel proud were from the first generation. A sense of pride that one has maintained and/or developed of his or her Korean origin appeared to have been successfully transcended from the first generation onto offspring generations, and even seemed to have grown stronger, given the high positive response rate from the second generation. These findings indicated that, although the majority of the Korean immigrant in Toronto perceive their ethnic background positively, a feeling of indifference seems to affect ethnic pride, especially in the case of the foreign-born generations.

**4.2.10 Self-Identification**

**Figure 19**

*Self-identification*



In this survey, the participants were asked to identify themselves as “Korean,” “Korean Canadian,” or “Canadian,” and were given the option of selecting “I am unable to respond,” if necessary. As shown in Figure 19, the findings demonstrated that the vast majority of participants were able to claim an identity label: out of the total of 240 participants, only three indicated that they were unable to provide an identification. “Korean Canadian” was the most popular choice for the total participants (67.9%), followed by Korean (25.4%), and Canadian (5.4%). Not surprisingly, the highest proportion of those who identified themselves as Korean was found among the first-generation participants (56.3%). Moreover, almost 44% of the first generation identified themselves as Korean Canadian, which was the lowest across all three generation groups. The single Canadian identity was not claimed by any of the first-generation participants.

In contrast, the responses gathered from the offspring generations seemed to demonstrate similar trends. Firstly, when compared with the first generation, most of the 1.5 and second generation appeared to favour the hybrid Korean Canadian identity label—and this was especially the case for second generation (77.5% of the 1.5 generation and 82.5% of the second generation). Secondly, compared to the first generation, there was a drastic decrease in the proportion of those who chose the single Korean identity label (17.5% of the 1.5 generation and 2.5% of the second generation). Lastly, while none of the first generation identified themselves as Canadian, this identification seemed to grow in popularity across the generations, albeit slowly: 1.3% of the 1.5 generation and as much as 15% of the second generation chose this identity label. The high proportion of those among the offspring generations who claimed the hybrid identity affirms the salience of ethnic identity reflected in self-perception, and moreover indicates that intergenerational transmission of ethnic identity seems to be successful in the case of the Korean immigrants. At the same time, despite the in-between characteristics that the 1.5 generation demonstrated, their self-identification tendencies resembled those of the second generation much more closely than those of the first generation.

Nevertheless, there are some differences that stood out when comparing the responses gathered from the offspring generations. For instance, while the majority chose the hybrid Korean Canadian identity label, the identity labels claimed by the minority among the 1.5 and second generation were different: some of the 1.5 generation self-identified as Korean (17.5%), whereas some of the second generation self-identified as Canadian (15%). Furthermore, almost 4% of the 1.5 generation were not able to provide a self-identification. Although this percentage

represents a very small minority, it is interesting to note that these participants were the only ones across all three generation groups who were unable to provide an identity label. It is nevertheless not a surprising finding, as the 1.5 generation has always been a subject of debate in previous literature, whether to represent them as lost and/or confused or as bicultural (Danico, 2004; B. S. K. Kim et al., 2003; B. S. K. Kim, 1980; Ryu, 1991; Yeh et al., 2005).

What stood out from these findings is the responses gathered from the second generation. Their level of Korean proficiency was visibly weaker, and their experiences of transnational activities were the least expressed in comparison to the first and 1.5 generation; yet, the second generation who felt proud of their ethnic origin and identified themselves as Korean Canadian were the most numerous across all generation groups. Understanding the reason behind this phenomenon likely requires an examination of in- and out-group dynamics within the Canadian mainstream society and the resulting essence of symbolic ethnicity (Alba, 1990; Waters, 1990).

Overall, the findings of this survey enabled generational comparisons among Korean immigrants in Toronto. The data suggested a successful intergenerational transmission of ethnic identity, with some elements that appear to be distinctively associated with each generation group. Although comparing the data gathered from the first and second generation demonstrated a clear contrast in a number of aspects, the responses gathered from the 1.5 generation consistently reflected their in-betweenness, which helps exemplifying the fluid and complex conception of this generation group. The findings in relation to each generation group will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 5

### ETHNIC PROFILES OF KOREAN IMMIGRANT GENERATIONS

#### 5.1 First Generation

**Table 28**

*First generation: profile traits*

Age	12.5% 25-34 years of age <b>31.3% 35-44 years of age</b> <b>31.3% 45-54 years of age</b> 20% 55-64 years of age 5% 65-74 years of age
Sex	<b>71.3% Female</b> 28.7% Male
Length of residence in Canada	11.3% 1-5 years <b>32.5% 6-10 years</b> 25% 11-15 years 25% 16-20 years 6.3% 21 years and more
Residence/citizenship status	37.5% Permanent resident <b>53.8% Canadian citizen</b> 8.8% Temporary resident

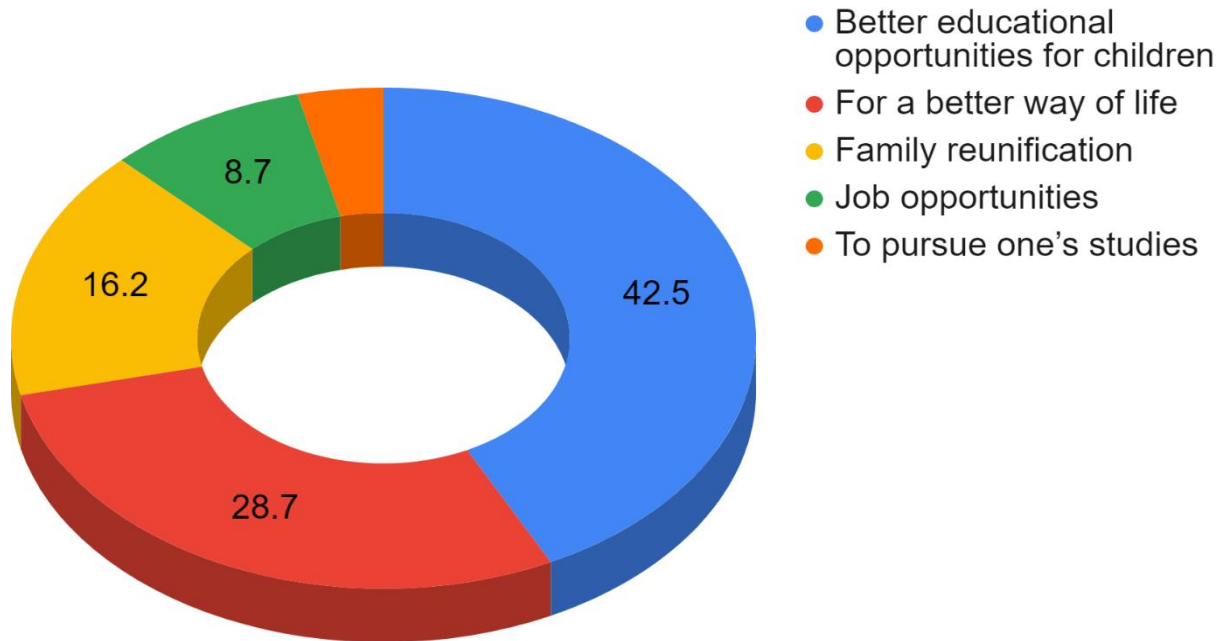
*Note: mode values are indicated in bold*

Parents or not, all the first-generation participants responded to the questions that probed into how they would incorporate their heritage values into the upbringing of their children, which contributed to depicting a global picture of the heritage legacy that is to be left behind in the subsequent generations. Table 28 outlines the profile traits of the first-generation immigrants who participated in the survey. They were the oldest on average, compared to the 1.5- and second-generation groups (62.6% aged between 35 and 54). As well, the majority were female (71.3%), and most had settled in Canada for numerous years. Albeit the small proportion, some recent immigrants who had arrived in Canada from one to five years ago were also present in the pool of participants from this group. While most were Canadian citizenship holders, the residence/citizenship status also varied among the first-generation participants, consisting of those who were permanent resident holders and temporary residents.



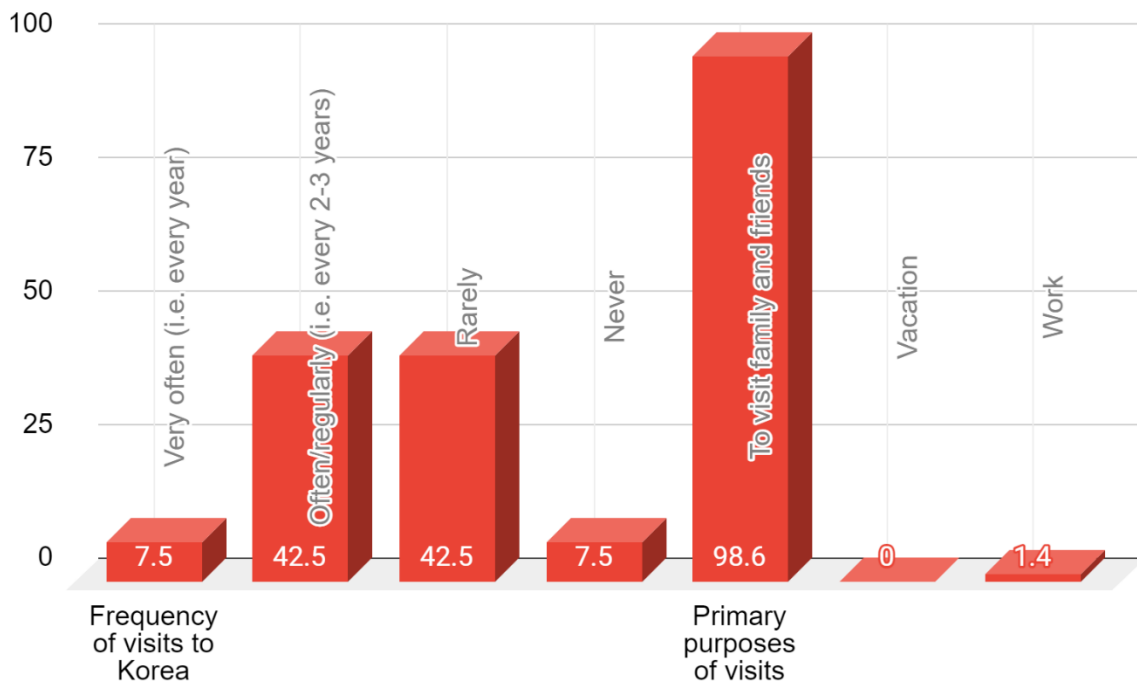
**Figure 20**

*First generation: primary motives for immigrating to Canada (%)*



**Figure 21**

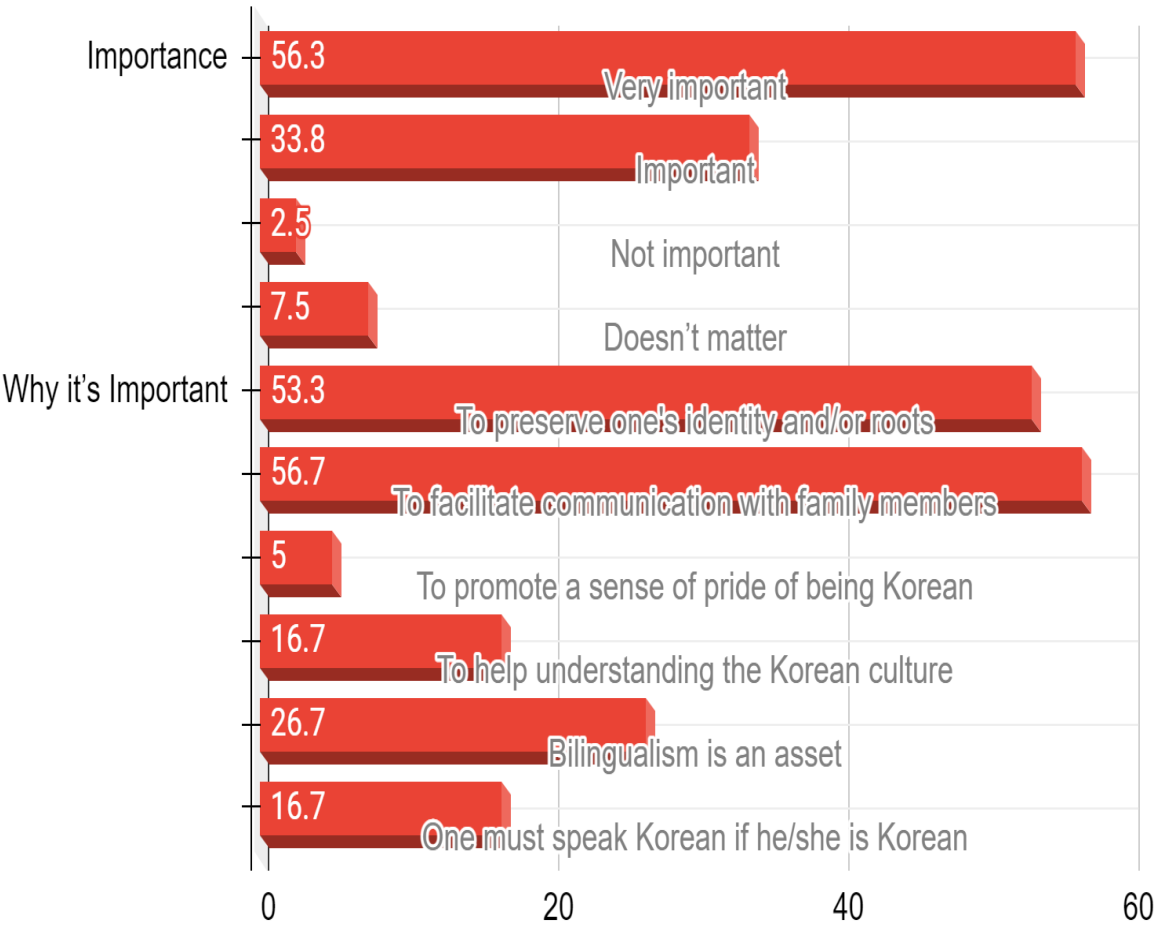
*First generation: visits to Korea and primary purposes of visits (%)*



The first-generation participants' reasons for immigrating were diverse (Figure 20). The most popular response was the pursuit of better educational opportunities for children, followed by the pursuit of a better way of life. Those who indicated family reunification (i.e. following their partner back to his or her country), job opportunities, and pursuing his or her own studies in Canada were slightly more numerous among the first-generation group when compared to the other generation groups. Furthermore, the first-generation participants appeared to have maintained the most direct ties with the country of origin when compared with the offspring-generation participants. As displayed in Figure 21, half of the respondents indicated that they visit Korea every year/every two to three years, mostly for the reasons of visiting family and friends.

**Figure 22**

*First generation: importance of intergenerational transmission of the Korean language (%)*



As first-generation parents often wish to transmit the heritage culture and identity to their children and they tend to perceive the Korean language as a means to be able to do so, offspring-generation children are likely to obtain first-handed, direct experiences of the Korean culture through their parents. Indeed, the parental attitudes towards the heritage language is significant, as these attitudes have an impact on shaping the children’s own attitudes toward the language (Cho, 2008; Jeon, 2012; S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2007; Sok, 2012). As Figure 22 illustrates, the maintenance of Korean language for their children was perceived as highly important in the minds of the first-generation participants—90% of them believed that it is necessary. Beyond enabling and facilitating communication with family members (56.7%), the first-generation often perceived one’s Korean proficiency as something inherent to the Korean identity (53.3%), as well as to one’s cultural understanding (16.7%). In fact, close to 17% of the participants believed that speaking Korean was an unassailable prerequisite for the Korean identity. Additionally, over one-quarter of the first generation valued bilingualism as an advantage in the job market/in the multicultural and multilingual societal settings. Therefore, the first generation seemed to have a high expectation for their children to retain, not only the Korean language, but also the Korean identity, which is likely to positively affect the children’s perceived importance of maintaining the ethnic identity.

**Table 29**

*First generation: self-assessed proficiency scores for English and Korean (score out of 10)*

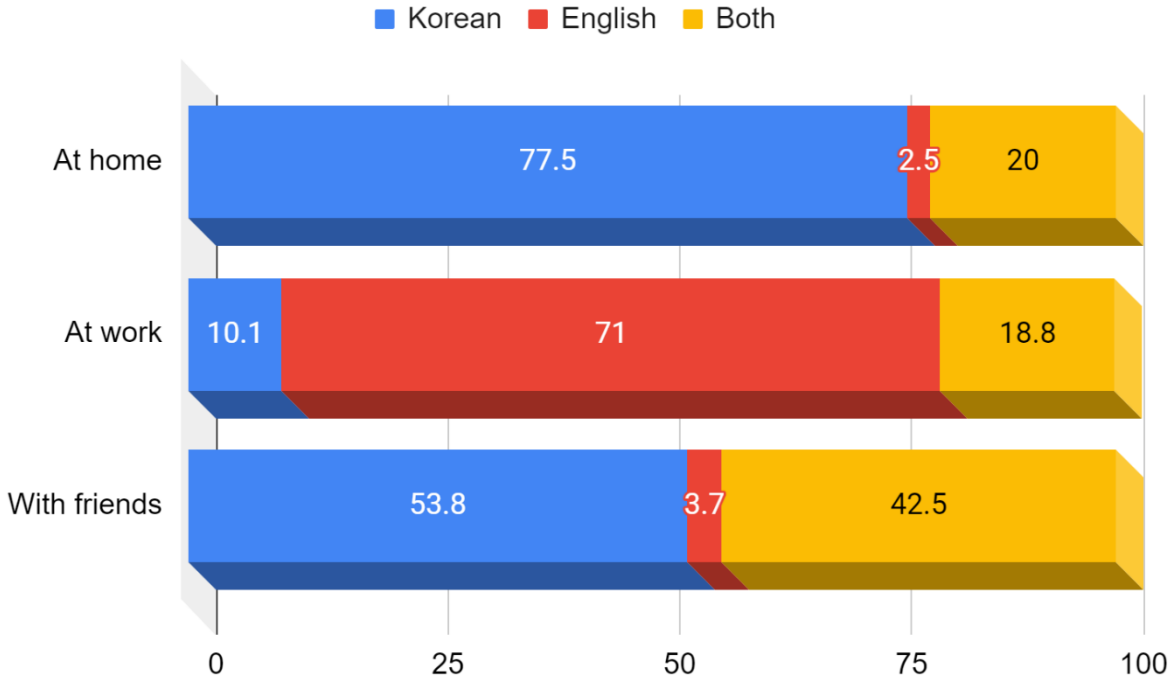
Language	Spoken		Written		Mean score in overall proficiency
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	
English	6.4	5, 6	6.8	8	6.6
Korean	9.9	10	9.8	10	9.9

Unsurprisingly, the first-generation participants demonstrated the weakest proficiency in English (mean score: 6.6) and the strongest proficiency in Korean (mean score: 9.9) across all generations (Table 29). They tended to be slightly more confident in written communication than in oral communication in English. As seen in Figure 23, this gap between the proficiency levels in the two languages seemed to be reflected in the choice of language used at home: most used Korean, 20% used both languages, and only 2.5% used English at home and in social settings. At work, the majority used English (71%); nevertheless, the percentages of those who used Korean or both languages at work were the highest when compared with the 1.5 and second generation. In social settings, the first generation’s preference the Korean remained appeared

salient (53.8%); but over 40% used both languages with friends. Evidently, among the first generation, English was visibly less favoured than Korean both at home and in social groups.

**Figure 23**

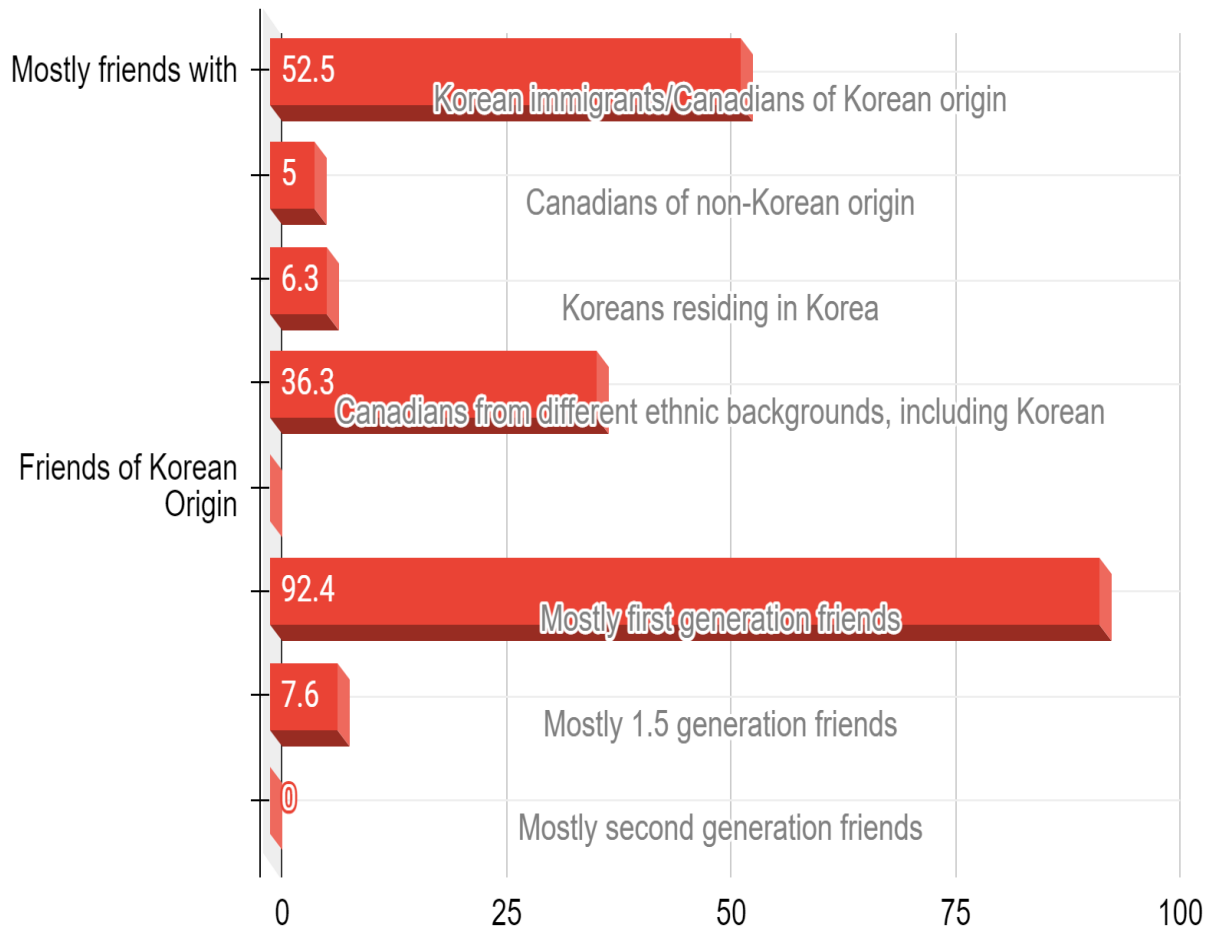
*First generation: languages used at home and work and with friends (%)*



Given the first-generation participants’ weaker level of confidence in their English proficiency, along with their wish to transmit the Korean proficiency and identity to their children, the first generation’s preference of communicating in Korean at home was not surprising. Furthermore, their limited level of proficiency in the English language suggests the presence of a language barrier with which they are likely to be faced in their lives as immigrants. In this respect, it can be expected that speaking the heritage language at home serves multiple purposes for the psychological well-being of immigrant parents’ self and the family. For instance, using Korean can provide a sense of comfort, as the individuals perceive the heritage language as “the only possible means for the expression” of their true selves (Berardi-Wiltshire, 2018, p. 8). The perceived value associated with maintaining the use of the heritage language at home is thus clear for the first-generation parents: it enables communication between family and helps establishing emotional closeness between parents and children, hence facilitating family cohesion (p. 8).

**Figure 24**

*First generation: composition of friend groups and generational composition of co-ethnic friends (%)*



On a broader level, cultural and language barriers inevitably restrict personal social networks that first-generation immigrants can develop (G. Kwak & Lai, 2012, p. 215). Indeed, the friend groups of the first-generation participants mostly socialized with Korean immigrants/Canadians of Korean origin (52.5%), and the vast majority of whom were first-generation immigrants like themselves (92.4%) (Figure 24). Additionally, around 6% of the participants retained friendship with Koreans who reside in Korea. The friend groups therefore were reflective of their language choice (i.e. language proficiency and use) in social groups, Korean. Nonetheless, the fact that 36.3% of the participants indicated socializing with Canadians of different ethnic backgrounds suggests that the first generation's networks may not solely be limited to what could otherwise be described as ethnic segregation.

As mentioned previously, in a multicultural city like Toronto where over 70,000 Canadians of Korean origin reside, the presence of the Korean community is vibrant. Thus, co-ethnic social resources are plentiful for Korean immigrants, especially for the first generation, whose access to social groups is often limited due to their limited language proficiency and/or cultural understanding. For example, some participants left the following comments that exemplify the first generation's dependency on co-ethnic peer socialization, especially using the heritage language:

*Comment A*

(Original) 1 세대 이민자로서 아무래도 한국에서의 교육과 생활이 캐나다에서보다 더 길쭉. 그래서인지 아직도 한국문화에 더 익숙하고 다른 1 세대 이민자들과 어울리는 게 편하네요. 같은 언어를 쓰고 같은 문화를 공유하다 보니 더 쉬운거 같아요.

(Translated) As a first-generation immigrant, I naturally spent more time in education and life in Korea than in Canada. That's why I'm still more familiar with Korean culture and find it easier to connect with other first-generation immigrants. I guess it's easier because we speak the same language and share the same culture.

*Comment B*

(Original) 캐나다에 이민 온지도 벌써 16 년이 다 되어가고 시민권도 땀지만 여전히 한국사람이라고 느낍니다. 집에서 또 친구들과 한국어로 대화하고 생활해서 그런 거 같음.

(Translated) I've been in Canada for almost 16 years now and I've even obtained citizenship, but I still feel like a Korean. I think it's because I speak Korean and live my daily life using the language at home and with friends.

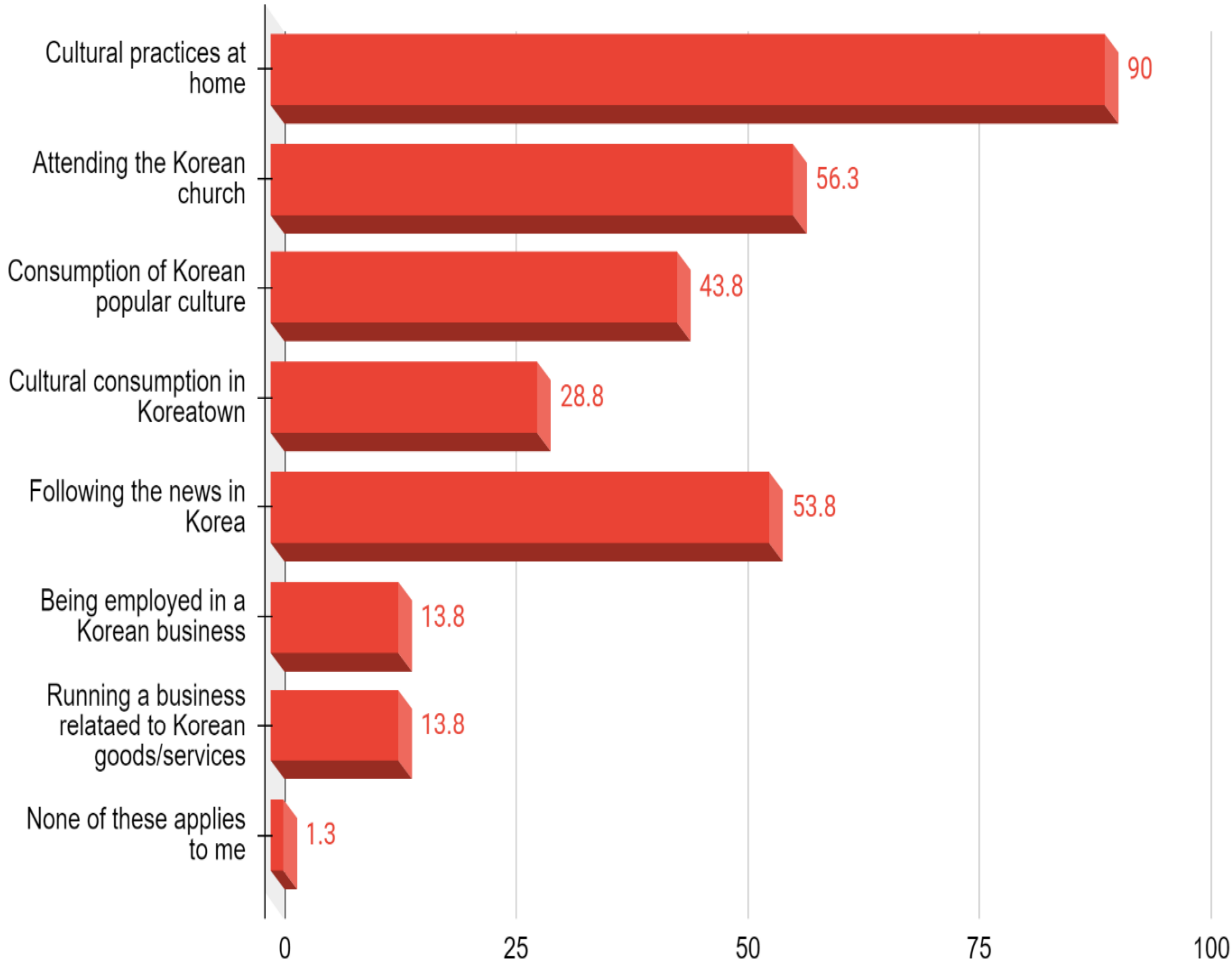
Both informants had numerous similar traits: they both immigrated to Canada for better education opportunities for their children, were now Canadian citizenship holders, and they rarely visited Korea. However, the commenter A was younger and a more recent immigrant (between 45 and 54 years of age, 6-10 years of residing in Canada) than the commenter B (between 55 and 64 years of age, 16-20 years of residing in Canada). Despite these differences, both informants indicated that Korean was their preferred language at home and in friend groups.

Comment A expresses that it is the shared culture and language that offer a sense of comfort for the informant in socializing with other Koreans—particularly with co-generational peers. Comment B furthermore illustrates the fact that the use of the Korean language with friends and family makes the informant feel Korean. Thus, co-ethnic peer socialization and the use of the heritage language can be understood as a mechanism that helps individuals cope with

linguistic and cultural barriers that they face and, simultaneously, enhances their ethnic attachment.

**Figure 25**

*First generation: transnational activities related to past and present experiences (%)*



*Note: multiple responses were possible.*

Given that the first-generation participants arrived in the host country in their adulthood and spoke much better Korean than English, it is no surprise that many identified with various transnational experiences (Figure 25). Some of the most popular responses included consuming of Korean food and practicing Korean traditions, attending a Korean church, and following the news in Korea. The positive attitudes of the first generation towards their children’s maintenance of the heritage language and Korean identity, combined with the transnational experiences with which they identified, are likely to influence the children’s perception of and familiarity with the heritage culture. Therefore, it can be expected that the ethnic identity

development of the offspring generations is affected by the kinds of acculturative experiences that the parent generation incorporates into the daily life at home.

Previous literature also reported that the second-generation children whose parents are actively involved in transnational activities or who grow up in households where the heritage language is used are more likely to retain transnational ties in their adulthood (Soehl & Waldinger, 2012, p. 807). Indeed, the transnational experiences that are embedded into the everyday life of first-generation immigrants become especially salient when considering their impact within the domain of home. As mentioned previously, cultural socialization at home is a type of transnational experience in which Korean immigrants often continue to engage across generations. Hence, cultural practices that first-generation parents facilitate, such as eating Korean food and speaking the Korean language, contribute to constructing a transnational space within the domain of home for all family members, especially affecting offspring generations. As Danico (2004) expressed, “the parents have the power to sustain Koreanness” through such practices (p. 12).

Furthermore, attendance and participation in the Korean church is another prevalent example of transnational experiences with which the majority of participants across all generations identified. In consideration of high levels of the parental wish for their children to maintain Korean language proficiency and identity, the Korean church provides an extremely useful site that parents can utilize to provide children with contextual occasions to practice the Korean language, make Korean friends, and learn about the Korean culture. The Korean church furthermore contributes to psychological well-being of first-generation Korean immigrants. Social services that the church offers to its members are especially valuable, especially for new immigrants during the initial immigration orientation (Min, 1992b; Hurh & Kim, 1984).

Moreover, other transnational aspects of the lives of the first-generation participants in this survey included consuming the Korean news (53.8%) and popular culture (43.8%). On the one hand, the respondents’ interest in the Korean news demonstrated their retained interest in current affairs of the homeland—despite the fact that close to half of the first generation had denounced their Korean nationality. On the other hand, the first generation’s consumption of the Korean popular culture can be understood as evidence that exemplifies the subjects’ attachment to the Korean culture.



**Table 30***First generation: transnational activities mostly associated with the first generation (%)*

	First-generation responses (out of the total responses from all generation groups, per each response category)
Following the news in Korea	58.9
Running a business associated with Korean goods and services related to Korea	55
Cultural practices at home (i.e. consuming Korean food/practicing Korean traditions)	35.5

Although it could be assumed that first-generation immigrants would be most actively engaged in transnational activities and behaviours, the findings of the survey proved otherwise. The first-generation participants were second-most transnational among all three generations of participants: 241 responses out of the total 678 responses (35.5%) which were gathered were from the first-generation group, whereas 251 responses out of the total 678 responses (37%) were from the 1.5-generation group (Table 27). When looking at the response rates from all generation groups per each response category, the first-generation participants were most numerous in identifying with following the news in Korea (58.9%), running a business associated with Korean goods and services related to Korea (55%), and cultural practices at home (35.5%) (Table 30). As mentioned earlier, the number of the first-generation participants following the news in Korea was significantly higher than that of the offspring generations (28.8% of the 1.5 generation; 12.3% of the second generation).

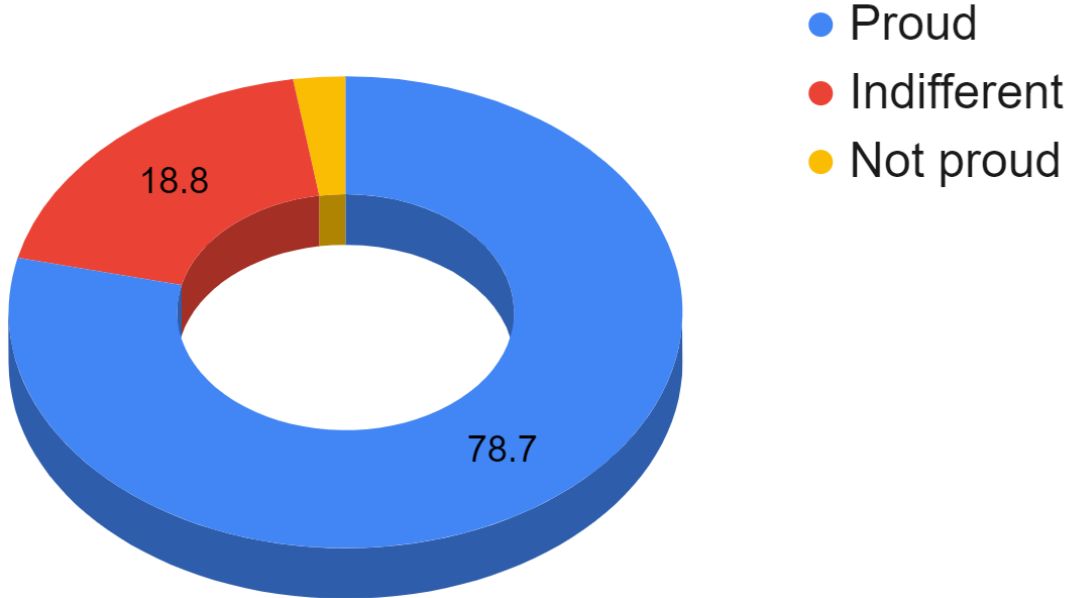
Overall, active involvement of the first-generation participants in transnational activities also suggests a certain degree of homesickness that they may experience. Indeed, homesickness has been identified as one of the biggest contributing factors to inducing stress, to which new immigrants were especially more vulnerable (Noh & Moon, 2012). Therefore, homesickness may help explaining the strong links that the first generation has retained to the homeland, through linguistic, cultural, and social practices related to their heritage identity.

What has been discussed so far about the first-generation participants represents different aspects and degrees of their ethnic exploration and involvement. Another factor that can significantly contribute to one's ethnic identity development is ethnic pride (Cebotari, 2009; Castro et al., 2009; Valk & Karu-Kletter, 2001). Ethnic pride seemed relevant to most of the

first-generation participants (78.7%) (Figure 26). However, the first generation was also the only group among whom few were not proud of their origin.

**Figure 26**

*First generation: pride in ethnic origin (%)*



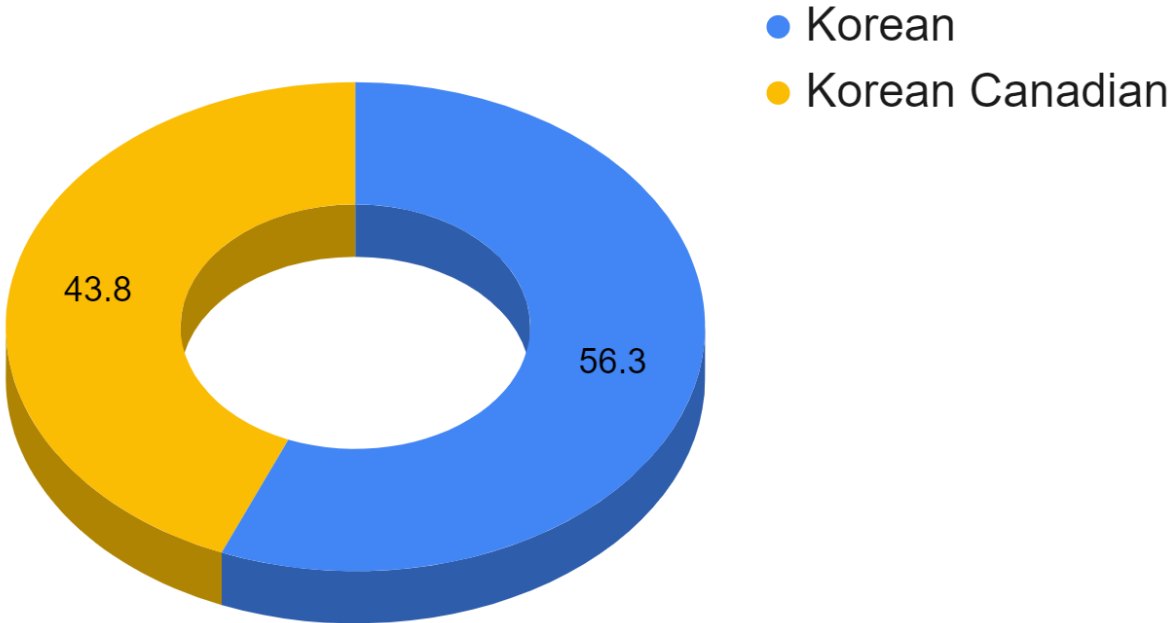
The ethnic experiences that appeared to be salient in the lives of the first-generation participants indicate a certain degree of membership that they partake in the Korean community in Toronto through the shared values, beliefs, and practices relevant to the heritage culture. Thus, their ethnic pride can be seen as an important building block of their positive sense of self in relation to the ethnic group. The sense of pride therefore may be seen an indicator of both the positive perceptions of self, as well as the group, and/or an aid that helps them cope with their immigrant lives within the mainstream society. In fact, Phinney (1990) interpreted pride as a coping mechanism employed by ethnic groups within the mainstream society.

The two participants (2.5%) across all generation groups who were not proud of their origin were indeed the first generation. While the overall responses of these participants appeared in line with the average, what stood out was their weak self-assessed proficiency level in English: their self-perceived level of English proficiency was only 4 out of 10 on average, which was significantly lower than the group average of 6.6. In consideration of the fact that both participants had resided in Canada for at least 16 years, their lack of confidence in their

English proficiency was striking. Moreover, both self-identified as Korean. Therefore, the fact that these participants lack ethnic pride while they self-identify using the ethnic identity label can be viewed as an indicator of their poor psychological adjustment—living as an immigrant within the host society, faced with language and cultural barriers.

**Figure 27**

*First generation: self-identification (%)*



When presented with “Canadian,” “Korean,” “Korean Canadian,” “Other,” and “I am unable to respond” as possible responses to the self-identification question, 56.3% of the first-generation participants chose the single Korean identity label, whereas a sizeable minority chose the hybrid Korean Canadian identity label (Figure 27). While the Korean identity label was chosen by at least a minority among each generation, the first generation was the most numerous in claiming the identity. This tendency appeared consistent to the overall findings in regard to the first generation: the high rates of retention of the heritage culture, language, and co-ethnic peer socialization in their daily lives in Canada suggest dominance of the first generation’s ethnic attachment over national attachment, which seems to characterize this generation group. As well, it is worth noting that, whether an ethnic label is chosen or imposed, one’s ethnic self-identification may be partial: he or she may feel only partly ethnic and partly mainstream (Phinney, 1990, p. 504). Hence, the minority who self-identified as Korean Canadian may have deemed the hyphenated identity a better reflection of self, if they felt that the single ethnic identity label was not adequate to represent the various ties—albeit potentially

limited—that they have developed with the mainstream Canadian culture, society, and/or identity.

Some of the first-generation participants left comments at the end of the questionnaire which seemed pertinent to the overall findings. Below is one of them, from a female informant, between 35 and 44 years of age and a permanent resident, who had been living in Canada for between 11 and 15 years. The respondent fit into the broad profile of the first-generation group: she had a strong preference for Korean over English, mostly socialized with first generation Koreans like herself, felt ethnic pride, and self-identified as Korean.

*Comment C*

(Original) 코로나 시대를 겪으며 한국정부의 대처와 국민성을 한국 또 캐나다 뉴스로 접해 들으며 한국인으로서의 자부심을 느낍니다. 또 한류 또한 캐나다 이 멀리서도 BTS 를 보며 한국어를 알고 있는 것에 자부심을 느끼는 아이들을 보며 한인이라는 나의 정체성을 다시금 자랑스레 여길 수 있었습니다. 아이들이 접하는 한국 문화가 나의 문화고 내 정체성의 일부이니까.

(Translated) Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, I feel a sense of pride as a Korean when I hear about the Korean government's response and the resilience of the Korean people through news from Korean and Canada. Also, Korean wave, too, witnessing children seeing BTS,<sup>63</sup> even from faraway Canada, and feeling proud of knowing the Korean language, has enabled me to feel proud of my identity. Because the Korean culture that they are learning, that's my culture and part of my identity.

Numerous elements can be noted from Comment C. Firstly, the transnational activities such as following the news about the country of origin, as well as children's consumption of the Korean popular culture, clearly seemed to be contributing to the sense of pride that the respondent felt. Thus, transnationalism appeared to be positively correlated with ethnic pride. Secondly, the respondent was happy to witness the children's exposure to the Korean popular culture and the resulting ethnic pride that they felt. At the same time, her comment demonstrates the important role that one's language proficiency plays in shaping his or her ethnic identity: not only did the Korean proficiency of the children enable them to explore the Korean popular culture through BTS, but it moreover seemed to have formed a sense of pride in their ethnic identity. Hence, language proficiency can help facilitating one's ethnic exploration and enhance

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<sup>63</sup> BTS (Bangtan Boys) is the name of a South Korean boy band that debuted in 2013 who has gained worldwide popularity over the years. The band is the most streamed group on Spotify, as well as the most followed music group on Instagram, and they have "23 Guinness World Records titles across music and social media" (NDTV Newsdesk, 2021).

his or her ethnic pride. Lastly, the resulting sense of pride that the respondent felt appeared to derive, not only from the fact that the others (i.e. the mainstream Canadian public and “children”) were exposed to the Korean culture, but also from the positive portrayal of the Korean identity. The positive out-group perception seems to be a significant contributor to one’s perception of the in-group identity.

In addition, the following comments from two informants, both between 45 and 54 years of age who had lived in Canada for at least 11 years, shed light on the first-generation parents’ perception of self and of their children.

*Comment D*

(Original) 나같은 1 세대 이민자들은 한국에서 교육받고 일하며 지낸 시간이 캐나다에서 보낸 시간보다 길어서 아무래도 섞이기가 어렵네요. 내 자식들은 캐나다에서 태어나 두 문화 속에서 두 언어를 쓰며 자랐으니 섞이기가 쉽겠죠.

(Translated) As a first-generation immigrant like myself, it’s rather difficult to blend in, since I’ve spent more time in Korea receiving education and working than in Canada. On the other hand, my children were born in Canada and grew up using two languages in two cultures, so it’s easier for them to blend in.

*Comment E*

(Original) 나는 한국인이지만 내 아이들은 캐나다인 이었으면 한다. 나와 내 부인은 순전히 아이들을 위해 이민을 왔기 때문이다. 덜 스트레스 받는 교육환경에서 영어로 교육을 받고 글로벌한 잡마켓에 당당히 참여할 수 있길 바랬다. 우리가 모국에 모든 걸 버리고 또 희생한 점에 있어... 우리 아이들이 이곳 사회에 자신의 뿌리를 잊지 않고 Korean Canadian 으로서 잘 통합하였으면 한다.

(Translated) I am Korean, but I wish for my children to be Canadians. Because my wife and I came here purely for the sake of our children. We hoped they could be educated in a less stressful environment, in English, and be able to confidently participate in the global job market. We sacrificed everything in our home country... I hope our children will not forget their roots and integrate well as Korean Canadians in this society.

Both informants demonstrated all of the key characteristics that have been identified so far in the study of the first-generation immigrant group: they mostly used Koreans in all domains of life, spoke Korean fluently, socialized with Korean first-generation immigrants like themselves, felt ethnic pride, and considered intergenerational transmission of the Korean language as highly important. Additionally, although they had resided in Canada for between 11 and 20 years, they both chose the single Korean identity label to self-identify.

As highlighted in Comment E, the use of the word, *sacrifice*, is not an uncommon subject in the narratives of first-generation immigrant parents (Danico, 2004; J. Jeong & Bélanger, 2012; J. Kim & Duff, 2012; Methikalam, 2008; Peng & Wright, 1994; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). As highlighted previously, better educational opportunities for children are typically the primary motive for most Korean first-generation immigrants; and for this reason, many leave behind what they have established back in the home country. Previous research has demonstrated that language and cultural barriers hinder their socioeconomical integration (Wu et al., 2012). For instance, while most recent Korean immigrants are of the white-collar middle-class background, it is difficult for them to access occupations of the equivalent levels in Canada due to language barriers, as well as the lack of Canadian work experience. Therefore, many turn to self-employment and manual labour to make the ends meet, which result in status inconsistency that may negatively affect psychological well-being of these immigrants (I.-J. Yoon, 2012).

The perceived parental sacrifice may significantly shape the way that immigrant children are raised. As expressed in both comments E and F, the parental wish for children to become bilingual and bicultural appears to be linked to the parental sacrifice and the self-perceived limits in integrating within the host society. In fact, the informant of Comment F hoped that his children will be Korean Canadian, unlike himself, by successfully integrating into the mainstream society while retaining their roots. His comment moreover implies that he wished for the children to successfully integrate for the sake of making the sacrifice which his partner and himself had made worthwhile. In parallel to this finding, previous literature has reported that Asian parents often “instil guilt about parental sacrifices and the need to fulfil the obligation to succeed, be respectful, and obedient” (Peng & Wright, 1994, as cited in Methikalam, 2008, p. 25). As first-generation parents perceive their children to be equipped with the right tools (i.e. mainstream language proficiency, cultural familiarity, and education received in the host country), they are likely to expect that the children would not encounter the barriers which they have had to face. Thus, parental pressure is prone to having a significant impact on identity journeys of the children, to varying extents.

Indeed, when compared to subsequent generation groups, first-generation immigrants—notably those who belong to visible minority groups—encounter higher levels of discomfort in the host country, as they are faced with differences that distinguish them

from the dominant group (e.g. racial status, culture, and skin colour) that negatively affect their subjective well-being (Wu et al., 2012).

It is important to note that the kinds of difficulties that first-generation immigrants encounter in their integration within the Canadian society should not be interpreted as a failure of multiculturalism. Rather, this generation group is faced with *unique* linguistic and cultural barriers that present challenges in their social integration and upward social mobility (Wu et al., 2012). Moreover, while the availability of co-ethnic peers and ethnic community may be valuable resources that provide first-generation immigrants with a sense of comfort and boost their ethnic attachment, these immigrants' dependence on co-ethnic networks and the ethnic culture can become, in turn, obstacles that hinder their integration. In spite of the perceived difficulties and evident ethnic tendencies that appear predominant, the first-generation immigrants appear hopeful for the future of their children.

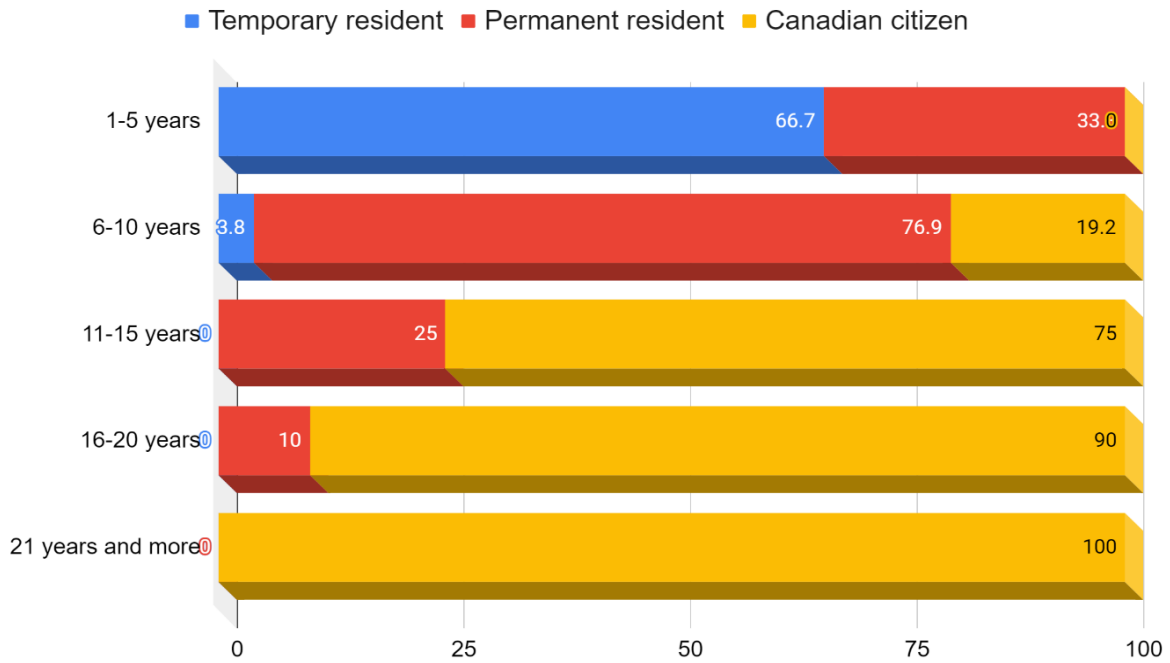
As the first generation demonstrates a visibly high level of dependence on the use of the ethnic language and co-ethnic peers when compared to subsequent generations, there remain few elements that suggest their integration and national attachment, to varying degrees. Hurh and Kim (1984) found that the immigrants' length of residence in the host country was irrelevant to the degree of their ethnic attachment, yet, positively related to the degree to which they were acculturated.<sup>64</sup> The findings from the present survey also mirrored their finding, as the participants tended to acculturate over time, regardless of their persisting ethnic attachment. For instance, regardless of the length of residence, high levels of Korean proficiency and co-ethnic peer socialization tendencies applied to the vast majority, if not all, first-generation participants. Yet, there were two variables (i.e. citizenship rate and ethnic self-identification) with which the length of residence demonstrated a positive correlation: the longer the participants had resided in Canada, the more likely it was for them to be Canadian citizens (Figure 28) and to claim the Korean Canadian identity (Figure 29).

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<sup>64</sup> Hurh and Kim (1984) also pointed out that this relationship between the length of residence and the degree of social assimilation was not applicable to non-college graduates.

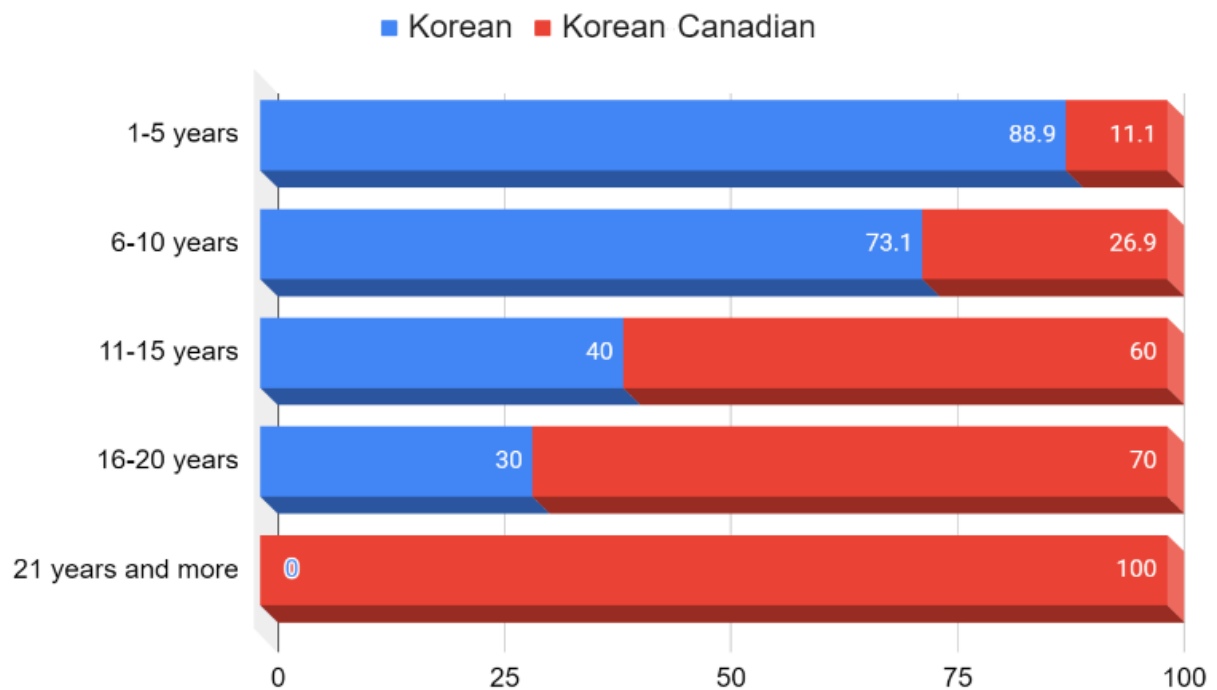
**Figure 28**

*First generation: residency status vs. length of residence (%)*



**Figure 29**

*First generation: self-identification vs. length of residence (%)*



Owing to the fact that this survey was primarily aimed at exploring ethnic attachment of immigrant generations, the level of overall acculturation/integration of the participants



cannot be adequately assessed from the findings. Nonetheless, the rates related to obtention of citizenship and ethnic self-identification can be considered as indicators of the participants' sense of attachment to the host country. As indicated earlier, Koreans may prefer permanent residency than a Canadian citizenship due to the South Korean laws that forbids double nationality (J. Park, 2012, p. 22). Yet, the findings of this survey showed an increase in the citizenship rate of the participants across their length of residence in Canada; for example, all the participants who had resided in Canada for 20 years and longer were Canadian citizens. Given that Korean nationality must be denounced upon obtaining Canadian nationality,<sup>65</sup> this finding can be meaningful. The positive correlation between the rate of self-identification patterns using the hybrid Korean Canadian identity and the length of residence is also interesting (Figure 29), because one's length of residence did not appear to be linked to, for instance, his or her English proficiency nor cross-ethnic socialization tendencies. Therefore, the findings suggest that the strong sense of ethnic attachment of the first-generation Korean immigrants in Toronto does not seem to negatively affect their acculturation, and that they seem to develop a sense of belonging to the host country, despite linguistic and sociocultural barriers.

According to Wu et al. (2012), most immigrants adapt to the Canadian social life and adopt it as their home and become more comfortable in the host society across the generations. In this respect, it is likely for offspring generations to develop a stronger sense of attachment to the host country than their first-generation parents. The sense of belonging that they develop to their heritage culture and ethnic identity is likely to demonstrate the impact of the upbringing of the first generation.

## **5.2 1.5 Generation**

As indicated in the cover letter of the survey, one had to have arrived before the age of 13 to be able to participate as the 1.5 generation. As shown in Table 31, the 1.5-generation participants in this study were mostly female (67.5%), between 25 and 34 years of age (70%), and had lived in Canada for at least 16 years (78.8%)—thus representing less recent immigrants when compared to the first-generation participants, overall. As well, the vast majority (92.5%) were Canadian citizenship holders.

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<sup>65</sup> It must be noted that another reason for which a Korean immigrant may choose to obtain the Canadian citizenship may be to avoid the conscription in Korea which obliges the male nationals between 18 and 28 years of age to perform military service (Military Manpower Administration (Republic of Korea, n.d.). Therefore, the sole fact of holding the Canadian citizenship may have little to do with one's national attachment and acculturation.

**Table 31**

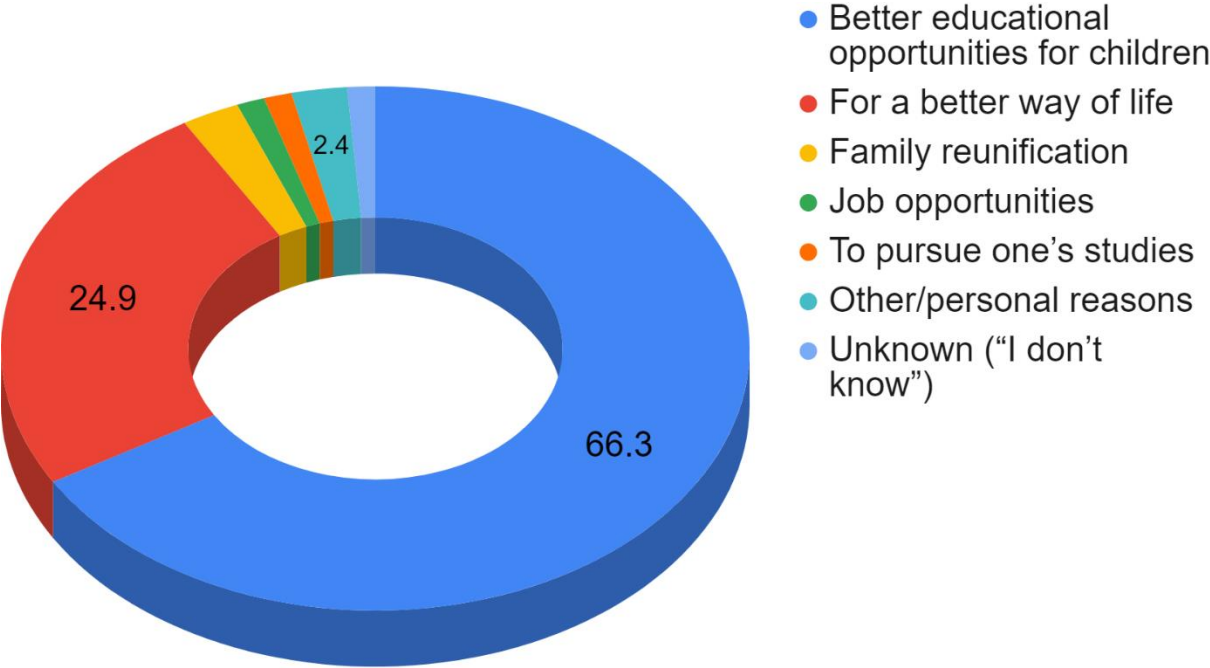
*1.5 generation: profile traits*

Age	11.3% 25-34 years of age <b>70% 35-44 years of age</b> 13.7% 45-54 years of age 5% 55-64 years of age
Sex	<b>67.5% Female</b> 32.5% Male
Length of residence in Canada	5% 6-10 years 16.3% 11-15 years <b>38.8% 16-20 years</b> 40% 21 years and more
Residence/citizenship status	7.5% Permanent resident <b>92.5% Canadian citizen</b>

*Note: mode values are indicated in bold*

**Figure 30**

*1.5 generation: parents' primary motives for immigrating to Canada (%)*

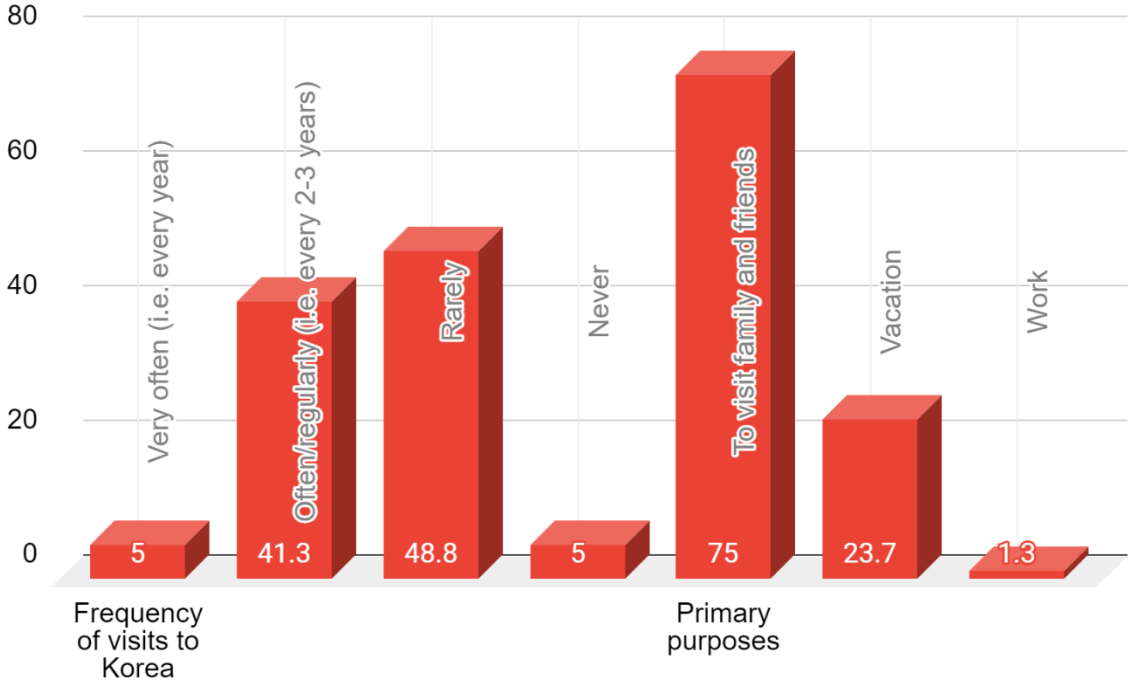


Whether they arrive in the host country with one or both parents or alone, the decision to migrate is often not for 1.5-generation immigrants to make. The findings demonstrated similar trends as those that were observed among the responses of the first-generation participants: “Better educational opportunities for children” was the most popular response

(66.3%), followed by “for a better way of life” (24.9%) (Figure 30). Other motives, such as the pursuit of family reunification and job and education opportunities (for the parents) were also reported, but they were fewer in response rate among the 1.5 generation when compared to the first generation. A very small minority also chose “Other/personal reasons.” All the 1.5-generation participants except for one were aware of the reason for which their parents decided to immigrate.

**Figure 31**

*1.5 generation: visits to Korea and primary purposes of visits (%)*

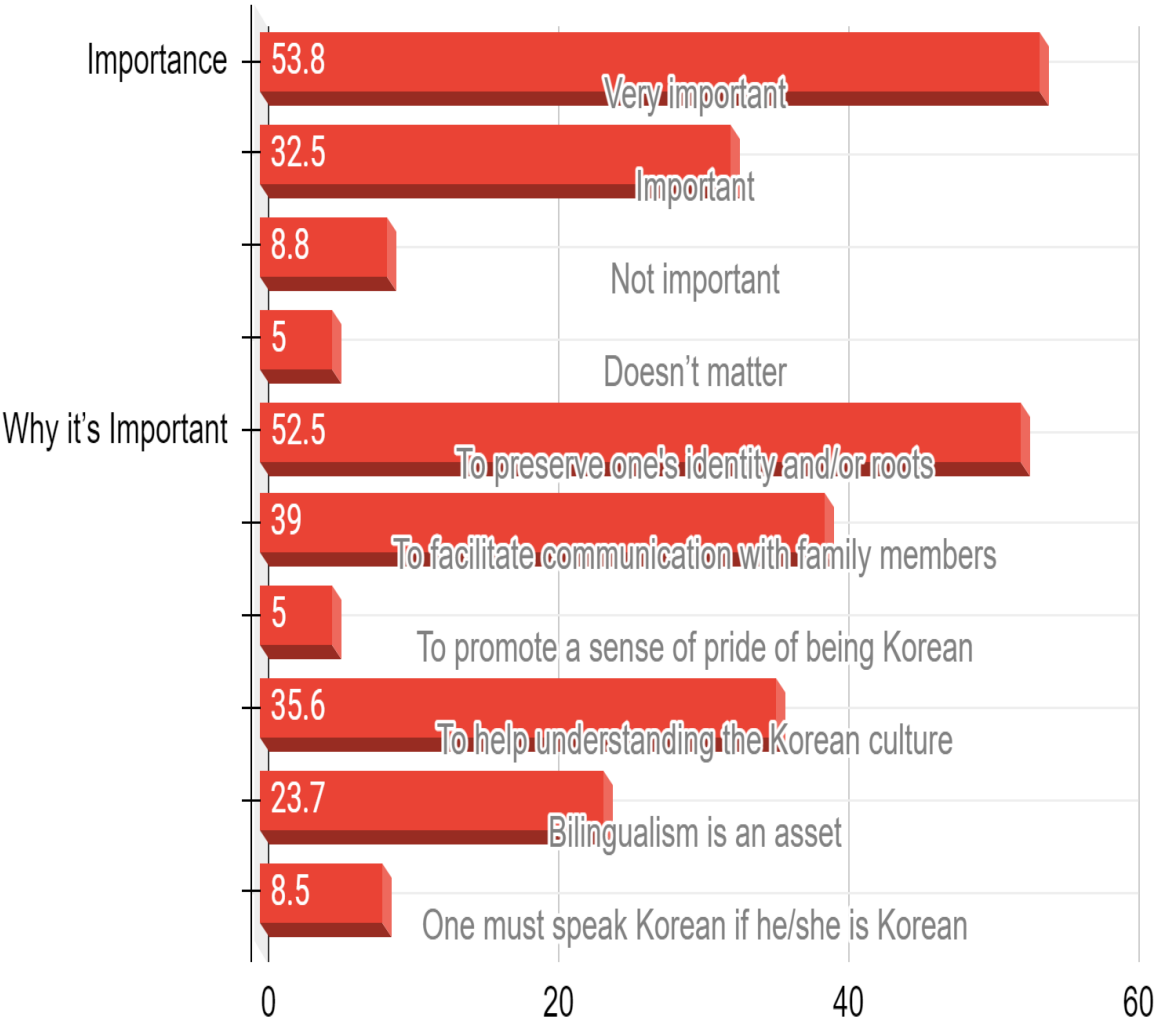


Although most of the 1.5-generation participants had settled in Canada for years, many maintained various links with Korea. First of all, the 1.5-generation’s frequency of visits to Korea resembled very closely that of their first-generation counterparts: almost half of the 1.5 generation visited Korea every year/every two to three years (Figure 31). While there were slightly more of the 1.5 generation who rarely visited Korea than when compared to the first generation, those who never visited Korea were the fewest (5%) among the 1.5 generation across all generation groups. This is an interesting finding, as it affirmed that the rate of their homeland visits is comparable to that of the first generation. Moreover, the vast majority of the 1.5 generation had visited Korea at least once in their lives.

Having left Korea at a young age and lived most of their lives in Canada, the fact that many of the 1.5-generation participants seemed to have developed and/or retained interests in visiting Korea is meaningful. Homeland visits represent an effective way of maintaining the heritage language, as they enable retention of close ties in which the heritage language is necessary. For example, those who travel to the homeland for vacation are likely to take part in national holiday celebrations and cultural festivals when visiting (Hinton, 1999; C. M. Smith, 2014). According to the findings, most of the 1.5 generation’s visits to Korea were organized to visit family and friends (75%), as well as for vacation purposes (23.7%) (Figure 31). These findings suggest a positive impact of these visits on ethnic exploration and attachment of the participants.

**Figure 32**

*1.5 generation: importance of intergenerational transmission of the Korean language (%)*



Furthermore, the maintenance of the Korean language of the subsequent generation was deemed important for the 1.5-generation participants, and the proportion of those who responded positively was comparable to that of their first-generation counterparts (Figure 32). Even though there was a slightly higher number of the 1.5 generation who did not consider the heritage language maintenance as important, and less of those for whom it did not matter, when compared to the first generation, the 1.5 generation’s responses seemed to closely mirror those of the first generation, overall. Most associated the heritage language with the heritage identity and/or roots—among whom few considered the language proficiency as a prerequisite for the ethnic identity—and many saw the value in being able to communicate with family members and understanding the Korean culture by using the Korean language. Additionally, close to one-quarter of the 1.5 generation saw bilingualism as an asset that helps widening the pool of economic opportunities/within the multicultural Canadian society. A small percentage of the participants also drew links between ethnic pride and the heritage language proficiency.

These findings are significant, as they imply the salience of parental influence on the 1.5 generation which is facilitated by family/cultural socialization at home, among other factors. Furthermore, one’s high level of motivation and interest in, as well as positive attitudes toward, the heritage language maintenance, are linked to his or her retention of the heritage language and cultural identity (S. M. Park, 2013). Therefore, a successful intergenerational transmission of positive perception of the heritage language maintenance can be expected to positively contribute to the ethnic identity of the 1.5 generation.

**Table 32**

*1.5 generation: self-assessed proficiency scores for English and Korean (score out of 10)*

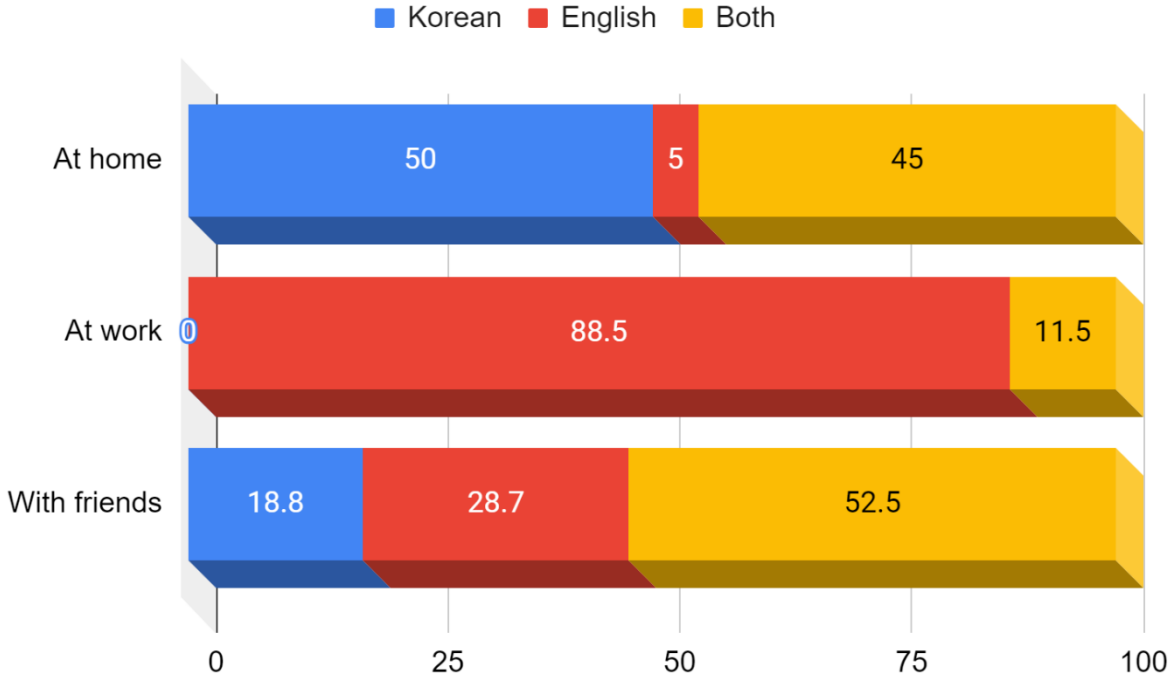
Language	Spoken		Written		Mean score in overall proficiency
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	
English	9	10	8.9	10	9
Korean	8.6	10	7.7	10	8.2

As previous studies have indicated, one of the consistent traits with which the 1.5 generation is associated is bilingualism (Danico, 2004; Sok, 2012; Y. Yi, 2009). Indeed, as displayed in Table 32, the 1.5-generation participants provided the self-assessed scores for their proficiency in both English and Korean, which were the most bilingual across all generation groups (mean scores of 9 in English and 8.2 in Korean). When compared to their second-generation counterparts, especially, the 1.5-generation participants tended to be overall confident in their Korean proficiency.

It should be noted that the scores of the 1.5 generation for Korean and English proficiencies were often not *perfect*. What also stood out about their bilingualism is *heterogeneity*, observed in the proficiency levels in the two languages across the 1.5-generation sample. The bilingualism of the 1.5 generation can thus be classified into following categories: those who are fluent in both Korean and English; more fluent in English than in Korean; more fluent in Korean than English; and not fluent in either. Besides the age at the time of immigration, the level of bilingualism of the 1.5 generation is dependent on several factors, including ethnic community, family socialization, peer groups, as well as personal views toward co-ethnics (Danico, 2004, pp. 2-3). On this note, the language use of the 1.5-generation participants in different spheres and socialization patterns would further shed light on this phenomenon.

**Figure 33**

*1.5 generation: languages used at home and work and with friends (%)*



Although the 1.5-generation participants seem to have maintained the use of Korean in their daily lives, the number of those who exclusively used Korean was far smaller when compared to the first generation. In fact, home was the only sphere in which the majority of the 1.5 generation used Korean: 50% used Korean only and 45% used both Korean and English, whereas only 5% used English (Figure 33). These findings can be explained by the limited

levels of English proficiency of their parents. At work, English was the dominant language (88.5%), and approximately 12% used both English and Korean; but none of the 1.5 generation used Korean exclusively at work. In social contexts, over half of the 1.5-generation participants used both languages (52.5%), which was the highest in percentage across all generation groups. While almost 30% used English with friends, those who communicated with friends using Korean, only, were the fewest, at 18.8%.

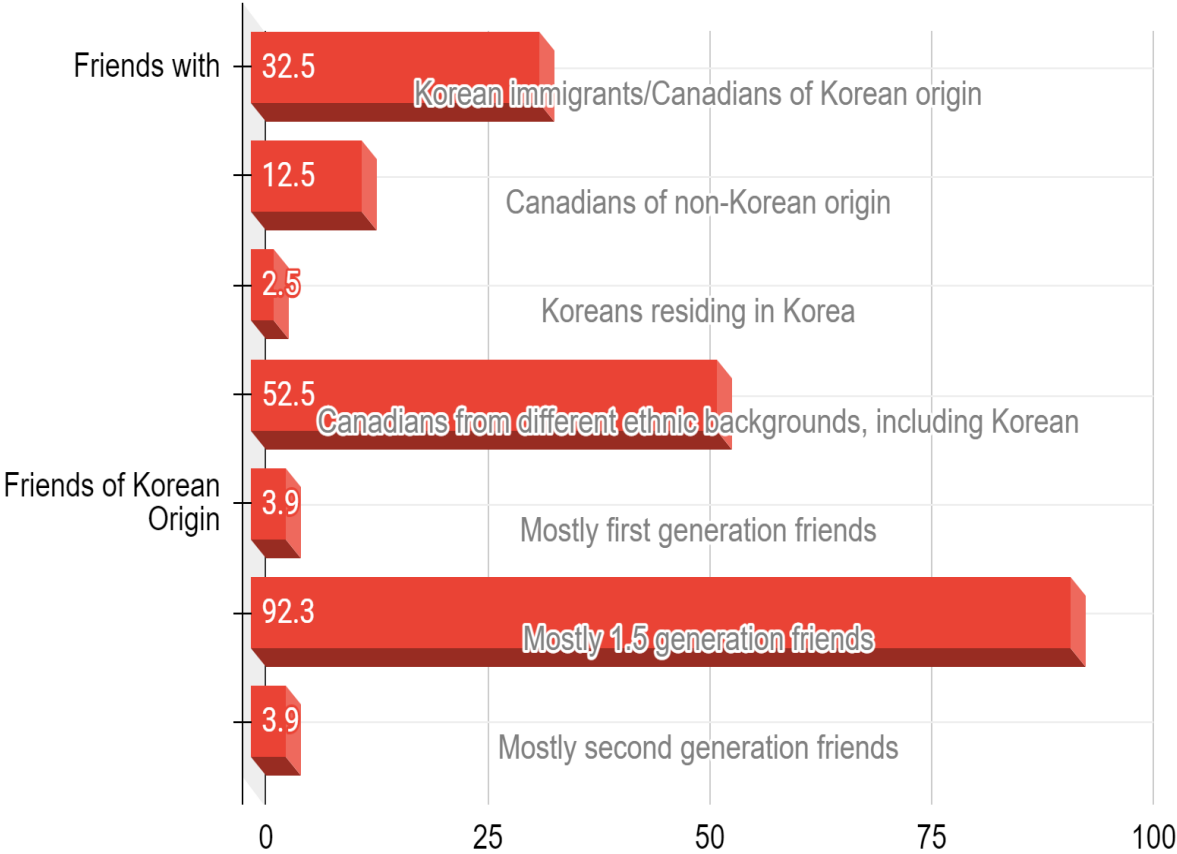
The most significant contributing factors to heritage language maintenance of immigrant children are supportive familial and communal contexts (Alba et al., 2002; Döpke, 1992; Phinney, Romero et al., 2001). Moreover, as mentioned previously, positive parental attitude towards the heritage language, and the language use at home are some of the strongest predictors of one's heritage language maintenance. Thus, the importance of family socialization—especially through parents—becomes evident in this context when discussing the heritage language maintenance of children. Most of the 1.5-generation participants who used Korean outside of home tended to use it along with English. While it holds true that their self-assessment of Korean proficiency reflected an overall good level of the language, it seemed evident that the language shift and heritage language attrition have begun taking place. Therefore, the language loss is likely to be associated with limited contextual occasions that would enable the language use.

Outside of the family, the socialization tendencies of the 1.5-generation participants illustrated a strong sense of co-ethnic ties. Since interaction with peers other than the parents using the heritage language is necessary for one to become bilingual (Danico, 2004; Döpke, 1992), the co-ethnic peer socialization tendencies that were revealed in the findings affirmed the availability and active use of co-ethnic networks, which are likely to positively affect the participants' bilingualism. Nonetheless, as can be observed in Figure 34, the 1.5-generation did not appear to be as dependent on co-ethnic peer socialization as the first generation: while around one-third were friends with mostly Korean immigrants/Canadians of Korean origin, over half of the participants were friends with Canadians of different ethnic backgrounds, and, albeit a small minority, close to 13% were friends with mostly Canadians of non-Korean origin. There were also fewer participants from the 1.5 generation group (2.5%) who were mostly friends with Koreans who resided in Korea, when compared to the first generation. As well, across all generation groups, the largest proportion of the 1.5 generation had friends of both Korean and non-Korean origin. These findings is likely associated with their bilingualism.

Hence, it can be deduced that bilingualism is attained, at least partially, through co-ethnic peer interaction, and, at the same time, it can facilitate and enhance co-ethnic peer interaction.

**Figure 34**

*1.5 generation: composition of friend groups and generational composition of co-ethnic friends (%)*



The 1.5 generation is often identified as English-dominant bilinguals (Harklau, 2003; Hinton, 1999). Having left the educational institution of the homeland at a young age, 1.5-generation students may not fully develop oral, written, or both systems of the heritage language, and moreover experience a loss of the heritage language proficiency during the acculturative process in the host country. In fact, many children may only have a “passive knowledge of their heritage language” (Hinton, 1999) and demonstrate varying levels of oral and written proficiency. The findings of this survey also reflected these trends: the 1.5-generation participants’ level of Korean proficiency seemed to have been compromised to a certain extent. In particular, their self-assessed score in Korean written proficiency (7.7 out of 10) was lower than the score in Korean oral proficiency (8.6 out of 10) (Table 5.5). These



findings indicated that there is likely to be a lack of adequate support needed to help enhancing their level of Korean proficiency, notably in literacy.

Furthermore, the 1.5-generation participants' mean self-assessed score in English proficiency was lower when compared to that of the second generation. This is probably linked to the fact that the 1.5 generation learns English as a second language upon arriving in Canada, with little or no prior knowledge of English (Hinton, 1999). Owing to their young age at the time of immigration, English acquisition takes little time for 1.5 generation; nevertheless, the rate of acquisition and the ultimate attainment of English proficiency greatly vary for each individual, depending on social and psycholinguistic factors that are still only partially understood (Roberge, 2002, p. 120).

The trend that seemed to emerge from the socialization patterns of the 1.5- and second-generation participants is that subsequent generations were increasingly engaged in cross-ethnic socialization and less engaged in co-ethnic peer socialization. However, the English proficiency of the 1.5 generation seemed to be bounded, compared to that of the second generation. This finding can be explained by the 1.5 generation's high level of co-ethnic peer socialization and its impact on their bilingualism. In the case of the 1.5-generation participants who mostly had co-ethnic friends, over 90% were friends with 1.5-generation immigrants like themselves (Figure 34), and more than half of the participants used both languages with friends (Figure 5.14).

Due to the parental preference for Korean at home, the acquisition of English of offspring generations is often dependent on peer-socialization, involving friends, coworkers, and siblings. Previous research findings have pointed out that English acquired predominantly through such informal social interactions may lead to certain grammatical features that are not learnt correctly (Roberge, 2002). In this respect, the correlation between the 1.5-generation participants' co-generational socialization tendencies and their *imperfect* English proficiency can be better understood.

The following comment furthermore provides an example of the 1.5 generation's usage of languages that often shift, depending on situations:

*Comment F*

Although I arrived in Canada when I was 8, I am pretty confident in my Korean as much as I am in English. All my coworkers are English-speakers and a lot of my Korean friends, too, so I use English a lot in my daily life. When I speak with my family and some Korean friends, I use a lot of Konglish

[...]. Because we have been in Canada for so long, it feels natural to do so. But whenever I talk to someone who doesn't speak English, like my grandparents in Korea, I need to pay attention not to use Konglish. It's become a habit when I speak Korean.

The informant was female, between 25 and 34 years of age, who self-identified as Korean Canadian. She had resided in Canada for between 16 and 20 years and was a Canadian citizen. Although she rarely visited Korea, she valued the maintenance and intergenerational transmission of Korean, identified with various transnational activities, and felt ethnic pride. While she assessed her English proficiency with the score of 10 out of 10, she gave 6 out of 10 as the score for her Korean proficiency.

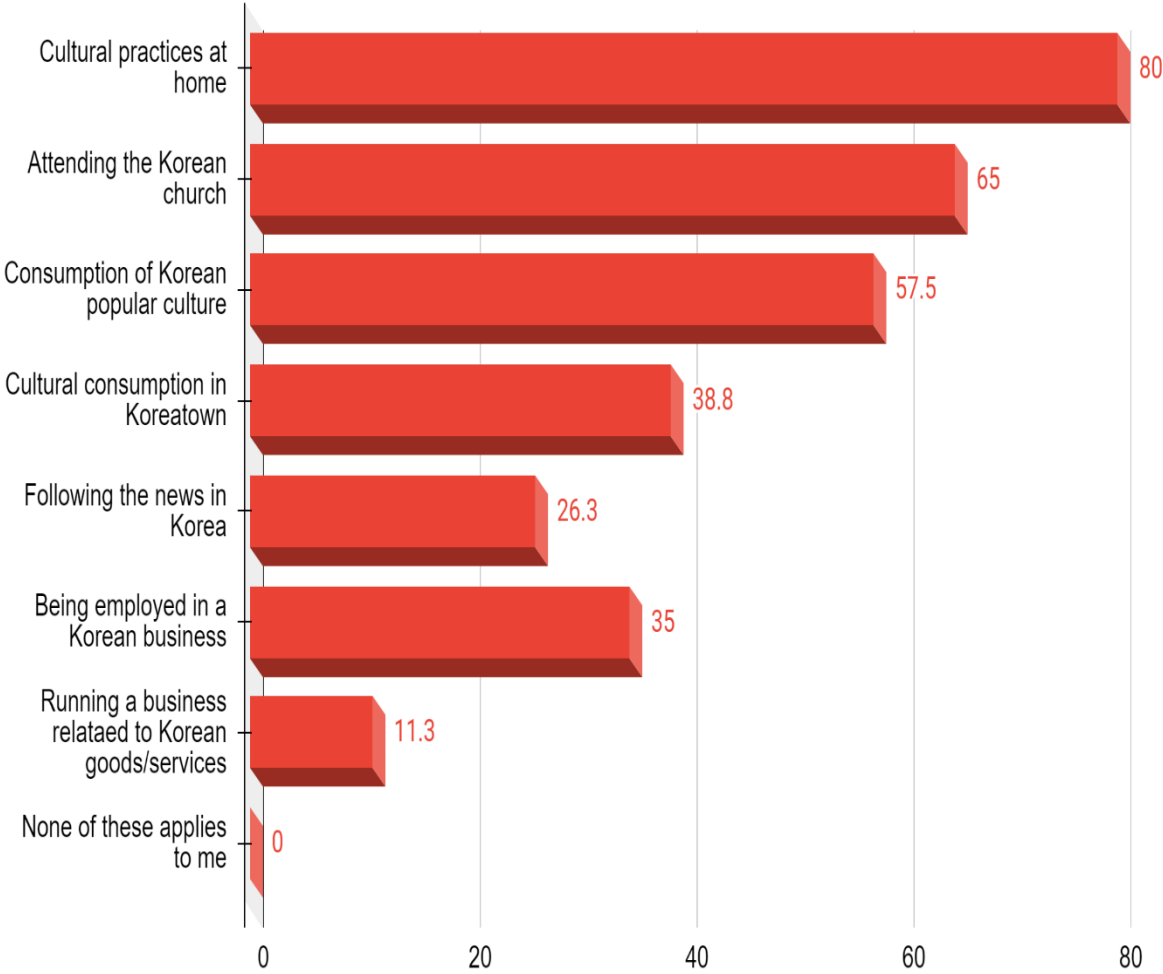
As highlighted in her comment above, the informant's language use reflected bilingualism: she mostly used Korean at home and English at work and in social circumstances, with friends who were Canadians of both Korean and non-Korean origin. Indeed, bilingualism gives the 1.5 generation a choice in switching between two languages depending on the context and need, and the individuals are likely to shift between Korean and English with family and friends. The comment also implies partiality that is associated with levels of bilingualism that the 1.5 generation tends to attain and furthermore highlights that the language use in their daily social interactions can differ from a native Korean/English speaker. For example, *Konglish* is a term used to refer to a language pattern which involves a mix of Korean and English. Most often, this form of mixed language is involuntary code mixing or "code-switching"—found in the linguistic patterns of those who speak one language better than the other language (Hinton, 1999, p. 4), and primarily employed by the 1.5 generation in their interactions with co-generational peers and/or their parents and siblings (Danico, 2004, p. 9). The 1.5 generation's use of Konglish in peer interactions can be seen as another example of the factors that add to imperfect bilingualism with which the generation is associated.

Moreover, when asked to identify the transnational activities in which they had been/were engaged in their lives in Toronto, the 1.5-generation participants were the most transnational across all generations (37% of the overall responses) (Table 27). As displayed in Figure 35, "Cultural practices at home" was the most popular response (80%), followed by "Attending a Korean church" (65%) and "Consumption of Korean popular culture" (57.5%). The high response rate of the 1.5 generation in the response category related to cultural practices, such as eating Korean food and practising Korean traditions, closely resembles that of the first generation. Indeed, food is an important transmitter of culture for offspring generations that are identified in everyday practices of Korean immigrant families. For instance,

sharing one’s favourite Korean dishes is one of significant ways of reclaiming the heritage culture (G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Therefore, home was again proven to be an important sphere that shapes immigrant children’s learning experiences—not only related to the heritage language, but also the culture.

**Figure 35**

*1.5 generation: transnational activities related to past and present experiences (%)*



*Note: multiple responses were possible.*

Korean immigrant parents often bring their children to the Korean church with the intention of providing their children with contextual occasions for them to learn and maintain the heritage culture and language (Min, 1992b; S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2007). The church can also provide various resources that are needed for facilitating their acculturative experiences—not only through practising faith, but also exploring co-ethnic networks. In other words, offspring-generation immigrants may form friendship within the Korean church that provide support which keeps them engaged spiritually and socially. Indeed, the data showed that there

is a positive correlation between attending a Korean church and having co-ethnic friends. The church in this regard can be seen as a valuable source of social resources that shape a group identity.

An immigrant’s consumption of Korean popular culture can positively contribute to his or her ethnic exploration on both social and cultural levels by providing them with occasions for literacy practice and facilitating social interaction with peers who share the same interests (J. Kim & Duff, 2012; Jeon, 2012; Y. Yi, 2009). The high percentage of the 1.5-generation participants who had experiences of consuming Korean popular culture suggests that the 1.5 generation tend to be invested in the cultural content transmitted through the Korean media industry—even more so than the first-generation parents. Hence, studying the representation of the ethnic media of Korea and its people, as well as its impact on the offspring generation’s imagination of the homeland, would further shed light on the complex construction of a group identity and self-comparisons that constitute one’s identity journey.

**Table 33**

*1.5 generation: transnational activities mostly associated with the 1.5 generation (%)*

	1.5-generation responses (out of the total responses from all generation groups, per each response category)
Being employed in a Korean business	59.6
Consumption of the Korean popular culture	41.8
Cultural consumption in Koreatown	37.8
Attending the Korean church	36.9

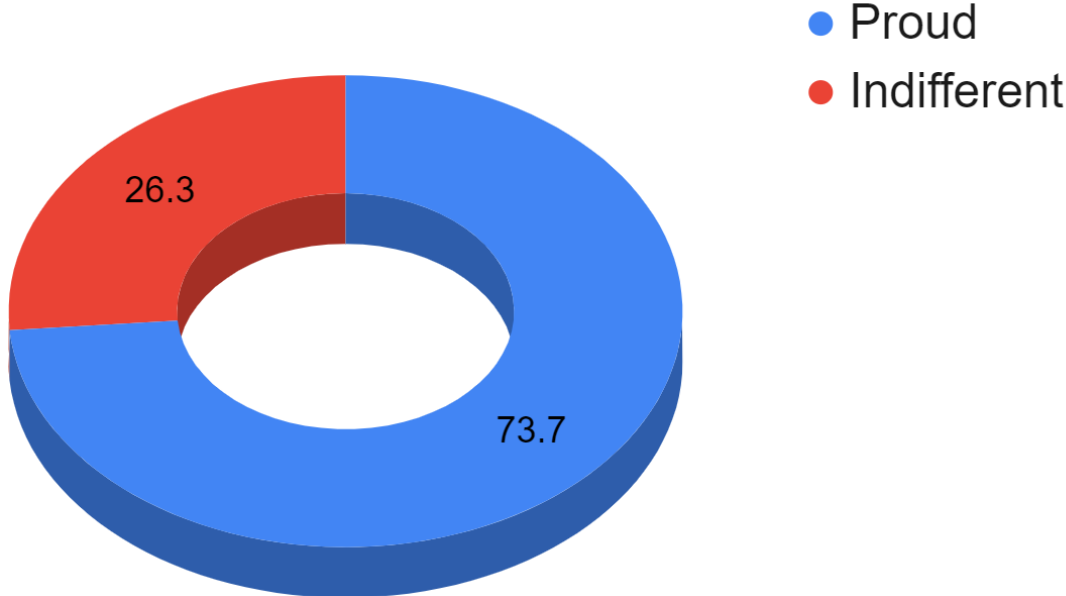
Overall, the number of those who had previous experiences of working in an ethnic business, consuming Korean popular culture, visiting Koreatown, and attending the Korean church were the most numerous among the 1.5-generation group (Table 33). Although it was not most frequently identified, the proportion of the 1.5-generation participants who had worked in a Korean business was noticeably higher than those related to the other generations (59.6 out of the total responses gathered for this response category). This finding is likely to be correlated with the high rates of the generation’s exploration of co-ethnic peer networks, as well as their bilingualism.

As discussed thus far, despite the 1.5 generation’s overall decreasing use of the heritage language in daily interactions and communication (especially in exclusivity), their level of

ethnic exploration and involvement in co-ethnic networks remained comparable to that of their first-generation counterparts. Furthermore, the majority of the 1.5 generation felt proud of their Korean origin, which furthermore highlighted the salience of ethnic attachment (Figure 36). On the one hand, the fact that none of the 1.5-generation participants reported *not* feeling proud of their Korean origin can be seen as a positive sign of their ethnic attachment and self-identity, which is often hybrid. On the other hand, it must not be overlooked that the percentage of those who felt proud was the lowest (73.7%), and those who felt indifferent were the highest in percentage (26.3%) when compared with other generation groups. This finding is intriguing and necessitates further inquiry.

**Figure 36**

*1.5 generation: pride in ethnic origin (%)*



The feeling of indifference concerning ethnic pride is exemplified in the following comment:

Comment G:  
I guess I could say that I am proud of my origin but seeing how there are so many other Canadians of different ethnic origins who live in Canada, I don't know if I would say that I feel particularly proud of my Korean background over others. This is why I answered that I feel indifferent.

The informant who left the above comment was male with Canadian citizenship, between 25 and 34 years of age, who had resided in Canada for between 16 and 20 years. He self-identified

as Korean Canadian. Overall, his responses demonstrated a relatively weaker sense of ethnic exploration, involvement, and attachment compared to the average: he rarely visited Korea, did not consider the Korean language maintenance to be important, and used English to communicate at work and in social circles, which mostly consisted of friends who were Canadians of non-Korean origin. The only indicators of his ethnic attachment included high levels of self-perceived Korean proficiency (the mean score of 9 out of 10), the use of Korean with his family, and the maintenance of cultural practices at home. Thus, sociocultural integration in the mainstream society, along with weakened ties to the ethnic culture, appeared to hinder forming a strong sense of ethnic pride in this case.

The findings showed that an individual's retention of the heritage language and culture at home alone may not be sufficient to form ethnic pride. To shed light on this finding, one's status as a member of a visible minority immigrant group within the mainstream society can be considered. Within the framework of acculturation models, the degree of salience of one's distinction between different cultures varies for individuals or groups who belong to two or more cultures, and it is often dependent on the acculturation strategy that is employed (Valk & Karu-Kletter, 2001, p. 585). For example, an integrated minority group which is "constantly in contact with other groups or mainstream society may make fewer distinctions between groups" (p. 585). Additionally, ethnic pride, as previously mentioned, plays an important role for visible minorities—and Korean immigrants are not an exception to this phenomenon, as it was found to positively contribute to their self-concept (Noh & Moon, 2012). In this regard, the feeling of indifference conveyed in Comment G may be interpreted as the result of the informant's sociocultural integration into the mainstream society. At the same time, it puts into question the relation between his national identity, which seems predominant over his ethnic identity, and self-concept as a visible minority immigrant.

In contrast, the following comment from another 1.5-generation informant illustrates a sense of ethnic pride that seems to be grounded on her interest in the Korean history and culture:

*Comment H*

Korea is a country that was completely torn by war around 70 years ago. Within one generation it has come so far: its GDP is the fourth largest in Asia and the tenth in the world, and we should be proud of this fact. Nowadays, there is a growing interest in the K-pop industry across the world. Many Korean idols and artists go on world tours and come to Toronto, too, and bands like BTS are seen on the Canadian media. For such reasons among others, I'm proud to be of Korean origin.

The profile of this informant demonstrated a close resemblance to the profile of the previous informant: she was a Canadian citizen, between 25 and 34 years of age, who had resided in Canada for 16 to 20 years, and self-identified as Korean Canadian. However, while she also rarely visited Korea, her overall responses conveyed a much more heightened sense of ethnic attachment and exploration than the previous informant: she assessed her Korean proficiency with the mean score of 7; considered the transmission and maintenance of the Korean language important for the reason of facilitating the “cultural representation” through the language; used Korean with her family and both languages with friends who were mostly 1.5-generation Korean immigrants like herself; and identified with numerous transnational experiences, including following the news in Korea.

Many aspects related to her ethnic exploration, involvement, and attachment can be noted from the comment. Firstly, the transition that Korea went through as a nation—from the previous generation as a war-torn country to the present generation where it stands as a G20 member country—seemed to be the core constituent of her imagination of homeland. Simultaneously, her knowledge of the past and current affairs of Korea as a nation, which is probably and at least partially shaped through the consumption of news in Korea, seemed to represent a source of pride.

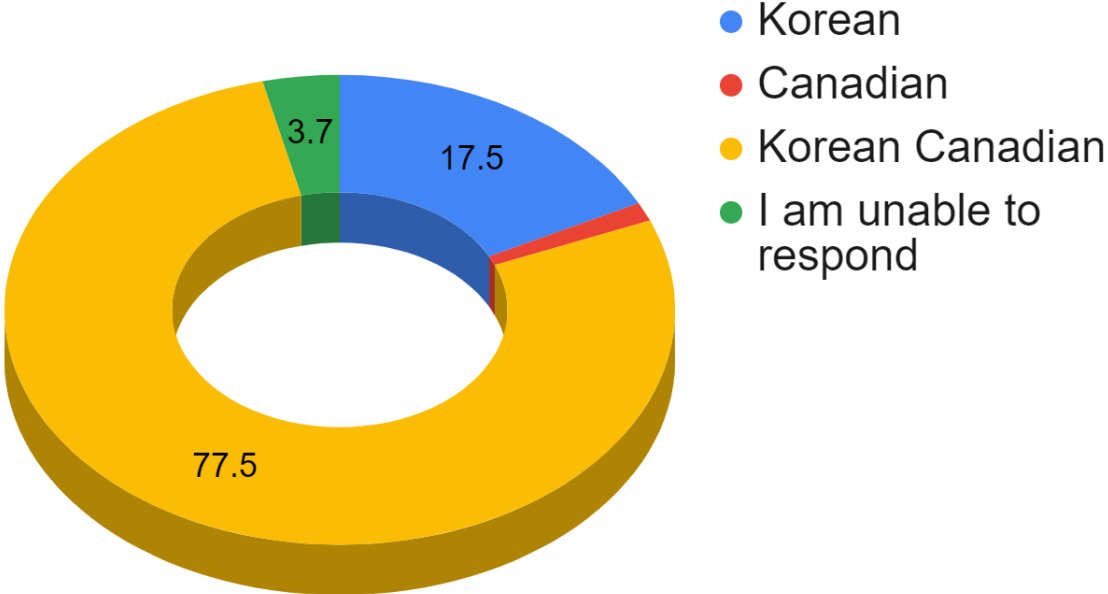
Like Comment C that one of the first-generation informants left, Comment H also exemplifies the positive correlation between the positive depiction of the home country in the mainstream media and ethnic pride that one feels. The representation of one’s ethnic group in the mass media is significant, as the mass media is what shapes the consciousness of the public. In other words, through its representation, the media can promote certain symbols that the mainstream group can use to identify ethnic groups with. Thus, in the case of individual members of ethnic groups, as the mass media portrayal of their group directly shapes the out-group’s perception of the in-group, their sense of self within the mainstream society, as well as attitudes towards the host culture, are affected (S. Liu, 2015).

Although the heritage language proficiency plays an important role in one’s ethnic exploration, involvement, and attachment, it should not be seen as a defining factor that affects these aspects of ethnic identity. For example, the informant who left Commenter G provided a higher self-assessed score in Korean proficiency than that of Commenter H; yet, he appeared far less involved in the ethnic community and less attached to the Korean ethnic origin than the latter. Therefore, it can be deduced that the heritage language proficiency can significantly

contribute to one's ethnic identity, on the condition that there also exist other variables that positively shape his or her ethnic attitudes and behaviours.

**Figure 37**

*1.5 generation: self-identification (%)*



When asked to self-identify, on the one hand, most of the 1.5-generation participants chose the hybrid Korean Canadian identity (77.5%). This identity label was noticeably more popular among the 1.5 generation than the first generation, and less so when compared with the second generation. (Figure 37). On the other hand, when it comes to single identity labels, the Korean identity label was claimed by 17.5%, whereas only one (1.3%) participant chose the Canadian identity label among the 1.5 generation. It was interesting to observe that all three participants across all generation groups (4%) who were unable to provide a self-identification were from the 1.5-generation group.

Previous research findings that have highlighted various factors related to acculturative stress can be referenced to shed light on the potential challenge that the 1.5 generation may be faced with when claiming an identity label. The lack of parental support and supervision, financial struggles, and self-doubt and confidence, as well as difficulties linked with imperfect language proficiency have been reported (Benyamin, 2008, p. 158-159). Hence, without the sufficient level of support from the family and peer networks, the negative kinds of



acculturative experiences and the resulting stress may lead a 1.5-generation immigrant to feel incapable of claiming his or her sense of belonging to either one of the cultures.

The fact that the majority of the 1.5-generation participants chose the Korean Canadian identity label could be perceived as a positive indicator of their acculturation and integration. In the case of the 1.5 generation, the transition from claiming the single ethnic identity to claiming the hyphenated identity begins in the family as a means of self-distinction. For instance, 1.5-generation individuals begin to perceive the need to differentiate self from their first-generation parents throughout inter-generational and cultural conflicts, as well as the practices related to language and cultural brokering. Then, throughout their interactions with peers within the ethnic community and the larger society, they learn to negotiate their ethnic options by, not only speaking the fitting language, but also adapting their behaviours (Danico, 2002, pp. 192-194). Throughout this process of negotiating identity, the 1.5 generation are often able to grow feelings of attachment to both the Korean and Canadian culture, while becoming flexible and competent in navigating in-between the two cultures (Danico, 2002).

However, the following comments indicate that, while identifying oneself as Korean Canadian may indeed be a way of expressing one's sense of attachment to both the Korean and Canadian culture to certain degrees, it may not be a definite indicator of his or her wholesome feeling of belonging to either/both cultures:

*Comment I*

I feel like the essence of my identity as a 1.5 generation Korean immigrant is becoming thicker as I age. When I look at my parents, international students from Korea, or even recent Korean immigrants, I feel different from them. But then when I look at Canadians there are too many differences between them and me. So I feel like I'm located just right in-between.

*Comment J*

(Original) 1.5 세로써 가끔씩 나를 포함 내 주변인들은 (대부분 1.5 세들) 한국인과 캐네디언 사회와 문화 사이에서 온전한 소속감을 한국과 캐나다사이에서 느끼지는 못하고 있는거 같다. 그리고 캐나다에 거주하고 있는 한인들 사이에서도 어학연수생이나 워홀들은 (금방 왔다가 가는) 자기들과 다르다고 분류하는 모습을 보면서 한국인 의식은 살아있지만 한국에서 거주하는 한국인에 비해 정서나 정체성은 조금 다르다고 느낀다.

(Translated) As a 1.5-generation immigrant, sometimes, I, along with those around me (mostly other 1.5ers), situated in-between the two cultures, feel like we don't completely belong to either Korean or Canadian society and culture. And, even among Koreans living in Canada, it seems like language students or working holiday makers (who come and go quickly) are classified as different from themselves. While the Korean consciousness is there, I feel

that the affect and identities are slightly different from those of Koreans living in Korea.

The profile traits of both informants were representative of the key characteristics of the 1.5-generation sample: bilingual female Canadian citizens, between 25 and 34 years of age, who had resided in Canada for between 16 and 20 years and self-identified as Korean Canadians. They were highly transnational, proud of their ethnic origin, and their co-ethnic friends were also the 1.5 generation, mostly.

The central idea conveyed in both comments is the informants' sentiment of in-betweenness. This perceived in-betweenness is meaningful, as it is a recurrent theme which emerges from the narratives of the 1.5 generation (Danico, 2004; Paek, 2019). Furthermore, in- and out-group perceptions appear to be construed in the minds of the informants in intricate manners: for both informants, distinctions were drawn, not only between Koreans and Canadians, but also between *Koreans* within the group of individuals sharing the Korean origin. The 1.5-generation identity therefore appeared to be salient in the minds of these informants. Whether it is associated with positive or negative experiences and perceptions necessitates further investigation, beyond the cases of these two informants.

Furthermore, self-differentiation, as described by both informants, illustrate the process of identity journey, facilitated by continuous observation and evaluation of in-group (*us*) and out-group (*them*). Such a process of creating the imagined boundaries of social groups is what contributes to the negotiation of an individual's sense of identity—consistently being assessed in relation to his or her group membership(s). Thus, a further investigation into the notion of the hyphenated Korean Canadian identity, consisting of the “Korean consciousness” and/or the “affect,” may prove to be useful in understanding the social categorization that seems to be actively taking place in the minds of the 1.5-generation immigrants.

Throughout the process of self-differentiation and identification, individuals are prone to facing certain types of challenges, which are likely to vary depending on the immigrant generation. In the case of 1.5 generation, the imposed pressures to become bilingual and bicultural, while taking on the role as language/cultural brokers, is particularly associated with their identity journeys and outcomes (Chao, 2006; Tse, 1996). Such kinds of challenges could account for the fact that, in spite of the years of being raised and educated in Canada, a sizeable minority among the 1.5-generation participants chose to identify themselves as Korean; and,

respectively, despite the years of being raised in a Korean household within the Canadian society, only one participant identified him/herself as Canadian in this survey.

Overall, what appears the most evident in the responses of the 1.5-generation participants was their *in-betweenness* in comparison to their first- and second-generation counterparts—reflected in their visits to Korea, perceived significance of transmitting the heritage language, language proficiency and use, as well as socialization and self-identification tendencies. The only exceptions to this trend were, on the one hand, their transnational behaviours which were the most significant, and, on the other hand, ethnic pride which yielded the lowest response rate when compared with the first and second generation. These findings therefore indicated both potentially positive and negative aspects of the notion of in-betweenness associated with the 1.5-generation identity that affect self-perceptions of the individuals. The heterogeneity associated with this generation group regarding their age at the time of arrival, acculturative experiences, and ethnic identity renders the study of this group complex, requiring more in-depth exploration of individual cases.

**5.3 Second generation**

**Table 34**

*Second generation: profile traits*

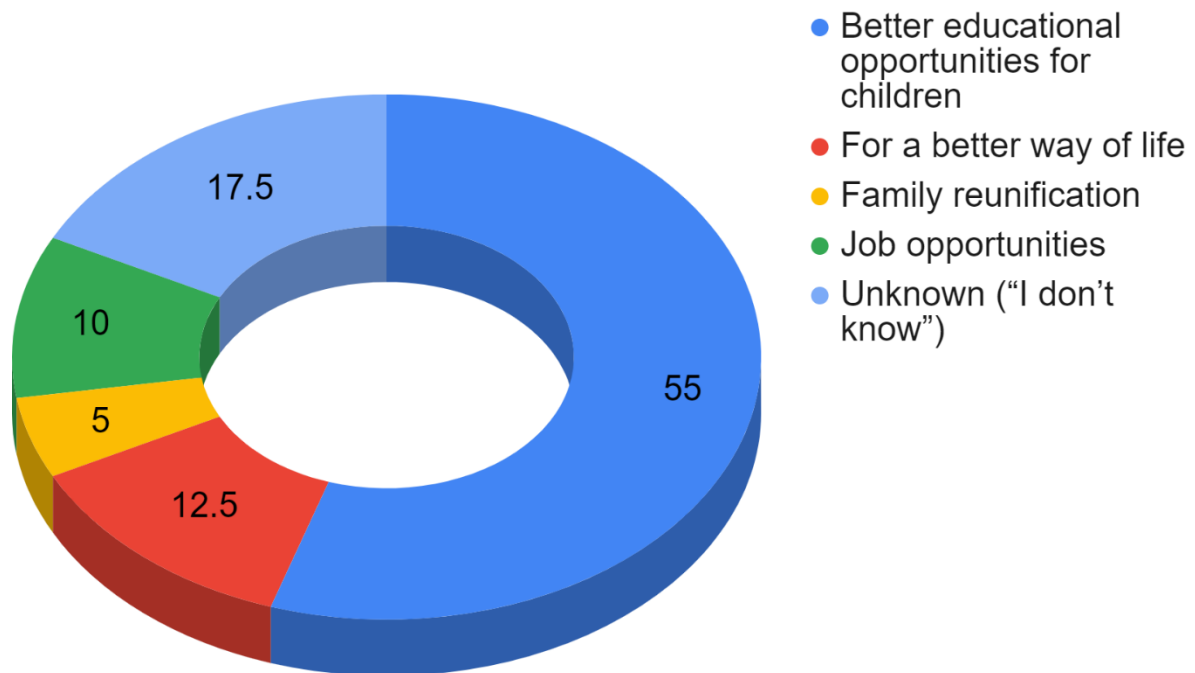
Age	15% 15-24 years of age <b>80% of 25-34 years of age</b> 5% 35-44 years of age
Sex	<b>65% Female</b> 35% Male
Residence/citizenship status	100% Canadian citizen

*Note: The mode values are indicated in bold*

The second-generation participants who participated in this survey had both parents who were born in Korea. Overall, the general profile traits of the second-generation participants closely resembled those of their 1.5-generation counterparts: everyone was a Canadian citizen, and the majority were between 25 and 34 years of age (80%) and female (65%). These findings are displayed in Table 34.

**Figure 38**

*Second generation: parents' primary motives for immigrating to Canada (%)*



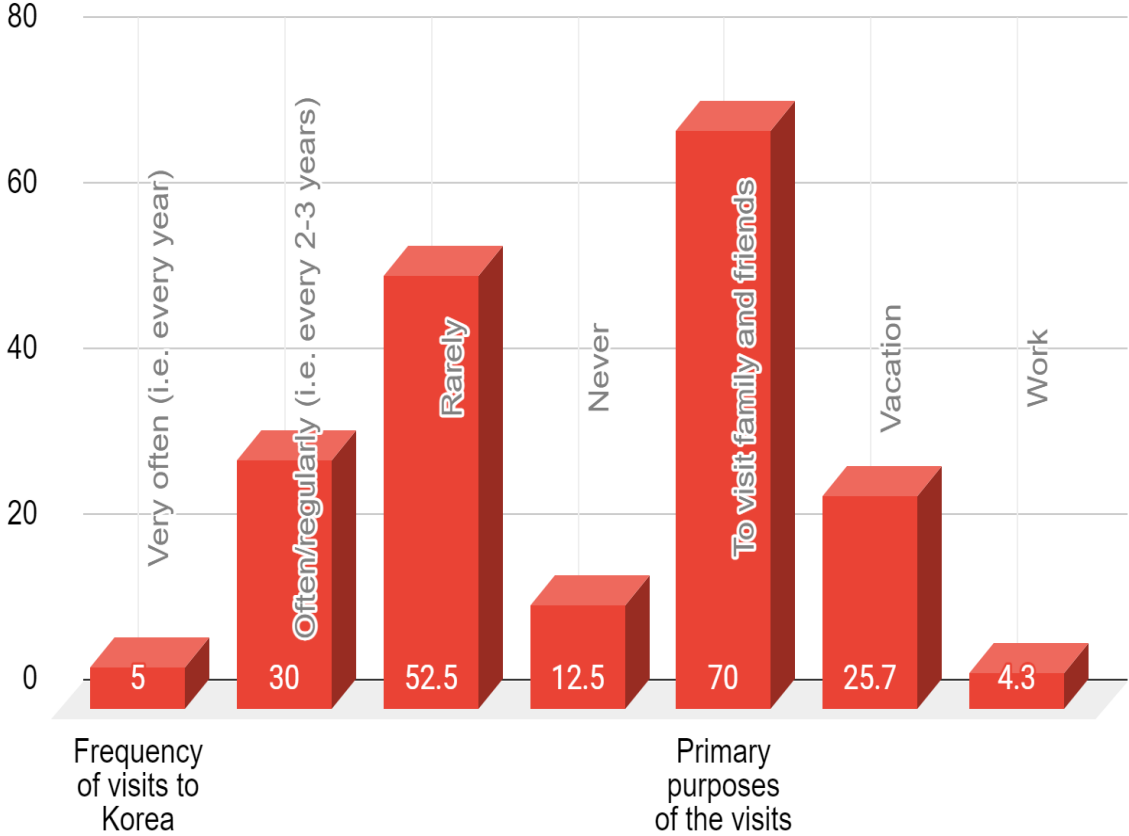
Like their 1.5-generation counterparts, most of the second-generation participants were able to identify the reason for which their parents decided to immigrate (Figure 38). While more than half indicated that their parents wanted to pursue better educational opportunities for the children, some of the responses gathered from the minority included seeking for a better way of life, job opportunities, and family reunification. However, compared to the 1.5 generation, a noticeably higher percentage of the second generation were unaware of the reason why their family immigrated (17.5%). As discussed previously, there seem to be significant levels of expectation of first-generation parents on their children—especially the 1.5 generation—to successfully adapt to the mainstream society while retaining the heritage culture and values; and the 1.5-generation children also try to meet the expectations, as they recognize the sacrifices that their parents made in having left the homeland for the children (Danico, 2004; J. Kim & Duff, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Therefore, it is possible that there may be relatively less efficient levels of parent-child communication about parental links to the homeland, less pressure placed on the second generation, and/or less levels of interest that the second generation retains in their parents lives prior to immigration.

The second-generation participants demonstrated the lowest frequency rate of visits to Korea across all generations: in fact, the visits were rare for more than half of the participants

(Figure 39). Yet, the significant minority (35%) reported visiting every year or every two to three years, and only 12.5% of the respondents had never visited Korea. Nonetheless, those who had never visited Korea were the most numerous among the second generation when compared to the other generations.

**Figure 39**

*Second generation: visits to Korea and primary purposes of Visits (%)*



As for the motives for the visits (Figure 39), the findings indicated that, while visiting family and friends remained as the primary motive for most of the second generation (70%), trips to Korea were also organized for vacation (25.7%) and work (5.3%) purposes for some. Although the percentage of the second generation who visited Korea for work may not seem significantly higher than other generations, this can be seen as an indicator that suggests the prospect of the retention of transnational, cross-border activities across the generations. The findings suggest that the second generation retained interests in the homeland of their parents, even though they may be less attached to extended family members than the 1.5 generation.

Although visits to the homeland can significantly promote offspring generations' motivation to learn the heritage language (Hinton, 1999; C. M. Smith, 2014), their impact on enhancing ethnic attachment and involvement of the Asian second generation may not be so significant, based on previous research findings. Undoubtedly, both the length and frequency related to visits may be correlated with the second generation's connection to the land of their ancestors. However, in the case of Asian second-generation immigrants, their homeland visits during their childhood may not affect the likelihood of joining homeland-oriented organizations, remitting, nor developing emotional attachment to the parents' native country (Huang et al., 2013). Therefore, although the second-generation participants in this study reported the lowest frequency rate of homeland visits, it should not be assumed that their ethnic attachment is also lacking.

**Figure 40**

*Second generation: importance of intergenerational transmission of the Korean language (%)*



Furthermore, the second-generation participants' overall attitude towards intergenerational transmission of the heritage language was positive, with 72.5% considering it

to be very important/important (Figure 40). The values that they attached to the heritage language maintenance resembled those expressed by the 1.5 generation, overall: the most common responses were related to the perceived importance of Korean in facilitating communication among family members (41.9%), understanding the Korean culture (41.9%), and the perceived value of bilingualism (23.3%). Nevertheless, the highest proportion of the second-generation participants did not consider the heritage language maintenance of their children to be important across all generations (25% “Not important”; 2.5% “Does not matter”).

Interestingly, the number of the second generation who considered the Korean language as a means of maintaining one’s identity and/or roots (27.9%) was visibly smaller compared to other generations (over 50% of the first and 1.5 generation). In addition, while few associated the heritage language proficiency with ethnic pride (7%), none of the second-generation participants shared the view that one must simply speak Korean if he or she is Korean. This latter point can be contrasted with the first generation, among whom close to one-fifth equated the Korean proficiency with the Korean identity.

As discussed earlier, the first- and 1.5-generation participants appeared to share similar values regarding the Korean language (e.g. “the Korean language helps preserving one’s identity” and/or “roots”/“one must speak Korean if he/she is Korean”). When compared with these two generations, there was a significantly smaller proportion of the second generation who associated the heritage language and identity. Instead, their interests in transmitting the Korean language, which were mostly related to facilitating family communication and cultural understanding, highlight the perceived importance of the heritage language as a useful tool that helps them better understand and explore their ancestral connections. In other words, the values that this generation group seems to have attributed to the Korean language seems to be more closely associated with their own personal experiences and the perceived links between the language and culture. The level of proficiency and use of languages of the second-generation participants help shed light on this last point.

**Table 35**

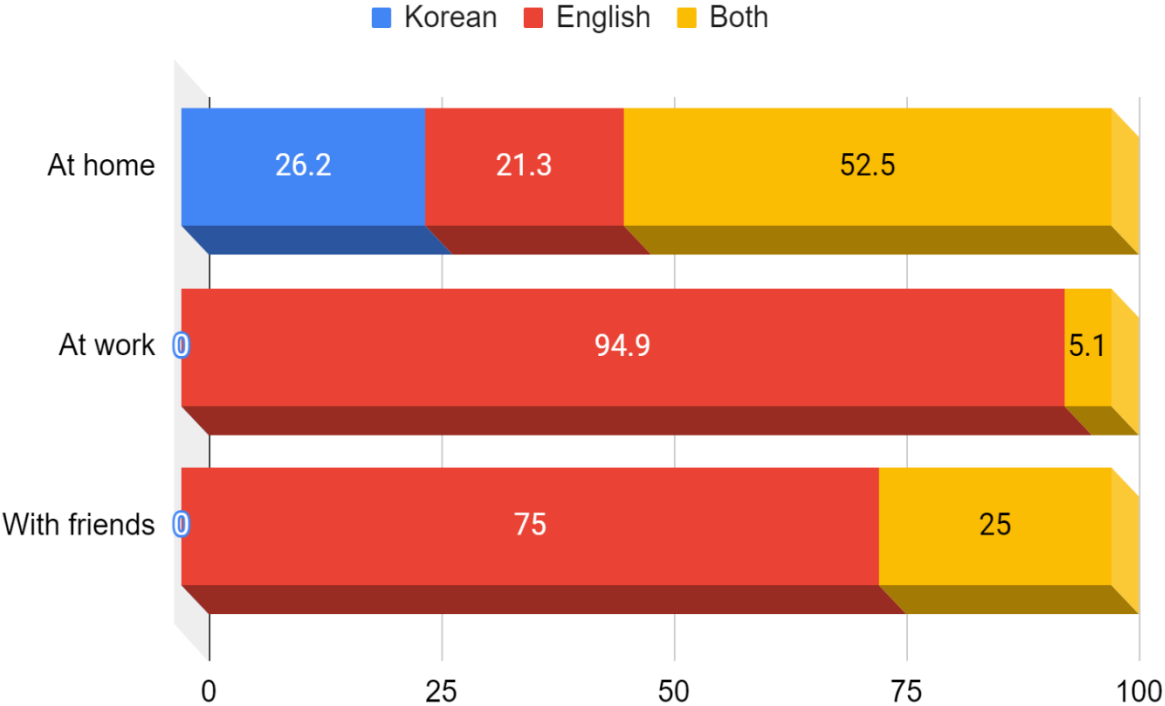
*Second generation: self-assessed proficiency scores for English and Korean (score out of 10)*

Language	Spoken		Written		Mean score in overall proficiency
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	
English	9.9	10	9.7	10	9.9
Korean	4.6	3	3	1	3.8

The second-generation participants' proficiency levels in English and Korean closely mirrored those of their first-generation counterparts, with the levels of English and Korean proficiencies reversed (Table 35). The mean self-assessed scores for English and Korean proficiency were 9.9 and 4.6, respectively. The scores tended to be especially low in written communication in Korean (mean: 3; mode: 1).

**Figure 41**

*Second generation: languages used at home and work and with friends (%)*



As illustrated in Figure 41, the proficiency levels of the second generation were reflected in their use of languages in different spheres of life. English was the language used by the majority at work (94.9%) and in social groups (75%), whereas Korean was the least used on its own. For instance, the exclusive use of Korean was limited to home for slightly more than one-quarter of the participants. Overall, the findings showed that, as in the case of the 1.5 generation, Korean was often used with English, and not exclusively, in the daily lives of the second-generation participants.

Through these findings, two important aspects of family socialization that influence the heritage language retention of the second generation are reflected. Firstly, without family socialization—especially through the parent-child communication—the heritage language



maintenance in the case of the second generation seems almost unrealizable. At the same time, family socialization alone does not seem to be a sufficient means for the second generation to be able to learn and retain the heritage language proficiency.

Indeed, the heritage language maintenance has been found in previous literature to be correlated with family cohesion within the context of immigrant families. Beyond facilitating successful communication between family members, the immigrant child's heritage language maintenance is meaningful, as the child often associates the parents with the heritage language and learns to attach personal importance to the language (Cho, 2008; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). In the present survey, in contrast to the 1.5-generation participants who seemed to have met the parental wish and expectation for them to become bilingual, the second-generation participants seemed to have attained a limited level of the Korean proficiency.

Such a significant extent of the heritage language attrition observed among the second-generation immigrants could be explained by their acculturative experiences. First and foremost, their mother tongue is the heritage language, but they usually become English-dominant as they start learning the language in school (Nesteruk, 2010). In fact, as they grow up, English becomes the language of choice in adulthood for the second generation (p. 273). Therefore, it is more likely that the parent-child relationships between Korean-dominant first-generation and English-dominant second generation are affected by language and cultural barriers.

Indeed, previous studies have identified the language shift that second-generation children often encounter, which can be the cause of parent-child conflicts in immigrant families. Moreover, it may negatively affect the children's self-esteem, while causing feelings of embarrassment about their parents' culture. Needless to say, the impact of the language shift and the resulting gap in linguistic and cultural comprehension between parents and children are especially salient in homes where parents speak little or no English (Fillmore, 1991; Nesteruk, 2010; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). The comment below exemplifies the evident language barrier often observed in communication between first-generation parents and second-generation children:

*Comment K*

I use Korean with my parents but English with my sister at home. Growing up, especially during my high school years, I found it very difficult to communicate with my parents. They always spoke Korean to me and I couldn't understand everything that they were saying. My sister who was born

in Korea and speaks much better Korean than me helped me understand my parents better when things were not good between us. I love my parents but the language barrier wasn't easy to deal with when I was a teen. I'd like my children to be able to connect with my parents by speaking the language that they are comfortable with.

The informant was a male Canadian citizen, between 25 and 34 years of age. Despite some ties to the Korean culture and identity that were maintained (e.g. cultural maintenance at home, previous experiences of attending a Korean church, and socializing with co-ethnic friends), his proficiency in Korean was limited in contrast to his fluency in English (mean score in Korean: 2.5; in English: 10). Yet, the comment demonstrates the informant's positive attitudes towards transmitting the Korean language to the future generation, for the reasons of facilitating communication between the children and their grandparents.

The comment above highlights different degrees of bilingualism linked with immigrant generations. Firstly, it conveys contrasting degrees of bilingualism that are a characteristic of the 1.5 generation—like his sister—and second generation—like himself. Furthermore, the fact that the informant responds to his Korean-speaking parents in English is an example of shifting language patterns<sup>66</sup> that tend to develop in immigrant parent-child communication between first- and second-generation immigrants. Previous literature has reported that such a language pattern can undermine and weaken the parental control and authority (Nesteruk, 2010, p. 273). These findings suggest that second-generation immigrants may be faced with the kinds of acculturative challenges that are different from those their 1.5-generation counterparts: daily communication at home—including parental guidance—become difficult due to the language barrier; and, while the second generation are faced with English-speaking environments and peer-networks outside of home, their parents expect them to become bilingual. Therefore, family cohesion can be at risk, linked to inefficient communication and the resulting failure to transmit the heritage/parental language and culture at home. This finding can also account for the fact that the highest percentage of the second-generation participants were not aware of the reason for which their parents immigrated.

Additionally, as the second-generation individuals are English-dominant and their Korean proficiency is often limited, they are more likely to be able to access English-spoken peer networks. This was evident in the socialization tendencies that the second-generation participants reported. Not surprisingly, the first and second generation seemed to have

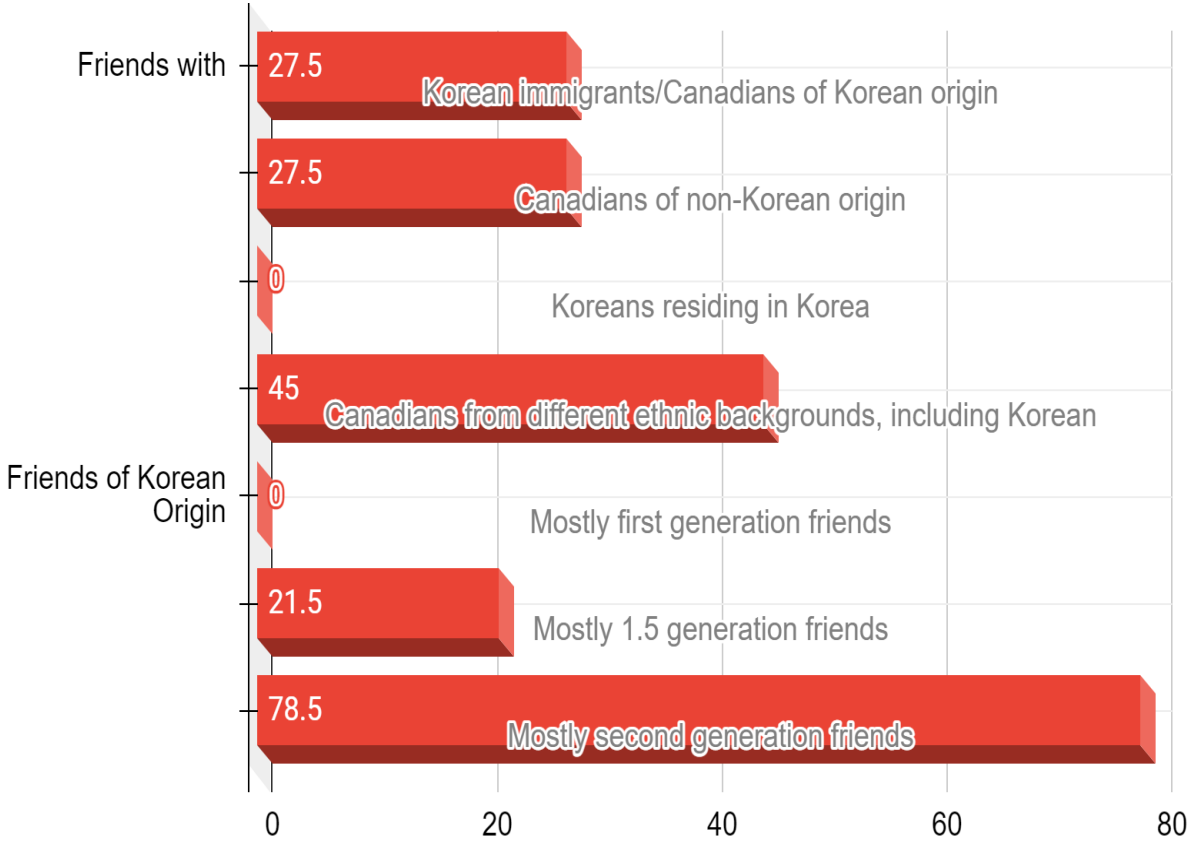
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<sup>66</sup> *Konglish*, as explained previously, is another example of such shifting language patterns.

developed contrasting socialization patterns, as the second generation appeared to be far less dependent on co-ethnic peer socialization when compared to the first generation. In fact, they were the least dependent on co-ethnic peer socialization across all generation groups (Figure 42). The differences in socialization tendencies were much more subdued when the comparison was drawn between the 1.5 and second generation: both generations were mostly friends who were of different ethnic backgrounds, including Korean.

**Figure 42**

*Second generation: composition of friend groups and generational composition of co-ethnic friends (%)*



What stood out from the socialization patterns of the second generation is that a significant minority (27.5%) were mostly friends with those who were Canadians of non-Korean origin, which was the biggest percentage that was reported across all generations. At the same time, the same proportion (27.5%) was mostly engaged in co-ethnic peer socialization with other Koreans, which was the smallest percentage when compared with the other generations. None of the second-generation participants were friends with Koreans who resided in Korea. These findings were consistent with previous studies which concluded that the second

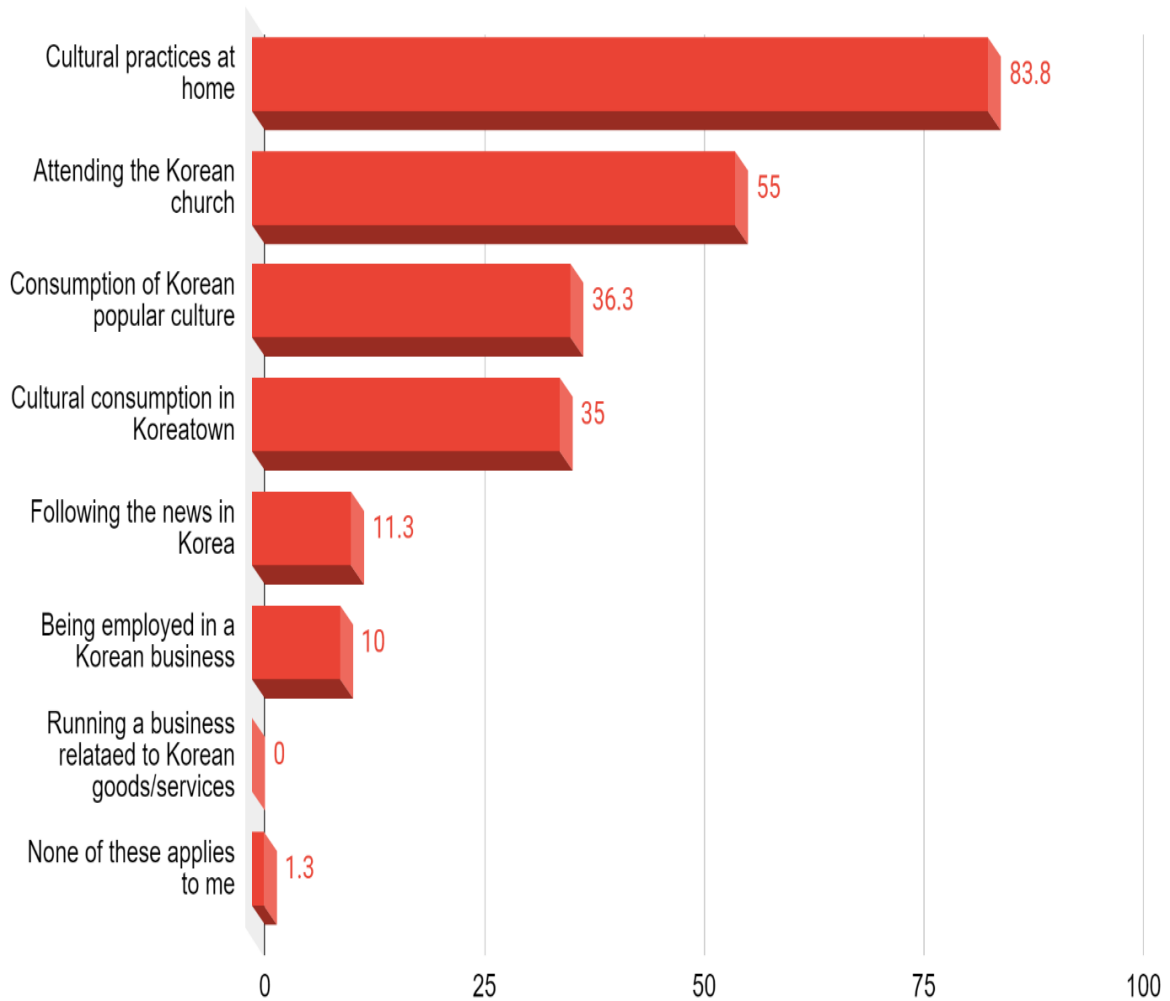
generation is more likely to develop a greater number of cross-ethnic ties than their foreign-born counterparts (Brown, 2006; Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001). Therefore, the participants appeared to be less and less dependent on co-ethnic ties across subsequent generations.

Moreover, only one-quarter of the second-generation participants used Korean along with English in social groups, despite the fact that almost 73% had co-ethnic friends in their social circles (figures 41 & 42). This is not surprising, given the fact that close to 80% of the second-generation participants who socialized with co-ethnics were friends with other second-generation Korean peers like themselves (i.e. who mostly used English in social settings), and the rest (21.5%) were friends with 1.5 generation (i.e. most of whom used both Korean and English). These findings mirrored and re-affirmed previous research findings which indicated that the intergenerational transmission of the heritage language is failing, increasingly affecting subsequent immigrant generations—especially their literacy (Hinton, 1999; Jeon, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014).

The fact that the second-generation participants seemed to be the least experienced in transnational activities across all generations is highly likely to be linked with their tendency to be English dominant in language and peer socialization patterns. Nonetheless, the responses of the second-generation participants demonstrated noticeable levels of transnationalism that exemplified their ethnic exploration and involvement (Figure 43). In fact, close to 30% of the total responses that reported transnational experiences were submitted by the second-generation group—this was indeed the smallest percentage across all generation groups, yet, it remained comparable to that of the first generation (35.5%) and 1.5 generation (37%). There was only one second-generation participant who did not identify with any of the transnational behaviours.

**Figure 43**

*Second generation: transnational activities related to past and present experiences (%)*



*Note: multiple responses were possible.*

The fact that the second-generation participants seemed to be least experienced in transnational activities when compared with their first- and 1.5-generation counterparts is highly likely to be linked with their tendency to be English dominant in language and peer socialization patterns. Nonetheless, the second-generation participants demonstrated a noticeable level of transnational behaviours which exemplified their ethnic exploration and involvement (Figure 43). Indeed, close to 30% of the total responses that reported transnational experiences were submitted by the second-generation group, which was the smallest percentage across all generation groups; yet, their response rate remained comparable to that of the first generation (35.5%) and 1.5 generation (37%). In fact, there was only one second-generation participant who did not identify with any of the transnational behaviours.

Just like their first- and 1.5-generation counterparts, the highest number of the second-generation participants identified with cultural practices at home (83.8%), such as consuming Korean food and practising Korean traditions. Throughout the process of being exposed to the heritage culture at home, the children attach meaning to the Korean language and cultural practices and associate these elements with their parents, as well as their ethnic background. What is interesting to note is that the second generation's exposure to heritage cultural practices at home (83%) was not only comparable, but it moreover exceeded that of the 1.5 generation (80%). Thus, the positive parental influence on the children's retention of the heritage culture appeared to be a stable factor that shapes the experiences of the offspring generations, regardless of their nativity.

As well, membership in the Korean church was again found to be a popular response (55%) among the second-generation sample. One of the participants left the following comment which shed light on his experiences within the Korean church:

*Comment L*

[...] my parents began attending church when they immigrated to Canada to take part in the Korean community. Since then, they have become very religious and they baptized me at birth. I am grateful for the fellowship that attending church has allowed me. I have been able to make so many friends who I can relate to both spiritually and culturally through the church.

The informant was a male Canadian citizen, between 25 and 34 years of age. His profile fit into the general profile description of the second-generation group, as he was English dominant, rarely visited Korea, valued the intergenerational transmission of the Korean language, felt ethnic pride, and identified himself as Korean Canadian. His comment above illustrates some of the key findings of this study so far: first-generation immigrants often become members of the Korean church to seek for support and resources that are needed for settling in Canada as newcomers, as well as faith and ethnic ties that they wish to transmit to children.

The next most common responses that were gathered from the second-generation participants were associated with Korean popular culture (36.3%) and Koreatown (35%). The fact that the lowest percentage of the second generation across all generations identified with the Korean popular culture is probably associated with their limited levels of Korean proficiency (Sok, 2012). Nevertheless, those who identified with this type of transnational activity represented the significant minority, and it can be expected that their consumption of Korean popular culture had a positive impact on, not only their ethnic exploration, but also their

literacy skills in the heritage language (Jeon, 2012; J.-S. Park, 2004). Furthermore, the proportion of the second-generation participants who frequented Koreatown surpassed that of the first-generation participants. This finding implies that Koreatown is not only frequented by foreign-born immigrants who want to recreate the memories of the homeland. In this respect, Koreatown becomes a transnational site within the public sphere, which represents the ethnic and cultural distinctiveness of immigrants—especially offspring generations—within the mainstream society. Therefore, Korean popular culture and Koreatown both appeared to positively contribute to ethnic exploration and attachment of offspring generations of immigrants.

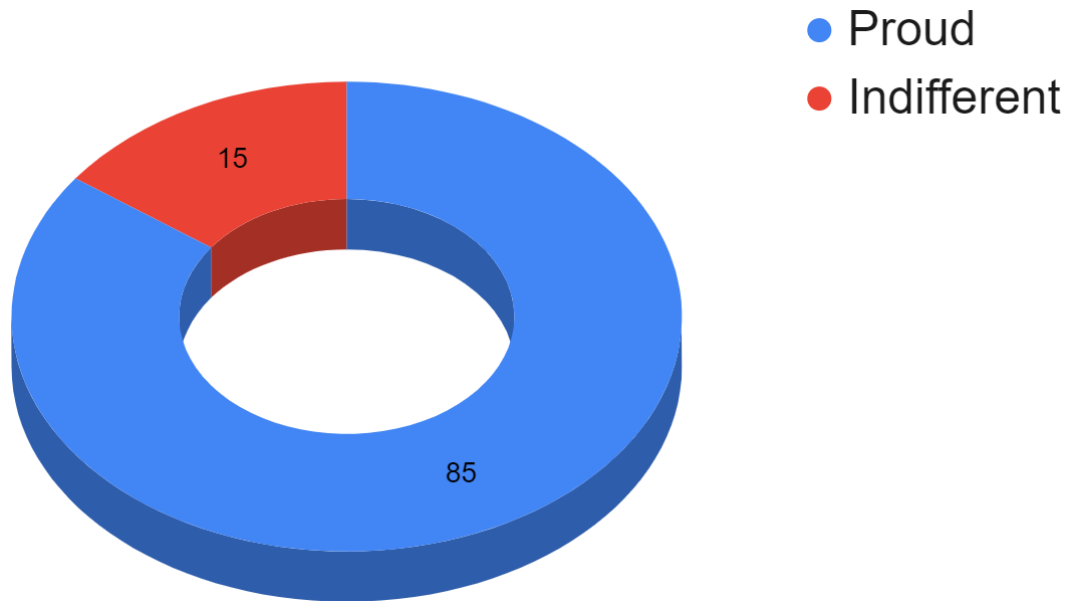
Besides cultural consumption, the second generation demonstrated a low level of transnationalism. Some of the lowest response rates were observed with the response categories related to following the news in Korea (11.3%) and working in a Korean business (10%). Moreover, none of the second-generation participants had run a Korean business, and one indicated that s/he was unable to identify with any one of response categories. What can be noted from these findings is that the second generation demonstrated varying degrees of transnationalism—albeit limited, when compared with other generations—and they seemed to be the least directly associated with the affairs of the parental homeland, and the least dependent on business opportunities within the ethnic community for making economic gains.

Indeed, a slight decline was observed in the percentages of the second-generation participants positively identifying with Korean language maintenance and use, co-ethnic peer socialization, and transnational behaviours, when compared with the other generations. Nevertheless, the second generation appeared to have maintained a noticeable level of attachment to their Korean culture. The factors related to their limited level of heritage language proficiency and frequency of visits to the parental homeland did not seem to significantly affect their ethnic exploration and involvement of this generation group.

The relatively high sense of ethnic attachment that the second-generation participants have developed becomes more evident in consideration of the ethnic pride. When compared with all generation groups, the highest majority of the second generation (85%) were proud of their ethnic background. Those who felt indifferent (15%) was the lowest in percentage across all groups. As well, like their 1.5-generation counterparts, none of the second-generation respondents reported lacking in ethnic pride (Figure 44).

**Figure 44**

*Second generation: pride in ethnic origin (%)*



Such a high response rate of ethnic pride that the second-generation participants felt was significant. As a second-generation immigrant, developing a sense of ethnic pride may be a relatively more complex process than it is for their first- and 1.5-generation counterparts, as the kinds of acculturative challenges associated with the heritage language and culture that they face may be obstacles that hinder their ethnic identity exploration. Firstly, their limited proficiency in Korean represents language barriers that are present in their family and peer interactions and socializations. Secondly, to varying extents, the peer socialization tendencies that result become less dependent on co-ethnic peer networks. Lastly, in contrast to the first and 1.5 generation, Korea is not a *homeland* for the second generation—in other words, lacking in personal memories of direct experiences related to life in Korea, developing a feeling of attachment and positive attitudes requires other strong influences that can positively shape the second generation’s ethnic identification.

The following comment expresses the sentiment of ethnic pride that the informant feels within the context of the Canadian multicultural society:

*Comment M*

People from so many different ethnic backgrounds co-habit in Canada. Living in Toronto especially makes me feel that the Korean community is actively contributing to the multicultural mosaic we have in Toronto, making the population more diverse and contributing to the economy and therefore society. For this reason, I am proud to be of Korean origin as a second generation: I feel that I bring with myself a part of the Korean culture that

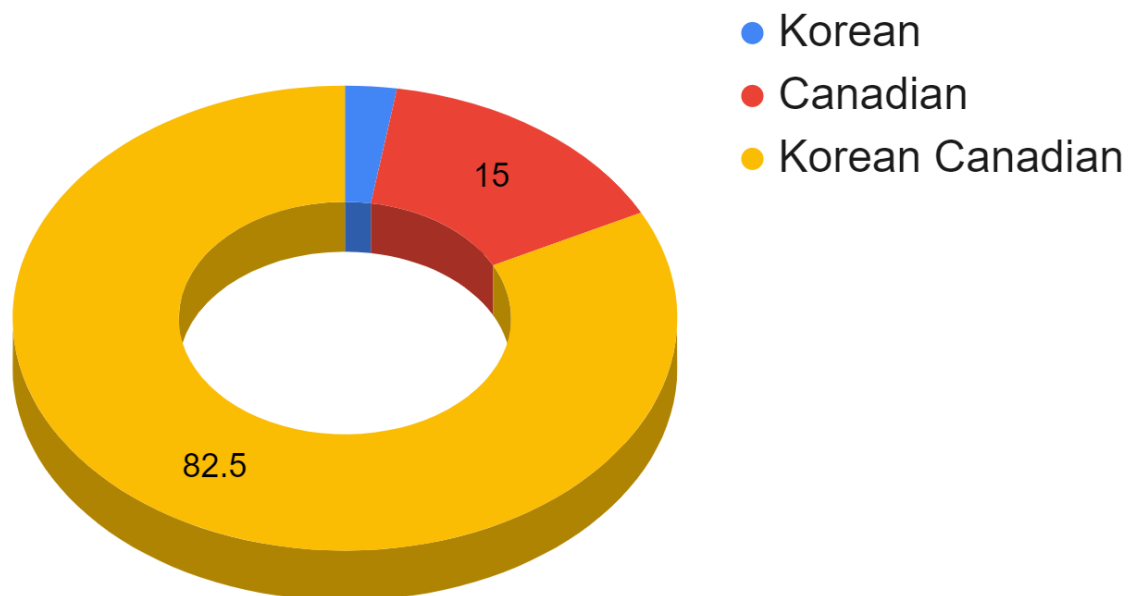


has been passed onto me from my parents to the Canadian multicultural society.

The informant was a female Canadian citizen, between 25 and 34 years of age, who identified herself as Korean Canadian. Her responses illustrated a high level of ethnic attachment through frequent homeland visits, positive perception of transmitting the Korean language, a relatively high level of oral proficiency in Korean (7 out of 10) and heritage language use at home. Moreover, she socialized with second-generation Korean Canadians like herself, and reported numerous transnational experiences that filled her life in Toronto. Her comment is interesting and provides some points for discussion. Firstly, her portrayal of multicultural Canada seems positive, referencing a successful co-habitation of immigrants within the Canadian society. The emphasis that she placed on multiculturalism in Toronto moreover projects the idea that ethnic communities positively contribute to the Canadian economy and the society. As well, such a positive perception of the Korean community within the multicultural societal settings seemed to be correlated with the sentiment of ethnic pride. Hence, there appears to be a correlation between positive perceptions of the Korean community within the multicultural Canadian society and ethnic pride, which altogether contributes to self-concept of the individual identifying with the ethnic group.

**Figure 45**

*Second generation: self-identification (%)*



Furthermore, the second generation was the most numerous in claiming the Korean Canadian self-identity label when compared with other generation groups (Figure 45). Unsurprisingly, they were the least numerous in self-identifying as Korean (2.5%) and most numerous in self-identifying as Canadian (15%). Additionally, while the majority of both the 1.5- (77.5%) and second-generation samples (82.5%) chose the Korean Canadian self-identity label, the second generation was more numerous in doing so. Thus, in the case of the second generation, the findings suggest that the Korean Canadian identity seemed to be less associated with their heritage language maintenance.

The comment below sheds light on the perceived notion of the hybrid identity, in the eyes of a second-generation immigrant:

*Comment N*

Often my parents would tell me they wished I had a chance to get to know Korea better and learn to speak Korean better (they say “you were born here but you shouldn’t forget your roots”). I will always cherish the Korean culture that my parents have passed down to me, but Korea is their homeland and not mine. I can identify with both the Korean and Canadian culture, but I feel closer to Canada on a more personal level. Btw, when I’m with my non-Korean friends, I’m the “Korean guy” in the group (there’s also the Indian guy and the Italian guy). All things considered, I definitely think that Korean Canadian is the most appropriate identity I would choose to describe how I feel.

The informant was a male Canadian citizen, between 25 and 34 years of age, and his parents immigrated to Canada for better educational opportunities for the children. Just like most of the second-generation participants, the informant seemed to have lost some primary links to the heritage culture. For instance, he rarely travelled to Korea to visit the extended family members; English was the language that he used in all spheres of life; and his self-assessed score for Korean proficiency was 4.5 out of 10. Nevertheless, some heritage cultural values and practices were observed, as he valued the intergenerational transmission of the Korean language as very important, identified with some transnational activities and behaviours, had friends who were of Korean origin, and felt ethnic pride.

What is interesting in the comment above is a sense of self-distinction that it conveys. It testifies a closer affiliation to Canada that the informant feels than to Korea, as well as the self-distinction that he drew between himself and his parents and his non-Korean peers. At the same time, the informant was able to identify with both the Korean and Canadian culture and claimed the Korean Canadian identity label for himself.

The hybrid Korean Canadian identity may imply one's certain degree of integration, but it may also carry a different connotation for individuals, whether positive or negative. The following comment exemplifies this ambiguity:

*Comment O*

Some of these questions were difficult to answer since I find it hard to define which culture I identify with. Both of my parents are Korean but my upbringing would display both cultures. I could confidently say that neither culture would identify me as one of their own as I would be "so Korean" to a Canadian, while Koreans would say I am definitely a Westerner. Therefore, I myself would be, for a lack of better term, a nomad of cultures.

The informant's general profile traits were not much different from the average profile traits of the second-generation participants, as she was a female Canadian citizen, between 25 and 34 years of age, who identified herself as Korean Canadian. Yet, her overall responses demonstrated a particularly strong sense of detachment from the heritage culture and values: she had never visited Korea; did not consider the intergenerational transmission of the Korean language to be important; and self-assessed her Korean proficiency with the mean score of 1 out of 10; and used English in all spheres of life. The only responses that hinted her ethnic involvement and exploration were related to the Korean church and the friends who were of Korean origin. Parallel to those from the first- and 1.5-generation groups who seemed to have been less engaged and involved than the average in exploring the Korean culture and community, this informant from the second-generation group also felt indifferent towards the Korean ethnic origin. Ethnic pride can be perceived as "one's feeling of attachment to his or her ethnic group as a whole" (Valk & Karu-Kletter, 2001, p. 596). Thus, regardless of generations, one's limited levels of ethnic exploration and involvement seemed to be correlated with the negative sense of ethnic attachment, including ethnic pride.

In this regard, Comment O illustrates that, for some individuals, the Korean Canadian identity may be the most appropriate for the lack of a better description of self. In other words, while the identity may represent one's sense of attachment to both the heritage and mainstream culture, it may, at the same time, embody his or her inability to fully adhere to one or the other. This aspect of the hyphenated identity stands as a proof that the notion of identity is a fluid social construct.

Comparing the three previous comments (comments M, N, and O) generates an interesting contrast in the effects of the in- and out-group perceptions on the sense of identity of the informants. In Comment M, the high level of ethnic attachment that the informant expressed is meaningful, not only because it is what enables her positive identification with the Korean

culture and immigrant community, but also because it appears to be the binding factor that contributes to her identification with the multicultural mainstream society. Thus, she seems to have perceived similarities between herself and both the ethnic community and the mainstream society: the ethnic values and cultural practices associated with the Korean immigrant community, as well as the multicultural spirit of the Canadian society. In this respect, the boundary between in- and out-group becomes blurred in her comment, illustrating the informant's plural memberships to these social groups.

Compared to Comment M, the impact of out-groups on the informants' self-perceptions is addressed in a more direct manner in the comments N and O. Both informants felt that they were situated in-between the Korean and Canadian culture, with the focus placed on how they are perceived by the others. Hence, both comments exemplify Phinney's (1990) argument that ethnic self-identification can be partially imposed on individuals. Moreover, both informants seemed to differentiate themselves from those who are of both Korean and Canadian backgrounds.

Furthermore, the difference that can be drawn between the two comments is the tone. On the one hand, Informant N seemed to be able to identify with the Korean culture, at least partially, by associating it with his parents, as well as the Canadian culture by associating it with his friends of non-Korean origin. While indicating that he was able to retain the Korean culture that his parents "passed down" to him, the informant also attested a closer affiliation that he has with the Canadian culture. Thus, owing to the perceived norms of his friend group in which the ethnic origins of the members were used as a means of in-group identification, the informant's ethnic origin and identity (i.e. "the Korean guy" in the group) did not seem to make him feel any more different than the other members of the group. In consideration of these points, the boundaries between the in- and out-group also becomes blurred in the case of this comment, as in the case of Comment M.

In contrast, Comment O alluded to a certain degree of rejection and exclusion that the informant perceived from out-groups—from those of the Korean and Canadian backgrounds. Although she admitted that her "upbringing would display both cultures," she believed that "a nomad of cultures" would be the most appropriate description of her sense of self. What is interesting to note is the marginal identity that is implied, which tends to be closely affiliated with the identity of 1.5-generation immigrants (Rumbaut & Ima, 1987). In this regard, marginality reflected in Comment O suggests that second-generation immigrants can also be

faced with, not only acculturative, but also integrative, challenges, despite their nativity and fluency in the mainstream language.

The overall findings demonstrated the salience of ethnic attachment in self-perceptions of the second-generation participants and moreover reflect a sense of national attachment that seems to facilitate their self-distinction from other generation groups. What is worth noting is that, as second-generation immigrants speak the mainstream language fluently and are often perceived as fully integrated (Danico, 2004; Rumbaut & Ima, 1987), those who have been unable to develop in-group identification in relation to the mainstream society may be at risk of developing a marginalized sense of self. Hence, it can be expected that the kinds of difficulties that the second generation may encounter in their identity journey differ from those that are faced by the first and 1.5 generation.

## CONCLUSION TO PART 2

Based on previous research findings that highlighted the significance of immigrant generations in studying acculturation and integration patterns of immigrants (Aydemir et al., 2009; Chen & Hou, 2019; Danico, 2004; Dion & Dion, 2004; Min & Kim, 2005; Park & Burgess, 1925; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), this quantitative study was aimed at establishing some of the key characteristics that are associated with the first and subsequent, 1.5 and second, generations within the Korean immigrant population in Toronto. The overall findings illustrated some of the defining elements of selective acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993), as the participants across the generations seemed to have integrated into the mainstream society on social and/or economic levels, to varying extents. What stood out is the salience of the ethnic identity, reflected in the identity labels that the participants claimed, in the form of either single or hybrid identity.

The findings demonstrated an increasing rate at which the Korean Canadian identity was chosen as a self-identity across the generation groups. The smallest percentage of the first-generation and the largest percentage of the offspring-generation—especially the second-generation—participants claimed the Korean Canadian identity. Thus, the maintenance of ethnic salience and the increasing levels of national identification across the generations seemed evident in the case of the sample.

Overall, ethnic salience seemed to have been transmitted in various forms and to differing degrees. Some of the findings mirrored previous research findings: family and/or friend ties facilitating homeland visits, perceived importance of maintaining the Korean language across the generations, transnational cultural maintenance throughout their lives in Toronto, and ethnic pride appeared to be positively correlated with ethnic salience and/or identity. Furthermore, consistent to previous research findings, varied linguistic profiles of immigrant generations were demonstrated in the study, which were positively associated with their socialization patterns. None of the participants was completely disconnected from the ethnic culture. Thus, ethnic salience—retained culturally and/or socially—can be seen as a factor that brings together these immigrants within and across the generations.

While the findings shed light on the salience of the ethnic identity of Korean immigrants in Toronto, the study has its limitations, mainly linked to the sample size of this quantitative study. In fact, given that there are over 70,000 Korean Canadians residing in Toronto (Statistics Canada, n.d.), the sample size of 240 Korean Canadians is only a small fraction of the targeted

population. Indeed, the fact that several findings of the study appeared to be consistent with previous research findings can be interpreted as a positive sign which indicates the validity of the gathered data, at least to a certain degree; nonetheless, it would not be appropriate to argue that the findings of this study are representative of the overall body of Korean immigrants in Toronto. Therefore, the true value of the findings of this quantitative study should be associated with the background context that underpins the study: intergenerational links among Korean immigrants in Toronto and ethnic salience, reflected in the hybrid self-identities that they claim.

Moreover, the fact that the majority of the participants were able to claim at least one identity label is a promising sign that they attained varying degrees of understanding of their identity. However, the self-identity labels that the participants claimed should not be interpreted as an achieved identity. Self-identification—as useful as it can be in demonstrating self-affiliations—is a fluid and multifaceted construct, shaped by the situational need of an individual to belong to a group (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2018; McKay & Lewins, 1978; Reimer et al., 2020; Rumbaut, 2005; Waters, 1990). Hence, due to the contextual contingency linked with the notion of self-identification, more elements of identity journeys of individuals need to be examined to be able to establish a more profound understanding of the context from which it stems.

Likewise, the notion of the Korean Canadian identity needs to be further explored by inquiring into different meanings that individuals attach to this identity label. Inherently, the notion represents a spectrum of two different poles of attachment; therefore, the varying degrees as to where one stands on this spectrum may differ for individuals. Some of the comments that explain the reasoning of the informants for their self-identification are clear examples of this fact: while sharing the same Korean Canadian self-identity, both the feelings of belonging and alienation were expressed by different participants—situated in-between or outside both cultures and groups. It is thus evident that the meaning of hybrid identity such as Korean Canadian must be further examined to start filling the ambiguous space which it holds. The following chapters in Part 3 are aimed at filling such gaps surrounding the notions of self-identification patterns and the Korean Canadian identity.

**PART 3**

**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH:  
IDENTITY NEGOTIATION OF  
1.5-GENERATION KOREAN IMMIGRANTS  
IN TORONTO**



### **INTRODUCTION TO PART 3**

Inquiring into the meaning of the hybrid Korean Canadian identity within the Canadian multicultural context is the primary objective of this study, which will be presented in the following chapters. The heterogeneous nature with which the notion of 1.5 generation is heavily associated renders their identity journey most hybrid, varied, and contextual, as illustrated in Part 2, as well as previous studies (Danico, 2004; Rumbaut, 2012). Therefore, although the highest proportion of the second-generation participants from the questionnaire survey associated themselves with the Korean Canadian identity, 1.5-generation Korean immigrants in Toronto were chosen as the focus group in this qualitative part of the study.

To explore in depth diverse perspectives and narratives that surround various acculturative and integrative challenges and resolutions which 1.5-generation Korean immigrants encounter, this qualitative part of the study, based on individual interviews, was aimed at tackling life experiences and resulting in- and out-group perceptions that affect self-perceptions. Self-perceived levels of social and cultural integration using both Korean and English as cultural resources were inquired into, and, moreover, how such perceptions appear to be aligned with perceived ethnic and national identities were examined. The findings helped establishing links between an individual, various peer groups, and society, encompassing both ethnic and national group boundaries. In other words, many aspects of individual and group identity, as well as ethnic and national identities were explored.

## CHAPTER 6

### QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: METHODOLOGY AND PARTICIPANT PROFILES

#### 6.1 Methodology

##### 6.1.1 Life History- and Narrative-Based Semi-Structured Interview

Like in the questionnaire survey, self-identification was to be used as a method to identify identity labels with which participants associate themselves in this qualitative part of the study. To be able to understand the meaning that the Korean Canadian identity holds for individuals, it seemed crucial to explore in- and out-group perceptions and comparisons that the participants make in their lives as immigrants in the host society (Tajfel & Turner, 2004; Turner et al., 1987). Thus, first and foremost, the perceived *Koreanness* and *Canadianness* in the minds of participants had to be examined before their perception of self could be discussed. Then, to be able to explore a diverse pool of influencing agents across different domains and stages in life that affect various self- and group-perceptions, life experiences of individual participants were targeted.

Life history interviewing is the qualitative method of collecting data selected for this study. As Robert Atkinson (1998) explained, it enables the researcher to look at the research participant's life as a whole and carry out in-depth study of individual lives. Based on interviews and conversation, the life story—the full or segmented account of the participant's story of his or her life—is edited, interpreted, and presented by the researcher in a comprehensive or topical manner (Ojermark, 2007, p. 4). The distinction between *life story* and *life history*<sup>67</sup> clearly marks the process of life history research method: the life story is the accounts—pure data—provided by the author/storyteller, whereas the life history is the final product—processed data—of the researcher (B. Roberts, 2002).

Among varying conditions on which different disciplines place a focus, there is a consensus that the individual research participant is “a window into broader social and societal conditions” (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 12). While one may argue that life histories should not

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<sup>67</sup> In the late 1930s, the life-history method lost popularity in the field of sociology—where it has the longest history—as positivist quantitative research methods became more favoured (B. Roberts, 2002). Throughout the decades, however, there has been an increasing level of interest in the life course, concern with lived experiences of individuals and their representation, and thus popularity of qualitative research. As a result, the life-history method has been gaining more ground and has been adopted in diverse disciplines (pp. 4-5).

be interpreted as objective realities, many contemporary researchers believe that these stories reflect a lived, subjective representation of reality that can make an important contribution to a better representation and understanding of the society (Bertaux & Kohli, 1984; Bertaux, 1981; Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). In turn, it goes without saying that understanding the societal context is crucial in understanding the life story of an individual (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Pyon, 2010). In fact, despite the narrow focus that is placed on an individual or small group of informants, the life history method has been found as “more holistic” than other methods such as surveys (Ojermark, 2007, p. 2).

Not only has the life history method been employed in literature in migration studies, it has also often been used in research on identities, and representation (Danico, 2004; De Fina & Tseng, 2017; Yu & Kim, 2014). Among the literature based on Korean immigrants, Danico’s (2004) interviews of the 1.5-generation Korean immigrants in Hawaii provided valuable in-depth insights into the Korean American identity formation, which was situated in relation to the family, community, and bigger society; and Yu and Kim’s (2014) interviews of 137 Korean American adult children of immigrants revealed detailed accounts of the intricately linked lives of the interviewees and their families, situated within the host societal settings. In parallel to these previous research findings about Korean American immigrants and their children, the current study was designed to explore the lives of 1.5-generation Korean Canadian immigrants and their identity journey within the Canadian society by employing the life-history interviewing method.

Beyond adopting the life-history method based on life stories of the participants, this study incorporated elements of narrative analysis in the design of interview questions, targeting topical stories and narratives.<sup>68</sup> The aim of incorporating narrative elements into the interview was to, not only inquire into the informants’ perception and understanding of the historical events and societal contexts that have had an impact on their sense of self and others, but also to further help shed light on how the 1.5-generation immigrants’ perception of the surrounding communities and society may be evolving over time. Hence, the gathered data were intended

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<sup>68</sup> Although the terms, *story* and *narrative*, are often used synonymously, there exists a clear terminological distinction. As William Labov (1981) postulated, stories are “recapitulations of past events, with a structure involving complications and resolutions, told by a narrator in order to make a point” (as cited in De Fina & Tseng, 2017, p. 381). Narratives are, on the other hand, any other genres of storytelling which does not fit into Labov’s definition: hypothetical, habitual, and generic narratives, to name a few examples (p. 382).

to further enrich the ongoing discussions of the hybrid identity, reflecting the dynamic nature of various evolving notions that are at play.

Furthermore, semi-structured interview was chosen as the means for gathering data in this study for a number of advantages that it offers. Firstly, the mix of closed- and open-ended questions provide an ideal framework and enables extended probing and exploration of important questions for the researcher. As well, as William Adams (2015) postulated, semi-structured interviews can be a useful tool that can help exploring the *puzzles* that emerge or remain following a survey analysis (p. 494). The questionnaire survey discussed in the last chapter effectively revealed the immigrant generation groups' varying degrees of tendency of choosing the Korean Canadian identity; but the diverse sociocultural and economic factors which have influenced their self-identification was yet to be explored. In this regard, semi-structured interview was deemed adequate for a further pursuit of the research interests.

Moreover, the method of semi-structured interview is grounded on the notion that “not every word has the same meaning to every respondent and not every respondent uses the same vocabulary” (Treece & Treece, 1986, as cited in Barriball & While, 1994, p. 330). In other words, the focus in a semi-structured interview, which is placed on ensuring the equivalence of meaning rather than wording, helps enhancing the quality of standardization of semi-structured interview, as well as the comparability of the collected data (p. 330). For instance, the interviewer has opportunities to adapt the wording of the questions to facilitate communication and understanding during the interviewing process. This ensures that, in case in which an interviewee has difficulty understanding certain aspects of the questions—whether due to a language barrier or unfamiliarity with the subject—or demonstrates reluctance to discussing sensitive subjects, the researcher/interviewer can help alleviate the challenge. In turn, the interviewer/researcher has the freedom to probe certain parts of the interviewee/informant's responses that may come across as ambiguous, inconsistent, or particularly interesting—for which further explanation may help validating and/or enriching the content of the provided data (Barriball & While, 1994).

### **6.1.2 Researcher/Interviewer**

A researcher plays an extremely important role as “the central ‘instrument’” in a life history study, as s/he, along with his or her own personal history, has “a guiding influence in all aspects of a study” (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 10). A researcher's positionality as an insider

and outsider—defined by his or her race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and personal life history and experiences—plays a significant role in facilitating a fieldwork; and its methodological advantages and liabilities between the two positions have been identified and discussed in previous literature (Bonzom et al., 2019; Chavez, 2008; Holmes, 2020; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). The researcher of the current study fits into most of the description of the 1.5-generation Korean Canadian informants for whom the interview was designed,<sup>69</sup> which renders her a partial insider, who shares a single or a few identities “with a degree of distance or detachment from the community” (Chavez, 2008, p. 475). Therefore, it was necessary to assess and evaluate how the insider identity of the researcher would affect the study.

Indeed, the insider positionality can present some challenges. Firstly, it can impose on the researcher certain social roles expected within the community which may affect the researcher-participant relation and the interview process (Kusow, 2003). Secondly, participants’ perception of the researcher’s positionality could also keep them from fully engaging in the interview. They may assume that the researcher, as an insider of the community, holds better knowledge about the community than they do and/or have the same understanding of it. In addition, such a perception may keep participants from asking questions when necessary, worried that they may sound “dumb” (Holmes, 2020, p. 6). Thirdly, due to the researcher’s familiarity with the community, the resulting bias—inherent and/or unknown—may influence the design of the interview, as well as the process of gathering and treating the data. For example, certain expectations and focus may be prioritized, depending on the researcher’s personal experiences and perceptions regarding the community (Chavez, 2008; Holmes, 2020).

Hence, some precautions had to be taken throughout the process of the interview to work around the challenges. In consideration of certain social roles that an insider-positioned researcher may be expected to take (Kusow, 2003), the tendency of the Korean people to maximize the private self had to be contemplated (Lee, 1987, as cited in K.-O. Kim, 1993, p. 44). For instance, they may not feel comfortable being asked to discuss certain topics which they may feel are too personal (e.g. hardships encountered as a family upon arriving and settling

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<sup>69</sup> The researcher of the study is a 1.5-generation Korean Canadian who immigrated to Toronto, Canada, at the age of ten and is of the required minimum age as highlighted in the eligibility criteria of the study. However, she has not been residing in Canada since 2012.

in Canada, conflicts encountered with the parents etc.)—if they perceive the researcher as an insider of their community.

Therefore, to offer some clarity on their understanding of the researcher’s positionality, the opening script was drafted so that informants can be provided with a brief presentation of the background of the researcher—with the aim of establishing the *partial* insider positionality which she holds. The self-introduction<sup>70</sup> was scripted as the following:

[...] To introduce myself, I am also a 1.5-generation Korean Canadian: I moved to Toronto when I was ten and lived there until I moved to France, at the age of 23. As it has been about 9 years since I left Canada, there are gaps to fill in my research about life in Canada as a 1.5-generation Korean Canadian. So thank you for joining me and becoming my co-partner in this study. [...]

The informants’ understanding of the partial insider positionality of the researcher was deemed beneficial in numerous aspects. Firstly, learning that the researcher has not been part of the Korean community in Toronto for a prolonged period may offer some reassurance, in realizing that there exists some distance between the researcher and the community that they may be affiliated with. As well, the acknowledgement of the informants’ positionality as *co-partners* in this study may help the informants feel a certain level of ownership of the information which they are to share throughout the interview(s).

Despite the precautions, it is inevitable that the researcher’s positionality and/or researcher-informant relationship played a role in shaping the research process and outcomes. The closeness, as much as the distance, which the participants drew from the researcher-participant interactions may have shifted throughout the interviews and affected the responses accordingly, especially in cases of follow-up interviews. Additionally, the insider position of the researcher, as well as her personal life experiences, are certain to have shaped the questions and the interpretations of the findings to a certain degree.

Nevertheless, in qualitative research, either positionality of the researcher as an insider or outsider does not guarantee impartiality of the findings and interpretations (Chavez, 2008). Christina Chavez (2008) argued that such “assumptions about insider positionality are theoretical, supported by little empirical evidence, and neglect the current trends of thinking in social construction and polyvocality” (p. 475). In fact, in many ways, the insider status potentially grants the researcher a privileged position throughout the research process—only if

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<sup>70</sup> The opening script for the interview is included in Appendix B.

the researcher understands in which ways he or she is like or unlike the participants, and how their identities can help or complicate the process (Chavez, 2008, p. 491).

In this study, the insider-positionality of the researcher granted her a sense of familiarity and closeness with the community, language, and culture, and disposed her with valuable insights into the community that helped the data collection, interpretation, and representation. For example, the recruitment of participants and connecting with them through mutual understanding of the shared experiences were especially facilitated by the insider positionality of the researcher. The shared self-identification as a 1.5-generation Korean Canadian also helped establishing an instant connection between the researcher and informants, based on the shared cultural understanding and experiences associated with the identification. Hence, although it is true that some of the core issues related to the notion of identity—in specific regard to an immigrant identity within the multicultural Canadian society—may have been addressed and interpreted in ways that were influenced by the insider positionality of the researcher, the insider advantages certainly contributed to the interactions and understanding between the researcher and participants, thus enriching the findings surrounding the themes that were tackled.

### **6.1.3 Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis is a widely used method for data analysis in qualitative research. While some scholars have argued that thematic analysis is only a part of the process that is incorporated into many qualitative analytic methods and that it cannot be considered as a method in its own right (Boyatzis, 1998; Ryan & Bernard, 2000), some have argued that it should indeed be classified as a qualitative analytic method (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). It is a highly flexible method that can be used across a wide range of disciplines, which enables generating and reporting themes that capture a phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2017; Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006, 2017) posited that thematic analysis is not bound to any theoretical framework, as it offers a method—a tool or a technique of approaching and treating the data—rather than a methodology—a framework shaped and structured by theories. Thus, the approach that it offers can be described as *organic*, enabling the themes generated from the raw data to provide a framework for the researcher to process and report the

research findings. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006) provided a six-step approach to conducting thematic analysis in qualitative research. Using this method, the researcher:

1. Familiarizes him/herself with the data (e.g. transcribing the audio and reviewing the transcriptions while taking notes), tackling the semantic meanings;
2. Develops codes by highlighting key analytic ideas which appear within the data;
3. Identifies patterns (themes) by combining relevant codes;
4. Reviews the themes by comparing them to the coded data, as well as the whole of the data set;
5. Defines and names the themes by formulating what pattern each theme represents in a concise and succinct manner; and
6. Writes up the report of the data.

Owing to its purpose to capture the essence of core ideas within and across data, as well as its theoretical flexibility, thematic analysis as a highly flexible method that can be applied across various domains and subjects, unbounded by the “sample size, data collection method, and approaches to meaning generation” (Braun & Clarke, 2017, p. 297). It can be used to study the lived experiences, views and perspectives, as well as behaviour and practices of participants, adapted for “‘experiential’ research which seeks to understand what participants think, feel, and do” (p. 297). This flexibility, as well as its efficiency in targeting the experiential data of participants, are the reasons for which this method was deemed adequate for this study.

There are some considerations that must be taken into account when employing thematic analysis in qualitative research: whether it will be conducted based on semantic (explicit) or latent (underlying) meaning/inductive (data-driven) or deductive (theory-driven) analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2017; Joffe, 2012). This qualitative part of the study was carried out using a combination of semantic and latent coding, by examining the surface-level meanings of the participants’ responses while exploring the implicit ideas or concepts which underpin what is explicitly expressed (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2016). Furthermore, the themes were developed in both inductive and deductive manners, as the questions were prepared based on some of the most prominent themes which have been discussed in previous literature, and the responses were analyzed and formatted into the themes that directly emerged from the data.

#### **6.1.4 Topic Sections and Questions**

As mentioned above, when designing the questions, a deductive approach was taken to carefully choose the topics, based on the literature review highlighted in Chapter 1. Various



agents that affect ethnic and national attachment of individuals that ultimately lead to either a marginalized or achieved identity were considered. The resulting topic sections were numerous and diverse, totalling 17:

- (1) Arriving and settling in Canada;
- (2) School;
- (3) Family;
- (4) Korean community;
- (5) Religion/Korean church;
- (6) Social Circles/Friend Groups;
- (7) Languages<sup>71</sup>;
- (8) The Internet;
- (9) Pop culture and the media;
- (10) Interest in current affairs and voting habits;
- (11) Perceived discrimination/racism and multiculturalism;
- (12) Dating/marriage;
- (13) Memories of and connections to Korea;
- (14) Canadianness/Being Canadian;
- (15) Defining the *Canadianness*;
- (16) Notion of *home*; and
- (17) Self-identification.

The primary objective was to guide the informants to walk the researcher through his or her life stories encompassing diverse domains and spheres. Open-ended questions were especially useful when probing into the informant's perception of various identities in a direct manner (e.g. "What makes you feel 1.5?" "What does it mean to be Canadian?" "What does Korean Canadian mean to you?" etc.). All the questions were drafted in both Korean and English to cater to the language preference of the informant.

Additionally, it has been reported that pilot testing can be a valuable practice that can enable researchers to "make informed changes and adjustments" to the interview before collecting the data (Barriball & While, 1994, p. 333). Therefore, the final pilot draft of the interview guide pilot-tested twice—once in the English language, and once in the Korean language—to evaluate the clarity of questions, simplicity in word choice, and logical correspondence with the experiences of the informant (p. 333). These practice runs were helpful in making appropriate changes to the wording of some questions, which was found to be too broad and/or ambiguous, causing uncertainty and confusion.

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<sup>71</sup> Like in the questionnaire survey, the self-assessment method was employed again in this study to help assess language proficiency of the participants. Open-ended questions were prepared to be able to establish a contextual understanding of the scores throughout the narratives.

### **6.1.5 Medium**

Due to the ongoing pandemic and the distance between the researcher in France and the informants in Canada, the interviews had to take place online: Zoom was chosen as an adequate platform to conduct the interviews. With advances in communication technology in the recent decades, using videoconferencing platforms has increasingly become a common practice among scholars. Mandy M. Archibald et al. (2019) argued that Zoom, for instance, is an effective way of collecting data, offering more satisfactory experiences for informants than other interviewing mediums, such as face-to-face and other videoconferencing services. In fact, despite some initial technical difficulties which may be encountered, using videoconferencing mediums did not appear to affect the overall interviewing experiences of the informant and researcher in their study. Its accessibility and ease of use, data management features, and security options were cited as the advantages that help making the platform an adequate tool for collecting qualitative data (Archibald et al., 2019).

To establish basic profile of each informant, a pre-interview questionnaire was prepared. It required the informants to provide some identifiable traits (e.g. name, sex, age, occupation etc.), the preferred language to use in the interview, as well as other information that would complement the questions which were addressed during the interview (i.e. self-assessed scores related to language proficiency). The questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

### **6.1.6 Participants/Eligibility Criteria**

In qualitative studies, a random selection of informants is not mandatory; rather, purposeful sampling is the method that is commonly employed, as it allows the researcher to select informants who he or she deems “information-rich cases” for the study (Patton, 2002, p. 230). In this study, a criterion-based selection was used as a means of purposeful sampling to clearly establish pre-determined criteria that both the researcher and potential informants could refer to. To participate in the interview, all of the following criteria had to apply to an individual:

1. He or she was born in Korea;
2. His or her parents are both of Korean origin;
3. He or she immigrated to Canada during childhood, before age 13;
4. He or she was residing in Toronto, Canada;
5. He or she had to be at least 18 years of age; and
6. He or she identifies him or herself as a 1.5-generation immigrant.

These criteria were indicated in the recruitment letter and consent form (Appendix B).

Besides the broad requirement criteria, such as being Korean born, with both parents who are of Korean origin, and the residence in Toronto at the time of the interview, age was the factor that was contemplated to define the targeted sample. Firstly, previous research has shown that age at the time of immigration significantly shapes acculturative experiences and identity journeys of 1.5-generation immigrants (Danico, 2004; Harklau, 2003; Pyon, 2010). Yet, scholars have not been able to reach a consensus on the age definition to distinguish the 1.5 generation from the first generation. In this part of the study, as in the questionnaire survey, the maximum age at the time of immigration was set to age 13. Individuals are also likely to go through an ethnic identity search during adolescence—and may or may not come to an identity resolution. Furthermore, their ethnic self-identification is more stable in adulthood (Phinney, 1993, Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2018). As well, there has been less focus placed in previous literature on the representation and discussion of 1.5-generation immigrants in their adulthood. Therefore, the candidates had to be at least 18 years of age to be able to participate in the interview.

### **6.1.7 Sample Size**

For qualitative research, Grant McCracken (1988) posited that “less is more” (p. 17). Indeed, in contrast to quantitative research whose objective is to yield generalizations from the sample about a larger population, qualitative research is aimed at exploring the gathered data themselves, which enable accessing cultural categories and assumptions that construe the world. Therefore, the focus of qualitative research is placed on working longer and intensively with a few, targeting articulate and in-depth narratives (p. 17). For these reasons, the range of eight to fifteen informants is recommended for qualitative research projects (Hill & Knox, 2021; McCracken, 1988), which this study was designed to target. The total of ten participants were recruited.

### **6.1.8 Recruitment Method**

In the information notice of the questionnaire survey (Appendix A), it was indicated that the researcher was recruiting 1.5 generation immigrants who would like to participate in online one-on-one interviews. Four of the researcher’s personal contacts agreed to participate and two people got in touch with the researcher voluntarily. The rest of the informants were recruited through snowball sampling, through which a confirmed informant directed me to others who may be or were interested in participating in the interview.

The informants were sent a copy of the recruitment letter, interview consent form, and pre-interview questionnaire by email. The recruitment letter introduced the objectives of both the interview and the larger study and the procedure of participating in the interview in a brief manner. The eligibility criteria were also indicated, as well as the contact information of the researcher and the research supervisor, in case of questions or concerns. Moreover, the interview consent form reiterated the key information related to the overall study and the interview process in a more detailed manner. It highlighted the following information: their participation was voluntary and that they would be able to stop taking part in the interview at any time, if they wished; the transcribed interview or its extracts may be used for the research purposes; they could request a copy of the transcript of their interview and make any edits they would deem necessary; and they could get in touch with the researcher at any point to ask any questions they may have. All the candidates were asked to carefully read the information and sign their consent if they agreed and return the signed consent form to the researcher to confirm their participation.

#### **6.1.9 Data Collection**

When returning the signed consent form by email, participants were asked to fill out the pre-interview questionnaire and send the completed copy to the researcher. The pre-interview questionnaire contained some information that helps identification of the participants, such as name, sex, age, the highest level of education completed and name of the degree, occupation, citizenship status, and moreover provided numeric values which express the self-assessed level of the Korean and English languages. Additionally, the participants were able to indicate the language that they preferred to use in the interview: Korean, English, or the mix of both.

After the participants signed and submitted the consent form and pre-interview questionnaire, the day and time of the interview, as well as their preference to hold one single or two separate sessions were decided between the participant and the researcher either by email or KakaoTalk. Once the date and time of the interview session were confirmed, the Zoom invitation was emailed to the informants.

At the beginning of each interview, the participants were reminded that they were free to turn on or leave on the camera and that they would only be recorded orally. Most of the participants preferred having the camera on to engage in the interview, and only two preferred having the camera off. The researcher's camera was left on throughout the interview process

with all participants in the attempt to make the interview any less artificial and/or impersonal for them.

The opening script was read out to them in their preferred language, as indicated in the signed consent form. The script (Appendix B) provided a brief overview of the interview content and highlighted some of the key aspects of the interview that the participants should note: most importantly, they were reminded that there is no right or wrong answer to the questions that would be asked throughout the interview; they could switch to any language between Korean and English, as they see fit; and that, again, although the interview would take approximately 90 minutes, it could be broken up into two sessions, if the participants wished. As previously indicated, the informants were also provided with a brief description of the researcher's background.

At the end of the interview, the informants were thanked for their participation and were reminded that they could ask for a copy of the transcript of their interview and make necessary changes, if they wished. The recording files, along with transcriptions of the interviews that were conducted in English, were made available for downloading on Zoom cloud server.

After each interview was transcribed and processed, some informants were asked to meet the researcher for a follow-up interview session, which was pursued within the week following the previous interview session. The follow-up interview sessions typically lasted between 10 and 20 minutes on Zoom. The gathered responses helped filling in the existing gap and helped clarifying certain aspects of the previous responses which were ambiguous or unclear. Seven out of ten participants were engaged in a follow-up interview. The data were collected between October 2021, and January 2022.

#### **6.1.10 Data Preparation**

The audio transcription function for cloud recordings on Zoom facilitated the transcription process in cases of the interviews that were conducted in English. The automated transcriptions were downloaded and compared to the respective recording files to ensure that all the words were correctly transcribed. As for the interviews that were conducted in Korean, the transcriptions had to be done from the scratch. Once certain parts of the interviews were selected for citation in the representation of the study, they were then translated into English.

All the interviews were transcribed semi-verbatim, which omitted false starts, stutters, and laughs. Filler words and grammatical errors were left unedited. Moreover, the parts of the interview which could help identifying the participants were removed, and pseudonyms were used for the names of all participants. The pseudonyms were generated in Korean or English, depending on the name of the participant that s/he preferred: for instance, if a participant preferred his or her Korean name, a Korean pseudonym was used in the transcript to replace his or her name.

### 6.1.11 Data Processing

The list of the 17 topic sections that were used to structure the interview questions were revisited and was partially modified and re-organized, based on the gathered data. The renewed list that was used for presenting the findings and analysis contained 18 topic sections:

- (1) Schooling experiences;
- (2) Family;
- (3) Ethnic community;
- (4) Friend groups;
- (5) Dating/marriage;
- (6) The Internet;
- (7) Interest in current affairs and voting;
- (8) The media and pop culture;
- (9) First-hand experiences of the *homeland*;<sup>72</sup>
- (10) Ethnic and mainstream languages;
- (11) Perceived discrimination and racism;
- (12) Multiculturalism;
- (13) Defining *Canadianness*;
- (14) Connection with peers within Canadian society;
- (15) Integration within Canadian society;
- (16) Feeling at *home*;
- (17) Ethnic and national pride; and
- (18) Self-identification.

The transcribed data were reviewed a number of times before they were coded and grouped together to identify themes. The themes were then grouped together in a table dedicated to each one of the 18 topic sections as highlighted above.

It must be noted that only the themes that were recurrent in at least two cases (participants) were included and discussed in the analysis. Furthermore, for each theme, categories (and sometimes sub-categories) were added to provide further exemplary

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<sup>72</sup> In the case of 1.5-generation immigrants, the term, *homeland*, may appear ambivalent, depending on how closely or distant an individual feels to the country of origin/parental homeland. Therefore, it must be noted that the term will hereafter be used to refer to the country of ethnic origin of individuals for practical reasons, without intending to impose assumptions on their identification with the origin country.

descriptions of each pattern. An example of the initial coding process and development of themes and categories can be found in Appendix C. Along with the coding-theme-category development, certain parts of the transcribed data were carefully selected for citation, with the aim of providing segments of the raw data.

## 6.2 Findings and Discussion

### 6.2.1 Profile of participants

**Table 36**

*Participant profile*

Case	Name (pseudonyms)	Sex	Age	Citizenship status	Age at the time of immigration	Length of residence in Toronto	Highest level of education attained	Occupation
1	Ben	M	28	Citizen	5	23	Bachelor of Medical Science	Software developer
2	Kelly	F	32	Citizen	9	23	Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Education	Teacher
3	Jacob	M	28	Citizen	6	22	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)	SEO account supervisor
4	Lucy	F	31	Citizen	9	22	College, Fashion Techniques and Design	Admin assistant
5	Jisoo	F	29	Citizen	12	17	Bachelor of Arts	Flight attendant/Groomer
6	Harin	F	28	Citizen	11	17	Bachelor of Art and Design	Customer service agent
7	Victoria	F	32	Citizen	10	22	Bachelor of Commerce	Real estate agent/part-time English tutor
8	William	M	33	Citizen	10	23	Master of Architecture	Architect
9	James	M	28	Citizen	9	19	Bachelor of Arts	SEO associate account manager
10	Nora	F	28	Citizen	8	20	Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education	Teacher

Table 36 provides an overview of participant profiles. Ten 1.5-generation Korean immigrants in Toronto participated in the interviews, out of whom six were female and four

were male. They were at a similar stage in life (i.e. in later adulthood), in the age range from 28 to 33 (mean age of 29.7), naturalized Canadian citizens who had resided in Canada for 17 to 23 years (mean of 20.8 years) at the time of the interviews. They also had completed the post-secondary education, with one participant who obtained the master’s degree and were employed.

Most participants immigrated to Canada with both their parents who were married. One participant, James, arrived in Canada with his mother and younger brother while his father stayed in Korea as a kiroki father, and another participant, Victoria, immigrated to Canada with her mother and older brother to follow her father, who had already moved to Canada for work. Two participants, Lucy and Nora, arrived in Canada with both parents, but the parents went through a divorce in Canada. As for the participants, themselves, most were unmarried and without children. Kelly, Victoria, and William were the only participants who were married, and Victoria was the only one who had a child.

### 6.2.2 Motives for Immigrating

**Table 37**

*Primary motives of the parents for immigrating*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Why did your parents decide to immigrate?	<b>10</b>
- For the children	7
- Parents’ dreams of moving abroad	2
- For job opportunities	2
- Not sure	2

The decision to immigrate was not up to the participants to make, but their parents’ (Table 37). The principal reasons that influenced their parents’ decision to immigrate were not various. In fact, it was centered around the children in most cases: providing them with a better educational environment and/or English education, as well as a better lifestyle and future opportunities for them, were cited. Four participants recalled that their parents were opposed to the “one-dimensional,” stress-inducing educational environment in Korea, which promotes learning based on memorization. Kelly and William, in particular, held vivid memories of the struggles that they experienced in their childhood in Korea, prior to immigrating.

From what I remember, my parents decided to move to Canada because of me and my brother’s education. But I think it was more because of me, personally, because my brother was too young, I struggled a lot in the Korean



school system. And my mom just did not like the Korean school system. [...] Like, and I had like one good teacher, but then I had pretty bad teachers who are like really, really into bribes and stuff like that in elementary school. (Kelly, 32, immigrated at the age of 9)

So when I was growing up in Korea, because of their education system. They value memorization. They value kind of a one-dimension of learning, so I struggled a lot. I mean, the education system is so one-dimensional in Korea, right? Like, there's one regulated way of learning and one regulated of testing. If you don't meet that, you're a failure, you're below the standard. [...] And because I'm a creative thinker and a visual thinker, and more an analytical and critical kind of learning person, not necessarily just memorization for the sake of memorization. [...]. My parents were worried because teachers were actually telling me or telling my parents that I had learning disabilities. [...] But my mom knew that, when I came back home, I had all these different creative outlets. I was writing poems when I was a kid which school wasn't teaching, I wanted to paint... I wanted to do all these things. She could clearly tell I didn't have a learning disability. It's just [that] I couldn't fit in the system. That's why we decided to move to either Canada or America or U.S. [...] But yeah, when I came here, all of a sudden, based on Canadian education, I was gifted.<sup>73</sup> [...] and I feel like they've made the right choice. (William, 33, immigrated at the age of 10)

Most participants described the Korean educational settings as “oppressive” and “competitive,” and associated them with high levels of stress and pressure. William’s response above especially highlights the stark contrast between the two educational systems in Korea and Canada. Furthermore, Jisoo and Victoria pointed out that they felt lucky to have been raised in Canada and received education in good settings and environment.

On the other hand, besides the reasons related to children, some parents’ decision to immigrate was also associated with their hopes of better opportunities for themselves. Victoria indicated that her father “hated his job” at LG in Korea and, because he had a positive impression of Canada, applied for a position at LG in Canada. Once he secured a position, he settled in Canada for a few months, and the rest of the family immigrated, as well. As for Harin, she reckoned that, along with educational motives for the children, her parents decided to move to escape from the financially difficult situation in which their business was placed in in Korea, post-IMF crisis. Moreover, for mothers of Lucy and Nora dreamed of moving to English-

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<sup>73</sup> As fostered by Ontario Ministry of Education and the Association for Bright Children, students are identified as *gifted* through nomination at any age from junior kindergarten to the last year of high school. By definition, *Giftedness* refers to “an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided” (Ministry of Ontario, 2001, as cited by Association for Bright Children of Ontario, 2004, p. 6). Only certain schools across the provinces of Ontario offer the Gifted program. While the gifted students have the option to remain in the regular class with accommodations provided by the teacher or join a self-contained class with other gifted peers, the latter is the most selected means of receiving education (Durham District School Board, n.d.).

speaking countries, which contributed to their decision to move to Canada. The following excerpt of Nora's responses portray the perceived images that her mother had of Korea and Canada:

Nora: And, obviously, she wanted to move because, you know, it was her childhood dream, but, more importantly, she wanted to provide us with better opportunities in the future. You know, with the Korean education system and all, it's really hard to keep up.

Researcher: I see. And do you know why it was her childhood dream to move abroad?

Nora: I remember her telling me about like, you know, when she was really young, she would look up to the sky and she would see like planes flying over. And she always dreamed of, you know, travelling and speaking English, being fluent in English. [...] she really admired the American or the Western culture, the lifestyle and their way of thinking. She thought that, overall, not just for us, like me and my brother, but for her, as well, there would be better opportunities in North America than in South Korea—which is a great country, but, you know, very small and limited in terms of opportunities. And she said that the society in Korea, you know, it's very fast-paced, a lot of social pressure and things like that. So I think, overall, she always wanted to move and try living in North America, and Canada was the best option at that time. (Nora, immigrated at the age of 8)

Like Nora's mother, the parents of Lucy and Harin considered other countries such as the United States and Australia for immigration. They chose to immigrate to Canada, because the immigration to Canada was easier and faster compared to other countries. As for the overall sample, their parents' decision to immigrate to Canada was sometimes linked with family connections, such as family friends, acquaintances, and extended family members, who had already settled in Canada. Those who had family connections in Canada explained that their family received help from these connections while settling in the new country, ranging from looking for a house to finding a job.

The lived memories of Korea, albeit limited, along with the parental perceptions of the Korean and Canadian society prior to immigration, seemed to be ingrained in the minds of most participants to this day. In fact, only two participants, Ben and Jacob, admitted that they were not too sure why their family immigrated—although they were able to guess that the reason was related to the education opportunities for their siblings and themselves. Out of the sample, both participants were the youngest to arrive in Canada, at the ages of 5 and 6, respectively. Besides the two participants, in most cases, the memories that individual participants retained from their childhood in Korea and the narratives of the parents appeared to have constructed the memories of the hopeful journeys that they were taken onto, to arrive in the country which

would become a new home for them. Overall, the background stories of their immigration which the participants shared affirmed some of the key traits of Korean immigrants in English-speaking countries: typically driven by the parents' zeal for the children's education, especially in an English-speaking environment, matched against the undesirable educational settings in Korea from which they wished for their children to escape (Cho, 2017; Jarvis et al., 2020; E. Lee & Johnstone, 2014; J.-K. Park, 2009; Rüdiger, 2019; I.-J. Yoon, 2012).

### **6.2.3 Settlement Patterns**

One of the two neighbourhoods that are known as Koreatown, located at Yonge and Finch in Toronto, provided a useful site for recent immigrants in search of home and other resources needed for settling into the host country. Some participants indicated that they stayed at a homestay which was run by a Korean owner at Yonge and Finch upon immigrating. Furthermore, the findings also demonstrated that the suburban neighbourhoods were also a popular choice for many families of the participants.

Indeed, while growing up, choosing a neighbourhood to settle in was not the decision of the participants to make, but the parents'. Unless there was a recommendation that was made by acquaintances or extended family members—as was the case for the parents of few participants—the parents' focus in choosing the neighbourhood was typically placed on the children: providing safety and good schools, and, in some cases, in areas that are not too populated with Koreans. Most participants had previously lived in the suburban areas in the GTA, such as Thornhill or Richmond Hill, which they described as “safe” and “good for families and children.” In terms of demographics, the neighbourhoods in which the participants settled in were described as “multicultural,” with concentrated population of Jewish, Italians, Koreans, and Chinese, among others, across different neighbourhoods.

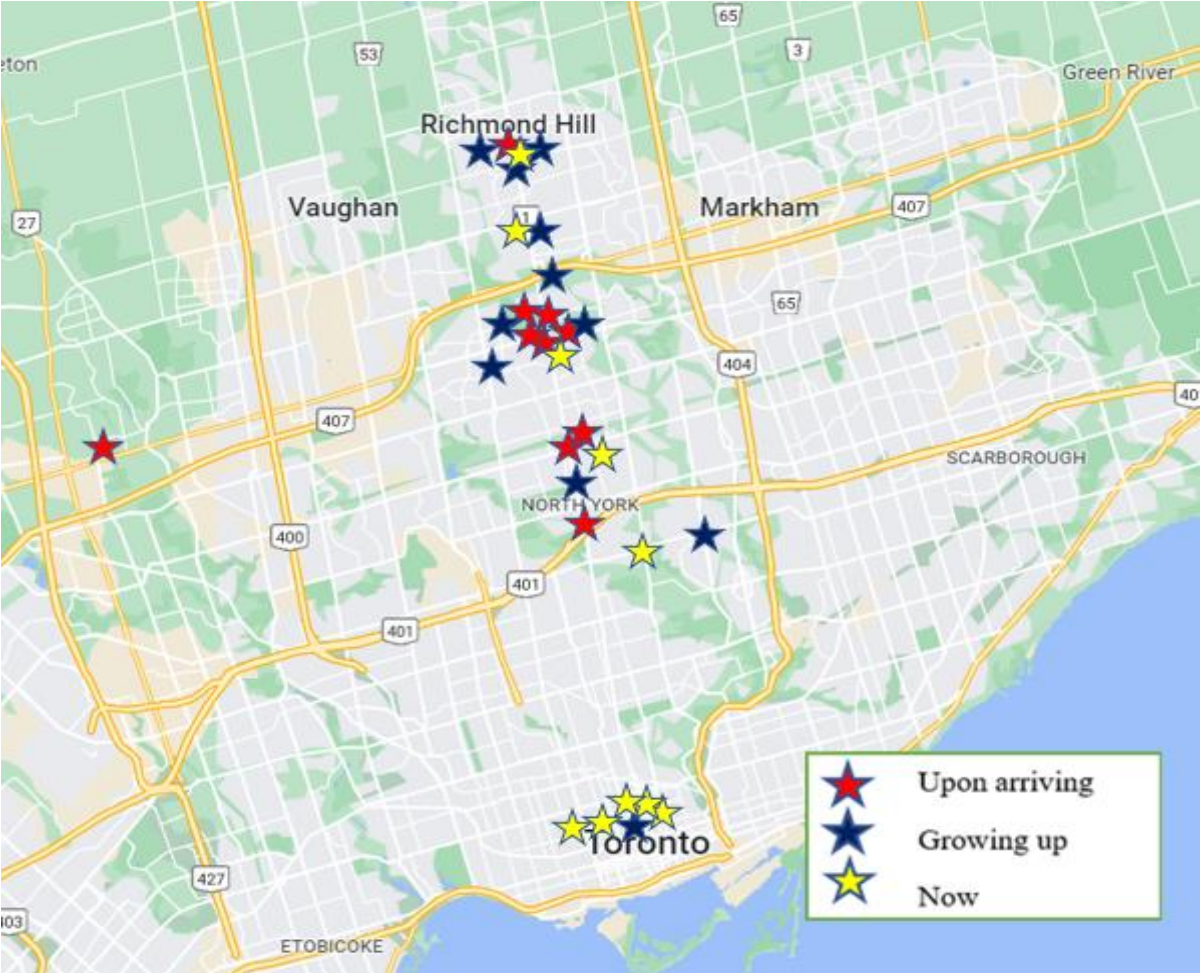
The overall settlement patterns and the current living situation of the sample are listed in Table 38. Figure 46 also roughly illustrates the neighbourhoods in which the participants settled upon arriving, while growing up, and currently. What stood out is the concentrated settlement patterns in Thornhill and Richmond Hill areas, as well as near the Koreatown at Yonge and Finch of the overall sample. Although all participants were employed and had a stream of income, only four moved out of the parents' home. This finding can be explained by previous literature which indicated that the autonomy of immigrant children is expected at later

ages when compared to their non-immigrant counterparts (Ferrari & Pailhé, 2017; Juang & Umaña-Taylor, 2012).

**Table 38**  
*Settlement patterns and the current living situation*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Settlement patterns	<b>10</b>
- Has lived in suburban areas in the GTA	9
- Currently resides in downtown Toronto	5
Current living situation	<b>10</b>
- Living with parents	6
- Moved out of parents	4

**Figure 46**  
*Settlement patterns of the sample—upon arriving, growing up, and presently*



Furthermore, the four participants who left their parents’ home in the suburbs settled in downtown Toronto. When asked for the reasons for choosing downtown to settle in, the proximity to work and the boredom they associated with suburban areas were cited. For

example, William explained the different dynamics of the suburban and downtown Toronto as the following:

Richmond Hill is like typical North American suburbs. You have to get in a car [to] go anywhere—everything's pretty far apart. I think it's a good, protected area for children to grow up [in]. But, as you get older, you kind of get bored and want to connect with more people, you want to be part of activities... Kind of like the pulse of life. [...] That's why a lot of younger folks will move to downtown (William, immigrated at the age of 10).

James was the only one who currently resided in downtown to have left the suburbs with his mother and younger brother. Like William and others, he also mentioned that living in downtown made going to work easier than the suburbs, and that it is “much busier,” as “it's like the heart of Toronto.”

As they had been exposed to the multicultural environment while growing up, the participants were likely to continue to find a sense of comfort and familiarity upon settling in the downtown area, which is also typically multicultural. Lucy described her neighbourhoods in downtown Toronto as “the core of Toronto,” where “all sorts of communities and cultures” are found. Likely, Jacob highlighted that there are many East Asians<sup>74</sup> in his neighbourhood in downtown Toronto, in which he finds comfort. Therefore, while the settlement patterns of 1.5-generation immigrants may differ from those of their parents geographically, the 1.5 generation are likely to choose multicultural areas to settle in.

The tendency to look inward and closely identifying with co-ethnic peers was also evident in the settlement patterns of most participants. While it would be easy to assume that such settlement patterns reflect ethnic/racial segregation (Murdie & Ghosh, 2010), some scholars have posited that a concentration of immigrants in a neighbourhood is not necessarily a reflection of the lack of their integration (Bolt et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2012). As well, Kymlicka (2010) argued that “There is an almost complete absence of immigrant or visible or religious minority ghettos in Canada,” in contrast to the United States or Europe (p. 8), and that ethnic neighbourhoods should be seen as “a steppingstone to integration” in Canada (p. 9). Consistent to Kymlicka's (2010) argument, the neighbourhoods—whether suburbs or downtown Toronto—in which most of the participants had resided during their childhood were described as ideal for children's education (e.g. good schools in the area, safe neighbourhoods etc.), and,

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<sup>74</sup> From here on onwards, East Asians will be referred to as “Asians,” unless otherwise specified.

in a number of cases during their adulthood, vibrant and dynamic (e.g. “the core of Toronto,” “Kind of like the pulse of life” etc.).

Mostly education migrants, the sample arrived in Canada at young ages, ranging from 5 to 11. At the time of the interviews, all participants were invested in their careers in adulthood, and half of them had moved out of their parents’ home to build their own nests in different parts of the city. These profile traits reflect the varying degrees of autonomy that the individuals are likely to have attained throughout their lives as immigrants who transitioned from childhood to adulthood, which was positively correlated with the rich and diverse pool of life experiences that they were ready to share.



## CHAPTER 7

### SOCIALIZATION EXPERIENCES OF THE 1.5 GENERATION

#### 7.1 Schooling Experiences

##### 7.1.1 Learning English

**Table 39**

*Learning English in school*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Overview of perceived experiences	<b>9</b>
- Experiences were mostly positive	6
- Experiences were mostly negative	3
Positive experiences	<b>9</b>
- Made friends easily with cross-ethnic/racial peers	8
- Learned English was easy	6
- Positive ESL experiences	3
Negative experiences	<b>5</b>
- Acculturative stress linked with the language acquisition (e.g. difficulty making friends/learning English/doing homework)	5
Vague memories of learning English	<b>3</b>

Arriving in a new, foreign educational settings does not only make up part of the schooling experience for an immigrant youth, but also the starting point of an acculturation, with the exposure to the mainstream language and peers. Table 39 highlights the patterns that were identified across the narratives centered around the participants' experiences of learning English in school. Overall, most participants described their experiences of learning English as a positive experience, and few as a negative experience: some of the positive aspects of learning English included an overall easy, fast, and natural process of acquiring the language through peer interactions/ESL experiences; and the negative aspects were associated with the acculturative stress linked to English and the lacking sense of confidence in the English proficiency, even upon completing the ESL program. Ben, Jacob, and Nora held vague memories of their language learning experiences, due to the young age at which they arrived in Canada.

The age at the time of immigration significantly shapes the acculturative experiences and results of immigrant children (Danico, 2003; Harklau, 2003; Hermansen, 2017; Pyon, 2012; Rumbaut, 2012; Rumbaut, 2004; Rumbaut & Ima, 1987), including the language fluency and accent (Basu, 2018; Danico, 2003). Sukanya Basu (2018) argued that the critical age for



developing one's English proficiency is between eight and ten. These previous research findings were mirrored in the findings of the current study, as they showed that how early or late the participants arrived in Canada appeared to have greatly affected their sociolinguistic adaptation into the English-spoken school settings.

In fact, all the participants who arrived before the age of 11 emphasized that they had no problem making friends with English-speaking peers, whom they described were friendly and approachable and did not mind the language barrier. Most of these participants emphasized that learning English was a fast process, and that it took its course through peer interactions. Half of these participants did not retain any "inherent difficulties" nor "bad memories" from their experiences of learning English—including Ben and Jacob, the two participants who barely remembered the language learning experiences. The following excerpt from Lucy's response provides an example of the "easy" process of the language acquisition which most participants experienced:

I was lucky I came at a pretty young age. At first, like, I didn't know anything—I barely knew the alphabet. And I think I was lucky in a way. The first year, I didn't have any Korean friends, and I was basically forced to speak English with non-Korean friends. My close friend at the time was Russian, and she was also an immigrant. Her English wasn't as good, either, but yeah, so we just communicated using body language, picked up [English] that way, and we also were both ESL. [...] when I was home, like, we didn't even really have the entertainment resources we have now, like to watch. [...] I was forced to watch TV here, which is all in English, and my favourite was SpongeBob. [...] Yeah, after like six months, I was able to converse like okay. A year, I was like more confident, and then, I guess, as you get older, you just pick up more vocabulary and yeah. (Lucy, immigrated at the age of 9).

This is not to say that those who arrived before the age of 11 were completely exempt from acculturative distress. For example, Kelly reflected on her first day of school in Canada, where there were no Korean peers, recalling the sentiment of feeling lost:

[...] I remember that first morning recess: I went out, and I was like, I don't know what to do. So I sat at this like bench thing in the playground of my school, and all these like White kids, blond hair, blue eyes... like the kids that I only saw on TV in Korea, they came up to me and they were like saying something to me in English. And I remember getting a gist of what they were saying. But I was a really, really shy kid, so I couldn't even make eye contact with them. And I didn't even like answer them. [...] So that's like a very distinct, clear memory to me [...] I remember a whole bunch of kids actually approached me. I had a class of really nice kids. And they actually made enough effort to try and talk to me. [...] And yeah, I don't have any memory of struggling with the language, except for that first day. (Kelly, immigrated at the age of 9)

Kelly, who struggled in Korea with studies and making friends, felt lost and anxious on her first day of school, not only at being exposed to the foreign environment, but also being approached by the blond-hair-and-blue-eyed peers speaking in a language she did not understand. Nevertheless, despite the difficulty which she experienced on her first day of school, making friends was not an issue for Kelly. She picked up on the language “really fast,” to the point that she was asked to be a MC for a medieval night that was hosted at the school a couple of months after her arrival.

The acculturative distress stemming from the initial exposure to the Canadian school settings was also echoed in the responses of a few other participants, more directly linked with language/cultural barrier. James, who arrived at the age of 9, found the first experiences of being placed in a school in Canada challenging, faced with language and cultural barriers. Yet, like Lucy, he acknowledged that he was lucky to have arrived at a young age, as being young allowed him to interact with peers without trouble despite the language barrier. He described his experiences as the following:

Obviously, there were challenges at first, because I didn't speak any English at all—any language, culture. But I think I had it easier than others, considering how people, like when they are young, are more approachable and friendly, and they actually make the effort to kind of like go above and beyond, to each means. [...] I think it [the student demographics] was mostly Canadian [at my school]. There was one Korean person. Yeah. And it helped me learn English. [...] I didn't have trouble making friends. They didn't really care that I couldn't speak the language and invited me to their houses and stuff. And this really helped me learn English, I guess. (James, immigrated at the age of 9)

Additionally, Nora, despite the fact that she arrived young and remembered little of her experiences of learning English, remembered feeling frustrated during her first full school year in Canada: she had trouble following the class and her father was unable to help her with homework. Nevertheless, she pointed out that making friends was easy (“You know when you are young, you just get along without really having to speak English properly, so like, making friends was easy, you know.”) and learning English was a fast process. As for William, while speaking English came naturally to him in no time, writing and reading English was challenging for him—which he felt was still the case today. He associated this difficulty with his overall weakness in languages.

As some participants pointed out, age at the time of arrival appeared to have played an important role in the acculturative process for the participants, directly shaping their process of learning English and peer-socialization patterns. At young ages, peer interactions and

socializations did not seem to require fluency in the language: some used body language to communicate, and some pointed out that they were not shy nor scared to make mistakes while speaking in English. Hence, exposed to English-spoken settings with English-speaking peers, all the participants who arrived before the age of 11 found it easy to blend in while absorbing the new language. Although having no Korean peers at their school at the time of arrival may have contributed to the initial feeling of distress, it seems to have worked as a positive driving force for these participants to learn English.

In contrast, the narratives of Jisoo and Harin exemplified the arrival age effect (Jia & Aaronson, 2003) as they illustrated the obstacles that the arrival age can place for 1.5-generation immigrants in their process of acculturation. The primary obstacle was the paradox, which laid in the interplay of language proficiency and use: English learners need English-speaking social networks in order to practise the language; yet, language proficiency is a prerequisite for gaining access to these social networks (Norton, 2000, p. 64). For instance, in Harin's case, she was exclusively engaged in peer interaction with Koreans mostly throughout her schooling and took four years to complete the ESL program—which was the longest time when compared to other participants, for whom “a couple of months” to two years were the average.

Jisoo and Harin were the two out of three participants, along with Nora, whose experiences of learning English were overall negative. Arrived in Canada at the age of 12 and 11, respectively, both Jisoo and Harin were placed in a school where there were few English learners. Jisoo was the only one across the sample who settled in Woodbridge area upon arriving in Toronto, which she described was mostly populated with Italians at the time. Placed in grade 7 instead of 8 in a small private elementary school, Jisoo was exposed to new school settings and environment without the support of the ESL program which did not exist at the school at the time. This meant that she had to attend mainstream English and history classes, which exposed her to high levels of acculturative stress. She remembered many difficulties she experienced in class: being asked to read Anne Frank's diary as homework and being unfamiliar with basic vocabulary (e.g. “a hole puncher”) and cursive writing. More importantly, she had to socialize with younger peers from grade 6 and kindergarten because she was unable to make friends with peers from her year. She “felt extremely lonely” (*Translated from Korean*). However, she believed that it is thanks to this experience that she acquired her current level of English.

Similarly, Harin arrived towards the end of grade 6 and felt extremely alienated to the point that she felt like an outcast. Like Jisoo, Harin found that there were very few English learners in her school—less than ten ESL students across all grades. Overall, Harin’s negative experiences of learning English were mostly associated with the lack of *choice* in choosing friends which she associated with language barriers. For Harin, this sense of alienation was initiated by the pull-out method employed in the ESL program.

[...] But back then, there were less than ten ESL students in the entire school. So it felt as if the ESL class were a class made up of troublemakers. So if you go to ESL, everyone would like... I was the only ESL student in my class. For example, in like English or history class, the homeroom teacher tells the ESL students to go to ESL, and all the attention would fall on me. So I’d just feel a bit uncomfortable [...]. [...] You come to class, and they do the attendance there and send you to ESL. And then, even though there was nothing wrong with being ESL, I became someone... who stands out a bit. Like an error in the system. [...] The [ESL] classroom was on the first floor when all the other classes were on the second floor. Whenever the time comes, we would just have to get up in the middle of the class and go downstairs with our binders.

*(Translated from Korean/Harin, immigrated at the age of 11)*

As described above, Harin criticized the pull-out method of the ESL program for its approach of separating the English learners from the mainstream class, especially in a manner which she perceived as insensitive and abrupt. Thus, she had a vivid memory of feeling alienated, especially in class, stigmatized with the ESL label.

In-between classes, Harin did not wish to play with the English-speaking peers, not only because of the language barrier, but also because of the cultural barrier: she felt that, although they seemed nice, they were too infantile and could not connect with them (“In a way, it was as if asking a high school student to play with a kindergartener. I did not want to play the Chinese jump rope with them” *(Translated from Korean)*). Although Harin had Korean friends in school, they were part of the school band and were rarely available during recess. As a result, she associated negative sentiments with her first experience of the Canadian school. Therefore, the acculturative distress seems to have significantly marked the experiences of learning English and adapting to the new environment in case of these two participants, Jisoo and Harin, who joined elementary school in late grade 6 and 7. Their overall experiences visibly contrasted with the experiences of the rest of the sample, especially on the level of social integration.

In contrast to the negative experiences that she associated with the ESL program at her first school, Harin was one of the three participants who retained positive memories of learning English as an ESL student. In fact, Harin had better experiences in ESL in the second school

she was placed in: her ESL teacher was a passionate and encouraging teacher who was “so implicated in teaching.” Likewise, those who remembered ESL experiences in a positive manner recalled supportive teacher-student interactions, friendships that they formed, class activities which they found “fun,” “easy,” and helpful, as well as a safe environment to learn and practise English. Victoria commented: “[...] so it was a really good environment to start your immigration. You can take the time you need to learn the language. Because you have support” (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean*).

Hence, the findings reflect both the benefits and risks related to the implementation of the ESL program in schools. On the one hand, the pull-out method may create a divide between English learners and mainstream peers, which, not only can be segregating in nature, but can also stigmatize English learners. Moreover, peer interactions and socializations that are generated through the ESL program are likely to lead the learners to develop speech patterns that differ from the standard/native English (Roberge, 2002, p. 121). On the other hand, the ESL program can be extremely helpful in helping 1.5-generation immigrants adapt to the new settings by engaging them in relevant and helpful learning experiences in a safe environment, while providing opportunities for them to engage in positive teacher-student and peer-to-peer interactions.

However, completion of the ESL program may not be enough for 1.5-generation immigrants to foster a sense of confidence in their English proficiency.<sup>75</sup> Numerous studies have reported that 1.5-generation immigrants, who identify English as the dominant language, encounter challenges associated with their English proficiency throughout schooling (Harklau et al., 1999; Lacina & Griffith, 2017; Roberge, 2002; Thonus, 2003). Such challenges have been described as distinctive to this generation group. For instance, as they tend to use the heritage language at home, their fluency of English proficiency is often flawed (Harklau et al., 1999; Lacina & Griffith, 2017); simultaneously, the challenges they face in their English proficiency—notably in academic English/literacy—are often unnoticed and/or overlooked, as 1.5-generation students do not tend to identify themselves as ESL and can be perceived as native English speakers due to their oral fluency in English (Danico, 2004; Roberge, 2002; Thonus, 2019).

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<sup>75</sup> Here, this description is strictly limited to those who still lacked confidence in their English proficiency at the time of finishing the ESL program. Those who reported feeling that their English proficiency was limited/imperfect *to this day* were numerous and will be discussed in the topic section, Ethnic and Mainstream Languages.

Consistent to previous research findings, some participants—Harin, Jisoo, Victoria, and William—did not feel confident in their English proficiency upon completing the ESL program. The feeling of insecurity about her English proficiency was especially impactful in the case of Victoria. As she was surrounded by numerous ESL peers in school, her limited proficiency was not so evident within the school settings; rather, Victoria became “self-conscious about not being so fluent in English” outside of school. Although she used to have an outgoing personality in elementary school, she became less extroverted and more introverted, while becoming increasingly “self-conscious” of her limited English proficiency throughout the transition from junior high to high school.

Furthermore, it did not seem uncommon for the ESL label to follow individuals throughout the schooling years.<sup>76</sup> Kelly and William continued to be identified as ESL on the attendance lists and the report card, years after they joined the mainstream class. In contrast to previous literature which shed light on the stigmatization of the ESL label (Gunderson, 2007), being categorized as ESL did seem to have bothered either one of the participants. Kelly used to inform supply teachers that she was ESL, even though she was no longer one, to avoid being asked to participate in class. Thus, she continued to associate a sense of comfort with being identified as ESL. As for William, the multiple labels which he was marked with by the time he reached high school did not seem to bother him, despite the confusion. He explained:

What was hilarious was, when I went to high school, I joined the International Baccalaureate program, the IB Program, which categorizes me in like the Gifted category. But then, at the same time, I was, on paper, ESL, as well. So there was a bit of a mix up when I went to high school: they were like, okay, does this kid go to Gifted English class or does he go to ESL? [...] I remember in grade 8, I did not speak French, I think I was still struggling to perfect English, but actually had valedictorian in grade 8. [...] So a lot of people thought that was hilarious that I couldn't speak French and I was still categorized as ESL, but I ended up getting valedictorian.

The acquisition of the English language in school seemed closely associated with the first impression of the participants of their schooling experience in Canada. Despite some memories that have been retained which involved confusion and distress stemming from one's unfamiliarity with the language and environment, most participants nonetheless recalled positive sentiment with their experiences of learning English, based on peer interactions and

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<sup>76</sup> While the reason for the lasting ESL-categorization of the former ESL students is not clear, William reckoned that it was “just for record purposes.” It can also be related to the funding that schools or school district receive, which is granted based on the ascribed labels of students (e.g. English learners, special needs etc.) that are enrolled (Herrmann, 2018).

ESL experiences. On the other hand, some remembered feeling frustrated, anxious, and/or stressed from being faced with language and cultural barriers. The ones who were affected by the arrival age effect were especially vulnerable to such distress, as their language barrier seemed to have significantly limited their social integration.

### 7.1.2 Peer Socialization

Co-ethnic peer socialization tendencies of an individual can be understood in light of the discrimination that 1.5-generation immigrants tend to encounter in school: to native-born peers, whether co-ethnic or not, the 1.5 generation may be seen as foreigners or FOBs;<sup>77</sup> to recent immigrants, they may be seen as too distanced from the heritage culture and language; and to native-born minority groups, they may be seen as a competition within the bigger picture of the school and society (Roberge, 2002, p. 112). Therefore, due to the social status and position that are externally imposed on 1.5-generation immigrants, the choice of friend groups throughout schooling may not be theirs to make.

**Table 40**

*Peer socialization in school—primary level*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Made friends with cross-ethnic, English-speaking peers	<b>9</b>
Made friends with co-ethnic peers	<b>5</b>
- Approached by Korean peers to be friends/assigned by the teacher to be friends with Korean peers	4
Positive memories	<b>9</b>
- Friendly and approachable peers	9
- Made friends easily	8
Negative memories	<b>2</b>
- Feeling of alienation and loneliness	2
- Felt that s/he had a limited choice in choosing who to be friends with	2

Table 40 displays the socialization patterns of the participants throughout schooling at the primary level.<sup>78</sup> As discussed previously, most participants found their peers in their

<sup>77</sup> *FOB* stands for Fresh Off the Boat, which can be used as a derogatory way to describe immigrants who have not “yet grasped the customs, the language, or culture of the [host] country” (Abad-Santos, 2015).

<sup>78</sup> In Canada, children attend elementary school for the first 6 or 8 grades of school, before moving onto either junior high (grades 7 and 8) or high school (grade 9 and higher). Table 7.2 refers to the participants’ experiences of elementary level grades *up to grade 6*, regardless of whether they attended elementary school until grade 6 or 8.

elementary schools as approachable and friendly, which made it easy for most to make friends—with or without Korean peers in their surroundings. Most made friends with peers, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. For all participants except for Harin and Jisoo, memories that they associated with their peer interactions in elementary school were positive.

Out of those who had Korean peers in school, four were directly invited to connect with Koreans. For example, Lucy and Kelly were approached by Koreans to become friends with the Korean group of peers. In the following excerpt from Lucy's response, the process of being *scouted* by Korean peers is described:

In grade 6, my friend, the Russian friend, she went to a different school, so I didn't have any friends at the time. So I was just hanging out alone in the playground during recess, and one day, this Korean girl came up to me, like, 'Are you Korean? Do you wanna hang out with us?' And that's how I started hanging out with them. And then, like a few months later, there was a new Korean kid who joined, and you know. (Lucy, arrived at the age of 9)

Additionally, Harin and Nora explained that teachers often assign a newly arrived Korean student to another Korean student in the class so that he or she can help the new student by translating in Korean and help him/her adjust to the new school environment. Unfortunately, in both their cases, being set up with another Korean peer through the teacher was not perceived positively. As for Nora, she felt frustrated at experiencing a language barrier while trying to communicate with a second-generation Korean peer that her teacher had assigned her to for help. She commented that "it was a big responsibility" for the Korean peer to have to care for her, when they were only in grade 3. Additionally, Harin felt that being set up with another Korean peer was imposing—it added to her feeling that she did not have a choice in deciding who to be friends with.

At first when I arrived at the school, I didn't have a choice—it wasn't up to me to decide who I wanted to be friends with because I am Korean. My homeroom teacher asked the people in my class who was Korean and asked a Korean girl to take care of me because I am Korean. Like this, I became friends with her. Even if I didn't want to, I had no choice. [...] And same thing: I became friends with who is now one of my closet friends because our teacher asked for a Korean student in the class, and I was there. She was like, 'Here's a new Korean student, show her around the school' and stuff. Kind of forced, in a way. You don't have a choice when you first arrive. (*Translated from Korean*, Harin, arrived at the age of 11)

While Harin emphasized that she had "no choice" in friendship throughout her schooling, she nevertheless acknowledged that English-speaking peers at the first school were nice and approachable. As for Jisoo, as indicated previously, had no choice but to play with younger



peers during the recess, as she had difficulty connecting with peers from the same grade in a school where there were no other Korean peers.

Overall, the findings indicated that, at the level of elementary schooling, the majority of the participants seemed to have explored peer networks, unconscious of ethnic/racial backgrounds. The only participants who struggled were, again, Jisoo and Harin, who joined the Canadian school at later ages than the rest of the sample. While Harin was able to utilize the Korean peer networks in her school, Jisoo, who did not have any Korean peers in her school, had to make a conscious effort to blend in, by socializing with younger peers. Regardless, the distress that seemed to have affected both participants seemed evident.

**Table 41**

*Peer socialization in school—secondary level*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Self-consciousness/awareness	<b>9</b>
- Became (more) aware of the minority status and/or ethnic/racial groupings	9
Dependence on co-ethnic/racial peer socialization	<b>8</b>
- Socialized exclusively with Korean peers throughout the most/all of junior/high schooling	5
- Socialized more closely/exclusively with Asians throughout the most/all of junior/high schooling	3
Engaged in cross-ethnic/racial peer socialization	<b>2</b>
Felt closer to immigrant peers	<b>2</b>
Positive sentiment (“I was friends with everyone”)	<b>2</b>
Neutral sentiment (i.e. conscious of ethnic/racial groupings, but felt indifferent)	<b>2</b>
Negative sentiments	<b>5</b>
- Felt unspoken pressure to stay within the Korean group	3
- Experienced difficulty in trying to belong to the Korean group	2
- Experienced anxiety when attending classes where there were no Korean peers in high school	2
- Regrets staying within the comfort zone in friend groups	2

Table 41 demonstrates the socialization patterns of the participants at the secondary level (i.e. junior high and/or high school). Throughout this period, eight participants became increasingly aware of visible groupings based on ethnicity and race, as well as their minority status within the mainstream settings. This phenomenon was positively correlated with an increased level of co-ethnic/racial peer socialization tendency in school. Typically, the

participants exclusively socialized with Koreans and/or Asians in high school, and only few had mixed groups of friends in terms of race. Looking back on their junior/high school experiences, half of the participants associated negative sentiments with their exclusive co-ethnic/racial peer socialization experiences, especially regarding their membership within the Korean group.

There are several reasons for which cliques—based on race, age, gender, and/or social status—*thrive* in high schools (Andrews, 2014). Firstly, the search for identity is the most prominent throughout adolescence (Hung, 2018; Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001; Phinney, 1988). Thus, adolescents become more conscious of ethnic/racial differences and gravitate towards peers with whom they have similar backgrounds (e.g. academic pressure from the parents). Secondly, adolescents are prone to going through an ethnic identity search upon encountering particular experiences such as perceived marginalization and discrimination, and may turn to co-ethnics for support (Phinney, 1993). Thirdly, the stress that occurs from the transition from the primary to secondary school, as well as the academic pressure, can create racial cliques (Caulfield et al., 2005).

Indeed, the findings revealed that ethnic/racial cliquing typically occurred throughout the participants' transition from the elementary to junior high/high school. Most participants were, to begin with, placed in high schools where there was a large number Asian peers, which provided an ample pool of co-ethnic and racial networking opportunities. In particular, Ben and William naturally became closer friends with Asians who were placed in the same class through the Gifted program at the junior high level (“And there happened to be so many Asian kids. That just naturally led to that kind of friend group”—Ben), and William was also part of the band in high school, whose members were predominantly Asians. Like Ben and William, Jacob and James indicated that their friend groups evolved from cross-ethnic/racial peers to co-ethnic/racial peers through the transition from primary to secondary schooling. Although neither of them had Asian peers in elementary school, they began to socialize with co-ethnics/racials upon being exposed to Korean peers in high school (“[...] I think that’s when I started leaning more towards the Asian group. It just happened naturally”—Jacob).

Many others transitioned from their primary school to secondary school with the same group of friends, which included Korean peers. Victoria, for instance, who had some interactions with few English-speaking peers in elementary school, went onto high school along with her Korean friends from the previous school. There, they were exposed to many more

Korean peers, with whom cliquing occurred instantly. Hence, Victoria began to become more dependent on exclusive socialization with Koreans throughout high school. Looking back, she believed that her limited proficiency in both Korean and English was the result of her excessive co-ethnic peer socialization in high school.

While co-ethnic/racial peer socialization happened circumstantially for most participants, few made a conscious effort to connect with/stick to Koreans. Harin, who arrived at the end of elementary school, moved onto junior high school with her group of Korean friends. Still faced with language and cultural barriers, she felt stressed by English-speaking peers who approached her and built a barrier against them.

Looking back now, I think I was the mean one. They wanted to just hang out together: asking the teacher if they could sit next to me, asking me to go see a movie... [...] But I felt pressured. I wished wholeheartedly that they [English-speaking peers] wouldn't talk to me because I didn't speak English. Whenever they were trying to tease me, trying to be friendly, I would just tell them, 'Shut up,' because I didn't know how to say anything [else]. [...] But in some ways, they were mean, too. One of the boys in my class said something in English to tease us when he saw that we were just about to leave for ESL. Frankly, I didn't even understand what he said, but I had a feeling that he was making fun of me. So I got angry and kicked him. [...] Later, he came to apologize in the hallway, even though I was the one who kicked him. But all I knew how to say in English was swear words. (*Translated from Korean/Harin, exclusively socialized with Koreans in secondary school*)

Harin's tendency of staying within the comfort zone of exclusively socializing with Koreans continued onto high school years, where she was met with all the Korean friends from her previous "feeder" schools. In high school, there was a large group of Korean peers to socialize with. She connected all her Korean friends she knew from her previous schools within the group and became friends with many, among whom international students from Korea were numerous. Harin felt comfortable with them, as they all did not speak English well and interacted with one another in Korean.

Another participant who made a conscious decision to belong to the Korean group in high school was Kelly. In junior high school, Kelly had a particularly difficult time, torn in-between the Jewish and Korean group of peers with whom she was friends. She "naturally gravitated towards Koreans," some of whom she attended elementary school with, and less so with the Jewish with whom she perceived no similarities. Yet, she was peer pressured by her Jewish friends to not play with her "FOB" Korean friends. She was so distressed to the point that she went to a different school, where she was able to socialize with mixed ethnic/racial groups of peers altogether for a year before advancing to high school. In high school, like Harin,

she was “reunited” with a group of Korean friends from previous schools and was excited to socialize with them and make new Korean friends (“I was like, oh my God so many Koreans, it’s like a whole new world”), without having to worry about potential conflicts in-between different groups. Kelly, too, only had Korean friends throughout high school, and she chose to ignore all her non-Korean friends from her previous schools. She explained as the following:

So in high school, because we were so isolated in our Korean group, I think I felt a little more keenly the fact that this is us, Koreans, and that is them, Canadians. So I think I felt the divide quite a bit. But that was only because like I, myself, made the conscious decision to be in the other group. (Kelly)

Jisoo, as well, made a conscious effort to connect with Koreans and stay within the group during adolescence. As the private elementary school that she was attending was a feeder school to a private junior high school in the neighbourhood, she begged her parents to let her go to a public school where there were Korean peers (“And the people at my [Korean] church went to schools where there were Koreans. They seemed to be having so much fun going to school”—*Translated from Korean*). In a new neighbourhood in Thornhill, she attended a public junior high school for one semester, where there were no Korean peers, but a big presence of an Asian community. Making friends was easier than in her previous school, as Jisoo felt more comfortable speaking English by then, and the Chinese and Russian-Jewish peers, who were the demographic majority at the school, were friendly and approachable. In high school, there were numerous Korean peers—and, like Kelly, she instantly connected with them and stuck to them throughout high school.

There were only two cases across the sample, Lucy and Nora, who were friends with mixed ethnic/racial groups of friends throughout secondary school years. On the one hand, Lucy, who had no trouble making friends with non-Korean peers, nevertheless started to mostly socialize with Koreans towards the end of the elementary schooling. The co-ethnic peer socialization tendency continued until she was placed in a school where there were no Korean peers. As she had always kept at least a minimal level of interactions with English-speaking peers throughout the years, she was able to blend in without a problem and form cross-ethnic and racial social ties—while staying close to her Korean friends outside of the school. On the other hand, Nora was the only participant who continuously attended schools in which there was a small presence of Korean peers. She blended well with friends regardless of their backgrounds; but, along with William, Nora stayed particularly closer to peers from immigrant backgrounds, especially to Korean peers, based on the similarities (“And there, that’s when I started, well, I hung out with a lot of immigrant friends. I think it’s just because it’s easier to

connect”—William; “[...] we were able to relate to one another. We just had that connection”—Nora). These findings highlighted the participants’ active exploration of peer networks based on the perceived similarities and accessibility.

In contrast to primary schooling experiences, memories that the participants associated with their socialization practices throughout their junior/high schooling were typically negative. Although co-ethnic/racial friendships may indeed provide a secure sense of social belonging within the mainstream settings of school (Caulfield et al., 2005), the fact remained that the co-ethnic/racial identification in peer interactions tended to occur *in response to* high levels of perceived ethnic/racial groupings and tensions throughout the adolescence. Even for those who explored cross-ethnic/racial friend groups in secondary school, they were more closely associated with co-ethnic/racial peers. Furthermore, many participants attained a heightened sense of their minority status within the mainstream school settings at the level of secondary schooling. In fact, five out of the eight participants who were engaged in exclusive co-ethnic/racial peer socialization throughout junior/high school years expressed negative sentiments in relation to their socialization experiences. Such sentiments were especially salient in the narratives of those who were exclusively friends with co-ethnics.

Ethnic/racial cliques, as well as the resulting self-perception in relation to group memberships, were vividly depicted throughout the participants’ narratives about their high school cafeteria. As many as eight participants recalled various friend groups which were visibly divided in the cafeteria: most of the divides were based on ethnicity and race, and some on interests (e.g. music, art, sports etc.), popularity, immigrant generations, academic groupings (i.e. IB<sup>79</sup>/Gifted, AP<sup>80</sup>), and financial backgrounds, to name a few examples.

So the minute you walk into the cafeteria, there's this whole huge middle section of what I would call just *White kids*. I'm pretty sure they weren't all White, but in my head, all White kids that I had nothing to do with. [...] And then, you walk to the back of the cafeteria, and... This is where I would start getting a little self-conscious, because, to the left, you have the Korean section. And then, in the middle is like the Persian section. The far right was like the Chinese section. The Persians are just kind of there in the middle, so sometimes, you're like, proximity-wise, closer to them. I remember I used to look at them, and also because they used to play soccer with Koreans. [...] And then, yeah, we would just mingle by ourselves in that little Korean

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<sup>79</sup> International Baccalaureate (IB) Program is a non-profit educational foundation which was founded in 1968 in Geneva, Switzerland. It offers educational programs for students between 3 and 19 years of age through authorized schools around the world (International Baccalaureate, n.d.).

<sup>80</sup> Advanced Placement (AP) refers to courses that are offered at the grade 12 level in a variety of subject areas, designed to provide teaching equivalent to first-year university courses.

corner, with the exit doors, and that was so like insular, and we didn't talk to anybody else. (Kelly, exclusively socialized with Koreans in high school)

Chinese second gens, smart Chinese who were taking AP classes together... And there were lots of Jewish... Well-dressed and fashionable ones, cool kids, volleyball and basketball kids... things like that. I think this is how they were grouped [in the cafeteria]. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo, exclusively socialized with Koreans in high school*)

[...] Because, in our school, like, in this neighbourhood, there are lots of I guess you could say wealthy middle-class families, but also apartments in one part of the area. So the school was a mix of, you know, kids from different like financial backgrounds. So I think it was kind of like divided, based on that, I would say. So there were like the rich White kids—there was like one group of them. There was another group of like Asian nerds. And other groups of, I don't know, just like, people like me: I was friends with kind of like random people. Like, the typical high school groups you could think of. What I remember is, like, you know, after every holiday break, we would always talk about what we did. And we'd always have kids who went to Florida, you know, whereas, you have other kids like me who stayed at home. So I think we were from diverse backgrounds, in terms of, not just ethnic, but financial backgrounds. Some were really well-off—they had cottages, did all this stuff. 'I went to Costa Rica' or some island down south... (Nora, socialized with mixed ethnic/racial groups of friends in high school)

Amidst the external pressure that was felt to identify one's place and position within the mainstream settings, there were also internal pressures that the participants perceived to *belong* to a group—especially to the Korean group. When asked what triggered him to start socializing with Koreans in high school when his friends had mostly been White peers previously, James pointed to this pressure: “[...] whenever [...] someone sees that you're Korean and you speak Korean, they kind of approach you and just start talking to you in Korean. And then, they'll be like, 'You should come hang out with us,' or something like that.” He furthermore commented:

James: Like the norm, at the end of the day, was people kind of just sticking to each other in their ethnic groups: like Koreans with Koreans, Canadians with Canadians, Persians and Persians, so on and so forth.

Researcher: Right, so, by 'Canadian,' you're referring to...?

James: Like, White people, I should say. Just like people whose parents are also Canadians, too. (James, socialized exclusively with Koreans in high school)

Moreover, another example of the “unspoken pressure” rising from within the Korean group was evident in the responses of Kelly and Jisoo. In high school, they both thought that Koreans who socialize with non-Korean peers are “a bit bizarre” or “uncool.” To avoid being seen interacting with non-Koreans by Korean peers, they actively avoided non-Koreans, unless absolutely necessary (e.g. working on group assignments in classes where there are no Koreans). For instance, Kelly ignored her non-Korean friends from elementary school, as well

as Chinese peers, who were nice to her in class where there were no Koreans. These findings clearly exemplify the perceptions of in- and out-groups that were actively being construed in the minds of the participants during adolescence. The White friend group, among others, with whom many used to identify in primary school, were perceived as an out-group for the majority of the participants at the level of secondary schooling.

Whether in exclusivity or in smaller doses, the participants were able to explore the meaning of their ethnic identity through co-ethnic peer socialization. Firstly, daily experience in the cafeteria was the first-handed experience of exploring the perceived images and status associated with different ethnic groups (e.g. cool/rich White/Jewish kids, cool Koreans vs. uncool non-Koreans etc.). Secondly, listening to Korean music and talking about Korean dramas in the cafeteria, speaking in Korean, dating within the Korean group, and going to Koreatown after school with friends helped at least half the participants explore the Korean culture and identity throughout secondary schooling. On this note, the level of ethnic identity exploration and commitment appeared to be the most prominent during this period in the majority of the cases (Phinney, 1990).

While the Korean friend group offered a sense of comfort for Jisoo and Harin (“[...] my friends were still learning English, too, [...]. Also, in high school, there were international students [from Korea]. They were comfortable with us and we were comfortable with them [...]. So we’d stick together”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*), Kelly and Victoria experienced difficulty trying to remain connected within the group. Kelly, for example, “had to consciously try so hard to be Korean,” which did not come naturally to her. She felt that she did not have many similarities with her friends and pretended as if she understood whenever her friends were discussing their experiences in secondary school in Korea or their recent visits to Korea. She also felt left out, because “all the Koreans were in the ESL classes.” As for Victoria, she felt awkward when she was in the cafeteria alone without her friends, even in the so-called “Korean corner.” She felt scared of the older Korean peers in the cafeteria, due to the perceived social hierarchy which is expected in Korean culture (e.g. bowing down to older people). Despite the feelings of distress, both Kelly and Victoria moreover felt dependent on the Korean group of friends for psychological support. They both felt anxious in classes where there were no Koreans, afraid that they might not be able to make any friends or not be chosen in a group for group work and assignments.

What is interesting to note is that, for the participants who were heavily absorbed in ethnic identity exploration through co-ethnic peer socialization in secondary schooling, the sentiment of ethnic attachment seemed overpowering. They prioritized their ethnic group membership to the extent that there was little room for national attachment to develop. For instance, they rarely used English to communicate in school, and the kinds of activities in which they engaged were strictly grounded to the Korean culture (e.g. listening to K-pop, watching Korean dramas, going out to Koreatown etc.). In such cases, therefore, the interplay between ethnic and national attachment did not appear to be balanced nor adhesive in such cases at the level of secondary schooling.

Across the sample, there were four participants—Ben, Jacob, Lucy, and Nora—who did not have difficulty connecting with friend groups throughout high school. Interestingly, while Ben and Jacob were exclusively engaged in co-racial peer socialization, they did not feel bothered by the ethnic/racial groupings that they witnessed and became part of. Jacob also commented that, although there were indeed friend groups based on ethnicity/race, “there were also groups that had no particular affiliation with one ethnicity whatsoever. just random people from all sides of the world, just in one group [...]. I would say they were numerous.”

Throughout secondary schooling, ethnic/racial groupings became increasingly visible for most participants, which initiated their search for group membership, as well as ethnic identity exploration. Along with the externally imposed ethnic/racial minority positioning in which most participants found themselves, ethnic clique memberships generated internal pressures which further shaped and solidified their peer-socialization patterns. Such pressures seemed to have caused a heightened level of awareness of one’s minority status and distress for many participants. Looking back, some expressed regrets for not having made an effort to step out of the comfort zone; at the same time, they acknowledged that belonging to cliques felt right and natural at the time, because they did not feel that they had anything in common with other groups. Unlike at the level of primary schooling, the arrival age effect (Jia & Aaronson, 2003) did not appear relevant to the participants’ social integration at the level of secondary schooling. The perceived similarities stemming from the shared ethnic/racial background, surrounded by the pressure to fit into the pre-existing social groups, seemed to override the shared dominant language and previous peer socialization patterns and ties throughout adolescence.



**Table 42***Peer socialization in school—post-secondary level*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Continued to mostly/exclusively engage in co-ethnic peer socialization throughout all of post-secondary schooling	<b>4</b>
Socialized with multicultural friend groups, throughout/towards the end of post-secondary schooling	<b>4</b>
Continued to mostly/exclusively engage in co-racial peer socialization throughout the most/all of post-secondary schooling	<b>2</b>
Tried to explore other friend groups	<b>2</b>
Negative sentiment/perceptions	<b>4</b>
- Negative perceptions of Korean peers	3
- Made a conscious effort to try to explore friend groups and struggled	2

Table 42 highlights the socialization patterns of the sample throughout their post-secondary education experiences. Compared to primary and secondary schooling, there were far less sentiments that they associated with their socialization experiences at post-secondary schooling level, in general. As well, no particular positive sentiments were described on this subject. In most cases, making friends occurred circumstantially and naturally. On the one hand, most participants found that co-ethnic/racial peer networks were readily available in the post-secondary education institutions that they attended, in which they found comfort in exploring. On the other hand, some participants effortlessly socialized with mixed ethnic-racial friend groups as they were then separated from the ethnic clique from high school and/or there were no concentrated Korean/Asian networks available. Nevertheless, most of those who exclusively socialized with Korean peers in secondary school, albeit few, continued to do so in university.

The *circumstances*, which naturally shaped the peer-socialization patterns of the participants, were defined by the availability and accessibility of ethnic/racial groups and settings. Some participants who entered university with co-ethnic/racial friends from high school were led to continue exploring similar peer networks. Furthermore, beyond the connections from high school, cultural similarities and shared experiences brought individuals together in a new learning environment and settings, as demonstrated in Ben's narratives. At the Western University in London, Ontario, whose dominant population, according to Ben, is White Canadians, his Chinese friend from high school and he were placed in a dormitory room, located on a floor that was entirely occupied by Asians. This matching was based on the questionnaires that applicants had had to fill out when requesting a room, whose results revealed

the similarities that deemed them a good fit for one another. Ben commented, “So I feel like, in my life, I never intended my friend group to be predominantly Asians. But a lot of times, it just kind of happens.”

There were only three participants—Lucy, William, and Nora—who found themselves in post-secondary educational settings, in which there were no apparent Korean/Asian networks. As for Lucy and Nora, they mostly had been socializing with peers of mixed ethnic/racial backgrounds throughout schooling; so making friends with cross-ethnic peers who shared the was a natural and easy task. At the same time, they remained closer friends with Koreans throughout university. Even for William, who was exclusively friends with Asians in the Gifted program throughout high school, also had no trouble blending in with peers of mixed backgrounds.

There were five participants—Kelly, Jisoo, Harin, Victoria, and James—who placed themselves within the Korean group upon starting university. They did so naturally, based on the socialization tendencies and/or peer networks from high school. Nonetheless, some of negative perceptions of Koreans persisted in their minds. For example, Kelly, Harin, and Victoria felt that Koreans typically spoke little English. Hence, although Victoria continued to exclusively socialize with Koreans in university, she did not wish to work on group assignments with them. Moreover, while continuing to socialize with Koreans in classes, Harin found Koreans too cliquy and clingy:

Korean people just come to you. [...] there was this Korean student association thing at the university, and they kept on inviting me to come to the orientation to have food and hang out, [insisting] that it would be helpful for university, that the seniors can help you out within the Korean community. I went once for the food but didn't feel like it would be much helpful. [...] That's why I'm not really close to my university friends... I don't have many shared memories with them. [...] I don't know why, but I just didn't want to be engaged like that. I had a feeling that only lame people were part of the Korean association. Being a member like that, luring people to come join... I didn't like the idea of it. (*Translated from Korean/Harin, exclusively socialized with Koreans in university*)

Therefore, Harin did not wish to belong to the Korean student association at the university, despite being friends with numerous Korean peers who were actively involved in the association.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> According to Harin, her friends were actively engaged in the Korean Student Association throughout the university years: they published journal articles in the Media & Press Department within the association, custom-made the uniform for the members, went on blind dates with Koreans from other departments and universities,

Furthermore, Kelly's experiences within the Korean student association in university provided a clear example of identity exploration and continuous self-comparison in relation to the perceived in- and out-groups that take place throughout the youth. Like some others, Kelly was admitted to the same university as one of her Korean friends from high school. Throughout the first year, they both felt that making friends in university was difficult, as they could not identify with the mainstream culture which they were being exposed to ("I remember in the first year, my friend and I weren't really interested in going to like, you know, frosh week or like any of the White-like parties. [...] I just couldn't really like identify, I guess, and I had no interest"). Hence, in the second year, they both decided to join the Korean student association, expecting to be able to connect with Koreans easily. Therefore, the ethnic networks and community can provide the ethnic minority youth with occasions to, not only explore ethnic identity, but also develop a sense of belonging, especially at times of need.

However, Kelly's experiences within the Korean student association were not at all positive. She found many of the friends that she made from the association to be "very surface-level friends," who were "fun to go out and drink with," but with whom the connections were not "really built on much." Furthermore, like in high school, she felt that there was a "fundamental difference" between *them*—who were mostly international students—and herself. In particular, when she was dating an international student from Korea that she met through the association, she found herself often called out by his friends and him that she was not like them ("And how the rest of them could stay out late and party late. But then I have parents here, so they worry... And I remember feeling like, that's very different of you to think that way"). Additionally, she was also "hounded" by the Korean Christian club at the university: she felt harassed by one of its members who kept on pressuring her to join the club. Following such encounters with the Korean community within the university, she started making an effort towards the end of university to interact with non-Korean peers in her classes while continuing to socialize with individual Korean students who were in the same classes as her. Only then, she felt that she found a good sense of balance.

Similarly, Jacob was faced with the difficulty when he tried to make friends in university. When he was in high school, he exclusively socialized with non-Korean Asians and had no sense of connection with Koreans. As well, he felt unconcerned by the ethnic/racial

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and went to what Koreans call MT (Membership Training: a Konglish term that refer to retreats, organized within college/university student associations in Korea).

cliquing observed in high school. However, “the gap” became more noticeable upon entering university. Although, like others, he also had few high school friends attending the same university as him, he felt the need to “try to look for new groups, new communities, to hang out with.” Then, he noticed for the first time in his life how difficult it was trying to connect with any other particular groups. After this experience, Jacob stuck to socializing with his high school friends in university. He commented that this realization upset him profoundly for a period of time (“I used to feel a lot of shame”).<sup>82</sup>

During their young adulthood, most participants were comfortably settled in their socialization patterns which they were used to from their previous socialization tendencies. Although it seems evident that availability and accessibility of Korean peer networks can aid the youth attain a sense of belonging and comfort, exclusive co-ethnic peer socialization seems to have reinforced the participants’ negative perceptions of co-ethnic peers and the community. The negative perception of one’s in-group can be detrimental for his or her self-esteem, especially when leaving the group is not an option (Liebkind, 2004). In this regard, in the cases of those who remained heavily dependent on co-ethnic peer socializations throughout schooling, their level of self-confidence seemed to be at risk.

It is worth noting that the salient impact of socialization tendencies throughout adolescence. The preference for co-ethnic peer socialization became evident at the level of secondary schooling, annulling the previous socialization experiences in primary schooling, and moreover lasted into university, in many cases. For instance, the four participants who only had Korean friends in high school continued to stay within the ethnic cliques, and the two participants out of three who mixed with cross-racial peers in university/college nonetheless remained closer friends with Koreans peers. Albeit the minority, the number of the participants who socialized with multicultural friend groups seemed to have doubled from secondary schooling to post-secondary schooling, from two to four. For the few who had to make a conscious effort to try to explore their options in-between friend groups, the failed attempt to adhere to a group caused a sense of distress and affected their self-confidence—to which, in turn, they sought for membership in other accessible groups as a means of coping mechanism. Overall, the socialization patterns throughout the schooling and their self-perception mostly

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<sup>82</sup> The identity crises that Kelly and Jacob experienced will be discussed in depth in Chapter 9.

seemed to evolve based on the availability and accessibility of different groups, as well as the internal and external pressures that are felt within and in-between the groups.

### 7.1.3 Academic Profile

**Table 43**

*Academic profile*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
High achiever	<b>5</b>
Average/good students	<b>3</b>
Uninterested in studies	<b>2</b>
Experienced difficulties in regular English class	<b>5</b>
- Sought for extra help in English in senior grades in high school	3

Table 43 lists the overall academic profile of the sample throughout their schooling experiences. The responses reflected the model minority (Blackburn, 2019), as the majority of the participants were well-behaved, good students in school. In fact, half of them were high achievers: Ben and William were part of the Gifted Program; Lucy and Jisoo always strove to get excellent grades; and Jacob excelled in high school, in response to the parental wish for him to get into a good university. In contrast, three participants—Victoria, James, and Nora—described themselves in school as “an average student”; nevertheless, tried their best to keep up, by always paying attention in class and doing homework, for example.

Across the sample, only two participants were completely uninterested in studies throughout schooling. On the one hand, Kelly’s lack of interest in studies continued throughout schooling both in Korea and Canada: she loved going to school to see friends but hated classes in general, except for art and language classes. She commented that she was “like a wallflower in class,” never raising her hand in class nor wanting to talk to teachers. On the other hand, Harin was unable to develop any interest in studies throughout schooling due to language barriers (“I guess I’m better now [in English]. Back then, I didn’t speak English so had no interest in studying. A class can be interesting only if you understand it. The language barrier naturally made me a troublemaker”). She was the only one out of the sample who had behavioural issues and was often given detentions in high school. Regardless of varied levels of academic motivation and interests of the participants, all participants completed post-secondary education.

Although most of the participants did well in school, the findings showed that many struggled with academic English/English literacy, which mirrored previous research findings (Benyamin, 2018; Lacina & Griffith, 2017; Roberge, 2002; Thonus, 2019). Half of the sample felt that their English proficiency was limited, especially in written communication, regardless of the perceived overall fluency in English. Ben and William, despite their Gifted status in school, never felt that they were good at languages and always struggled with writing in English. Similarly, Jacob, James, and Nora found academic English writing difficult and asked their parents for extra help in high school, who provided them with tutoring classes. Furthermore, close to half of the participants pointed out that their level of English was affected by their exclusive socialization with co-ethnic peers. Having many friends whose English was limited, they always communicated in Korean in school, which they felt limited their proficiency level—and moreover, according to few, even deteriorated the level of their English from prior schooling experiences.

In spite of the challenges with which the participants were faced concerning their English proficiency, most did well in schools in Canada, and the few who were not interested in studies did not appear to have experienced distress related to academic performance. In this regard, the goal of the parents to provide children with a learning environment that is unlike the competitive and stressful Korean education system seems to be a success. Indeed, receiving education in Canada was beneficial for many participants, as it significantly alleviated the academic stress and pressure and provided a learning environment which proved to be more adequate. For participants like Kelly and William, who significantly struggled with the Korean education system, the Canadian school system appeared to be especially beneficial.

The findings showed that schooling experiences are crucial in shaping acculturation and integration of the immigrant youth, as they offer continuous opportunities to acquire the mainstream language and explore social groups within the mainstream/ethnic cultural settings. Since the first day of being placed in a school in Canada, the participants were continuously exposed to the mainstream societal settings through school. The resulting peer interactions and socializations represent a significant influence on the acculturation and integration of immigrants by shaping their ethnic and national attachment: co-ethnic peer socialization can extend on the cultural socialization outside of home and add to their ethnic attachment; and cross-ethnic socialization can facilitate their integration, contributing to their national attachment.

In cases of individuals belonging to visible minority groups, their socialization patterns throughout schooling are an important factor to examine, as their perceived ability to access dominant groups can shape their intergroup attitudes, social competences, and the resulting self-confidence, which can be seen as a valuable social capital (Chen & Graham, 2015; Fang, 2021; Tran & Lee, 2011). In this respect, the co-ethnic/racial peer socialization patterns in which most participants were continuously engaged throughout schooling are likely to have negatively affected their ability to navigate in-between different communities in many cases, especially in cases in which exclusive co-ethnic peer socialization patterns were continuously demonstrated throughout schooling.

Educational institutions play an important role in shaping Canadian citizens who have the access and the capacity to fully participate in the Canadian multicultural society (Ghosh, 2004, p. 563). At the federal level, the Multiculturalism Policy exists to create an equal society for all; however, the implementation of this policy by educational institutions at the provincial level in English-speaking Canada has been criticized as “far from satisfactory” in the literature, as it demonstrates a significant variation across the provinces (p. 543). The findings clearly revealed the preference of the most participants for co-ethnic/racial peer socialization within the domain of school, which suggests that the schools in Toronto may not be so successful in promoting inclusion among their student population. This is critical, since, throughout schooling, the adolescents belonging to ethnic minority groups may be faced with a limited access to occasions that can help forming social ties outside of co-ethnic/racial boundaries.

On the one hand, the ESL program, whose aim is to facilitate a language learner’s linguistic, cultural, and social integration within the multicultural Canadian settings (The Ontario Curriculum, 2007), is likely to initiate cliques through its pull-out method. As well, the findings showed that a successful transmission of the Canadian culture through the ESL program seems arguable, in consideration of the perceived cultural barrier which the participants were faced with at the level of secondary schooling. On the other hand, the ultimate goal of *inclusiveness* and the extent to which the Canadian education system seeks to promote this ideal among its body of students can also be questioned. The findings in relation to the participants’ perceived experiences of peer interactions across different groups, in most cases, appeared to be short of the inclusiveness it seeks to promote (Ministry of Education, 2009). In fact, it could be argued that the narratives conveyed *tolerance*, at most, of the overall students toward ethnic/racial differences that were mostly visible in the form of cliques. The increased

level of tensions and pressures that seem to exist may be overlooked in educational institutions. Although most participants performed well academically, the social cliques based on ethnicity and race that are formed and typically maintained throughout schooling suggest that the eventual level of sociocultural integration within the Canadian mainstream society may be at stake in the case of Korean 1.5 generation.

## **7.2 Family**

### **7.2.1 Impact of Immigration on Family**

The family is the driving force in the 1.5-generation immigrants' retention of their heritage culture (Danico, 2004; S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2007; Sok, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). As the questionnaire survey findings showed, Korean parents provide occasions to engage the children in ethnic practices at home: they tend to use the ethnic language to communicate with their children and moreover expose the children to elements related to the Korean culture within the domain of home. To profoundly examine family dynamics and relationships that are likely to shape the parental influence on children, it seemed necessary to question the links that the participants were able to build between immigration to Canada and its impact on the family. As the age of children of immigrants is positively correlated with the level of their understanding of the first-generation parents' immigrant narratives (G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014, p. 57), it was presumed that the sample in this study, which consisted of participants in their adulthood, had been able to establish an understanding of their parents' lives as immigrants in Canada.

Table 44 shows the perceived impact of immigration on the life of the participants' family. While slightly more than half of the participants believed that their family's economic status was unaffected by the move to Canada, most participants had at least one parent whose access to the Canadian labour market was limited. Faced with status inconsistency, some parents seemed to have chosen self-employment as the means of generating income (Min, 1984). As much as some believed that immigration brought some positive changes to the lives of their family, some also recalled the challenges and struggles that their families had had to encounter, which affected family cohesion.



**Table 44***Impact of immigration on family*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Impact on economic activities/status of the parents	<b>10</b>
- At least one parent's economic status went through a downgrade upon immigrating	7
- Mother stopped working and became a housewife upon immigrating	5
- Both parents were negatively affected	4
- Mother became the breadwinner	2
- At least one parent's economic activity/status was unaffected upon immigrating	<b>6</b>
- Both parents were unaffected	2
- Parents are self-employed in Canada	3
Positive impact on family	<b>5</b>
- Improved lifestyle (e.g. more relaxed, more family time etc.)	5
Negative impact on family	<b>6</b>
- Acculturative distress affecting parents/family cohesion	6

To begin with, the participants were asked to describe their parents' occupation in Korea and in Canada. The findings showed that both parents of the participants were often subject to status inconsistency: five mothers stopped working and became a housewife, two mothers became breadwinners of the family by running businesses in service sector, and four fathers went through a downward economic mobility upon immigrating. Indeed, the working-class economic profile has been identified as one of the most common traits of Korean immigrants in the host country (Coe et al, 2020; Min, 2013; J. Park, 2012). Typically, at least one parent of the participants was currently working or had previously worked in manual labour (e.g. postman, hairdresser, car mechanic etc.) or was running or used to run a business based on manual labour (e.g. a Korean hair salon, home renovation business, dry cleaners, etc.).

There were only two participants who indicated that the economic status of both their parents remained unaffected by immigration. Yet, a number of fathers of the participants were able to find a job that allowed them as a family to retain the economic middle-class status in Canada: the fathers of Ben, Kelly, and Victoria, continued working in the field of IT in Canada; William's father, who used to have "the top job" working in the finance industry in Korea, studied software programming in Canada and found a job as a software engineer; and Lucy's father learned the skills to be a mechanic to secure a job in Canada, through which their "lower-

middle class” family status remained unchanged. On the other hand, James’ situation was particular when compared to the rest of the sample, as his father stayed in Korea to financially support the family in Canada, which therefore enabled him to maintain his economic status.

Overall, the participants had divided sentiments regarding the perceived experiences of their family’s move to Canada. Half of the sample described the positive impact of immigration on their family, mostly linked to the lifestyle from which they were able to benefit. Throughout the narratives of describing the better lifestyle that their families were able to attain in Canada, the consistent theme that emerged was family time, which they got to enjoy more in Canada. The following are the excerpts from the narratives of Kelly and William:

I think the biggest way that immigration has changed our family dynamic is, I think, we got the chance to spend time together as a family a lot more and just like kind of grow closer together. Because I remember in Korea—because my mom would make us pray before every single meal, because, her good, Christian family... I literally used to pray like, not for the meal, but ‘오늘 아빠가 빨리 오시게 해주세요 [please let dad come home early today].’ So my prayer was literally, I wish my dad would come home while I’m still awake, because I never used to see my dad. Like weekends, yeah sure, but like, you know, he was so tired half the time. It’s funny how it revolves around my dad quite a bit, but I think immigrating to Canada made him chill out a lot more and just kind of like be more of a harmonious family. (Kelly)

I do remember my father spending more time with his family after we moved, well, because of the work ethic in Korea. I pretty much only saw him after... Pretty much just before my bedtime. But he’s a very family-oriented person. So I do remember even sometimes that he would still have the energy when he came back from work, and we would go out to Lotte World<sup>83</sup> or something like that, when it was closing, just so we can have some family time. But we had very little time. But after we moved here, and I guess the work ethics and work hours improved, we got to spend more time as a family, which is great. (William)

On the other hand, the negatively perceived impact of immigration on family was associated with acculturative stress that affected their parents and overall family dynamics. Many among those whose parents experienced difficulty penetrating the Canadian labour market and/or encountered the shift from blue- to white-collar were also concerned that the language barrier further negatively affected their parents’ psychological well-being. The following excerpts provide examples of such struggles:

My mom used to be a teacher in Korea. In Canada, I don’t know exactly what her situation has been, ‘cause... most of the time, she’s stayed home. I think, at one point, she used to teach Korean at the Korean school, but that was only

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<sup>83</sup> Lotte World is a recreation complex in Seoul, Korea.

seasonal kinda thing, I think. But I definitely think she felt she had very limited options because of the language barrier. (Jacob)

She couldn't continue with her profession from Korea. She tried to work for a Korean bank here, you know, because there are some banks here, like 하나은행, 신한은행 [Hana Bank, Shin Han Bank]... So I think she tried to apply for a position, but, because of her... I think the pay wasn't that great—it's like an hourly pay. I remember her telling me that briefly, like a long time ago, because I asked her this. [...] But you can earn more running a business, so I think that's why she ended up going into dry cleaning. And dry cleaning is really common, I guess, like, a lot of Korean immigrant parents, they either have a 세탁소 [dry cleaner's] or like a convenience store. [...] And there was also the language barrier: even to this day, she's not like fluent in English. So I think the language barrier also made her choose to go into dry cleaning, which, you know, she runs it by herself, so, even if she's not fluent, it doesn't really affect the business. (Nora)

My dad struggled a lot, too. In Korea, at the time, my grandpa on my dad's side, mom's side, too, was the Chairman of an advertising company and had a lot of money. My dad was the CEO. He tried other businesses, too, and his title was always a CEO. Now... my poor dad. He tried to work in anything and everything here because he doesn't speak English. [...] Our status within the society used to be, back in Korea, it was pretty good for mom and dad. But then, now, in Canada, it's not even like my dad works for some kind of a reputable company. So mom and dad were extremely stressed. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Faced with the language barrier, the first-generation parents of the participants seem to have adopted numerous strategies to try to integrate into the Canadian labour market while continuing their career path: some obtained skills needed for manual labour prior to immigrating to start the economic activity upon arriving in Canada (e.g. car mechanics and hair styling); some enrolled in a Canadian college to obtain Canadian educational experiences and diplomas/certifications; and some turned toward jobs that involve Korean clientele. Upon failed attempts at securing a job in the desired field, self-employment, manual labour, or staying at home as a housewife were adopted as a resolution. The distress which their parents had to endure was evidently observed and ingrained in the minds of many participants.

Furthermore, some participants expressed that lacking in family connections that can provide support for the acculturative period can contribute to the distress. Linked to the language barrier, Jacob, Jisoo, Harin, and James thought that their parents/family were vulnerable to feeling lonely in Canada. As for James, he shared his experience of living a kiroki-gajok life: having left his father behind in Korea to leave for Canada with his mother and younger brother, he described the separation as “a whole new experience,” through which his brother and he managed to “just kind of cope” with “being sad” for missing family time. As for

Jacob, Jisoo, and Harin, they were especially concerned that their parents may be lonely in their lives in Canada. Lacking in connections and help needed for a smooth transition into the new country and social interactions in everyday life were the reason for concern.

I guess, if anything, sometimes, I'm a bit concerned because they've [the parents] been here all these years, and they don't really like—I mean, this is the feeling that I get—hanging out with Korean people, and they don't bother trying to pick up the English language at all. I mean, I don't know—are they lonely? Maybe they are. They probably are. That sort of thing. (Jacob)

Before coming to Canada, we were really close to my aunts and my father's side of the family and all, and here, well... [...] People who have relatives here, they can get together and stuff. It feels very lonely without the extended family around. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

Seriously, having relatives here makes all the difference. When we first arrived, we really didn't know anyone. All we had was each other. Plus, my family doesn't have a religion. If you go to a [Korean] church, the church people help you out, you go to a Catholic church, the Catholic church people help you out. Not even things like that for us. Honestly, that's why I'm worried for my parents. We're technically all they've got. [...] My parents must've been lonely, always. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Faced with the acculturative stress and obstacles, family cohesion was at stake for some participants. According to Harin, immigration to Canada made her family “so distant, yet so close” (*translated from Korean*). To explain, she recalled all the disputes that she had with her parents, following the struggles she encountered in school upon arriving, as well as the disputes between her parents which were taking place “every day”—when all they had was each other in the new country. Similarly, Lucy shared her memories of the tension and stress between her parents which were felt at home: “I think there was definitely stress between the two of them, because it was more like my mom who wanted to come, and they both had to leave their family [behind in Korea], my dad didn't know English...” The parents of Lucy and Nora separated following the struggles that they experienced throughout their acculturation.

Moreover, Harin and Lucy saw that their parents/family were exposed to distress stemming from living day to day. Harin explained that, when they were adjusting to life in Canada, no one in her family had mental capacity to be able to care for each other (“I didn't care about how my brother was doing in school, because my life felt like hell. So I'm sure everyone was very stressed. Because I found it hard to survive, even my family felt distant a bit”—*Translated from Korean*). Looking back, both Harin and Lucy were able to empathize with their parents in the situation during the acculturative period, as, in Lucy's words, they “didn't have the resources that they have now” to “take care of themselves” and “to become the best parents.”

Indeed, faced with pre-migration, migration, and post-migration stressors (e.g. the loss of social and economic status, changes in occupation, and language barrier), the first-generation immigrants are vulnerable to high levels of acculturative stress (S. Jung, 2013; Noh & Moon, 2012). The findings demonstrated that, the more evident changes the first-generation parents are faced with throughout their acculturation, the higher level of stress they are prone to enduring. Additionally, there seemed to be a link between negative perceptions of the impact of immigration on family and economic status of parents: the parents of all the participants except James who spoke about the distress that their parents experienced upon immigrating had blue-collar jobs. Throughout the narratives, it became evident that most of the participants were sensible to potential stressors related to immigration and their impact on their parents throughout their lives in Canada.

### 7.2.2 Language/Cultural Brokering

**Table 45**

*Language proficiency of the parents*

	Proficient	Limited	Very weak English proficiency
Father	5	1	3
Mother	4	3	3

In contrast to their children who are exposed to the mainstream culture through schooling, first-generation parents have relatively limited exposure to the mainstream language and culture. The resulting language barrier that first-generation parents tend to experience was evident in the findings, consistent with previous literature (Buki et al., 2003; Vaydich & Keown, 2018). On this subject, Table 45 shows the language proficiency of the parents, categorized as “Proficient,” “Limited,” and “Very weak English proficiency,” based on the participants’ descriptions. Out of the 19 parents,<sup>84</sup> nine spoke proficient level of English, four limited, and six spoke very little English, if any. Typically, fathers spoke better English than mothers. Furthermore, all the five fathers who spoke proficient level of English were the ones who were able to secure a job in the desired career field (except for James’ father, who continued working in Korea). In contrast, the parents who worked in/ran businesses targeting the Korean clientele

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<sup>84</sup> Nora’s father, who left the family following the divorce, was not included in the count.

(i.e. the mother of Harin and fathers of Lucy and Jisoo) all spoke little to no English. None of the participants believed that their parents had obtained a native-like fluency in the language.

**Table 46**

*Language/Cultural brokering—perceived experiences*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Experiences of language brokering	<b>10</b>
- Has helped the parents with English	10
- Language brokering asked of the daughter rather than the son	3
Type of language/cultural brokering	<b>10</b>
- Help with everyday affairs	5
- Occasional/exceptional occasions	3
- Teaching the English language and culture	2
Perception of the responsibilities related to language/cultural brokering	<b>10</b>
- Neutral/empathic sentiment	8
- Negative sentiment	5
- Positive sentiment	2

Language/cultural brokering transmits the Korean values of hard work and obligation to family from immigrant parents to children, and it can instil a sense of responsibility in their minds to look after their first-generation parents (Danico, 2004; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). The findings affirmed these notions of language/cultural brokering and further provided an insight into how it affects the parent-child interactions and relationships. Table 46 lists some of the language/cultural brokering patterns that were identified in family socializations of the sample. Parallel to the limited proficiency of their parents in the English language, the patterns indicate that the language/cultural brokering was not a foreign subject for the participants, and that there were various feelings that they associated with this type of parent-child interactions.

All ten participants had previously helped the parents with English with tasks, such as everyday affairs (e.g. writing emails, answering/making phone calls, posting on social media in English, and translating), occasional, specific tasks (e.g. accompanying grandmother to a medical appointment), and teaching the English language and mainstream culture to the parents (e.g. teaching commonly used phrases, slangs, and a sense of humour in English etc.). Among the four who helped their parents daily, three participants—Jisoo, Victoria, and Nora—indicated that their parents always asked them for help instead of their male sibling. Yet, they all associated this tendency with the personality difference between them and the siblings, as well as the closer mother-daughter relationship that they had, rather than with gender roles.

The sentiments that the participants associated with various tasks related to language/cultural brokering were often mixed, and, in some cases, evolved throughout their transition from the youth to adulthood. Language brokering tasks typically felt burdensome for numerous participants, especially during youth, due to their limited proficiency in Korean and/or the frequency of the help that was asked for. The participants whose parents' English proficiency was described as "limited" were more vulnerable to experiencing negative sentiments.

Ben, Jisoo, Harin, and Victoria referred to their experiences of being asked to manage "adult things" while growing up, such as calling the bank to inquire about a mortgage by pretending to be the mother, accompanying the parent to the bank, and proofreading the father's resume.

I guess there probably were like some minor, small annoyances. Like, sometimes, my mom or dad didn't feel as comfortable dealing with some English speaking, and they asked me to do it—um, which, you know, it's fine. Sometimes, like, they might have misheard or misunderstood some things. But in the end, it's understandable. [...] But I guess sometimes they ask me, for example, my grandmother, she had like a doctor's appointment, and I go in, as well, to act as a translator—to the best of my not-so-great abilities. [...] I'm good with just everyday conversations in Korean, but then, when you add a few medical terms in there, I have no idea what it is. (Ben)

When I was young... even now, there are always things that my parents ask me to do for them. [...] They arrived in Canada at an old age for us, so I used to think obviously I had to help. But nowadays, I keep thinking that they arrived not much older than my current age. And, to me now, that does not feel so old anymore. [...] I wish they could've learnt English more... I've got my work to take care of and there are times I'm just tired and feel annoyed... Why didn't they learn English? Maybe that [the age] was just an excuse? I think this from time to time and feel annoyed. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*) In a way, my parents not speaking English is my responsibility. They didn't have time to learn English, because they were too busy making money to raise us. [...] It can be pressuring sometimes, because, when I don't speak English well, myself, yet, they ask me to take care of everything. Although I understand now... (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

It was frustrating. [...] because I don't have the vocab in Korean. Some things I wanted to say, I couldn't really get across and communicate that perfectly to my mom. So I would get frustrated, like, ugh, why can't my mom be more proficient? And I'd feel like a bad child. (Nora)

As illustrated in the narratives above, a feeling of empathy typically accompanied negative sentiments (i.e. pressure, annoyance, frustration, and/or the guilt) associated with language/cultural brokering throughout the time.

A feeling of empathy was positively correlated to the participants' understanding of the parental sacrifice and the acculturative stress that the parents encounter: some appeared to have felt empathy toward their parents' situation since childhood, whereas some seemed to have attained an increasing level of understanding and the resulting empathy as they matured. Throughout the time, some participants became increasingly concerned and protective of their parents (“Cause she speaks no English, she needs me”—*Translated from the mix of Korean and English/Victoria*). Harin, especially, expressed that she felt “very protective” (*Translated from Korean*) of her parents, due to the continuous experiences of “babysitting” them. She explained in the following words:

I have conflicting thoughts. On the one hand, I want to move out and separate from my parents. I also have my work, but I'm always babysitting my parents to take care of their things. At the same time, I think to myself that it's obviously my responsibility. It feels as if they're not my parents but my children, in a way? [...] Because my friends are international students, so they've lived on their own. [...] I've always lived with my parents. I also want to move out and things, but I feel too anxious that something might happen, or they might call me. Even if I were to move out, I'd only feel at ease if I were to live right next door to them or something. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Harin's narrative clearly illustrates the perceived dependency of her parents on her, as well as a feeling of responsibility that she feels for taking care of her parents. This finding suggests that the settlement patterns which were previously discussed may not simply be an indicator of the children's autonomy, but rather, they may also be affected by the perceived parental need for language/cultural brokering and/or the perceived lack of autonomy of the parents in the children's eyes.

Furthermore, the parents' English proficiency was positively correlated with the children's empathic perception of the language/cultural brokering. For instance, the participants whose parents' English proficiency was described as “limited” were more prone to being affected by negative sentiments through family dynamics, as the parents were more likely to be dependent on language/cultural brokering. In contrast, those whose parents were proficient in English tended to be less dependent on language/cultural brokering, which seemed to have shaped the children's positive sentiments—such as appreciation, admiration, and/or pride for their parents' adaptation into life in Canada. For example, Kelly was appreciative of the fact that her father was “pretty comfortable” in English, thanks to his previous experience of studying in the United States, his hobby of writing journals in English, and his active interactions with English-speaking colleagues at work. Similarly, William, who occasionally



helped his parents with English by teaching them humour (“I’ve had to teach them sarcasm—sarcasm is not a thing in Korean. So watching *Friends*, for example, they had to learn sarcasm or slangs, and things like that. So I’ve had to teach them that”), felt proud of his parents who spoke English proficiently: he commented, “To be honest, I should be more proud [...]. [...] Looking back at it now, now that I’m older, I think it was very brave thing they did. I’m really impressed”).

What can be noted from the findings in this topic section is the role reversal in family dynamics between the first-generation immigrant parents and their 1.5-generation children, facilitated by language/cultural brokering. On the one hand, depending on the closeness of the parent-child relations and the parents’ level of English proficiency, most parents appeared to be dependent on their children, to varying degrees, to manage a variety of tasks and/or to learn and understand the mainstream culture. On the other hand, as language/cultural brokers, the participants were expected to carry out the tasks of bridging the two cultures for the parents, which they associated with varying sentiments toward their parents and stress throughout the time. The resulting interactions, as well as the help that is transmitted, appeared to have enabled most participants to attain a better understanding of their parents’ struggles as the first-generation immigrants and feel empathy. Therefore, the findings suggest that language/ cultural brokering is likely to enhance parent-child understanding and relationships and add to ethnic attachment of the 1.5-generation children.

The task of mediating in-between the two cultures, between the Korean-speaking parents and English-speaking members of the society, can be challenging for the children. Indeed, previous research has concluded that language brokering can result in higher levels of anxiety and depression among the adolescent children (Chao, 2006). However, successful language/cultural brokering can have positive outcomes on self-perception of individuals by enhancing their self-confidence, academic performance, interpersonal skills, and language abilities (Buriel et al., 1998; Chao, 2006; McQuillan, & Tse, 1995; Tse, 1996; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). In this regard, despite the psychological distress that it can place on the children, language/cultural brokering can be seen as a potentially beneficial practice that can, not only promote the bicultural identity of the brokers, but also help shaping a positive sense of self and improving their sociocultural abilities.

### 7.2.3 Korean Upbringing

**Table 47**

*Perceived parenting styles and upbringing*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Felt parental pressure/expectation in his or her upbringing, directly imposed or implied	<b>10</b>
Had a minimal level of parental intervention in his or her upbringing, for the most part	<b>7</b>
- Supportive parents	4
- Limited parental guidance	3
Open-minded/progressive parents, for the most part	<b>6</b>
Parents were dependent on language/cultural brokering on a regular basis	<b>5</b>
Strict upbringing in some aspects of parenting	<b>2</b>

Table 47 highlights some of the patterns that came to the surface when the participants spoke about the parental intervention in their upbringing. Most parents imposed a minimal level of parental intervention in the upbringing of the children, and most were described as atypical of the “tiger mom” stereotype (Blackburn, 2019)—which contrasted with a few parents who imposed a strict upbringing. However, regardless of the perceived level of parental intervention, all participants felt varying degrees of parental expectations and pressure. Some parents’ dependence on the children’s language brokering can be seen as one of the examples of parental expectations and resulting pressure. Moreover, all the participants found at least some aspects of their upbringing to be positive, which enhanced their appreciation for their parents. At the same time, many participants also described some negative experiences and sentiments that they were faced with throughout their upbringing, which affected the parent-child relations and overall family dynamics, as well as their identity journeys.

The length of residence in the host country, language proficiency, and day-to-day responsibilities of the parents shape their involvement in children’s education (Cooper & Christie, 2005; Turney & Kao, 2009). Due to such factors, visible minority parents tend to demonstrate a lower level of school involvement when compared with their White and non-Hispanic middle-class counterparts (Christianakis, 2011). The findings affirmed the minimum level of parental intervention in the case of Korean parents. On the one hand, some participants expressed that their parents were “supportive” of them and described the stance that their parents took as “advisors”—giving strong encouragement or gentle reminders—in letting the children explore and form their own paths. On the other hand, minimal levels of parental

intervention was an imposed reality: intervening to actively guide and support their children can be a difficult task, given that some parents were caught up in “living day to day” (“Mom was working, and dad was working somewhere, too”—Harin; “First, we were just, you know, living day to day, putting out fires... and they were busy”—Lucy) and/or the parents were unable to provide help due to the language/cultural barrier (“Maybe that was difficult for them, ‘cause they don’t really know”—*Translated from a mix of English and Korean*, Victoria).

Indeed, the ways in which most of the parents tried to help their children become bilingual could be described as passive. While the majority kept the daily communication at home in Korean and brought their children to the Korean church, only few seemed to have made an effort to provide the children with occasions to maintain/improve Korean literacy, for instance. The exception included three cases—Jacob, James, and Nora—whose parents enrolled them in Korean language classes offered by a Korean church. James and Nora believed that the classes helped them maintain their Korean proficiency. As well, most parents did not appear to have provided direct help for the children to learn and/or perfect their English. Nora and Lucy perceived the interactions with their older brothers to be relatively more helpful in their English acquisition than those with their parents.

One thing was, my brother and I would kind of sometimes challenge each other—like, it’s more like a teasing. He would say something to me in English and say, ‘너 이거 모르지? 난 이거 배웠다 [You don’t know this, do you? I’ve learnt this].’ Like, he would learn something new at school, and he would come and say it, and I would want to know what it means, you know. (Lucy)  
Otherwise, I don’t know how I would have. I only speak Korean at home. Maybe a bit, like, I speak both with my brother. (Nora)

In contrast, the parents of Ben, James, Kelly, and William, whose parents offered them help: Ben’s parents enrolled him in an academy whose focus was placed on English acquisition when he was a child; James’ parents suggested English tutoring class for him to further “take it to the next level”; Kelly’s mother registered her in English classes prior to immigration, and helped her read and study vocabulary in English during her childhood; and William’s parents tried to live a “Canadian lifestyle” by keeping communication at home in English, watching national TV, living in a “non-Korean” neighbourhood. Nonetheless, some parents made sure to provide help when the children asked for it—for example, by signing the children up in English tutoring classes when they communicated that they needed help with academic writing. Besides these cases, most participants expressed that their parents did not provide much help with their acquisition of English.

Although many parents kept parental intervention to a minimum level, some decided to intervene to help the children choose a career path which they deemed “safe.” In the context of immigrant families, the parental wish for their children to attain social mobility and stability stem from the structural barriers which they face in the host society as first-generation immigrants (Juang & Umaña-Taylor, 2012). Jacob, who felt undecided about the career path to take upon graduating from university, recalled that his parents continued to make suggestions as to what they thought would be good options—for instance, going into the profession of teaching, which would provide him with a stable job. Although he decided to go back into college for a year and to get into the copywriting industry, which is “very highly competitive,” his parents supported him, while feeling uncertain about his decision. Likewise, William’s parents intervened to try to guide him towards what they deemed was the right path: when William was contemplating in high school between becoming an artist or an industrial designer, his parents “very gently pushed” him to explore the career paths that would be more financially profitable and stable (“Well, artists, it’s like... Well, they don’t think that’s a career”). Unlike Jacob’s case, William’s parents succeeded in convincing him to choose architecture as the career path. As for Lucy, whose mother tried to dissuade her from pursuing fashion studies, she explained: “She wanted me to have more of a comfortable life, because she didn’t have that.”

Moreover, contrasting with the popular Asian tiger mom stereotype, seven participants described their parents to be “open-minded” and “progressive,” especially drawing comparisons to the stereotype of traditional Korean parents that they know.

My parents weren’t like the typical Asian stereotype, tiger mom, and things like that. [...] My parents were so open to the point that... usually it’s the boys who are more of troublemakers and girls kinda stay at home, calm, but it was the opposite for us. [...] I’d hang out at Finch with friends until 2am and ask my dad to come pick me up. And I was also able to have boyfriends come and have a sleepover. [...] Seriously, every day [...] even after going to a club, I’d call my dad to come pick me up, and he’d get out of bed and come pick me up. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Honestly, I think they adapted to the Canadian culture, in some parts, as well. You know how the old, traditional Korean mindset is, they have that whole... How do I say this... Like, you must kind of marry into the Korean family... There’s all these factors, right? [...] That kind of went away as we came here, and they became more open about it. So my parents were pretty chilled for Korean parents. So that’s great. (James)

For many, the open-mindedness of their parents was closely linked with parental support that they received for the life decisions that they made.

Growing up, like, to my Korean friends, especially, I would say my mom is like a 백인엄마 [White mom]. [...] so my friends would joke about it, because

my mom's really like chilled—she was not that stereotypical, like, Asian mom. She let me do what I wanted to do, never like 'oh you have to be a lawyer,' 'you have to be a doctor' [...]. She was always like, 'do whatever makes you happy.' She supported me. (Nora)

For the most part, my parents have been very... Like patient and globally supportive. I would say they've allowed me to do whatever I wanted, with my education or the career that I'm pursuing... whereas, with what I've heard about other Korean families, if they heard that their son was in a predicament, which I was in back then—you know, not being able to find a career path or not achieving the grades that I should be—I think their reaction would have been a lot different than my parents. (Jacob)

In spite of the minimal level of parental intervention and the open-mindedness of the parents that most participants described, all participants felt varying degrees of the pressure linked to the parental and expectation in their upbringing (e.g. related to language/cultural brokering, staying out of trouble, maintaining the Korean proficiency, doing well in studies, being obedient, or choosing good career paths). Indeed, visible minority students, as language/cultural brokers, are faced with the responsibilities related to what is typically perceived as parental duties (e.g. making their own educational decisions), which significantly affects their educational experiences and outcomes (Tse, 1996). Simultaneously, there is often a strong parental wish for children to be able to achieve social mobility through educational attainment in immigrant families (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Therefore, the pressure, which is associated with such duties and expectations, as well as the consequences in cases of negative outcomes, can represent a source of distress for children.

Firstly, Kelly and Victoria were the only participants who described their parents as strict in some aspects of their upbringing. Their narratives are especially rich in examples of parental expectations and pressure. According to Kelly, her mother wanted her to maintain the Korean identity, without falling “prey to all of the negative aspects of Korean [culture] that she wanted to get away from.” Hence, Kelly had a strict upbringing throughout high school and university; for example, her mother used to confiscate her wallet to prevent her from going to karaoke with her friends and gave her a curfew, until she graduated university and started working. As for Victoria, she described both of her parents' upbringing as strict in some respects, as she recalled being often scolded and given corporal punishment. The way she perceived her upbringing was paradoxical: on the one hand, she found her parents' parenting style “controlling”; yet, on the other hand, she perceived an overall low level of parental intervention in her education.

In most cases, the pressure that the participants felt was implied; however, it seemed to have had a notable impact on the participants. For example, Victoria, faced with the minimal amount of guidance that her parents provided, was nonetheless expected to “get by” without becoming “a troublemaker.” She believed that, as a result of such an upbringing, she became a perfectionist (“That’s why I’m really a perfectionist. Not that I’m perfect, but I don’t wanna make mistakes. I think this is because of that”—*Translated from a mix of English and Korean*). Similarly, Ben, who was labelled as Gifted in school and was referred to as the “studious type” in the family, felt the parental expectations were indirectly placed on him—reflected from the parental wish, projected within the family dynamics, and consequently self-imposed. As well, Jacob’s parents, with whom “there was never an ultimatum,” never directly placed any pressure on him but gave him “gentle reminders” to get into a good university, which he complied with. These findings suggest that there exists a strong sense of connection between the participants and their parents, which facilitate the participants’ acceptance of the perceived parental expectations and pressure. Whether directly expressed or implied, the parental pressure seemed to lead the participants to strive to meet the parental expectations, in most cases.

The parenting styles to which the participants were exposed throughout their upbringing were associated with both positive and negative sentiments. On the one hand, all participants retained positive aspects of their upbringing, which enhanced a sense of appreciation for their parents in their minds. Most participants were grateful that their parents instilled the values that they deemed positive, related to the Korean culture, religion (i.e. Christianity), and/or the character of the parents. In parallel, many were grateful that their parents did not impose traditional Korean values on them. Some of such values were related to extreme levels of pressure for academic performance and overall educational attainment of children, as well as various Korean traditions, parental preferences for dating and marriage, gender bias, and parental authority that are imposed.

Nevertheless, the findings showed that there were some intergenerational conflicts centered around cultural values, which proved parallel to previous literature (Farver et al., 2002; Lay & Nguyen, 1998). In most cases, family cohesion did not seem affected. For example, as for William and Harin, cultural conflicts arose from “small things” throughout everyday interactions with the parents, which, as William explained, were due to the differences in the value system between the “conservative” Korean community and himself. He added, “Every time we had a conflict about certain things, they would always tell me, ‘Yes, I understand you

have a problem with our stance, but then, you should understand that we're actually a lot more open than most Korean families.” Harin, who described her parents as “very open-minded,” regularly “lectures” her mother to point out how traditional her mother’s mind can be (“I always lecture my mom. How can she possibly live in Canada with such a Korean mindset?”—

*Translated from Korean*). She further explained:

When my brother goes out, she always asks me, ‘Where are they headed to? Aren’t they bad kids? Are they nice kids? They don’t do drugs or anything, right?’ things like that. There are a lot of things that are more accessible here than in Korea, you know, even if they may not be legal. Like marijuana and guns, things like that. So she gets worried over things like that. And about work, too. But then, I think it’s more to do with generational differences than cultural, because, as for our parents’ generation, they have to get on the boss’ good side and things like that. There are lots of things like that related to work. When I talk badly about Air Canada, tell her what I told my manager at work and things, she always gets worried, like, ‘you sure you can do that?’  
(*Translated from Korean /Harin*)

For some participants like Kelly and Lucy, the cultural conflicts that remained ingrained in their minds were mostly limited to their adolescence: Kelly used to get into conflicts with her mother during high school and university due to her mother’s “tiger mom” parenting style at the time, trying to impose a certain level of control over Kelly’s peer interactions; and Lucy also experienced conflicts with her mother during high school, who tried to persuade her to choose a career path which she deemed “safe.”

Besides the parent-child conflicts, some other negative sentiments were expressed. Lucy, Harin, and Victoria wished that their parents had provided them with more support, including guidance (“[...] I wish my mom did this, or my dad did this—like better way”—Lucy), attention and care (“My parents never really cared about me. [...] I had to cope alone”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*). Victoria commented, “I wish that they could have given me more guidance or helped me find what I wanted to do in life more actively” (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean*). Most participants also found language brokering burdensome and/or stressful. Therefore, a high level of dependence on the children to language broker, when paired with the limited parental intervention, appeared to have negatively shaped the ways in which the participants perceived their upbringing.

Across the sample, there were two participants—Lucy and Harin—for whom negative sentiments related to their upbringing seemed salient: they felt resentment toward their parents and defied parental control and expectation while growing up. Following the divorce of her parents, Lucy felt let down (“So to me, I was like, ‘You guys weren’t good parents. You guys

split, so have no right to control me”) and fought back whenever she felt that her mother was trying to control her. Similarly, the feeling of resentment tainted the parent-child interactions and led Harin to defy parental expectations while growing up.

[...] if they were together and they were trying their best to, you know, keep our family together and do their role as parents and do their responsibility well, then, I would have felt more of a pressure to comply as a daughter—to make them happy. But since they didn’t provide that family dynamic that I wanted, I felt like I didn’t have to listen to my mom. (Lucy)

So, at first, I felt resentment. [...] At first, I ripped up textbooks because I didn’t want to go to school. They had to be returned, too. I threw chairs across the room and stuff. [...] I really hated school. Everything had changed. I used to live a really good life there [in Korea] but we came here, and I became this weirdo who couldn’t even speak. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Nevertheless, both Lucy and Harin developed a feeling of empathy and appreciation toward their parents throughout the time, based on the perceived parental sacrifice: Lucy believed that immigration to Canada enabled her and her brother to live a successful and happy life, and understood her parents’ circumstances with better clarity; and Harin became protective of her parents who, faced with language and cultural barrier, went through a drastic change in their socioeconomic status upon immigration, and felt especially close to their mother, who became the breadwinner for the family in Canada.

**Table 48**

*Parental values, beliefs, and cultural practices observed throughout upbringing*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Projected gender roles	<b>6</b>
- Gender roles imposed on the sibling/on self	5
- Language brokering asked of the daughter and not the son	3
Celebration of Korean holidays and retention of traditions	<b>10</b>
- Celebration of Korean holidays, even if only limited to eating appropriate food for the New Years and/or Thanksgiving	7
- Maintenance of other Korean traditions	2

Table 48 demonstrates some of the parental values, beliefs, and practices that the participants observed at home throughout their upbringing. Many recalled some gender bias that they observed, which their parents either imposed on them or their siblings of the opposite sex. The celebration of Korean holidays and maintenance of traditions were kept to a minimum in many homes. In fact, three participants indicated that their family did not maintain any of the Korean traditions and holidays.



Some of the gender roles that were projected throughout the participants' upbringing were related to Korean and/or Christian values, which included "reliable," "leader"-like men bias. Gender roles were furthermore incorporated into different treatment of sons and daughters in some homes. For example, Ben and Jacob both saw a clear difference in ways in which their parents enforced a strict upbringing of their older sisters (e.g. going out and staying out until late, curfews, pressure to marry etc.). While Ben commented that his mother was globally "more chilled" with him than his sister, Jacob explained the ways in which he perceived such a differential treatment:

[...] I guess, just from the way that we were growing up, gender roles or particular expectations were a definite thing within our household. For instance, you know, there were things that I would be allowed as a male, whereas my sister would—even though she has a couple years ahead of me—would not even be an option for her. Just solely based on the fact that she's a woman. [...] Let's say, for instance, if I decided to step out of the house and not come back until 5am, nobody would care. But, on the other hand, if my sister were to come back home and let's say at like 9pm, uh, you know there'll be people, like my dad would be waiting outside. A huge argument would ensue. Another thing I would say is definitely marriage expectations. I think obviously this also has to do with age, as well. [...] the topic of marriage is definitely a lot heavier to her than it is to me. I don't recall a single time that my parents ever, ever, ever asked me when I'm getting married, what my plans are, and stuff like that. [...] I think, as a younger offspring, especially as a man, there're just so many things that I was just allowed to just, you know, cruise with. (Jacob)

Moreover, as previously indicated, Jisoo, Victoria, and Nora pointed out that the parents always depended on them for help with English and never on their brothers. Interestingly, all three of them felt that this was rooted to differences in personality and/or English proficiency between their male siblings and themselves, rather than gender roles.

In contrast, Harin found that her parents held certain expectations in regard to the career choice of her older brother, but none for her. Growing up, she thought that her mother was only focused on her brother ("I used to tell my mother all the time, me being twisted... although I've gotten much better now... 'You're all about your son and your son only' [...]"—*Translated from Korean*). Because her older brother is the firstborn son,<sup>85</sup> she felt that her parents always gave him attention and tried "not to step on his toes."

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<sup>85</sup> The first-born son is treated specially in traditional Korean families, as they are seen as the "heir to the family name," the one who is entitled to "most of the family property and, in turn, is expected to support his parents in their old age" (Sechin Cho, 1996, p. 133).

Family socialization can be perceived as one of the prominent transmitters of ethnic and racial gender stereotypes. Understanding the cultural experiences that portray gender stereotypes and how they are perceived in the minds of individuals who identify with ethnic/racial minority groups is important, as the individuals are often faced with the challenge of resolving the perceived ethnic/racial gender roles, as well as degrading perceptions that the dominant group holds of their ethnic/racial gender statuses (Noh, 2012, p. 193). According to the findings, while some participants recalled some of the gender roles from their upbringing, there did not appear to be a significant impact of the perceived gender roles on the majority of the participants.<sup>86</sup> In fact, most associated the perceived gender roles with the “old” and “traditional” Korean mindset, from which they mostly distanced themselves—in other words, they were perceived as remnants of the heritage values ingrained in the parents’ minds. In this respect, such *Korean* values were referred to by the participants as a means to self-distinguish from their parents. At the same time, the participants did not perceive the gender bias to have been severe throughout their overall upbringing. Additionally, none of the participants felt that they had been confronted with conflicting gender roles and status within the mainstream societal settings.

Furthermore, Korean holidays and traditions were not actively maintained at home for most participants. Nevertheless, the findings mirrored one of the most prominent elements related to cultural retention of Korean immigrants: Korean food (G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). For example, six participants continued to be engaged in minimally retained cultural practices by eating the food matched with Korean holidays (e.g. 떡국 (rice-cake soup) on New Year’s day and 송편 (rice cake) on Korean Thanksgiving). Across the sample, there were three participants who did not practise any Korean traditions nor celebrated Korean holidays while growing up, other than eating Korean food at home.

Beyond food, two participants had experiences related to Korean traditions in their upbringing. Firstly, Harin’s mother started organizing 제사<sup>87</sup> for her father-in-law when he

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<sup>86</sup> Albeit a few, there were some exceptions, in which cases the participants felt at least partially influenced by such *Korean* and/or *Christian* gender roles that were projected throughout their upbringing. These cases will be discussed shortly.

<sup>87</sup> 제사 (“jesa”) is a Korean traditional ceremony which functions as a memorial to ancestors, held on the anniversary of the ancestor’s death. While the first-born son is expected to host the ceremony for the deceased

passed away, for which she dedicates a great amount of time and effort into preparing the food that goes into the organization. Although her mother did not wish to pass on the practice to the children, Harin believed that it should not be her mother to organize the ceremony to memorialize her paternal grandfather, in the first place—which represented another example of the parent-child cultural conflict. Secondly, William’s family celebrates the New Year’s day “to the full extent”: they eat 떡국 (rice cake soup) and play 윷놀이<sup>88</sup> together, William and her sister do the New Year’s traditional bow to the parents, and, in turn, their parents give them money and offer words of wisdom. Across the sample, William was the only one who saw the value in maintaining the Korean traditional culture and practices. He explained:

For the parents, kind of an opportunity to formulate script and have unconditional attention to whatever they have to say. It’s like a reflection of time for both of us to reflect and listen. And we saw value in that. We didn’t keep it for the sake of Korean tradition—we kept it because we saw value in that.

The contrast in the perception of the maintenance of Korean traditions in the cases of Harin and William demonstrates that 1.5-generation children must agree with the cultural values that the traditions transmit in order for them to adopt and maintain the traditions.

Through family socialization, many values related to the Korean culture, religion, and some of the personal values of the parents were transmitted to the participants. Consistent to previous research findings, most participants seemed to value family, filial duty (Y. I. Kwon & Chuang, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014), and the maintenance of the Korean identity and/or language (M. Y. Park, 2021). Some also felt gratitude toward their parents for having transmitted such values.

Most notably, parent-child interactions transmitted some core elements of the Korean culture and influenced their value system. Throughout the narratives of the participants, the importance of family and filial duty was expressed. The attitudes towards language/cultural brokering, sentiments of concern for their parents, and a feeling of empathy which replaced the feeling of resentment—as discussed thus far—altogether contributed to shaping varying degrees of importance that most participants placed on family, as well. Ben explained that seeing his parents take care of his grandparents provided him with an example to follow: “They

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ancestors, its organization (i.e. making food) is typically the responsibility of the women—for this reason, the practice of 제사 has become more and more criticized and abandoned in the recent years (C.-U. Cho, 2018).

<sup>88</sup> 윷놀이 (“yootnori”) is one of the most popular traditional Korean board games, which is typically played on the New Year’s Day.

felt responsible for their parents [...]. So, seeing their example, I guess, gives me the feeling that that would also be my responsibility—how I treat my parents.” The perceived sense of responsibility for their parents and the value of family cohesion appeared to be the driving force for most participants to be obedient to their parents and be responsive to the parental wishes and pressure.

For some participants, their upbringing had the most significant impact on shaping the degree of importance that they associated with retention of the Korean identity and language. Some drew links between the identity and language, which they believed were influenced by the beliefs of their parents. For example, Kelly commented the following:

[...] she always stressed the fact that it's so important that I retain my identity as a Korean person. And she was like, it's such a shame that so many second gen or 1.5 gen Korean kids lose the ability to speak Korean. [...] And she always thought that, like, speaking the language is such a huge part of retaining your identity. And even now, she's always like, 'Oh, when you have kids, make sure you teach them Korean and speak Korean with them.' [...] 'Otherwise, they're going to be really confused as to like who they are, and what their identity is.' And that's why she always made such a point to speak Korean to me at home. So that's number one.

Additionally, some considered the maintenance of the Korean language as important, as it facilitates parent-child communication—thus, positively contributing to family cohesion.

Through their understanding of the parental sacrifice for children's education, as well as through the “gentle reminders” and “strong encouragement” that they received while growing up, the importance of education was transmitted to the value system of some participants. A few also expressed that their parents taught them to respect elders, referring to “social hierarchy” centered around age within the Korean culture. For instance, as she was raised by a Korean mother, Nora felt a sense of respect for elders ingrained in her, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds (“[...] because I was raised by mostly by my mom who's Korean, [...]. [...] If I'm dealing with non-Koreans, like 백인 할머니들 [White grandmas], I find myself really treating them as if they're my own grandma. [...] it's very important to treat elders with respect”—Nora).

Some participants adopted values related to Christianity through their parents. Beyond adopting “a religious point of view” in life, three participants incorporated some of the gender roles that are projected by the religion into their understanding of the notion of gender. For example, Ben commented: “[...] there's this idea of equality which I think is instinctual for me.

And then, another layer that gets added is like knowing there are certain ways that men are expected to act.” Moreover, the perceptions of the notion of marriage and family of the two participants—Kelly and Jisoo—were shaped by the religious values that their parents considered as important. They both placed a sense of importance on family rather than on self/individual, and therefore viewed marriage as an essential step in life for themselves.

Hence, some of the personal values that the participants adopted were closely linked with the Korean and religious values, as well as the ways in which they perceived their upbringing. Firstly, some learned how to love and care for others, whether they be members of the family or close friends. The perceived value in filial piety was transmitted through their upbringing and through the relationships with family friends, which were especially valued in the host country with no extended family members. Secondly, some learned the importance of parenting by reflecting on some aspects of their upbringing that they perceived negatively. For instance, Harin believed that, had her parents been strict with her, she could have been happier while growing up. Thus, she wished to become a tiger mom when she has a child of her own to raise (“If they were strict, I wouldn’t have gone through the kinds of things that I have gone through. [...] I think I’ll actually become a tiger mom”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*). What was especially interesting was the response of Victoria, who was the only mother across the sample. Despite her wish to raise her child differently from the ways she was brought up, she found that it was difficult to do.

Whatever they taught, I think I’ve absorbed it naturally, since childhood. I feel that especially as I raise my own child. Some of the things, I don’t wanna repeat what they did to me. You just want to do a better job, right? The things that you wished you had, for example, things like what hurt you. I do try to be different and do better, but it just comes naturally... [...] My parents, especially my dad, he is obsessed with being safe. He hates anything adventurous and likes playing it safe—it could be monetary or like literally health and safety, things like that. If I feel like my child is to be adventurous or is in any bit of danger, I stop him from doing it. [...] When you get scolded, you get scolded a lot. [...] I even got beaten back in Korea. There were times they were controlling, too... I try not to be like that, but that’s all I’m used to and that’s all that I know. I try to adopt the right way of parenting, but I realize, most of what I experienced wasn’t good parenting... [...] So I think that’s very hard. Teaching, scolding, things like that...

Lastly, some participants felt that the lack of/limited parental intervention that they had throughout their upbringing, along with the parental support, helped them become autonomous and confident in self. On the one hand, Jacob and William felt that their parents, who supported them to make their own decisions in life, helped them to attain a sense of confidence in self

("[...] it really helped me [...] overcome whatever obstacles I'm currently facing and just keep persisting, and to be myself"—Jacob). On the other hand, Lucy, whose parents' divorce made her feel that her parents failed her while growing up, nevertheless acknowledged that her mother's love for adventures, as well as her parents' decision to immigrate—which she reckoned must have taken "a lot of courage"—positively contributed to her self-confidence in believing in the power of perseverance.

As previous research highlighted, family plays a central role in shaping the ethnic attachment of immigrant children through transmission of the heritage language and culture (Alba et al., 2002; Döpke, 1992; Hughes et al., 2006; Knight et al., 1993; Moua, 2014; Phinney, Romero et al., 2001; Rumbaut, 1994; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004). In fact, the first-generation parents appeared to be the only strongest and consistent factor that directly influenced ethnic attachment of the participants throughout their lives, in most cases. The impact of family socialization on shaping their ethnic attachment was the most evident in cases in which the participants almost felt detached from the Korean identity, as they nonetheless pointed to their upbringing as the source of their identification with the Korean culture ingrained in their self-identity.

One of the defining tendencies related to parent-child interactions appeared to be language/cultural brokering. The practice tended to have become normalized in most cases and moreover contributed to shaping the linked lives of the parents and children (G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Throughout the practice of language/cultural brokering, various cultural values are transmitted which facilitate intergenerational understanding. Therefore, language/cultural brokering can be understood as a consistent reminder of the heritage culture that significantly shapes the ethnic attachment of 1.5-generation children, which, simultaneously, provides occasions for practising bicultural mediation.

On the other hand, traditional gender roles and celebrations of Korean holidays, which appeared to have been at least passively observed and transmitted in essence in most cases, did not seem to significantly affect the ethnic attachment of the participants, in many cases. This phenomenon can be further understood in consideration of previous literature, which concluded that immigrant generations are positively correlated with varying degrees of detachment from ethnic identity, as the subsequent generations acculturate (Danico, 2004; Itzigsohn, 2009). The findings suggest that, to enable the intergenerational transmission of ethnic traditions related to cultural practices, the children of immigrants must be able to see the value for themselves—if

not, ethnic traditions are likely to be perceived as intergenerational differences and add to the sense of detachment that they feel from the ethnic identity.

The cultural values that the participants adopted were mostly related to family dynamics, including their understanding and acceptance of the parent-child relationship. Such transmitted values seemed to have provided the participants with cultural references and resources that helped them better understand the Korean culture. Furthermore, some of the adopted values seemed to have influenced ways in which they perceived relationships with family and close friends throughout their lives in Canada. Therefore, the significant role that family—especially parents—plays in shaping the children’s sense of self seems evident: by consistently exposing the children to first-hand experiences of the heritage culture and related values, parents provide children with a stable point of reference that can be used to learn and interpret the meaning of the Korean heritage.

Overall, the findings of this study revealed that, not only do first-generation parents have an impact on shaping the ethnic attachment of their 1.5-generation children, but they also have an indirect influence on forming the children’s national attachment. Through the transmission of the importance of family as a cultural value, coupled with the perceived parental sacrifice, the majority of the participants responded well to the parental pressure to become bilingual and bicultural. In fact, the parents, who typically required the participants to act as language/cultural brokers, were often described as open-minded and progressive, in contrast to the traditional Asian parents. Many participants emphasized that their parents did not impose traditional Korean values and traditions—especially those who were male—and some expressed appreciation for the fact that their parents were mostly supportive of their decisions in life. Whether such parenting styles stemmed from the language and cultural barriers that the first-generation parents faced (Christianakis, 2011) or from the conscious parental decision to let the children form their own paths, most participants appeared to have coped well with limited parental guidance throughout youth—learning to be autonomous, while taking on the job as a cultural mediator between the parents and the mainstream society. In this regard, bilingualism and biculturalism of 1.5-generation immigrants can be understood as the product of the Korean upbringing.

### **7.3 Ethnic community**

#### **7.3.1 Korean Immigrants/Community in Toronto**

Due to the large, concentrated population of Korean immigrants, Toronto seems to offer diverse opportunities for co-ethnic networking. Previous studies have shown that a vibrant ethnic community can be seen as representative of the salient ethnic identity of its members, as well as an indicator of discrimination and racism that they perceive (Cebotari, 2009; Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001). Thus, examining the presence, functioning, and perceptions of the Korean community in Toronto seems vital in understanding the ethnic and national attachment that Korean immigrants develop. To inquire into the essence and dynamics of the Korean community in Toronto, the participants' perceptions of, as well as experiences within, the Korean community were examined. The findings revealed that the participants were exposed to the Korean community through various channels. The Korean church was the venue with which all participants could identify with, followed by co-ethnic peer socialization in school and Koreatown. Few participants had some experiences of exploring online Korean communities, and few attended Korean extracurricular classes.

Table 49 shows how Korean immigrants and community are perceived in the minds of the participants. All participants thought that Korean immigrants tend to stick together and network within the Korean community, and many pointed out that Korean immigrants represent a diverse body of individuals, whose characteristics are shaped by arrival age and immigrant generations. When commenting on the Korean community, all participants believed that the Korean church plays a central role in upholding the Korean community in Toronto. As well, there were varied perceptions that the participants developed of Korean immigrants and the community, both positive and negative.



**Table 49***Perceptions of Korean immigrants and the Korean community in Toronto*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Korean immigrants in Toronto	<b>10</b>
- Korean immigrants stick together/are actively engaged in co-ethnic networking	10
- Korean immigrants are ignorant (e.g. about what is happening in Canada, the Canadian culture)	2
- A diverse body of individuals	4
- Korean immigrants are divisive	3
- Korean immigrants are proud of their Korean identity	2
- Korean immigrants are hardworking and determined	2
Korean community in Toronto	<b>10</b>
- The Korean church plays an important role in upholding the Korean community	10
- Fostered by institutions and organizations (e.g. churches and KCCAM)	2
- Evolving community, whose changes are linked with an increasing number of integrated offspring-generation immigrants	2
- Positive perceptions (e.g. a strong sense of community, can be helpful and reassuring)	10
- Negative perceptions (e.g. a small, “closed-off,” drama-ridden community, a weak sense of community)	7

When asked to describe the Korean immigrants in Toronto, most participants voiced that Korean immigrants often stick together, actively engaged in co-ethnic networking. The participants’ descriptions were mostly based on the stereotypical image of Korean immigrants (i.e. “*very Korean people*”) who remain immersed in the Korean culture: socializing with each other in Korean, doing “Korean things,” and “looking Korean.” “Closely knit” and “They stick together” were typical descriptions that were used. Some criticized the immigrants for being “too attached to Korea” and “too closed off” to care about current affairs in Canada and/or to learn about the Canadian culture. Additionally, some felt a grounded sense of empathy, and a few felt against the secluded position in which they believed Korean immigrants tend to place themselves in. The following excerpts are some examples of the narratives that described the participants’ perceptions of Korean immigrants:

I feel some are a little too attached to Korea, I guess. Just like, culture or values and whatnot. Even though, like, what affects them more directly and is more relevant, they don’t really care about. I think that happens sometimes where like some Korean immigrants will follow Korean news more closely than news here, for example. One is gonna affect them more [...]. (Ben)

So, these days, I find it almost embarrassing whenever I run into *very* Korean people who are very clueless about Canadian culture, because it strikes me as ignorant. And I don't want to associate myself with that ignorance. (Kelly)

They, like everybody within the group would know each other. And I think, just in terms of how often they communicate or message each other and hang out, they're definitely more actively involved in their own circles than most groups I know. (Jacob)

I've always looked at it and thought, why put yourself in such a small community and network in Canada? If you want to embrace that lifestyle, just go back to Korea, where you can fully embrace that lifestyle. [...] Maybe because of the difficulty in integrating into the Canadian culture, it's easier to just reject and find comfort in a smaller Korean community. (William)

And overall, they like to hang out with their own Korean friends, whether they're FOBs or not... [...] Well, actually, it depends on people. Most people stick to Korean people because they're FOBs and they don't speak the language, obviously. If they're not FOBs, and they were here younger... At first, when you get here, you usually tend to feel more connected to other Koreans. And, so you just keep that friends close to you. (Lucy)

Like Lucy, half of the participants acknowledged that Korean immigrants were a diverse body of individuals, whose characteristics are shaped by the arrival age, immigrant generation, and the residence status as an international student. Based on such differences, some believed that Korean immigrants were divisive: according to them, Korean immigrants form groups based on their length of residence in Canada and socialize among themselves. The common opinion was that, regardless of the differences, Korean immigrants tend to "keep to themselves." James, for example, commented, "It's very rare that, um, you see Koreans, especially those who just came to Canada, hanging out with non-Koreans."

On the other hand, Jisoo and Harin described Korean immigrants as hardworking individuals, who "bite the bullet" to "not pass on poverty." What is interesting to note was a sense of pride that seemed to be derived from such a perception.

Korean people, back then, as immigrants, took on all kinds of jobs, even like worm-picking. They try so hard to not pass on poverty. So that kind of diligence... [...] if I were to start my own business, I'd hire Korean people. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

We are such a small nation and we survived from the Japanese colonization and all. Non-Koreans don't do what's hard, what's dangerous. But Koreans really bite the bullet. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Moreover, Jacob, who also perceived Koreans as individuals who were engaged in a network which is "a lot more exclusive than others," believed that a high level of pride they have as Koreans was one of the shared traits that bring them together within the community.

Some of the building blocks of the Korean community that the participants identified included the Korean language, Korean networks, and a sense of shared identity, culture, and related experiences. Across the narratives, active networking was identified as the key ingredient that forms a community. Furthermore, when asked to comment on the Korean community in Toronto, all ten participants expressed that it was closely associated with the Korean church in Toronto in their minds. The reasons were numerous: Ben and James recalled their experiences of being part of the church community, which was the only means of identifying the Korean community for them; and others acknowledged a strong presence of the Korean church community in Toronto, in which they believed resided the essence of the Korean community. Furthermore, Lucy and Harin associated the term, Korean community, with the institutions and organizations (e.g. Korean churches and Korean Canadian Cultural Association of Metropolitan Toronto (KCCAM)) that facilitate networking opportunities and cultural events (e.g. Korean Harvest festival hosted by KCCAM).

Although all participants agreed that the Korean community has a positive impact on the psychological well-being of (at least some) Korean immigrants, consistent to the mixed sentiments and opinions that the participants had about Korean immigrants, their perceptions of the community were divided. Some pointed out that the Korean community can be helpful for some immigrants, as it can facilitate their access to a pool of networks and resources, and they moreover believed that there was a strong sense of community among Koreans in Toronto. James held a particularly positive opinion about the community: “I think Koreans, they have a very strong community. I feel like they always stick up for each other, always helping each other out.” Yet, others thought that the community was only useful for first-generation or recent immigrants, to whom access to other communities in the host country were limited due to the language/cultural barrier.

In fact, extending on the perceived idea that the Korean community promotes active co-ethnic networking between Korean immigrants, many participants described the community as a small and “closed-off” community. Within such a “tightly knit” community, Lucy, Harin, and Victoria spoke about the drama and distress that they associated with the community. Based on their previous experiences of networking with other Korean immigrants, they perceived the community as stressful, ridden with jealousy and gossips. For instance, Lucy explained that the gossips are brewed from the “very *Korean Korean*, traditional mindsets”; Victoria shared that some old Korean immigrants scam recent Korean immigrants by taking advantage of the

unfamiliarity of recent immigrants with the host country; and, as an example, Harin referred to her personal experiences of arriving in Canada and being overcharged by a Korean immigrant who lodged her family at the home stay. Therefore, both Lucy and Harin believed that the cons outweigh the pros of actively networking within the Korean community—at least for 1.5- and second-generation immigrants who were not dependent on the community like their first-generation counterparts. Thus, they expressed that the spirit of community is weak among Korean immigrants in Toronto.

Overall, most participants saw the Korean community as a useful pool of resources on which recent immigrants and/or first-generation immigrants were dependent, and their narratives implied certain degrees of the perceived distance that they drew between themselves and the community. At the same time, Kelly and William expressed that the Korean community in Toronto was evolving: according to them, there was an increasing number of 1.5- and second-generation adult immigrants who are more integrated that make up the Korean community. They also believed that such an evolving demographic representation of the community was, not only bringing progressive changes, but also highlighting the potential for further positive evolution of the community in the future. For example, Kelly referred to a “Korean golf tournament” which her husband had recently attended, where 1.5- and second-generation immigrants in their 30s and 40s, “very successful in their field,” participated—hence rendering the event a useful networking opportunity. Another example was the Korean Scholarship Foundation, to which second-generation immigrants contribute to promote success among the community members. Throughout these recent observations, Kelly commented, “We’re starting to see there’re all these very influential, successful Koreans that are willing to contribute to the Korean community and Canada.”

Through the recent perception of the evolving Korean community, Kelly and William were starting to “see more value in Korean communities.” Upon starting to build his career, William realized that it is “so much easier” connecting with other Koreans, as a genuine interest is immediately established to try and help one another (“camaraderie is like immediate”). Through such experiences, he felt a sense of motivation to invest in the Korean community—not only belong, but furthermore help other members. He expressed his sentiment in the following words:

I find that it’s almost something that I want, to help other Koreans become better footholds, because it was so hard for me to enter this industry and to excel in this industry. I’d almost do it for selfish purposes: because, the

stronger you build that network, the better your chances of building businesses, as well. [...] I have aspirations to be a leader within the Korean community, ‘cause I want to build networks and roots within Canada, so that it would be easier for the Korean community to become part of the Canadian business network.

Similarly, Kelly went through a change in her sense of identification with the Korean community. Initially, due to the stereotypical image of Korean immigrants and the community, Kelly, among few others, felt hesitant about identifying herself as an immigrant. However, following the pandemic and Asian hate that she experienced, she now felt that it was important to “stick together” to “promote success within the Korean community.”

I’ve been under the delusion that I am not a Korean immigrant. [But] I am and always will be Korean in any other Canadian person’s eyes. So I think it’s better that I try to make sure that Koreans in Canada have a good place, and a safe place to live, and like future, successful future and all of that. So yeah, I think, although I don’t necessarily associate with the Korean community right now, I think I would like to be a little more associated with it and try to find a way that I can kind of help it.

Thus, in line with previous research findings (Cebotari, 2009), there seems to be a renewed appeal for Kelly to engage in the ethnic community, following perceived discrimination. Her wish to improve the status of the Korean community within the mainstream society can also be interpreted as an attempt to enhance her self-concept through the group membership, based on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

**Table 50**

*Association of self and the parents with the Korean community*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Considers both of their parents as part of the Korean community	<b>8</b>
Feels part of the Korean community, at least partially	<b>6</b>
- Partial self-association with the community through peer networks	4

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that most participants associated themselves and parents with the Korean community, even in cases in which some negative perceptions of the community were retained (Table 50). The perceived association was especially more salient between their parents and the community, for the reasons of their parents’ socialization patterns built on the Korean church networks, exclusive socialization with Koreans, shared interests and values based on the Korean culture, a higher rate of cultural retention, and the language/cultural barrier, which they believed restricted their parents from identifying with other communities in Canada. The only two participants who did not associate at least one of their parents with the

Korean community were Lucy and Nora. Both their mothers did not have Korean friends, and Lucy's mother was "not a fan of Koreans," who she thought were too "gossipy." Yet, Lucy reckoned that her father, with whom she does not talk to regularly, would be more dependent on the Korean community than her mother, due to his limited linguistic and sociocultural integration in Canada.

As for the participants, themselves, Ben and James were the only two to have positively associated themselves with the Korean community. The sense of confidence in claiming the group membership was positively correlated with their church membership. In contrast, four participants—Lucy, Jisoo, Victoria, and Nora—identified with the Korean community only partially. This tendency was especially interesting to observe in the cases of Jisoo and Victoria, whose socialization patterns were predominantly based on Korean-speaking peer networks.

Uh, when you say community, because I don't really have an active kind of personality to mingle and socialize with people, it's a bit difficult to answer. But when I think about my identity, yes, I feel like I'm part of the Korean community. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Jisoo*)

Victoria: I've never thought about it. I think it's something I take for granted. But then, I don't think I have that much of a positive feeling nor impression of the community. That's why I take it for granted—because I do benefit from it, a lot. Working, going to Korean restaurants, supermarkets...

Researcher: Your work as a realtor, is your clientele Koreans?

Victoria: Yeah. [...] I think I unconsciously believe that I can only target Koreans, that there is a barrier. When you work as a realtor, your clientele is the people from your country. Plus, it's not like I speak English very fluently... [...] Chinese [realtors] deal with Chinese. I've never seen a Korean who hires a White real estate agent. [...] I think I'm part of it, but I don't necessarily feel like I'm part of it. When, in fact, I am part of it. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*)

What is interesting to note is that, even though both Jisoo and Victoria found it difficult to personally identify with the community, the community seemed to have an impact on shaping their self-perceptions. The hesitation that was expressed in Victoria's response, correlated with negative perceptions of Korean immigrants and community, seems especially critical, as her work depends on the Korean clientele. In consideration of previous literature which found an individual's negative perceptions toward his or her ethnic group and his or her self-esteem to be positively correlated (Phinney et al., 1992b), Victoria's self-concept may be at risk. Moreover, Lucy and Nora both felt part of the Korean community, partially, based on the sense of connection that they retained with Korean immigrants that make up the community. Yet, Lucy's perception of her Korean Canadian friends who she dissociated from the stereotypical Korean immigrants, as well as Nora's limited interactions with Korean Canadian peers, along

with their lack of active networking within the community, made them feel somewhat disconnected.

Additionally, the fact that as many as four participants did not feel part of the Korean community suggests that the spirit of the Korean community may indeed be weak, as Lucy and Harin suggested. In the cases of Kelly, Jacob, and William, their disassociation with the community was not surprising: on the one hand, Kelly's co-ethnic friends were nothing like what she perceived as typical Korean immigrants and they often socialized doing "extremely non-Korean" things; on the other hand, Jacob and William simply lacked co-ethnic peer networks to explore. Nonetheless, even Harin, who mostly/exclusively socialized with co-ethnic peers, did not feel part of the Korean community—the lack of active involvement in wider Korean Canadian networks in Toronto seemed to be the hurdle. Therefore, the findings affirmed that positive role that the Korean community can play a positive role for certain groups of immigrants. At the same time, there appeared to be varying degrees of perceived distance in many participants' minds, between themselves—and in few cases, their parents, as well—and the community.

Exploring the in-group perceptions of the participants was an important task, as the kind of perceptions one has towards his or her group can have significant influences on his or her self-perception (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). On the one hand, negative perceptions towards the ethnic group may have negative consequences on the self-perception of individuals, when they are exposed to stereotypes that involve their group. As for visible minority groups, negative perceptions can be especially damaging, because they are often faced with an ascribed identity, as well as an out-group's perception of their affiliation with the ethnic group (J. N. Martin & Nakayama, 2010). On the other hand, only when individuals go through the process of ethnic identity exploration and find resolutions to perceived conflicts facing their in-group, they can attain positive outcomes on their self-perception and feelings associated with the group membership (Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Kohatsu, 1997).

According to the findings, the participants' negative perceptions toward Korean immigrants and community in Toronto seemed to persist in their minds, affecting their desire to be associated with the community, in most cases. Yet, most acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the social resources that the community provided for their family, especially their parents, throughout their lives in Canada. Moreover, some felt enthusiastic about the evolving community of Korean immigrants in Toronto, because they believed that the group

was increasingly becoming represented by offspring generation immigrants, who were better integrated than their first-generation counterparts. Therefore, the varying levels of social and cultural integration of the overall participants within the Canadian society, as well as their wish for a better representation of Korean immigrants and the community, appear evident. The overall sentiments that the participants expressed about their ethnic group affirm the strong presence of the Korean community in Toronto, which they were able to explore through various social and cultural ties and observations. At the same time, the *spirit* of community can be put into question: mirroring Min-Jung Kwak’s (2004) study of the Korean Canadian community in Vancouver, the findings from this study indicate that the community in Toronto may be fragmented between the recent immigrants/first-generation and long-term immigrants/offspring generations.

### 7.3.2 Korean church

**Table 51**

*Affiliations with the Korean church*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
The Church	<b>8</b>
- Protestant	5
- Catholic	3
Decision to attend	<b>10</b>
- Parents’ decision	7
- Conscious decision	3
Affiliation with the Korean church	<b>10</b>
- Had previously attended a Korean church	10
- No longer attends a Korean church	9

The Korean church has become the dominant religion, as well as the key contributing element, of the Korean immigrant community, as it became “the most stable and coherent institution available” to Korean immigrants to practise the language, culture, and heritage, as well as to access social support, services, status, and leadership (Yu, 2022, pp. 2-3). Reflecting this notion of church, all participants had previous experiences of exploring the Korean church, to varying extents—including the two participants who did not have a religion. Most participants used to go to church in Korea prior to immigration, whereas some started going to church for the first time in Canada. Across the sample, eight participants identified themselves as Christian (five Protestants and three Catholics) and considered themselves as religious (Table 51).



Some pointed out that it was not their choice to have a religion, but their parents (“When I was young, I didn’t have a choice. In my mind, Sunday was the day when we go to church”—*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*). Similarly, as can be seen in Table 51, it was mostly the parents of the participants who made the decision to join the Korean church in Canada with their children. There were three participants who made a conscious decision to attend the Korean church during their youth, wanting to explore the Korean identity and community. Regardless of religion, all participants shared some previous experiences within the Korean church community. However, only one participant currently attended a Korean church: entering adulthood, three participants made a switch to a Canadian church, and six stopped going to church altogether.

The findings affirmed the important role that the church plays in community building and retention of Korean immigrants (Joo, 2010; Min & Choi, 1993; Min, 1992b; S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2007). The narratives were rich in examples of how the Korean church actively promotes a sense of community through various means. Firstly, it offers help to its members, especially recent immigrants and international students, through the church networks. Secondly, it promotes cultural retention through group events and activities (e.g. eating Korean food to celebrate Korean national holidays) and language classes. Thirdly, it offers group activities for the youth to practise faith (e.g. Bible study groups, missions abroad, church retreats etc.) which are organized systematically. Fourthly, it organizes group events and retreats for all members (e.g. picnics, sports events etc.) to promote a sense of community. The social capital that becomes available through networking opportunities within the church community seems to be the biggest appeal to Korean immigrants and their families of the church membership besides faith.

**Table 52**

*Previous affiliations with the Ministry or Ministries within the Korean church*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Affiliated with the Korean Ministry (KM), only	<b>5</b>
Affiliated with both the KM and EM	<b>4</b>

Whether Protestant or Catholic, Korean churches typically provide multiple worship services based on the language choice (Korean Ministry (KM) and English Ministry (EM)) and age group (Yu, 2022). The choice of language distinctively marks the church experiences for individuals. Previous literature has revealed the generational gap and conflicts that are visible

within the Korean church, often addressing the issues relevant to the first and second generation (E. Kim, 2016; Young, 2012; Yu, 2022). The first generation, with KM affiliations, is influenced by Confucianism, whereas the second generation, with EM affiliations, is influenced by Western ideals of egalitarianism; thus, there is likely to be a clash of interest within the church between those prioritizing Korean values and Christian values (Kim, 2010, as quoted in Yu, 2022, p. 3). In the case of the sample, their church experiences reflected their bilingual and bicultural tendencies of the 1.5 generation: half of the participants had been affiliated with the KM, only, one with the EM, only, and four with both (Table 52).

Besides the activities and events that are part of experiences associated with both Ministries, the findings affirmed that the experiences within the Korean church can be varied for individuals, depending on the Ministry of their choice. Not only did the language affiliated with each Ministry dictate members that adhered to respective groups, but it also shaped peer interests, behaviour, and values within the groups. Most importantly, the narrated experiences of KM attendees were visibly richer than those of EM attendees in illustrating various Korean cultural traits.

According to the participants, KM attendees, among whom numerous international students are present, is different from EM attendees, who are predominantly second-generation immigrants. Some participants found the sermons in KM to be more geared toward international students (“As if the church were like foster home. Lots of international students, those who don’t have their parents here [...]”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*; “And the pastors know that they’re all like here by themselves and kind of lonely and, you know, need a family. And so it would be sympathetic towards that”—Kelly). Moreover, in KM, peer interests and group behaviours were centered around the Korean culture: KM attendees would often talk about currently popular content from the Korean pop culture (“Korean music, game shows, or dramas, early K-pop—especially at that young, impressive age—were front and centre”—Ben). Korean values and mannerisms were also more projected throughout peer interactions in KM (“[...] they’re still like very big on respect-your-elders kind of attitude”—Kelly; “In KM, you talk to people in Korean, so you use 존댓말 when you talk to elders”—James). The way of welcoming newcomers in KM in Protestant churches was also “very Korean.”

When you are new at the church, they say, ‘there are new people here, stand up.’ And everyone claps to welcome you. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

It's very in-your-face [in KM]. In English Ministry, that would never happen in a million years. [...] the one thing that the Korean Ministry does actually really well is welcoming newcomers. Like, they really want to make sure that you are like noticed and recognized and, like, that you eat together with them and like play all these games together with the whole lot. But English Ministry, it's like, holy shit, it's really hard to integrate yourself into the church. It takes a lot of will power, because, especially in like a non-Korean church—because I've been to a couple—they think it's like encroaching on your privacy, so they don't like to do that. (Kelly)

Hence, such differences between KM and EM clearly illustrate contrasting ways of upholding the Korean immigrant Christian community, which appeared to be correlated with varying levels of integration between the generations.

**Table 53**

*Korean church—perceived experiences*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Positively perceived experiences within the church	<b>10</b>
- The church membership helped them/their family make connections and/or valuable memories	10
- Received help from the church community as a family while adapting to life in Canada	3
- Feels appreciation for the experiences related to learning the Korean language and culture	2
Negatively perceived experiences within the church	<b>5</b>
- Experienced the language/cultural barrier	3
- Negative experiences through peer interactions	2
Neutral perceptions of the Korean church	<b>2</b>
- Besides the food, the culture that EM promotes is not so distinctively Korean	2

Table 53 lists the participants' perceptions of their experiences within the Korean church. The connections and valuable memories that they/their families were able to make through networking experiences within the community were positively perceived by all participants. Some also recalled the help that their family received from the community while adapting to life in Canada. At the same time, half of the participants also associated networking experiences within the Korean church community with negative sentiments, linked to peer interactions and/or language/cultural barriers. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that the Korean church helped the participants explore their identity, which, in some cases, led them to switch between the KM/EM, searching for a better *fit*.

Regardless of the Ministry, all participants saw the value in their previous/current affiliations with the Korean church, since their family and/or they, themselves, were able to build meaningful relationships and create good memories. Networking with other Koreans was perhaps especially meaningful for Harin and Jisoo, who were the only participants to have struggled with socially integrating in school when they first arrived in Canada.

Like the small church [we used to attend], the members were immigrants who arrived at around the same time. So we used to stick together really tightly and had a lot of fun together going to church. In the summer and things, we went to like Tobermory, too... I think the church represented a part, a good part of my life, then. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

The first friend that I made at school went to church, [...]. Back then, the church was the only place where we could hang out under adult supervision. [...] For me, the church was like a playground—going on camping trips and religious retreats... For me, the retreats weren't for religious reasons—it was the kind of an occasion where they feed us for free, we get to camp, there's someone to drive us... [...] I used to go irregularly for one to two years. I used to only go on the days where they give you gifts, like on Christmas and Easter. [...] Because both my mom and dad were busy working, it's not like we were able to go on family trips together or anything. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Jisoo, who was going to church with her family at the time, was thankful to have the church community, which provided her with emotional support and comfort while she adjusted to life in Canada. As for Harin, who made a conscious decision to go to a Korean church to socialize, also found comfort in the surroundings in which she could network and have fun without language/cultural barriers. The Korean church, therefore, provided a safe shelter for these participants. Such experiences and the resulting perceptions of the Korean church mirrored those of the first-generation immigrants, who, faced with downward social mobility and status, turn to the Korean church for support and resources (Yu, 2022).

Moreover, families of numerous participants received help from the church, especially when settling in Canada upon immigrating. Similar to the narratives of Harin and Jisoo cited above, many families benefited from church networks, as they made family friends and developed a sense of belonging in the host country (“Especially because our family didn't have any other family here, these friends became like family. [...] So for Christmas, because we don't have a big family here, we could be with these people”—Ben). Some practical help was provided through church networks, as well, providing tips which are useful for adjusting to life in Canada (“[...] tell us about the places we must go to, giving us tips on how we could improve our English and the culture faster”—James) and for starting and maintaining a business (“She was debating whether to open a convenience store or open a dry cleaning. She would just like

ask around at the church [...]. And she would go to these people’s businesses to see what it’s like”—Nora). Some participants also added that the church community is helpful for, not only recent immigrants, but also for its member on a long term—“constantly helping each other out,” “bringing each other food,” or “helping businesses that are in need during the pandemic.”

The narratives of all participants except Jacob, whose experiences were limited, demonstrated that they were able to explore the meaning of the Korean identity through church membership. In fact, many participants were able to actively explore their self-identity through the Korean church. For example, William and Nora, besides the church networks, they had limited, if not a lack in, access to co-ethnic peer networks. Hence, Nora’s mother brought her to the Korean church and encouraged her to attend Korean classes to make Korean friends. Nora believed that the Korean classes helped her retain at least some of her writing skills in Korean, and that she was able to have memorable encounters with Korean peers through the church. As for William, his parents were atypical of Korean parents, as they “tried really hard to learn English and to live a Canadian lifestyle” to help the children integrate: they first settled in a neighbourhood which was not heavily congregated by Koreans at the time, kept communications at home mostly in English, and tried attending a Canadian church. Consequently, William had lost a sense of the Korean identity as early as in elementary school and did not make any Korean friends through school.

I didn’t have any Korean friends. And then, during university, I believe brought me to the Korean community? Well, it must have been joining a Korean church... Because that’s when I started to individually, consciously go, myself. So yeah, that’s where I met a lot of my Korean friends, and maybe that’s where I tried to explore that a bit more.

The Korean church was the only point of exposure that both William and Nora ever had to the Korean community, and they both had positive memories associated with it, mostly. William expressed that he needed to “meet Koreans that are similar in terms of their upbringing” and learn the meaning of the Korean identity, which was not clear to him to be considered as an option. He also recalled the small groups<sup>89</sup> and the friends he was able to make through the church. Therefore, the Korean church provided a meaningful occasion for both William and Nora to explore their Korean identity, which they expressed was necessary in their overall

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<sup>89</sup> According to Ben and Kelly’s explanations, one of the subtle differences in the ways in which KM and EM are structured in Korean churches include the organization of Bible study groups. For example, at the Korean church that Kelly used to attend, KM Bible study groups involved meetings that were organized for before or after the service every Sunday, whereas EM study groups, referred to as *small group*, met outside of the church (usually at someone’s house) on a weekday to discuss the material of a text or the sermon from the previous week. With both KM and EM groups, each Bible study meeting was typically followed by having a meal together.

identity journey. As well, by attending EM, they were able to do so without the risk of encountering the language barrier.

Ben's narratives also provided an example of a case in which the Korean church enabled identity exploration. Like William and Nora, Ben's exposure to the Korean community was lacking, as he had few Korean peers in his friend groups in school. Therefore, Ben, who was introduced to the Korean church by his parents, made a conscious decision to switch to the KM to improve his Korean and explore his Korean identity.

At one point, I chose the Korean Ministry to attend, mostly because I just wanted to actually practise speaking Korean. [...] I think, just being able to speak the language, this helps kind of solidify that identity of being a Korean. Through KM, not only was Ben able to make Korean-speaking friends, but he was also able to improve his Korean proficiency. Co-ethnic peer interactions allowed him to develop a stronger sense of motivation to "look up more things like the Korean culture, consume more Korean media."

Furthermore, some felt appreciative of their previous experiences within the Korean church community, which they believed enhanced their level of language proficiency and/or cultural understanding. Ben's response provides an adequate example:

Obviously, like, I probably wouldn't be able to speak Korean as well, for example, as I can right now, if I hadn't done that. [...] In the community, I guess, in that environment, more Korean culture type things were in front of me. [...] So like, early K-pop and whatnot. And yeah, that did make me want to like, go home, look up more things like the Korean culture, consume more Korean media. I guess it was a positive feedback loop, like, choosing to go into that more Korean community. Maybe we want to, you know, learn more and like be more part of that. And like, yeah, expand my Korean identity, which made me use more of the Korean community. Yeah, it kind of built up during that time. That was like middle school, high school age. And this was mostly church. So I'm grateful for that. (Ben)

Overall, many participants had been actively engaged in the church community. In Ben's case, his engagement in the church community was not bound to the church he was attending: he was part of the Korean Christian Fellowship in his university, which was initially set up by Korean pastors in Toronto and was taken in under InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.<sup>90</sup> Through his membership, Ben was able to be part of the larger Korean Christian community

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<sup>90</sup> InterVarsity Christian Fellowship is a Christian campus ministry which was founded in 1941, which works with college campuses and students across North America to promote a sense of community based on faith (InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, n.d.).

and socialize with Korean peers, while engaging in activities that helped him practise faith (e.g. Bible study and guest speaker sessions). What is worth noting is that the activities within the Korean Christian Fellowship did not seem to be strictly centered around the Korean culture; rather, they were organized to promote networking with Korean peers, as well as the “Korean Canadian culture” (“For example, if there was like a potluck dinner, [...] there would be a lot more Korean food to attract Korean people. Other than that, not really much Korean culture”). Through his membership within the Christian community, Ben had access to a good “social support,” which contributed to making his university life a positive experience.

Interestingly, besides eating Korean food together after the service, during group events, and on Korean national holidays, Kelly and William did not find the church experiences within the EM as distinctively Korean. This finding mirrors previous research findings, which found that English-language congregations of the Korean immigrant church lacked in elements related to the Korean culture (Min & Kim, 2005). Despite this observation, the participants seemed to have been able to explore their self-identity as EM-attendees through peer interactions within the church community. Therefore, one’s identity exploration within the domain of Korean church may not be bound to the *Korean* identity; rather, it appears to entail constructing the meaning of the perceived identity as an offspring-generation of Korean immigrants through the socialization with peers who are like them. Thus, the Korean identity that the participants were able to explore through the Korean church are likely to be distinctive from that of the first-generation immigrants.

Nevertheless, it would not be just to say that the experiences related to the Korean church were only positive. Language/cultural barriers and some negative memories related to peer interactions within the church community were highlighted in the narratives. Firstly, Kelly, who was brought to the Korean church by her parents, indicated that the language barrier was a persistent problem which deterred her from being fully engaged in the sermons in KM. Since she was committed to exploring her Korean identity through peer socialization using the Korean language throughout high school, she was unable to make the decision to “switch over” to EM until university (“I didn’t want to admit the fact that I didn’t understand almost 40% of the sermon [...]”). In the EM, she was able to connect with English-speaking second-generation peers, with whom she had numerous similarities in regard to her upbringing, cultural interests, and preferences. She believed that the experiences within EM have helped shaping her current sense of identity.

Besides Kelly, language barriers were experienced by few other participants through their KM/EM experiences. It was for this reason that Victoria, after attending EM during elementary school, switched to KM in middle school (“Back then, I didn’t speak English well”—*Translated from Korean*). Nora, who used to attend EM until middle school, was encouraged by her mother to join Bible study group in KM when she was in her second year in university. Although she found it very difficult to learn the Bible in Korean, the overall experience was beneficial for her (“[...] it was so difficult, because we were learning the Bible in Korean. [...] but at the end, I really found it helpful [...]).

In addition, the negative perceptions were associated with cultural barriers. Kelly and Lucy felt opposed to the “typical and formal” Korean values and mannerism that were projected through peer interactions and sermons at the church. The examples which are cited below refer to their experiences of attending KM.

In the Korean Ministry, what I really don’t like about it is that they’re still like very big on respect-your-elders kind of attitude. [...] Whenever we were waiting to use the photocopier in the church, for example, there’s a line. It’s Sunday, everyone’s busy, but then, this like older 장로님 [elder of a church] would come in and just completely cut the line without like anything, you know, just because they’re older and they’re more important. I hated that so much because instances like that would frequently reoccur. (Kelly)

But even during the worship, I never felt touched by what they said. It was always so typical and formal, like, ‘you shouldn’t do this,’ ‘you shouldn’t do that...’ I never really learned anything from it. (Lucy)

The narratives cited above represent examples of the intergenerational difference and resulting conflicts that can become visible within the Korean church. Indeed, the Korean church, founded and led by the first-generation, is heavily tied to the top-down line of authority (i.e. the young respecting the older and being obedient to them) and traditional understanding of their children as possessions of the parents (S. Kim, 2010; Young, 2012). Therefore, the findings illustrated in-betweenness of the 1.5-generation immigrants: while they are, like the first generation, prone to benefit from the social support and resources that the church provides, they may, like the second generation, deviate from the ethnic traditional culture to varying degrees, which the church emits.

Moreover, Harin and Victoria recalled the distress that resulted from peer interactions within the church community. Victoria described herself as “really active” within the church during high school: she used to be part of the praise team and regularly attended Bible study groups, which naturally allowed her to form deep bonds with her church friends throughout the



time. Nevertheless, she expressed that some of the negative experiences with peers at the Korean church made her temporarily switch to a Canadian church, to which she did not feel obliged to take part in the community.

Victoria: I attended People's Church because something happened at the Korean church. Following a kind of negative experience, I took a break. [...] Korean church, everyone knows each other, because we've all been attending the church for so long. So you have to commit, go say hi, read the air... there were things like that. But [at the Canadian church] you just go in for the sermon, no Bible study after service... So I went for those reasons.

Researcher: So at the People's Church, was there a certain system like at the Korean church? Like any programs for the members, people doing things together...

Victoria: There was. But we didn't join anything. Just the service. (*Translated from English and Korean*)

On a similar note, Harin made a remark that the gossips and drama that the people at the church tend to create affected her and her surroundings. Such sentiments seemed to be linked with their negative perceptions of the overall Korean community.

As the findings demonstrated, going to the Korean church exposed the participants to the Korean community and the values and mannerisms that are associated with the language-based congregations. On the one hand, the participants who had experiences of attending KM attested to high levels of exploration of the Korean culture and identity: a better understanding of Korean manners and values, an improved level of Korean proficiency and interest in Korean pop culture, as well as a stronger sense of motivation to further explore the Korean community, were the positive impact of the church membership that were described. On the other hand, those who were previously part of the EM were able to build connections with peers with whom they shared a similar upbringing and background culture, using the English language in which they felt more comfortable. Switching between the KM and EM exemplifies the active effort of the individuals in negotiating their identities—seeking to fit in and find a sense of belonging. The overall findings suggest that the Korean church provided valuable occasions for most participants to explore different degrees of the Korean identity embedded in the Korean Canadian identity.

In the context of community building of Korean immigrants, the central role that the Korean church plays has been illustrated throughout the narratives of the participants. Beyond providing networking opportunities and social resources for the members, the Korean church was typically described as a useful site for first-generation immigrants, especially, whose access to other communities in Canada were limited by language/cultural barriers. Hence, a sense of

belonging that the church community provides was identified as the primary form of emotional comfort from which its members benefit. As well, some believed that the church was useful in providing various contextual occasions for immigrant children to explore the Korean culture and learn the language. Thus, such aspects of the Korean church membership were perceived as binding factors that bring Korean immigrants and their families together in Toronto.

What is interesting to note is that, by the time of the interviews, nine participants had stopped attending the Korean church. In fact, six stopped going to church, mostly throughout schooling, and three switched to a Canadian church. Mostly, ceasing to attend the Korean church appeared to have occurred naturally. Jacob naturally stopped attending when his parents stopped during their first year in Canada, and Nora, who, upon her mother's encouragement, started going to church again for the Bible study in university, stopped going after a year. As for Lucy and Harin, they only went to the Korean church to socialize with friends while they were students. In Victoria's case, as mentioned previously, she made a switch to a Canadian church after encountering negative experiences within the Korean church community and gradually stopped attending church altogether in adulthood. Lastly, Jisoo switched to a Canadian church when she was in a relationship with her then-boyfriend, who was a second-generation Taiwanese. Due to the language barrier, she found it difficult to follow sermons and switched back to the Korean church when their relationship ended. Therefore, these participants did not seem to have formed long-lasting bonds within the church community on a personal level. Yet, they agreed on the significance of the Korean church within the Korean community in Toronto. Jisoo, moreover, wished to get involved in the church community again when she gets married and has children, because she saw the value in providing an extra support group outside of the small family they have in Toronto.

As for Ben, Kelly, and William, who started attending Canadian churches, the switch occurred naturally. Ben, who had been exposed to a Canadian church during university located in London, Ontario, was attending what he described as "a Canadian church, made up mostly of Koreans" at the time of the interview. Founded by a Korean pastor who used to be a pastor in another Korean church, Ben's current church is run in the English language. Although the largest population of the church members are Koreans, it is accessible to members who are non-Koreans—which is a significant difference from a typical Korean church. Ben's decision to attend Canadian churches both in university and in adulthood was influenced by the recommendations of his peers from the church network. His description of his current church

provides an adequate example of Kelly and William's perception of the Korean community as an evolving community: there seems to be an increasing number of offspring-generation immigrants who are better integrated into the Canadian society, who wish to represent the community in ways that are different from the previous generation. In the case of Kelly and William, the switch occurred as they simply wanted to try a different church. Upon recommendation from peers and through trials, they both settled with what they described a "Canadian" and/or "multicultural" church. The proximity of the church from their current home in downtown Toronto was one of the deciding factors, as well. James, who was the only participant who continued to attend the Korean church community, also expressed his interest in attending a Canadian church one day to explore the diversity in both the demographics and perspectives on religion.

Although the Korean church is primarily represented and perceived as an "immigrant church," there is an increasing level of concern over "divergence from the immigrant population" (J. J. Oh & Eng, 2022), leading to what has been described as "a silent exodus" of offspring generations (Cachero, 2018; H. Lee & Olsen, 1996; Oh, Eng, 2022). Indeed, the decreasing population of the attendees to the Korean church has been reported in recent years in the discussion of Korean American churches. For example, it has been postulated that the increased level of accessibility to information and diversified networking opportunities using the internet (e.g. Korean American portal sites), as well as the bad image of the Korean church that has been established over the years (e.g. financial and sexual scandals), are some of the factors contributing to the decreasing number of attendees. Moreover, the Korean church has been criticized for being resistant to evolve, the view which is especially associated with the elderly who are reluctant to let go of the old ways and principles. This tendency has led to a divide between the first and second generations, whose perception of the role of church in differ: the native-Korean first generation who see value in the ethnic identity retention within the Korean church; and the Korean American second generation who wish for the church practices to be more geared towards reflecting their lives as Korean Americans (Cachero, 2018; J. J. Oh & Eng, 2022). Therefore, the findings suggest that the silent exodus may also be the reality for Korean Canadian churches.

Furthermore, the emphasis that is placed on the Korean church in its community-building practices and maintenance of the ethnic identity has led to concerns of the EM members, who believe that there is less room within the Korean church for practising faith

based on theology (Kim, 2015). In fact, in contrast to ethnicity being the central element of the KM that unites its members, ethnicity may be perceived by Korean American church-goers as an obstacle which stands in the way of establishing a multicultural church, focusing on faith (Young, 2012, p. 27). Thus, it has been reported that, faced with the growing cultural tensions between the KM and EM within the Korean church, the KM wishes to nevertheless retain the connection with the EM, while the EM seeks to detach from KM and establish its own church identity (p. 31).

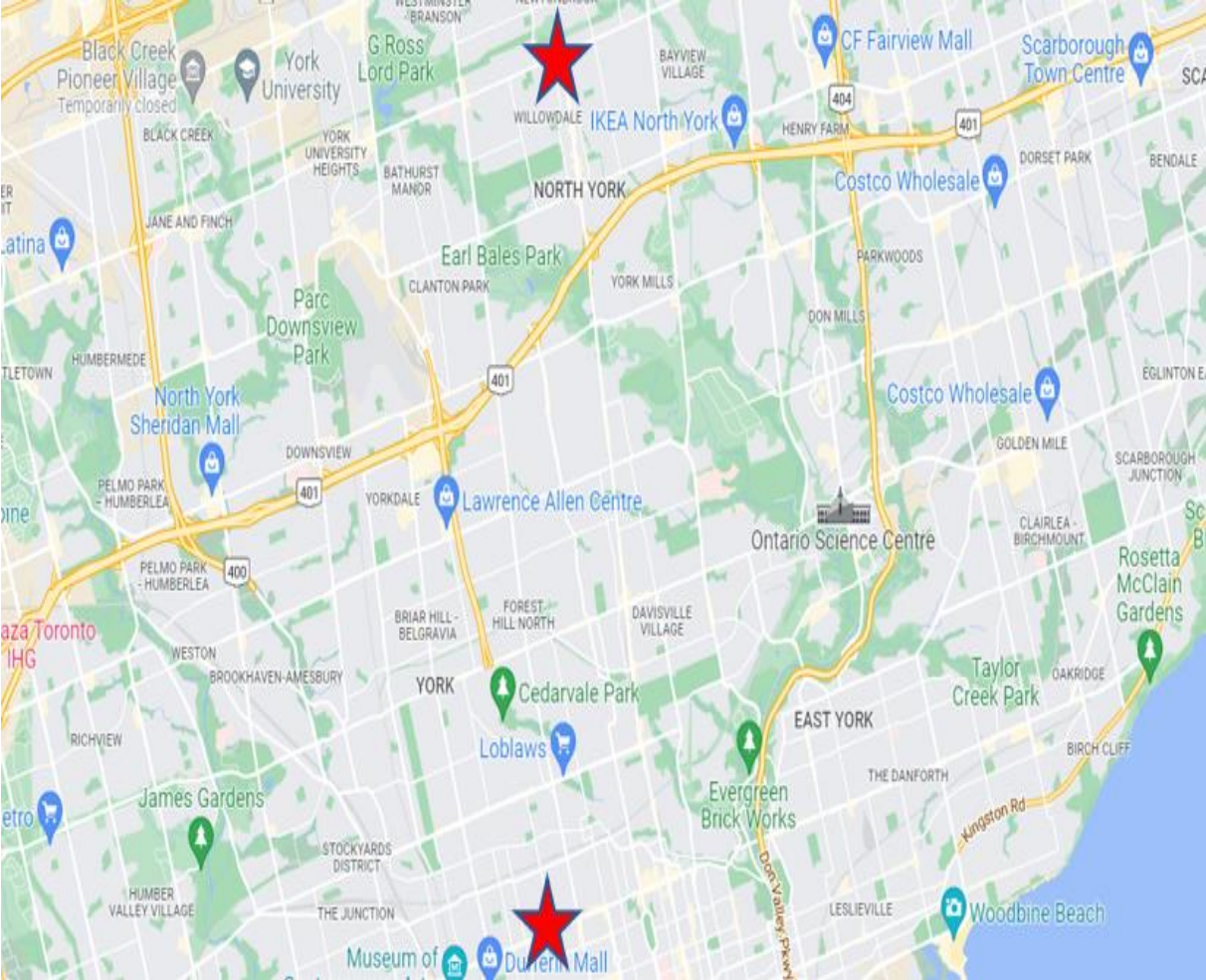
The findings of the present study suggest that Korean churches in Canada may be faced with the same issues as those in the United States. Although many participants were engaged in various practices related to ethnic identity exploration through the Korean church throughout their childhood, adolescence, and/or young adulthood, many left the Korean church to either explore the Canadian church communities or stop attending the church altogether. In contrast, their first-generation parents continued to be engaged in the Korean church community throughout the time. Therefore, these findings affirmed the different cultural, social, and/or religious needs that different generations seek to fulfil through their church practices, as well as the growing concerns for the future of the Korean church amidst the intergenerational transition of its members. Additionally, the varying levels of evolving ethnic and national attachment that many participants seemed to have developed were observed: as they aged, some became less dependent on the Korean church community, and some moreover actively sought for membership in the multicultural church community.

### **7.3.3 Koreatown**

Throughout the years, notably since the 1960s, the passage that Korean immigrants took throughout Toronto for settlement and ethnic enclaves that were formed have demonstrated positive correlations. In the 1960s, as the first wave of Korean immigrants comprised Koreans who attended the University of Toronto to study theology, their settlement patterns and some initial community roots (i.e. the Alpha Korean United Church) were mostly concentrated in the downtown area (Brown, 2012, as cited in Fraser, 2019, p. 7). Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, diverse forms of community institutions were formed between Bathurst and Christie in downtown Toronto, representing an ethnic enclave, which provided Korean immigrants with various forms of services, community hubs, and employment (Fraser, 2019, p. 7). Then, in the 1990s, as Korean immigrants began settling in the suburbs, many community institutions also shifted toward the North York area (p. 8). Currently, the two neighbourhoods, Yonge and Finch

and Bathurst and Christie, remain as the areas that are identified as Koreatown in Toronto (as starred in Figure 47). Due to the proximity to their childhood residence in the suburbs, most participants were more familiar with Koreatown at Yonge and Finch. Both areas are congregated with Korean businesses, representing pockets of the city that offer a variety of socializing activities associated with the Korean culture and services for Korean immigrants (Figure 48).

**Figure 47**  
*Koreatowns in Toronto*



**Figure 48**

*Koreatown at Yonge and Finch in Toronto*



*“File: Yonge Street Olive Ave.jpg” by Leventio is marked with CC 4.0. The image can be visited by the link [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yonge\\_Street\\_Olive\\_Ave.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yonge_Street_Olive_Ave.jpg).*

Having a vital ethnic community—whose benefits for its members is determined by the enclave quality rather than size—is advantageous for immigrants in their adaptation and acculturation in the host society, because it offers cultural/social capital and group membership. It is especially useful for visible-minority immigrants who, regardless of the level of their acculturation, tend to be faced with a limited access to the middle-class White society (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Schüller & Chakraborty, 2022). Indeed, due to racial discrimination to which visible minority groups are vulnerable, acculturation outcomes of the second generation are not guaranteed to be better than those of the first generation—in fact, the process and outcomes have been found as highly varied (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001). In the case of 1.5-generation Korean immigrants, the findings affirmed that the majority actively made use of the Korean community for ethnic identity exploration on both cultural and social levels. For many, the exploration was facilitated by their co-ethnic peer socialization, as well as the perceived in- and out-group distinctions.

As displayed in Table 54, most participants had experiences of exploring Koreatown throughout schooling years. The level of exploration of Koreatown appeared to be the highest during high school. This finding was not surprising, in consideration of the high levels of their co-ethnic peer socialization patterns and desire to explore the ethnic identity during



adolescence, in line with previous literature (Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001; Phinney, 1988). Furthermore, due to the location of Koreatown located at Yonge and Finch,<sup>91</sup> the presence of the Korean community is hard to go unnoticed. Hence, even Jacob, who had limited interactions with Korean peers throughout schooling, was circumstantially exposed to the area during his daily commute between his home in the suburbs and his university in downtown Toronto.

**Table 54**

*Exploration of Koreatown*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Explored Koreatown throughout schooling years	<b>7</b>
- Explored Koreatown mostly during high school	6
- Explored Koreatown mostly during university/college	4
Has never explored Koreatown	<b>3</b>

**Table 55**

*Frequency of visits to Koreatown—past and present*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Frequency of visits in the past	<b>10</b>
- Regular, frequent visits	7
- Almost none	3
Frequency of visits in the present	<b>10</b>
- Infrequent/rare visits	7
- Frequent/occasional visits	3

Nevertheless, as Table 55 shows, there seemed to be a significant decrease in the frequency of the participants' visits to Koreatown between the past and the present. In the past, most participants used to visit Koreatown frequently, whereas, at the time of the interview, visits were infrequent and rare for the majority. In fact, currently, there were two participants who continued to visit Koreatown occasionally, and only one participant for whom the visits were frequent.

Koreatown offers Korean immigrants cultural and social resources that they can use to engage in transnational experiences. Throughout such experiences, one can combine the cultures of Korea and Canada, thus interpreting what their ethnic identity means for them, as 1.5-generation immigrants living in the host country (Y. Lee & Park, 2008; Min, 2017; Shin,

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<sup>91</sup> The area houses Finch GO Bus Terminal, which is a transport hub connecting the inner-city transit to regional transit.

2012). The findings showed that the participants were engaged in various kinds of activities that supported their exploration of cultural and social ties, as well as ethnic businesses, within the Korean community through Koreatown. In Koreatown, Korean restaurants, cafes, bars, karaokes, and PC cafes were frequented by the participants. Extra-curricular schools, such as art academy, were also attended by few. Other businesses, such as Korean hair salons, were still visited by few participants in the present day. The annual Korean harvest festival, hosted by the Korean Canadian Cultural Association of Metropolitan Toronto near Yonge and Finch was also cited.

**Table 56**

*Appeals of Koreatown for the youth*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Socializing activities related to the Korean culture	<b>8</b>
“Hotspot” for the Korean youth	<b>4</b>
A limited choice of places to socialize	<b>4</b>
Extracurricular activities (e.g. art classes)	<b>2</b>

The appeals of Koreatown for immigrants, especially the youth, to wish to engage and explore within the community are listed in Table 56. Most participants highlighted various socializing activities and extracurricular activities that are available and concentrated in Koreatown. Thus, Koreatown was depicted as the “hotspot” for the Korean youth across some narratives. Looking back, some participants believed that they had a limited choice of places to socialize, which led them to frequently visit Koreatown.

The narratives of the participants vividly illustrated Koreatown in Toronto, particularly Yonge and Finch, as the hotspot for the Korean youth. Their experiences are well represented in the following excerpts:

Growing up, Finch is where we hung out all the time. That was just our hotspot, because there's Korean food, there's karaoke... stuff to do. [...] If anything, you can run into your friends there, too. It's just where everybody went. I guess, at that time, I felt more connected to the Korean community— 'cause I was there, where Korean people hung out. Now, I barely go there. It's just only if I want to have Korean food. [...] when we started drinking, we were drinking in 한국술집 s [Korean bars]. (Lucy)

Koreatown at Yonge and Finch was our go-to place in high school and university. [...] at least once or twice a week was our average throughout high school. Probably more towards like the older grades, especially because we had to go to 미술학원 [art academy]. [...] And whenever we did go out to that



area, we would go to a Korean restaurant, like Soban<sup>92</sup> or like karaoke. And, if not that, we would just like walk between Finch to like North York, like grab bubble tea and like go to a movie theatre... And then, when we got to university, that's when we started going to like Korean bars in that area to scope out other Koreans. [...] I still love Korean bars. I still go to have like 막걸리 ["makgeolli"]<sup>93</sup> and stuff. (Kelly)

For whatever reason, Korean kids just love karaoke. That's why they're all clustered at places like Finch. [...] I used to go to Yonge Finch every day. In high school, I used to like live there, almost. [...] I'd go to karaoke twice in one day. Go to karaoke once, go to YK,<sup>94</sup> go have corn cheese at Soban, then go to Ziller karaoke... Then, go to the bowling alley at the Food Basics plaza, then Congee Queen,<sup>95</sup> then go back to Soban to finish the night off. [...] These days, I just feel too tired. I just don't go out much now. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Back then... In high school, we used to go out to Finch a lot, because, in Koreatown, there are obviously lots of Koreans, and, in high school, you go through puberty, so you're so self-conscious. So you'd always be so alert as to whomever is around, you know. Seeing what kind of people were there, things like that. Then, going into university, I rarely went there. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*)

Since high school, in Koreatown, um, regularly enough, my Korean friends and I would do activities that are more Korean. For instance, we go to like Korean bars, Korean karaokes, Korean 피씨방 s [PC cafes]... [...] If we do go out and interact, then I think that's pretty much all we do. (James)

What is interesting to note from the excerpts above is the sense of cultural community comprised of the Korean youth, who gather to engage in Korean activities with one another, while being conscious of the surroundings in which they constitute the majority. The sense of community was established in the minds of the participants—"back then" for most—based on the shared interests, networks, and transnational activities of exploring the Korean culture, as well as an immigrant.

It is through the experiences in Koreatowns that the participants were able to further connect with Korean peers outside of school and church networks. For example, to prepare their portfolio for the university entrance audition, Kelly and Harin went to a Korean art academy in Koreatown, where they expanded their co-ethnic network. Harin also added that one of the friends that she made at the academy was the main influence on her previous tendency of frequently socializing in Koreatown.

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<sup>92</sup> Name of a Korean restaurant, which no longer is in business in Koreatown at Yonge and Finch.

<sup>93</sup> A type of Korean rice wine.

<sup>94</sup> Name of a PC cafe in Koreatown at Yonge and Finch.

<sup>95</sup> Name of a Chinese franchise restaurant.

When the participants were asked to explain why they no longer frequented Koreatown, some expressed that, at the time, back then, Koreatown felt like “only” or “the best option,” in consideration of numerous factors. Firstly, in high school, especially, not having a car restricted the mobility of Harin and her peers, as they had to depend on public transit to get around (“[...] it’s not like we had a car [...] the kinds of activities we could do together to socialize was limited”—*Translated from Korean*). Therefore, Finch, the transport hub, was a great fit. Secondly, some participants “just didn’t know” better as to where else to hang out (“Back then, [...]. [...] we used to wonder where all those Korean people kinda disappear to when they get old, ‘cause you don’t really see old people in Koreatown”—Kelly; “There were no cool restaurants, or none that we knew of. There was no Instagram—like, we didn’t know”—Lucy). Thirdly, some suggested that there has been an improvement of the hospitality scene in Toronto over time, which eliminated the need for them to go to Koreatown for good dining experiences (“Toronto has become such a good place for international cuisine over time, too—but like in the recent years, not so much back then”—Kelly; “[...] in Toronto, you can get pretty good food now from any kind of cuisine”—Jacob). Lastly, some expressed that their sense of taste evolved along with their peer-socialization patterns, which led them to step over the boundaries of Koreatown for socialization and entertainment. The following excerpts provide examples:

I started hanging out more with non-Koreans, naturally, I just started finding nice patios and pubs. [...] And also my palette has gotten better. [...] All we used to eat was like 김치볶음밥 [Kimchi fried rice] at like 내고향.<sup>96</sup> And we were so happy. (Lucy)

Also, hanging out in areas of Toronto that have no Koreans whatsoever. [...] ‘cause we’ve become so like, this restaurant is not good enough for us, we must go and find somewhere cooler. [...] We go like biking together or go to scotch tastings and whatnot. Like, I was paddleboarding all summer and like, you know. (Kelly)

In fact, a commonly cited factor that appeared to be linked with the declining level of the participants’ dependence on Koreatown for socialization was age of the participants. Many associated Koreatown with a young crowd. Therefore, the level of interest in socializing in Koreatown seemed to decline naturally over time for many.

Furthermore, in parallel to the perception that the Korean church community seems to be affected by the generational change, Koreatown in Toronto may be evolving, as well, according to some participants. Kelly and William believed that there is an increased number of second-generation immigrants among the Korean immigrant population in Toronto, who do

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<sup>96</sup> Name of a Korean restaurant, which no longer is in business in Koreatown at Yonge and Finch.

not depend as heavily on Koreatown for entertainment and socialization as the previous 1.5-generation youth (“[...] a lot of younger Koreans in Toronto now are like... Second gen, like, Canadian [...] And oftentimes, you can’t even tell that they’re Korean”—Kelly). As for external factors, Kelly, Jacob, Lucy, and William pointed out that Koreatown at Yonge and Finch is increasingly occupied with Chinese people and businesses (“It’s kind of tough to call it the second Koreatown now. A lot of Chinese businesses have taken over”—Jacob). Jacob also added that, there seems to be “a new Korean hub” forming around World on Yonge<sup>97</sup> in Markham. Additionally, the same four participants believed that some elements of Koreatown, such as Korean bars, have become trendy over time and “pretty multicultural” (“They’re not a hole-in-the-wall-only-Koreans-know-about kind of places anymore. [...] all these like Instagram posts about them”—Kelly). Kelly and Lucy made a remark that the “Korean-centricness” was becoming less the case of the clientele of Koreatown, and that certain aspects of Koreatown were also evolving to adapt to the changing clientele (e.g. bland taste of Korean dishes served in restaurants which are normally spicy).

Overall, the findings demonstrated Koreatown as an attractive and convenient site in which the Korean youth socialize with each other and further expand their Korean networks—especially involving the Korean-speaking 1.5-generation, who predominantly occupy the area. By actively engaging in various activities that the area offers, the participants were able to attach meaning to their perceived sense of the Korean identity. Koreatown is furthermore significant within the context of the Korean community because it offers a site outside of home for the Korean youth to explore their sociocultural identity (Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001). Unlike the Korean church, visiting Koreatown does not require an individual to be religiously affiliated. As well, various types of ethnic businesses provide, not only useful, but also fun environment, making the area popular among the youth. Thus, it is undeniable that Koreatown constitutes a significant part of the Korean community, along with the Korean church.

Albeit expressed by a few, the opinion that Koreatown in Toronto is going through a shift is likely to be the case. According to Fraser (2019), a shift in the settlement patterns of Korean immigrants is the primary reason for which Koreatowns in Toronto have lost the population and community institutions—remaining in the form of businesses. The findings of this study further extend on this evolving state of Koreatowns in Toronto by demonstrating the

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<sup>97</sup> World on Yonge, also known as World Shops, is a retail space located at Yonge and Doncaster in the north of the current Koreatown at Yonge and Finch.

generational shift that is evident in the Korean immigrant population in Toronto. Firstly, there is an increasing number of the second-generation Korean youth who are likely to demonstrate a lesser level of cultural retention than their 1.5-generation counterparts. Secondly, as offspring-generation immigrants grow older, the overall level of the integration of the dominant community members is bound to evolve, compared to the Korean community which used to be mostly sustained by first-generation founders. Thirdly, as offspring generations are, as they age, not likely to be dependent on Koreatown for their cultural and social needs, the clientele of ethnic businesses are likely to shift. What is also worth noting is that Koreatowns are going through commercial gentrification: the businesses that primarily occupy the neighbourhoods render the Korean ethnic identity as a form of commodity, consumed by the middle class (Fraser, 2016). The fact that only few participants continue to visit Koreatown stand as an example that the cultural and social capital that Koreatowns offer are no longer primarily a necessity, but rather, a commodity.

Koreatown can be seen as a particularly interesting site of study, as it visibly reflects the gradual process of the evolution of the Korean community in Toronto. The evolution is not only dependent on generational changes that are taking place within the Korean community, but also on external changes that are brought by the dynamics of the city development and evolving interest of the general Canadian population in Korean businesses. Hence, Koreatown may indeed be evolving, gradually becoming less ethnically secluded and more open to a multicultural clientele—and, as Jacob suggested, perhaps starting to form elsewhere in the city, depending on shifting demographic patterns and demand.

Overall, the findings that have been discussed in this topic section suggest that there may be a weakening sense of community and ethnic attachment in the minds of 1.5-generation immigrants as they age, and that the gradual process of the blurring of ethnic boundaries may be the reality of the Korean church community and Koreatown in Toronto. In some cases, the participants demonstrated the tendency of exploring what they perceived as mainstream interests throughout the time, which eventually replaced their previous social and cultural activities that used to be heavily shaped by the ethnic culture. Additionally, the narratives that evoked generational difference in envisioning the future of the Korean church indicated that the participants are no longer passive recipients of cultural transmission; rather, they are actively engaged in imagining the qualities of what they perceived as the future of the Korean Canadian community. In this regard, it could be argued that Korean offspring generation immigrants are

likely to wish to provide support for the future generations by uniting the Korean community and the Canadian mainstream society—which appears to be a different approach when compared with their first-generation counterparts. Therefore, the Korean community serve as an important site for immigrants and their children to practise and express their identity, which seems to be becoming increasingly transnational and symbolic across generations.

#### 7.4 Friend Groups

The findings related to schooling experiences, family, and Koreatown, which have been discussed so far, mostly focused on the memories of the participants from their childhood and early adulthood. As all the participants were in their adulthood at the time of the interviews, the gap between their schooling experiences (i.e. under their parents’ care) and the present-day experiences needed to be examined furthermore. The socialization experiences that occur outside of home represent a significant aspect of cultural socialization and the resulting identity, because they shape an individual’s socialization tendencies and in- and out-group perceptions within the context of ethnic and national identities (Danico, 2004; Döpke, 1992; Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001; Roh & Chang, 2020). For example, social integration of migrants helps them to develop a more positive attitude towards the host society (Becker, 2022), and it is moreover positively correlated with intergroup relations, as well as economic and cultural integration of immigrants (Naveed & Wang, 2021; OECD, 2019b). In other words, social integration of immigrants greatly contributes to establishing social cohesion and overall productivity of the state. It must also be noted that social integration of migrants tends to evolve with the length of stay. Thus, it should be examined as a progress, rather than a static state (Cruz-Saco, 2008; Martinovic et al., 2009).

**Table 57**

*Socialization patterns*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Mostly socializes with Asian peers, including Koreans	<b>5</b>
Exclusively socializes with Korean peers	<b>3</b>
Mostly socializes with peers of mixed backgrounds, including Koreans	<b>2</b>

Table 57 shows the socialization patterns that were reported by the sample. The tendency of co-ethnic/racial peer socialization remained constant for most participants, unchanged since schooling. While many maintained close friend groups from school and/or

church from childhood, few participants expanded on their friend groups by exploring peer networks through work.

Indeed, there were no drastic changes, if at all, observed in the socialization patterns of the sample since schooling until the present day. All of the three participants, who were close friends with Koreans throughout schooling, Lucy, Jisoo, and Victoria, continued to exclusively socialize with Koreans in adulthood. It must be noted that, in contrast to Jisoo and Victoria, whose friend groups had been limited to Korean networks throughout most of schooling, Lucy used to be friends with mixed groups of peers in school, while keeping close friendships with Koreans outside of school; regardless, like Jisoo and Victoria, Lucy was exclusively engaged in co-ethnic peer socialization on a regular basis presently. In fact, following the pandemic, her regular socialization became limited to her closest friends who were Koreans (“I still do have a lot of non-Korean friends that I could see, if I wanted to. It’s just, with the pandemic, we just phased out a little”). Across the sample, there were only two participants, Kelly and William, who mostly socialized with cross-ethnic and racial peers presently. They both used to socialize with non-Korean peers in school—Kelly towards the end of university.

Out of those who socialized with Asians in the present day, Nora and Harin represented the few cases in which their socialization tendencies evolved since schooling. On the one hand, Nora shifted from socializing with peers from mixed ethnic/racial backgrounds to Asian peers. Her friend groups were circumstantial throughout schooling, based on whoever happened to be in her surroundings, and that she always felt closer connection to peers of Asian or immigrant backgrounds. On the other hand, Harin, who only had Korean friends throughout school, became friends with peers of mixed backgrounds, mostly Asians, through work, with whom she interacted regularly in the present day.

**Table 58**

*Close friends*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Korean ties	<b>10</b>
- Most friends are from school/church	10
- Made friends through work/other connections	3
Non-Korean ties	<b>7</b>
- Most friends are from school/church	6
- Made friends through work	2

As demonstrated in Table 58, the impact of previous socialization tendencies and experiences appeared to be significant on shaping the social ties that lasted into the adulthood, since all the participants retained friendship with “old friends” from school and/or church. Whether within or beyond co-ethnic/racial boundaries, half of the sample made friends with the peers that they met through diverse channels (e.g. work, roommates, through other friends, and Continuing Studies course). Nevertheless, there were only two participants—Kelly and Harin—who formed close friendship with cross-ethnic/racial peers beyond schooling, through work.

The participants who made friends through work and other networks seemed to stay within ethnic/racial boundaries that they were familiar with. The only exception to this trend was Harin, who, despite having continuously been engaged in Korean networks throughout schooling, became friends with peers from both Korean and non-Korean backgrounds through work (“I actually began to have non-Korean friends as I started working. [...] But then mostly Asians. The friend I’m close to is Dutch”). She felt that she now had “a choice,” which made a significant difference. As expressed previously, Harin felt that her choice of friends was decided by schoolteachers who kept on assigning Korean students to each other, as well as circumstances (e.g. language/cultural barriers, the “ESL label,” Korean networks in school etc.). She commented: “Now that I’m working, all those connections and labels have stopped following me around... Freedom? In a way, I’m not restricted to any groups anymore, so I can now make friends based on my choice” (*Translated from Korean*).

All ten participants had Korean friends in their friend groups—although, in the cases of Jacob, William, and Nora, the presence of Korean peers in their friend groups remained limited. What seemed interesting was the positive correlations that were observed between the patterns of cross-racial and cross-generational socialization. On the one hand, those who were part of co-ethnic/racial friend groups were mostly friends with co-generation peers; on the other hand, Kelly and William, whose friend groups were of mixed racial backgrounds, had close friends who were both 1.5 and second generation. The only exception to this trend was Ben, who mostly socialized with Asian peers and had co-ethnic friends from both 1.5- and second-generation backgrounds. As the second generation often demonstrates a lower level of ethnic language and cultural retention, as well as a higher level of mainstream language and cultural acquisition (Danico, 2004; Rumbaut & Ima, 1987; Soehl & Waldinger, 2012; Warner & Srole, 1945), these participants’ social ties with the second-generation peers are likely to be associated with higher levels of sociocultural integration compared to the others. These differences observed across

the sample in the individuals' socialization patterns furthermore highlight the heterogeneity of the 1.5 generation that contribute to shaping the 1.5-generation identity.

When the participants were asked to describe shared interests and activities of their friend groups, there seemed to be a significantly lower level of cultural retention in the present-day lives of the participants than in the past. Besides occasionally going to Korean hair salons, bars, and restaurants in Koreatown or eating Korean food and having Korean drinks together with friends, the activities in which the participants were engaged were not limited to the Korean culture (e.g. rock climbing, cycling, profession-related interests etc.). Additionally, Korean pop culture, which many participants consumed regularly, was described as irrelevant to group interests and activities within their friend groups, in most cases. In fact, Jacob and James were the only participants who were engaged in activities based on the Korean culture with their friends: they played Korean online games with friends who were both Korean and non-Korean origin; and James regularly went to Koreatown with his Korean friends to socialize. These findings suggest that, while co-ethnic peer socialization patterns can positively be correlated with high levels of ethnic identity retention (Vietze et al., 2019), cultural aspects of the ethnic identity that individuals maintain may not reflect the heritage culture and identity in their pure form. Therefore, the ethnic identity that most participants maintain seems to be, beyond being transnational, symbolic, overall.

According to Tajfel and Turner (2004), group membership is the core component of one's identity, as it marks an individual's social identity by promoting a sense of belonging. Through in- and out-group comparisons, individuals are able to define *us* versus *them*, which consequently can both shape their sense of in-group pride and self-confidence, as well as prejudice and racism against out-groups. Furthermore, on the one hand, one's tendency of co-ethnic peer socialization is often linked with perceived barriers related to ethnicity in accessing cross-ethnic groups (i.e. perceived discrimination and bias), especially in the case of foreign-born individuals (Brown, 2006; B. S. K. Kim et al., 2003; G. Kwak & Lai, 2012;); and, on the other hand, cross-ethnic friendships have been found to positively influence intergroup attitudes of individuals (Chen & Graham, 2017).

As for the majority of the sample, the impact of group membership—examined through their friend groups—is likely to be especially salient on their ethnic/racial identity. The findings showed that their peer-socialization patterns underwent little to no change throughout their lives, consistently demonstrating the preference for co-ethnic/racial networks, in most cases.



Therefore, social integration as a *process* (Martinovic et al., 2009) in the case of the 1.5-generation participants in this study may be described as a passive process for most, in which the individuals seemed to have been able to overcome ethnic boundaries, but nonetheless remained within co-racial networks in their friend groups. Hence, there probably exist perceived barriers that persist throughout time for the majority—regardless of the level of acculturation and the stage of life—that contribute to the evident social divide between the co-/cross-ethnic/racial peers.

At the same time, when compared with the past sociocultural ties and resulting experiences, the present-day sociocultural socialization tendencies of the participants demonstrate a significant difference. Firstly, the Korean language no longer seemed to be an evident marker of identity, compared to their schooling years: across the sample, Jisoo was the only one who exclusively used Korean with friends; Lucy, Harin, and Victoria used both Korean and English either in Konglish or simultaneously; and the rest of the sample used English to socialize. Secondly, group interests no longer seemed to be centered around the ethnic community, framed within Koreatown and Korean churches. In other words, despite the persistent tendency of co-ethnic/racial peer socialization, most participants appeared to have attained an evolved palette for sociocultural activities within their friend groups in their adulthood. Thus, while social integration of the sample may still be retained within ethnic/racial boundaries in most cases, increased levels of cultural integration was evident—suggesting an improved level of sociocultural ties to the national identity that the participants developed over time.

## **7.5 Dating/Marriage**

Dating and marriage preferences and tendencies within and across ethnic/racial groups are dependent on several factors, such as an individual's ethnic background, early socialization tendencies, and—in the case of offspring-immigrant generations—the level of integration of their parents into the host society (Anyawie & Lichter, 2022; Clark-Ibáñez & Felmler, 2004; Hannemann et al., 2018; Van Niekerk, 2007). In addition, the intergenerational shift in co-ethnic marriage and intermarriage rates appeared to be highly dependent on migrant groups (Hannemann et al., 2018). For example, in Asian American literature, a growing population and the reinforced cultural boundaries that result have been found to provide second-generation Asian Americans with ample opportunities to network and marry within the co-ethnic/racial groups, retaining the in-group boundary (Qian & Qian, 2020).

**Table 59***Romantic relationships—experiences and overall tendencies*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Previous/current experiences	<b>10</b>
- Has been in a relationship with a Korean peer	7
- Has been in a relationship with a non-Korean peer	6
- With an Asian	4
- With non-Asians	3
Overall tendencies	<b>10</b>
- Has mostly/always been in co-ethnic relationships	6
- Has only been in co-ethnic relationships	4
- Has mostly/always been in relationships with non-Korean peers	4
- Has only been in relationships with non-Korean peers	3

In the case of the 1.5-generation Korean participants in this study, most of their first-generation parents seemed to remain closely connected to the ethnic language, culture, and social networks. Furthermore, linked with the large body of the Korean Canadian population in Toronto, co-ethnic/racial peer socialization tendencies were evident in most cases. Therefore, it can be expected that their preference for choosing a partner for dating and marriage would be geared towards co-ethnic/racial peers. This hypothesis was proven to be true, as shown in Table 59, which summarizes the patterns related to the participants' previous relationships. Seven participants had been in a relationship with a co-ethnic partner, four out of whom had only been with co-ethnics. As many as six had also been in a relationship with a cross-ethnic, three of whom had only been with cross-ethnics—which showed that the overall preference of the sample was not strictly limited to co-ethnic networks and communities. Across the sample, there were only three participants who had previously been in an interracial relationship, mirroring the findings that illustrated the limited exploration of the most participants of cross-racial networks. Naturally, the participants mostly remained within their familiar networks when seeking for a romantic relationship: most of those who had mostly/always been in co- or cross-ethnic relationships had only been in co- or cross-ethnic relationships, respectively.

At the time of the interviews, the three participants, Kelly, Victoria, and William, were the only ones across the sample who were married, and they were happy to have married a Korean for the cultural similarities that they shared. The three participants who were currently in a relationship indicated that their girl/boyfriends were co-ethnic/racial: on the one hand, the boyfriends of Harin and Lucy were of the Korean origin, and, on the other hand, the girlfriend of Jacob was of a mixed Asian origin.

While previous research findings identified numerous factors related to co-ethnic/racial preferences of immigrants for choosing partners for dating/marriage, it has also been concluded that infrequency of intermarriage is primarily linked with a low incidence of cross-ethnic/racial encounters (Shin, 2014). Mirroring this finding, co-/cross-ethnic/racial relationships tended to occur naturally for the participants, through the social networks which they were part of—as Kelly said, “[...] it was never quite at the forefront of my conscious thoughts that I would like to meet a Korean guy.” For Jisoo, her exclusive socialization patterns with Koreans left her with no room to consider dating anyone outside of the group (“Back in university, I used to only hang out with Koreans, so I just thought I’d always have to be with a Korean in a relationship”—*Translated from Korean*). Lastly, Harin and Victoria indicated that the language and cultural barrier was the reason for which they felt bound to dating within the Korean networks (“I’d love to share things. But then, for example, if they don’t celebrate Christmas—then what do we do?”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*).

**Table 60**

*Perceived importance of ethnicity/race in dating/marriage—of self*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Important	<b>8</b>
- Preference for a co-ethnic/racial partner	5
- “They need to be Korean”	3
Not important	<b>2</b>

The importance of ethnicity/race that the participants perceived in choosing a partner for dating/marriage is indicated in Table 60. Most participants perceived ethnicity/race as an important factor in marriage, to varying extents and preferred co-ethnic/racial peers for dating and/or marriage. These preferences highlighted their in-group preference based on ethnicity and/or race. Across the sample, there were only two participants for whom neither ethnicity nor race was important in a romantic relationship and union.

Regardless of the perceived importance of ethnicity/race in dating/marriage, all participants acknowledged some of the key advantages that a co-ethnic/racial dating/marriage can bring. They agreed that shared cultural norms, values, and experiences related to the Asian culture were the biggest benefits of co-ethnic/racial unions. Indeed, shared cultural understanding and experiences—particularly related to family values—seemed to be one of the biggest appeals of co-ethnic/racial relationships and unions. One of the criteria that was deemed important by many was having shared family values (e.g. family dynamics, family values and

mannerisms). Additionally, perceived cultural similarities among co-ethnic/racial relationships and unions included a similar taste in food and experiences related to upbringing and immigrant lives (“They might have a similar upbringing as me, in terms of having lived in a similar area [...]”—Kelly; “They must have experienced similar kinds of difficulties as an immigrant...”—*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*).

Moreover, Jisoo, Victoria, and William pointed out some benefits of having a co-ethnic *and* co-generation partner: there were shared experiences that were particular 1.5-generation Korean immigrants (e.g. helping first-generation parents, similar upbringing encompassing two countries and cultures) that would help establishing the connection between the individuals. For instance, Jisoo recalled her previous relationship with a Taiwanese, with whom, despite sharing the racial origin, she encountered cultural conflicts (“[...] he grew up in Windsor among White people, so I think there were such cultural conflicts between us. Because he was second generation, [...] a very White-washed second generation...”—*Translated from Korean*). Overall, when commenting on advantages of co-ethnic unions, all participants seemed to agree on what William described as an easier connection “at an almost instinctive level.” As for co-racial unions, having a similar appearance, as well as potentially widening the available networks, were also mentioned by some participants as one of the perceived benefits related to co-racial marriages.

Some participants also saw co-ethnic unions in a positive light, which they believed would ensure fluid communication between the partners and parents. For Harin, Victoria, and Nora, whose parents’ English was described as very/limited (the mother’s, in Victoria’s case), speaking the same language was an important factor to consider in romantic relationships, especially in marriage. Harin, who felt protective of her parents and saw them as her “responsibility,” especially wanted to ensure that her future family would develop a close relationship with her parents without language barriers.

**Table 61**

*Perceived importance of ethnicity/race in dating/marriage—of parents*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Important	<b>7</b>
- Not certain ethnicities/race	4
- Must be Korean/preference for a co-ethnic partner	3
Not important	<b>3</b>

It is worth noting that marriage is an important institution for Asians, for whom cultural attitudes towards marriage are typically heavily influenced by traditional family values, comprising of gender-specific roles, a strong familial focus on children, and viewing a marriage as a reunion between, not just two individuals, but also their two families (National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, 2009). Previous research findings in Korean American literature have also revealed that most of first-generation Korean American parents expect their children to marry a co-ethnic (G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Some participants in the present study also pointed out that, unlike casual dating and relationships, “marriage is such a big deal” and that “marrying someone is like bringing together two families” in the minds of many Koreans, including their parents. As can be seen in Table 61, ethnicity or race was an important factor of consideration for the parents of many participants: four participants felt that their parents would, despite feeling neutral about mixed marriages, would be against the idea of them dating/marrying those from certain ethnic/racial backgrounds; and the parents of three participants expected the children to be with a Korean partner. Across the sample, there were three participants who felt that their parents did not perceive ethnicity/race as an important factor in dating/marriage of their children.

In some cases, the perceived importance of ethnic/racial backgrounds of the participants’ partners in the eyes of the parents appeared to stem from stereotypes that the parents associated with certain ethnic/racial groups. The following excerpts provide some examples:

I think the only thing that my mom doesn’t want is for my brother to meet a Chinese girl. [...] she thinks that Chinese girls are going to whip their husbands, and they’re never going to cook or do the dishes or anything. (Kelly)

I think it’s just based on what they think the community is like. [...] I know that their perception of Chinese people is, for instance, that Chinese women don’t cook for you and stuff like that. And their perception of Japanese woman, on the other hand, is that they make food and other household chores and things, that they are good, like, traditional wives. They have a lot of these kinds of stereotypes. ‘Though, for some of the other groups, for them, race is a big thing. Already, they feel like we are a visible minority and so obviously prone to like discrimination, and Black people are even more severely victims to that. So there’s that... Another thing that they’re worried about is that you will have children, and they will not even look Asian, and that they’ll just look completely like a different race. Another reason I think would be other negative stereotypes associated with Black people, like violence, like what they see on TV. (Jacob)

Strictly speaking... I don’t think it would matter in the end. Parents in general always give in, in the end, I think. But they would flip out if I were to bring

home a Black person. But then, what would they do, if I love him? [...] I feel like they think Black people are shady. And, because we're Asians, they probably think I'd put myself in a more difficult position by being with a Black person. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Both Jacob and Harin thought that their parents would be fine with them dating or marrying a White person (“I guess they don't really have negative stereotypes that they tie to White people”—Jacob; “I think my mom would like it better, even, if the person were White... who is more active and has lots of connections, who is helpful and stuff”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*). On the other hand, there was one participant, Nora, whose mother did not want her and her sibling to marry Koreans, due to the perceived formalities and etiquettes that are expected of the families of the bride and the groom in Korean culture (“She doesn't really like that you're expected to do things for the other family as a woman. [...] these unwritten rules about what you should be doing for the other family”).

Furthermore, some participants who had previously been in a relationship with a non-Korean person expressed that their perceptions of ethnicity/race in romantic relationships/unions evolved over time. Jisoo, for instance, felt that her horizon had “expanded” since university, based on her previous relationship with her Taiwanese ex-boyfriend (“Before, I used to strictly date Koreans. Now, this is me being better... I'm open to dating Chinese, too, now”—*Translated from Korean*). As for William, who was unable to connect with the Korean community, culture, and identity while growing up, always had “an interest in dating interracial.” However, when it came to marriage, he realized that the Korean ethnic background was an important factor for him to consider, as he learned over time that sharing the same values was beneficial in a relationship. He provided an example by describing one of his previous interracial relationships, which contributed to his improved understanding of what he wanted in a relationship:

When I was dating a White girl, my goodness, that was probably the most difficult relationship I've ever been in. It was so difficult. Because she couldn't understand reasons why I was upset or why I had certain cravings and emotions. I couldn't understand why she had certain urges or thought process... It was very different.

In consideration of previous research findings (Clark-Ibáñez & Felmlee 2004; Hannemann et al., 2018; Van Niekerk, 2007), the participants' perceived importance of ethnicity/race in dating/marriage were compared to the following elements: (1) the parental

preference for ethnicity/race, (2) sociolinguistic integration of the parents,<sup>98</sup> (3) and close friends of the participants (Table 62). The findings provided some interesting insights.

**Table 62**

*Perceived importance of ethnicity/race in dating/marriage—of self and parents vs. language proficiency of parents vs. close friends*

Participant	Ethnic/racial preference of self	Ethnic/racial preference of the parents	Language proficiency of parents	Close friends
Victoria	Must be Korean	Must be Korean	Proficient/very weak	Korean
Ben	Korean preferred	Korean preferred	Proficient	Asian
William	Must be Korean	Korean preferred	Proficient	Mixed backgrounds
Kelly	No preference	Not certain ethnicities/race	Proficient	Mixed backgrounds
Jacob	Korean/Asian	Not certain ethnicities/race	Limited	Asian
Nora	Korean preferred	Not certain ethnicities/race	Limited	Asian
Harin	Must be Korean	Not certain ethnicities/race	Very weak	Asian
Lucy	Korean/Asian	No preference	Proficient/Very weak	Korean
James	No preference	No preference	Limited	Asian
Jisoo	Korean/Asian	No preference	Very weak	Korean

Firstly, what can be noted is that the parents' co-ethnic peer socialization patterns and language proficiency did not seem to be associated with the participants' ethnic/racial preference for dating/marriage. For example, Ben and William were two out of three participants across the sample who described the English proficiency of both their parents as proficient; yet, they both demonstrated preference for co-ethnic partners. At the same time, the findings suggest that there may be a link between the language proficiency of parents and ethnic/racial stereotypes that they perceive: out of the parents of five participants, among whom at least one spoke proficient level of English, those of four participants did not seem to hold negative stereotypes regarding ethnicity/race that affected dating/marriage preferences that they had for the children; and, out of the parents of five participants whose both parents spoke limited

<sup>98</sup> The findings indicated that the parents of all the participants were part of the Korean community, exclusively engaged in co-ethnic peer interactions, outside of the sphere of work. Thus, only the language component of integration of the participants' parents were included in the list.

levels of English, those of three participants held negative ethnic/racial stereotypes. Although these may be loose interpretations, previous research has found that severity of language barriers with which one is faced negatively affect their intergroup contact, which has been identified as a means of reducing negative stereotypes (Kwak & Lai, 2012; Pettigrew, 1997).

Secondly, there were some links that could be drawn between the parental preferences for co-ethnic partners and those of the participants. On the one hand, the parental preference for Korean partners for the children mirrored that of the participants, such as Ben, William, and Victoria. On the other hand, those whose parents did not seem to particularly favour the Korean background over others seemed to be open to dating/marrying Asians or other races, such as Kelly, Jacob, Nora, Lucy, James, and Jisoo.

Lastly, co-ethnic/racial friend groups appeared to be somewhat relevant to the participants' ethnic/racial preference in dating/marriage. Sharing the same ethnic/racial backgrounds were considered as preferable or crucial by seven out of eight participants who were close friends with peers of Korean or Asian backgrounds. The only exception was James, who closely socialized with Asian peers, but did not attach any importance to ethnicity/race in a partner. Moreover, based on the two participants across the sample, William and Kelly, who had close friends of mixed ethnic/racial backgrounds, no links have been found between their cross-racial social ties and ethnic/racial preference for dating/marriage.

Dating and marriage tendencies can indicate one's preferences for group boundary maintenance, representing his or her ethnic attachment (Sidanius et al., 1997). Despite the parents' strong sense of ethnic attachment—and some ethnic/racial stereotypes, in some cases—that were demonstrated, most participants felt free to date/marry someone outside of the ethnic/racial group. Nevertheless, the majority did not seem to step out of the co-ethnic/racial networks with which they were familiar. Cultural familiarity, facilitated by an intergenerational transmission and reinforced by social ties, may be the key factor that explains this phenomenon. Indeed, the cultural elements, such as language, food, and family values, as well as various experiences linked with their lives as visible minority, have been highlighted as the most significant appeals of the ethnic/racial boundaries that most participants wished to maintain.





## CHAPTER 8

### THE INTERNET, MEDIA, CULTURES, AND LANGUAGES

#### 8.1 The Internet

Not only is the internet a valuable mode of communication that significantly aids small immigrant communities by promoting mental support and spreading useful information (Georgiou, 2006), but it is also a useful pool of resources that are utilized by immigrants for their personal growth and empowerment, especially in the case of disadvantaged groups (Elias & Lemish, 2009). Moreover, positive correlations have been drawn between high levels of identification of migrant children with their ethnic community, as well as their use of the internet, in exploring the cultural content and engaging in online communication with the members of the community (Rydin & Sjöberg, 2008; Yang et al., 2020). In addition, Elias and Lemish (2009) posited that the internet can contribute to the hybrid identity construction of immigrant youths, because it offers a safe and useful space for individuals to experiment with multiple cultures and identities simultaneously. Inquiring into the internet use of the participants was therefore aimed at examining their online exploration of their identity—especially targeting the kinds and depth of ethnic and national ties and attachment that were formed in domains of politics, pop culture, and media throughout their identity journey.

**Table 63**

*Apps and websites used regularly*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Popular social media apps and platforms	<b>10</b>
- Netflix	10
- YouTube	8
- Instagram	8
- WhatsApp	3
- Facebook	2
Korean communication apps and platforms	<b>9</b>
- KakaoTalk	9
- Naver	6
- Daum	3

There seemed to be a high level of dependence on the internet in the case of most participants: seven participants indicated that, as they did not have a cable TV subscription, their access to news and/or pop culture was exclusively facilitated through the internet. Table

63 lists some of the most popular social media/communication apps and platforms, some of which facilitated transnational aspect of their sociocultural identity.

Across the narratives, Netflix, YouTube, and Instagram were the most popular apps and streaming platforms that the majority used regularly. Some Korean apps and platforms were also cited, indicating the participants' active use of Korean communication platforms and/or web portals. For example, KakaoTalk was used by all participants except for Ben, who was trying to restrict the number of messaging apps in general. All nine participants used the messaging and videocalling features on KakaoTalk to communicate with their immediate family members in Canada, and some also used it to keep in touch with their extended family in Korea. Likewise, half of the participants used the app to communicate with friends, whether in Korea or Canada. Besides KakaoTalk, the participants' use of Korean apps and sites was limited to Naver and Daum. Their use of the platforms varied: as mentioned earlier, Jacob and James enjoyed reading webtoons on Naver and/or Daum; Victoria accessed news in Korea on Naver; Lucy and Nora used Naver dictionary to check vocabulary; and Jisoo, Harin, and Victoria used Daum Café to access *캐스모*,<sup>99</sup> the online community of Korean immigrants in Toronto.

What is worth noting is the abundance of sociocultural resources which have become available and accessible online in the modern context. Not only has maintaining connections with family, friends, and various communities been made easier and affordable through the internet, but increased levels of popularity of streaming platforms that deliver various national and ethnic media have further boosted accessibility of multiple cultural content online (K. Yoon, 2022; K. Yoon, 2018). Indeed, the participants appeared to be actively making a use of communication and streaming platforms to explore communities and media related to both the ethnic and national cultures online.

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<sup>99</sup> *캐스모* (“keh-seu-mo”) [acronym in Korean for *The Story of Korean Immigrants in Canada*] is a Korean-immigrant online community on Daum that has over 220,000 members.

The community site for Korean immigrants in Toronto on Daum Café appeared to be useful for various purposes, such as looking for tenants for renting properties (“When I used to rent my house, I used to use it then”—*Translated from Korean/Victoria*) and recruiting Koreans for businesses (“I would post for my mom when she looks for a hair stylist to hire”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*).

## 8.2 Interest in Current Affairs and Voting Habits

The sample consisted of the participants who were long-term immigrants, whose mean length of residence in Canada was 20.8 years at the time of the interviews. As they were all citizenship holders, spoke English, and accessed the English-language media, it could be expected that they developed varying levels of interest in current affairs and politics in Canada. At the same time, considering the findings that have consistently emphasized a strong level of ethnic attachment of the first-generation parents and the salient impact of family socialization on the participants, the parental influence on the participants' interest in political affairs related to both ethnic and host country seemed worth examining. In fact, previous literature has highlighted that the parent-child transmission of parental political orientations is facilitated through political learning in pre-adulthood (Jennings et al., 2009).

**Table 64**

*Interests in the news/news consumption—of self and family*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
<b>Family</b>	<b>10</b>
- Follows the news in Korea	9
- Regularly follows the news	7
- Minimally follows the news	2
- Follows the news in both Korea and Canada, even minimally	4
<b>Discussions take place at home</b>	<b>10</b>
- No	6
- Yes	4
<b>Personal consumption of the news in Canada</b>	<b>10</b>
- Follows the news	4
- Follows the news, albeit minimally (i.e. disinterested)	2
- Does not follow the news	4
<b>Personal consumption of the news in Korea</b>	<b>10</b>
- Does not follow the news	8
- Follows the news, even minimally	2
<b>Personal interest in the news</b>	<b>10</b>
- In at least on country	4
- Either country	4
- In both countries	2

Table 64 summarizes the findings relevant to the interests of the participants and their families in consuming the news in Canada and Korea. Overall, there was a small number of participants who were interested in the news in both countries, and close to half of the

participants were not interested in following the news altogether. These findings were reflected in the patterns of news consumption of the overall sample. A higher number of participants were interested in the news in Canada and followed the news when compared with those interested in the news in Korea. As for the family, unsurprisingly, the parents seemed to be more interested in Korean news than the children, and those who were married indicated that their partners and they shared similar levels of interest in the news. However, most did not seem to be engaged in family discussions about current affairs. The overall findings affirmed the parental influence on shaping the children's interest in the news in Korea and Canada.

At home, all participants but Lucy observed that their parents were interested in the news in at least one country, to varying degrees: the parents of five participants followed the news in Korea, only, and the parents of four participants followed the news in both Korea and Canada. Most parents were un/disinterested in Canadian politics ("I know that my parents are very interested in Korean politics, but I'm not so sure about Canadian politics. [...] I don't think I've ever heard them go into details about Canadian politics"—Jacob). Few participants—Kelly and James—pointed out that their younger brothers were "more active and more read" about Canadian politics, and that, in Kelly's case, her grandfather also used to email her links to Korean news articles.

Whether it be about Korea, Canada, or both countries, the parents of four participants—Ben, Kelly, William, and Nora—discussed politics and shared the current news at home. Among these participants who were exposed to discussing current affairs throughout their upbringing, there seemed to be a genuine interest that was initiated in their minds throughout the exchanges.

But my parents would look at both. They're interested. Um, and, like my sister, I don't know how much she follows. [...] Yeah, I follow quite a bit. It's almost like a hobby. (Ben)

Yes, we discuss it [politics] quite a lot. Korean news, [...] I don't really follow, but my parents follow it to some degree and tell me about it. And whenever I hear big stories popping up, I ask them about it, and they kind of fill me in on all the background knowledge that's required and whatnot. Canadian news, we all follow, and we talk about it quite a bit, especially when it comes to politics. And I talk about it with my brother quite a bit, because my brother is very well aware of what's happening around. (Kelly)

My parents follow both, Korean and Canadian. We do discuss it. [...] I would say yes, I'm very interested, especially because architecture is so closely tied to the welfare of the city and country. I mean, because everything in construction is tied so closely to politics, so closely tied to the economy. (William).

Yes, my mom is very into politics. She follows the news, but mostly Korean news. And she knows Canadian news through me, because, once again, with the fact that she's not fluent in English, she doesn't really have a lot of sources. So it's mostly me telling her like the major events that are happening. [...] I became very interested in it—how things are being run, things like that. So I would say I'm very much into politics. (Nora)

Like the four participants, the overall sample's only point of exposure to Korean news seemed to be through their parents at home. Although none of the four participants did not follow the news in Korea themselves, they had always been exposed to discussing the news at home with their parents who were highly engaged in the news in Korea and/or Canada, which seemed to have helped them develop their interest in following the news. In the cases of Kelly and Nora, they remained interested in the affairs of Korea, even though they do not actively seek out for the news outside of the family discussions, themselves. Furthermore, Kelly and William discussed the news at home with their partners, as well, and their discussions were centered around Canada/North America, for the most part.

The narratives of Kelly and Nora, cited above, contrast with those of the three participants, Lucy, Jisoo, and Victoria, who did not consume any news in either Korea or Canada:

No, zero. My family doesn't like politics. [...] Usually, I'm very disinterested in politics: I hate it, I don't like talking about it. Because I have no interest, I have no knowledge about the subject. (Lucy)

My parents are not really invested in politics. They're left-wing, but not so decidedly. I think they follow some Korean news on Naver and the like. [...] I'm a bit embarrassed, but I'm not interested in either country. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

Not so much about Canada, but Korean news... up to certain extent. [...] [with her parents and husband] We're not into politics that much. [...] Not much, other than the news that directly affects me, like with my work. (Victoria)

Lucy was the only participant whose parents were completely uninterested in the news in both countries, and Jisoo and Victoria were the two participants whose parents were minimally engaged in the news in Korea. Naturally, the four participants never discussed the news at home while growing up, and they did not feel interested in the news in either country, themselves. Thus, these findings are consistent to the central argument of Kent M. Jennings et al. (2009), which emphasized the salience of intergenerational transmission of parental political character, centered around parent-child discussions in pre-adulthood of the children. At the same time, they vary in the sense that the ethnic/national news consumption patterns of the participants who were exposed to family discussions did not seem to be aligned with those of their parents.

Moreover, the findings indicate that parental interest in the current affairs of at least one country is required, as well as family discussions about the subject, for children to develop personal interests in current affairs—whether in one or both countries. In this regard, it seemed likely that the limited occasions for the participants to engage in family discussions about the news was the main cause of their overall limited levels of personal interests in Korea and/or Canada.

What stood out from the findings is the small number of participants who were interested in the news in both countries—only two, across the sample. As many as six participants were un/disinterested in the Canadian news, and eight in the Korean news. Even in the cases in which the participants were un/disinterested in current affairs, some expressed that they were nevertheless exposed to some “big news” in their daily life. In Victoria’s case, despite the lack of interest in politics altogether, she had to follow some Korean news articles to be able to prepare private English classes for company employees in Korea. As for James, he was the one out of two participants across the sample who maintained some interest in Korean news and made an effort to keep up with current affairs. He explained in the following words: “This is more to just kind of keep up to date with what’s happening there, because, in Canada, you still hear it from others, right?”

Given that the participants immigrated at a young age, and most were not exposed to political discussions at home, the overall lack of interest in the news in Korea was not a surprise. Even in the cases of Ben and William, whose parents regularly discussed the news at home, they did not feel that the Korean news was relevant to them on a personal level.

Yeah, that’s brought up a few times about both Korea and Canada. Obviously, my parents follow more Korean news than I do. I almost look at none—like a little bit pops up on my feed and whatnot. I mostly focus on just Canadian politics for my part. (Ben)

But it’s funny, because, whenever we do discuss it, I always look at the Korean news as a foreigner with no invested interest in Korea, whereas they look at it as a foreigner with invested interest in Korea. So whenever I hear stories about North Korea and how they’re threatening or they did something to South Korea, they would discuss it, and they talk about the sensitivities around it, a little bit more sympathetic, whereas, when I hear the news, I just go on about how South Korea just needs to start a war, needs to send a stronger message. If they sink one of our ships, we need to sink ten ships, you know. [...] Whereas my parents see it as, you know, if you start a war, we have so much more to lose, think about all the people, and blah blah blah... It's obvious that they are still attached to the safety of that nation or the wealth of that nation, whereas I’m looking at it from like a logical perspective. And they are more emotional about it. (William)

Therefore, while family discussions may be linked with fostering the children’s interest in current affairs, the parental influence alone may not be sufficient in forming the children’s interest in the current affairs in the parental homeland. One’s lack of interest in the political affairs in the parental home country can also represent his or her emotional disconnection to the country (Espiritu, 2003, p. 204). In contrast, in cases in which the exposure to family discussions did have an impact in enhancing children’s interest in Korean news, the language barrier may become an obstacle in further engaging them to actively consume the news, themselves. For example, unlike Ben and William, whose parental interest and discussions did not seem to have contributed to their own interest in the news in Korea, Kelly and Nora remained interested—yet, they expressed that the language barrier hindered their active engagement in keeping up with the news in Korea (“In my head, I am interested in the affairs of Korea, but [...] I find it hard to actually actively look at what’s happening. The language barrier doesn’t help”—Kelly”; “[...] there’s a lot of words I don’t get, and it makes me not want to read it”—Nora).

Among the seven participants who followed the news in either Korea or Canada, most used social media platforms (e.g. Twitter, Reddit, YouTube, Spotify, and Instagram) and news outlet apps and sites (e.g. Google News, CBC, CP24, and Naver) to access the news. YouTube and Instagram were the most popular platforms used by many participants, as the subscription/following function made it easy for them to continuously receive the news from news outlet channels/accounts. Furthermore, some participants mentioned that some YouTube videos/Instagram posts published content which presented current affairs in a brief, simple language, thus making it easier for them to follow. There also existed Korean news outlets and media that published both print and online versions of the news, providing local news for Korean Canadians (“Toronto news and other news that affect Koreans”—Victoria).

**Table 65**

*Voting in Canada*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Does not regularly vote	<b>6</b>
- Has never voted	5
Regularly votes	<b>3</b>



As Table 65 illustrates,<sup>100</sup> there was a low level of voting habits across the sample. Only three participants regularly voted, whereas half of the participants never voted in Canada. The parental interest in current affairs (of whichever country) and family discussions throughout the upbringing tended to have positively affected the voting habits of the participants. For example, Ben, Kelly, and Nora were three out of the four participants who had been exposed to discussions about the current news at home, and they were the only three participants who regularly voted. The exception was William, who seemed far more interested in the American elections than the Canadian. Kelly's younger brother, who "strongly believes in democracy and the need to vote," played a role in shaping Kelly's voting habits, as well ("So he used to rush my parents to go vote and stuff like that"). Across the sample, Nora expressed a particularly high level of interest in Canadian politics: because she used to follow the news while growing up and still often regularly discussed it with her mother, following the news daily has become a habit which she enjoys. She pointed out that she also had had an experience of working on the election day.

Given that the participants left Korea at a young age and renounced their Korean nationality, their overall lack of interest in current affairs of Korea seemed reasonable. Nevertheless, the fact that most participants expressed overall low levels of political engagement in Canada—especially on the level of civic participation—draws attention, since their Canadian citizenship appeared to be irrelevant to their interest in national affairs. Indeed, when examining the visible minority representation in the Canadian Parliament and cabinet, Koreans represent one of the most under-represented visible-minority group across all parties, along with Filipinos and Japanese. This trend seemed to be persistent, despite the ongoing political integration of immigrants and visible minority groups (Black & Griffith, 2022).

To understand this phenomenon, previous research findings prove useful. On the one hand, the children who are brought up in highly political families are likely to demonstrate high levels of political engagement and participation (Jennings et al., 2009). On the other hand, one's engagement in political participation during the formative years of early adulthood is an important factor which, paired with naturalization, can facilitate his or her political integration in the mainstream society (Street, 2017). In light of these research findings, it can be understood that the first-generation parents' overall lack of political engagement and participation in

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<sup>100</sup> Since James had only acquired the citizenship in the year that he was being interviewed, he had not had opportunities to be able to vote. Therefore, he has been left out of the count used in the Table.

Canada may be the factor that affects civic engagement and participation of the children. In fact, only a few participants in this study who had regularly been engaged in discussions about current affairs at home throughout their upbringing regularly voted. In parallel, most participants who lacked exposure to political discussions at home were un/disinterested in political affairs in both Korea and Canada.

While the parental influence on shaping the participants' national political attachment may exemplify the top-down model of political transmission in the context of parent-child socialization, the trickle-up effects can also be observed in the findings (Terriquez & Kwon, 2015).<sup>101</sup> For example, some participants regularly exchanged Canadian news with Korean news coming from the parents, and, in Kelly's case, her younger brother encouraged the parents to regularly vote in Canada. These trends also can be seen as examples of cultural brokering, in which 1.5-generation children transmit cultural knowledge related to national identity onto the parents.

The overall findings therefore showed that, on the political level, ethnic and national attachment tend to be weak, mostly, in the case of 1.5-generation participants. In consideration of the cases of the four participants, Lucy, Jisoo, Harin, and Victoria, who were completely uninterested in both Korean and Canadian news, their exposure to the news seemed to be extremely limited, if not entirely lacking: at home, their parents tended to be, if at all, mostly interested in following ethnic news; and, in social settings, they tended to mostly/exclusively socialize with 1.5-generation Korean immigrants, like themselves, who were likely to also be un/disinterested in politics. Thus, when it comes to developing the 1.5 generation's interest in current affairs—ethnic and/or national—the language barrier (i.e. when accessing the content based on ethnic politics), as well as cultural and social barrier (i.e. limited exposure to and resulting cultural knowledge of current affairs in Korea) may be the biggest obstacles.

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<sup>101</sup> In their discussion of political socialization within the context of immigrant families, Veronica Terriquez and Hyeyoung Kwon (2015) posited that parents and children can both influence the development of civic and political participation of one another. The parental influence on the child is referred to as the *top-down model*, and the child's influence on the parents is referred to as the *trickle-up model*.

## 8.3 The Media and Pop Culture

### 8.3.1 Consumption Patterns

Mainstream and ethnic media are understood as powerful agents that shape one's mainstream and ethnic cultural values, attitudes, languages, and pride (DeFleur & DeFleur, 1967; Jeon, 2012; J.-S. Park, 2004; Pyke, 2000; O'Guinn et al., 1985; Ramasubramanian et al., 2017; Y. Yi, 2009; K. Yoon, 2022; Zhang, 2021). Thus, the media consumption of immigrants is a strong indicator of their ethnic and national attachment. In this study, the participants were asked the questions that inquired into their consumption of media, including pop culture. The regular use of streaming platforms, such as YouTube, Netflix, and Instagram, have made both Korean and mainstream pop culture easily accessible for the participants.

**Table 66**

*Past and current consumption of pop culture*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Past consumption patterns	<b>10</b>
- Used to follow both Korean and western pop culture	4
- Used to mostly/exclusively follow Korean pop culture during youth	4
- Used to mostly/exclusively follow western pop culture	2
Current consumption patterns	<b>10</b>
- Follows both Korean and western pop culture	7
- Mostly follows western pop culture	3

Table 66 lists some comparative patterns related to the participants' consumption of both Korean and western pop culture. Overall, there was a subtle shift in the participants' interests over time from Korean pop culture towards western pop culture. While Korean pop culture was still embedded in everyday life of most participants in present day, most participants were consuming it along with the western pop culture.

Previous literature shed light on various aspects of the consumption of Korean pop culture of the Korean Canadian immigrant youth, primarily highlighting the positive correlation between high levels of an individual's K-pop<sup>102</sup> consumption and his or her enhanced ethnic attachment. Beyond providing literacy practices, the consumption of Korean pop culture often enables the immigrant youth to negotiate and reaffirm their identity. On the one hand, in- and

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<sup>102</sup> The term, K-pop, refers to Korean popular music.

out-group identification is facilitated through the distinction of those who consume mainstream Western pop music and those who consume older Korean pop music, leading one to attain a better understanding of self-identity. On the other hand, intergenerational interactions through family pastimes of watching Korean TV together can improve the quality of family relations and the impact of family socialization (J. Kim & Duff, 2012; Jeon, 2012; J.-S. Park, 2004; Y. Yi, 2009; K. Yoon, 2019). Thus, it appeared evident that Korean pop culture provides a valuable cultural reference and resources for individuals, which can facilitate their exploration of various social ties within the family and ethnic community.

One of the most prominent findings was that the participants' consumption of Korean popular culture was often linked to their socialization patterns across different domains. For example, most of their consumption patterns of Korean pop culture were influenced by their friendships and romantic relationships with Korean peers in school and KM within Korean churches. While many consumed both Korean and western pop culture with friends in school and in church, four participants—Kelly, Lucy, Jisoo, and Harin—whose close friends were Koreans throughout schooling, were absorbed in exploring Korean pop culture exclusively throughout their adolescence. The exception to this trend was Jacob, for whom Korean pop culture was not a shared interest within their friend groups. He nevertheless became interested in Korean pop culture through his sister and was able to establish a connection with the Korean culture through Korean pop culture exploration, which positively shaped his ethnic pride (“[...] I just honestly feel like there're more things I can connect to and be proud of within the Korean culture [...]"). Thus, consumption of Korean pop culture can be seen as a means of enhancing one's interest and motivation to explore the Korean identity, even in the cases in which an individual has limited access to cultural and social resources that are needed to explore their ethnic identity. Extending on previous research findings, the current study sheds light on the power of transnational consumption of Korean pop culture in enabling ethnic identity exploration for immigrant children—independent of the availability of co-ethnic peer networks.

At the time of the interviews, most participants were still following Korean pop culture, but along with western pop culture (“a mix of both”), and no one was exclusively immersed in Korean pop culture anymore. Kelly, moreover, stopped consuming Korean pop culture gradually over time since schooling, and, along with Nora and William, was mostly engaged in western pop culture. Throughout the narratives, various elements of Korean and western pop culture were mentioned: K-pop and K-dramas, entertainment shows, series, and movies, as well

as western pop songs, TV shows, series, and movies. Outside of the entertainment category, only one participant, Lucy, indicated that she liked reading books in both languages.

Using the transnational approach, consumption of Korean pop culture of immigrants can be understood as their means of coping with social marginality within the dominant society and as an indicator of their nostalgia and patriotism for the ancestral homeland (Dunn, 2005; Lacroix, 2013). However, the recent literature on K-pop have suggested that, faced with the global popularity of K-pop, K-pop consumption is becoming increasingly associated with the diasporic identity that ethnic youths develop in their identity negotiation, as well as the cultural identity that can be claimed by any individuals, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds (Ju & Lee, 2015; K. Yoon, 2019; K. Yoon, 2022). In this respect, the transnational consumption of Korean pop culture which many participants seemed to have been consuming daily not only signifies their ethnic attachment, but it also suggests an enhanced level of their sociability beyond ethnic group boundaries, using their transnational identity. Furthermore, in the present-day, most participants were consumers of both mainstream and ethnic pop culture, which highlighted their bicultural interests and, in most cases, literacy. At the same time, the fact some participants became increasingly immersed in the mainstream media in their transition from adolescence to adulthood suggest lesser levels of perceived sociocultural marginality and their dependence on ethnic media and community—thus reflecting a heightened level of their integration.

### 8.3.2 Representation of Koreans/Asians in the Mainstream Media

**Table 67**

*Perceived representation of Koreans/Asians in the mainstream media*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Koreans/Asians are being portrayed in a positive manner in the mainstream media	<b>10</b>
- Asians used to be underrepresented in the mainstream media	4
There is an increasing level of presence and popularity of Korean pop culture	<b>10</b>
Feels concerned about tokenism/persisting Asian stereotypes	<b>3</b>

Throughout their life experiences in Canada, the participants had consistently been exposed to the mainstream media and various peer groups. As out-group perceptions of self and in-group members affect an individual's self-perception (Phinney, 1990), the participants' perceptions of how Koreans/Asians are portrayed and represented in the mainstream media

were investigated in this topic section. Table 67 demonstrates the findings. All participants agreed that there is an increasing level of presence and popularity of Korean pop culture these days. This perception also mirrored the opinion that Koreans/Asians are being portrayed in a positive manner in the mainstream media, in contrast to their underrepresentation, which was described as the norm by some participants.

Throughout the narratives, there were numerous symbols of Korean pop culture, such as BTS, Squid Game, and Parasite, which were brought up. The participants used such symbols to exemplify the perceived sense of growing level of recognition and popularity among the public in the genre (“Especially these days, there’s like a big boom of stuff”—Ben; “Now we do—it’s big”—Lucy; “But more recently, K-pop, K-drama... like, that’s becoming international, right?”—William). Popularity of K-pop was felt through diverse venues: the mainstream media, mainstream and ethnic peer interactions, as well as their online exploration. The following excerpts provide examples:

I definitely do think they have a presence in the mainstream media. [...] for instance, BTS has obviously gone huge worldwide, including Canada. [...] a couple of like months ago, McDonald's released a collaboration with BTS for their special McNuggets and stuff like that with special sauce, and it got sold out in the first day. And this was all over the news here. [...] But aside from just K-pop, um, some of Korean artists are starting to, for instance, like the hip hop community. They like previously, they had almost like no global presence whatsoever. But especially with globalization in general and the internet, there’s so much exposure that you can get just from putting a YouTube video out. I think a lot of the Korean artists have really caught on interests from like worldwide, including Canada. Just based on that, I think that’s definitely a growing industry. It’s very easy to tell from the get-go, just by looking at a metric perspective. [...] So when the Korean videos have millions and millions of views, you already know that there’s more than just the Korean population that’s interested. Just look at the comments alone: there’s a lot of English speakers that are leaving English comments on these videos. (Jacob)

Right now, the recent one is Squid Game: it's all over. Everyone’s crazy over it. YouTube, like, everything. Even just today, this magazine called ID, they reposted an old editorial that they did with the model, actress that’s in the show. So the post was ‘shout out to all those Squid Game stans, here’s an old editorial of Hyeon’—the actress that was in it. So, like, it’s big. It’s in the mainstream now. Even when I go to work, my co-workers, who are non-Koreans, [...]. Like, everybody's talking about it. As well, there’s K-pop. Everybody knows K-pop. My co-workers, they’re always like, ‘you listen to K-pop?’ and blablabla. People are always talking about it. Then K-dramas, too. It’s big now. [...] When it comes to dance, you see them on Tiktok, there’re these dance choreographers that went on like western shows? You know, those like America’s Got Talent or whatever. And they did pretty good.

And there's like so many other dancing shows in Korea now, and people love those—like, the comments are all English. (Lucy)

Apparently, right now, Squid Game is a very popular show. I have no idea what it's about, but I'm seeing a lot of the 뽑기<sup>103</sup> [Dalgona] pictures—I guess that's part of the show. And I'm like, wow, 뽑기's being reported in these like random western news outlets—what's happening? I find out through like, not because I want to find out about it, I just kind of hear about it, see it, people tell me. Like, my students tell me, 'Oh I love K-pop,' 'I love this drama,' 'have you seen this?' [...] So there's so much Korean culture being talked about everywhere nowadays. It's just, you just know about it. (Nora)

But Korean media, I almost never come into contact with, unless it is completely viral in Canada, like Squid Game. [...] or like when BTS blew up here, that was the time I tried watching a BTS music video. [...] It's more like curiosity. Like, why is it blowing up? I need to check it out, just so that I can join the conversation with other people. (Kelly)

The perceived success of Korean pop culture in the mainstream market appeared to affect how the participants perceived the societal perception of Koreans/Asians.

And when you see stuff like that on the news everywhere, I do believe that kinda improves the way that Asians are seen. (Jacob)

Like, it's out there. The messaging is going out. So it's kind of like the strongest form of propaganda of our ethnicity. (William)

It's changed, because, in the past, there was a lot more like... [...] Asians were just like a secondary character, almost never main characters. Sometimes, it'd be a little more characterized into like comedic roles—for example, typecasting, in a sense. And these days, like, there's a kind of a bigger push or evolutions have made roles for Asians. A lot more positive representation. (Ben)

It's refreshing, because these Asians are not like convenience store owners or like running dry cleaners, which used to be the norm before this movie. (Kelly)

As illustrated in the narratives of Ben and Kelly, some participants linked the increasing popularity of Korean popular culture (e.g. K-pop bands, award-winning films such as *Parasite* and *Minari*), as well as some of the recent products of mainstream popular culture that involve Asian castings (e.g. *Crazy Rich Asians*), to the growing representation of Koreans/Asians in the mainstream media. Many participants moreover believed that the new light painted Koreans/Asians as “trendy” and “fascinating” in the mainstream media.

Amidst positive opinions about the phenomenon of Korean pop culture and increasing levels of Asian representation in mainstream media, some participants also raised concerned

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<sup>103</sup> Pronounced as “ppop-ki,” the term refers to a Korean candy which was featured in the popular Korean series on Netflix, *Squid Game*. It was translated as *Dalgona*, another name of the same type of candy which was used in the series.

voices. Firstly, while acknowledging that it was “refreshing to see a show entirely based on an Asian immigrants’ life and the main casts being Asian,” Jacob criticized Kim’s *Convenience*<sup>104</sup> for not being “really Korean,” as most of its actors were “not even Korean”: he saw some elements of cultural appropriation throughout the episodes he watched (“I felt like it was just a show about what White people think Korean people are like”). Like Jacob, Harin felt that the “pretty boy” image that K-pop boybands promote reinforces the mainstream perception of Asian men as antagonists to masculinity (Espiritu, 2003). On the other hand, Kelly denounced tokenism that she perceived in some series these days. She commented: “[...] they put in an Asian cast member just so that they can say that they put in an Asian cast member—not necessarily because they think this person is going to add richly to whatever material they’re putting out there.” Using the movie, *The Chair*, as an example, she explained that starring an Asian cast as the Chair of the English Department at a prestigious university was, beyond playing with the racial and gender controversy, “trying a little too hard.” Nonetheless, overall enthusiasm that was conveyed across the narratives for the evolving levels and quality of representation of Asians in the mainstream media prevailed.

**Table 68**

*Impact of global popularity of Korean pop culture*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Global popularity of Korean pop culture	<b>10</b>
- Feels a sense of pride	10
- Feels intrigued	3

Naturally, the positive depiction of Asians, notably Koreans, in the mainstream media, as well as positive feedback from mainstream peer groups, appeared to have contributed to forming ethnic pride and self-esteem of the participants (Table 68). First and foremost, pride was a recurrent theme across all the narratives. Some felt an enhanced sense of pride, associated with the recognition that the Korean culture has been gaining among the mainstream population (“[...] I always valued Korean movies, literature... [...] I’m just happier that it’s being recognized by other people, as well”—Lucy; “I feel like Koreans especially have a big presence, thanks to BTS and other content. [...] So I feel proud”—*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*).

<sup>104</sup> Kim’s *Convenience* is a Canadian television sitcom, which was aired from 2016 to 2021. Its story is built on the life of a Korean immigrant family who runs a convenience store in downtown Toronto.



Furthermore, even the few participants who had lost a sense of connection with the Korean culture and identity felt proud for the recent achievements of the Korean pop cultural industry. For example, Jacob described his sentiments as the following, “[...] there’s a lot of aspects related to the Korean identity that I don’t necessary feel connected to. [...] when I see [...] arts and entertainment do pop off globally, it does make me feel proud.” Moreover, what stood out from the responses is an enhanced sense of self-esteem, which seemed to result from the association of self of the participants with the positive representation of Koreans in the mainstream media (“But I do have a sense of pride that *we* are getting the recognition”—William). Even the few participants like Kelly, William, and Nora, whose media consumption was mostly western, the phenomenon seemed to pique their interest (“I need to check it out, just so that I can join the conversation with other people”—Kelly; “[...] compared to before, there’s more incentive to try out some Korean content”—William; “I find out through other people. And then, if it sounds interesting, I end up looking it up myself”—Nora). Therefore, the positive out-group perceptions seemed to be linked with self-associations with the ethnic group, which enabled enhanced levels of self-esteem. Some correlations can be drawn between these findings and social identity theory, since positive social identity, as the ultimate objective of individuals, is significantly shaped by favourable in- and out-group comparisons and value connotations (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, pp. 283-284).

Some participants expressed feeling hopeful for further positive changes that such an evolving portrayal of Asians could bring in the future. William made a reference to the movie, *Crazy Rich Asians*, which was “a huge deal” in Canada:

Before in the American media or in American entertainment industry, Asians being depicted as heroes or attractive and successful characters, that was rare. In Canada, a lot of Asian communities, including Chinese, Korean, Filipino, whatever, they regularly bought out every single ticket, even if they didn’t go [...] so that it shows the box office that it is popular. And like they purposely sold that out every time, just to support and to force the media to produce more this type of stuff. ‘Cause if you prove that it’s a business, a success, they have to do it.

As described in William’s response above, the sense of community evoked in Asian communities supporting the media content representing Asians provides the reason for which all the participants—regardless of the level of attachment they felt to the Korean culture and identity—were able to positively identify with the success of Korean pop culture and express support. As well, both William and Ben perceived the increasing level of demand for Korean pop culture and the shift in the overall representation of Asians in the mainstream media as “the

strongest form of propaganda,” which would help making the future generations less racist in the long run. These findings resonate with previous literature, which found that the Korean pop culture promotes the spirit of Asian community and the pan-ethnic identity within the mainstream societal settings (Ju & Lee, 2015). The positive portrayal of Asian that Korean pop culture promotes can enhance one’s self-perception in coping with social marginality (Ju & Lee, 2015).

The *forever foreigner* representation of Asians which used to prevail in the mainstream pop culture presented the first- and second-generation immigrants with challenges in their identity construction (M. Tuan, 1998). Therefore, the evolving representation of Koreans/Asians in the mainstream pop culture in the current-day context can be expected to yield a positive impact on the immigrants’ identity journey. On the one hand, the positive representation of Koreans/Asians in the mainstream media is likely to be related to ethnic pride, regardless of the overall sense of attachment of an individual to his or her ethnic identity; and, on the other hand, the positive out-group perception of Koreans/Asians and an enhanced sense of Asian community may help positively shaping the intergroup attitudes and relations of individuals. Therefore, the findings suggest that the improved representation of Koreans/Asians in the mainstream media is positively correlated with national attachment of Asian Canadians throughout their identity journey.

It is worth noting that many participants associated the term, *mainstream media*, with the North American—if not American—media. Thus, when asked to comment on the presence of Koreans or Asians in the mainstream media/pop culture, numerous participants discussed the media beyond Canadian borders. Yet, some explained that, in contrast to the media representation of Asians which they perceived was on the rise, that of Canadians was limited, if not lacking, at the mainstream level. Indeed, the few popular icons of Canadian pop culture that were mentioned (e.g. Raptors, Justin Bieber, Drake, Avril Lavigne etc.) did not seem to arouse national pride in the minds of the participants; rather, a feeling of indifference was often expressed. In fact, many voiced that there was no such thing as a global recognition of Canadian pop culture:

Recently, I think there have been pop cultural phenomenon that have put Toronto, Canada, more on the map—like the Raptors or like Drake. Even then, I just don’t feel there’s *any*, anything special about Canada. And honestly, I’ve gotten so many dumb questions from non-Canadian people about Canada, like polar bears and shit like that, that I just don’t really associate any sense of pride with Canada. (Kelly)

I'd say I feel pretty indifferent. [...] For instance, when like the Raptors won the championships, or Drake or Justin Bieber started getting popular, I never really felt a new sort of sentiment. Yeah, so it's a little weird. But then, I mean, like Justin Bieber and Drake, I feel like people don't even know that they're Canadians—unless you're Canadian and that's how you know. (Jacob)

About Canada, frankly, everything's American. Here? Even people like Justin Bieber and, who is it, Avril Lavigne, people like that. But then, there's like nothing about them that you look at and think, 'oh, they're Canadians,' no? (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Out of the ones who commented on the presence of Canadians in the mainstream media, Ben was the only participant who associated it with a sentiment other than indifference. He felt intrigued by the *Canadian* label in pop culture. For instance, if he were to come across Canadian artists, he would be more inclined to “give them a shot,” “because they're Canadian.”

The Canadian media and the cultural message that it transmits have been criticized for being overshadowed by the dominant American influence in previous literature (Meisel, 1986; K. Yoon, 2017). Furthermore, K. Yoon (2017) posited that the failure of the public broadcast media to satisfy migrant populations may be linked with the lack of diversity in its content, which renders the identity of the Canadian media indistinguishable from that of the American media. For example, it has been reported that only 47 out of the 3,206 television contracts were given to women of colour, and only 22 went to Indigenous women between 2014 and 2017 (Canadian Media Fund, 2019). These findings provide a further context to the unclear distinction of the Canadian media content, as well as the overall lack of national pride that the participants demonstrated in regard to the representation of Canadians.

In addition, previous studies have found that one of the values and ideals related to the mainstream culture that are transmitted through mainstream pop culture is racial ideologies and bias. While the issue of racial hierarchy may be tackled at the level of schooling through the curriculum, the racialized notion of White bias representing the mainstream identity, along with other racial categorizations, form a racist ideology that pervades into the minds of the consumers of mainstream popular culture (Hall, 1995; S. J. Lee & Vaught, 2003; Ramasubramanian et al., 2017). These findings are concerning, since the members of visible minority groups that are exposed to mainstream pop culture may be at risk of encountering contradictions between out-group perceptions and self-perceptions in viewing their in-group identity. Therefore, the positive representation of Koreans/Asians in the mainstream media and ethnic pride that the participants described can be seen as a mechanism that counteracts racial ideologies that are conveyed in the mainstream media.

What stood out from the findings related to the participants' consumption of pop culture is the essence of transnationalism in their overall use of the internet. Their use of mainstream streaming apps/platforms and Korean communication apps/platforms in their identity journey enabled them to freely navigate and explore ethnic and mainstream communities and respective cultural content. Moreover, out of all the examples of the participants' use of the internet, the patterns of their pop culture consumption seemed to be the most bicultural. Throughout their consumption patterns and experiences of pop culture, the participants were able to learn various in- and out-group perceptions that the media portrays and negotiate their identity.

## **8.4 First-Hand Experiences of the Homeland**

One of the key characteristics associated with the 1.5 generation is the lived memories of what is often referred to as the *homeland* in the literature (Danico, 2004; Rumbaut & Ima, 1987). The findings so far have revealed that most participants had been actively engaged in imagining of Korea by exploring the Korean culture through family socialization, peer socialization, and transnational experiences. To further understand the imagination of Korea in the minds of the participants, their first-hand experiences of Korea were inquired into: the memories that they maintained from their childhood, retained social ties to Korea, visits, and relocation experiences to Korea in some cases.

### **8.4.1 Childhood Memories in Korea**

In contrast to their parents, 1.5-generation immigrants retain relatively unclear memories of the homeland (Danico, 2004; Rumbaut, 2012; Rumbaut & Ima, 1987). For example, Rumbaut (2012) postulated that the retained memory of the origin country that pre-school children is extremely weak, which negatively affects their acculturative experiences and outcomes—rendering them comparable to second-generation immigrants in terms of the perceived distance from the homeland. Indeed, Ben, who was the youngest to have arrived in Canada across the sample at age 5, was the only participant who was unable to recall any childhood memories of Korea. Besides Ben, for at least half of the participants, childhood memories of Korea were vague and distant.

Moreover, the memories of Korea that the 1.5 generation maintains “take the form of snapshot images,” reflecting “feelings and experiences they had as children more than having clear memories of Korea as a country” (Danico, 2004, pp. 96-97). Overall, the majority of the participants remembered experiences related to school and friends, which appeared to be

closely associated with one another in their minds. It was also these experiences that made some participants retain positive and/or negative sentiments. Additionally, half of the participants recalled their memories of spending time with family—some of which were discussed in Learning English section previously—and few described some old, outdated images of Korea from their childhood. Table 69 highlights some of these memories that were recurrent throughout the narratives.

**Table 69**

*Childhood memories of Korea*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Related to schooling experiences	9
Related to friends	9
Related to family	5
Old, outdated images of Korea	2

Walking through the memories, many participants described some positive memories of playing with friends and spending family time, especially with extended family members. They seemed to have associate such memories with nostalgia.

I have a lot of great memories of hanging out with cousins. We were really close. (Kelly, arrival age 9)

I would say I remember bits and pieces of my experience in kindergarten, like late kindergarten to, you know, grade one. So just school experiences, just a couple of kids that were my friends. But mostly my grandparents—I lived with them when I was in Korea. (Jacob, arrival age 6)

I guess going to school... Playing... Like, I was young, I was under 10. So all the memories are like playing in the playground, going on vacations, going to the beach, going to my grandma's, celebrating holidays with the big family. And I think that's pretty much it. [...] Yeah, because I went through such a big change, coming here. I think I was able to keep that memory, 'cause it is very different. It's like a life before Canada. So I think I remember it. [...] It stays with me. (Lucy, arrival age 9)

I have such strong memories of my child experience, especially in my grandparents' neighbourhood, because we used to go there all the time to see them. [...] So I have very strong memories of playing there. So my childhood home still remains that. (William)

[...] I think my memories are mostly around playing sports, playing traditional Korean games, which is, I think, very unique to Korea. 딱지, 구슬치기, 고무줄놀이<sup>105</sup>... (James, arrival age 9)

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<sup>105</sup> 딱지 (“ttak-ji”), 구슬치기 (“goo-seul-chi-ki”), 고무줄놀이 (“go-moo-jool-nori”) are names of traditional games that children play.

As illustrated in the excerpts above, such memories allowed the participants to retain varying levels of attachment.

Furthermore, several references were made to the stressful learning environment and, in some cases, peer socialization, in Korea across the narratives.

I definitely remember my creativity being stifled. That's very strong in my memories. I remember I had a very isolated upbringing when I was child. I don't think I had that many friends. I was very introverted. And then, when I came to Canada, for some reason, I became extremely extroverted. (William, arrival age 10)

I don't have much positive memories of school. I hated school in Korea. Yeah. I used to wake up every morning to go to my mom and be like, 'why do I have to go to school?' And it's like a grade-2 kid. And my mom was like, 'I was heartbroken.' [...] I genuinely hated school. I could say that with 100% certainty. I did not like anything about it. [...] I don't particularly remember having such a great time hanging out with friends, either. I just kind of hung out with whoever approached me first, and I was like, 'okay, I will hang out with you.' (Kelly, arrival age 9)

A very crowded school... Things like school. The school system? It's kinda really challenging... Going to cram schools. (*Translated from Korean*, Harin, arrival age 11)

Again, the first thing is the environment, which was more competitive. And even as a kid, like I kind of felt that pressure, because right after school, all the kids would be going to 학원 s [cram schools] and to do extra-curricular activities... just keep up competing with each other. (James, arrival age 9)

As discussed in the topic section, Motives for Immigrating, William and Kelly had a difficult time coping within the Korean education system: they both struggled with their studies and making friends with peers, due to their introverted character. Kelly emphasized that she mostly has negative memories of Korea because of her schooling experiences, and that the only positive memory which she retained was playing with her cousins.

Few participants also described the old, outdated images of Korea that they remembered from their childhood. Crowded classes in school, loud and open markets, and disinfection cars going around in the streets were some of the examples of the image that they provided. Lucy shared her vivid memories of what she described as "good-old-days kind of Korea": she remembered going out after school with other kids from school and her neighbourhood until they were called back home for dinner and chasing after disinfecting cars that circulated the neighbourhoods with friends on their bicycles. Similarly, Harin commented, "[...] that kind of old Korea, not like now. Nowadays... I'm sad that Korea is losing this kind of charm" (*Translated from Korean*). Hence, a sentiment of nostalgia was also evident in their narratives.

These lived memories of Korea can serve as one of useful reference points for the individuals when drawing comparisons between Korea and Canada. For example, while recalling the games that he used to play with friends in Korea, James commented that they do not exist in Canada—thus distinctively dissociating his early childhood with his life in Canada. Additionally, as previously discussed, the childhood memories of Korea for Kelly and William involved limited time spent with their fathers who were extremely busy with work. Such memories appeared to have positively shaped their appreciation for their life in Canada as a family. The comparisons that were drawn when reflecting on their childhood involving the two countries seem to have contributed to the process of negotiating the notion of home and self-identity.

Albeit being distant memories for numerous participants, memories of Korea were mostly centered around schooling experiences, peer socialization, and family time in their minds. These findings are meaningful, as they can be perceived as the foundations of one’s imagination of Korea onto which more content is added throughout his or her experiences, in relation to family/peer socialization, homeland visits, and other transnational activities in Canada,

#### 8.4.2 Family and Social Ties and Visits to Korea

**Table 70**

*Social ties and visits to Korea*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Close relationship with extended family	<b>6</b>
- Frequent contact	4
Friends who live in Korea	<b>5</b>
Frequency of Visits	<b>10</b>
- Infrequent/irregular	7
- Regular/frequent visits since adulthood	4

Homeland visits reflect ethnic identification of offspring immigrants and their emotional ties to the origin country by fostering their direct engagement with the culture and people (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Schimmer & van Tubergen, 2014; Soehl & Waldinger, 2012). Table 70 lists the family and friend connections that tie the participants to Korea, as well as the

frequency of their visits to Korea.<sup>106</sup> In total, eight participants maintained ties with family and/or friends who reside in Korea. Although the visits were described as infrequent/irregular for most, some participants started to visit Korea more frequently when they started to become financially independent.

As shown in the table, six participants retained ties with their extended family. Their contact was varied in frequency, as half of them occasionally kept in touch, while the other half were in touch with the family regularly. Four participants also had friends who resided in Korea, who they met in high school while the friends were international students in Canada or during the time they temporarily resided in Korea. Although these friendships did not appear to be correlated with the frequency of the homeland visits of the participants, their close contact with family did: all the four participants who regularly visited Korea—Jisoo, Harin, James, and Nora—were, not only close to their extended family in Korea, but also kept in touch with them regularly.<sup>107</sup>

According to previous literature, the frequency of adolescent children's return visits is linked with higher parental income, as well as what has been referred to as *ethnic motivations*—social ties that one maintains with people in the origin country (Schimme & Tubergen, 2014). The first-handed engagement with the homeland during one's youth that the visits facilitate can positively affect his or her homeland attachment and ethnic identification. Thus, Paulien Schimmer and Frank van Tubergen (2014) postulated that “return visits among adolescent children of immigrants are related to their ethnic identification” (p. 705). In parallel, infrequency of return visits can be expected to mirror one's stronger identification with the host country (Schimmer & Tubergen, 2014; R. C. Smith, 2006). The findings of the present study showed some patterns that mirror the previous research findings: the tendency of participants to visit Korea in an infrequent manner was positively correlated with the infrequent return visits of their parents that they observed throughout their upbringing, along with their limited contact with family in Korea. In this regard, it can be expected that most participants' identification with Canada be stronger than their identification with Korea—which is likely to be linked to symbolic elements (e.g. closely perceived family ties/friendship, among others), rather than to direct ties (i.e. kinship/economic ties) with the country, itself.

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<sup>106</sup> The frequency of visits that are cited in this study are based on the participants' travelling experiences prior to the pandemic.

<sup>107</sup> It must be noted that Jisoo and Harin were able to visit Korea as frequently as they did (i.e. “a number of times per year”), as they were both able to book flights at a reduced fare through their work in the airline industry.



Whether they were able to explore Korea through return visits during their youth, some participants felt motivated to visit Korea more often on their own as they transitioned into adulthood. In fact, out of the four participants who visited Korea regularly, three—Harin, James, and Nora—indicated that their visits used to be infrequent/rare while growing up. Their visits appeared to have become more regular once they became financially stable. Therefore, besides one’s early first-handed engagement with the homeland that parents can facilitate, the transnational ties that individuals maintain with their extended family seemed to positively contribute to shaping their ethnic motivation, affecting their patterns of return visits. In turn, regular visits to Korea are likely to enhance their ethnic attachment, by enabling them to build links between self and “the larger place and broader set of people left behind” (Soehl & Waldinger, 2012, p. 808).

**Table 71**

*Sentiments linked with visits to Korea*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Positive sentiments	<b>10</b>
- Feels that Korea is a cool/fun place to be	9
- A sense of comfort	4
Negative sentiments	
- Related to the culture shock	<b>6</b>
“Korea feels familiar, yet foreign”	3

Table 71 summarizes positive and negative sentiments that the participants felt through their visits to Korea. While all participants expressed an interest in planning a trip to Korea again in the future, the findings depicted various cases of what scholars refer to as the reverse culture shock (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Lysgaard, 1995).<sup>108</sup> On the one hand, some expressed a sense of fascination and comfort in visiting a place that felt like “a whole new world,” whose culture, yet, remained familiar to them in many aspects. On the other hand, some recalled feeling lost upon being faced with the discrepancy between their imagination of the homeland/childhood and the reality which they were exposed to.

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<sup>108</sup> The stages of intercultural adaptation that one experiences upon encountering a new culture have been conceptualized in various theoretical models. The most renowned ones are the U- and W-curve models, in which the curves represent stages of emotions that are involved in the process (Lysgaard, 1955; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1964). However, these stage-based models have been criticized to be inadequate, “neither accurately descriptive nor particularly predictive,” owing to highly variable factors that render the process unpredictable (La Brack, n.d., p. 2).

While the participants described their visits to Korea, the majority expressed feeling fascinated. Many felt enchanted with, among other aspects of the Korean experience, the variety of activities, food, and infrastructure involving the latest technology and quick service. For Jacob, Ben, Lucy, and William, who had not returned to Korea since immigrating until young adulthood,<sup>109</sup> the first visit was an occasion for them to experience Korea “for the first time.” The following excerpts demonstrate the sentiments:

So that was like, I guess just really cool, because, effectively, that’s the time in my adult life that I visited and that I can clearly remember. Like, when I was little, I remembered almost nothing. But this is kind of like almost experiencing Korea for the first time. (Ben)

I was really happy to be back, because, like, there were so many fun things to do and like cool little things to buy and stuff like that. I remember getting so excited about all the stationary that I’d been deprived of. (Kelly)

When I’m in Korea, I feel like I’m on a cloud nine—like, every day, who do I meet today? What do I eat? I get really active when I’m in Korea, determined to make the most of the time I have there. Every day, I’d be out, eating, hanging out, and shopping... I get so diligent. When I’m in Canada, I just lounge about at home. The first time I went back, I was in high school. It was just simply amazing. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

When I first went to Korea, it really felt like a whole new world. Things like the infrastructure, the taxi culture and all. I just loved everything so much. [...] Each visit is refreshing. The things here, they’re so good, everything is clean, so fast, even the internet speed, people... (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

The first time I visited, it felt like a whole new world. Things had changed so much. So it was just so fun, so many things to shop. It was just so much fun. (*Translated from a mix of Korean and English/Victoria*)

Along with a feeling of excitement, there was a sense of comfort that some participants associated with visiting Korea, mostly stemming from their familiarity with the language and culture. An example of the Korean culture with which they were familiar was the 정 culture.<sup>110</sup>

Lucy explained as the following: “[...] there’s this 정 that we have, family-like quality. And even strangers, you look out for each other and help each other... and, you know, help someone in need.” As well, for those who maintained ties with their extended family in Korea, this type of social connection also seemed to contribute to the sense of comfort that they felt in Korea. Furthermore, Nora commented that the feeling of familiarity and the family time that she was

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<sup>109</sup> Ben and William indicated that their first visits to Korea took place when they were “pretty young,” and that they did not remember much of the visits. Therefore, they both referred mainly to their second visit to Korea which took place in adulthood.

<sup>110</sup> The 정 (“jeong”) culture is difficult to translate in English because it is intricately linked with historical events, such as the foreign occupations that the Korean people had to endure. It refers to the values that are shared among Koreans—related to being kind-hearted and sentimental and helping those in need.

able to enjoy in Korea made her want to organize trips to Korea more frequently (“[...] I felt like I found my people, you know. [...] So it made me realize that I missed a lot of family gatherings growing up here in Canada. So it made me want to come back, to return to Korea more often”—Nora).

However, some examples of the culture shock that most participants felt throughout their visits in Korea were not always positive. The resulting sentiments were typically described as a “strange” feeling across the narratives, with varying degrees of shock that was experienced.

The first time I went, I felt very much like a foreigner, because it felt very different from what I had in mind. Compared to what I remember as a kid when I was in Korea, people dress differently, I noticed. Everything felt more advanced, you know, like the subway—you have those weird glass doors. Like, that was kind of mind-blowing. That, and the moving TV screens on the subway... Yeah, it felt very much like I did when I first came to Canada. Kind of like, I was stranded. So yeah, I felt out of place. [...] It still feels like a very different world because everything moves very fast in Korea. I feel like it’s kind of hard to get used to some of the cultural aspects in Korea, where, for example, you would go to like those open markets, and people are always shouting. People are very hands-on, touchy, they’re very like in-your-face kind of thing, which is not necessarily a bad thing. But it’s very different from, you know, Canada. (James)

For the most part, it’s good, and then, I get really turned off by the people. [...] Almost every single time because they have no sense of personal space and like just no etiquette. And I’m too used to people like holding doors or waiting for you to get off the subway or the elevator, or like, you know, stuff like that. [...] People push you on the escalator in Korea, and I’m like, what the hell is that about? Oh, it’s usually 아줌마 s [middle-aged women] who are the most offensive. [...] Also, just like how disrespectful they are of your privacy also shocks me. And how they’re like so okay with saying anything and everything. (Kelly)

And, I don’t know, everything else about it—the street vibes, people, modes of transportation, stuff like that—they were all so very different from what I was used to. [...] No matter what establishment I entered, as well, I also felt super awkward. I felt like I stand out, I felt kinda different from other people around me. [...] Just everything about me was different. My hair wasn’t long, it wasn’t covering the forehead, it was waxed back. [...] I honestly thought it was a stereotype, but I realized it was true when I got there. (Jacob)

As evoked in the excerpts above, many cases of the culture shock appeared to stem from the perceived rupture between the childhood memories and first-hand experiences of (re-)discovering their “home country.” Moreover, whether one was affected by the perceived discrepancy between his or her childhood memories and experiences in Korea, the comparisons that were drawn between Korea and Canada remained as a significant factor that affected their culture shock.

In some cases, the sentiments that stemmed from the first-hand experiences of Korea were described as “so foreign,” yet “at home.” For example, Ben, Lucy, and Nora highlighted that, on the one hand, they felt the culture shock upon being exposed to an environment and culture that are significantly different from those in Canada, and, in Lucy’s case, her childhood memories; and, on the other hand, they felt “comfortable” and “familiar” through the language, culture, and ties with the extended family. These cases can be contrasted with Jacob and William, whose sentiments of feeling lost dominated their description of their first visit.

[...] just knowing the Korean culture, but all the new things to discover for the first time. (Ben)

The first time I went back, everything had changed so much. It was the first time being in my home country as an adult, because I’d left when I was child. So already, everything felt very different from how I remembered it as a child, I guess. But also, things had changed so much, like technology. ‘와 뭐야 신기해,’ 이라고 [I’d be like, ‘Wow that’s so cool’]. So it was like visiting. I had like so much to discover, experience. It was weird. Like, I felt like a foreigner, but also, I felt at home, at the same time. (Lucy)

The first time, oh, there was such a big culture shock. Korea is just so different from here. Um... Just seeing Korean everywhere, it was just, I don’t know, it felt so foreign to me. At the same time, strangely, I felt at home. Yeah, like, I felt like I found my people, you know. And it’s just so fun there, so many things to do, things to buy... [...] It was nice obviously seeing my family [...] (Nora)

So when I visited Korea, there were stark differences, and I was shocked. The way they look, the way they talk, the lifestyle... everything. (William)

[...] there were like all the landmarks and things I thought I’d recognize—no longer there. So the trees looked different, the path to the elementary school looked different... I remember pretty much nothing. [...] So, in that sense, all sense of the childhood connections, that’s gone. [...] I did so largely feel like a tourist in that aspect, like a stranger. (Jacob)

Some previously research findings can be revisited: those who return to the home country with a strong self-identity are less prone to being affected by culture shock; moreover, individuals are especially vulnerable to experiencing greater extents of culture shock in their childhood and adolescence; and the psychological outcomes are the most salient in the initial stages of culture shock (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Ward et al., 1998). For instance, Ben, for whom the trip to Korea in early adulthood was the first return trip he could remember substantially, did not feel affected by the culture shock, because he “felt kind of detached from the Korean identity” by then and was “expecting to discover Korea from a foreigner’s point of view to some extent.” As for Jacob and William, for whom the culture shock was a distinct element of their first return visit, their identity journeys are likely to have been faced with the risk of being jeopardized, had they not been able form significant ties to the national identity

prior to the visits. Further discussions on their identity journeys will be provided in the next chapter.

Throughout continued return visits, the culture shock tended to be persistent, yet, increasingly subdued. Therefore, it did not seem to deter them from wanting to re-visit Korea.

Like a bit less than the first couple of times, for sure. [...] I have a great time—to the point where I actually want to go back to Korea as soon as they lift covid restrictions again. (Kelly)

I still have that even when I go back now. It's more like I am a foreigner actually, but I'm comfortable there. So I guess things are not foreign nor new to me. (Lucy)

But I think it's been more normalized after going there more consistently. (James)

In fact, all participants expressed their intention to continue to go to Korea, whether to visit their family and friends, go on a vacation, and/or further explore the Korean identity. This was also the case for Jacob and William, who, despite the feeling of discomfort that they experienced due to the culture shock, remained interested in going back to further explore Korea.

Since immigrating to Canada at a young age, most participants had been able to maintain some ties to Korea through family and/or friend connections. Beyond close family ties and contact, the biggest contributing factors that appeared to be linked with the motivation of the participants to continue visiting the home country were sentiments of fascination, comfort, and curiosity. In few cases, some of such sentiments were mixed with one's search for a better resolution to the perceived *foreigner* position in a country that represents his or her childhood. Hence, despite certain aspects of the Korean culture that brought on a culture shock, first-hand experiences of re-discovering Korea seemed to be appealing to the sample. In light of these findings, it is not a surprise that return visits have been maintained throughout the years among the sample, albeit infrequent for many.

Return visits required the participants to engage in an intercultural adjustment, using cultural resources from both cultures that they possess. Throughout various cultural comparisons, they were able to explore the cultural references with which they were able to identify or to which they felt foreign. In this regard, it could be argued that return visits provide meaningful occasions for individuals to re-assess and evaluate their ethnic and national attachment.

### 8.4.3 Relocation to Korea

In previous literature, return migration<sup>111</sup> used to be primarily associated with unsuccessful integration of migrants within the host society; but more recent literature has shed light on the transnational ties and attachment that can also lead migrants to return to the homeland (de Haas, 2005; de Haas, 2008). Added to ethnic attachment, fuelled by transnationalism, economic development in origin countries have been found to be linked with the migrants' increased interest in investing, circulating, and returning to the origin country. South Korea, for instance, represents an example of former-emigration countries which is seeing such trends of return migration (de Haas, 2008, p. 42).

**Table 72**

*Relocation to Korea*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Has considered relocating to Korea	<b>7</b>
- Has had the experience of relocating to Korea	3
Motives for considering relocation to Korea	<b>7</b>
- To experience life in Korea	3
- For work experiences	3
- To improve Korean proficiency and exploring the culture	2

In the case of Korean 1.5-generation immigrants in New Zealand, Jane Yeonjae Lee et al. (2015) found that the 1.5 generation may decide to return to the origin country upon completing post-secondary education and entering adulthood. The move tends to be based on different motivations, such as reaction to perceived discrimination in the host country, as well as the pursuit of job opportunities and exploration of the ethnic culture. The findings from the current study demonstrated that the motivation of the participants to return to Korea mostly stemmed from ethnic attachment, transnational ties, and potential job opportunities, rather than negative experiences linked with their lives in Canada (Table 72).

As many as seven participants had considered moving back to Korea temporarily, since they wished to experience life in Korea and/or explore the culture and improve their Korean proficiency. For some, their motivation stemmed from the imagined image of Korea by which

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<sup>111</sup> Hein de Haas (2005) postulated that, owing to transnational lives of migrants that involve high levels of circulation between two or more countries and dual loyalty, "clear-cut dichotomies of 'origin' or 'destination' and categories such as 'permanent,' 'temporary,' and 'return' migration are becoming increasingly difficult to sustain (p. 1273).

they felt fascinated. For example, Nora simply wanted to “get the experience of living in Korea,” whereas Jacob and Jisoo had an image of Korea, which, as Jisoo described, was “fantasized.”

Oh, I did think about working there briefly, just to get the experience of living in Korea. I did think about that. But unfortunately, with covid and everything, it's hard. After living in France and experiencing the culture there,<sup>112</sup> I thought, ‘why don't I do the same in Korea, where I'm actually from? And also learn more of the Korean language?’ [...] So I thought, maybe if I, you know, worked and lived in Korea for a bit, I could learn about where I'm from and the language. (Nora)

[...] I just felt like there're certain aspects to Toronto that I just, I always thought could be better. [...] You know, based on all the things that I've seen or heard of Korea, along with other countries, I was always very interested in this sort of vibe. [...] I've got some Korean friends who have gone back, you know. And there's obviously what I see on the internet, like through the concert video clips in Korea and things. Like, I know the night scene in Korea is pretty cool. When I went to visit, myself, I couldn't really make the most of the nightlife there because I was busy visiting my family. But even still, it's definitely a lot more dynamic than the nightlife in Toronto. (Jacob)

I always used to visit during the summer holidays, just to have fun. I've always fantasized about Korea... Korea is just fun. [...] I had a longing for Korea. I just wanted to stay there for as long as I liked. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

Jacob's case exemplifies that the limited level of first-hand experiences of an individual is not an obstacle that stands in the way of the 1.5-generation immigrants' imagination of their homeland. The second-youngest across the sample to have arrived in Canada, Jacob had limited lived memories and experiences of Korea: he was unable to recall the reason for which his family immigrated; his childhood memories were limited to fragmented memories of school and his grandparents; and his visits to Korea were rare. Nonetheless, his imagination of Korea, facilitated by transnationalism (i.e. consumption of Korean pop culture, among other elements), rendered Korea an exciting place to be for the nightlife he craved for. Besides fascination, Ben and Nora also wished to improve their Korean proficiency and further discover the culture.

In addition, some participants sought for work opportunities when considering moving back to Korea. On the one hand, Lucy and Victoria saw more value in gaining work experiences in Korea to be able to advance in the labour market in Canada later. When Lucy was trying to enter the fashion industry upon finishing the college education, she thought that moving to Korea would be beneficial on many levels: according to her, there were more job opportunities in the industry in Korea than Canada; and having relatives in Korea made the relocation to

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<sup>112</sup> After graduating from university, Nora spent two years in France teaching English as a language assistant.

Korea an easier option than other destinations. As for Victoria, she was unhappy with her career choice in the hotel industry and decided to relocate to Korea to learn baking. Korea seemed like a good option for her at the time, since she had the support from her Korean husband, and she believed that Korea was more advanced in the industry than Canada. On the other hand, for James, upon graduating, moving to Korea was simply a means of broadening the pool of accessible work opportunities in his job search. At the time, he felt that the opportunities were limited to Korea, and he was, back then, “slightly more confident” in his Korean proficiency and had “an open mindset” for moving abroad.

Therefore, retained ties with Korea through family connections, as well as familiarity with the language and culture, seemed to have shaped the image of Korea as the place that offers more/better opportunities in the minds of some participants. All the participants nevertheless considered the return to Korea as a temporary move and wished to settle back in Canada. However, out of the seven participants who even briefly contemplated moving to Korea, most did not pursue the idea. Language barriers (e.g. linked with the disadvantaged position in the job market) and cultural barriers (e.g. work culture) were typically highlighted as the perceived obstacles that deterred them from putting the thought into action. Indeed, return migration is not an easy decision to make: often riddled with worries of moving and resettling in a new environment, it “takes courage, strong motivation, and a willingness to take action” (J. Y. Lee, 2018, p. 59).

**Table 73**

*Perceived experiences of relocating to Korea*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Cultural barrier	<b>3</b>
- Harsh work culture	3
- Societal pressure (e.g. to conform, social hierarchy)	3
Language barrier	<b>2</b>

Embedded with experiences of culture shock, the experiences of return migration were not so positive for all three participants, Lucy, Jisoo, and Victoria. While Lucy was overall fond of the time that she spent in Korea, all three, including Lucy, placed emphasis on some of the negative aspects of the life in Korea, as well as some language barriers that they experienced (Table 73). The following narratives provide examples:

[...] the work culture, it is so depressing. And the culture of respecting seniors in terms of hierarchy, like, you know, respecting the senior staff or even older



co-workers, I guess. And, as a new recruit, if you're just a lower level in a team, then, it's hard to voice your opinion. It's just basically a very robotic work culture in Korea. At school, work... everything. It's like military, kind of—you follow the rules, and you can't break them. And it's hard to be unique. I feel like they don't celebrate uniqueness. It's more of a community, like, you help each other. There's no individual liberty in Korea. If there is, you kind of feel more like a loner or an outsider and that you stand out, kind of. (Lucy)

There was just way too much work and... too many things to care about. It was just really hard. [...] Compared to Canada, you really have to care a lot about how other people see you. And, respecting the elders, okay, but it's a bit too much, especially at work. The workload alone is way too much, so that's hard, too. So I just felt like it was exhausting. [...] When I was living in Korea, doing interviews or working in Korea, writing emails, for example... I wasn't able to use sophisticated vocabulary. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*) Like work hours or the work-life balance is way too different. [...] The system there has changed a bit—you can't work for more than 52 hours, I think [now]. [...] There are still people who work past those hours... Just judging from that, the standards are completely different. [...] I think I realized it when I went to Korea and worked there... Living there. I went to Korea and realized how hard it is to speak without mixing Korean and English. So hard. That's how I realized I'd lost a lot of Korean. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*)

As expressed above, the harsh work culture, societal pressure, and self-perceived linguistic competences in the Korean language<sup>113</sup> were negatively depicted in the minds of these participants. Although all the three participants who relocated to Korea intended their stay to be a temporary one to begin with, these cultural and language barriers further hardened the idea that their permanent home would be in Canada (“So yeah, living in Korea, that was fun, [...]. [...] But I would not wanna live there forever”—Lucy; “I really wanted to come back to Canada. I didn't like Korea. I didn't want to work in Korea. I hated it”—*translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*). Even Jisoo, whose decision to move to Korea was based on the fantasized image that she initially had, commented: “It's just fun to be there on a vacation... How should I describe it, fun hell?” (*Translated from Korean*). The three participants came back to Canada after experiencing life in Korea for a duration which ranged from two to four years. Indeed, previous research findings have also demonstrated that, upon encountering culture shock, 1.5-generation immigrants who relocated to their homeland tend to wish to move back to the host country (Chiang, 2011). Therefore, the perceived discrepancy between the imagination and the lived reality of the homeland seems to be a typical memory retained by the 1.5 generation who go through return migration.

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<sup>113</sup> Further discussions about language proficiency and language barriers will be discussed later in this chapter.

The culture shock stemming from relocation to the homeland may be impactful on the individuals' perception of self, as well as the homeland and hostland. At the same time, it must be noted that, the longer period of time one spends in the homeland, the higher levels of adaptation that s/he is likely to attain (Storti, 2022). Indeed, Victoria, who indicated that living in Korea made her re-assess her Korean proficiency, nevertheless attained better levels of Korean proficiency from the time that she spent in Korea (“But once I, ‘cause I lived there for like four years, then, I got a lot of it back again”—*Translated from a mix of English and Korean*). Therefore, regardless of the culture shock, the impact of relocation to Korea is likely to be meaningful in affecting an individual's ethnic identity exploration—and its impact can be expected to be greater than that of return visits.

At the time of the interviews, there was only one participant across the sample—Nora—who continued to be interested in the idea of experiencing life in Korea through relocation. Those who spent a few years in Korea had no intention of relocating to Korea again, due to the negative experiences that they had, as well as reasons related to family (“The older I get, the more I think I need to be where my parents are”—*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*; “I want to raise my kid in Toronto”—Victoria). As for the others, who had considered it in the past but no longer saw it as an option, their reasons were still related to the language and/or cultural barrier. Simultaneously, the participants' sense of attachment to their lives in Canada seemed to have grown over time throughout time (“And also, I just really like it here”—Ben; “I think, to me, Toronto is my home”—Victoria).

Through the lived experiences of Korea that return visits and/or relocation facilitated, the participants were able to, not only further explore the Korean culture, but also match their childhood memories and imagination of the homeland to the place. As well, the culture shock with which most participants were faced added to the feelings of intrigue and curiosity and/or emphasized the perceived distance between the country of their birth/partial childhood and themselves. Thus, the cultural adjustment that they had to endure in-between the two countries and cultures provided them with valuable occasions to re-assess explore the meaning of their bilingual and bicultural identity through in- and out-group assessments.

## 8.5 Ethnic and Mainstream Languages

### 8.5.1 Self-Perceived Levels of Bilingualism

**Table 74**

*Self-assessed proficiency scores for Korean and English*

Participant	Self-assessed proficiency scores, out of 10					
	Korean proficiency			English proficiency		
	Written	Spoken	Average proficiency	Written	Spoken	Average proficiency
Ben	3	6	4.5	8	10	9
Kelly	4	5	4.5	10	10	10
Jacob	3	4	3.5	9	9	9
Lucy	9	9	9	10	10	10
Jisoo	9	10	9.5	10	8	9
Harin	6	9	7.5	6	8	7.5
Victoria	7	8	7.5	8	7	7.5
William	1	7	4	9	10	9.5
James	7	7	6.5	8	8	8
Nora	7	8	7.5	10	10	10
Mean	5.6	7.3	<b>6.4</b>	8.8	9	<b>9</b>
Mode	<b>7</b>	<b>7, 8, 9</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	

In the pre-interview questionnaire, the participants provided self-perceived proficiency levels in written and spoken Korean and English, using the self-assessment scale from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). As Table 74 shows, the results demonstrated a wide range of perceived proficiency levels in the two languages of the sample. Looking at the mean scores, the average proficiency score was visibly higher in English (9) than in Korean (6.4).<sup>114</sup> On the one hand, the participants were the least proficient in written Korean proficiency (mean value of 5.6, mode value of 7). Indeed, among the self-assessed scores in written Korean proficiency, the most significant variation was observed between the lowest (1) and highest score (9). On the other hand, spoken proficiency in English was given the highest score on average across the sample (mean value of 9). The variation between the lowest (7) and highest (10) self-assessed score was also the smallest.

Throughout the narratives, varying degrees of confidence, as well as the perceived language barrier, were expressed. These elements were helpful in providing a contextual understanding of the self-assessed scores that the participants provided. In addition, they were

<sup>114</sup> Compared to the 1.5-generation immigrants who participated in the questionnaire survey, the mean scores of the current sample was the same in English proficiency and lower by 1.8 in Korean proficiency.

especially useful in comparing the cases. Moreover, the average of the self-assessed scores in both languages (e.g. Ben:  $(4.5 \text{ (average proficiency in Korean)} + 9 \text{ (average proficiency in English)})/2 = 6.8$ ) demonstrated a correlation with the elements of confidence and perceived language barrier that are described in the narratives. These average scores will be referred to as *bilingualism scores* (e.g. Ben's Bilingualism Score = 6.8).

Table 75 provides a comparative listing of the participants' self-perceived levels of proficiency in both languages. Based on the patterns that emerged from the elements of confidence and perceived language barrier, bilingualism scores were calculated for each case. Then, using bilingualism scores, four categories were created to identify those who were (1) Confident in their bilingual abilities; (2) Quite confident, despite some language barriers; (3) Proficient, but insecure about both language proficiencies; and (4) Lacking in confidence in one language. The narratives,<sup>115</sup> self-assessed proficiency scores, bilingualism scores, and categories are displayed in Table 8.13 to justify the categorization.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> The commentaries of Jisoo, Harin, and Victoria were translated from Korean or a mix of English and Korean.

<sup>116</sup> Bilingualism scores were used as a means to associate the cases with each category; however, the eventual ordering within categories, as displayed in the table, is not aimed at reflecting the hierarchical levels of confidence that each case demonstrated in their language proficiency.

**Table 75**

*Self-perceived bilingual abilities and commentaries*

Categories based on the perceived bilingual abilities/ confidence	Participant	Self-assessed score in proficiency (Korean, English)	Bilingualism score	Commentary (on the scores for Korean/English proficiency/ perceived language barriers)
Category 1: Confident, no perceived language barrier	Lucy	9, 10	9.5	<p>For Korean, I would say I am fluent. I have no problem speaking, writing, reading. But I did take a score away, just because I came here when I was young, and my vocabulary—or like when it comes to a certain subject—maybe that's a bit tougher. [...] And grammar. When I write, I don't know how to put the space. It's something that I never got a chance to learn, 'cause I left in grade 4, so it was something that I was never taught. [...] Like, I can read and understand fine, and, when I'm talking and writing to my friends, it doesn't really matter. So I did say a 9. [...] I don't like being incorrect grammatically. So I always Google like, am I supposed to use <math>\text{ㅌ}</math> or <math>\text{ㅌ}</math>, you know, like those little ones? I always look those up if I'm unsure. So I did score my Korean high.</p> <hr/> <p>[...] This is the language that I used in school, throughout my high school, college... you know, like, I wrote essays and I know how to write properly.</p> <hr/> <p>Language barrier? Yeah no. Not anything like where I felt like my language was not fluent, I guess.</p>
Category 2: Quite confident, despite some perceived language barrier	Jisoo	9.5, 9	9.3	<p>As for Korean, there's no hesitation when I speak in Korean. I think I can converse well. But, back in Korea, I did some interviews in Korea a couple of times and found some aspects a bit hard. So I gave a 9 [for written Korean proficiency]. Like, difficult vocabulary and... Speaking well...</p> <hr/> <p>I was taught how to write essays and things like that in English here... English is the language I was educated in, so I have no trouble reading and things in English and stuff. For example, if I read the Bible in Korean and find it difficult to understand because of really sophisticated vocabulary, I would read it in English and understand in one go.</p> <hr/> <p>But when it comes to daily communication in English, because I've been socializing with Koreans since grade 9, I'd speak fluently but pause from time to time. There is a bit of discomfort with that. [...] When I was living in Korea, doing interviews or working in Korea, writing emails, for example... I wasn't able to use sophisticated vocabulary. So I think I realized, 'oh, I thought my Korean was perfect, but my Korean isn't perfect, and neither is my English.' As for English, I feel the barrier while working. I feel</p>

Category 2: Quite confident, despite some perceived language barrier (continued)				it all the time. I am able to fully express myself, but [I] should be able to do it more eloquently. Things like that.
	Nora	7.5, 10	8.8	<p>I gave 7 for writing, because I don't write in Korean often. I do write in Korean when I message KakaoTalk to my family, but, otherwise, I never write in Korean. I don't think my written Korean is that bad. [...] Like, it's not perfect, but considering I didn't really do much school in Korean [...]. And 8 for speaking, because I speak in Korean with my mom all the time. When I call my family back home, obviously I speak in Korean, so... And I don't really have much trouble expressing myself. I do have trouble in terms of vocab, I don't know a lot of vocab. But, instead of saying like the specific word that I don't know, I would always explain what it is. [...] I have enough of the language skills that I can explain myself. So I don't really have trouble communicating.</p> <p>So English 10 and 10, because, you know, that's what I speak outside of home. I'm most comfortable with English.</p> <p>Well, it's with my mom. I... It's more her barrier than mine, I think, because she only speaks Korean, you know. There are times, not a lot, but sometimes, when I don't know some words or how to describe something very complex in Korean. I use Naver dictionary and look up words.</p>
Category 3: Insecure about proficiency in both languages	Harin	7.5, 7.5	7.5	<p>When it comes to speaking, you just need to get you ideas delivered—and, that much, I can do that fine. That's why I gave this score. As for difficult vocabulary, I don't really know. When there's vocabulary you don't know in spoken communication, you can use body language or explain, right? So it's not like the other person can't understand what I'm saying or anything. But, when it comes to writing, if there are words I don't know in texts, I wouldn't really know the vocabulary. You have to be familiar with <u>grammar and stuff, too, but I don't really know stuff like that.</u></p> <p>See, because I don't really know much vocabulary... Like, in Korean, when you explain things... How do I explain? When communicating [in Korean], I know things like 스프릭 [-sss], like proverbs, filler words and stuff, so I can explain things without knowing the vocabulary. But, as for English, those are the kinds of things you learn when you are really young—tick tock tick tock, woof woof, things like that. You learn that in kindergarten, not in high school. For these reasons, I feel like I communicate in English less efficiently than in Korean. [...] When it comes to writing, I think it's the same as in Korean. I would look up words in a dictionary to write.</p> <p>Yeah sure, sometimes. When I get really angry, and I can't think of words to say. [...] I can't think in either language well [in such circumstances], but I would first think in Korean. Oh, but then, other than when I feel angry, when I want to speak eloquently. Whether in Korean or English, when I want to speak using eloquent language, and it doesn't come out straight away?</p>
	Victoria	7.5, 7.5	7.5	<p>When I speak in Korean, it's often informal, so it's easier. That's why I gave a higher score. So oral, everyday stuff... So I feel more comfortable. Written, because it's not about everyday stuff, I don't think I feel so confident.</p> <p>Rather, because I don't really have many occasions to speak in English these days... Because, my current job is, I'm working with Koreans, there's like only so much English you can use. Of course, I do everyday stuff [using English], but, in a day, I don't really have long periods of time where I use English.</p>

				<p>That's why I gave a less score for oral. And written, you can think about it and write it, so I gave a higher score.</p> <p>In both. I feel like there's the language barrier in Korean, in English, too... It really could be like a complex. I have accepted that, but, uh... If I were to live another life, it'd be nice to pay a bit more attention to language. 'Cause I cannot learn two languages when I should focus on one language. So generally, basic level, I can speak both, but, on a deeper level, to express exactly how I feel when I talk about a subject... There's so much vocabulary that you can use, right? In different situations. It can be a little bit different. Things like that, I feel like I lack in, a lot. And because I'm not the kind of person who is talented in languages, I think I have this complex.</p>
<p>Category 3: Insecure about proficiency in both languages (continued)</p>	<p>James</p>	<p>7, 8</p>	<p>7.5</p>	<p>So honestly, I'm not that confident in either, like English or Korean. I think I am able to speak the language and understand what other people are saying, but, obviously, when it comes to like all the sophisticated words, I'm not too familiar with those in either language. So yeah, that being said, I guess I tried to give myself like a score around the average. [...] when they kind of use sophisticated words in Korean, I don't really understand. And I'd be like, 'oh, maybe my Korean's not as good as I thought.'</p> <p>And English being my primary choice, I gave a score that was a bit higher than Korean. And especially after seeing some of my other friends, like you know, after seeing like how they write, like the kind of vocabulary they use, it just seems more evident that maybe my English isn't—it may not be the worst, but still—you know, perfect.</p> <p>[In school] So there wasn't like hardship, there was more like a personal evaluation where I wasn't like completely happy with the way I spoke. And, sometimes, I found myself at a loss of words, when I was trying to express certain things. [...] I found myself translating certain Korean words to English. But then, I did the same thing when I was speaking Korean, like translating words from English to Korean. [...] because I've had several interviews in Korean. [...] I kind of found myself unable to answer some questions, just because I didn't really understand all, like, technical terms. [...] when I worked at a Korean company in Canada last year, [...]. So I had to kind of like learn to how to like address certain people, how to like talk formally. [...] And I think, back then, I was slightly more confident in my ability to speak Korean. But the interviews were kind of like the eye-opening moment. [...] I can still associate with whichever party—I'm able to speak the language and understand enough to get along with everyone.</p>

Category 4: Lacking in confidence in one language	Kelly	4.5, 10	7.3	<p>These days, especially, it's very taxing. [...] especially after moving out of my parents' house, I have almost no opportunity to speak Korean on a daily basis. [...] And I thought that I was linguistically pretty good and, therefore, I thought I would be able to retain my Korean, no problem [...]. However, I have realized that I was very wrong. [...] And like, I can speak Korean conversationally, sure—like, usually, no problem, if it doesn't get into any difficult vocabulary. Even then, like, most of the time, halfway through, I have to switch to English because I can't finish one complete phrase. [...] And I get very self-conscious with, um, 띄어쓰기 [spacing]. I'm guessing 90% of the time. I have no idea how it works. Um, and I also am not so confident that I know enough like common Korean expressions Koreans would be using these days... [...] And speaking Korean, same thing. It's hard. It's like I have to think about what I'm trying to say in English and translate it into Korean. [...] I also pretend that I'm second gen and I don't speak Korean 90% of the time. And I have to try very hard. And like, whenever I go into Korean place, speaking English, these days, they just assume that I don't speak Korean.</p> <p>Okay, so English, I'm very confident in my ability to read, write, speak... Um, especially because I taught it, as well, and I'm still like tutoring essay writing and things like that, so I feel extremely confident, maybe to a fault. And I never really have to think about what I'm saying or second-guess or like searching for the right word.</p> <p>Whenever I have to like text someone in Korean. [...] Last year, a friend of mine asked me to tutor someone [...]. So this person apparently speaks zero English. She was sending me all these like text messages on 카톡 in Korean, like <i>professional</i> Korean. I was losing my shit. I had to write like two sentences back to her, and it took me like 20 minutes. I had to Google translate. [...] I automatically kind of like freeze internally whenever I have to interact with Korean adults, like older Korean adults, because I know that I'm gonna screw up somewhere. [...] With like 존댓말 [formal register] and stuff. [...] I stutter quite a bit and I have to pause a lot and fix what I have to say and... [...] Well, you know, I shouldn't even say Korean adults, I should say Koreans in general that I don't know. [...] So I would say, like, almost every single interaction I have with a Korean person these days.</p>
	Ben	4.5, 9	6.8	<p>So I can, you know, work my way through a Korean conversation—I don't feel too uncomfortable with it—but my vocabulary is kind of limited. Just like, regular, everyday, it's passable, it's workable, but then, I wouldn't be able to write anything, no, because I wouldn't know how to spell things, like space things out, in terms of like grammar and whatnot. [...] I can read-ish. I'm definitely much slower. [...] Yeah. Just my speed of reading is nowhere near like my English reading speed. And, if I try to read a book [in Korean], I'd run into a lot of words that I wouldn't be familiar with. So when it comes to just like reading or writing in Korean, Korean is not like the language for me.</p> <p>And English, obviously, it's what I consider like my best language. I just don't think my writing's very good.</p> <p>Yeah, again, mainly Korean, like medical insurance or whatnot. I guess writing, as well, like reading—I would just not know how to do it. [...] like writing letters to grandparents. I'd be mostly lost for words and just having a real rough time trying to spell things out, and I would just ask my parents for help. [...]</p>



Category 4: Lacking in confidence in one language (continued)				if I wanted to search something in Korean and trying to type it out, yeah, I just take longer because I'd be like, 'wait, how do I spell that?'
	William	4, 9.5	6.8	<p>[...] I haven't practised writing in Korean, so I've completely lost that. Reading Korean, I may have the same ability as like a toddler. And then, speaking Korean, just because I do speak Korean once in a while at church or with my parents... although we predominantly speak English with my parents. [...] I feel like I have a vocabulary of like maybe a 4th-grader Korean. That gives me enough vocabulary to get on and converse. [...] But, you know, linguistically, I'm not the strongest.</p> <p>When I gave myself a 9 for written English, I should really clarify that. If I were to say proper grammar English or academic English, that would be less. [...] probably I'd rate myself lower in academic English, but, in terms of creative writing or professional writing, it'd be a lot higher, because that's where I've had to hone my craft.</p> <p>Not really, because I knew a certain amount of Korean. If someone could only speak Korean, we got by. But, again, it's rare that I would be speaking to people in Korean.</p>
	Jacob	3.5, 9	6.3	<p>I don't feel comfortable with it. It makes me feel very awkward. So I'd rather not engage whatsoever. [...] Um, I can get by making small talks in Korean for the most part and can understand it ok, I guess. But when I'm expected to speak in Korean, I feel like I can't really express myself. I just don't have the vocabulary for it. [...] Like reading-comprehension-wise, I think I can read okay and understand, just because I usually like, throughout my childhood and even now, like Korean-based webtoons or like playing Korean online games. I would be sort of like forced to read a text and try to understand it. [...] But then, when I try to do anything more complex than just reading webtoons or playing games, I feel stuck. I just don't have the vocabulary for it. [...] But then, I also never write in Korean other than like writing messages on Kakao. And I know I make mistakes.</p> <p>I wouldn't give myself a ten, just because [...] when people first hear me speak English, they feel like, you know, there's usually no mistake, that I'm very fluent. I think there are still some gaps that come up here like now and then when it comes to like pronunciation and stuff like that, which I really think do kind of tie back to my roots.</p> <p>I definitely do struggle when talking to mom and dad about any conversations that go beyond small talk. Yeah, just because I can't articulate the words [...] so I sort of fumble and try to like throw an English diction here and there to make it work. But again, that would cause confusion with the parents, and the whole discussion falls through. So like, it's become a point where I just don't even really try anymore. [...] trying to talk with like another Korean person outside of the family. Yeah. I think I would definitely get a little nervous. Even though I can mostly understand what they're saying, that feeling of the nervousness kind of prevents me from actualizing a response in Korean the way that I like.</p>

Across the sample, Lucy was one of the two participants who described her Korean proficiency as “fluent” and was overall confident in her proficiency in both languages, thus representing the only case which fit into Category 1. She did not recall experiencing any significant language barrier in her life, besides some difficulty she has with vocabulary related to particular domains and some grammatical elements in Korean. Like most participants, Lucy was more confident in her English than Korean proficiency. Her confidence in her bilingual abilities could be associated with the conscious effort that she makes to enhance her Korean proficiency: at times of uncertainty, Lucy looks up grammar to improve her Korean proficiency, for instance.

Moreover, Jisoo and Nora, placed in Category 2, were also quite confident in their proficiency in both languages; however, the perceived language barrier was more pronounced in their narratives when compared to the narratives of Lucy. While Nora felt confident in her English proficiency, she seemed to have more trouble with written communication in Korean than Jisoo (“I do have trouble in terms of vocab, I don’t know a lot of vocab”). Jisoo, on the other hand, who felt fluent in spoken Korean and confident in written English, experienced some minor language barriers in both languages: she was unfamiliar with sophisticated vocabulary and was unable to speak fluently in English without pausing from time to time, which she described as “a bit of discomfort.”

There were three participants—Harin, Victoria, and James—who were placed in Category 3. Their linguistic competences, as reflected in self-assessed scores and narratives, were associated with a sense of insecurity, grounded on their perceived proficiency in both Korean and English.

I can’t think in either language well. (*Translated from Korean*, Harin)

It really could be like a complex. I have accepted that [...]. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean*/Victoria)

I found myself translating certain Korean words to English. But then, I did the same thing when I was speaking Korean [...]. (James)

The limited levels of their confidence in the languages were visible in the self-assessed scores. In contrast to the participants whose dominant language was evaluated with the scores ranging from 9 to 10, these three participants’ self-assessed scores (7.5 for both languages for Harin and Victoria, 7 and 8 for Korean and English, respectively, for James) highlighted that, either they were unable to identify the dominant language and/or that their level of proficiency in the dominant language was lacking in fluency, as well.

Category 4 included the participants whose Korean proficiency appeared to have been most affected by the language shift. Kelly, Ben, William, and Jacob were confident in their fluency in English, for the most part. The perceived language barrier was grounded on their limited proficiency in the Korean language, which restricted their ability to communicate using the needed competences. Vocabulary, grammar, and spelling were especially prominent weaknesses among other elements for the four participants.

[...] halfway through, I have to switch to English because I can't finish one complete sentence. [...] I'm guessing 90% of the time. I have no idea how it works. (Kelly)

I wouldn't know how to spell things, like space things out, in terms of like grammar and whatnot. (Ben)

[...] I have vocabulary of like maybe a 4<sup>th</sup>-grader Korean. (William)

[...] I feel like I can't really express myself. I just don't have the vocabulary for it. (Jacob)

In all four cases, the impact of the limited proficiency in Korean was significant to the point that they felt a significant level of discomfort when communicating while using certain language competences in Korean. For example, Kelly and Jacob preferred to not engage in interactions with others in Korean, and Ben and William were unable to write in Korean.

Previous literature has shed light on correlations between limited/partial levels of bilingualism and academic abilities of individuals: one's heritage language proficiency can be linked to his or her mainstream language proficiency—notably affecting literacy—which can shape his or her academic skills required to succeed in school (Fillmore, 1991; Harklau et al., 1999; Roberge, 2002). Thus, it is interesting to use the data represented in Table 5.8 (*Academic Profile in School*) and Table 5.44 (*Self-Perceived Bilingual Abilities and Commentaries*) as a comparison. Indeed, all five participants who had difficulty in regular English classes in school due to academic English—Ben, Jacob, William, James, and Nora—expressed limited levels of their literacy in Korean, to varying extents. At the same time, given the fact that most participants across the sample identified themselves as good students, average at the minimum, the academic difficulties that some participants were faced with appeared to have been grounded to academic English. In Jacob's case, he even pursued a university degree in English Literature, which suggests that the difficulty that he experienced in English was mostly limited to his high school years.

Furthermore, as illustrated in Table 8.13, varying levels of bilingualism and confidence that the participants associated with their language proficiencies were evident across the sample. Moreover, whether reflected in the ways they spoke or in the examples of the language

use reflected in their responses, code-switching—which is often associated with bilinguals—was typically observed in some cases, to different degrees. Code-switching was especially salient in the narratives of Harin and Victoria, as can be observed in the following excerpts:

저는 특히 illustration 과라 딱히 반에 있어야 할 필요가 없었어요. 대학 교수님도 수업 끝나기 몇 분 전에만 attendance check 하면 attendance 주는 거기 때문에 애들이 나가서 알아서 paint 하고 말 없이. (Harin)

제가 지금 job 이 Korean 들이랑 working 하기 때문에 there's like only so much English you can use. Everyday stuff 는 당연히 하지만 하루에 길게 영어를 쓰는 시간이 없는 거 같아요. That's why I gave a less score for oral. (Victoria)

It could be assumed that code switching, especially in the cases of those like Harin and Victoria who expressed limited levels of confidence in their linguistic competence, is derived from one's effort to compensate for the lexical gap; however, a number of scholars have advised against the association (Del Fina, 2007; Heredia & Altarriba, 2001; Tang, 2014). Roberto R. Heredia and Jeanette Altarriba (2001) provided a list of arguments: firstly, code-switching could be related to one's unconscious effort to facilitate the process of retrieving words, thus resulting from word frequency in his or her common language use; secondly, one's ability to code-switch is dependent on his or her level of grammatical understanding of each language for it to be able to effectively convey his or her ideas during the process; thirdly, the notion of language proficiency is also unclearly defined (i.e. which skills related to written and oral proficiency take precedence); and, lastly, code-switching can be seen as a means of enhancing the efficiency of communication of ideas for individuals (p. 165). It has also been highlighted that, as for Asian American bilinguals, this form of communication should be seen as part of the process of negotiating and expressing identity on multiple levels—sociocultural, ethnic/racial, and generational (Danico, 2004; Del Fina, 2007; Tang, 2014).

Indeed, Nora's response below is a clear example of code-switching representing her bi-cultural/lingual abilities:

Um, I have an older brother, 오빠.<sup>117</sup> [...] So she says, '어 한국사람 결혼하면 엄마가 너무 바쁠 거 같애.' You know, she just jokingly says that. '한국사람

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<sup>117</sup> 오빠 (“oppa”) is a Korean word whose literal translation in English is *older brother*. While it is used by younger female siblings to call/refer to their older male siblings and cousins, it is also used by younger girls and women to call/refer to their older male friends and acquaintances.

결혼하지 마, 외국사람 결혼 해. 너무 피곤해, 하게 되면...' She's not like dead serious, like, she's not forcing me. 농담 반 진담 반.

While using English—as she did throughout most of the interview—to express her ideas, Nora used certain words in Korean in distinctive patterns in the excerpt above. On the one hand, she used Korean words in ways to emphasize the cultural link that she has to the Korean culture. For example, right after indicating that she has an older brother, she added the word in Korean, 오빠 [older brother]—how she would be expected to address her sibling in everyday interactions and situations. On the other hand, Nora's use of the Korean language can be seen as a stylistic choice for putting emphasis, hence alluding to her bilingual abilities. After explaining that her mother—who has expressed her wish for the children to marry a non-Korean, so that she would not have to deal with Korean traditions and mannerisms surrounding marriage—is half-joking and half-serious, she re-iterated the idea in Korean (“농담 반 진담 반” [half-joking, half-serious]). As well, she used Korean to communicate what her mother would typically say, by imitating her speaking to the children in Korean.

Other examples of code-switching were numerous across the narratives of the overall sample. The most common use was linked to words that are distinctly cultural. Various references were made to:

- Korean activities and food (e.g. 윷놀이, 딱지, 구슬치기 [Korean traditional games], 노래방 [karaoke], 뽑기 [Korean candy] (“ppop-ki,” see Footnote 103), 떡국 [rice cake soup]; 순두부찌개 [soft tofu soup]);
- institutions (e.g. 학원 [cram school], 영국문화원 [British Council in Korea], 한글학교 [Korean school (classes)], 유학원<sup>118</sup>);
- attributes of people that are culturally defined (e.g. 아줌마,<sup>119</sup> 꼰대<sup>120</sup>);

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<sup>118</sup> 유학원 (“yu-hak-won”) is an agency that helps individuals throughout their experiences of studying abroad. The kinds of service that 유학원 provides includes consultations, language classes, one-on-one coaching, and help with administrative work.

<sup>119</sup> 아줌마 (“ah-joom-ma”) is the term used to “refer to or address a woman who is married and not related” in an informal, often impolite manner (Naver, n.d.). Although it was initially used to address female relatives, it is now used to address middle-aged women either in a friendly or derogatory manner (National Institute of Korean Language, n.d.; 조항범, 2009). The examples provided in Naver Dictionary lists the following associations with the term: talkative, rich, restaurant, nasty, neighbour, kitchen, fat, young etc. (Naver, n.d.).

<sup>120</sup> 꼰대 (“ggon-dae”) is a slang term which was initially used to refer to the elderly or teachers (used so among students) and has recently been used to refer to a person who is condescending—imposing his or her way of thinking in an authoritarian manner (National Institute of Korean Language, n.d.; 노윤주, 2018) It could be compared to *boomer* in English.

- one’s status (e.g. 장로님,<sup>121</sup> 유학생 [international student]); and
- Korean mannerisms (e.g. 존댓말 [former register], 정 (“Jeong,” see Footnote 110)).

Some examples of code-switching from English to Korean that described and emphasized feelings were observed, as well.

막 답답하고 이런 거 [Like, the feeling of frustration, things like that], I hate it. (Nora)

You know those Korean 아줌마 s [middle-aged women, auntie, lady] who are just like, very like... 정신없어 [all over the place]? And she was just like, loud. (Kelly)

It’s like, *feeling* words. What are some good examples? When you eat hot food on a hot day and then we say 시원해 [it’s cool/refreshing].<sup>122</sup> You know what I mean? No one will understand that in English. Why eat hot food on a hot day and say that it’s cold, it’s chilly? (William)

Thus, as there are no equivalent words/expressions in English that can be used to adequately make such references related to the Korean culture, code-switching was deemed necessary to efficiently deliver the ideas. These findings affirmed that, while code-switching may indeed be positively associated with language proficiency of an individual, it can also be a salient marker of one’s ethnocultural identity, grounded on his or her understanding of the ethnic culture.

Across the sample, the level of bilingualism appeared to be variant; and the perceived level of bilingualism seemed to either positively or negatively affect self-perceptions and/or confidence in many cases. Furthermore, regardless of one’s language proficiency, code-switching—which added various ethnic qualities to their narratives—was not an uncommon speech pattern for most participants. In this respect, a positive correlation between bilingual abilities of the 1.5-generation participants and their self-identities can be expected.

### 8.5.2 Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses

Several self-perceived strengths and weaknesses related to their language proficiencies were identified in the narratives (Table 76). First and foremost, oral communication skills in Korean seemed to be the perceived strength for all participants, to varying extents: all ten participants felt that their Korean proficiency was at least at a conversational level. This included Kelly and Jacob, who gave their oral proficiency in Korean the lowest scores (5 and

<sup>121</sup> 장로 (“jang-ro”) is a word used to address an elder within a Protestant church.

<sup>122</sup> As William explains, Koreans use the expression, 시원하다, has various uses. Parallel to William’s example, “Eating hot and/or spicy soup,” and “after a shower or sauna or when your pain is gone” are few examples (Y. Kang, 2017).

4, respectively). As for perceived weaknesses, vocabulary (i.e. “sophisticated” vocabulary) and grammar (e.g. spacing, spelling) were consistently identified as one of the biggest weaknesses across all narratives, mirroring the findings of previous literature (Roberge, 2002; Jeon, 2012; Yeh et al., 2005). Furthermore, overall written communication, whether it be related to reading, writing, or both, was described as troublesome for most participants—even for the three participants, Jacob, James, and Nora, who took Korean classes at the Korean church. One’s arrival age which is linked with limited schooling in Korea, as well as his or her limited exposure to using skills related to written communication, were identified by most participants as the main cause of their perceived weaknesses in Korean proficiency. As well, Kelly and Jacob expressed feeling uncomfortable speaking in Korean, which led them to avoid engaging in Korean conversations: on the one hand, while Kelly preferred avoiding interacting with Koreans outside of the family in Korean, she nonetheless maintained the minimum level of proficiency in Korean to be able to communicate with her Korean-speaking parents; and, on the other hand, Jacob stopped trying to engage in “conversations that go beyond small talk” with his parents.

**Table 76**

*Korean proficiency: perceived strengths and weaknesses*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Perceived strength	<b>10</b>
- Speaking (at least on a conversational level)	10
Perceived weaknesses	<b>10</b>
- Vocabulary/grammar	10
- Reading/writing	7
- Severe level of discomfort associated with speaking	2

Successful maintenance of the heritage language is dependent on the availability of peers with whom one can speak the language, as well as cultural resources that can promote the language use (Imbens-Bailey, 1996; Jeon, 2012; Phinney, Romero et al., 2001). Moreover, family is often the main contributing factor to the heritage language proficiency of immigrant children (Alba et al., 2002; Cheng & Kuo, 2000; Döpke, 1992; Phinney, Romero et al., 2001). The findings of the present study seemed consistent to these previous research findings. Firstly, peer interactions using Korean (i.e. in KM in Korean churches, school, and work) provided numerous occasions for most participants to use and hence retain their heritage language. Secondly, Various hobbies, such as consuming Korean pop culture and media, as well as other

leisurely activities using Korean (e.g. webtoons, online games, and social media), using various mainstream and Korean social media platforms also seemed to have contributed to the participants' Korean proficiency. Thirdly, family played a significant role in shaping the participants' heritage language proficiency: Korean was used by all participants except William in their interactions with their parents and many with their siblings and/or extended family in Korea.

In addition, some had experiences of working in Korea or working for a Korean company in Toronto. Such experiences appeared to have led them to re-assess the level of their Korean proficiency:

Last year, a friend of mine asked me to tutor someone with her husband's company. [...] So this person apparently speaks zero English. She was sending me all these like text messages on 카톡 in Korean, like *professional* Korean. I was losing my shit. [...] And I thought that I was linguistically good, [...]. However, I have realized that I was very wrong. (Kelly)

But, back in Korea, I did some interviews in Korea a couple of times and found some aspects a bit hard. So I gave a 9. [...] When I was living in Korea, doing interviews or working in Korea, writing emails, for example... [...] So I think I realized, 'oh, I thought my Korean was perfect, but my Korean isn't perfect, and neither is my English.' (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

I think I realized it when I went to Korea and worked there... Living there. I went to Korea and realized how hard it is to speak without mixing Korean and English. So hard. That's how I realized I'd lost a lot of Korean. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*)

And, during the interviews, I kind of found myself unable to answer some questions, just because I didn't really understand all, like, technical terms. [...] And I think, back then, I was slightly more confident in my ability to speak Korean. But the interviews were kind of like the eye-opening moment. (James)

As exemplified in the excerpts above, these participants with work experiences using Korean struggled with language barriers throughout the process of application and interviews related to a job search and/or co-ethnic peer socialization through work, which negatively affected their self-perceived Korean proficiency. Despite the challenges, Victoria and James highlighted that their Korean proficiency was enhanced through work experiences, albeit to an extent that was not sufficient for their confidence in their level of Korean proficiency.

In regard to English proficiency, although all participants were able to at least engage in an everyday conversation in English without difficulty, there were only three participants across the sample—Kelly, Lucy, and Nora—who felt confident in their level of overall proficiency in English, without perceived weaknesses by which they felt significantly bothered



(Table 77). Moreover, Lucy, Jisoo, and Victoria identified the competences related to written communication (i.e. reading and writing) as strengths, mostly owing to their educational background in an English-spoken environment.

**Table 77**

*English proficiency: perceived strengths and weaknesses*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Perceived strengths	<b>10</b>
- Speaking (at least on a conversational level)	10
- Overall confident in all areas related to English proficiency	3
- Reading/writing	3
Perceived weaknesses	<b>6</b>
- Vocabulary	4
- Academic English/writing	2

Again, vocabulary was most frequently cited as a perceived weakness in English proficiency in most cases, albeit by far fewer participants than in Korean proficiency. It appeared to negatively affect oral communication skills of Jisoo and Victoria, both of whom indicated higher levels of confidence in written communication in English than in oral communication. As Victoria pointed out, engaging in written communication gives time to prepare their input through the means of, for instance, using a dictionary to look up vocabulary.

Otherwise, Ben and William identified writing skills and academic English as their weaknesses, respectively. Indeed, these areas used to render English classes difficult for them throughout schooling. It is interesting to note that Jacob, James, and Nora, who also experienced difficulty in English classes in school due to academic English, no longer seemed to associate literacy skills with perceived weaknesses in English. In comparison, the perceived weaknesses of Ben and William seemed to have constantly remained linked to literacy in adulthood—despite their perceived fluency in overall English proficiency.

Across the sample, the narratives shed light on the kinds of experiences that the participants saw as the factors that positively affected their English proficiency. As discussed in the previous chapter, schooling experiences were salient part of their acquisition of English language. In parallel, many participants described the process of learning English as a phase or a process that occurred naturally through interactions with English-speaking peers throughout their schooling experiences. Some participants also identified the ESL-related experiences—

whether involving teacher-student or peer-to-peer interactions—as one of the most helpful experiences related to schooling that affected their English proficiency.

Additionally, mirroring previous research findings (Jeon, 2012), consumption of pop culture was evidently a continuous driving force in their linguistic competences, whether in the form of TV shows and movies that they watched growing up or various content that they consumed on streaming platforms these days. While there were few participants across the sample who did not consume any media content in Korean, all participants were actively engaged in exploration of media and/or pop culture using English. Therefore, one's exposure to languages and cultures through the consumption of pop culture seemed to be an important factor to inquire into when examining his or her language acquisition and cultural understanding.

Moreover, there were four participants, Jisoo, Harin, Victoria, and James, who recounted the language barriers that they experienced in English. James associated his current levels of proficiency in both languages with his friend groups: he believed that his language proficiencies, dependent on his socialization patterns, always fluctuated throughout his life, “back and forth” between the two groups. For example, prior to immigrating, he socialized with Korean peers; upon arriving in Canada, with White peers in primary school; with Korean peers throughout secondary and post-secondary schooling; then with Canadians after university. As for Jisoo, Harin, and Victoria, they associated their perceived weaknesses in English proficiency with their exclusive co-ethnic peer socialization tendencies throughout schooling.

The findings also showed that the process of learning the languages was not limited to schooling for the overall sample. William, for instance, pointed out that his English proficiency improved throughout his experiences related to post-graduate school and, moreover, work (“‘cause I had to hone a certain type of dialogue and the way I communicate, especially being in architecture. Because architecture, ultimately, is about storytelling”). The narratives of other participants also highlighted the significant role that work experiences can play in facilitating the process of learning and further improving one's English proficiency:

I think friends are... It may be an excuse, but when you first arrive, the teacher pairs you up with another Korean. So you can be friends. So your friends are set, with Korean kids like yourself. You know, because you are associated like that, Koreans hang out with each other, that kind of thing? [...] That's why I guess I still can't speak English really perfectly fluently, you know? [...] English is still... Also, I think I've learnt a lot from working. [...] Because I didn't think I could speak English... So that I don't look like an idiot, I used

to like *not* speak in English. [...] But, when I'm at work, I can't not speak at work. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

I think working has helped most. I use it every day—mm, although not as much as my previous work. And I get to listen to other people. You have to speak in English. At school, you have your Korean group of friends. You can just use English when you do class presentation and things like that. I think work, you are constantly speaking in English. And, times like that, you are used to speaking in English the most. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*)

What stood out from the narratives of Harin and Victoria is the comparison that they both drew between their language use and peer groups associated with school and work. On the one hand, as discussed in the previous chapter, peer networks and interactions in school appeared to be mostly shaped by circumstantial factors, often outside of the participants' control.<sup>123</sup> In other words, the *choice* that the individuals made to adhere to groups in school were often imposed on them, which, in turn, shifted most participants' patterns of language use (e.g. transitioning from primary to secondary level of education). In consideration of the fact that, in school, the vast majority of the participants were situated in an environment in which visible ethnic/racial groupings were the norm and co-ethnic networks were readily available, there were no incentives for them to attempt to step out of their comfort zone within social boundaries. In contrast, based on the participants' choice of a work environment, peer networks and interactions that work facilitates left them with no choice but to communicate in the language(s) used at work. Taking on the responsibilities related to work on a daily basis within relevant peer networks represent clear incentives for individuals. Therefore, it is not a surprise that work experiences can enhance language proficiency of individuals.

What is also interesting to note is the contrast in the reflections of some participants on their work experiences using the Korean and English languages. In some cases, the individuals believed that work experiences helped them improve their English and let them expand on their peer networks outside of the co-ethnic boundaries, which was perceived positively. Such narratives can be contrasted with those related to work experiences using the Korean language, which were mostly centered around the culture shock. Although few participants pointed out that their Korean proficiency improved following the work experiences, most of those who had experiences of working using Korean seemed to place a focus in their narratives on the shock

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<sup>123</sup> E.g. teachers pairing up Korean students together, language and cultural familiarity with in-group peers, perceived pressure to stay within the in-group constructed on the Korean ethnicity, increased levels of differences (notably related to ethno-racial awareness) at the level of junior/high school etc.

that they felt upon realizing that their Korean proficiency was not as good as they used to think. This phenomenon can likely be explained by the fact that, prior to working, the participants had constantly been exposed to English-speaking natives within the English-spoken education environment, along with the mainstream media, in Canada. In contrast, their exposure to the Korean language and culture had been mostly based on family and peer networks which are likely to have provided occasions for casual, informal interactions. Hence, the participants would evidently have had more opportunities for self-assessment of their level of English compared to Korean prior to work experiences.

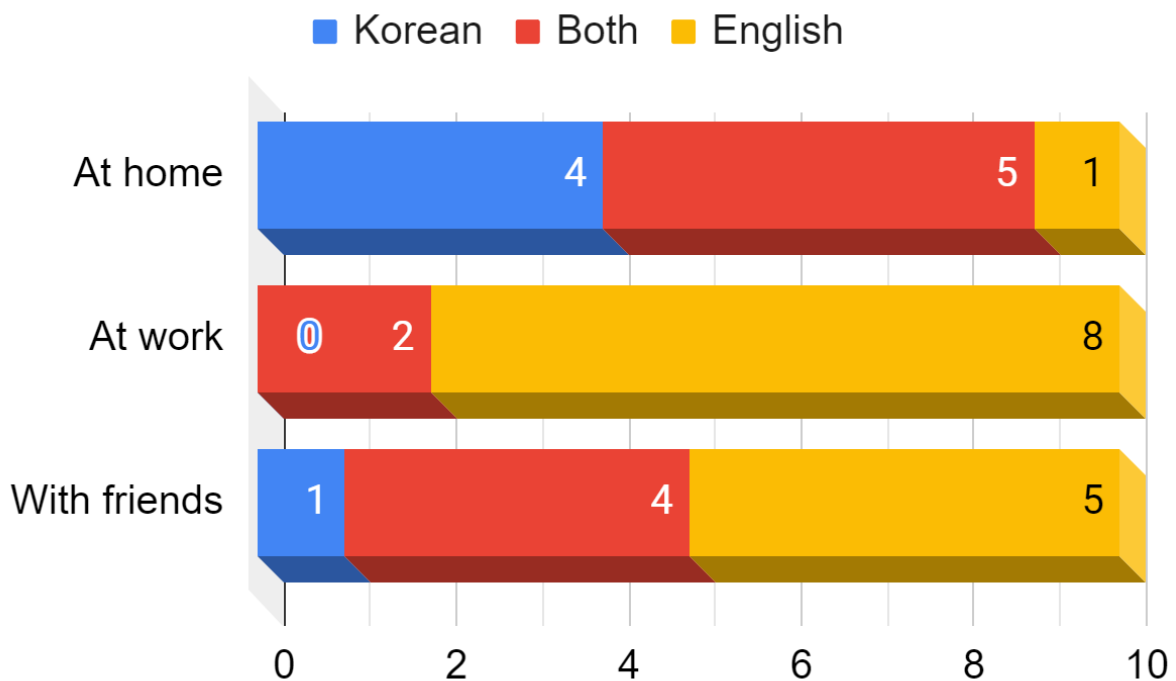
Overall, the findings demonstrated a language shift across all cases, to varying degrees. Although all participants maintained a sufficient level of Korean proficiency to be able to hold an informal, everyday conversation, most had become English-dominant. At the same time, in spite of having been schooled and currently working within the English-spoken mainstream settings, many participants felt weak in different competences related to English proficiency—mostly related to vocabulary and written communication. Beyond schooling, work experiences provided interesting insights into how peer networks and language proficiencies of individuals can shift and furthermore affect their self-perceptions.

### **8.5.3 Language Use in Daily Life**

On the one hand, previous literature has shown that it is highly likely for Korean to be used as the primary language in parent-child interactions, regardless of the Korean proficiency of 1.5-generation children (Harklau, 2003; C. M. Smith, 2014), which seemed consistent to the findings of the present study (Figure 49). The only exception to this trend was William, whose parents mostly kept communication at home in English to facilitate the children's integration in Canada. Otherwise, the language shift—the tendency of becoming English-dominant and encountering attrition of the heritage language—seemed to have taken place across most cases, affecting even those who did not feel confident in their level of English proficiency. On the other hand, English was often the dominant language at work for the majority, regardless of their English proficiency. Indeed, at work, there were only two participants who used both English and Korean. Therefore, it can be presumed that limited levels of the parents' English proficiency within the domain of home, along with English-speaking peer networks and environment within the domain of work, play a powerful role in generating dynamics that shape one's bilingualism and sociocultural adjustment.

**Figure 49**

*Languages used at home and work and with friends (out of ten participants)*



What can also be noted from the findings is the heterogeneous characteristics that define the 1.5 generation. The overall sample demonstrated varying degrees of language preferences and perceived strengths and weaknesses, closely linked with diverse interests and hobbies which involve the internet and the media, life experiences, and relevant peer networks. The central finding seemed to be is the fluid, shifting nature of what can be described as a language journey, which involves one's process of learning, maintaining, losing, and, in some cases, re-learning languages. The following narrative exemplifies the notion adequately:

Um, so interesting case, because I had completely lost my ability to speak and write in Korean. Yeah, well, I could speak basic phrases, but because I was always surrounded by like Canadians... I only hung out with Canadians, I think, up to like high school. I couldn't write in Korean, and speaking, I didn't really do much of, either. But I think it was only when I started hanging out with Korean friends again, and they kind of like taught me all over again, letting me know whenever I was making mistakes. I think that's when I started re-learning Korean. I'm just like always resetting. I think, now, because I have some friends who are Korean, but, because of our other friends that are English-speaking, like, non-Koreans, I'm kind of resetting that process again. It's always going back and forth. So it's, it's not a set factor—it just keeps fluctuating sometimes. Yeah, just depends on the environment, I guess, [...]. (James)

As illustrated in the excerpt above, the language proficiencies of the participants seemed to have been constantly shaped by the current use of the languages throughout their lives. In this regard, it can be expected that most participants are at risk of further losing their Korean proficiency in the future, as their parents remain as the only regular contact in their lives with whom Korean is used.



## CHAPTER 9

### *FEELING CANADIAN*

#### 9.1 Discrimination and Racism

##### 9.1.1 Overall Experiences

Racial discrimination, to which ethnic/racial minority groups are vulnerable, has a significant impact on self-esteem and physical/mental well-being of individuals (Chung, 2016; Esses, 2021; Greene et al., 2006; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). Perceived discrimination leads individuals to identify more closely with their ethnic group as a means of a coping mechanism, in which cases a stronger sense of ethnic identity can be expected (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). As for Asians, despite the model minority, they are persistently perceived as *perpetual foreigners* in the host country (Hwang, 2017; Francis, 2021; S. Y. Kim et al., 2011; Noh, 2012). For example, in school, speaking imperfect English (e.g. with a non-native accent) signals foreignness and/or immigrant status of the speaker, rendering individuals vulnerable to discrimination. Thus, Asian populations are often faced with high levels of perceived discrimination, albeit to lesser extents when compared with Blacks (Beiser et al., 2001; Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Greene et al., 2006).

**Table 78**

*Overall experiences of racial discrimination*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Experienced racial discrimination first-handedly	<b>9</b>

Morton Beiser et al. (2001) postulated that discrimination entails “the unfair or injurious acts” that can be present “in direct and blatant forms of behavior or in more subtle and elusive attitudes and behaviours” (p. 194). In line with this broad notion of discrimination, the shared stories of discrimination across the interviews presented various forms of racial discrimination. Table 78 summarizes the overall experiences of discrimination, as reported by the sample. The majority had previously experienced discrimination, and, overall, there appeared to be an increased level of awareness of racism following the pandemic. In fact, Ben was the only one across the sample who had no previous experiences of being discriminated against based on race. Nevertheless, he indicated that he was familiar with “second-hand” experiences of discrimination.



Most participants were exposed to discrimination as early as in childhood, some in the form of micro-aggressions. The circumstances in which discrimination was experienced varied, from schooling experiences (“[...] like squinting eyes and stuff like that. [...] just imitating the way they think Asian languages sound”—Jacob) to everyday situations (“[...] on the street, actually, this guy [...] saw me, and like he pulled his eyes sideways like that [...]”—*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Lucy*; “[...] we were in the car at a parking lot, waiting for this spot to free up. [...] a White middle-aged woman stole our spot. [...] She looked back at us while pulling her eyes sideways”—*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*). Kelly and Harin spoke about their experiences of racism throughout schooling as the following:

Like, I remember in high school and one of my English classes, one of the girls, White girls in my class, came up to me. [...] She was like, ‘Hey [[Kelly]], I was like talking to my mom yesterday, and I told her that there’s this really pretty Chinese girl in my class,’ and like she was talking to me about that. And I was like, ‘Oh, thank you, but I’m Korean,’ and she was like, ‘Whatever, same thing.’ So it’s like stupid shit like that, you know. It’s like, she wants to compliment me, but then, when I try to correct her, she’s like, ‘oh no, that’s not important.’ [...] as I was in high school and I didn’t really know how to deal with the situation, I was just like, I knocked it off. But then, it’s funny that that’s stuck in my memory. [...] how they say, ‘oh, you’re really pretty for an Asian,’ ‘oh, you’re really good looking for an Asian.’ Yeah. So I’ve definitely experienced that growing up in Toronto. And like, I’ve lived in very multicultural neighbourhoods and like I went to pretty multicultural schools. And, even then, I still experienced like all of these little micro-aggressions. (Kelly)

Back in high school, I was talking to my friends in Korean in one of my friend’s neighbourhood. We were just walking, and these non-Korean kids who were passing by were imitating the way we were talking. A White guy and two girls. I was infuriated. So, in my limited English, I cursed at them, shouting, [...]. They were running away, and I threw my shoes at them, swearing, chasing after them. They eventually said sorry and ran away. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Unlike Harin, Kelly felt lost as to how to deal with the situation and “knocked it off.” Yet, she found herself reflecting on her past experiences of discrimination more recently, as there was an increasing level of attention given to the victims of racism (“[...] you know how people post like all these like examples of what racism could be and, like, I also like look at my own life and think about it, as well”).

Furthermore, some described their experiences of racism which appeared somewhat restrained. The participants nevertheless felt helpless in such circumstances.

Even if it may seem like there’s no racial discrimination... When they see that you’re Asian, and, immediately, they’re not nice, whereas, when it’s White people, they are much nicer, and they get chatty... things like that? The kinds

of stuff that are just felt without anything being said, you know? There are so many immigrants and Asians in Canada, so I used to not be able to tell, but I think you can tell from the attitude of that kind of people. [...] These days, they don't outrightly discriminate because that's taboo. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

I think this thought is rooted in my mind. Because I am Asian, Korean, and my English isn't perfect, not like the White... So, rather than discriminating in an outright manner, they treat you in a different way. (*Translated from a mix of Korean and English/Victoria*)

As the excerpts above demonstrate, discrimination that Harin and Victoria describe seemed to be perceived through people's attitude—therefore ingrained in everyday situations they face.

Although it wasn't any intentional things that I was experiencing from people... Being in my industry, it was very obvious how underprivileged I am as an Asian person in the creative industry. [...] Every time I go on a business kind of a golf outing, of course, in golf, it's like predominantly White, as well. And, whenever we go with clients and colleagues, they're all White—they all grew up with cottages or playing hockey, or, you know, following the Jays, Raptors, and blah blah blah... And all that stuff that I can't connect with. They would always feel a little bit awkward about asking me about Asian type of questions. Or food—they won't understand certain food. The level of connectivity is not there, the depth of connectivity. So it's not as easy to do business. (William)

In William's case, he believed that the perceived barrier was not an explicit form of racism, but rather, that it was stemming from the social group memberships which were at play, based on race and cultural familiarity. As these narratives illustrate, race seemed to be perceived as one of elements of social divides that the participants encountered, marking *us* from *them*.

In addition, Nora, Lucy, and Kelly shared personal experiences of discrimination that they encountered. Nora described her experience of the struggles she faced in university when she was trying to find a part-time job. Upon coming across an article in the Toronto Star that discussed discrimination in the job market based on last names that sound foreign, Nora changed her official name to her current English name—and, only then, she began getting calls for an interview. Her new name felt like “a new identity,” which she described as “a pretty big part” of herself; at the same time, she was regretful that she felt the need to change her name (“I like [[her Korean name]] more, because it is my name”). In the cases of Lucy and Kelly, they both experienced Asian hate during the pandemic: Lucy and her boyfriend were yelled after by a homeless person in the streets of Vancouver while travelling; and Kelly, along with her husband, were cussed at by a White man (“[...] and he was like, ‘You fucking Asians are fucking everywhere’”).

Although examples of discrimination and racism were numerous and varied, many seemed to attach little importance to their personal experiences of discrimination. The following narratives express their sentiment:

It was just more like, ‘ah, that’s annoying,’ stuff like that. (Jacob)

Um, very minor, like small, petty stuff, I want to say. (Lucy)

I wouldn’t say I experience that strongly in a way that it offended me. (William)

I haven’t experienced *major*, major discrimination. (Victoria)

Nothing serious, but yes. And I think everyone experiences racism at one point or another, because, whether intended or not, everyone a sinner and the racist, is what I feel. (James)

Some participants insisted that the instances in which they encountered discrimination were rare. For instance, Jacob had never felt discriminated against since his schooling experiences, and he did not feel vulnerable to racism within the society. As well, Jisoo and Nora emphasized that the experiences which they described were one-time occurrences. Overall, most participants seemed to downplay their personal experiences of discrimination. This phenomenon will be discussed further on.

### 9.1.2 Ethnic and Racial Stereotypes

**Table 79**

*Perceived stereotypes regarding Koreans and Asians*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Positive stereotypes (e.g. smart, hardworking/academic, trendy/cool)	<b>7</b>
Negative stereotypes (e.g. bad drivers, nerdy/unattractive, obedient/submissive, rich Asians are a threat, “foreigner” stereotype, unhygenic)	<b>4</b>
Neutral stereotypes (e.g. tiger mom, family-oriented)	<b>3</b>

Stereotypes, whether positive or negative, entails overgeneralization of a population which can be dehumanizing. Stereotypes are impactful on shaping self-identity and in- and out-group perceptions of individuals because they are universal: the content of stereotypes is well-known and is associated with prejudice toward the group (Devine, 1988, p. 5). Stereotypes can be a useful predictor of ethnic/racial discrimination, because experiences and consequences of discrimination differ for each group, depending on out-group perceptions (Donovan et al., 2013). Therefore, inquiring into perceived stereotypes in the minds of the participants provided useful insights into out-group perceptions of the ethnic/racial identity that are likely to have

affected the participants' self-perceptions. Table 79 provides a list of Korean/Asian stereotypes that the participants identified, as well as their general opinions regarding the subject.

The narratives provided a rich pool of examples of stereotypes related to Koreans/Asians. Most were deemed positive, tying the findings to the model minority. There were seven participants who identified at least one positive Korean/Asian stereotype. The most common stereotypes that were mentioned in the narratives were that Asians are good in certain fields such as maths, science, and art. In the more recent context, some believed that Koreans were increasingly seen as trendy and cool, following the global popularity of Korean pop culture. Moreover, some participants voiced concerns related to the model minority. For example, Kelly, a secondary school teacher, described the pressure and stress associated with the stereotype that Asian youths are “very academic,” and that they are “very obedient and disciplined”—who are thus expected to be “quieter, never voice an opinion.”

Some of the negative stereotypes were also described by some participants. According to them, Asians were perceived as “bad at driving,” “nerdy,” who “can’t speak English,” to name a few examples. Following the pandemic, Ben also believed that Asians could be seen as unhygienic. Furthermore, Kelly and Harin thought that Asians were often perceived as rich, based on their success which has been observed “in the past decade or so.” They associated this bias to the negative sentiment that has been on the rise toward Asians in recent years: “foreigners coming in with all this cash” and “living the life that they would like to live,” as well as Asian Canadians, among other hard-working immigrants, who are “making the country run.” In addition, few participants commented on the stereotype that Asians do not speak English. On the one hand, Kelly associated this bias with Asians, in particular, and described the image of Asians being ignorant about social etiquettes (“[...] they can’t speak English and, therefore, are going to be ignorant about rules and social etiquette”). On the other hand, Victoria believed that the bias was rooted to the general perception of a “foreigner,” rather than the race (“I don’t know if people would think Asians don’t speak English because they’re Asians. It’s more like, ‘since they’re foreigners, they might not speak English’”—*Translated from Korean*). Hence, consistent to previous literature which has shed light on the reality of Asian immigrants who are perceived as the model minority (Blackburn, 2019; Francis, 2021), these findings highlighted the participants’ awareness of their minority status—often riddled with the perpetual foreigner stereotype (Francis, 2021) and the disadvantages that stem from out-group perceptions that it is faced with.

Many positive and negative stereotypes appeared to be associated with one another: Asians are good at certain subjects but are nerdy and unattractive; Asians are hardworking and do not voice their opinions; and Asians are rich and are a threat to the national economy. Moreover, in their attempts to try to understand social hierarchy, the participants appeared to have drawn links between the bias and racial discrimination that they witnessed. Firstly, according to Harin, due to the popular belief that Asians are hardworking, quiet, and obedient, Asians are given significantly less attention compared to other racial groups (“In their eyes, because we are quiet, [...]. [...] because Asians respect the rules, they do their work, I feel like that’s why others care less about them”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*). Secondly, Kelly pointed to the stereotype about rich Asians—notably Chinese—as the contributing factor to Asian hate (“And then, there's all this like pent-up anger and jealousy and a mix of everything built into that”). Thirdly, Jisoo and Victoria believed that a foreign individual is more vulnerable to discrimination if he or she does not speak English (“In Canada, you could get discriminated against if you don’t speak English”—*Translated from Korean, Jisoo*; “I haven’t experienced major, major discrimination... because I still speak English. The moment I speak in English, not much discrimination, I guess? [...] I remember instances where attitudes change when I speak in English”—*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*).

When the participants were asked how the existing Asian stereotypes made them feel, they overall responded that they felt indifferent. First and foremost, some stereotypes that are seemingly harmless (e.g. strict Asian tiger moms and family-oriented Asians) were identified. As well, although many participants were aware of the negative ways in which they could be perceived within the mainstream society, most believed that Asian stereotypes are generally positive. Globally, the participants expressed that stereotypes are the *norm*. Half of the participants believed that stereotypes exist with every ethnic/racial group, and that they will always exist. James explained:

It was more people making stereotypical jokes, which were obviously not offensive to me at that point, because I was so adjusted to the culture. [...] I think it’s pretty normalized up ‘til this point, because you see it happen so frequently.

Some participants even found certain stereotypes funny, as they found some sarcasm or truth reflected in them (“Like the math one, I personally find hilarious, because, you know, I am living proof that that stereotype is so not true”—Kelly; “[...] we’re good at maths and science. And I think it is true, for me”—Lucy). Thus, the overall opinion of the sample regarding stereotypes seemed to be that they should be taken light-heartedly.

### 9.1.3 Impact of Racial Discrimination

The overall experiences of discrimination and racism evidently affected the participants in ways which they perceived self, the ethnic/racial group, and the society. The narratives about racial discrimination were especially interesting, because they involved accounts of how the participants perceived and experienced Asian hate which arose during the pandemic. Both in the media and academia, growing levels of attention have been paid to the psychological impact of Asian hate throughout the pandemic: faced with the media coverage of Asian hate crimes, the model minority myth had been brought to the surface to be questioned; and persistent stress, anxiety, and depression were reported by those targeted by Asian hate (Chang et al., 2021; Francis, 2021; Parsons Leigh et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2021). In their qualitative interview study of Asian Canadians, Jeanna Parsons Leigh et al. (2022) found that Asian hate affected the participants to varying extents. They reported that some of their participants no longer felt safe, both physically and psychologically, whereas some felt that discrimination had a limited impact on their sense of belonging to Canadian and Asian cultures and communities.

**Table 80**

*Impact of perceived racial discrimination on self*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Impact on self	<b>10</b>
- Varying degrees of distress/increased levels of awareness of one's minority status	10
Profound impact	<b>10</b>
- Does not feel profoundly affected	7
- Feels profoundly affected	3
Stance towards the Asian community	<b>10</b>
- Understands the cause of the Asian Hate movement, but does not feel implicated	7
- Does not find the Asian Hate movement effective	3
- Feels supportive of the Stop Asian Hate movement	2
- Feels motivated to connect with the Korean/Asian community	2

Table 80 presents the perceived impact of racial discrimination on the participants, as revealed in the narratives. Whether one experienced implicit or explicit forms of discrimination, most of the sample reported that they did not feel profoundly affected. Nevertheless, consistent to previous literature, experiences of discrimination typically shaped the perception of the participants of their minority status within the mainstream society and caused distress, and, in

some cases, enhanced a feeling of motivation to connect and stand with Asians (Esses, 2022; Greene et al., 2006; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009; Phinney, 1993; Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

First-handed experiences of racial discrimination often caused a feeling of distress to varying degrees and typically enhanced the level of awareness of one's minority status in the minds of the participants. The impact of Asian hate was also evident in some cases. For example, Victoria felt extremely concerned about the raising sentiment of Asian hate that was reported in the news during the pandemic, and thus, although she never directly experienced hate crimes herself, she always made sure to go from "door-to-door" by car and never walked outside by herself as a precaution throughout the pandemic. Additionally, Lucy found herself reflecting on her previous experience of being verbally harassed in the streets—relating the incident to Asian hate and her minority status as Asians ("[...] thinking about it now, I think it might've been because we were Asian").

While most participants tended to "brush it off" their experiences of racial discrimination, few participants—Kelly and Harin—felt profoundly affected.

And because I think I actively tried to join the Canadian group, like, the end of university and after university, I guess I didn't really feel that Asian. 'Cuz no one really mentioned it to me [...]. [...] Yeah, we joke about like Koreans being whatever, and people always make fun of me for being bad at math even though an Asian—it's just like a joke, right? So never really got to me or anything like that. Like, I used to just fully identify myself as Canadian by then. [...] And now, I'm very conscious of the fact that I'm Asian and therefore different and stand out wherever I go, because, again, I was like 'oh, I'm just Canadian'—but no, I am not. I'm not White. [...] I'll forever be Korean, right? [...] It was pretty shitty for the first couple of weeks after it happened, because I felt so raw about it. (Kelly)

As illustrated in Kelly's narrative, indeed, when one is separated from the groups with which he or she identifies with, his or her self-identity can be "profoundly shaken" (Jetten et al., p. 48). In high school, Kelly was "so isolated" in the Korean group that the micro-aggressions which she was experienced did not upset her ("[...] this is us, Koreans, and that is them, Canadians. [...] But that was only because like I, myself, made the conscious decision to be in the other group"). Then, upon integrating into friend groups which she perceived as Canadian throughout university, it seemed evident that her self-identity mirrored the group identity based on her friend groups. Therefore, her self-identity was thrown into turmoil when she was verbally assaulted by a White man during the pandemic—it was a big shock to her, reminding her of her minority status within the mainstream society. As for Harin, who only started socializing with non-Korean peers in adulthood through the exposure at work, had experienced too many cases

of discrimination and racism which, she believes, was the cause of her short temper. As can be seen in the excerpt below, Harin felt that, had it not been her elevated sense of awareness toward racial discrimination, she would be much happier in life.

I think racism has shaped the feeling of rage and hate that I feel. I just can't hold it in. [...] I am always very skeptical and have a hard time trusting people. Whenever I feel like there's something going on at my workplace, I keep the voice recorder on. At the level of paranoia, I note down everything that has happened. There's always this thought in my head, that I need to be prepared in case something unfair happens to me. [...] I always try to prepare myself, because I know I could be faced with racism any time. I don't think other people think like this. [...] If I didn't have such thoughts in my head, I'd be able to live a much happier life. [...] It's a lot of stress. Not necessarily that it would happen, but I'm like, what if it does happen? I always go through a simulation in my head. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Harin*)

Unlike Kelly and Harin, most participants expressed that they did not feel particularly affected racial discrimination, and many did not feel concerned by Asian hate following the pandemic. Furthermore, the majority tended to “brush off” negative experiences, even after experiencing varying degrees of distress. This phenomenon, rooted to sociocultural and psychological mechanisms, is not uncommon to immigrants that to visible minority groups. Firstly, visible minorities tend to minimize personal experiences of racial discrimination and react passively, and the ways in which they cope are dependent on varied factors, including ethnicity and culture (Chung, 2016; W. Kuo, 1995; Noh et al., 1999; Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997). For example, in the case of Asian immigrants, a direct confrontation does not align with cultural values, as it can be considered as a social deterrence (W. Kuo, 1995). As well, visible minorities may associate personal experiences of discrimination as a personal failure, and thus, deny personal experiences of discrimination and/or minimize the experiences in order to protect their self-esteem. At the same time, they may attribute such failures to their group status as a minority, which can lead to higher levels of perceived discrimination towards their group (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997; D. M. Taylor et al., 1990).

Across to the sample, the most common opinion was that racism exists everywhere, and that it cannot be eliminated. As the experiences of racial discrimination were one-time occurrences for some, they were able to let go of the negative feelings associated with the experiences. As for Lucy and Jisoo, they both believed that racism was the result of the problems of the aggressor, and that it had less to do with their race (“It is racism, but the underlying factor where it comes from, I don't think it's racism. It's just that they are, you



know, unhappy, miserable people [...]”—Lucy; “Rather than thinking that that person acted like that because I’m Asian, I just thought that it’s more of her problem, that she’s just that kind of a person...”—*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*). These narratives illustrated the preferences of the participants for forbearance as a coping mechanism, which remained consistent to the Asian cultural norms of indirect problem-solving (Noh et al., 1999).

Moreover, throughout their narratives, over half of the sample drew a comparison between Canada and the United States (“[...] in Canada, I never feel alienated, but in places other than Manhattan, a bit like in the countryside, Connecticut, for example, [...] I can feel the stares”—*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*) and Europe (“Being discriminated against, rather, Canada is a bit better. You go to Europe, it’s bad in Europe”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*) to prove their point that the situation is better in Canada.<sup>124</sup> Some also highlighted that Toronto was exceptional, and this opinion emerged especially when the participants were asked to comment on the Stop Asian Hate movement: most participants had never had a first-hand experience of Asian hate, and many saw Toronto as a model for multiculturalism which provided a safe environment for them. Ben’s narrative provides an example of this perception:

I think Toronto itself is literally the most multicultural city in the whole world.  
I think I’m safe in saying that. And, in a sense, I feel blessed because of that.  
It feels like I have been more shielded from experiencing any overt racism  
just from living here and growing up in a less discriminatory place. (Ben)

Even Lucy, who felt that the pandemic affected racism in Canada, along with other places, only noticed “small petty racism in the streets” in Toronto—“not anything bigger”—following the pandemic. Therefore, the media coverage seemed to have enhanced their perception of Toronto as a haven, in many cases.

Although most participants did not feel directly affected by Asian hate, due to their previous experiences of racial discrimination and/or exposure to the media coverage, some felt sympathy for the victims of Asian hate and understood the cause of the movement. Albeit few, some expressed their support for the movement, as well. Across a number of narratives, comparisons between Canada and other countries were typically made:

Realizing that this is not the norm in most of the world, when these movements come up, I think they have a point. They probably experience a lot of crap that I’ve never gone through. Yeah, I feel for that. (Ben)

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<sup>124</sup> This is not to say that the participants believed Canada to be free from severe cases of racial discrimination. Lucy, for instance, pointed out that Blacks were significantly more vulnerable to high levels of racism. Indeed, in Toronto, the police have been criticized for tendencies of racial profiling (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2022).

Maybe in Canada, it's better, but I've watched videos [...]. And I guess I do see it on the news, like that time when Asian American women were killed in a nail shop by this guy [...]. Yeah, so things like that are shocking, but they do happen. [...] so that is definitely not small. That's something that should not happen. And movements like that, I think does bring awareness and shine light to something that shouldn't be happening in the world. So I definitely support it. (Lucy)

Back then, it was quite severe, especially in America. So I think it was necessary. (*Translated from Korean/Victoria*)

Thankfully, I haven't experienced anything here. But when I read online, I've noticed it's been happening more frequently, like in the other parts of the world. So reading that, obviously, it's disheartening [...]. [...] it's just very wrong. So I guess, even though I don't feel personally like implicated, I support the cause. (James)

At the same time, most of the sample did not feel concerned (“I do understand the cause, but again, at the same time, I wouldn't say I feel like I'm too heavily involved”—Jacob; “But then, when like George Floyd, that happened, [...] it made me think a bit. Asian hate movement doesn't really touch me...”—*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*; “I don't feel any threat on a personal level”—William).

Throughout the narratives, it became evident that the various references that were used for comparisons were sourced from the participants' experiences of travel and work, as well as their exposure to the media—notably, the media coverage of Asian hate which grew during the pandemic. Many referred to the perceived images of *more* severe cases of hate crimes, which involved unsolicited attacks on Asian women and seniors in the United States. This tendency of comparing *us* (Asian Canadians) and *them* (e.g. Asian Americans) can be seen as a means of saving face and promoting in-group pride (De Hooge & Van Osch, 2021). Thus, there seemed to be increased levels of awareness of the pan-ethnic Asian Canadian identity, following the pandemic.

The findings showed that the exposure to the media coverage of the Asian hate sentiment alone did not seem to be sufficient in evoking a sense of implication in the Stop Asian Hate movement. Rather, the lack of first-hand experiences in their daily lives of what they perceived as a severe, explicit form of racism seemed to be the reason for which most participants found the movement irrelevant to them on a personal level. Moreover, Kelly, Harin, and William felt that the movement was ineffective.

I think it's very important to raise awareness about all the horrible things that were happening to like Asian seniors and things like that in the States and on the west coast like Vancouver. But then, I don't think it helps anyone when

we go on protests and marches waving signs of stopping Asian hate. Personally, I don't think it's ever going to stop. (Kelly)

Ineffective? Even if you protest like that, the ones who discriminate against Asians, they don't think they're concerned. When it comes to Black Lives Matter, White people are more inclined to listen, because they're historically involved. But then, in that sense, I guess there's also the Chinese railroad... I just think there's less attention on Asians, because, honestly, we're too diplomatic. Because, when we feel angry, we don't make a scene nor violently protest. I'm a bit of an exception. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

To be honest, I'm not all that invested in it, because it came late in this whole kind of walk, era, of so many different movements. So I just said it's another one of those. If it's an immediate reaction to unsolicited attacks of Asians, sure, I can see the need for awareness of that, because, apparently, they are happening everywhere. But yeah, like, I don't feel it's a larger, long-lasting movement that affects us as a race fitting into society. (William)

The lack of implication and emotional investment in the Stop Asian Hate movement reflected the overall sentiment of helplessness and/or indifference regarding the subject of racism that many participants felt. In fact, most expressed that it was impossible to eradicate racism—like stereotypes, they believed that racism will always persist. Some participants argued that a more progressive approach to embracing ethnic and racial differences was necessary, and that, for example, rather than “ignoring” or “pretending” that everyone is the same, societies must acknowledge racial differences and the bias and learn to “work around” them.

As a result of perceived discrimination and racism, Kelly and William felt a renewed sense of motivation to connect with Koreans in Toronto. In both cases, despite their integration into English-speaking peer groups, they experienced a barrier that prevented them from feeling a sense of belonging. As for Kelly, the verbal aggression from a White man that she experienced during the pandemic placed a rupture in her self-perception as Canadian; and, as for William, the perceived boundary between White peers and himself at work settings represented an unspoken barrier that made it difficult for him to establish connections. Due to these experiences, the two participants, whose co-ethnic peer socialization had been kept to a minimum in the recent years, wished to connect with the Korean community in Toronto to improve the situation of Korean immigrants altogether (“[...] it has made me realize and therefore is shaping my whole new viewpoint towards like helping Koreans and all of that”—Kelly; “[...] because I went through that hardship and how hard it was to penetrate that market, I would love to be influential position enough so that I could help other Koreans get there”—William). William also expressed “a strong support” for the Asian community in Canada, when commenting on the success of Crazy Rich Asians and the significant support from Asian communities that it received.

Overall, discrimination, racism, and many stereotypes associated with the Asian race were familiar subjects to the sample. The findings showed that, while the negative sentiments resulting from experiences of discrimination did not appear to affect most of the participants on a long term, they affected some participants significantly. Regardless of whether or not one felt profoundly affected by discrimination, it cannot be denied that the bias that construct stereotypes and perceived discrimination contributed to shaping their perceptions of social hierarchy, in which their in-group minority status takes part.

Some interesting observations can be made when comparing these findings to previous literature. On the one hand, indeed, most participants tended to minimize personal experiences of discrimination, which can be interpreted as a means of maintaining self-esteem (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997). On the other hand, in contrast to previous findings that highlighted the tendency of visible minority individuals to exaggerate group discrimination (D. M. Taylor et al., 1990), many participants seemed to associate most of the perceived discrimination with other pan-Asian groups (e.g. *Asian Americans*). In this respect, the perceived status of the Asian Canadian identity reflected across the narratives of the sample can be interpreted as a coping strategy that the participants adopted to dis-associate themselves from the perceived discrimination and maintain a positively perceived in-group identification and pride.

## **9.2 Multiculturalism**

To promote a national identity that can be shared among its increasingly diverse body of citizens, the Canadian government established a link between immigration, multiculturalism, and citizenship, by creating the federal Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship in 1992 and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship 1993 (Wayland, 1997, p. 56). However, to the present day, there remains ambiguity ingrained in discussing a common Canadian identity. At the same time, more recent literature has indicated that multiculturalism appears to be positively correlated to one's identification with Canada (Adams, 2007; CBC Radio, 2019; Citrin et al., 2012; Kymlicka, 2010).

**Table 81***Perceived meaning of multiculturalism*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Canadian ideals of embracing diversity (e.g. being open-minded and tolerant)	<b>8</b>
Demographic description of the current state of the Canadian society	<b>2</b>

Following the questions related to perceived experiences of discrimination and racism, the participants were asked to share their opinions about Canadian multiculturalism. Firstly, the perceived notion of multiculturalism was inquired into. As outlined by Dewing (2009), the term, multiculturalism, refers to both the demographic fact and sociological ideals, as well as the state policy (p. 1). In parallel, the findings indicated that the participants' understanding of multiculturalism was varied (Table 81). The vast majority perceived it as a sociological ideal: the culture of embracing diversity built on open-mindedness and tolerance toward differences. As well, there were two participants—Kelly and Victoria—who thought of it as the reality of cultural pluralism which exists within the Canadian society.

Hmm. Multiculturalism itself, in my mind, definition-wise, is just the state that we are living in. [...] And so I think we live in a multicultural society just as a technicality: we live with many people from many different countries, especially here in Toronto. (Kelly)

I think it's just what it is—and this is what our country has become and will become in the future. (Victoria)

**Table 82***Perceptions of Canadian multiculturalism*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Positive perceptions	<b>8</b>
- It has a positive impact on individuals and the society	7
- It helps shaping the Canadian culture and/or identity	7
- Feels a sense of pride	6
Negative perceptions	<b>8</b>
- Multiculturalist ideals may not be effectively fostered/managed in Canada	7
- Tensions/conflicts remain related to multiculturalism	6
- The ideology of multiculturalism may only be applicable to urban centres in Canada such as Toronto	3
- Due to multiculturalism, it is hard to form national pride	3

Table 82 shows how the participants perceived the current state of Canadian multiculturalism. The findings showed that many held both positive and negative views on multiculturalism in Canada. On the one hand, most participants voiced that multiculturalism had an overall positive impact on Canadians, society, and the nation-building of Canada. On the other hand, many also raised concerns about multiculturalism, questioning whether it was effectively fostered within the Canadian society. Some also pointed out the fact that multiculturalism may hinder forming national pride.

Some participants were able to say with certainty that Canadian multiculturalism is overall successful as a means of managing diversity. Open-mindedness and tolerance of Canadians and the society were typically cited as examples. Multiculturalism was also described by some as a positive push factor for Canadians to adopt and maintain a multiculturalist conduct (“[...] it keeps people more open-minded, more accepting and welcoming of others [...]”—Lucy; “We’ve already become more multicultural, compared to like 20 years ago, right? So I think that’s great, because more people become more open-minded, then”—*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*). What was especially interesting was Jacob’s observation of Canadian multiculturalism throughout the pandemic. He described the rise of Asian hate and the resulting tension and conflicts as “a good test” to see how *multicultural*—beyond being a mere demographic description—Canadians really were. He also added that he witnessed the majority that support multiculturalist ideals through the responses of the public on social media and the news. Additionally, Nora provided an example to illustrate the positive impact of multiculturalism on people’s conduct: she believed that multiculturalism was what helped her “become more open-minded, open to new cultures, break stereotypes” Thus, for Nora, multiculturalism had “a big impact” on her upbringing, as well as the identity.

Furthermore, many participants believed that, as a result of multiculturalism, Canada was a “pretty peaceful place to live in,” despite various “communities that do stand out.” Jacob and James mentioned that open-mindedness, which they believed is shaped by multiculturalism among Canadians, was not limited to different cultures, but rather, differences, in general (e.g. LGBTQ rights, religion, and the way of living). To Nora’s mind, multiculturalism was a necessary tool that enabled the country to “function” with many diverse bodies of individuals co-existing within the same place. She commented, “I think Canada wouldn’t function if

multiculturalism wasn't working. Because we're so diverse, we have to learn to work, live, and exist together.”

Mirroring the narratives on the subject of discrimination, some participants drew comparisons between hate crimes that took place in Canada and other countries during the pandemic to explain why they believed multiculturalism was successfully implemented into the Canadian mindset and society (“[...] in comparison to other places, we have far less hate crimes”—Jacob; “I think Canada, in general, is doing really well, because you don't have as many like hate crimes compared to other places, like in the States”—James; “[...] the Asian hate stories I see from the States and other parts of the world, [...]. I don't see very blatant discrimination of that nature”—Nora). Therefore, the media coverage about hate crimes in countries other than Canada during the pandemic seemed to have reinforced these participants' positive perception of Canadian multiculturalism.

Beyond discussing the impact of multiculturalism on individuals and the society, many participants moreover made a link between multiculturalism and the national culture and/or identity of Canada. For them, the word, multiculturalism, was synonymous to Canada and the Canadian culture. Additionally, Jacob and James made an explicit reference to the Canadian identity, which they believed was founded by multiculturalism (“[...] the fact that Canada's basically about multiculturalism, so accepting to be open toward other cultures. And I think that's pretty much what the main thing is that defines the Canadian identity”—Jacob; “I think to be Canadian is to embrace multiculturalism. So respecting other cultures, I think that's the core value of being Canadian”—James).

Some participants drew a distinction between Canadian multiculturalism and American melting pot to highlight the positive impact on shaping Canadian nationalism:

[...] Canada, the US, right next to each other, both English-spoken... I used to not be able to tell much difference between Canada and the US. [...] But through work and as I age, I see more differences. [...] In the States, in places like New York, Manhattan, there are many different ethnicities, but other than the majority who are Blacks and Latinos... You don't really see as many Brown people like you do here, for example. [...] I had a friend who lives in the States come visit me here. As soon as she arrived, she asked me why there were so many refugees, ‘the people with those things wrapped around their heads.’ For me, we see people like that all the time, but, for her, I guess she was surprised to see people like that at the airport. [...]. In Canada, we are definitely inclusive. When you hear other people speaking in a different language on the bus and stuff, no one cares—and me, neither. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

[...] the US is the melting pot and Canada is a mosaic. And the reason why it's mosaic is because every ethnicity keeps intact their cultural interests and values and qualities. But then, they're also part of the larger picture, right? So a mosaic culture. (William)

These narratives can be seen as examples of what Charles Breton (2015) worded as “Canadian exceptionalism”: the idea that associates “the norm of inclusiveness” with the Canadian identity, which enables it to “act as a superordinate identity” for immigrants (p. 362). Indeed, compared to other countries, studies based on Canada have consistently demonstrated a positive correlation between one’s identification with the country and his or her support for immigration and multiculturalism (Breton, 2015; Citrin et al., 2012; Wong, 2015). In parallel to these previous research findings, many participants believed that multiculturalism—through its promotion of the “mosaic culture”—provided a culture that is distinctive of Canada which they can relate to. In several cases, multiculturalism seemed to positively shape a sense of national pride that some participants felt.

Beyond mostly positive opinions surrounding the subject of Canadian multiculturalism, many narratives also reflected some concerns about the current state of Canadian multiculturalism. They seemed to believe that multiculturalism was ideal as a projected national identity and cultural value in Canada, but that the result was flawed. The question that was raised across their narratives was centered around the core element of the notion of multiculturalism—diversity.

Firstly, some participants expressed concerns over the impact of multiculturalism on Canadian nationalism. Kelly and William, who acknowledged the positive impact of multiculturalism on Canadian cultural identity, identified multiculturalism as the cause of the perceived *lack* of Canadian nationalism, compared to the assimilative melting pot of the United States and American nationalism.

And Canada doesn't do anything as a country, I feel like, to develop the sense of nationalism in its citizens the way America does. [...] maybe it was like How I Met your Mother, I think. How Barney was talking about how like, you know, there's no sense of anything for like Robin and Canadians, and how like, if you go into any American bar and start chanting 'USA,' everyone's going to start following along. And you know what? I think that episode actually rings true. If you go to like a Canadian bar and start chanting 'Canada,' you know, I feel like, what the hell is wrong with you? [...] Like, Canada doesn't do anything to nurture that sense of national pride in anyone, because we so believe in this mosaic multiculturalism, [...]. I'm not saying that it's a bad thing or a good thing. But then, I think any Canadian would be very hard-pressed to say that they are very strongly nationalistic towards Canada. (Kelly)



It's [multiculturalism] also a weakness because the sense of national pride is not as strong as, say, the Americans. In America, you abandon everything you had before and you become American, right? Not abandon, but like, you first identify as American. [...] I think that it's greatest strength and weakness of Canada. It's hard to form national pride, but, at the same time, we have a very diverse understanding and views in life, which is great. It's just a question of how to make the best use of the voices. (William)

As both participants pointed out, there appeared to be a stark contrast between American nationalism and Canadian nationalism. To begin with, it has been suggested in the press that Canadians do not share the same understanding of the notion of nationalism with Americans: for Canadians, nationalism is likely to be associated with multiculturalism, equated with the “idea of feeling connected to our country and ensuring that others feel connected as well” for Canadians, in contrast to, for instance, the “Trump nationalism” (Press, 2018). Therefore, it is interesting to note the contrasting views of the overall participants on the correlations between Canadian multiculturalism and Canadian nationalism. On the one hand, many were proud of Canadian multiculturalism for its contribution to shaping the Canadian cultural character, national identity, and nationalism. On the other hand, some felt that multicultural ideals in Canada was an obstacle to promoting Canadian pride and therefore nationalism.

As for Jacob, for whom Canadian multiculturalism and the resulting open-mindedness were a source of pride, he also felt that vibrant diversity was another result of multiculturalism. Thus, he found it hard to identify any “very defining attributes” of Canada besides multiculturalism that he could be proud of. He explained his torn sentiments in the following words:

I personally feel like Canada is a pretty peaceful place to live in—and this, even with so many different groups of communities of people living in the same country, I guess. [...] We are still one of the most open and tolerant, I think. And I think there's a certain sense of pride in that. [...] Even the food, we have every cuisine, [...] everything you can possibly think of from anywhere in the world, but we don't necessarily have our own food other than like poutine. At least, in Toronto, you can get pretty good food now from any kind of cuisine. [...] But again, we just don't have much food that we can actually say it's Canadian. That's my perception of Canada as a whole. Yeah, we have a bit of everything, but we just don't know what it is that makes us stand out.

Furthermore, numerous participants pointed to some of the perceived flaws of multiculturalism in Canada, reflected in their lived experiences. Many referred to persistent tensions and conflicts related to multiculturalism. For instance, the following excerpt from

Kelly's narrative illustrates her renewed perception of Canadian multiculturalism following the pandemic:

Pre-covid, I would have said, yes, Toronto is a fantastic place, we are a very multicultural, diverse harmonious society, where everyone kind of gets along and we celebrate differences and all of that flowery stuff that we've learned about Canada back in school. I think I was like a very strong believer in it, because, again, like I, myself, or like people around me, my husband, my friends... Like, we all had a pretty diverse group of friends. But then, again, post-covid, because I'm starting to become more aware of, you know, Asian hate, racism, and all of that... It just kind of came to surface, whatever people were feeling inside. [...] now that I am a little more conscious of it, um, I think we function okay as a society, where people keep most of their racialized thoughts to themselves. But then, as soon as like a big event like covid happens, that very thin veneer becomes completely shattered. So I think it's, um, fine when things are good, but then, who's to say that we're gonna continue to live in a peaceful, good society, moving forward? (Kelly)

The excerpt above conveys the frail sense of multiculturalist ideals which Kelly believed are adopted in the minds of people. Additionally, it illustrates the shock that an individual may encounter upon being confronted with the rupture between the multiculturalist ideals that are promoted in Canada and the persisting racism that he or she encounters. In Kelly's case, the disappointment at realizing that multiculturalism in Canada was flawed, affected her vision of the life she wanted to live. For example, she no longer wanted to move into one of the White-dominant neighbourhoods, which she used to perceive as ideal (“[...] Rosedale and like midtown, like beautiful houses”). Instead, as mentioned earlier, she wished to connect with and help other Koreans in Toronto and settle in multicultural suburbs where she used to live in during her childhood—for herself and for her future children. Like Kelly, Ben and Jacob also pointed out that discrimination and racism persisted in Canada, regardless of their overall positive perceptions of Canadian multiculturalism.

Moreover, Ben, Kelly, and Nora distinguished Toronto and other urban centres of Canada from the rest of the country when discussing multiculturalism.

But, um, like, living in Toronto, especially, you would never, ever expect to hear or experience something like that—or so I thought, before the pandemic. (Kelly)

Um, I'm sure not all of Canada is very multicultural. Toronto is like the biggest city, so obviously, it's a little different. (Nora)

In the grand scheme of things, I think there's definitely ups and downs, and I think it varies a lot by region. Like I said, I think Toronto is, in essence, at the forefront of it. They'd get like top marks for kind of multiculturalism. Whereas like some small town in northern Ontario would just be full of like older, six-, seven-generation Canadians, very simple, like European descent,

mostly. Like, if, for example, I went there, they'd probably you know do a double take and see, what's this non-white person doing here? (Ben)

This aspect of Canadian multiculturalism that was raised in the excerpts above is indeed reflective of the demographic reality of Canada, where immigrant populations are visibly centered in large cities in Canada, especially Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2017b; Statistics Canada, 2016a). Therefore, it is important to note that perceptions of Canadian multiculturalism are likely to be different in the minds of individuals residing in parts of Canada outside of the immigrant-populated cities.

Beyond the ethnocultural diversity which is evident within the Canadian society, Lucy and Victoria pointed to the increasing levels of social divide that they perceived:

And I think people cluster more and more between themselves... your ethnicity. [...] I think people might not see some groups positively, kind of, think they are too cliquy... Some bad perceptions, probably? I think there are those kinds of prejudice. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*)

And if it's working... I don't know. Because, recently, I feel like there are times we have so much diversity and we kind of have to tolerate it. And there are some maybe negative sides to it. There's too much, and, sometimes, it's not harmonious—like, there could be clashes, violence, fights... because, like, *everybody* is here. Like, I live downtown near Dundas Square, and when I go out, I see in one corner this guy who's like, 'Believe in Jesus Christ,' and in this other corner, this guy handing out Quran... You know, there're all sorts of people. (Lucy)

Like Jacob, both Victoria and Lucy expressed a strong sentiment of support for open-mindedness that multiculturalism fosters. Yet, the scenes depicted in their narratives above represent examples of drawbacks of multiculturalism, which they found concerning. These concerns mirrored the popular opinion of critics of multiculturalism, who argue that multiculturalism leads to the lack of social cohesion amidst the accentuation of differences (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 7).

Moreover, Kelly recalled an instance that she perceived as an excessive level of public effort of promoting multiculturalism. Her former colleague in summer school was given a disciplinary hearing for calling an Asian colleague 'poker face,' which the committee deemed derogatory, based on the Asian stereotype that Asians are emotionless. Kelly believed that, paradoxically, such a measure reinforced the stereotype which exists in people's minds. As a result, Kelly became more self-conscious and hyper-sensitive about such issues. Ben also commented the following:

Also, maybe I'm wrong about this, but the whole push for multiculturalism also kind of makes me more aware—or hyper aware—of different cultures

and ethnicities. When looking at myself and, also, just... It is something that comes like front and centre in my mind when I meet someone, for example.

Like, oh, they're from this culture, whatnot. (Ben)

These findings indicated that a push for multiculturalism which may be perceived as excessive may result in hypersensitivity and awareness in the minds of individuals, without effectively promoting inclusion and cultural understanding. Hence, some participants seemed to believe that multiculturalism should be fostered in a more efficient manner.

Indeed, political correctness<sup>125</sup> has become an element of the Canadian culture which cannot be overlooked. According to the poll conducted by Research Co. in 2020, half of the Canadian participants supported political correctness, and one-third always acted in such a manner. Moreover, most participants in their study believed that teachers, politicians, and journalists should act in a politically correct manner “always” or “most of the time” (Canseco, 2021). Despite the growing popularity of PC culture, there are evidently some concerns: the critics argue that political correctness is inherently oppressive (Black, 2018), and it has also been reported that the methods used by PC advocates can be violent and intimidating (Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015). As the narratives above suggest, in the context of Canadian multiculturalism, the increasing level of diversity, as well as the heightened levels of social expectation of being politically correct, may lead to what some perceived as a *flawed* practice of multicultural aspirations. Consequently, although multiculturalism may encourage celebration of diversity, PC culture may discourage the public discourse from addressing the diversity that is present within the society.

Furthermore, Ben, Harin, and William raised a point in arguing that the push for multiculturalism can be constructive, only if the culture of embracing diversity is built on open discussions, rather than the false pretense that everyone is equal, regardless of their ethnic/racial backgrounds.

I guess, one thing that I don't like about, sometimes, with ‘multiculturalism’ is where a lot of them will deny that there's any cons of different cultures. [...] I think there should be some space to allow for discussion and to be able to say, yeah, there are some negatives, and I think that's fine. (Ben)

If you were to ask Muslims questions like, ‘Why do you guys wear a Hijab?’ the questions could come across being offensive. But then, there could also be people who genuinely just don't know. [...] I wonder if we couldn't have been educated since a really young age, like kindergarten—like, ‘let's talk about cultures.’ Even if they do teach like this, I guess I wouldn't know,

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<sup>125</sup> Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines political correctness (hereinafter PC) as “conforming to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated.”

because I only started going to school here towards the end of elementary school (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

I think it's just like stereotypes that exist with every race. As much as we don't like to talk about it or say it out loud, [...]. [...] We all have this. Why are we in such denial of it, and what [why] are we trying to eliminate it? I think we should know how to walk around it, learn to use it to our advantage. We should learn to improve it, because it is a stereotype we have, or we should learn to laugh about it. Like it's just part of life. Ignoring it or trying to eliminate it and pretending that doesn't exist, it doesn't do anything. It doesn't work. [...] It's just a question of how to make the best use of the voices. (William)

These findings suggest that, while multiculturalism in Canada may be positively regarded as an effective means of fostering open-mindedness in the minds of Canadians, the resulting public sensitivity—further driven by PC culture—towards addressing the evident diversity may be shaping hyper-awareness and sensitivity around the subject, without making room for open and meaningful discussions. Without open discussions, as the excerpts above suggest, cultural differences can be perceived as a taboo, which implies that one is expected to be open-minded without truly understanding the meaning of cultural diversity in Canada. In other words, tolerating differences may not be enough—*embracing* diversity needs to be the central aim and practice of multiculturalism, perhaps approached differently than presently.

All the participants appeared to acknowledge that Canadian multiculturalism is ideal as a projected national value. The majority perceived it positively, based on the open-mindedness, which they associated with the national character, culture, and identity, and there was a sense of pride that was invoked in the minds of many participants. Yet, the majority agreed that the current state of multiculturalism—the practice of embracing diversity—was not perfect in practice. This belief was closely tied to numerous factors: their experiences of discrimination and racism that they perceived or experienced; the vibrant diversity witnessed within the society that some perceived as an obstacle to forming national pride and/or as an instrument that encourages ethnic cliques; and the current cultural climate of political correctness and the resulting public sensitivity around increasing levels of diversity. While the narratives often revealed both positive and negative sides to Canadian multiculturalism, most seemed, nevertheless, to convey that its advantages outweigh the disadvantages. They believed that multiculturalism made Canada a better place to live in compared to other places and contributed to Canadian nationalism. In fact, there were only two participants across the sample—Kelly and Harin—whose overall tone remained critical while speaking about their sentiments about Canadian multiculturalism.

The findings showed that a sense of shared Canadian identity is indeed construed through multiculturalism, which has become both the demographic reality and an important part of what one perceives as the Canadian character and culture. However, some of the concerns and criticisms tended to be directed at how multiculturalism is managed. In fact, in consideration of the multiculturalist ideals which are well embedded into the public policy, the findings suggest that there is likely to be a lack of open public discourse about how diversity should be discussed and debated. For instance, the narratives of the participants about their schooling experiences did not seem to entail any educational effort at the institutional level to facilitate cultural exchanges among students. As well, as discussed previously, the Canadian public broadcast media has been criticized in the literature to have failed to reflect the diversity in its content (J. Yoon, 2018; K. Yoon, 2017). Therefore, it can be said that, despite the federal Multiculturalism Policy which obliges public institutions to encourage immigrant participation, the actual management of the state and public institutions of the multicultural reality of the Canadian population may not yet be adequate. Nevertheless, most participants had an overall positive perception of multiculturalism: they appeared to appreciate its representation of the Canadian population, as well as its contribution to the Canadian national identity.

### **9.3 Defining *Canadianness***

Throughout their experiences of growing up and living in Canada, various perceptions of Canada were formed in the minds of the participants. To identify the patterns that would best represent the perceived image of Canada and Canadians, the imagined qualities of the Canadian culture, citizenship, and people were explored throughout the narratives. The findings indicated useful references that could help contextualizing the perceived self-identity of the participants within the Canadian society.

#### **9.3.1 Canadian Culture**

Culture represents a crucial component of national identity (Tolia-Kelly, 2009). In the case of Canada, previous literature has consistently reported a lack of a strong Canadian identity across the time (Howard-Hassmann, 1999; Roy, 1995; C. S. Taylor, 2007; Wayland, 1997). Therefore, to understand how the participants perceive their national identity, it seemed necessary to examine how they perceived the Canadian culture. Table 83 presents the elements that the participants associated with the Canadian culture. Various ways of what they perceived as the Canadian way of life were referred to, and embracing multiculturalism and being nice were typically described as the defining elements of the Canadian culture.

**Table 83***Defining the Canadian culture*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Immersed in activities and the lifestyle centered around the Canadian interests (e.g. national sports and teams, outdoor activities, permanent residency & contribution to the economy, the Canadian lifestyle)	<b>7</b>
Embracing multiculturalism	<b>6</b>
Being nice (i.e. polite, kind, friendly)	<b>5</b>
Having good intentions, but falling short of actions	<b>4</b>
Political neutrality	<b>4</b>

First and foremost, the examples of what the participants perceived as the mainstream Canadian culture encompassed various domains of interests and activities. Firstly, social interests and activities included “trying out different restaurants,” “going to cultural events” (e.g. concerts, games, and sports events), “gathering at a cottage,” as well as activities that are “rooted in the landscape and the weather” in Canada (e.g. hiking, kayaking, hockey, skiing, and snowboarding). Some of the popular summer activities that were particular to Toronto hospitality scene were also mentioned: like Lucy highlighted, “[...] the kinds of things they would do in Toronto is, you know, going to patios in the summer and going out to eat.” Secondly, identification with national symbols and popular icons (e.g. Blue Jays and Raptors) were described as “very important to follow.” Thirdly, one’s interest in politics (“There are always those people, those who religiously publish weird stuff about like politics in English. [...]. Anybody would look at them and be able to tell they’re Canadians [...]”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*), permanent residency in Canada, and contribution to the economy, as well as embracing the Canadian way of life (“enjoying life,” “nature and slowness,” and “relaxed” lifestyle) were mentioned.

Embracing multiculturalism (i.e. being open-minded and inclusive toward differences) was identified by many participants as the national character that represents the Canadian identity. This finding was unsurprising, as multiculturalism is often considered as the accepted norm in Canada (Breton, 2015; Guimond et al., 2013). As Charles Breton (2015) postulated through the notion of “Canadian exceptionalism,” multiculturalism proved to be a useful point of reference for Jacob, who felt unsure as to whether he was able to adequately describe Canada and its culture (“Um, I gotta think, because I don’t have enough knowledge [...]. I think, number one, just based on the fact that Canada’s basically about multiculturalism [...]). Moreover,

Kelly believed that one should not be “so isolated” in the ethnic culture and group to be able to embrace the mainstream culture.

Some participants identified the nice-and-friendly Canadian stereotype (C. S. Taylor, 2007) as the Canadian character, by highlighting that being Canadian is equivalent to “being polite and kind,” “friendly,” “being respectful,” and “saying sorry all the time.” For instance, Jisoo and Harin, who frequently worked with American and Canadian clients at work, pointed out that Canadians were nicer than Americans. Jisoo provided precise examples by describing her observations on the perceived differences between Canadian and American customers.

[...] People who are accustomed to saying sorry, excuse me, and things like that, they’re Canadians. But when people just go, ‘mm-hmm’ when you say ‘hello,’ ‘bonjour’ to them, they’re Americans. Like ‘thank you,’ ‘no problem,’ those kinds of things, you know?” (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)  
Harin also referred to casual, random chats that Canadians strike up in the streets:

Frankly, in Canada’s case, when you’re waiting for the subway and your eyes meet with someone else’s, then you just talk to them, you know. [...] Like, being nice? Friendly? (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Harin*)

Beyond the niceness that was described, some participants commented on “good intentions” of Canadians. At the level of general culture, Lucy appreciated friendliness of Canadians, but perceived it to be superficial at times.

I feel like Canadians are known to be friendly. But sometimes, it can be a little fake friendly—because it’s so expected. Like, I used to think we were so friendly, and [that] it was genuine. And I still think it is. But also, some parts of it is that people just do it because it is expected, and not from a genuine heart. [...] it’s more like, ‘I want to be a polite person. (Lucy)

In addition, political neutrality was cited as the result of diverse voices that dictate the political atmosphere (“[...] we have such a diverse multicultural voice when it comes to national interests. When it comes to national problems, when it comes to even global issues, the kind of voice that the nation has is very multicultural”—William). In contrast to Jacob who appreciated Canada’s political neutrality for the passport that he perceived as “pretty convenient” for travelling, some participants were critical of it. For example, Ben associated the culture of political neutrality with his perception of Canadians, who “mean well” and “want to do the right thing,” and yet, are not willing to look into political issues too deeply. Simultaneously, in turn, he believed that the government policies were often “very moderate,” as well. Similarly, Kelly also believed that, due to the mosaic multiculturalism, “Canada doesn’t do anything as a country.”



The overall narratives brought to the surface several identifiers related to the perceived Canadian way of life and psyche that constitute the group culture. Multiculturalism again was proven to be an important element that shapes the national character and culture. For example, open-mindedness and being nice and politically neutral, which were often associated with the normative Canadian conduct, seemed to be linked with Canadian multiculturalism.

### 9.3.2 Canadian Citizenship

In liberal states, citizenship has become increasingly multicultural and less focused on nationhood traditions. This phenomenon has led to a more complex identity construction of naturalized citizens among immigrant populations (Joppke, 1999). These tendencies are especially true in the case of Canada, whose citizenship policy—relatively modest and simple—is regarded as a *mid*-point in the integration process of immigrants, not as the *end*-point: it is founded on the principle that immigrants are likely to have dual identities and loyalties, and is supported by multiculturalism policies and the public—including immigrants, themselves (Kymlicka, 2003, pp. 197-199).

**Table 84**

*Perceived significance of Canadian citizenship*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
For one to feel Canadian...	<b>10</b>
- The citizenship is not necessary	8
- The citizenship is necessary	2

Throughout the interviews, the participants were asked to share their opinions regarding the significance of the Canadian citizenship in fostering the Canadian identity. The patterns that were identified across the narratives can be seen in Table 84. The majority did not believe that one needed to have the citizenship to feel Canadian; however, some expressed that it can nonetheless help an individual to feel (more) Canadian—which was aligned with Kymlicka’s (2003) description of the Canadian citizenship policy as the mid-point of immigrants’ integration process. The ones who did not agree that the citizenship plays any role in shaping the Canadian identity referred to various ways in which they perceived an individual to be Canadian even if he or she did not have the citizenship:

I’ve met people who literally only came here on a student visa and stayed here for like three months but are way more ready and willing to accept this Toronto culture, rather than people who have been here for like 20 years and still speak Korean and go to Korean restaurants. (Kelly)

Looking at my boyfriend's case, he's been really unlucky. He was only able to get the permanent residency after 18, 20 years, even though he's lived here for longer than me. I feel like people who speak better English than me and all, but, because of circumstances like that, have not been given the residency or citizenship, I feel like they could be more Canadian than me. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

You wouldn't necessarily feel Canadian just because you are a citizen... Rather, even without it, I'm sure there are lots of people who have absorbed the culture and things like that, because they've lived in Canada for a long time. (*Translated from Korean/Victoria*)

[...] I think there are plenty of people that identify as Canadian and contribute to—some more than most Canadians—to the welfare of Canada, without having the citizenship. (William)

Furthermore, Harin added that she saw little value in the Canadian citizenship. For her, the only differences between the permanent residency and citizenship were that one's permanent residency could be revoked in contrast to the citizenship, and that citizens are given the right to vote. Since she did not vote, she felt that her status as a Canadian citizen had “absolutely no meaning to me whatsoever” for her. Harin's perspective is understandable, in consideration of the fact that the legal status and rights of non-citizens in Canada are not precarious nor socially stigmatized: besides voting rights and access to certain government positions, they have equal access to civil rights, social benefits, labour market, and the full protection of anti-discrimination laws (Kymlicka, 2003, p. 198).

In contrast to Harin, many participants regarded the citizenship as an important factor that adds to one's sense of belonging—regardless of whether they saw it as a prerequisite for the Canadian identity.

I don't, I wouldn't say that you need it like it's the only factor. But I do think it can help significantly. (James)

That's a tricky question. Maybe yes, not because of the status, necessarily, but because of the time it takes to get there. [...] So I think, during that time, as you experience Canadian life, you'd feel more and more integrated and are in the society, so it makes you feel more Canadian. I think it's because of your interactions and the time you spend here you feel more Canadian, not necessarily because you are a citizen. (Nora)

Additionally, the two participants across the sample who perceived the citizenship as important—Ben and Jacob—believed that the citizenship is one of the key ingredients that instills the sense of Canadian identity in an individual's mind. For example, Jacob compared it to an item on a checklist: not “the ultimate thing,” but one among many that one needs to “cross off.”

**Table 85***Sentiments associated with becoming a Canadian citizen*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Felt indifferent	<b>5</b>
Barely remembers	<b>3</b>
Felt happy/relieved	<b>2</b>

Table 85 presents the findings related to how the participants remembered becoming a Canadian citizen. As they arrived in Canada at a young age, they were granted the citizenship as dependent children, based on the application of their parents. Thus, Victoria and Nora only had vague memories of their obtention of the Canadian citizenship, and Ben, Jacob, and Lucy barely remembered the experience. Those who did retain at least partial memories recalled feeling indifferent when they learned that they were becoming Canadian citizens. Jisoo, Victoria, and Nora expressed that, although, back then, they felt indifferent and took the citizenship for granted, reflecting now, they considered themselves lucky and appreciated their citizenship. Across the sample, Kelly was the only participant who felt slightly upset about losing her Korean passport, although she also described her overall feeling as indifferent.

There were two participants—William and James—who positively perceived their obtention of the Canadian citizenship at the time. William, who was in elementary school when his family became citizens in Canada, remembered feeling “quite happy” upon hearing the news. Not only did he feel completely detached from the Korean citizenship which he had to then give up, denouncing the Korean citizenship meant that he would not have to serve in the military in Korea in adulthood. As for James, the only participant across the sample who had recently become a citizen, seemed to have retained vivid memories of the application process, including the citizenship test. Such first-handed experiences led him to attach a meaning to his Canadian citizenship on a personal level. He commented: “[...] there was now physical evidence that I was Canadian, instead of me being in a weird place. I felt like I was part of neither. I’m just feeling like finally having a set identity.”

In fact, while many participants inferred that Canadian citizenship may positively affect an individual’s sense of belonging to Canada, the findings suggest that obtention of citizenship may not play a significant role in shaping national attachment of an individual if he or she is too young to understand its importance (e.g. due to the young age at the time of naturalization and the dependent status). Many of those who remembered their parents being happy with the

news that they were becoming Canadian citizens described the memory from a detached, third-person perspective (“I was in grade 8, and I remember my parents were really happy”—Kelly; “My parents were happy”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*). Harin explained that, for her parents, obtaining the citizenship was a goal and an accomplishment; thus, there was a sense of achievement that she associated with the citizenship for her parents.

In most cases, the overall opinion regarding the Canadian citizenship was that it can help one to feel more Canadian. The fact that they had to denounce their Korean citizenship upon being naturalized did not seem to have affected the vast majority of the sample. Although most participants did not seem to fully embrace their civic rights as Canadian citizens (i.e. voting), many seemed to appreciate their Canadian citizenship.

### 9.3.3 The Canadian Mainstream

Examining the construction of the dominant group perception is important when discussing identities, as the dominant group plays a significant role in shaping the social hierarchies, including out-group perceptions of subordinate groups (Tatum, 2000). The study sought to identify the dominant group, as perceived in the minds of the participants, by inquiring into both their notions of *Canadian* and *mainstream*. Thus, the participants were asked to share how they would define “Canadian mainstream social circles.”

**Table 86**

*Defining the Canadian mainstream group*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Immersed in the Canadian culture (e.g. mainstream interests/activities, multiculturalism etc.)	<b>10</b>
One of/both notions of <i>Canadian</i> and <i>mainstream</i> is/are affected by the White Canadian stereotype	<b>7</b>
- The mainstream group identity is associated with the White Canadian stereotype	5
- Both notions are affected by the stereotype	2
Self-identification as Canadian	<b>2</b>

The narratives that described the perceptions of the participants of what constituted Canadianness illustrated numerous characteristics that they believed befit the mainstream social group (Table 86). First and foremost, all the participants placed an emphasis on one’s cultural integration. Yet, it was evident that the perceived images of the Canadian mainstream social

group were overlapped with the White race in the minds of many participants—mirroring the consistent White bias in the perceived Canadianness which has been reported in previous literature (Howard-Hassmann, 1999; C. S. Taylor, 2007). A finding that was especially intriguing was the distinction between the terms, Canadian and mainstream, that many participants drew, in relation to the White Canadian stereotype.

Firstly, one's integration into the Canadian culture was addressed—both explicitly and implicitly—in all the participants' responses when defining Canadianness. According to them, Canadians are immersed in the kinds of Canadian activities that are centered around the Canadian culture, politics, economy, and/or landscape; they embrace multiculturalism; and they are nice and well-meaning. At the same time, the White Canadian stereotype was ingrained in many participants' minds. Out of these participants, Ben and James drew no distinction between Canadians and being mainstream and described the persistent White Canadian stereotype that contrasted with their perceived Canadian identity:

Personally, I don't like those notions of like, there's a way to be Canadian. [...] I think that people, by their actions or speech, define what it means, rather than the other way around. Like, how Canadians act or feel is what is Canadian [...]. Of my friends or social circles, I wouldn't label anything as a Canadian social circle, even if some might be more like ethnically diverse or whatnot. [...] I wouldn't use that label, I don't think. It will feel weird. [...] There's the notion of stereotypical or classical Canadian, like, you know, White anglo-Canadian, that's Canadian. But I guess it's because I feel Canadian myself, and I feel that a lot of my friends who are whatever ethnicity pretty Canadian, as well, that, that just feels like Canadian, in itself. [...] I feel like, because I feel like I am Canadian in itself... Like, by definition... Therefore, I am. Yeah. (Ben)

Like, White people, I should say. Just like people whose parents are also Canadians, too. [...] I think to be Canadian is to embrace multiculturalism. So respecting other cultures, I think that's the core value of being Canadian. (James)

As can be observed in the excerpts above, both participants were faced with the persistent White Canadian stereotype that stood in the way of their identification with the Canadian identity, which they primarily associated with the Canadian culture.

**Table 87**

*Perceived Canadian and mainstream group identities*

Participant	Perceived group identity	
	Canadian	Mainstream social circle
Kelly	<p>‘Cuz, honestly, before the pandemic and all this Asian hate and whatnot happening, living in Toronto, you’re never conscious of the fact that you’re Asian and therefore different. But then, with the pandemic, [...]. And now, I’m very conscious of the fact that I’m Asian and therefore different, and stand out wherever I go, because, again, I was like ‘oh, I’m just Canadian’—but no, I am not. I’m not <b>White</b>. [...] I’ll forever be Korean, right? [...]</p> <p>[...] I guess, going a little deeper in terms of what I feel when I say someone is Canadian is, if they’re like truly immersed in the Canadian culture. [...] I think it’s when you are not so isolated in whatever background culture you’re from or background ethnic culture, and you are willing and actually do embrace whatever the mainstream culture is here in Toronto or Canada. Like, um, you know, going out and meeting people who are not of the same ethnic background, trying out different restaurants, going to cultural events, like... concerts, games, sports events... doing hobbies or activities that also are rooted in the landscape and the weather here, like skiing, snowboarding...</p>	<p>When I hear mainstream social circle, especially in Canada, I picture mixed gender, multicultural friend group that’s at least like six people.</p>
Jacob	<p>I gotta think, because I don't think I have enough knowledge to really give a good response to this. [...] I think, number one, just based on the fact that Canada’s basically about multiculturalism, so accepting to be open toward other cultures. And I think that’s pretty much what the main thing is that defines the Canadian identity. But at the same time, though, I still think there are certain core elements as to what would really define a Canadian. For instance, like what I mentioned about the sports team and everything earlier, like the Blue Jays and the Raptors, there are still a couple of things for sure that are rooted to Canada. [...]</p>	<p>So, um, mainstream, I would number one say just association with <b>Caucasians</b>, with the values or whatever culture that they're very familiar with.</p>

Lucy	<p>Oh my god, saying sorry all the time. Yeah, being very, very polite and kind to strangers, being respectful, being open-minded to different cultures... stuff like that. I feel like Canadians are known to be friendly, but sometimes it can be a little fake friendly—because it's so expected. Like, I used to think we were so friendly, and [that] it was genuine. And I still think it is. But also, some parts of it is that people just do it because it is expected, and not from a genuine heart. And I only noticed this when I started to travel in other countries [...] it's more like, 'I want to be a polite person. [...]</p> <p>Like... When we say Canadian, I think of like average Canadian group, I guess. When I picture the kinds of things they would do in Toronto is just, you know, going to patios in the summer and going out to eat, go to cinema, going to house parties... Like, with my non-Korean friends, we play board games a lot, and going to cottages... In the winter, doing activities like skiing or snowboarding... [...] I feel like, when you say Canadian, because Canada's very multicultural, it's a very mixed group of people. So I'd think of diversity. [...]</p>	<p>But I guess, when I hear the word, mainstream, I guess I think of like <b>White</b> people.</p>
Victoria	<p>Like, <i>Canadian</i> Canadian? [...] Canadians are people that enjoy things that people like do here often, I guess? Like winter sports, hockey, ski, snowboarding, things like that. In summer, summer activities. Like, someone who lived here for a long time, raised here and is familiar with the culture and the lifestyle. Um, but then... On the other hand, when you say Canadian, I also think of <b>White</b> people. Um so... I guess that kind of overlaps. [...] Canadians are just Canadian. <b>White</b>. [...]</p>	<p>Mainstream... To me, it's like the majority. Because, here, it's so multicultural, I don't immediately associate mainstream with Canadian. Not necessarily. I mean, <i>Canadian</i> means <b>White</b>. Just <i>mainstream</i> alone, I think, career-wise, mainstream. I think of it in that sense.</p>
Nora	<p>Canadian... Someone who is part of a very diverse population, diverse society, who understands different cultural differences, who knows how to get along with people from different backgrounds, who's open-minded... Those are the things I think of when I think of Canadians. [...] And just, in general, we are nice. And also... I think of—I don't know why—like a cottage, like gathering at a cottage and doing something very Canadian, like hiking or like kayaking. [...]</p>	<p>As for definition... I don't know. I'm not sure how I would define that. But I think I would associate it with like the kinds of social tendencies, the kinds of things that Canadians would do. Like the kinds of activities that they do and like... yeah, something like outdoorsy. [...] when I think of like mainstream social circle, I can't help but think of like actual <b>White</b> Canadians.</p>

Whether Canadian or mainstream, whichever term the participants associated the White Canadian stereotype with is not so important. The fact that the race is involved in their definition of the Canadian identity indicates that there is a certain level of social and/or cultural divide that they perceive, associated with the perceived minority group status. The participants who associated both notions of Canadian and mainstream identities with White Canadian stereotype may be more vulnerable to developing a sense of marginalized identity, if their ethnic identity is not fully explored. Table 87 presents the narratives of the five participants the White Canadian stereotype affected their perceived qualities of Canadian or mainstream group identity.

Nonetheless, the White Canadian stereotype appeared to have had a little to no impact on some participants' perceptions of Canadians/the mainstream group. For example, Harin and William believed that Canadian people could be defined by their implication in the national culture and/or development: for Harin, this meant that one had to be invested in politics while embracing the Canadian culture (e.g. being friendly, enjoying nature and the slow pace of life); and for William, one's contribution to the national economy and culture was the core definition. They also both associated the mainstream group interests with the North American culture:

Frankly, Canadian mainstream is just following American mainstream trends, and America is the centre of the world. American politics, religion and things... (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

When I hear 'mainstream,' in the context of where I live, I think of North American social construct—North America: Canada and US. (William)

To these participants, the perceived mainstream interests were not uniquely Canadian national interests, but rather North American—mostly defined by Americans, as Harin argued.

It is interesting that the North American character was brought into the discussion in some narratives such as the ones cited above. Indeed, previous literature has shown that cultural elements in the case of Canada do not seem to play a significant role in nation-building. Not only are the arts and letters, as well as the mass media in Canada, lack social and cultural references that create a distinctive national character and culture (Meisel, 1986; K. Yoon, 2017), there is a “lack of a dynamic polity” which is rooted to ensuring “not disturbing the present” (Porter, 1967, p. 54). Furthermore, the American culture, both popular and high, has been extremely accessible and popularized to the point that it has become the mainstream culture which significantly affects the consumer behaviour (Porter, 1967). These previous research findings indicate that neither pop and high culture nor politics—besides the multiculturalism policies—can shape a national identity that is distinctively Canadian.



Moreover, multiculturalism continued to be the central element of the Canadian/mainstream group identity that Kelly and Jisoo emphasized. On the one hand, to describe Canadians, various elements related to the perceived Canadian culture were mentioned (e.g. being nice and polite, engaging in cultural events and activities that are “rooted in the landscape and the weather”); on the other hand, to describe the mainstream group identity, group identification and membership were emphasized within the context of multicultural society. What seemed interesting is how the narratives of Kelly and Jisoo differed in conveying their ideas: while both pictured multicultural groups of friends who did not perceive cultural boundaries, Jisoo highlighted that nativity and linguistic profile made all the difference. She explained: “Backgrounds don’t matter. Born and raised in an English-spoken environment [...]. [...] Like, how would you explain this? Mixing well, actively. No barrier?” (*Translated from Korean*). In this regard, Jisoo’s perceptions of the Canadian identity seemed to be centered on *English-speaking* Canadians, thus distinctly dissociated from other Canadian populations such as French speakers and the Aboriginals.

As well, what is worth noting from the narratives is the importance that Ben and Harin placed on one’s willingness to identify him or herself as Canadian as the defining element of the Canadian identity (“I feel like, because I feel like I am Canadian in itself... Like, by definition... Therefore, I am”—Ben; “As long as you believe you’re Canadian and you say that you are”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*). Although both participants circled between the racial bias and the cultural component of the Canadian identity throughout some parts of their narratives, they wished to emphasize the element of self-identification as the key element. The importance placed on one’s willingness to self-identify as Canadian is aligned with Howard-Hassmann’s (1999) vision of the Canadian identity. The overall lack of a strong national identity other than the national culture built around multiculturalist ideals, along with the persisting White Canadian stereotype, seemed to remain as a hurdle for many in their imagination of Canadian qualities.

Overall, the imagined national identity of Canada in the minds of the participants appeared to be mostly based on activities which were deemed mainstream—rooted in the Canadian national, cultural, and social interests. Furthermore, the national character of embracing multiculturalism seemed to be linked with the culture of being open-minded and nice. Thus, the findings suggest that the state’s effort in employing multiculturalism as a tool to help construing the Canadian culture and identity has been successful, as numerous elements

of the national character that the participants identified appeared to be related to multiculturalism. The cultural character of being friendly and inclusive that the participants often associated with Canadian multiculturalism is also meaningful, as out-group perceptions significantly contribute to shaping one's attitudes toward the out-group. For instance, Aune Valk (1998) found that, if one perceived an out-group as hostile, his or her strong sense of ethnic identity was correlated with negative attitudes toward the out-group; and, if one perceived an out-group as similar and friendly, his or her strong sense of ethnic identity was correlated with positive attitudes toward the out-group. Therefore, the niceness that many participants perceived in the Canadian identity can be expected to have had a positive impact on shaping their in-group identity, as well as their out-group attitudes, throughout their identity journey.

Moreover, describing the perceived national identity was not an easy task for many participants. Firstly, considering the mixed views on the impact of multiculturalism on the national identity of Canada, it would be contentious to argue that a firm Canadian identity has been established in the minds of individuals through multiculturalism. Secondly, the citizenship, although it was positively believed to boost one's national attachment, did not appeal to most participants as one of the key elements of the Canadian identity. Thirdly, addressing and discussing diversity within the Canadian society may not be a simple task due to PC culture. Lastly, most evidently, the White Canadian stereotype—which is likely correlated with the perceived barriers and discrimination—persisted in the minds of many participants, disrupting their conception of the national identity and, in some cases, mainstream group identity.

It is also interesting that the imagined qualities of the national identity did not at all seem to be linked with the *other* Canadian identities, such as those associated with Aboriginals and French Canadians. This finding can be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand, it may be seen an indicator which affirms that the Canadian identity may indeed be fragmented among the minds of its citizens; and, on the other hand, it may be seen as a positive sign that suggests the prevalence of the English-speaking *ethnic* Canadian identity (Howard-Hassmann, 1999)—whose group identity has become more distinct and concrete in the modern-day context.

## 9.4 Connection with Peers within Canadian Society

Tajfel and Turner (2004) postulated that an individual’s positive attitudes toward the in-group and his or her in-group identification are correlated. Moreover, Charlotte Clara Becker (2022) posited that those who have contact to natives—more precisely, who have predominantly native-born friends—develop a positive national identification. Based on these previous research findings that accentuate the salient impact of one’s social links and his or her identity, the participants’ in- and out-group perceptions, as well as intra-/inter-group attitudes, had to be investigated. Therefore, their identification with various social groups (i.e. the perceived mainstream group and peer groups of Korean/non-Korean origin) was looked into. The results illustrated intricate processes of comparison that the participants drew between themselves and each peer group in question.

### 9.4.1 Identification with the Mainstream Social Circle

**Table 88**

*Identification with the perceived Canadian mainstream social circle*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Currently, does not feel part of the Canadian mainstream social circle	<b>8</b>
- Has never felt part of the Canadian mainstream social circle	<b>5</b>

First of all, the participants were asked to comment on their membership in what they perceived as the mainstream social circle. As Table 88 displays, the majority did not feel that their friend groups would be perceived as the mainstream, and half believed that they had never been part of the mainstream group within the Canadian society. The White Canadian stereotype and/or predominantly co-ethnic/racial friend groups were the most evident reasons for these perceptions.

What was especially interesting was the cases of Ben, Jacob, Lucy, and Nora, whose perceived White Canadian stereotype seemed to come into a clash with the perceived Canadian identity, when reflecting on their social group membership in the Canadian mainstream group. Firstly, despite the fact that Lucy was immersed in what she described as “Canadian” activities (e.g. going to a cottage, winter sports etc.) with her friends who are not “typical Korean immigrants,” she refrained from identifying her friend group as a mainstream social group. Secondly, Jacob and Nora identified with Canadian multiculturalism, which they believed represented the Canadian culture; yet, they did not see themselves as part of the mainstream

social circle. Thirdly, Ben, who believed that one's willingness to self-identify as Canadian should be the defining element of the Canadian identity, felt uncomfortable describing his friend group—who he described as “pretty Canadian”—as a Canadian/mainstream friend group. Across these cases, the fact that the participants had no/few White friends seemed to have a strong influence on their perception of their group status. Therefore, the ethnic/racial origin of social groups seemed to rule over the cultural components which they deemed important in defining the Canadian identity. This finding can be interpreted as a clash between the personal and social identities that the participants perceived (Spreckels & Kotthoff, 2009).

The discrepancy between the perceived identities appeared to have a salient impact on Ben, especially, whose dilemma is clearly illustrated in the following excerpt:

Ben: If you are Canadian, then, you are the mainstream.

Researcher: Would you say that you have been part of the mainstream social circle then throughout your life or at any stages in particular?

Ben: Again, I think... I do believe that I should just say yes, because... Looking at my friends... Yeah, we are I think we would identify ourselves as Canadians, but then it just feels weird to name the group as like the Canadian, therefore the mainstream group. So I don't know if I can give a definitive, like confident answer.

In fact, Ben was the only one across the sample who was unable to give a definitive answer as to whether he considered himself as part of the mainstream social circle. Although he did not believe in the White Canadian stereotype, himself, the perceived out-perceptions of the national/mainstream group membership left him feeling uncomfortable in claiming the group identity.

However, this is not to say that the White Canadian stereotype was only factor that significantly influenced the how the participants perceived their social identity. Jisoo, who attributed niceness and inclusiveness to the Canadian identity, believed that one's nativity in Canada and English-speaking profile (i.e. “born and raised in an English-spoken environment”) determined his or her mainstream social identity. In this respect, she used to feel mainstream through her last relationship with her Taiwanese ex-boyfriend (“When I was with my ex-boyfriend, he had a very active personality, and so him and his friends, we used to hang out together... I think they were the mainstream. So I felt part of it then”—*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*). In her mind, socialization with peers coming from such a background can facilitate one to adhere to the mainstream group, even if he or she did not fulfill the perceived requirements.

Furthermore, half of the participants did not identify with the mainstream group identity. Jacob, Harin, William, and Nora felt that their interests and hobbies were not aligned with those of the mainstream group. On the one hand, Jacob expressed uncertainty describing the Canadian identity besides multiculturalism and some of the popular cultural interests and symbols (e.g. Blue Jays, Raptors etc.) and moreover associated the latter with White Canadians when identifying the perceived mainstream group identity (“[...] for the most part, the Caucasians, I don’t have the same interests with”). On the other hand, Harin, William, and Nora had a clear idea of what they perceived to be Canadian, whether it be related to one’s cultural/economic integration or self-identification; yet, they did not feel that they were part of the mainstream group, because their interests and/or social tendencies did not mirror the mainstream, national interests. For these reasons, these participants felt that they had never been part of the mainstream social circle in their lives. Likewise, Victoria had never felt part of the mainstream social circle. She believed that the Canadian identity was based on one’s sociocultural characteristics grounded on Canadian way of life and the White race, and her perception of the mainstream group identity appeared to be centered on socioeconomic barriers that she felt. She was the only one across the sample who was unable to identify with either the Canadian or the mainstream group identity.

The only participant who felt part of the mainstream group was Kelly. Her vision of the Canadian identity was focused on cultural elements, mainly in terms of shared mainstream interests and activities—thus irrelevant to race. Her in-group identification with the Canadian/mainstream identity seemed to be based on one’s involvement in multicultural peer networks that encompass multicultural ethnic backgrounds, as well as exploration of cultural activities based in Canada. Indeed, Kelly emphasized that the kinds of sociocultural activities in which she was engaged were “extremely non-Korean, [...] Canadian things.” As well, Kelly was the only one besides William who had multicultural groups of friends who she was in regularly touch with, including White Canadians.

Kelly’s identification with the mainstream group identity can be contrasted with the difficulty that Ben experienced in claiming the mainstream group identity. Like Ben, the out-group perceptions of her minority status within the society appeared to affect Kelly’s self-perceptions (“And now, I’m very conscious of the fact that I’m Asian and therefore different [...]. I’m not White. [...] I’ll forever be Korean, right?”). Nevertheless, in contrast to Ben, she was able to positively associate herself with the mainstream social group within the Canadian

society. Her positive identification appeared to be positively correlated with her friends who were of multicultural backgrounds, thus affirming the significant impact of friend groups on one’s national identification (Becker, 2022).

The narratives in this part of the interviews depicted the social integration of the participants as a process (Martinovic et al., 2009). Some participants communicated that there was a point in time in their lives where they felt part of the Canadian/mainstream social circle. For example, as for Lucy, Jisoo, and James, there was a period in their lives during which they felt part of mainstream/Canadian social circles through the cross-ethnic and/or racial networks that they explored, and, as for Kelly, she had not felt part of the mainstream group during her youth, because of the “*Korean Korean*” peers with whom she used to socialize with in school.

The perceived group membership provides a useful hint, which helps understanding the self-identities of individuals in relation to ethnic and national group identities and boundaries (Becker, 2022; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). In this context, the process of one’s identification with the mainstream group is of interest, as the experiences of group membership to the mainstream/Canadian social group—whether previous or current—sheds light on whether the individual has had an opportunity to be able to explore the national identity. The findings demonstrated that many participants seemed to have been faced with various types of barriers (i.e. related to the White Canadian stereotype and/or other sociocultural/economic barriers) in their identification with the dominant group within the Canadian society.

**9.4.2 Identification with Korean Canadians**

Previously, the participants’ perceptions of Korean immigrants were explored. The diverse profiles of individuals who represent Korean immigrants in Toronto, including those who remain “too Korean,” and their tendency to stick together were described. Some participants felt hesitant before admitting that they would identify themselves as Korean immigrants, due to the unintegrated-Korean stereotype.

**Table 89**

*Identification with Korean Canadians*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Able to connect with Korean Canadians based on cultural similarities	<b>10</b>
- Conditional, depending on the kind of immigrant	6

As can be seen in Table 89, all participants expressed that cultural similarities facilitate establishing a connection with Korean Canadians. Firstly, various cultural similarities were mentioned, such as the food, language, and mannerisms. Secondly, shared experiences of living in Canada as immigrants and the resulting sense of identity were described (“I know that they would have had a similar upbringing, so we could always talk about Korean parents and how they raise kids”—Kelly; “I think I relate more with them, just because they’ve gone through similar experiences—that feeling of not really belonging, while also belonging...?”—James). Thirdly, sharing the same peer networks within the Korean Canadian community were referred to as an advantage in establishing connection (“[...] might know some of the same people”—Ben). Through these similarities, many of the participants inferred that the connection with Korean Canadians was “immediate,” and that there was a sense of “genuine interest”:

In terms of business, it’s so much easier when you’re dealing with other Koreans. And there’s genuine interest immediately, even though we don’t know each other. If I do meet another Korean, there’s a genuine interest to try and want to help one another. [...] Camaraderie is like immediate. (William)  
[...] I feel like there’s the kind of like a story that we can relate to, which maybe makes it easier to connect for me. (James)  
[...] I just think like, with Koreans, they would understand me overall. Like, some things I wouldn’t even need to explain—they would just get it, you know. (Nora)

At the same time, the perceived distance that some participants drew between themselves and the Korean community was also reflected in the narratives: while numerous participants were able to identify with Korean Canadians easily, they did not particularly feel the desire to explore Korean Canadian networks. In fact, Ben described his identification with Korean Canadians as “nothing like crazy.” Moreover, Jisoo and James raised a point saying that coming into contact with Korean Canadians was as if they were seeing their “acquaintances” or “friends, but maybe not like the closest of friends”—no particular sentiments attached, besides a level of familiarity with them.

Most participants felt that the connection would depend on the person—that is to say, the *kind* of Korean immigrant he or she is. The most cited factors were the language and for how long the person resided in Canada.

It’s tough to say. I do feel like there’s a big disconnect between me and them, at least in the sense that, like those Korean immigrants who came here in the later phase of their life or have a better knowledge of, or just have a better grasp of the language, have a better network of Korean people... they’re pretty much foreign to me. I think, if any, those Korean immigrants that have become very... I wouldn’t say very westernized but, you know, speaking

English as the primary language and things... I definitely identify with them more. (Jacob)

Mmm... Just like the things that we talk about all the time? We don't speak Korean nor English well, like... But, because of that, we have similarities [...] (Translated from Korean, Harin)

So what's happening, I find, is that secluding or secluded type of communities were a lot more dominant before. Now, I think there are more and more people like me that are starting to build a career, like 1.5 that are trying to build a career, trying to expand our network... (William)

I feel like I could identify with Koreans a lot. But then that also depends on when they immigrated. They need to have been in Canada for a while... at least for more than 5 years, at least. Only then, I'd feel the connection. (Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria)

I obviously identify more closely with Koreans that have been here for longer like myself, because I think there are more similarities. Not just languages—because I can speak and understand Korean and English—but I guess like... I think identifying with both Korea and Canada, that is something that we have in common. (James)

Associated with the perceived notion of *Korean immigrants* as a diverse body of individuals, these participants were aware of similarities and differences that they would typically encounter upon coming into contact with co-ethnic peers—depending on the peers' language and familiarity with life in Canada. Furthermore, Lucy was “skeptical” when meeting Koreans in Canada, due to the perceived image of drama-ridden community of Korean immigrants. She explained: “[...] do they belong to that typical type of the Korean community, gossiping and all that drama that comes with it? Like, they could be very *Korean* Korean, traditional mindsets [...]”). Yet, she also acknowledged the shared cultures which “makes it easier to connect.”

Overall, the findings demonstrated that the participants feel varying levels of comfort and confidence in establishing a connection with Korean Canadians. Some felt more so than others due to the connections within the Korean community, and less so for some due to the language/cultural barrier or the negative perceptions of Korean immigrants and/or the Korean community. Regardless, the cultural familiarity and experiences related to their lives as immigrants in Canada seemed to be common factors that shaped the identification of the participants with Korean Canadian peers.

The findings also highlighted various social comparisons that the participants drew throughout their lives, which, according to Michael A. Hogg (2000), is a core element of group life. Intricate distinctions between *us* and *them* appeared to persist in the minds of many participants: not only did they distinguish themselves from those of non-Korean origin, but they also set themselves apart from Korean immigrants who possessed certain characteristics which



they deemed negative. This tendency represents an example of what is described as in-group favouritism or intergroup bias, which individuals use to maintain a positive social identity (Brewer, 1979; Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Tajfel et al., 1971; Turner, 1978). Furthermore, the narratives exemplified important elements of the perceived Korean Canadian group identity and the in-group identification of the participant, which appeared to be construed on shared lived experiences and cultural familiarity.

### 9.4.3 Identification with Canadians of Non-Korean Origin

**Table 90**

*Identification with Canadians of Non-Korean Origin*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Finds it easier to connect with Asian or immigrant Canadians	<b>8</b>
No perceived barrier in connecting with non-Asian Canadians	<b>5</b>
Finds it hard(er) to connect with White Canadians, in particular	<b>5</b>

The narratives that illustrated the participants' identification with Canadians of non-Korean origin reaffirmed their socialization patterns and provided a contextual understanding of the demonstrated tendencies. Table 90 lists the socialization tendencies that were identified across the findings. What stood out from the findings is that all participants except for Ben and Harin found it easier to connect with Canadians who were of Asian or immigrant backgrounds, since they had a number of shared similarities pertinent to the Asian culture (e.g. upbringing, family values, taste in food, immigrant life experiences etc.). Nora's comment, "Asians just get Asians," seemed to be an adequate description of the sample's overall sentiment toward Asian Canadians.

While most participants did not find it difficult to connect with peers of non-Korean/Asian origin, some found it particularly difficult to connect with White Canadians. Jacob and Victoria, especially, saw no similarities between White Canadians and themselves.

And regarding non-Korean people—that also ties back to what I said—I feel like there are certain values, hobbies, interests that they commonly have that I don't. But then, I have friends who are also non-Korean origin. So I guess here, I'm talking about, again, White Canadians who I consider like the mainstream or *Canadian* Canadians. (Jacob)

But then just Canadians... Like White Canadians, not really... There's nothing we have in common. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*)

Both Jacob and Victoria had very limited experiences of socializing with White Canadians, as they had not had White friends since elementary school. Jacob struggled to make friends outside of his Asian peer networks in university. Therefore, his perceived sense of disconnect from White Canadians was especially tied to this experience, among others. In Victoria's case, her experiences with cross-ethnic/racial peers were even more limited, as she primarily interacted with Korean clients at work and exclusively socialized with Korean friends at her current job. The attributes of their self-identity that were aligned with what they perceived as Canadian (i.e. embracing multiculturalism for Jacob; long-term residence in Canada for Victoria) were too partial, representing a limited pool of shared cultural similarities between themselves and White Canadians. As well, the White Canadian stereotype was persistent in both their minds when reflecting on the Canadianness. Therefore, the race represented a predominant social barrier which they were unable to overcome.

In parallel, Jisoo shared some observations of the perceived disconnect between herself and White Canadians and their culture. Her perceptions were developed, based on her previous relationship with a second-generation Taiwanese, who she considered as "White-washed," as well as her experiences at work, interacting with colleagues and clients who were White. The following excerpt represents her remarks:

[...] he grew up in Windsor among White people, so I think there were such cultural conflicts between us. Because he was second generation, also, because he was a very White-washed second generation... [...] Koreans are hard-working and responsible. This is what I noticed from working with White people. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

Like Victoria, Jisoo had never had White Canadian friends since early schooling years. The most recent exposure to the perceived White Canadian culture and peers was through her previous relationship and work. Moreover, although her perceptions of the Canadian/mainstream identity were not directly associated with the White race, they remained irrelevant to her profile besides the multiculturalist conduct and niceness (i.e. nativity in Canada and upbringing in an English-spoken environment and settings). Therefore, the perceived disconnect between themselves and White Canadians appeared to be both the cause and the result of their co-ethnic/racial peer socialization patterns, for most of these participants.

Furthermore, William also expressed feeling distanced from White Canadians. He felt "very conscious" of being seen as Asians first rather than Canadian. This sentiment was the result of working in his industry which he described as predominantly White ("They all grew up with cottages or playing hockey [...] the Jays, Raptors [...]). And all that stuff that I can't

connect with. They would always feel a little bit awkward about asking me about Asian type of questions”). Hence, for William, his visible minority status was associated with the “disadvantaged position” throughout interactions with White Canadians, which shaped his in- and out-group perceptions. Nonetheless, he did not “feel discouraged”—in fact, he was one of the two participants across the sample who had a mixed group of friends. He, himself, fit into his perceived criteria of the Canadian identity, which was not tied to the White race (i.e. permanent residence in Canada and economic contribution to Canada); and, even though he did not feel that he was part of the Canadian mainstream social circle, he was the only one across the sample to have chosen the Canadian self-identity.

Most participants did not perceive any barriers in connecting with Canadians of non-Korean origin. On the one hand, some felt neutral about interacting with Canadians of non-Korean origin (“Just like the baseline”—Ben; “It’s not a factor that would make me like nor dislike someone more”—James). On the other hand, some felt that connections could be established based on the similarities that are grounded in the Canadian culture. The following excerpts provide examples:

It’d probably have to come down to like... cultural similarities, too, I guess, in some aspects. Like, the kinds of things that I usually do with friends or that I like doing, myself. And I’d try to look for similarities like, you know, profession, for example. Like, if I meet another fellow high school teacher, I instantly feel like the connection to them, because I know again that we’re going to have a lot of similarities and lots to talk about and whatnot. (Kelly)  
With others, it’s again the shared culture of being Canadian, feeling like I’m Canadian. There’s multiculturalism and just sense of being Canadian that I guess I have in common with them. (Lucy)

In a way, a bit, not caring so much about how other people see you when I do things. For example, I’m pretty sure I’m the only person who goes outside in PJs, even just briefly, when I’m Korea. [...] Like, engaging in a conversation when someone starts talking to me in the streets. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Enjoying social activities and hobbies (e.g. paddleboarding, biking etc.), embracing multiculturalism, and identifying with the Canadian conduct of being inclusive, friendly, and approachable and living a care-free lifestyle, were the links that made these participants feel connected to other members of the Canadian society, regardless of ethnic/racial backgrounds of individuals. Therefore, even in cases of those who were less integrated on a social level (i.e. limited socialization with Canadians outside of the Korean-/Asian-Canadian networks), the participants appeared to be nonetheless culturally integrated, to varying degrees (i.e. adopted behaviours and attitudes related to the national culture and cultural familiarity).

Overall, the sample seems to have established various links across groups and circumstances throughout their life experiences and developed varying levels of comfort and confidence in connecting with different peer groups. The co-ethnic/racial peer socialization tendencies of the participants were positively correlated with their identification with Canadians of Korean/Asian/immigrant backgrounds, based on cultural familiarity and shared experiences associated with different group identities. On the one hand, many emphasized that their identification with Korean Canadians would be dependent on the shared linguistic and cultural profile that are shaped by immigrant generations and/or the length of stay in Canada. On the other hand, while half of the sample did not perceive any barrier in connecting with Canadians of non-Asian backgrounds, the other half pointed to the perceived barrier in connecting with White Canadians, in particular. This disconnect that was drawn in their minds between themselves and White Canadians was also typically cited as one of the reasons for which they felt detached from what the perceived Canadian/mainstream group. In light of previous literature, the in-group bias and the ethno-racial identity that the majority of the participants seemed to have developed can be understood as a coping mechanism that they use to moderate the effects of ethnicity/race-related stress and to maintain a positive sense of self (Iwamoto & Liu, 2010).

## 9.5 Integration within Canadian Society

**Table 91**

*Feeling integrated within the Canadian Society*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Feels integrated	<b>6</b>
Feels partially integrated	<b>3</b>
- Felt uncertain about the response	2

In previous literature, integration of migrants has often been examined using social, economic, and emotional approaches (Cruz-Saco, 2008; Martinovic et al., 2009; Schüller & Chakraborty, 2022). It has been described as a dynamic and fluid process across the lifetime, reflecting varying extents to which individuals perceive themselves as members of the host society and identify with the host country (Becker, 2022; Martinovic et al., 2009). During the interviews, the participants were asked to share whether they felt integrated within the Canadian society and provide their reasoning. As displayed in Table 91, six participants felt integrated within the Canadian society, and three felt that their integration was partial, among whom two

were unsure about their sentiment. Across the sample, there was one participant who felt unintegrated, for the most part.

Throughout the narratives that described self-perceived integration of the participants, several factors related to their sense of belonging were referred to. Ben, Kelly, Lucy, William, James, and Nora were “comfortable” and “very settled” in Canada, as they were familiar with “how things run” and felt “accepted as part [...] of the society.” Among these participants, Kelly and William emphasized that work experiences allowed them to feel increasingly integrated, culturally and/or socially.

I wouldn't say throughout my life, no. I would say that has been the case after graduating from university and after I started working. Up until then, I would say I wasn't part of the mainstream social circle, because, up until then, my friend circles were all very, very Korean—not even like Canadianized Koreans, like *Korean* Korean. [...] Like the things that I'd do with my friends who are not Koreans. So... like, I was paddleboarding all summer and like, you know. [...] I feel that I am integrated, yes. I know how things run here and I have my friends, family, my life here in Canada. (Kelly)

I think so, yes. [...] Now, as I get into, more into the workforce, building my network, and start to feel more and more integrated. So I'd probably say yes, I do feel integrated, now. (William)

Additionally, in William's case, there was a sense of pride that he associated with his successful economic integration—not only in the labour market, but moreover the career field, which is predominantly White.

In contrast, Jacob, Harin, and Jisoo only felt partially integrated within the Canadian society. Firstly, Jacob's sentiment was expressed in the following words:

And again, this is hard to say, because like, you probably noticed from my previous response, I don't really have a full grasp of what it means to be Canadian. At the end of the day, I'm still unsure. So I would say partly, I think, in the sense that, like, you know, being open to other cultures, being accepting... like on that part, I can definitely identify with. I do feel like I'm integrated in that sense. But you know, at the same time, there's still that feeling in the back of my head that, like, what does it mean to be Canadian? I don't think, you know, am I Canadian? I don't know. I don't have an answer for you here.

Jacob's sentiment and explanations were consistent to the feeling of uncertainty that he expressed throughout the interview when he was asked to describe Canadianess. The only element related to the Canadian culture and identity that Jacob was able to identify with was multiculturalism, which, again, enabled him to feel at least partially integrated. However, the lingering question in Jacob's mind about the Canadian identity seemed to negatively affect how he perceived his integration within the society.

The hesitation that was felt in Jacob's response when describing perceived integration of self was echoed in the narratives of Harin ("This question is so hard. How did other people respond?"—*Translated from Korean*). Like Jacob, Harin's narratives consistently conveyed marginalized self-perceptions: while she felt that a compromised Korean identity was a defining element of the 1.5-generation identity, she saw herself as an "outsider" when describing her interests in relation to those of the Canadian mainstream and felt insecure about her English proficiency. The factors that led her to believe that she was at least partially integrated included her identification with some elements related to the Canadian culture (e.g. multiculturalism, "slow" and relaxed lifestyle, Canadian conduct of friendliness towards strangers) and social ties that she was able to form through work.

As for Jisoo, she felt partially integrated due to her life, which she deemed was centered around the Korean culture and people.

It's like having one foot in and one foot out, that kind of thing? Yeah. For example, work, if I were to start my own business, I'd hire Korean people. The business itself, the clientele would be Canadians, though. [...] But then, besides making money, working... Those are the things that you do that involve non-Koreans, but the food I eat, interacting with my parents, meeting people and socializing with friends all that... All that is too leaned toward Korean people. I don't think I'm fully integrated. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

Jisoo believed that her integration was limited to economic integration and that, in all domains of life outside of work, her life was predominantly centered around the Korean culture, language, and peers. How she envisions running her own business—hiring co-ethnic peers to target Canadian consumers—as it adequately exemplifies both how she perceives her in-betweenness and partial integration. At the same time, Jisoo pointed out that her experiences and resulting sentiments was "a common occurrence for many—just a question of to what extent" (*Translated from Korean*). Victoria, who also perceived her life to be "too Korean," could be seen as an example of such an "occurrence." In her case, she did not feel integrated within the Canadian society, representing the one case across the sample.

No, even though I guess it's not all no... Those things, I don't really get to enjoy those kinds of activities. I think I'm just staying within the Korean Canadian society, although there are many other things I could do, and I could live a more Canadian life. Mm, just sticking to something familiar, constantly. Staying in the comfort zone. I'm unable to integrate, it feels like. (*Translated from Korean/Victoria*)

Across the narratives, it is evident that the sense of comfort stemming from familiarity with life in Canada enabled many participants to feel integrated, to varying degrees. What is

worth noting is that one’s economic integration within the Canadian labour market appeared to have shaped some participants’ overall sense of integration within the Canadian society. On the one hand, Kelly, Harin, and William were able to form valuable peer connections outside of the co-ethnic/racial networks, which helped them feel integrated—at least partially. On the other hand, work experiences led Victoria to believe that the 1.5 generation was at a disadvantaged position in the labour market, which evidently seemed to be linked with the fact that she targets and serves Korean clientele at work. This perception, along with Victoria’s limited levels of sociolinguistic integration, led her to believe that her overall integration was lacking. Therefore, although economic integration can positively affect one’s sociocultural integration through facilitating his or her exploration of peer networks, economic activities alone—without meaningful peer socialization and resulting relationships—may not be sufficient means to boost sociocultural integration of individuals. In fact, the barriers that are perceived through one’s economic integration within the labour market may negatively affect one’s overall sense of integration. The fact that, despite the length of residence in Canada and successful economic integration of all participants in the Canadian labour market, as many as four participants did not consider themselves as fully integrated, stands as evidence.

## 9.6 Feeling at Home

Feeling at home is the core constituent of an individual’s sense of belonging. In discussions related to migrant experiences, it is often cited as one of the factors that significantly shapes migrants’ well-being, as well as their long-term loyalty to the host country (Chow, 2007; Wu et al., 2011). To further investigate this sentiment, the participants were asked to, first, identify home between Canada and Korea, secondly, provide an explanation, and thirdly, indicate whether they were happy with their lives in Canada.

**Table 92**

*Feeling at home in Canada*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Sense of comfort (“feels like home”)	<b>10</b>
Life experiences accumulated/time spent in Canada	<b>9</b>
Home is where family and friends are	<b>4</b>

Table 92 presents the findings relevant to the sense of belonging that the sample described. Feeling comfortable, which was one of the contributing factors to many participants’ sense of integration within the Canadian society, appeared to be the decisive factor for all

participants that rendered Canada home. “It feels like home” and “I feel good/comfortable” were the most common responses that were gathered. Familiarity with the Canadian culture and life in Canada were the sources from which the sense of home stemmed.

Furthermore, Canada felt like home due to the fact that the participants had spent most of their lives in Canada. Throughout the time spent in Canada, the participants associated various life experiences and memories with the country (“[...] I’ve spent most of my time here and all my memories are here...”—*Translated from Korean/Harin*; “This is where most of my memories are”—Nora), including their childhood (“I grew up here”—Ben; “Just because I’ve lived here since I was really young, I consider Canada as the place where I was raised”—*Translated from Korean/Victoria*) and identity journey (“[...] also where I feel like I’ve become myself [...]”—Lucy). In fact, all participants except for Jisoo pointed to the accumulation of life experiences in Canada which shaped her sense of belonging.

Naturally, the time that the participants spent in Canada was also tied to the people with whom they spent the time with. Family and friends were especially important for Kelly, Jisoo, Harin, and Nora, in feeling rooted to the country—and, in Jisoo and Nora’s cases, their parents were the most important determinant of *home* (“I consider the place where my parents are as my home”—*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*; “Here, my mom’s here, my brother’s here. [...] Where they are, that’s [...] home for me”—Nora).

Furthermore, a few participants’ identification of Canada as home was also based on comparative observations.

What’s funny is that, through my current work, I get to travel a lot. [...] Like, wherever I go, it’s nice to be able to travel, sure, but it doesn’t feel like home. A bit like... Ah, I guess I feel comfortable in Canada, things like that? (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Like, living in France, you know, there were some times I was just like, I don’t get French people, you know. Many moments like that. So it makes me think like, ‘oh, I’m really Canadian,’ because French people get French people, but I didn’t get them, you know. Like their way of like dealing with things, like admin stuff, the paperwork... It’s like so frustrating, you know. I would always be like, why can’t they do it this way, like they do in Canada? Always comparing. Plus, in Canada, I would just know how things are done and what to expect, you know? (Nora)

Definitely Canada, no second thoughts. I just don’t have enough experiences nor memories to really consider Korea home. Just based on the fact that I’ve spent most of my life here. [...] I think Canada, to me, is a home, but at the same time, not really. I just say that it is, just because there’s no other country I feel more affiliated towards. (Jacob)



On the one hand, for Harin and Nora, travelling to other countries/living abroad enhanced their sense of belonging to Canada in recognizing it as home, where they felt comfortable. On the other hand, Jacob's narrative again partly depicted a sense of marginality: while his identification of Canada stemmed from the life that he had lived in the country, it was also linked with the lack of any other countries to which he felt more attached to. Moreover, the sense of attachment which he felt to Canada did not appear to be wholesome. These findings highlighted the importance of identity exploration of individuals within both ethnic and national contexts. Through exposure, constant in- and out-comparisons are made to shape one's social identity, testing the synthesizing methods of individuals in their identity negotiation (Erikson, 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

Overall, the findings showed that the length of time that the participants spent in Canada is positively correlated with their identification of Canada as home. A sense of comfort stemming from one's familiarity with the Canadian life and culture, various life experiences accumulated in Canada, and sense of attachment to people (especially family) were most cited. Even in the case of Jacob, the time spent in Canada became an element that bound him to identifying Canada as home, amidst the lack of other choices.

Furthermore, regardless of their perceived level of integration within the Canadian society and perceived discrimination, all participants expressed that they were overall happy with their lives in Canada. There were two participants, Kelly and James, who felt "very happy," even. In contrast, Harin pointed out some aspects related to living in Canada with which she was not happy. Nevertheless, for her, *home* did not have to be perfect, and the place where she felt most comfortable was Canada. She explained:

One time, when my dad collapsed because he was having a heart attack, the ambulance came, but they took their time... And, whatever they do, I feel like there's no ownership. They're all just employed, so I feel like they're just like, 'I'll just do as much as I'm paid to do.' I'm sure there are people who are passionate, but I don't think most have a sense of duty. This culture itself, anywhere, just, not just in hospitals. [...] And racism? Life in Canada may not be so easy, but I think I feel comfortable here. It's ironic... Everyday life is always challenging, because it's not like I was born here, nor had I been raised here since I was very young. I've always lived here with flaws, but there are so many memories I've built here that make me call Canada home. Canada is home, not necessarily because it is perfect, just... It feels like home. So, although it's not perfect, I'm overall happy. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Harin's narrative above may be an adequate representation of the overall sample's satisfaction with their lives in Canada, which was expressed with certainty, despite some of the

inconveniences and challenges that the individuals had been faced with throughout their lives. Hence, these findings indicated a positive correlation between the length of residence in Canada, sense of belonging to Canada, and psychological well-being of the participants—rendering the notion of home a multifaceted and fluid element related to identity.

The findings also affirmed that one's sense of belonging may develop in an adhesive manner. For instance, as for William and Nora, a sense of home remained associated with Korea, linked with childhood memories and extended family.

Hmm, if I had to choose between the two, Canada. But I would not say I lost a sense of home in Korea. I wouldn't say that because, when I was a child, I have such strong memories of my childhood experience, especially in my grandparents' neighbourhood, because we used to go there all the time to see them. [...] So my childhood home still remains that. (William)

Well, my real home, even though I said I feel I felt at home in Korea, my real home obviously is here in Canada. This is where most of my memories are, like, I've lived here for most of my life and I still live here, I'm comfortable, so obviously it's home for me. Um... I think the main reason why I felt at home in Korea was because my extended family was there, for the most part.

(Nora)

In contrast, in Harin's case, her current perception of Canada as home had only recently been shaped, which seemed to have helped her marginalized self-perceptions ("Honestly, for me, like, I used to think that I didn't belong anywhere up until about two to three years ago, you know? Now I feel like Canada is my home"—*Translated from Korean/Harin*).

As previous research findings have shown, identification of home is an important element of one's development of identity (Y.-F. Tuan, 1977). Moreover, not only is the notion of home linked with a migrant's racial status, but it is also intricately associated with immigrant generational effect (J. Y. Lee & Kim, 2021; Wu et al., 2012). In the case of Korean 1.5-generation immigrants, identifying home can be a difficult journey, as they are subject to navigating in-between two cultures and relevant social groups, exposed to challenges surrounding languages and cultures (Chao, 2006; Benyamin, 2018; Tse, 1996; Yeh et al., 2003; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Despite such challenges, the participants appeared to have developed a positive sense of belonging to Canada, grounded in the length of time that they spent in Canada and the resulting sentiment of comfort. In this respect, the importance of Canadian citizenship, which most participants appreciated but did not perceive as a definitive element of the Canadian identity, can be reassessed. As the citizenship is what enabled the participants to legally reside in Canada for as long as they did, it can be associated with the sentiment of home that they felt in Canada across time, as well as the level of familiarity with life in Canada. The

findings indicate that these elements of national attachment positively contribute to national identification of the participants, enhancing their self-identity.

## 9.7 Ethnic and National Pride

**Table 93**

*Sense of pride in Korean and Canadian Identities*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Feels proud of both the Korean and Canadian identities	<b>4</b>
Feels proud of one of the two identities	<b>3</b>
- Feels proud of the Korean identity	2
Feels indifferent about the subject	<b>3</b>

Ethnic and national pride represent one of the key elements of ethnic and national attachment of migrants—reflecting one’s attachment to and affiliation with ethnic and national cultures and groups (Castro et al., 2009; Cebotari, 2009). As discussed previously, the participants expressed ethnic and national pride in respect to various aspects of Korean and Canadian culture (e.g. Korean pop culture, Canadian multiculturalism). To examine their ethnic and national pride in direct relation to their personal identity, the participants were asked to share whether they felt a sense of pride in their Korean and/or Canadian identity (Table 93). Personal connection to the Korean/Canadian identity, as well as positive out-group perceptions which affect their in-group evaluation, appeared to affect the responses of the participants. Some also pointed out that they felt indifferent about their ethnic/national backgrounds in their self-identity.

Across the sample, there were four participants—Lucy, Jisoo, Victoria, and Nora—who felt proud of both their Korean and Canadian identities. These cases can be seen as examples of one’s development of ethnic and national attachment in an adhesive, additive manner. The positive perceptions of these participants of their Korean and Canadian identities that are developed on various personal connections to the cultures appeared to enhance their self-perceptions.

On the other hand, there were some participants who felt proud of either their Korean or Canadian identity. For instance, Kelly and Jacob felt proud of their Korean identity rather than their Canadian identity, mostly based on the recent global popularity of Korean pop culture. Even though Kelly’s consumption of Korean pop culture was limited to hearing about the viral content from her non-Korean Canadian surroundings, she nevertheless felt proud of

the fact that “[...] these days, Koreans have so much to offer.” As for Jacob, the sense of pride that he felt in the Korean culture was rooted in his personal connection with Korean pop culture (“I do tend to be more absorbed into the stuff that Korea produces more than Canada”).

While both participants’ positive perceptions of the Korean identity based on the representation and consumption of Korean pop culture made them feel proud of their ethnic identity, their perceptions of the lack of a distinct Canadian culture with they could connect negatively affected their national pride on a personal level. Kelly’s her perception of the Canadian identity was centered around what she perceived as the mainstream interests and activities (e.g. cultural events, outdoor activities), and she saw multiculturalism as the cause of the lack of Canadian nationalism (i.e. national pride and identity). Furthermore, she did not believe that Canada stood for “anything great or phenomenal,” thus lacking in distinctive cultural elements that can be recognized on an international level. As for Jacob, his perception of the Canadian identity was centered around multiculturalism and White Canadians, as well as the perceived mainstream interests, which he dissociated himself from (e.g. Blue Jays and Raptors). Not only did he share Kelly’s view that there was no distinct Canadian identity, but he also personally felt disconnected from already limited cultural attributes and symbols related to Canadian culture.

[...] what does it mean to be Canadian? [...] am I Canadian? I don’t know. [...] In fact, I can’t even recall off the top of my head just one sort of Canadian media or entertainment that I can really say I was ever really into. [...] I don’t know, maybe if there were more facets I could relate to, that I could connect with, I guess that could be starters. Um, but that doesn’t necessarily mean it’s Canada that has to change—maybe it’s me that has to change. But that being said, the present me right now doesn’t feel like there’s a lot of things. (Jacob)

Hence, the identification with multiculturalism and the sentiment of pride that he felt in Canadian multiculturalism was not enough for Jacob to feel connected to the Canadian identity. This sense of detachment from the national identity seemed to furthermore affect national pride that he felt.

Indeed, the question of personal connections to the ethnic/national cultures was a recurrent theme that emerged across some narratives when discussing pride in the ethnic/national identities. Ben was one of the two participants who, based on church connections, fully felt part of the Korean community in Canada, and he also perceived global popularity of Korean pop culture in a positive manner. Nevertheless, he felt increasingly detached from the Korean identity over time, which affected his ethnic pride (“I feel kind of like an outsider looking into it. I can’t really feel pride over something I don’t feel part of [...]).

Simultaneously, as he became increasingly familiar with life in Canada, he was able to “positively identify with it in many aspects.”

Besides one’s personal connection to ethnic/national identities, positive out-group perceptions and in-group evaluation seemed to be salient factors that affected ethnic/national pride. Firstly, Lucy and Nora felt proud of their Canadian identity, based on their positive out-group perceptions of Canada.

I’m proud that we are represented as multicultural and accepting, open-minded toward other races and religions. (Lucy)

You know, when I tell them I’m from Canada, they’re like, ‘Oh, wow.’ Like, you know, there’s such a good reputation around Canada and Canadians. (Nora)

In contrast, the sense of indifference that Kelly felt in her Canadian identity was associated with out-group perceptions.

I don’t think Canada really stands for anything great or phenomenal. [...] No one ever goes, ‘Wow, you’re from Canada.’ They’re like, ‘Oh cool, Canada, okay,’ ‘You guys have beavers?’ [...] And honestly, I’ve gotten so many dumb questions from non-Canadian people about Canada, like polar bears and shit like that, that I just don’t really associate any sense of pride with Canada.

Secondly, many participants also described positive out-group perceptions of the Korean identity that shaped the sentiment of pride that they felt in their identity.

But, as a Korean, I feel like... Recently, there have been more reasons to be more proud to be Korean, because I feel like there have been so many, um, like technological advances, so many pop cultural advances... And like everyone knows K-pop and like Samsung and all that. And I just feel that, these days, Koreans have so much to offer. (Kelly)

I feel proud of how we are doing in the arts industry, the entertainment industry, as well as... (Lucy)

And then, also, when I was in university, I used to work at Pandora. There, when I said I’m Korea, Chinese people, even though they’re really pretty, too, they would be like, ‘Wow, you’re Korean,’ and things like that made me feel lucky to be Korean. And also, too, among Asians, being Korean, in particular, because there’s like BTS and other content like that, which is on the rise... So I feel proud. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

These days, the good thing about Korea is... They’re on a roll. A lot of people know. They are doing well in the entertainment industry, too. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*)

At the same time, Nora’s ethnic pride was affected by both positive and negative out-group feedback:

I’m proud to be both Korean and Canadian. [...] I still feel more Canadian in a way than, like Korean from Korea, right? I do feel Canadian, and I feel a bit more pride in saying I’m from Canada. When people ask me like where I am

really from, you know, where my parents are from, that question always comes after. And when I tell them, 'From Korea,' you know, sometimes, it's like, yeah, there's 'K-pop,' 'I love K-dramas,' 'Koreans are cool,' but then sometimes it's like, 'Oh, is that North or South?' you know. Like, 'How did you escape North Korea?' Someone would just assume that I'm from the North. So yeah, just from that point of view, I feel kind of saying I'm Canadian—it's just the negative reactions that can follow. (Nora)

Thirdly, the positive in-group evaluation that helped shaping ethnic/national pride of the participants was not solely dependent on out-group perceptions, since the positive perceptions of the Korean/Canadian identity of some participants were developed throughout their understanding, as well as first-hand experiences, of the culture(s). The elements related to the (English-spoken) Canadian culture (e.g. the lifestyle, education system, and English-spoken environment) and the Korean culture (e.g. “정” and “빨리빨리” culture, and respecting elders etc.) were referred to:

[...] even though I did say I do feel like a tourist or sort of like a stranger when I went back to Korea, there're still things about that place—the way it operates, the people act about—that I do really appreciate much more than here in Canada. (Jacob)

Ah, I feel like being Canadian is really great, because I like Canada. I like most things about this country, compared to other countries. So like, I feel proud of the fact that I live in Canada, that I got to live in Canada. Korea, too. There's like advantages of being Korean, in particular. [...] In Canada, the lifestyle and everything, the education system. [...] Maybe like, the mindset of Koreans? Like 빨리빨리,<sup>126</sup> things like that... That kind of stuff makes me feel good about the fact that I'm from Korea. Also, there's 정 in the Korean mindset. I appreciate things like that. Canada, too, they're very neutral, you know, there's no edge. And I think it's rather safe, compared to other countries. Natural disasters, crimes, too. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*)

[...] People who have good lives in Korea, they don't want to leave Korea and they like Korea, but people who don't, they find it hard to live day to day and want to leave Korea... So the fact that I have been educated in English and raised in such a good environment, that makes me feel proud, I think... As for Korean pride, maybe it's just a stereotype, but you know when you are Korean, you work hard. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

There are certain things that I do value in the Korean culture, like respecting elders and looking out for each other as if you're a family... Like 정. I do value those. (Lucy)

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<sup>126</sup> 빨리빨리 (“ppalli ppalli”) translated to *hurry hurry* and is a reference to the Korean culture in which a fast pace of life is expected as the social norm. According to an article published by Korea Daily, “the rapid economic growth the country experienced within such a short period of time,” as well as the advanced technology and fast services, may be the factors that have shaped this aspect of the Korean culture (H. L. Yi, 2016).

Indeed, there were abundant examples that affirmed the salient impact of out-group perceptions on one's in-group evaluation. The sentiment of ethnic/national pride which typically resulted was meaningful for the participants, only if they were able to personally identify with the ethnic/national identities. Various cultural elements were referred to across the narratives, as the participants described their views on the group identities and sentiments.

What is worth noting is the findings of the questionnaire survey discussed in Part 2, which shed light on ethnic pride across generational groups of Korean immigrants. The 1.5-generation participants were the most numerous to indicate that they felt indifferent about their ethnic origin (21 out of 80 participants (26.3%)). In parallel, according to the data gathered from the interviews which was based on their ethnic pride in their Korean identity, as many as four participants reported feeling indifferent: William, James, and Harin felt indifferent about both their ethnic and national identities, and Ben about his ethnic identity. The sentiment of indifference reported by the 1.5-generation individuals is likely to be closely associated with their in-betweenness.

William's feeling of indifference was based on his reflections on his overall identity journey. He drew links between the lack of pride in the Korean and Canadian identities with the marginalized personal identity, which he had had to struggle with throughout his identity journey. Being identified as a Korean within the mainstream societal settings, yet, faced with the vibrant presence of the Korean community and networks which he was not part of, "feeling like a bit of a nomad" adequately described his identity journey. Because William had had to explore his identity in-between the two cultures while not belonging to either, he emphasized that he had been independent throughout his identity journey, which was evidently linked with a certain degree of disconnect that he felt from both the ethnic and national cultures and social groups. As a result, the sense of autonomy and confident self-identity seemed to have been achieved, which, in turn, was linked with a certain degree of disconnect that prevented him from feeling a sentiment of pride associated with what he perceived as ethnic and national group identities.

Furthermore, Harin and James also felt indifferent towards one's ethnic and national identification. In contrast to William, the two participants expressed that their sentiment of indifference was related to the overall notion of ethnic and national identification.

I'm quite indifferent in that sense. When it comes to other people, too, where they came from, what nationality they have, I don't really care about things like that. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)  
I wouldn't say proud. I'm more indifferent because I don't feel like it really matters what you identify as. (James)

The feeling of indifference regarding ethnic and national pride in the three cases can be interpreted in light of John W. Berry's (1990) argument that fewer distinctions may be drawn by those who are constantly exposed to other groups or mainstream society. Indeed, William was surrounded by cross-ethnic and racial networks in his social life and work, and Harin started making friends outside of co-ethnic and racial groups in adulthood through work. As for James, his feeling of indifference was linked with his confidence in being able to form social ties within and across ethnic groups (“[...] I feel like I can still associate with whichever party—I'm able to speak the language and understand enough to get along with everyone”).

Overall, what stood out from these narratives is, firstly, the various types of interfaces that were observed in development of ethnic and national pride of the participants: for some, simultaneous and/or symmetrical development of both ethnic and national pride was possible; and for others, asymmetrical development of ethnic and national pride was observed; and the feeling of indifference was evident in cases in which the participants were unable to claim the Korean/Canadian identity and/or when the perceived cultural elements related to the national identity—besides multiculturalism—were unclear or limited. Secondly, the salient impact of ethnic media on shaping one's ethnic identity and pride was affirmed (Ramasubramanian et al., 2017). The increasing level of global popularity that the Korean popular culture has been gaining in the recent years seemed to have significantly helped enhancing ethnic pride of the participants by allowing them to develop appreciation for the heritage culture and/or ethnic group, regardless of their ethnic media consumption. Thirdly, one's personal connection to the perceived Korean and Canadian identity, as well as positive out-group perceptions and in-group evaluation, appeared to be the core components that formed his or her ethnic/national pride. Only when one was able to personally identify with the positively perceived cultural elements of the ethnic/national identities, ethnic/national pride seemed to have enhanced his or her self-concept.

## **9.8 Self-Identification**

Encompassing a diverse range of domains and spheres, the narratives of the participants illustrated a constant in- and out-group comparisons in relation to self throughout their identity



journeys. Consequently, the participants were able to attach different meanings to various identity labels that they associated with sociocultural groups throughout their lives. To examine the perceived meaning of self-identity labels that the participants claimed for themselves and how the labels corresponded to their self-perceptions, the overall identity journeys and the resulting self-identification tendencies of the participants were examined in this topic section.

### 9.8.1 Identity Journey

**Table 94**

*Identity journeys and resulting confidence in self-identity*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Defining descriptor of the overall identity journey	<b>10</b>
- Linear	5
- Crisis-ridden/fluctuating	5
Confident sense of identity	<b>10</b>
- Confident, at least for the most part	6
- Not confident	4

The narratives shed light on distinct patterns of development/negotiation of identity between the two cultures, as well as the resulting confidence in self-identity, of the participants (Table 94). Throughout their lives, for half of the participants, the understanding of their self-identity seemed to have evolved in a linear movement toward a better understanding of self, four participants experienced at least one period in their lives that was significantly marked by an identity crisis, and one participant's identity was shaped in a fluctuating trend. Most participants felt that they were able to achieve a good level of understanding of self, and even most of those who remained somewhat unsure of their identity expressed feeling satisfied with their self-perceptions.

Table 95 presents the narratives of each participant that provide an insight into his or her identity journey, as well as the categorization based on descriptors that seem to best illustrate the overall trend of identity development in each case.<sup>127</sup> In the "Linear" category, Ben, Lucy, Nora, and Harin were placed, since their descriptions of their identity journey portrayed a linear trend towards a better understanding of self across time without a significant deviation. Most of these participants attained a better understanding of their in-betweenness throughout time.

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<sup>127</sup> The narratives of Jisoo, Harin, and Victoria were translated from either Korean or a mix of English and Korean.

**Table 95**

*Perceived identity journey*

Descriptor	Participant	Narratives
Linear	Ben	<p>I'm pretty comfortable with how I feel as a person. I feel like, over the years, I'm feeling more and more Canadian. [...]</p> <p>Yeah, I think, over the years, feeling more Canadian I guess would be the general trend. [...] Again, there were times when I did wanna explore more of Korean culture. But it wasn't like, not necessarily trying to be Korean, you know. It was more like, just wanted to experience Korean culture more. [...] just being more aware of what I think I am. And also, yeah, just being more aware of the world, I guess.</p>
	Lucy	<p>Um, yeah, I feel pretty confident in who I am. I think I'd give like 8 out of 10. In my mindset, there's always room for growth. [...]</p> <p>[...] I'm actually learning more about myself more recently, now. I think I used to only know it on a surface level: I like this, I like that. But now, it's more of a deeper level. And you know, in terms of my Korean Canadian identity, um, I guess, yeah, when I first came here, I felt like a foreigner, for sure. I was Korean. And then, as I grew up and started to adopt and learn this culture, I felt more connected to it—speaking the language and hanging out with my non-Korean friends... And I started to develop the Canadian side of my identity. So now, it's evolved to the point where [...] I guess I feel like I have the best of both worlds.</p>
	Nora	<p>Like, globally, I'm pretty confident with my identity, in the sense that I feel both Korean and Canadian. Like, I can relate to both. But I think it relates back to like, 'am I a Korean' or 'am I a Canadian?' Yeah, I have moments when I'm like, 'am I more Korean than Canadian?' and other way around. And that's why I think I sometimes feel confused about... my <i>real</i> identity. I sometimes feel like I can't really relate to like my really Canadian friends sometimes, because they're so Canadian, if that makes sense. And sometimes, when I'm with like strictly people from Korea, yeah, I also can't get along with them like 100%, because it's a little different, you know, their interests, their personalities, you know. So, sometimes, I'm like I feel like, I fit in both, but I don't feel completely like 100% on one side. I'm more going back and forth between my two backgrounds sometimes. So, sometimes, I'm like, I don't know what I am. [...]</p> <p>So I think my identity... Living abroad helped me realize that I'm more Canadian than I thought. Little moments of like feeling like I'm more Canadian than like, I am French or European, you know. I realized a lot of my values were actually very based on Canada—and Korea, but mostly Canada.</p>
	Victoria	<p>I think it's got a bit to do with my personality... It's probably more to do with the language barrier, my identity. Probably because [although] I arrived when I was young, I've been living my life too leant towards the Korean culture. Like, I have too many Korean friends. I don't think that helped. Because of the language barrier, there's a limit as to how well I can speak English, speak Korean, and I'm like a bit not proud of myself? It's a bit like a complex, I feel like it's lacking. [...]</p> <p>Because of the age... I think my sense of identity has become firmer, being shaped more and more... [...] I feel like I'm making an effort to make it clearer, better myself and develop. Broaden, I guess, perspective-wise? Even my identity, I feel like maybe it's not just Korean nor just Canadian, but maybe it's become a bit broader. It may not be perfect, still, but I understand it better... And want to better myself... [...] Just because I've lived here since I was really young, I consider Canada as the place where I was raised. I'm comfortable here and... [...] because I've been raised here, mostly, I feel like it's home right here.</p>

	Harin	<p>But my identity, in-between Korea and Canada, maybe? Confidence in that is, well... I don't really know myself well. I really don't. [...] I'm a loner, I don't belong anywhere... I used to think this a lot throughout my life. [...]</p> <p>Throughout my life... I always hung out with Koreans and felt comfortable with them, only, when I was in school. Now, maybe because I'm older... Maybe through working at [[her workplace]], I feel like everyone is essentially the same. So maybe that's why I feel less of a distance between non-Koreans and myself... [...] When I first arrived in Canada, I just couldn't adapt. I just wanted to go back to Korea, I hated it here. But now, I don't hate it and Canada feels like home? [...] I think, for me, it's not the place or the country that I feel attached to, but more like where I've spent most amount of time, with whom. [...] I've spent most of my time here and all my memories are here...</p>
Fluctuating	James	<p>Confident, yes, I feel like I can still associate with whichever party—I'm able to speak the language and understand enough to get along with everyone. [...]</p> <p>It's more of a back-and-forth process, where I used to identify [as a] South Korean person, and then, I hung out with a lot of like White Canadian friends, started to identify more as a Canadian, even before having the permanent residency, citizenship, and all that. And then, during the high school phase, by going back to Korean... University, like hanging out with Korean, Asian friends, and then coming back to the Canadian side again after university... lots of back and forth. So I would say no set identity—it's just an ongoing, changing process. So yeah, I think like that's a tough one, because, again, I feel like I belong in both societies, but not fully in either. But if I were to choose one, I would lean more towards being Canadian, just because of how much time I've spent here.</p>
Crisis-ridden	Jisoo	<p>I think I'm rather satisfied... Yeah, I think I understand myself, my identity. [...] now, I think I'm rather satisfied with my life. [...]</p> <p>Ever since arriving in Canada, I've always considered myself as 1.5 generation, socializing with people that are like me... I've always had this thought at the back of my head—seeing that I'm a minority, how I'd be able to integrate in the mainstream... if I can do things like that. Then, the guy that I happened to be with was a native, Taiwanese-origin, raised here. I realized that, if I wanted to live here, I shouldn't only hang out with Koreans, if I wanted to avoid being a frog in the well. So, in a way, it was through him that I realized this. I felt like, as long as I'm with him, I'd also be the mainstream. So, for a while, even when I would watch like Netflix, I would wonder, why am I watching Korean stuff? Church, too, why am I going to a Korean church?... I was like that because I felt like, if I want to live here, it's me who needs to integrate and adapt, my life had been too Korean... After the breakup, I guess I'm just going back to what feels comfortable, to Koreans...</p>
	William	<p>And that's actually the reason why I feel very confident in terms of self-identity, while not so much about the Korean or Canadian identity. Because it was very much a self-journey of self-development—relying on self to navigate and grow while not belonging to either Koreans or Canadians. I had to be confident in who I was, I had to have a very strong sense of self-identity, because I couldn't identify with either culture. So that's why there was a lot of investment in building self-awareness and self-identity. I don't belong to mainstream of either, so I had my own interests, I had my own hobbies, I had my own taste in food, culture, music, whatever. That was all very self-driven, without external influence from either Korean or Canadian culture. And so, as a result, I have a very strong understanding of self-identity. [...]</p> <p>I've always struggled growing up, and still now, with my identity. Maybe I struggle less now. But, when I was younger, I couldn't categorize myself as Korean, because I clearly wasn't tied to the Korean community nor culture. And I couldn't identify myself as Canadian, either. So I remember feeling very lost. I was very conscious and aware that I belong to, you know, and a bit of sadness that I didn't belong to either. I remember that quite clearly and feeling that quite strongly. Now, as I get into, more into the workforce, building my network, I start to feel more and more integrated... So I'd probably say, yes, I do feel integrated now. But I do remember having very strong emotions of not belonging to... I felt like a nomad.</p>

Crisis-ridden (continued)	Kelly	<p>Okay, so I think before covid, I would have said I'm perfectly confident, because I was very, very comfortable and very grounded in the fact that I am like this Canadian girl who is living in Toronto, working as a teacher, and you know, that's, that's it, end of the story, that's who I am. [...] But ever since then, my sense of identity has been a little shaken. I find myself these days still trying to kind of like suss out who I am and like what it means to be like an English-speaking Korean living in Toronto and working amongst Canadians and like teaching Canadian kids. Like what, what does that mean for me? So I do tend to reflect on that quite a bit these days. So, in a way, I think I'm sure, but I'm not so sure anymore. [...]</p> <p>I think my whole entire life in Canada, it was a bit of an identity crisis. Because I came fairly early, and usually, people that come around my age are pretty like second gen. [...] I feel like I've gone through a rollercoaster of identities, from the Korean living in Korea to like a Korean FOB living in Canada, and then not really FOB but pretending to be FOB living in Canada, then, Canadian, then, I don't know what.</p>
	Jacob	<p>[...] when you asked me what I thought my identity was, I answered Korean Canadian, but... even though I do understand that, in naming, that's what I am, there's still a lot of things that I'm [not] sure—from a semantic standpoint—where I exactly lie between the two. Now, just in terms of like, there're obviously still things about my Korean culture slash identity, cultural elements that I connect with much better than like Canadian ones. But, obviously, a lot of things that I don't understand, and I don't feel connected to the Korean community. But on the flip side, even though there's a lot of things that I understand better about the Canadian identity, ironically, there's a lot of those things that I don't really relate to. So just because of that, I don't really know where I lie between those two ends of the spectrum. [...]</p> <p>[...] I guess I grew up, like, essentially, you know when you're a kid, you don't really know, and you don't really care about who you are. I mean, you don't really think about it, whether you're Korean, Canadian, whatever. But, as I grew up, I did start to realize more that there's, at least to me, there's a big difference between being a <i>Canadian</i> Canadian and an immigrant Canadian—like, in the connection that they have with the country. So, in this sense, I think Canada, to me, is a home, but, at the same time, not really. I just say that it is, just because there's no other country I feel more affiliated towards. I don't know if that makes sense. Like, I speak fluent English, but I would say I identify more with the Korean culture... but again, I don't really identify with other Korean immigrants whose primary language is Korean. It's something I still really haven't gotten a good grasp of, myself, I don't understand it. But that's just the way it is. [...]</p> <p>It's gone better since then, I think. During that time, I was trying to explore what different communities were like. It was difficult at times. But now that I've at least tried, at least got exposed to both communities to a certain level, you know, obviously, I wasn't able to penetrate as much as I wanted to, learn more about the two communities, but I think I kinda learned enough to feel satisfied with where I am right now, in terms of, you know. I don't, I never feel dissatisfied with my current situation anymore, whereas, before, I definitely did. [...] I used to feel a lot of shame.</p>

To begin with, Ben, Lucy, and Nora spoke of feeling increasingly connected to the Canadian identity which they associated with their self-perceptions (“[...] feeling more Canadian would be the general trend”—Ben; “And I started to develop the Canadian side of my identity”—Lucy; “[...] living abroad helped me realize that I’m more Canadian than I thought”—Nora). Ben, in particular, felt more Canadian and less attached to his Korean identity over time. Lucy’s case also stood out, since her self-identity was described as the most bicultural identity construct across the sample. Her positive self-perceptions in relation to both cultures and groups also seemed to be correlated with her bilingual identity: she was the only case which was placed in Category 1 (“Confident, no perceived language barrier”).

Compared to the previous two cases, the narratives of Nora, Victoria, and Harin illustrate varying degrees of uncertainty that remain unresolved and embedded in their understanding of self-identity, in relation to the two cultures. What can be noted is the increasing degrees of uncertainty, in the order of these three cases listed in Table 9.18. Nora, for instance, who felt increasingly certain that Canadian over time, like Ben and Lucy, she emphasized that there are moments where she wonders about her “*real* identity,” as she negotiates her identity in-between the two cultures and groups.

The narratives of Victoria and Harin are visibly more ridden with negative self-perceptions, when compared to the rest of the cases placed in the “Linear” category. While Victoria felt increasingly attached to Canada as a home, the sociocultural ties and practices in her daily life were predominantly Korean, and the language/cultural barrier persisted, which negatively affected her self-perceptions on many levels: firstly, her self-confidence was compensated; secondly, she felt unintegrated in the mainstream society; thirdly, she found it difficult to positively identify with the national identity. Nevertheless, she no longer pondered about her in-betweenness as much as when she was younger, as she reached an understanding that her identity did not have to be bound to single identities such as Korean or Canadian. Therefore, she believed that her perceived notion of self-identity became “clearer” and “firmer” over time (“[...] maybe it’s not just Korean nor just Canadian, but maybe it’s become a bit broader”).

Similarly, Harin also struggled to express her self-identity (“I don’t really know myself well. I really don’t”). Like Victoria, she was immersed in Korean ways of life most of her life: she had a particularly difficult time adjusting to the life in Canada when she first arrived and continuously socialized within co-ethnic peer groups, until she started working

in adulthood. Through work experiences, she felt that she finally had a choice to be friends with whomever she wanted to become friends with (“Now that I’m working, all those connections and labels have stopped following me around... [...] I can now make friends with whom I decide to be friends with”—*Translated from Korean*). Her narratives suggested that her perceived notion of identity broadened over time, progressing in a linear trend. Her imagination of Canadian qualities revolved around the Canadian culture, and, despite the profound impact of perceived racial discrimination, she felt that there were less and less perceived sociocultural barriers when connecting with peers of non-Korean origin and increasingly felt at home in Canada over time. Nevertheless, she felt partially integrated, because her personal interests were not aligned with what she perceived as the mainstream Canadian interests. Therefore, at the time of the interview, she still felt unsure of her identity.

In the “Crisis-ridden” category, Jisoo, William, Kelly, and Jacob were placed. Their identity journeys consisted of at least one identity crisis throughout their lives. The episodes of identity crisis that were narrated were mostly centered on adolescence and/or young adulthood of the participants, which can be explained by the fact that one’s self-identity is the most malleable throughout these periods (Erikson, 1994; Phinney, 1990). Compared to the rest of the sample, these participants seemed to have attained a particularly heightened level of self-perceptions as a visible/ethnic minority within the mainstream Canadian society.

Firstly, when explaining why she felt partially integrated within the Canadian society, Jisoo described her life as “too Korean”—eating Korean food, engaged in daily communication and interactions with family and friends in Korean. Her identity journey appeared to have been significantly affected by the previous relationship she was in during university years with a Canadian-born Taiwanese peer, through which she went through an identity crisis. She became more self-aware of her minority status within the social settings and made a conscious effort to integrate through the sociocultural ties that she was able to form through her then-boyfriend. In doing so, Jisoo went through a phase of trying to neglect the Korean social circle and culture by, for example, not attending the Korean church nor watching the Korean content on Netflix. However, following the breakup, she found herself going back to her comfort zone of socializing with co-ethnic peers. At the same time, she expressed feeling satisfied with the level of understanding of her self-identity which she was able to attain throughout her identity journey.

Furthermore, William's struggle with identity began in school, and was ongoing. As he had to use English at home and in school, he felt that he had to "erase" his past to blend in, which led him to lose his Korean identity ("I was totally lost. [...] I definitely did not identify myself as Korean"). Then, his quest for a "new" identity began. By the time he was in high school, he naturally became friends with Asian peers that he met through the Gifted program and felt unable to claim the Canadian identity, as well ("I was very lost in terms of mashing within. I couldn't identify myself as Canadian nor Korean [...]"). On top of that, his cultural interests were not aligned to his ethnic nor national/mainstream interests, which further complicated his quest of forming a sense of belonging. The resolution that he chose was attending a Korean church in university to try to explore the Korean identity. In the end, economic integration was what helped him the most in establishing a sense of stability and belonging by shaping national attachment. On the one hand, he remained conscious of the minority status and his marginalized identity—being identified as Asian/Korean, and yet, lacking the identification with and support from the ethnic community. On the other hand, building his networks and career helped him feel integrated as a member of the mainstream society, and thus, Canadian. As a result of the continuous struggles to try to belong and explore self-identity while not belonging to either group, William felt confident in his independence and autonomy, as well as his understanding of self-identity. Thus, although there remained some struggles with his identity for him, it was to much a lesser extent now.

Like William, Kelly experienced identity crises ("a rollercoaster of identities") that profoundly affected her self-perception throughout her life. Her struggles with identity began in junior high school, when she was forced to choose between her Jewish and Korean groups of friends—which led her to change school. Then, in high school, faced with an ample pool of co-ethnic networking opportunities, she went through a "mental turmoil" while struggling to be Korean to fit in. In university, Kelly was faced with another episode of identity crisis upon taking part in the Korean student association, which exposed her to occasions that further accentuated numerous differences between herself and Korean peers. Simultaneously, she found herself feeling marginalized, as she also was unable to identify with non-Korean peers. As a resolution, she eventually turned to non-Korean peers in her photography classes towards the end of university, with whom she was able to become friends based on the shared interests. From then on, she was able to make friends outside of co-ethnic/racial networks, especially through work, to the point that she felt "perfectly confident" in her Canadian identity. Yet, following Asian hate that she experienced during

the pandemic, her self-identity became unclear, and she found herself wondering how she self-identifies as “an English-speaking Korean living in Toronto.”

As for Jacob, it was not until university that he realized that ethnic and racial differences between social groups, which he started noticing in high school, were an impossible barrier to overcome in his effort to connect with “new groups” and “communities to hang out with.” Throughout the experience, Jacob became increasingly aware of the perceived differences between groups and moreover felt marginalized, as he found himself unable to identify with either one of the Korean or Canadian communities. As a result, he went back to socializing with his group of Asian friends from high school. Beyond the experiences revolving around social group memberships that triggered his identity crisis, Jacob was also faced with the issue of self-identification. On the one hand, although he positively identified with Canadian multiculturalism and felt partially integrated and at home in Canada, he was unable to identify with the national identity, due to the perceived lack of distinctive Canadian cultural products, a sense of detachment from mainstream interests, and the White Canadian stereotype. At the same time, while Jacob identified with some elements of the Korean culture (i.e. Korean pop culture) which shaped ethnic pride, he was unable to fully explore the Korean identity, due to the language barrier that hindered his exploration of peer networks. Consequently, Jacob’s self-identity continued to be marginalized, and he still did not fully understand where it stood in-between the two cultures and groups. Nevertheless, he felt satisfied at knowing that he tried to explore both communities and with what he learned from the experiences.

Across the sample, James was the only one to be placed in the “Fluctuating” category, as his identity journey was described as “a back-and-forth process,” fluctuating between the Korean and Canadian identity throughout his life. As illustrated in his narrative, his self-identity constantly evolved, defined and re-defined by his friend groups. Throughout the shifting identity, James nevertheless also felt increasingly Canadian over time. Therefore, his identity exploration seemed to be continuous and active throughout his life. Although his identity was described as “no set identity” and “an ongoing, changing process,” he felt confident in his self-identity, based on his perceived ability to associate himself with others regardless of group identities.

Overall, the findings highlighted numerous dimensions of the notion of identity, encompassing its individual/group, in-/out-group, social/cultural, and personal/social aspects (Cerulo, 1997; Keefe, 1992; Milne, 2017; Rumbaut, 2005; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). The identity



journeys of the participants were riddled with numerous in- and out-group comparisons, identities, and self-definitions across different cultures, as well as their cultural understanding and identification, which contributed to a resolution. The time spent in Canada was evidently positively correlated with the national identification of the participants by fostering life experiences, integration, and the resulting feeling of home. It was also linked with personal experiences of identity crises and/or exploration, which eventually led the individuals to feel satisfied with their understanding of self-identities, regardless of the identity outcomes. In fact, what appeared to matter the most in predicting one's satisfaction with his or her self-identity was not so much about the clarity of the perceived self-identity, but the personal experiences of identity exploration through different peer networks.

Unsurprisingly, in cases in which the participants were unable to confidently claim either one of the Korean and Canadian identities, marginal identities emerged, associated with uncertainty in making sense of their in-betweenness. Including those who felt confident in their self-identity, questioning self in regard to his or her in-betweenness appeared to be a common occurrence that most participants, if not all, experienced. What stood out from the findings is that, over time, the 1.5-generation participants' national attachment is likely to enhance their national identification in their bicultural identities, and that, if their national attachment is not strong enough, their ethnic attachment is unlikely to be sufficient to provide them with ethnic identification that would provide a confident self-identity.

To better understand the self-identities of the participants and the associated feelings, such as self-confidence, the Erikson's (1994) concept of ego identity proves useful: for one to be able to form a strong sense of self, self-sameness and continuity in one's synthesizing methods of ego must be matched with the those that are projected by others in the immediate surroundings, while the individual maintains a sense of uniqueness. In other words, Erikson (1994) proposed a means that can be adopted by individuals to be able to successfully navigate developmental challenges that they encounter as they grow and mature. As an effective ego identity provides individuals with abilities to navigate contextual changes brought on by various personal or situational factors, the limited degrees of confidence that some participants expressed when commenting on their self-identity within diverse sociocultural contexts can be further understood.

As well, the findings re-affirmed the fluid notion of identity (Cerulo, 1997; Danico, 2004). The participants experienced the shifting sense of self throughout the course of their

lives, typically in a progressive, linear evolution or going through what could be described as fluctuations or identity crisis. These variations in patterns of identity negotiation are evidently linked with the heterogeneous nature of the 1.5 generation (Danico, 2004; J. Y. Lee & Kim, 2021). The participants became increasingly self-conscious about the ethnic and racial differences associated with different social groups while growing up, and, throughout their identity journeys, most were able to achieve a satisfying level of understanding of self-identity throughout adulthood. It must be noted that, regardless of the trend and identity resolution, the identity journeys, which were described by the sample at the time of the interview, should not be perceived as conclusive. As James described, an identity journeys were indeed found to be “an ongoing” process, constantly shaped and re-shaped by cultural and social experiences one encounters.

## 9.8.2 Identity Labels

### 9.8.2.1 1.5 Generation

**Table 96**

*1.5-generation identity*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Self-distinction from the first/second generation	<b>10</b>
Perceived in-betweenness	<b>10</b>

Self-identification as 1.5 generation was one of the criteria for participating in the interviews. When the participants were asked to share what the 1.5-generation identity label meant for them, the responses illustrated a culture, which appeared to be distinctive of the 1.5-generation identity. Mirroring Danico’s (2004) findings, the findings showed that the 1.5-generation culture consisted of numerous elements, such as bilingualism/biculturalism and partial belonging/marginality, enabling individuals to distinguish themselves from whom they perceived as out-groups (Table 96).

The most common comparisons that the participants drew to describe their identification as a 1.5-generation immigrant occurred between themselves and the first- and second-generation peers. Across the narratives, nativity in Korea, lived experiences and memories of the birth country, maintenance of Korean, as well as some of the adopted elements of the Canadian culture throughout life experiences, were consistently referenced, highlighting the

qualities that were deemed unique to the 1.5 generation. The following narratives best represent the overall observations:

I am technically definitively 1.5 gen, because I wasn't born here, I was born in Korea. I still remember going to school and all of that in Korea—my memories are clear, very vivid. But then, I've adopted the Canadian culture here, because I was raised in Canada, for the most part. And I could definitely tell the difference between me and someone who was born here [...]. When they talk about like the stuff that they did in kindergarten, I'm like, that wasn't my experience. Um... [...] The fact that they have less knowledge about Korea, for the most part. They understand and speak less Korean. I know that's not always the case, because there are some second gen kids who speak way better Korean than I do and go back to Korea more often... But, in general, I find that that's the case. (Kelly)

Well, first thing is, like, I speak Korean fluently and I've had lived experience in Korea. If I was born here, I think it'd be more confusing maybe. I'm not sure. Like, you were born in Canada, but you look Asian, you're Korean, and your parents are Korean, and you're raised here with, you know... You go to school, you're more taught the values and culture here. You still look Korean, but you've never had a lived experience in Korea, so you might not really own that part of the identity that you just were born with—whereas I do have that lived experience. I do have that part of my identity that is Korean. But I also am Canadian. (Lucy)

I would say 1.5, because [...] I have an understanding of Korean core values that stem from Korean upbringing. But the nurture part of my growth, conscious growth anyway, intellectual growth, as well as social growth, come from the Canadian context. So that, to me, is 1.5. Whereas, for second generation, those core values in unconscious upbringing with the Canadian culture would make them the second generation. And for first generation, more external forces would be leaning them towards the Korean culture. (William)

Furthermore, like Lucy and William, Ben also commented on the “external forces” that distinguish the 1.5 from the second generation: he believed that, had he grown up in a “small town in Canada” where few Koreans reside, he would have felt more like the second generation. For him, the Korean upbringing of his parents and the Korean church community contributed to creating his 1.5-generation identification. Thus, the 1.5 generation was described as the group of individuals who share some of the key characteristics with both the first generation (i.e. nativity in Korea, maintenance of the Korean language and culture) and the second generation (i.e. adoption of the Canadian culture, upbringing within the Canadian societal settings and environment). Yet, the differences, such as the bilingual and bicultural abilities, rendered the 1.5 generation distinctive from the other generation groups in the minds of the participants.

Indeed, bilingualism and/or biculturalism were referenced across all the narratives as the key trait(s) that define the 1.5 generation. In particular, Ben accentuated the salient impact of bilingualism on shaping an individual's identification as the 1.5 generation: he believed that being able to speak Korean allows an individual to connect easily with other co-ethnic peers, thus facilitating access to ethnic identity exploration while living in Canada and enhancing self-esteem ("I think the big thing is language. I think that's quite a big factor, just being able to speak it. [...] where I can quite easily directly connect with Koreans, whether they're Korean Canadians or just Koreans"). In fact, across the sample, Ben was the only participant whose lack of memories of lived experiences in Korea was comparable to the second-generation identification; nevertheless, his ability to speak Korean, which he considered as "a huge part" of the 1.5-generation identity, seemed to have contributed to his self-identity as the 1.5 generation.

At the same time, it was apparent that self-perceived levels of bilingualism/biculturalism had a significant impact on *in-betweenness* that the participants associated with their identity. How this in-betweenness was perceived did not differ greatly, for the most part: across the sample, there was only one participant, Lucy, whose interpretation of the 1.5-generation identity was predominantly based on positive self-perceptions, such as high levels of bilingualism and biculturalism.

[...] I speak Korean fluently, and I've had lived experience in Korea. [...] I do have that part of my identity that is Korean. But I also am Canadian. That's how I understand it. [...] I feel like I have the best of both worlds. (Lucy)

Throughout the interview, Lucy's narratives consistently reflected bilingualism and biculturalism. Indeed, she was the only one across the sample who was confident in her level of bilingualism and perceived no language barrier. Moreover, she felt no sociocultural barrier in connecting with peers outside of co-ethnic/racial groups. Therefore, her positive perceptions related to her bilingual/bicultural abilities were closely associated with the 1.5-generation identity.

Besides Lucy, the rest of the sample expressed that their bilingual and/or bicultural abilities were partial, which led them to perceive varying degrees of in-betweenness in their self-perceptions as the 1.5-generation. The borders marking the space in which the majority of the participants were placed appeared to be blurry: their self-identity was partially overlapped with elements related to the Korean and Canadian culture, inscribing a sense of *partial* belonging to both cultures and identities.

I think the fact that, like at home, a lot of what we do is very Korean. It's all Korean-based—the music, the language... I speak the language every day, my mom speaks it... The fact that I don't speak in English with my mom, I think that makes me feel Korean. It really ties back to the fact that I'm Korean Canadian. Like, I experience, live both cultures. I'm a bit of both... But not fully, you know? [...] I feel like I'm very Canadian when I'm in the society, but when I'm at home, I'm very Korean in my ways. (Nora)

In Canada, there seems to be a culture that belongs to the 1.5-generation. I think I'm part of that culture. It's not black and white, it's not exactly Canadian nor exactly Korean, the 1.5 gens are there, that kind of thing... I think there's a culture that's shaped by the shared experiences. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

Language and culture, lifestyle, too. I can identify with both Korean and Canadian. As for the language, I don't speak either well, but I still speak them both. And culture, I like watching Korean entertainment, really like the Korean culture, really like Korean food, eat Korean food every day... But then, a bit different from actual Koreans. Canadians, too. So that's why I identify as the 1.5 generation. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*)

What makes me feel 1.5? I would say it's the feeling of being in-between the two cultures, but also not identifying entirely with either [...] For example, I speak English and feel like maybe I have some Canadian qualities in my character, but I identify more with the Korean culture. Yeah, it's something I still really haven't, you know, gotten a good grasp of, myself. I don't understand it, but that's just the way it is. (Jacob)

Firstly, if you're perfectly integrated within a society, you need to be perfectly comfortable with the language. In a way, when I think, I have to think using a mix of both English and Korean. On top of that, even though I was born in Korea and go there to visit often, I don't know much about the country. [...] politics and things like that. And, even though I live in Canada and am Canadian, I don't even vote. I think politics, that's a big part of it. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

[...] even though you kind of get the best of both worlds, it's also like you're not fully part of both worlds. [...] when you're talking about some of the things about Korea to I guess to a non-Korean, like saying, 'Oh yeah, in Korea, we have this,' and vice versa. When you're talking to a Korean person, you go, 'In Canada, we have this.' So basically, identity-wise, when you're subconsciously saying that, it kind of feels like you don't identify with like just one particular culture, it's more... You feel like you're part of both. And then, when you visit Korea, [...] your mannerisms—the way you dress, the way you look—is apparently different, according to my friends. With that in mind, it's like, well, we don't exactly appear as a Korean in Korea. When we're here, and no one's going to just look at us and immediately go like, 'oh, that person's Canadian,' even if you have citizenship. So yeah, I guess all those factors in mind, that makes you feel kind of ambiguous. Being in-between, partially belonging and yet not entirely belonging, is what I'd say. Yes, pretty much having that mixed experience, mixed language, mixed way of like processing my thoughts... I think, because of that, I identify as 1.5. (James)

It is interesting to observe that the six participants cited above demonstrated varying degrees of integration and bilingualism (i.e. ranging from Category 2 to Category 4, Table 8.13)—therefore, the sense of marginalized identity that they associated with the 1.5-generation identity seem to be irrelevant to these two factors.

What can also be noted is the language barrier that Harin, Victoria, and James associated with their 1.5-generation identity. Indeed, they experienced language barriers that affected their self-perceived proficiency level in both languages (7.5-8 out of 10 in both languages, Category 3, Table 8.13). Victoria moreover drew links between the language barrier with the barriers in the labour market that the 1.5 generation is faced with, highlighting some of the challenges that she believes are unique to the 1.5 generation:

Because of the language, we are faced with career barriers... Like even the type of industry we can work in? I think there's that, too. Because we don't have roots here. Our parents and their friends, it's limited, what they can do. And we grew up witnessing that, so you're also kind of limited. So what you've experienced indirectly, as well as directly. (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean*)

Her narratives above echo the narratives of few other participants. For example, as indicated previously, William emphasized many times throughout the interview the difficulties he encountered while trying to build his career in the field, which he described as predominantly White, linked with challenges in establishing connections. Similarly, Harin indicated that having connections is crucial in one's successful economic integration and moreover perceived limited opportunities in Canada.

Because here, without connections, you can't work. Here, if you've got a [good] reference, you automatically make it through the first round, and they make sure you get an interview, at least. If you tell someone that you know the manager, [...]. But I've heard way too many stories like that. I've seen it happen way too many times in my surroundings. [...] maybe it's just me, maybe it's because I am not familiar with that kind of domain, or maybe because I don't have connections, but I feel like there aren't many opportunities. (*Translated from Korean*)

Considering the findings that have been discussed so far, it appears likely that parental pressure—either direct or indirect—is placed on 1.5-generation individuals to become bilingual and bicultural and do well in life, while they are provided with minimal levels of parental intervention. Hence, being faced with the perceived barrier in the labour market due to language/cultural barriers without the “roots” that can provide them with help represents a kind of challenges that the 1.5 generation can be faced with.

The findings showed that the 1.5-generation identity was intricately linked with some of the key elements of self-perceptions of the participants. Situated in-between, not only the heritage and national cultures, but the first and second generation, what seemed evident was the salience of ethnic ties on the participants' understanding of the 1.5-generation identity: *Korean* upbringing, ties to Korean communities, and use of the Korean language that fill their lives with bicultural experiences were referred to across many narratives. Thus, the findings illustrated the practicality of the 1.5-generation identity label as a technical and sociocultural term that can be used as a means of distinguishing the immigrants within the ethnic community.

As Jane Yeonjae Lee and Minjin Kim (2021) argued, defining the 1.5-generation identity is “an almost impossible task,” due to the heterogeneous nature of the experiences and situations of the group that are prone to evolving throughout the space and time (p. 7). Indeed, the findings constantly demonstrated the ambiguous space in which the 1.5-generation individuals are situated and the resulting sentiments related to their stance in-between the two cultures, which render the 1.5-generation identity label complex. Such ambiguity embedded in the 1.5-generation identity label provides the 1.5 generation with a pool of similarities that can help the individuals establish connections with one another. The fact that majority of the sample socialized mostly with 1.5-generation peers stands as evidence. As Jisoo described, the so-called “1.5-generation culture”—built on acculturative experiences, identity negotiation, and outcomes—appears to be distinct in the minds of the participants. In this respect, the 1.5-generation identity seems to be a useful identity label that individuals can claim and share, which helps enabling self-distinction among the diverse profiles of Korean immigrants of different generations, while providing a safe space for them to understand and be understood on varying degrees and perceptions of their in-betweenness.

### **9.8.2.2 Korean Canadian**

Although many participants felt that their self-identities were not “black and white,” most expressed a stronger sense of attachment to one of the ethnic or national identities when describing their bicultural self-identities. Often, ethnic salience was embedded in their self-identities to varying degrees as a complement to their national identity, and there was only one participant across the sample—Jisoo—who felt more closely connected to her ethnic identity than national identity. In contrast, as mentioned previously, the self-perceived stance in the spectrum of in-betweenness remained unclear for some.

**Table 97***Korean Canadian identity*

Theme, category/subcategory	Number of cases
Self-identification	<b>9</b>
- Self-identifies as Korean Canadian	9
Meaning of the Korean Canadian identity	<b>9</b>
- Mixed, hybrid identity	6
- Based on out-group perceptions	3

When the participants were asked to choose an identity label among “Korean,” “Korean Canadian,” and “Canadian,” nine participants identified themselves as “Korean Canadian,” and one participant felt that “Canadian” was a better representation of his identity. The findings are displayed in Table 97.

Across the narratives, the individuals referred to various elements that shaped their interpretation of their Korean Canadian identity, such as their Korean upbringing, perceived integration within the Canadian society, feeling of home in Canada, in- and out-group perceptions, and their sense of attachment to both the ethnic and national cultures and identities. Such elements were intricately linked with one another in representing a sense of mixed identity in one’s identification as Korean Canadian. Moreover, the findings showed that many participants’ perception of the Korean Canadian identity was synonymous to that of the 1.5-generation identity—grounded in bilingualism and/or biculturalism that they felt was ingrained in both identity labels (“I think the Korean Canadian identity is more distinct among the 1.5 generation”—*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*; “[...] I would identify Korean as someone, just-came-from-Korea kind of thing. Canadian, I would associate with people who were born here. And Korean Canadian as more like people who are like me, like 1.5 gen”—James). While generation groups were used as reference points for comparison when defining the 1.5-generation identity, ethnic and national identities and respective cultures were referenced to describe the Korean Canadian identity.

The essence of mixed, hybrid identity was evident in most narratives, associated with the participants’ positive identification with both cultures and identities. The following excerpts exemplify the cases in which the participants felt increasingly attached to the national identity over time, while maintaining some ethnic salience in their self-identity, to varying degrees.

So someone who is accepted by this country, this culture. You can like blend in, but also, you’re able to keep like different aspects of Koreanness, I guess,



and still cherish that in a way? I guess I arrived in Canada with the Korean identity, but the Canadian side of my identity formed over time. So I just feel like that's who I am—I feel like I'm Canadian, like, Korean Canadian. Like, I have both sides of it. I tend to choose the sides that I like of the Korean culture and the sides that I like of the Canadian culture and mix it. So it's like the best of both worlds. That's what I think of when I say I'm Korean Canadian. (Lucy)

I identify myself as Korean Canadian. I feel very much attached to Korean culture because of my family, the way I interact and live every day—and there's a lot of Koreanness to it. But I still feel accepted within the society and feel integrated. So yeah, I feel not just Canadian, but Korean Canadian. It's part of my identity. My everyday life and the fact that I'm interacting with my family all the time... It's really more Korean than Canadian, right? The things we do, the language we speak, the food we eat, [...]. So I feel more attached to the Korean culture than the Canadian culture, or at least I used to think that. But again, I think recently, I realized that I was a lot more Canadian than I thought when I was abroad. And that, when I'm not home, I'm outside, I feel more Canadian in a sense. (Nora)

Just like the background of where I come from, [...] the Korean part of that is still like very integral to how I became who I am, right? [...] Actually, growing up in Canada but definitely growing up with Korean family. Maybe it would have been different if I was, for example, second or third generation, whose, my parents were more, you know, like Canadian culture. But because they're first-generation immigrants... And yeah, so that connection makes me feel still like I have that base of, or starting point, of Korean identity. (Ben)

What especially stood out from the excerpts above is ethnic salience that remains embedded in the participants' identity, which went through a linear progressive transition towards national identification. The significant role that family plays in shaping ethnic salience is therefore evident (Danico, 2004; Phinney, Romero et al., 2001; Soehl & Waldinger, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014), as well as the constant bicultural identity negotiation in and outside of home. Thus, these three participants seemed to perceive *Korean* in their Korean Canadian identity as an additive description to their Canadian identity. In Ben's case, who expressed feeling “detached from the Korean identity,” the ethnic description of his self-identity became a symbolic representation of his heritage culture and identity, especially.

On the other hand, some participants continued to associate their perceived in-between, marginalized self-perceptions with their Korean Canadian self-identity.

Just because I'm not Korean, I'm not Canadian—I'm Korean Canadian. I think it's because I arrived when I arrived. There's a lot of Korean culture and Canadian culture, too. So... (*Translated from a mix of English and Korean/Victoria*)

Korean Canadian. I'm a loner, I don't belong anywhere... I used to think this a lot throughout my life. For me to say I'm Korean, I honestly have no idea what's going on there, and for me to say I'm Canadian... So politics is a big

part of it, more than the culture. I don't know much about politics and I have no interest either in [politics in] Canada or Korea. [...] It's not about the culture, surprisingly. (*Translated from Korean/Harin*)

Korean Canadian. Yes. When I go to Korea, I feel a bit different from really *Korean* Korean people, I can feel it. So I feel I guess I'm not completely *Korean* Korean, nor do I feel like I'm *Canadian* Canadian. I guess it's like 7 to 3, the mix—like Korean 7, Canadian 3. [...] Yeah. That's why I guess I feel closer to *Korean* Canadian. (*Translated from Korean/Jisoo*)

The identity journeys of Victoria and Harin reflected a linear trend towards a better resolution of self-identity and perceptions, whereas that of Jisoo entailed an identity crisis before reaching a better grasp of self-identity. All three cases demonstrated that the self-identities of the participants were mixed and therefore could not be tied to one single identity. Therefore, the Korean Canadian identity seemed to be an adequate representation of their self-perceptions. In contrast to Ben, who saw *Korean* as an adjective that accompanies his main, personal identity as a Canadian, Jisoo seemed to place more importance on the ethnic identity in her Korean Canadian self-identity.

Furthermore, there were three participants—Kelly, Jacob, and James—whose identity journeys involved identity crises and/or fluctuating self-identities. Their self-identification as Korean Canadian was significantly shaped by out-group perceptions: for them, the Korean Canadian identity was closely associated with their self-consciousness of how they were perceived by others based on their race.

Hmm, I would identify myself as a Korean Canadian, because... this stems from the experience I had during covid [...]. Before, I always used to introduce myself as a Canadian whenever I got travelling or whatnot. [...] But then, I know that whoever's asking the question isn't really asking that question. And they're gonna want to know where I'm *really* from. [...] I don't think I'd necessarily tie it to my identity per se, if that's what you're asking. I think it's more to do with how easy it is. (Kelly)

So this is a situation where, if I identify as Korean, I think that would have to do more with how others identify me. So when people look at me and they'll think I'm Korean, and, because of that, I think that's kind of embedded into my mindset, as well. But realistically, I would probably be more Canadian, because I'm not too familiar with the Korean culture—like, not as much as I am with the Canadian. If I were to choose one based on how I feel, I would lean more towards being Canadian, just because of how much time I've spent here. (James)

To be honest, I felt like, if someone did ask me, and I just told him that I'm Canadian, there will be a lot of questions that come up. For instance, I mean, they'd look at me then they're probably just going to think [...] I'm from one of the Asian countries, right? And for me to just say I'm Canadian, they're probably automatically going to assume, 'Oh, you immigrated to Canada, and you might have the nationality or citizenship.' I think, as for what Korean

Canadian means to me, I think it just basically means that I'm an immigrant.  
(Jacob)

In line with Howard-Hassmann's (1999) argument that Canadian as an ethnic category is a void category, often associated with presumptions about the Canadian identity (i.e. White European descent), the fact that these participants feel the need to use ethnic identification to conform to how they are perceived by others highlights persistent barriers that out-group perceptions present ethnic Canadians with. Therefore, the significant role that out-group perceptions plays in affecting one's self-perceptions is evident (Cooley, 1902).

Across the sample, William was the only participant who did not choose the Korean Canadian identity, over his preference for the Canadian identity. He was also the only one whose upbringing lacked significant Korean influences, in and outside of home: at home, his parents sought to provide an environment for the children to acquire the mainstream culture by speaking English, watching English shows and series on TV together, and going on vacation to places to engage in what they perceived as "Canadian activities"; and outside of home, his co-ethnic peer socialization was constantly limited throughout his life, for the most part. Nevertheless, William inherited some of core Korean values (i.e. maintenance of some of the Korean traditions related to the New Year's Day), and he was aware that his upbringing was different from that of White Canadians ("They all grew up with cottages or playing hockey [...] the Jays, Raptors [...]. And all that stuff that I can't connect with"). Therefore, William accounted for his self-identification as the following: "Now, I'd identify myself as Canadian—Canadian with Korean background, Korean upbringing. [...] I can't identify myself as a Korean first, then Canadian."

Overall, the hybrid identity in the form of the Korean Canadian identity was deemed adequate to represent the self-perceptions of most participants. First and foremost, inherently, the identity label conveys the notion of mixed identity. In most cases, it was observed that, on the one hand, the salience of Korean upbringing helped them maintain ethnic attachment, and, on the other hand, the salience of time spent in Canada positively contributed to their national attachment.

Furthermore, the Korean Canadian identity label was associated with varied ways of interpretation and application and thus proved to be highly malleable. For instance, the Korean Canadian identity was interpreted in different manners by the participants in their attempts to best represent their self-identity and/or perceptions. Often, *Korean* was used as an adjective that

added further meaning to the Canadian identity that they adopted, which was corresponded with self-perceptions related to their ties to the heritage culture or out-group perceptions (i.e. ascribed identities, such as Korean, Asian, and immigrant). Even in the one case where the participant felt detached from the ethnic identity, the Korean Canadian identity was useful in providing him with the descriptor that can reflect his heritage culture. In addition, some participants used the Korean Canadian identity label to express the uncertainty that they felt in viewing their stance in in-betweenness. As well, putting *Korean* before Canadian in self-identification was deemed meaningful for two participants, each of whom claimed the Korean Canadian identity or the single Canadian identity, based on their national identification that prevailed over ethnic identification.

When compared to the 1.5-generation identity, the Korean Canadian identity also seems to be practical and useful, as it can reflect and highlight the bicultural identities and in-betweenness of the participants. Therefore, some saw this hybrid identity as synonymous to the 1.5-generation identity. However, as demonstrated in the findings of the questionnaire survey, the Korean Canadian identity was claimed by individuals across all generation groups—and there was a higher number of the second-generation participants who claimed the Korean Canadian identity than their first- and 1.5-generation counterparts. Hence, this hybrid identity label can be understood as an umbrella term, broader than the generational identity labels, that are useful within co-ethnic groups. In other words, it can be claimed by individuals of Korean origin across different generation groups, who maintain varying levels of connection with both the Korean and Canadian culture and/or those who are in the need of an identity label that would adequately represent their compromised identity.



### CONCLUSION TO PART 3

This study sought to establish an in-depth exploration of identity negotiation of 1.5-generation immigrants in Canada. The findings revealed a diverse range of cultural and social links that facilitated different types of interplay between ethnic national attachment of individuals, which ultimately shaped their self-identification. The identity journeys of the participants led to the resulting self-identities, varied in forms of single and hybrid identities.

Across all spheres of life, on multiple levels, both ethnic and national attachment were shaped through continuous identity negotiation of the participants, marked by through in- and out-group comparisons and definitions. While national attachment seemed to be positively affected by their initial acculturation period in primary school for most, the schooling experiences and peer interactions were remembered negatively by the few due to language and cultural barriers, who arrived the latest at the ages 11 and 12. Regardless of initial acculturative experiences and integration, ethnic attachment often took precedence over national attachment, as one transitioned into and through adolescence. Moreover, faced with growing levels of self-awareness of ethnic and racial differences throughout schooling experiences (Andrews, 2014; Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001; Phinney, 1988), the participants' exploration of ethnic/racial identity was a prominent phenomenon that shaped their identity journeys. For the majority, co-ethnic/racial peer socialization throughout adolescence, especially at the level of secondary school, was observed. Thus, during this period of their lives, most participants' in- and out-group perceptions and identification appeared to be centered on ethnicity and/or race.

Throughout schooling, different socialization patterns emerged. For those who were heavily immersed in their ethnic identity exploration, perceived pressure and stress associated with Korean peer groups and community tended to have negatively shaped their in-group perceptions. As for the others, those who were not heavily invested in co-ethnic peer socialization tended to rely on co-racial peer groups for friendship throughout adolescence. Across the sample, those who remained culturally and socially integrated throughout schooling experiences were few. The experiences related to cultural and social identification with the ethnic/racial peer groups in school, along with increasing levels of self-awareness of ethnic and racial hierarchy, accounted for the negative sentiments that most participants developed throughout their schooling experiences during adolescence. In many cases that involved exclusive ethnic peer socialization throughout the most, if not all of, schooling, the overall

schooling experiences positively affected ethnic attachment of the participants, for the most part, while negatively affecting their national attachment.

Within the sphere of home, parents, in particular, was again identified as the primary factor that consistently facilitated the participants' cultural and linguistic retention, providing them with the resources to help them explore the meaning of the ethnic identity (Alba et al., 2002; Danico, 2004; Döpke, 1992; S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2007; Phinney, Romero et al., 2001; Sok, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014). Furthermore, building bridges between Korean-dominant parents and the mainstream society as cultural/language brokers was a significant example of family socialization practices that led the participants to perceive their in-betweenness. Hence, it can be argued that family socialization affects national attachment of the 1.5 generation, depending on their successful delivery of language/cultural brokering, as well as the perceived differences between their parents and themselves in the salience of their ethnic identity.

Consistent to previous literature (J. Jeong & Bélanger, 2012; Sok, 2012; G. J. Yoo & Kim, 2014), the findings showed that many participants formed higher levels of emotional attachment to their parents, which facilitated the transmission of ethnic identity. Regardless of whether they experienced conflicts and/or stress from parent-child interactions throughout their upbringing, many participants increasingly felt appreciation and/or empathy as they aged, for the parental decision to move to Canada and sacrifice they had to make. The strong parent-child bonds facilitated the transmission of the importance of family and filial duty, as well as the importance of maintaining the Korean identity and/or language for most participants. At the same time, many sought to meet parental expectations, which were perceived through the parental pressure, whether direct or implied. Consequently, most participants' sense of attachment to the Korean identity seemed to have become increasingly embedded into their hybrid identities across time—in the form of their emotional connections to their first-generation parents, representative of what they perceived as the heritage/ancestral attachment. In the few cases in which one felt detached from their Korean identity, family links and Korean upbringing were useful reminders for them to retain their sense of ethnic attachment.

What stood out from the findings is the negative impact of family socialization on civic interest and integration of many participants. Most parents of the participants were interested in current affairs of the home country and un/disinterested in current affairs of the host country. Furthermore, many parents did not engage the children in discussions about the subjects at home. The few who retained an interest in current affairs and regularly voted were regularly

engaged in family discussions about the news while growing up. Moreover, albeit the minority, those who followed the news in Canada were visibly more numerous than those who followed the news in Korea. In fact, even in the few cases where the participants were interested in the news in Korea, the language (i.e. limited literacy) and social barrier (i.e. limited exposure to and background knowledge of current affairs in Korea) kept them from actually consuming the news. The overall interest in current affairs and civic participation in both countries seemed limited for most participants.

Regardless of how closely one felt attached to the Korean identity, the salience of ethnic attachment was evident, when considering the overall peer socialization patterns and dating and marriage preferences of the participants. Co-ethnic or racial preference for (close) friendship was observed in many cases, and the same trend was evident in their dating/marriage preferences—based on shared experiences related to cultural similarities, especially family values. Thus, ethnicity and race continued to be significant factors that shaped in- and out-group perceptions for most participants throughout their lives.

Moreover, the ethnic community provided the participants with valuable occasions to engage with co-ethnic peers in socialization practices related to the ethnic culture, mirroring previous research findings (Joo, 2010; S. M. Park & Sarkar, 2007; Phinney, Horenczyk et al., 2001; Min, 1992). The exposure to and experiences within the Korean church and Koreatown were commonly shared across the narratives. Throughout ethnic identity exploration, which was the most salient during adolescence, many participants were most actively engaged in networking within the Korean community during high school years, in particular. In this regard, the ethnic community represents a useful public site that represents a rich source of co-ethnic networking opportunities, through which diverse transnational experiences promote the individuals' identification with the ethnic culture and co-ethnic peer groups, as well as self-awareness of their identity as a Korean immigrant living in Canada. Throughout various co-ethnic ties that they formed throughout their lives, the participants were able to attach meanings to group identity labels such as *Korean community* and *Korean immigrants*. Such perceptions enriched their understanding of the ethnic identity and, based on self-affiliations, the perceived group identities affected their self-perceptions and self-concept.

As they aged, the 1.5-generation participants tended to become less dependent on the ethnic community for social and cultural resources, unlike their first-generation parents. At the same time, the findings suggest the following: firstly, offspring generations of immigrants have



needs within the mainstream society that differ from those of the first generation; secondly, how offspring generations envision the ethnic community to be represented within the mainstream society may significantly differ from the current ethnic community founded by the first generation; and thirdly, the generational shift that is taking place may be bringing changes to the ethnic community in Toronto (e.g. new multicultural churches that are founded by offspring-generation pastors). Evidently, the notion of Korean community in Toronto seemed to, at least partially, remain tied to its classical image of first-generation founders, while simultaneously reflecting the gradual evolution of the ethnic community, driven by the generational change.

The evolving perceptions of the participants of the ethnic community, linked with their experiences of interacting with different generations within the community, were positively correlated with their ethnic and national attachment that shifted throughout their lives. At the same time, the findings demonstrated the salience of generational distinctiveness that the participants emphasized in their 1.5-generation identification. The fact that most participants gradually dissociated themselves from the Korean community as they transitioned through adulthood indicates that ethnic attachment of these participants is not dependent on, nor defined by, the community founded by the first generation, and that there is a need for the Korean Canadian community that can adequately meet the needs of offspring generations of Korean immigrants.

Along with the sphere of ethnic community, the sphere of work seemed to have provided the participants with useful occasions to negotiate their identity as adults. The findings of the current study showed that successful economic integration of the participants within the Canadian society was closely associated with their national attachment, to varying degrees. Not only did successful economic integration improve cultural and social links that work experiences facilitated, but it also fostered a positive self-evaluation through self-comparisons to the first-generation parents, whose struggles to integrate within the Canadian labour market (e.g. shift from white-collar jobs to blue-collar jobs and/or dependence on the ethnic community) contrasted with the economic integration of the majority of the participants.

In addition, the findings suggest that ethnic attachment can positively be affected by one's integration within the mainstream labour market. For instance, albeit working for Canadian businesses and companies, few participants continued to exclusively or mostly interact with co-ethnic colleagues and/or clients at work. As well, encountering difficulty in

connecting with cross-ethnic peers throughout work experiences was associated with an enhanced sense of ethnic attachment, expressed in the renewed wish to explore and improve the representation of the Korean community within the Canadian society. Some participants were also able to further explore their ethnic identity by choosing to return to Korea, albeit temporarily, for work opportunities. As a result, enhanced levels of understanding of Korean culture and language proficiency, as well as perceived language and cultural barriers stemming from interactions with local Koreans and self, affected their ethnic/national attachment and self-perceptions. Therefore, through the sphere of work, the participants were exposed to wider peer groups and communities encompassing both the ethnic and national cultures for further in- and out-group definitions and comparisons—which enabled them to achieve a better understanding of their identity throughout their adulthood.

In line with previous literature, the virtual sphere also significantly enhanced the participants' links with the ethnic and national cultures and communities and contributed to shaping identities that can be described as hybrid and transnational (Elias & Lemish, 2009; K. Yoon, 2017). The findings showed that the kinds of ties that the internet allows individuals to build in relation to ethnic and national identities can be numerous, across cultural, social, and political domains. For example, the use of the participants of communication applications and search platforms related to both the ethnic and mainstream cultures was commonly observed. Using online spaces, they maintained social ties in Korea and Canada and consumed popular culture and media while negotiating identities. In turn, the individuals were able to retain language proficiency and cultural proficiency while negotiating identities. At the time of the interviews, the participants' exploration of the media and communicative tools using the online sphere appeared to be active and hybrid across all domains. Ultimately, the language patterns and cultural behaviours of the participants were significantly shaped by their daily use of the internet, which contributed to shaping both their ethnic and national attachment.

One's media exposure and consumption patterns also seemed to play a powerful role in in- and out-group perceptions and his or her self-perceptions (DeFleur & DeFleur, 1967; Jeon, 2012; O'Guinn et al., 1985; J.-S. Park, 2004; Pyke, 2000; Ramasubramanian et al., 2017; Y. Yi, 2009; K. Yoon, 2022). The findings showed that the media had a significant impact on both ethnic and national in-group identification and pride of the sample. On the one hand, imagination of Korea was significantly facilitated by one's consumption of Korean pop culture. Simultaneously, ethnic pride was positively affected in most cases, linked with increasing levels

of global popularity of Korean pop culture. The resulting positive sentiments toward the Korean group identity seemed to enhance the self-concept of many participants related to their in-group identification with the Korean identity. On the other hand, the media coverage of Asian hate that arose during the pandemic was referenced numerous times, which mostly contributed to enhanced national identity of Canada—which many perceived as a good place to live, less affected by racism. Such perceptions were correlated with Canadian multiculturalism and the national pride that many participants associated with their group identity as Canadian. On the other hand, the prevalence of the American pop culture projected through the mainstream media also made some participants to feel that there was a distinct Canadian cultural identity.

Beyond exploring life experiences of the participants across different spheres of life, inquiring into their notion of home proved to be a useful approach to examining the salience of ethnic and national attachment that they felt. According to Henry P. H. Chow (2007), feeling at home is a positive indicator of an immigrant's sense of belonging to and psychological well-being within the host society. Therefore, the fact that all participants identified Canada as home—mostly based on life experiences encountered throughout the time spent in Canada and the resulting sense of comfort—can be interpreted as a positive indicator of their national attachment. On the other hand, few participants continued to associate the notion of home with Korea, at least partially, grounded to their childhood experiences and extended family. The findings thus revealed the overall increased levels of dissociation between the participants and their natal, so-called *homeland* over time (Espiritu, 2003; Rumbaut, 2005). Therefore, it is likely that time spent in Canada is positively correlated with national attachment and negatively correlated with ethnic attachment to a certain extent—that is to say, the retained ethnic identity reflected in the narratives of the participants appeared to be increasingly symbolic over time, adopted and claimed in elements that they deemed were necessary, depending on situations.

The fact that all participants identified Canada as home was moreover significant, because they also acknowledged that their lives in Canada were not perfect. Firstly, racial stereotypes and discrimination—including Asian hate, White Canadian stereotype, and/or the perceived distance between self and White Canadians—remained persistent. Secondly, vibrant ethnic and cultural communities, which multiculturalism has shaped, rendered it difficult for some to identify the distinct and strong national culture and identity of Canada they could identify with. Thirdly, limited levels of bilingualism and biculturalism, as well as self-perceived integration on civic, social, and cultural levels, made some participants feel limited in their

choices of adhering to social groups and led them to question their self-identity. Nonetheless, all participants were overall happy with their lives, feeling comfortable in Canada and satisfied with their self-identity as a 1.5-generation Korean immigrant. As well, although some associated the multicultural reality in Canada with the lack of national pride and identity, many held overall positive perceptions of multiculturalism and associated it with the core of the national culture, pride, and part of the national identity that they could identify with, at the least.

Based on constant in- and out-group definitions and comparisons to self throughout the journey of navigating between the two cultures, all participants were able to claim a self-identity. The findings reflected both symmetrical and asymmetrical types of interfaces between ethnic and national attachment. Furthermore, most perceived their achieved identity positively, albeit some discomfort/uncertainty that surround their understanding of self-identity. There were only few participants who remained undecided on how to interpret and resolve their (partial) cultural and social affiliations in relation to their self-definitions.

The findings also showed that cultural elements provided individuals with tools to utilize when adhering to social groups, and the social group memberships which were granted helped shaping their self-identity. Only if the qualities related to self-identities of the participants were overall aligned with those related to the perceived ethnic/national group identities, they were able to claim the group identity as the self-identity. Successful exploration of peer groups was positively associated with self-confidence.

In the case of the 1.5-generation participants, the Korean Canadian identity was the prevalent self-identity. However, due to such a wide range of experiences and sentiments that are associated with identity journeys of the participants, it seems impossible to provide a narrow definition that would adequately represent this hybrid identity. Rather, acknowledging the sense of dual, mixed identity as the core constituent of the hybrid, Korean Canadian identity appears most suitable. First and foremost, it is evident that the Korean Canadian identity often corresponds to an individual's sense of connection with the perceived meaning of both ethnic identity (e.g. cultural familiarity facilitated through Korean upbringing and co-ethnic peer socialization) and national identity (e.g. mostly centered around one's understanding of the Canadian culture, such as multiculturalism, paired with the White Canadian stereotype). At the same time, it should not be overlooked that the identity label may also be linked with the uncertainty for some, associated with their in-betweenness. Therefore, the identity label represents a means of self-distinction, as well as claiming a group identity—centered around

self-perceived bicultural and bicultural identities and/or persisting ascribed identity shaped by out-group perceptions.

Moreover, what can be noted is the nature of the *Korean* identity that is embedded in the Korean Canadian identity. As mentioned earlier, in the case of the 1.5 generation, the findings suggest that the ethnic identity is likely to become increasingly symbolic over time (Alba, 1990; L. W. Roberts & Clifton, 1982; Waters, 1990). Indeed, the findings mirrored the previous research findings: independent of social structures that impose conformity to community standards, *feeling* ethnic was often described across the narratives, rather than traditional elements of the retained ethnic identity. Hence, while the ethnic identity may be imposed by out-group perceptions (J. N. Martin & Nakayama, 2010), it can also be act as an added layer to one's personal identity—enriching his or her individuality and/or representing his or her in-group identification.

Various contextual experiences and perceived identities render the Korean Canadian identity as a sociocultural construct. It is filled with meaningful ideologies and self-perceptions that are imagined in the minds of individuals, which are formed and negotiated throughout time. Thus, regardless of how closely one relates to his or her ethnic and national identities, the Korean Canadian identity provides individuals with a safe space in which they are able to express their sense of belonging to socio-cultural groups—either related to the ethnic or national identity or both—to varying degrees.

This study has its limits. First and foremost, the focus group utilized in this study was small and narrow: the participants were brought together by common profile traits related to their ethnic background and 1.5-generation identity, and most participants were raised in the same suburban areas in Richmond Hill and Thornhill. Therefore, it must be noted that the frequency of the responses and the narratives that expressed individual opinions may not be representative of the overall body of Korean Canadians. Furthermore, owing to the contextual nature of identity, this study was not focused on inquiring into the *exactitude* of, but rather, exploring *subjective* narratives of events, experiences, sociocultural ties, and language proficiencies that the participants perceived as important parts of their identity journeys. In other words, the significance of this study has less to do with providing an exhaustive list and analysis of influencing factors that shape one's identity; rather, it has more to do with demonstrating an active interplay between a diverse range of elements related to the ethnic and national identities that shape one's self-identity. In this respect, despite its limits, this study

brings to light an in-depth exploration of the *content* and *process* of identity journeys, as narrated by the sample. It also highlights that the notion of identity, especially in the case of the 1.5 generation, is complex, contextual, and fluid.

Finally, the findings suggest the salience of the pan-Asian identity, which seems to be mostly developed by co-racial identification and peer socialization tendencies, as well as some of the recent global phenomena (e.g. popularity of Korean pop culture and Asian hate). In fact, there was a strong sense of co-racial identification among the participants, due to the cultural similarity, shared experiences, and networks. Indeed, the pan-Asian identity has been gaining a growing level of attention in previous literature, especially in the Asian American literature (Benson & Rahman, 2007; Espiritu, 1992; L. Kuo et al., 2020). Thus, exploring the interplay between the pan-Asian, ethnic, and national identities, as well as the influence of the Asian Canadian identity on identity journeys and outcomes of individuals, may be useful in further understanding the complex, hybrid identity constructs that are present in Canada.



## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**



## GENERAL CONCLUSION

Following the ongoing shifting of population due to global migration, the notion of identity, which used to be grounded to national borders and boundaries, has become extremely complex and hybrid (Alba, 1990; Winder, 2004). Owing to the vibrant level of ethnic diversity, an ample pool of group identities that constitute the Canadian society are guaranteed, which made Canada an intriguing model of study. Moreover, the Korean Canadian identity seemed to be an adequate example of many hybrid identities that are present within the multicultural society of Canada.

Before taking on the challenge of exploring the Korean Canadian identity, some background context needed to be provided. Therefore, as presented in Part 1, various push and pull factors between Korea and Canada that dictated the migration patterns throughout time were identified, related to political, social, and economic factors, as well as the government relations between the two countries. In a more recent context, the Canadian government linked immigration and multiculturalism to citizenship (Wayland, 1997), opening its doors to migrants arriving from all corners of the world, while simultaneously promoting the national identity through multiculturalist ideals; and the Korean parents' wish to provide the children with English-spoken, better educational settings has driven Korean migrants to leave the homeland as voluntary, education migrants (Cho, 2017; E. Lee & Johnstone, 2014; J.-K. Park, 2009; Rüdiger, 2019; I.-J. Yoon, 2012). As a result of the migration patterns from Korea to Canada in the last decades, Korean immigrants currently represent the seventh-largest non-European group in Canada, despite being one of the more recent immigrant groups in the country (Cobb, 2006; Colin, 2001).

As highlighted in previous sociopsychological literature, the complex phenomenon of identity involves in- and out-group perceptions and self-comparisons (Cooley, 1902; Erikson, 1994; J. N. Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Spreckels & Kotthoff, 2009; Tatum, 2000). Hence, the in- and out-group identities and relevant qualities were explored within the framework of ethnic and national identities. Self-identification was used as a means of inquiring into one's self-identities (Howard-Hassmann, 1999; Park, 1999; Phinney, 1990; Turner et al., 1987). As well, generational analysis was adopted as part of the methodology to help shaping the overall research project.

As discussed in Part 2, questionnaire surveys provided valuable insights into ethnic salience (i.e. one's sociocultural ties and resulting sense of attachment to the ethnic identity) in the case of Korean immigrants in Toronto, across the first, 1.5, and second generation. The generational impact on ethnic salience was striking in linguistic, social, and cultural profiles of the participants, and in-betweenness of the 1.5 generation was highlighted in the findings. At the same time, it appeared evident that all three generations maintained various ties (i.e. linguistic, sociocultural, transnational) with the ethnic identity. The findings from this part of the study revealed that the Korean Canadian identity can be seen as a group identity that brings together individuals within an ethnic group—regardless of generational differences.

Then, Part 3 shared the findings based on the 1.5 generation, to provide an in-depth exploration of their identity negotiation in-between the ethnic and national cultures and identities. What stood out was the intricate and complex process of developing in- and out-group perceptions and comparing and contrasting groups and self. Feeling in-between ethnic and national groups within the cultural, social, and societal context appeared to be a common memory and experience related to identity journeys of the participants that contributed to shaping their 1.5- and Korean Canadian identities. Overall, one's family and peer groups, as well as language proficiency, cultural understanding, life experiences, and time spent in Canada, seemed to be the most influential factors that affected ethnic and national attachment of the participants. The resulting Korean Canadian identity was, in most cases, reflective of the in-betweenness and/or duality, and, in some cases, of the persisting out-group perceptions of their minority status.

Before concluding, the primary research questions can be revisited:

- What does it mean to be Korean Canadian? What kinds of experiences shape one to feel Korean Canadian?

As an identity construct, the Korean Canadian identity can be defined by various sociocultural factors that are mixed in varying types of interfaces. As an example of diverse hybrid identities that have emerged in the modern-day context of the Canadian population, it provides individuals with an *umbrella* identity label that can be claimed, regardless of their varying degrees of ethnic and national attachment and self-perceived integration within the mainstream society. The findings of this study demonstrated that it is highly fluid and can therefore be claimed as a personal, social, cultural, group identity. As much as it can be associated with both positive and negative sentiments linked with self-perceptions (i.e. related

to self-perceived levels of biculturalism and bilingualism), it can also be imposed, to varying extents (e.g. out-group perceptions).

When it comes to the Korean Canadian *group* identity, the generational shift that appears to be taking place within the community of Korean immigrants is both interesting and intriguing. As offspring generations, such as the 1.5 and second generation, enter adulthood and become working members of the society, there seem to be both the need and desire to promote a representation of the group that is adequately reflective of their levels of integration and needs—which tend to significantly differ from that of the first generation. Such a sense of motivation as a group is likely to help bringing Korean Canadians together furthermore. Therefore, overall, it can be argued that the Korean Canadian identity is largely based on varying degrees of bicultural experiences and affiliations, situated in-between the two cultures and social groups.

- What is *Canadian* multiculturalism, and how is it lived and perceived by Korean immigrants?

Multicultural Canada, as it is known today, is the representation of the demographic and social realities, as well as the political and cultural ideologies, which have been actively promoted by the state since the adoption of the Multiculturalism Policy in 1971 (Dewing, 2009). Indeed, the Canadian citizenship has been expected to become a binding factor that forms a shared Canadian identity, in the backdrop of diversity representing the Canadian society. Nevertheless, discussing Canadian identity has always been a complicated matter: firstly, it remains fragmented between First Nations, francophones, and ethnic minorities; secondly, the White Canadian history between the British and French, which represents the founding history of Canada, continues to shape the stereotypical White Canadian stereotype to this day; thirdly, the cultural similarities that it shares with the United States has a significantly negative impact on the nationhood of Canada (Meisel, 1986; K. Yoon, 2017); and, lastly, the *core* Canadian values, such as tolerance and support for diversity, which remain abstract, makes it hard to form a strong common identity that can be embraced by diverse populations in Canada (Wayland, 1997, p. 56).

In addition, the findings shed light on the paradoxical reality of Canadian multiculturalism, in the lived experiences and resulting perceptions of the sample in the qualitative part of the study. Interestingly, the cultural characteristics of Canadians (e.g. being nice, friendly, and politically correct and neutral) could be associated with the inclusive

character that is projected through Canadian multiculturalist ideals. The paradoxical reality seemed to lay in the fact that, despite the national ideology of celebrating the diversity, due to the diverse ethnic and racial groups within the society and increasing levels of support that PC culture has been gaining, some participants felt that there was little room for open discussion in which the public could engage in efficiently addressing the differences that need attention. The politically neutral stance that the state has been keeping also seems to have led to mixed opinions that the peaceful and peace-making image associated with Canada was beneficial for Canadian nationalism, and that meek political actions that it engages in fails to shape a strong Canadian identity. In addition, the cultural diversity and personal identity that are promoted through multiculturalism, along with the salient impact of American culture on Canadian culture, significantly affected the national identification of many participants.

At the same time, the findings also demonstrated that multiculturalism is indeed a useful tool as a national symbol that shaped most participants' perceptions of the Canadian national culture and identity. Not only did it seem to positively depict national identification in the minds of many participants, but it also promoted a sense of pride and helped them live through experiences of racial discrimination—especially during the pandemic—throughout their lives in Canada. Therefore, the discussions surrounding the notion of Canadian multiculturalism continues to be varied and contrasting. Nevertheless, it seems evident that it has become a key element related to the Canadian identity that needs to be addressed, and its salience will continue to rise over time.

- What is the modern-day multicultural, English-speaking Canadian identity?

In respect to Anderson's (2006) definition of the nation as an imagined community, examining how the Canadian identity was imagined in the minds of Korean Canadians was deemed a useful attempt at shedding light on the national identity of Canada. The findings affirmed that, on the one hand, multiculturalism was an important element of the English-speaking Canadian identity that is promoted by the state and reinforced by the media, which appeared to have helped shaping the national identity that the participants could embrace. At the same time, some of the concerns raised in how Canadian multiculturalism is being managed could not be overlooked. Thus, one's dynamic processes of negotiating identities within the multicultural Canadian society can be seen as the *process*, and the resulting attention and sensitivity towards the state of Canadian multiculturalism can be seen as the *content*, of this

identity label. Personal identification with multiculturalism as a national symbol and cultural element can also be seen as a quality that is distinctive to the Canadian identity.

Despite the successes of multiculturalism in the nation-building project of Canada, the modern-day English-speaking Canadian identity remains interwoven, at least partially, with the White Canadian stereotype. Hence, the value placed on multiculturalism seems to have a positive impact on binding individuals together within the ethnoculturally diverse society and is therefore probably an effective means to counter with the persisting White Canadian stereotype. Simultaneously, as the waves of immigrants continue to arrive in Canada in the upcoming years, non-White, English-speaking Canadians—*ethnic Canadians*, as Howard-Hassmann (1999) named them—are likely to have increasing levels of presence within the mainstream society. Therefore, to engage them as active citizens and promote their representation, further efforts should be made at the institutional level.

As indicated in previous literature, it is indeed impossible to ascribe a single identity to a nation like Canada, whose diverse populations are encouraged to keep their ethnic colours intact (Howard-Hassmann, 1999; Wayland, 1997). Thus, studying hybrid identities such as Korean Canadian is interesting, as it enriches the nation-building narratives that surround the theme of Canadian multiculturalism. Simultaneously, it sheds light on various interfaces of ethnic and national attachment encompassing the Korean and Canadian identities, which contribute to self-identification of individuals. Studying hybrid identities is moreover important, because it helps bringing further attention to diverse identity constructs that have become a salient part of the Canadian identity—as much as the identities related to French-speaking Canadians, White Canadians, or Aboriginals, which have historically been closely associated with the national identity. Future research should be aimed at investigating how the narratives of individuals that claim diverse hybrid Canadian identities contribute to the nationhood of Canada, and in what ways their national identification can be better facilitated.

To conclude, this study was intended as the beginning of a long-term research project based on the theme of identity, involving both individual self- and group identities within the societal/national context in Canada. The hybridity that can be inherent in self-identities of individuals will be a useful compass that will guide me through my research journey. Diverse contributing factors to identity constructs across bi- and multi-lingual and cultural contexts will continue to form the core of my research interests.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

### PART 2 – QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

#### Information Notice

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your interest in my research about the identity negotiation of Korean Canadians in Toronto, Canada.

My name is Lindsey Paek, and I am a PhD student at the Université Bordeaux Montaigne. This survey was prepared to examine the ethnic identity of Korean immigrant generations in Toronto, linked with my dissertation.<sup>128</sup>

If you decide to participate in this survey, you will be using Google Forms to complete the questionnaire. Completing the questionnaire will take between 5-10 minutes. All the questions are indicated in Korean and English, and they are based on your profile (age, sex, length of stay in Canada, and the residence/citizenship status), the motive for immigrating to Canada, and your experiences and thoughts related to the languages and Korean ethnic identity. All responses will be anonymized.

The survey will remain accessible until the targeted number of the participants, 80 per generation, will have been reached. Also, I am looking for 1.5 generation immigrants who can participate in online one-on-one interviews in the future. So please don't hesitate to get in touch with me if you are interested.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Paek

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<sup>128</sup> I initially had planned to examine ethnic salience embedded in the Korean Canadian identity by studying the transnational social identity of Korean immigrant generations and their community within the Canadian multicultural context. However, while the survey was being circulated, I decided to shift the focus of the research from the transnational social identity to a broader conception of identity, based on ethnic and national attachment of individuals across the generations and their imagined qualities of ethnic and national identities. The initial version of the notice described the research project as the following, before it was replaced by the current description in the second paragraph of the notice presented above:

*My name is Lindsey Paek, and I am a PhD student working on the dissertation based on the identity negotiation of Korean immigrants in Toronto and their contribution to Canadian multiculturalism under the supervision of Professor Lionel Larré in the Cultures and Literature of the English-Spoken World/Cultures et littératures des mondes anglophones (CLIMAS) research laboratory at Université Bordeaux Montaigne. This survey was prepared to examine the ethnic identity of Korean immigrant generations in Toronto/저는 Université Bordeaux Montaigne, Cultures and Literature of the English-Spoken World/Cultures et littératures des mondes anglophones (CLIMAS) 연구실에서 Lionel Larré 교수님 지도 아래 박사과정 재학 중인 Lindsey Paek 이라고 합니다. 본 설문조사는 박사학위 논문의 주제인 토론토 한인이민자들의 정체성 협상과 캐나다 다문화주의에 대한 기여에 대해 알아보고자 준비 되었습니다.*

The rest of the information notice and the content of the questionnaire remained unchanged.

## 안내사항

안녕하세요,

저는 Université Bordeaux Montaigne 에서 박사과정에 재학 중인 Lindsey Paek (백지은) 이라고 합니다. 본 설문조사는 박사학위 논문의 주제와 관련된 토론토 한인 이민자 세대들이 지니고 있는 민족 정체성에 대해 알아보기 위하여 준비되었습니다.

귀하께서 이 설문조사에 참여하신다면 구글 폼을 이용해 설문지를 작성하게 될 것입니다. 모든 질문에 답변하는 데에는 약 5-10 분 가량 소요되며, 설문지의 모든 질문은 한국어와 영어로 표기되었으며, 귀하의 프로필 사항 (나이, 성별, 캐나다에서의 거주 기간과 신분), 캐나다로 이민 오게 된 계기, 그리고 언어들과 한민족 정체성에 관련된 귀하의 경험과 의견에 기반을 두고 있습니다. 모든 귀하의 답변은 익명 처리될 것입니다.

각 이민자 세대(1 세, 1.5 세, 2 세)를 대상으로 한 설문지가 준비되어 있으니, 아래 참가 규정과 링크를 참고하여 주시기 바랍니다.

본 설문조사는 목표로 한 세대당 80 명의 참가자들이 참여하였을 때까지 열려 있을 예정입니다. 또한, 후에 있을 온라인 일대일 인터뷰에 참가하실 1.5 세 이민자 분들도 모집하고 있으니 관심 있으신 분들은 연락 부탁드립니다.

본 연구에 관심을 가져주시고 시간을 내어주셔서 감사드립니다.

Lindsey Paek/백지은 드림



## **Eligibility Criteria for Each Generation Group/각 세대 참가자 자격 규정**

### First-generation participant eligibility criteria/1 세대 참가자 자격 규정

To participate in the survey as a first-generation immigrant, the following criteria must apply/1 세대 설문조사에 참여하시기 위해서는 밑의 모든 사항들에 해당하셔야 합니다. 귀하는:

- You were born in Korea and spent your adolescence in Korea/한국에서 태어나 유년기를 보내셨습니다
- Upon immigrating to Canada, you have been residing in Toronto, only/mostly/캐나다로 이민 후 토론토에서만/주로 토론토에서 거주해 오셨습니다

### 1.5-Generation participant eligibility criteria/1.5 세대 참가자 자격 규정

To participate in the survey as a 1.5-generation immigrant, the following criteria must apply/1.5 세대 설문조사에 참여하시기 위해서는 밑의 모든 사항들에 해당하셔야 합니다. 귀하는:

- You were born in Korea and immigrated to Canada when you were a child (this survey is designated for 1.5 generation immigrants who moved to Canada before the age of 13)/한국에서 태어나 어린 나이에 캐나다로 이민 오신 분들 (이 설문조사는 만 13 살 이전에 캐나다로 이민 오신 1.5 세 분들이 참여하실 수 있습니다)
- Both your parents were born in Korea and immigrated to Canada/부모님 두분 모두 한국에서 이민 오셨습니다.
- Upon immigrating to Canada, you have been residing in Toronto, only/mostly/캐나다로 이민 후 토론토에서만/주로 토론토에서 거주하고 계십니다.

### Second-generation participant eligibility criteria/2 세대 참가자 자격 규정

To participate in the survey as a second-generation immigrant, the following criteria must apply/2 세대 설문조사에 참여하시기 위해서는 밑의 모든 사항들에 해당하셔야 합니다. 귀하는:

- Both your parents were born in Korea and immigrated to Canada/부모님 두분 모두 한국에서 이민 오셨습니다.
- You have been residing in Toronto, only/mostly/캐나다로 이민 후 토론토에서만/주로 토론토에서 거주하고 계십니다.

## **Contact Information/연락처 정보**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me/궁금한 점이 있으시면 언제든지 연락 부탁드립니다.

Researcher/연구원: Lindsey Paek/백지은  
lindseyjpaek@gmail.com

Research supervisor/지도교수님: Professor  
Lionel Larré  
lionel.larre@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr

## Questionnaire/설문지

Please indicate your age/만으로 나이가 어떻게 되십니까?

- Under 15/15 세 미만
- 15-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+

What is your sex?/성별을 선택해 주십시오.

- Female/여성
- Male/남성

How long have you been living in Canada?/캐나다에 거주하신 지 얼마나 되셨습니까?

- 1-5 years/1-5 년
- 6-10 years/6-10 년
- 11-15 years/11-15 년
- 16-20 years/16-20 년
- 21 years and more/21 년 이상

What is your status in Canada?/캐나다에서의 거주 신분이 어떻게 되십니까?

- Permanent resident/영주권 취득자
- Canadian citizen/캐나다 시민
- Temporary resident permit (e.g. student/work visa)/체류증 (예: 학생/워크 비자)
- Refugee/난민

(First generation) What was your primary reason for immigrating to Canada?/귀하께서는 캐나다로 이민을 결정하게 된 가장 큰 이유가 무엇입니까?

- Better education opportunities for children (i.e. learning English)/자녀의 교육 (예: 영어교육)
- Learning English for self/자신의 영어 실력 향상
- Job opportunities/구직 기회
- Family reunification/가족 상봉
- For a better way of life/더 나은 생활방식/삶의 질
- Other/기타

(1.5/Second generation) What was your parents' primary reason for immigrating to Canada?/부모님께서 캐나다로 이민을 결정하게 된 가장 큰 이유가 무엇입니까?

- Better education opportunities for children/자녀를 위한 더 나은 교육기회
- Learning English for self/자신의 영어 실력 향상
- Job opportunities/구직 기회
- Family reunification/가족 상봉
- For a better way of life/더 나은 생활방식/삶의 질
- Other/기타
- I don't know/모름

How often do you visit Korea?/한국을 얼마나 자주 방문하십니까?

- Never/전혀 가지 않음
- Rarely/거의 안 감
- Often/regularly (i.e. every 2-3 years)/자주/규칙적으로 (예: 2-3 년 마다)
- Very often (i.e. every year or less)/매우 자주 (예: 매년/미만)

What is the main purpose of your visits to Korea?/한국을 방문하는 가장 큰 이유가 무엇입니까?

- To visit family and friends/가족과 친구들을 방문하기 위해
- Vacation/여행 목적
- Work/일 관련
- Other/기타

How important is it that your (future) children speaks Korean?/(미래) 자녀분이 한국어를 할 줄 아는 것이 얼마나 중요하다고 생각하십니까?

- Very important/매우 중요함
- Important/중요함
- Not so important/그리 중요하지 않음
- Doesn't matter/상관 없음

If it is important that your child speaks Korean, please indicate the reasons why/자녀분이 한국어를 할 줄 아는 것이 중요하다고 생각하신다면 어떤 이유입니까?

On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), how would you evaluate your level of proficiency in written communication in English?/귀하의 서면 형태의 영어 의사소통 능력을 1(낮음)에서 10(높음)까지의 척도로 평가한다면?

On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), how would you evaluate your level of proficiency in oral communication in English?/귀하의 구술 형태의 영어 의사소통 능력을 1(낮음)에서 10(높음)까지의 척도로 평가한다면?

On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), how would you evaluate your level of proficiency in written communication in Korean?/귀하의 서면 형태의 한국어 의사소통 능력을 1(낮음)에서 10(높음)까지의 척도로 평가한다면?

On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest), how would you evaluate your level of proficiency in oral communication in Korean?/귀하의 구술 형태의 한국어 의사소통 능력을 1(낮음)에서 10(높음)까지의 척도로 평가한다면?

Which language do you use to communicate with your family?/귀하는 어느 언어로 가족과 소통하십니까?

- Korean/한국어
- English/영어
- Both/둘 다

If employed, which language do you use at work?/직장이 있으신 경우 귀하는 직장에서 어느 언어를 사용하십니까?

- Korean/한국어
- English/영어
- Both/둘 다

Which language do you mostly use to communicate with your friends?/귀하는 어느 언어로 친구들과 주로 소통하십니까?

- Korean/한국어
- English/영어
- Both/둘 다

Your friend group(s) is/are mostly:/귀하의 친구들을 주로 어떻게 분류하시겠습니까?

- Korean immigrants/Canadians of Korean origin/한인 이민자들/한국 출신 캐나다인들
- Canadians of non-Korean origin/한인 이민자를 제외한 캐나다인들
- Koreans residing in Korea/한국에 살고 있는 한국인들
- A mix of Canadians of Korean and non-Korean origins/한인 이민자들과 캐나다인들

If you have friends who are Korean immigrants/Canadians of Korean origin in Canada, please indicate the following:/캐나다에 한인 이민자들/한국 출신 캐나다인 친구가 있다면 해당되는 사항을 선택하여 주십시오:

- Mostly first-generation Korean immigrants/주로 1 세 한인 이민자들
- Mostly 1.5-generation Korean immigrants/주로 1.5 세 한인 이민자들
- Mostly Second-generation Korean immigrants/주로 2 세 한인 이민자들

What makes up part of your life in Toronto? Please check all that applies in the following list, even those that you can identify with based on your past experiences/다음 사항 중 귀하의 토론토에서의 생활에 연관되는 것들을 모두 체크해주시시오 (옛 경험 포함).

- Cultural practices at home (e.g. eating Korean food, practicing Korean traditions etc.)/집에서의 문화적 식별 (예: 한국음식 소비, 한국 전통 등)
- Attending a Korean church/한인 교회에 다닌 경험
- Consumption of Korean popular culture (e.g. K-pop, Korean films, dramas, entertainment shows etc.)/한국 대중문화 소비 (예: K-pop, 한국 영화, 드라마, 예능 프로그램 등)
- Cultural consumption in Koreatown (e.g. Korean restaurants, karaokes, internet cafes etc.)/코리아타운에서의 문화 소비 (예: 한국 식당, 노래방, PC 방 등)
- Following the news in Korea/한국 뉴스 소비
- Being employed in a Korean business/한인 비즈니스에 근무
- Running a business associated with Korean goods and services related to Korea/한국에 관련되거나 한인을 위한 상품/서비스를 제공하는 비즈니스 운영
- Other/기타
- None of these applies to me/해당되는 사항 없음

Do you feel proud to be of Korean origin?/자신의 한국 혈통에 대해 자랑스럽게 생각하십니까?/

- Yes/예
- No/아니오
- Indifferent/그저 그럼

How would you identify yourself?/자신을 어떻게 식별하시겠습니까?

- Korean/한국인
- Canadian/캐네디언
- Korean Canadian/코리안 캐네디언
- I am unable to respond/대답할 수 없음

Do you have any other thoughts or comments?/마지막으로 하시고 싶은 말씀을 적어주시시오.

## APPENDIX B

### PART 3 – INTERVIEW

#### Recruitment Letter

Dear Participant,

My name is Lindsey Paek, a PhD student working on a dissertation based on the identity negotiation of Korean immigrants in Toronto, under the supervision of Professor Lionel Larré at the CLIMAS research laboratory at the Université Bordeaux Montaigne. Currently, I am recruiting 1.5-generation participants in Toronto who will take part in one-on-one interviews.

The interview seeks to address the following research questions:

- What memories do 1.5 generation Korean Canadians have of/how do they perceive Korea and Canada?
- For them, what does it mean to be Korean/Canadian/Korean Canadian?
- How do they identify themselves, and what in what ways is their identity significant?

To participate, the participant must be at least 18 years of age, must have been born in Korea and immigrated to Canada during childhood, before age 13, and identify him/herself as 1.5 generation. As well, the parents of the participant must be of Korean origin. Participation is voluntary and anonymous, and it involves filling out the pre-interview questionnaire and participating in an interview on Zoom, which will take between 90-120. All interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Paek  
lindseyjpaek@gmail.com

Research supervisor: Professor Lionel Larré  
lionel.larre@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr

## **Consent Form**

Dear Participant,

Before you give your consent to participate in the research, you must be provided with some information. If you agree to participate, please read the following and provide your signature at the end of the form.

### Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in this interview, all of the following requirements must apply to you:

- You were born in South Korea;
- Both your parents are of Korean origin;
- You immigrated to Canada during your childhood, before age 13;
- You reside in Toronto, Canada;
- You are at least 18 years of age; and
- You identify as a 1.5-generation immigrant.

### Purpose

The purpose of the interview is to explore the identity negotiation of 1.5 generation Korean immigrants who reside in Toronto, Canada. This qualitative study is part of the larger research project, which inquires into the identity journey of Korean immigrants in Canada and the Canadian national identity which is becoming increasingly hybrid.

### Procedure

The participant will be asked to fill out a general profile questionnaire and engaged in an one-on-one interview which will last between 90 to 120 minutes. The interview will be held in the language of the choice of the participant: English, Korean, or both. During the interview, the participant will be asked questions based on a variety of topics related to his or her life in Canada as a 1.5 generation immigrant (e.g. experiences related to family, school, Korean community, and the overall mainstream society, as well as the resulting sense of self). After the interview is finished, and the information is processed, there could be a couple of follow-up questions asked to the participant.

The interview will be audio-recorded using Zoom and a voice recorder, and a transcript will be produced. The transcript of the interview will be analyzed by the researcher and its access will be limited to the researcher and the jury members of the dissertation defence, only. The interview transcript or extracts may be used in further research and academic publications. Any summary interview content or direct quotations from the interview will be anonymized so that the participant cannot be identified (i.e. a made-up name (pseudonym) will be used), and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify the participant is not revealed.

By signing this form, I agree that:

- I am voluntarily taking part in this interview. I understand that I don't have to take part and I can stop the interview at any time;
- The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above;
- I do not expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation;

- I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality; and
- I have been able to ask questions, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

Name of the Participant:

Signature of the Participant & Date:

Signature of the Researcher & Date:

### Contact information

If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Researcher: Lindsey Paek  
lindseyjpaek@gmail.com

Research supervisor: Professor Lionel Larré  
lionel.larre@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr



## 참가자 모집 공고

안녕하세요,

제 이름은 Lindsey Paek(백지은)이고 Université Bordeaux Montaigne CLIMAS 연구실에서 Lionel Larré 교수님 지도 하에 토론토 거주 한인 이민자들의 정체성 협상에 관한 박사학위 논문을 준비중입니다. 현재 저는 개인 인터뷰를 진행하기 위해 토론토에 거주중인 1.5 세 이민자 참가자를 모집하고 있습니다.

인터뷰는 다음 질문들에 기반을 두고 있습니다:

- 1.5 세 한인 이민자들은 한국과 캐나다에 대한 어떤 기억을 가지고 있으며 두 나라를 어떻게 인식하고 있는가?
- 그들에게 한국인/캐나다인/Korean Canadian 으로서의 정체성은 어떤 의미를 가지고 있는가?
- 그들은 자신을 어떻게 인식하며 그들의 정체성은 어떤 의미로 중요해지는가?

인터뷰에 참가하기 위해서는 만 18 살 이상이어야 하며, 유년기, 만 13 세 이전에 캐나다로 이민을 오신 한국 태생에 자기 자신을 1.5 세로 인식하고 있으셔야 하고, 부모님 두 분이 한국인이셔야 합니다. 본 인터뷰는 자발적 참여로 이루어지며 이에 관련된 모든 정보와 자료는 익명처리 될 것입니다. 또한 인터뷰는 간단한 설문지 작성과 줌(Zoom)을 이용한 약 90-120 분의 개인 인터뷰로 구성되어 있습니다. 모든 인터뷰는 녹음 될 것이며 글로 기록될 것입니다.

본 연구에 관심을 가져주시고 시간을 내어주셔서 감사드립니다. 궁금한 점이 있으시면 언제든지 연락 부탁드립니다.

Lindsey Paek/백지은 드림  
lindseyjpaek@gmail.com

Research supervisor: Professor Lionel Larré  
lionel.larre@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr

## 연구 참여 동의서

안녕하세요,

참여에 동의하시기 전에 연구에 관하여 다음의 몇가지 사항을 안내드려야 합니다. 아래의 설명을 읽어 보신 후 연구에 참여를 원하시면 본 양식에 서명하여 주십시오.

### 자격 규정

이 인터뷰에 참여하시기 위해서는 밑의 모든 사항들에 해당하셔야 합니다. 귀하는:

- 한국에서 태어나셨습니다;
- 부모님 두분 다 한국인이십니다;
- 유년기, 만 13 세 이전에 캐나다로 이민을 오셨습니다;
- 캐나다 토론토에 거주 중이십니다;
- 만 18 세 이상이십니다; 그리고
- 1.5 세 이민자로 자신을 인식하십니다.

### 연구 목적

이 인터뷰의 목적은 토론토, 캐나다에 거주 중인 한인 1.5 세 이민자들의 정체성 협상을 분석하고, 더 나아가 본 연구를 통해 점점 더 혼성화 되어가고 있는 캐네디언 정체성에 대해 알아보고자 함에 있습니다.

### 인터뷰 참여 절차

참가자는 기본 프로필 설문지를 작성하고 줌(Zoom)을 이용한 90-120 분의 개인 인터뷰에 참여하게 될 것 입니다. 인터뷰는 참가자가 선택한 언어(한국어/영어/둘 다)로 진행이 될 것 입니다. 인터뷰를 통해서 참가자는 1.5 세 이민자로서 경험해온 삶에 관련된 다양한 주제에 관한 질문들에 답변하게 될 것 입니다 (예:집, 학교, 한인 커뮤니티, 그리고 주류사회를 통해 얻은 경험들, 그에 관련된 자신의 정체성). 인터뷰가 완료된 후, 자료 정리를 통해 몇 후속 질문이 발생할 수 있습니다.

인터뷰는 줌(Zoom)과 음성 기록 장치를 통해 녹음될 것이며 글로 기록될 것이고, 인터뷰 녹취록을 접근할 수 있는 권한은 연구원과 논문 심사 위원에게 제한됩니다. 인터뷰 녹취록 또는 발췌문은 추가 연구 및 학술 출판물에 사용될 수 있습니다. 요약된 인터뷰 내용이나 인터뷰에서 직접 인용한 내용은 참가자의 신원 보호를 위해 익명화 될 것이며 (예 : 가명 사용), 인터뷰에서 참가자를 식별할 수 있는 다른 정보가 공개되지 않도록 주의를 기울일 것 입니다.

이 문서에 서명하시면 귀하는 다음 사항들에 대해 동의한 것으로 간주됩니다:

- 이 연구에 대한 귀하의 참여는 자발적이며, 귀하가 이 연구에 대한 참여를 거부하거나, 또는 언제든지 그만 두실 수 있습니다;
- 전사된 인터뷰 또는 발췌문은 위에서 설명한 대로 사용될 수 있습니다;
- 이 연구에 참여에 대한 혜택이나 지불금을 받을 것으로 기대하지 않습니다;
- 귀하는 인터뷰 녹취록 사본을 요청할 수 있으며 기밀 유지의 효과를 보장하기 위해 필요하다고 생각되는 내용을 수정할 수 있습니다; 그리고
- 귀하는 이 연구에 대해 질문을 할 수 있었고, 앞으로 가질 수 있는 질문에 대해 연구자에게 자유롭게 연락할 수 있음을 이해합니다.

참여자 이름:

참여자 서명 & 날짜:

연구자 서명 & 날짜

#### 연락처 정보

이 연구에 대한 추가 질문이나 우려 사항이 있는 경우 다음으로 연락해 주십시오.

연구원: Lindsey Paek/백지은  
lindseyjpaek@gmail.com

지도교수님: Professor Lionel Larré  
lionel.larre@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr

## Interview Opening Script

Hi [name of the participant], thank you for agreeing to participate in my study and for meeting with me today. As indicated in the recruitment letter, this interview will be based on your experiences as a 1.5-generation Korean immigrant in Toronto. Globally, we will be discussing your life experiences and related thoughts, so please keep in mind that there is no right or wrong answer.

To introduce myself, I am also a 1.5-generation Korean Canadian: I moved to Toronto when I was ten and lived there until I moved to France at the age of 23. As it has been about 9 years since I left Canada, there are gaps to fill in my research about life in Canada as a 1.5-generation Korean Canadian. So thank you for joining me and becoming my co-partner in this study.

You have indicated that you prefer participating in the interview using English; nevertheless, please keep in mind that you are welcome to use whichever language to express how you feel in responding to the questions.

[or: You have indicated that you prefer participating in the interview using a mix of English and Korean. Please keep in mind that you are welcome to use whichever language to express how you feel in responding to the questions.]

This interview will take approximately 90-120 minutes and it can be carried out in one session or two separate sessions. Please take your time if needed and don't hesitate to let me know if you wish to take a break and come back to it later.

## 인터뷰 오프닝 대본

안녕하세요 [참가자 이름]님. 이 인터뷰에 참여해 주셔서 감사합니다. 모집 공고에 명시된 대로 이 인터뷰는 귀하의 토론토 거주중인 한인 1.5 세 이민자로서 겪은 경험들에 기반을 두고 있습니다. 전반적으로 귀하가 겪은 전반적인 경험들과 그에 관한 귀하의 생각을 논의할 예정이니 옳고 그른 답은 없다는 점을 유념하시기 바랍니다.

저에 대해 소개 드리자면, 저 또한 1.5 세 코리안 캐네디언입니다. 열 살에 이민을 와서 스물두 살까지 토론토에서 살았었고, 프랑스로 오기 위해 캐나다를 떠난지 9 년 정도의 시간이 지났기 때문에 제 연구에는 1.5 세 코리안 캐네디언으로서의 삶에 대한 채워야 할 많은 공백이 있습니다. 그러므로 이 연구에 있어 저의 파트너가 되어 주셔서 다시 한번 감사드립니다.

귀하는 한국어로 인터뷰에 참여하는 것을 선호한다고 의사를 표하셨지만 인터뷰 도중 언제라도 질문에 답하실 때 편하신 대로 어느 언어든지 사용하실 수 있습니다.

이 인터뷰는 약 90-120 분정도 소요되며 한 세션 또는 두 개의 개별 세션으로 진행할 수 있습니다. 여유를 가지고 각 문제에 답을 주셔도 되고 인터뷰 도중 휴식이 필요하시다면 주저하지 말고 알려주세요.

**Pre-Interview Questionnaire/기본 프로필 설문지**

Please fill out the following table/다음 표를 작성해주세요.

Name/성명	
Sex/성별	
Age/나이	
Occupation/직업	
Residency status (e.g. citizen)/거주 신분 (예: 시민권자)	
Length of residence in Canada/캐나다 거주 기간	
Language(s) you speak/구사 가능한 언어(들)	
Highest level of education completed & name of the degree/최종 학력 및 학위명	
Preferred language to conduct the interview in (English, Korean, or mixed)/인터뷰 진행에 있어 선호하는 언어 (영어, 한국어, 둘 다 섞어서)	
On a scale of 1 (weakest) to 10 (highest), how would you evaluate your level of proficiency in written/oral communication in Korean?/귀하의 서면/구두 형태의 한국어 의사소통 능력을 1(낮음)에서 10(높음)까지의 척도로 평가한다면?	Written/문자 (쓰기 & 읽기):  Oral/구두 (듣기 & 말하기):
On a scale of 1 (weakest) to 10 (highest), how would you evaluate your level of proficiency in written/oral communication in English?/귀하의 서면/구두 형태의 영어 의사소통 능력을 1(낮음)에서 10(높음)까지의 척도로 평가한다면?	Written/문자 (쓰기 & 읽기):  Oral/구두 (듣기 & 말하기):

## Interview Guide

### Arriving and settling in Canada/캐나다에 도착하고 적응기에 대한 기억

Why did your family decide to immigrate? Why did they choose Canada? 귀하의 가족이 이민을 결정한 이유는 무엇인가요? 캐나다를 선택한 이유는?

- What neighbourhood(s) have you lived in in Toronto? What can you tell me about your old and current neighbourhoods?/토론토에서 어떤 동네에 거주하셨나요? 거주하셨던 동네들과 현재 거주중인 동네에 대해 얘기해 주세요.

### School/학교

Tell me about your experience of learning English in school/학교에서 영어를 배운 경험에 대해 얘기해주세요.

Who were you friends with when you were in school in Canada (i.e. elementary, middle, secondary, post-secondary etc.)?/캐나다에서 학교에 다닐 때의 귀하의 친구들에 대해 얘기해주세요 (초/중/고/대학교 등).

- Referring back to the cafeteria in your high school, what were the groups like? Which group(s) did you belong to?/고등학교 카페테리아를 떠올리셨을 때, 거기에 있던 그룹들을 어떻게 기억하시나요? 귀하는 어떤 그룹에 속해 있었나요?

What kind of a student were you, academically and personality-wise? 귀하는 학문적으로나 성격적으로 어떤 학생이었나요?

### Family/가족

In what ways do you think immigration to Canada has affected the life of your family?/캐나다로의 이민이 귀하의 가족의 삶에 어떤 식으로 영향을 미쳤다고 생각하시나요?

- What did your parents do for a living in Korea? What do they do in Canada for a living?/귀하의 부모님은 한국에서 어떤 일을 하셨었고 현재 캐나다에서는 어떤 일을 하고 계신가요?

How do you think your family has influenced your values, beliefs, and your overall sense of identity (e.g. gender roles, cultural/family values, parental expectations etc.)?/귀하의 가족이 귀하의 가치관, 신념 및 전반적인 정체성 형성에 어떠한 영향을 미쳤다고 생각하시나요 (예: 성 역할, 문화적/가족 가치, 부모의 기대 등)?

- Have you experienced any cultural conflicts with your parents?/부모님과 문화적 갈등을 겪은 적이 있으신가요?
- Do you celebrate any of the Korean holidays with your family?/한국의 명절을 가족과 함께 기념하시나요?

### **Korean community/한인 커뮤니티**

How would you describe Korean immigrants in Toronto?/토론토에 거주하는 한인 이민자들을 어떻게 묘사하시겠어요?

In what ways has the Korean community been present your daily life, past and present? (e.g. church, school friends, on/offline networking etc.)?/한인사회 또는 커뮤니티는 귀하의 이전과 현재의 일상 생활에 어떻게 연관되어 있어 왔나요 (예: 한인 교회, 학교 친구들, 온라인 또 오프라인 네트워킹 등)?

- Tell me about your experiences in Koreatown/코리아타운에서의 귀하의 경험에 대해 이야기해 주세요.

What does *Korean community* mean for you? Do you feel part of the Korean community in Toronto?/귀하에게 *한인 사회*란 어떤 의미인가요? 귀하는 토론토 한인 사회에 속해 있다고 느끼시나요?

- In the case of your parents, would you say that they are part of the Korean community and that they identify with Korean immigrants?/귀하의 부모님께서서는 한인 커뮤니티에 속해 있으며 한인 이민자들과 동질감을 느낄 것이라고 생각하시나요?

### **Religion/Korean church/종교/한인 교회/성당**

Are you religious? If so, what religion are you (if Christian: Protestant or Catholic)?/종교를 신뢰하신다면, 독실하게 실천하시나요? 어떤 종교를 믿으시나요 (기독교라면 개신교/가톨릭교)?

- Prior to immigrating to Canada, were you or your family religious?/캐나다 이민 이전에 귀하나 귀하의 가족은 종교를 따르셨나요?

Have you attended a Korean church?/한인 교회나 성당에 다녀보신 적이 있나요?

- (If applicable) Can you describe your experiences of the Korean church? (e.g. sermons/the Mass, the Korean/English Ministry, Korean school, activities etc.)/(해당 되는 경우) 한인 교회/성당에서의 귀하의 경험에 대해 얘기해주세요 (예: 설교나 미사, KM/EM, 한글학교 등).
- Have you attended a non-Korean church? Why/why not?/한인 교회가 아닌 캐나다 교회에 다니신 적이 있으신가요? 그 이유는?

How important is the Korean church for you/for the Korean community?/한인교회나 성당이 귀하에게, 또는 한인 커뮤니티에 얼마나 중요하다고 생각하시나요?

### **Social circles/Friend groups/소셜 서클/친구 그룹**

Who do you socialize with on a regular basis, and what interests do you share with your friends?/귀하는 누구와 자주 만나서 어떤 관심사를 공유하시나요?

- If applicable, what generation are your Korean-origin friends?/한국계 친구가 있으시다면 그들은 어느 세대인가요?

How would you define Canadian mainstream social circles? At any point in your life, have you been part of the mainstream social circles in Canada?/캐네디언 주류 소셜 그룹을 어떻게 정의하시겠어요? 귀하는 캐나다에서 주류 그룹에 속해보신 적이 있으신가요?

### **Languages/언어**

Referring to the score that you gave yourself in the questionnaire to evaluate your level of Korean and English, could you explain to me why you gave such scores?/귀하가 자신의 한국어와 영어 능력을 평가하기 위해 설문지에 스스로 매긴 점수를 참고해서 왜 그런 점수를 주었는지 설명해 주시겠어요? [Remind the participant of the scores]

How would you describe your overall experience of learning English?/귀하가 영어를 익힌 전반적인 경험을 어떻게 묘사하시겠어요?

- What helped you most in learning English?/귀하의 영어 학습에 가장 도움이 된 것은 무엇인가요?
- How did your family help you learn English?/귀하의 가족은 귀하가 영어를 익히는 데 어떻게 도움을 주었나요?

Can you describe the level of English proficiency of your parents? If you have had to help your parents with English, could you provide examples?/귀하의 부모님의 영어 능력 수준을 어떻게 묘사하시겠어요? 영어에 관해 부모님을 도와드려야 했다면 예를 들어 주세요.

- (If applicable) How did you feel about the fact that your parents are not proficient/fluent English speakers?/(해당되는 경우) 귀하의 부모님이 영어를 유창하게 구사하지 못한다는 것에 대해 어떻게 생각하시나요?

Tell me about your maintenance or loss of the Korean language proficiency/귀하의 한국어 능력 유지 또는 상실에 대해 얘기해주세요.

- What has contributed most to your current level of Korean?/현재 귀하의 한국어 수준에 가장 크게 영향을 미친 것은 무엇인가요?
- How did your family help you learn/maintain your level of Korean proficiency?/귀하의 한국어 능력 수준을 높이거나 유지하는 데 귀하의 가족은 어떻게 도움을 주었나요?

Have you ever experienced a language barrier, whether it be related to your Korean or English proficiency? If so, in what kinds of circumstances?/귀하는 한국어나 영어에 관해 언어 장벽을 느낀 적이 있으신가요? 그렇다면 어떤 상황에서?

- If you've experienced a language barrier between you and your parents, how has this affected your relationship with your parents?/귀하의 부모님과 소통 중 언어 장벽을 경험해 본 적이 있으신가요? 그렇다면 언어 장벽이 귀하와 부모님과의 관계에 어떤 영향을 미쳤나요?

Currently in your life, in what contexts do you use English and Korean?/현재 삶에서 귀하는 어떤 상황에서 영어와 한국어를 사용하시나요?



### **The Internet/인터넷**

What apps/websites do you use in your daily life?/귀하는 일상 생활에서 어떤 앱이나 사이트를 사용하시나요?

### **Pop culture and the Media/대중문화와 미디어**

Tell me about your previous and current consumption of the mainstream and Korean pop culture/예전과 현재, 귀하의 주류/한국 대중 문화 소비에 대해 얘기해 주세요.

Do you think that Koreans or Asians have a presence in the mainstream media or pop culture? How are they portrayed?/한국이나 아시아인이 주류 대중문화나 미디어에서 존재감이 있다고 생각하십니까? 그들이 어떻게 비추어지고 있다고 생각하시나요?

### **Interest in current affairs and voting habits/시사에 대한 관심과 투표 습관**

Does your family follow news in Canada/Korea? Do you discuss it at home?/귀하의 가족은 캐나다나 한국의 뉴스를 소비하시나요? 집에서 뉴스에 대해 얘기를 나누시나요?

How interested are you in the affairs of Canada? Do you follow the news/vote in Canada?/귀하는 캐나다 뉴스에 얼마나 관심이 있으신가요? 캐나다 뉴스를 소비하시고 투표 하시나요?

- (If applicable) How do you stay up to date with the news in Canada?/(해당될 경우) 캐나다의 최신 뉴스를 어떻게 접하시나요?

How interested are you in the affairs of Korea? Do you follow the news in Korea?/귀하는 한국 뉴스에 얼마나 관심이 있으신가요? 한국 뉴스를 소비하시나요?

- (If applicable) How do you stay up to date with the news in Korea?/(해당될 경우) 한국의 최신 뉴스를 어떻게 접하시나요?

### **Perceived racial discrimination and multiculturalism/인종차별과 다문화주의**

Have you experienced any racism/discrimination in Canada? How do you think they have affected you?/캐나다에서 인종차별을 경험한 적이 있으신가요? 그렇다면 그런 경험들이 귀하에게 어떤 영향을 끼쳤다고 생각하시나요?

- What is your opinion about the *Stop Asian Hate* movement?/Stop Asian Hate 운동에 대해 어떻게 생각하십니까?
- What stereotypes or bias about Koreans/Asians exist? How do you feel about such perceptions?/한국인이나 동양인에 대해 어떠한 고정관념이나 편견이 있나요? 그러한 인식에 대해 어떻게 생각하십니까?

What does multiculturalism mean for you? Do you think multiculturalism is *working* in Canada? 캐나다의 다문화주의는 귀하에게 어떠한 의미를 가지고 있나요? 캐나다에서 다문화주의는 *효과적*이라고 생각하시나요?

### **Dating/marriage/데이트/결혼**

Is ethnicity or race an important factor for you when considering dating or marriage? How about for your family?/데이트나 결혼을 고려할 때 귀하에게는 민족이나 인종이 중요한 요소인가요? 귀하의 가족에게는 어떤가요?

- What ethnic/racial origin have your past and current partners/girl/boyfriends been? If applicable, how were their origins received by your family?/귀하의 과거 및 현재 남/여자친구는 어떤 민족/인종 출신이었나요? 해당될 경우, 귀하의 가족은 그러한 다른 배경을 어떻게 받아들였나요?
- In your opinion, what are the benefits of having a Korean or an Asian partner? /한국인이나 아시아인과의 파트너 관계의 이점은 무엇이라고 생각하세요?

### **Memories of and connections to Korea/한국에 대한 기억과 연결점**

What memories do you have of Korea?/한국에 대해 어떤 기억이 있으신가요?

What kinds of ties do you still have with Korea?/한국과 어떤 연결점이 남아 있나요?

- How often do you visit Korea?/얼마나 자주 한국을 방문하세요?
- How do you feel when you are in Korea? How about the first time you visited?/한국에 계실 때 기분이 어떠세요? 처음 한국을 방문했을 때는 어떠셨나요?

Have you ever considered relocating to Korea, or would you ever consider it in the future?/한국으로의 이전을 고려해 본 적이나 앞으로 고려할 의향이 있으신가요?

### **Canadianness/캐나다인스러움**

In your opinion, what does it mean to be Canadian?/캐나다인이라는 건 무엇을 의미한다고 생각하세요?

- Does one need the Canadian citizenship to be *Canadian*? (If applicable) How did the obtention of the citizenship make you feel?/캐나다인이 되려면 캐나다 시민권이 필요하다고 생각하세요? (해당되는 경우) 귀하는 귀하의 시민권 취득에 대해 어떻게 생각하셨나요?

Do you consider yourself integrated into the Canadian society?/귀하는 자신이 캐나다 사회에 통합되어 있다고 생각하시나요?

### **Notion of home/홈이란 개념**

Where do you feel at home, between Korea and Canada? Why?/한국과 캐나다 사이, 집이 어디라고 느끼시나요?

- Are you happy with your life in Canada?/캐나다에서의 삶에 대해 만족하고 행복하십니까?

### **Self-identification/자기 식별**

What makes you feel 1.5?/어떤 면에서 귀하는 자신이 1.5 세라고 느끼시나요?

How would you identify yourself? *Korean, Canadian, Korean Canadian*? Why?/귀하는 자신을 어떻게 식별하시나요 (한국인, 캐나다인, Korean Canadian)? 그 이유는?

Do you feel a sense of pride in your Korean and/or Canadian identity? Why/why not?/한국인 또는 캐나다인으로서의 자부심을 느끼시나요? 그 이유는?

How confident do you feel in your identity?/자신의 정체성에 대해 얼마나 확신감을 느끼시나요?

How do you identify with those of Korean origin in Canada? How about with non-Korean Canadians?/귀하는 캐나다 내 한국계 사람들과 어떻게 자신을 동일시할 수 있으신가요? 한국계가 아닌 캐나다인들과는?

How would you say your sense of identity has evolved throughout your life?/삶을 통해 귀하의 정체성은 어떻게 진화했다고 생각하시나요?

## APPENDIX C

### PART 3 – CODING

#### Example of Initial Stage of Coding the Transcribed Data

*Topic section/Theme: Learning English in School*

#### Case 1

Transcribed data	Initial coding
<p>Participant: I think I was young enough that it wasn't really a bother to me, I guess. And I don't remember it at all, pretty much. And I don't think I was like ever stressed about it or anything. And yeah, I think just being that young just helped me like pick up the language really quick. I started like senior kindergarten, so... I don't even remember if I was ever like part of the ESL. I was just absorbing English from my surroundings.</p> <p>[...] When I was younger, so elementary, it was kind of just people in my class. Participant: just like whoever I played with during recess. It was a pretty good mix of like different backgrounds.</p>	<p>Vague memories</p> <p>Learning English = easy and fast</p> <p>Peer group/Participant: Easy to mix, blend in</p>

#### Case 2

Transcribed data	Initial coding
<p>Participant: So when I first came, I remember my first day of school I had: zero idea how to talk to other kids, and I still remember so clearly the first recess, that morning recess that we had. I actually don't remember like leading up to morning recess. I don't remember my teacher introducing me or anything like that, but I remember that first morning recess. I went out, and I was like, I don't know what to do. So I sat at this like bench thing in the playground of my school, and all these like white kids—blond hair, blue eyes, like the kids that I only saw on TV in Korea—came up to me, and they were like saying something to me in English. And I remember getting a gist of what they were saying, but again, remember, I was a really, really shy kid. So I couldn't even like make eye contact with them. And I didn't even like answer them. Like, nothing. I was like silent, I was like literally sitting there, like sitting there, like twiddling my thumbs. So that's like a very distinct, clear memory, to me, and because, like the other kids are like what, nine years old? If the other kid doesn't answer you back after like three questions, you're just going to walk away. So I remember a whole bunch of kids actually approached me. Like I had a class of like really nice kids. And they actually made enough effort to like try and talk to me.</p> <p>Researcher: That's so cute.</p> <p>Participant: I know. It was really sweet. Um, so that was like the first day, but then I remember that I did not ever distinctly struggle with English. I picked up on it really quickly to the point where, like a couple months after coming to Canada, at that school, um, they put me in charge of like MCing for this like medieval night that we had at school. So just by that, I know that I didn't really have a hard time picking up on the language at all. Um, I was still in the ESL class, but then it was just like one period out of the whole entire day. And, yeah, I don't have any memory of struggling with the language, except for that first day.</p> <p>Researcher: How long did you spend in the ESL program, do you remember?</p> <p>Participant: Yes, I spent probably not even the full year. Um, I think I was in it for a couple of months. Um, definitely—so I came here and started grade 4 in September—I know that I wasn't an ESL in grade 5, although I was identified as ESL. So I didn't have like that withdrawn thing from the class...</p> <p>Researcher: Yeah, the pull-out method.</p>	<p>The first day -&gt; felt shy and lost</p> <p>Nice, friendly, approachable peers</p> <p>Learning English -&gt; easy &amp; fast</p> <p>MCed in a school event</p> <p>/</p> <p>The ESL label followed</p>

Participant: Yeah. But I think it was still indicated on my report card, because I remember whenever supply teachers came, I would go up to them and be like, 'hi, I'm ESL.' Yeah, like, just in case they decided to like call me out in class or something. So it was like a pre-emptive, preventative thing that I used to do, up until grade six. But I know I wasn't in ESL class.	Used the label to her advantage so she wouldn't have to participate in class
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### Case 3

Transcribed data	Initial coding
<p>Participant: Learning English? I mean, I do have memories of it, but nothing really speaks out to me, in particular, I think. I mean, to me, it was just a learning process, and there were no inherent difficulties of that no bad memories that I can think of, I think. For the most part, the school system was very accommodating for new English speakers, and I think I learned it quite fast, fast enough to not feel bothered.</p> <p>Researcher: And when you first settled in Toronto, the first I guess elementary school that you were placed in, did they have an ESL program?</p> <p>Participant: Yes, it did.</p> <p>Researcher: I see. And what do you recall from your experiences of being an ESL student?</p> <p>Participant: Again, not much. I just remember that we were placed in this this separate classroom with a couple of students obviously than being ESLs. Yeah nothing more I can recollect, sorry</p> <p>Researcher: What makes you think that your school was very accommodating for English learners?</p> <p>Participant: Um, I think, just again, limited memory here, but I know the teachers were very patient with me. As I would pick up the language, I never felt like I was pressured or made fun of for my lack of literacy. They were there every step along the way, when I was learning to speak. And I think it just, in turn, the peers, they made it very easy for me, as well: there was never an instance where they would make fun of me for not being able to speak English well. Even like at the very early stages of my schooling experience in Canada, I never had trouble making friends. I think that really speaks for a really big part of what I mean by easy transition. Yeah, so, I would say, at the end of the day, it's just the patience of the teachers, along with the openness of my peers.</p>	<p>Learning English-&gt; natural process, fast Mostly positive experience (accommodating school)</p> <p>Vague memories</p> <p>Patient teachers</p> <p>Nice, approachable peers</p> <p>No trouble making friends</p>

### Case 4

Transcribed data	Initial coding
<p>Participant: I was lucky I came at a pretty young age. At first like I didn't know anything—I barely knew the alphabet. And I think I was lucky in a way: the first year I didn't have any Korean friends, and I was basically forced to speak English with non-Korean friends. Like my close friend at the time was Russian, and she was also an immigrant. Her English wasn't as good either, but yeah so we just communicated using like body language, picked up that way, and we also were both ESL. I basically learned English through ESL—like I had an amazing teacher. Yeah, her name was Mrs. []. She was such a nice person, and the way she spoke English, I could read her lips really well. Like, I remember her so well. I'm very grateful to have met her. So anyway, yeah it was easy to learn through her, like we did fun exercises and some reading, writing exercises that helped... And so through that and also hanging out with the Russian friend, as well as like when I was home, like we didn't even really have the entertainment resources we have now, like to watch. So I guess it all lucked out, timing wise. I was forced to watch TV here, which is all in English, and my favourite was Spongebob. So I guess my environment, like I was forced to learn English pretty fast: there was no Korean friends, ESL, and at home, watching like English cartoons... And they always played the same episodes over and over again. So the first time, I wouldn't really know what's going on, but through the repetition, I'd think oh I think that's what that means, and then I just kind of picked it up like that. It was pretty easy. Yeah, after like six months, like, I was</p>	<p>Lucky</p> <p>Became friends with another ESL student, Russian/immigrant background</p> <p>Positive ESL experience (teacher + peer+fun classes)</p> <p>Immersed in the English language</p>



Case 6

Transcribed data	Initial coding
<p>Participant: 아 솔직히 영어 배운거는 많이 없고요 한국에서. 아 여기서 포인트가 많은 게, 제가 처음에 왔을 때, 6학년 끝날때 쯤에 왔어요. 도착해서 Johnsvie Elementary School 에 갔는데, 거기서는 진짜 아무것도 거의 못 배웠다고 하면 될 것 같아요. 좀 거의 왕따였죠. 지금은 유학생들 많은데. 제가 이민온 지 17년 됐으니까. 제 lifetime 반 넘게 여기 살고 있어요. 그래서 처음에 17년 전만 해도 ESL이라는 것도, ESL이 약간 어떤 분위기였냐면... 지금은 exchange student도 많고, ESL 하면은 아 뭐, 유학생들 아니면 이민온 애들 처음엔 다 가는 거니까 당연하다고 여겨지는데, 그때는 거의 진짜 전교생에서 ESL 학생들이 열명이 안 됐어요. 맨 처음에 그 elementary school 갔었을 때는 영어를 배우라고 학교 system에서는 ESL이란 걸 만들어 놔지만, 저는 그때 막연하게, 무조건 이민을 가면은, 나는 한국 사람이지만 영어가 저절로 될 줄 알았어요. 영어를 배우는 과정도 몰랐고, 그냥, 어 나 이민 가면 영어 쓰겠네, 했는데... 직접 와서 보니까 그게 아닌 거예요. 그리고 영어도 제가 잘 트는 편이 아니고 좀 약간 빨리 배우는 사람들 있었는데, 저는 그렇지 않았어요. 그리고 한국에 있었을 때도 영어학원을 많이 다니고 그랬다면 어느정도 할 수도 있었는데 저는 진짜 영어... 영어학원을 다니긴 다녔었는데 아예 영어를 못 하는 상태에서 와 가지고 이게 어느 정도 들려야 영어를 배우든 말든 하는데, 완전 아무것도 모르는 상태에서 ESL을 가니까. 못 알아듣는 상태에서 못 알아듣는 말을 해서 못 배웠어요.</p> <p>Researcher: 너무 힘들었겠어요 처음 왔는데.</p> <p>Participant: 네, 그것도 그렇고. 약간 system을 좀 욕하자면... 아 욕을 하기보단 이게 ESL은 과목을 듣다가 아 ESL하는 애들은 ESL반으로 가라고 하잖아요. 근데 그때만 해도 전교생에서 정말 열명이 안 됐기 때문에 ESL 듣는 애들이. 약간 문제아 모아둔 클래스 같이. 그래서 약간 ESL 간다고 하면 모든 전교생들이... 반 안에 저만 혼자 ESL이니까, 예를들어 어떤 수업을 들을 때, 예를들어 English나 History 들을 때, 선생님이 너네 이제 ESL로 가, 라고 말하면 동시에 이제 attention이 저한테 오잖아요. 근데 저는 제가 잘못된 게 아닌데도 약간 불편한 기분이 드는 거죠. 괜히 수업하고 있다가 갑자기 homeroom teacher가, 아 이제 너희 ESL로 가, 이게 아니라. 차라리 그랬으면 반을 바꿀 때 제가 자연스럽게 빠질 수 있으니까 괜찮았을텐데, 갑자기. 반에 오긴 와요. 근데 거기서 attendance를 하고 보내는 거예요. 그럼 그 ESL 클래스가 합당한 건데도. 그 system속의 error 같이. 저는 약간... 튀는 사람이 된거죠. 그게 마치 special 뭐 문제아 클래스 같은 느낌이 들었어요 그때는.</p> <p>Researcher: 그런 경험이 있으셨구나.</p> <p>Participant: 그 ESL에서는 정말 배운 게 없어요. 왜냐면 거기서 제가 학교를 세달 정도밖에 안 다닌 것 같아요. 끝날 때쯤에 제가 왔어요. 그래서 그땐 영어를 못 배웠다. 결론은, 영어는 여기서 배운다고 되는게 아니라 그것도 어느정도 들려야 배우는 거지. 안 들리는데 그냥 배우면 모른다. 근데 영어가 잘 입에 안 붙는 애들은 한번쯤은 다 경험했을거라고 생각해요 저는. 이 system이 제가 왕따가 안 될수가 없는 system이었어요.제가 진짜 왕따가 아니더라도 그렇게 보일 수 밖에 없는. ESL이니까 이제 History, English 시간, 너네 밑으로 가야 돼. 이것도, 하필 교실이 또 1층에 있었어요. 다른 수업들은 다 2층에 있는데</p>	<p>Negative experience in the first elementary school</p> <p>Limited support system</p> <p>Hard to make friends</p> <p>Few ESL students</p> <p>Difficult to learn English</p> <p>Negative ESL experience (pull-out method)</p>

<p>딱 그 시간 되면 갑자기 저희는 수업 듣다 말고 binder 들고서 밑으로 내려갔어야 돼요.</p> <p>Researcher: 그럼 초등학교를 졸업하시고 ESL 은 몇년 정도를 다니고 졸업하셨어요? 기억나세요?</p> <p>Participant: 초등학교를 처음에 전학을 한번 갔는데. 처음에 Johnsvie 갔을 때는 정말 안 좋은 기억 뿐이고. 그 다음에 Willowbrook 이라는 데를 갔는데. 그 학교는 그나마 나왔던 게, 거기는 ESL 에 저 말고 다른 애들이 있었어요, 제 학년에. 그래서 그때는 좀 나왔어요. 그리고 ESL 선생님도... 기가 정말 센 Russia 사람이었던 거 같은데. 그 사람은 진짜 열심히 가르쳐 주려고... 제가 약간 헬렌 켈러의 셸리반 선생님을 만난 느낌이었어요. 살면서 여태까지 그 분 밖에 제게 선생님이었다고 인정 안 해요. 그래서 제가 전엔 School Board 같은 데서 찾아본 적도 있어요. 그때는 영어도 못 했으니까 무슨 말을 하고 싶어도 못 했는데. 그 분은 정말 너무 훌륭한 선생님이라고 생각이 들어서요. 그 학교 명단에서 그 선생님 연락처라도 찾고 싶어서 봤었는데 없더라고요.</p> <p>Researcher: 아쉽네요. 되게 맘에 와닿았나 봐요 그 선생님이.</p> <p>Participant: 그 선생님이 왜 대단하냐면, 항상 우리한테... 그 학교에서도 전교생에서 ESL 이 10 명이 안됐어요. 전 학교보다 조금 많았는데도 열명이 안됐어요. 그때까지만 해도 진짜 ESL 에 사람이 없었는데. 저는 그때 영어도 잘 못 알아들었었는데 그 선생님이 하신 말씀이 기억이 나요. 8 학년 때 영어 시험 보는 게 있었는데... 영어 읽기 시험 뭐 있었는데. 그게 ESL 만 하는 게 아니고 전교생이 다 해야하는 영어 시험이었어요. 근데 그게 저희가 다 긴장을 하니까, 그 선생님이 저희보고, 저희보다도 시험을 못 본 ESL 아닌 애들이 많다고, 저희가 더 잘한다고 다 똑같다고 말을 해 주신 거예요. 진짜 제가 처음에 에세이 쓰는 걸 전혀 몰랐을 때 그 선생님이 다 가르쳐 주셨어요. 처음에 시작하는 단어라던가 이음새라던가... 저는 그때 그 선생님께 배웠던 걸 고등학교 대학교 지금까지 쓰고 있어요. 그리고 진짜 passionate 하고 굉장히 따듯하고... 너무 잘 가르치시고 저희가 영어 못 하는 건 창피하고 부끄러워 할 필요가 없다고 하시면서 너무 잘 해주셨어요. 뭐 하고 계시는지 모르겠네...</p> <p>Researcher: 그러게요. 지금쯤이면 정년퇴직 하셨으려나.</p> <p>Participant: 고등학교 때도 저는 영어를 잘 못 배웠던 것 같아요.</p> <p>Researcher: 그럼 고등학교에서도 영어에 자신이 없었다고 하셨는데, ESL 은 언제 졸업하셨나요?</p> <p>Participant: 어 기억이 잘 안 나는데 근데 한 10 학년까지 다닌 것 같아요. 한 11 학년 12 학년 즈음에 영어를 regular class 에서 들었던 것 같아요. 제 친구 중 한명은... 착해요. 근데 이해를 좀 못해요. 왜냐면 더 제가 이민 왔을 때보다 더 어렸을 때 왔으면, 제가 겪는 step 을 skip 해요. 영어를 되게 빨리 배우고, 애들과 그런 다른 걸 못 느껴요. 제가 느끼는 걸 개는 느끼지 않았어요.</p> <p>Researcher: 그 친구는 캐나다에 언제 왔나요?</p> <p>Participant: 음... 8 살 때 왔나?</p>	<p>Second elementary school: better experiences</p> <p>Positive ESL experiences (good teacher)</p> <p>Finished ESL in high school</p>
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## Case 7

Transcribed data	Initial coding
<p>Participant: I think because I came here in elementary school, I didn't have much pressure in learning English. And I was very eager to learn anything and make friends. I think that was my personality back then. 그래서 I didn't really have much pressure. Like, even if I made mistakes when writing journals, doing anything, really. Spelling... I didn't get stressed much. I just went with what I knew. I think as I grew older, like middle school and high school, I think that's when I was a little bit self-conscious of, like, oh I don't speak English that well. Not really at school, but like outside of school. [In] School, there's a lot of ESL students, so they kinda understand. But outside of school, I think I was kind of self-conscious about not being so fluent in English.</p> <p>Researcher: Yeah, I understand. Okay. And when you first arrived in the elementary school, was there the ESL program there?</p> <p>Participant: Yeah, and it was really easy. 'Cause it was an elementary school, we coloured a lot. It was easy. I think that's why we weren't stressed so much. Like colouring 되게 많이 하고. Learning about Canada, about provinces... I think it was really easy. And the elementary school that I went to, there was only one class per grade. So everyone was like a family, everyone was so nice. Nobody like made fun of you because you don't speak English. Yeah, so it was a really good environment to start your immigration. You can take the time you need to learn the language. support 가 있으니까.</p> <p>Researcher: And how long did it take for you to finish the ESL program, do you remember?</p> <p>Participant: I don't really remember. I think, 'cause I came here in grade 4... Um, do you do ESL instead of the regular English class?</p> <p>Researcher: that's the idea.</p> <p>Participant: then, I think, in grade 6, I joined the regular English class.</p>	<p>Primary: Little pressure Eager to learn and make friends</p> <p>Secondary: more self-conscious of limited English proficiency</p> <p>Positive ESL experiences (easy and fun classes)</p> <p>Primary: nice and understanding peers</p> <p>2 years of ESL</p>

## Case 8

Transcribed data	Initial coding
<p>Participant: I do remember learning English, and that was very challenging for me to learn how to write English well. Speaking English, it came quite quickly talking to friends. And dialogue is fairly easy to pick up. But then I've always had a problem with language, specifically learning languages. I continue to struggle to learn French. It was, yeah, I think it's just a written part that was difficult for me to learn. It's just I am not good at languages, in general. So I'd say learning English to become comfortable getting by, that came almost in no time.</p> <p>Researcher: And were you placed in ESL when you were only grade 2? Was there the program, do you know?</p> <p>Participant: Yeah, when I first came, I was in ESL for—I think—two years... If I remember correctly, I was ESL on and off, and categorized as ESL when I was in grade 7 and 8. I was, in my paper, I was categorized as ESL.</p> <p>Researcher: That's funny.</p> <p>Participant: Yeah. But I didn't go, because the teacher started getting... 'this kid definitely does not need to be in ESL.' What was hilarious was, when I went to high school, I joined the International Baccalaureate program, the IB Program, which categorizes me in like the gifted category, but then, at the same time, I was on paper ESL, as well. So there was a bit of a mix up when I went to high school. They were like, ok does this kid go to Gifted English class or does he go to ESL? But, yeah, I was categorized as one.</p> <p>Researcher: Why were you labelled as one?</p> <p>Participant: I think at that point, it was because the way they calculated was, if I haven't been here for certain number of years, just automatically goes into I</p>	<p>Written comm in English -&gt; still challenging, not good at languages Speaking English -&gt; Easy &amp; fast Became fluent no time</p> <p>The ESL label followed</p> <p>IB/Gifted label</p>

<p>guess...</p> <p>Researcher: That's convenient. Okay, for teacher's references, I guess.</p> <p>Participant: I believe so. Just for record purposes. Yeah, the funny thing that you should know is that, I remember in grade 8, I did not speak French, I think I was still struggling to perfect English, but actually had valedictorian in grade 8.</p> <p>Researcher: And by English, you mean written English, right? Because you were fluent in spoken English.</p> <p>Participant: Yeah. So a lot of people thought that was hilarious that I couldn't speak French and I was still categorized as ESL, but I ended up getting the valedictorian.</p> <p>Researcher: And about the IB program, are there requirements to meet to be able to join that? Is that something that you apply for, or do you just get invited into it?</p> <p>Participant: That year was actually the first time the IB program came to York Region. So IB program was very new. We were actually the first class, guinea pig class. Yeah, so what happened was, every elementary school that gets fed into this high school nominates I think two students or three students to be to join the IB Program. And then, based on the grades in the nomination, you get it. [...] When I first came to Canada, I was really lucky to have the friends that I... because I wasn't able to speak English right because I didn't learn English when I was in Korea. But the friends that I had were very nice to me, and they wanted to hang out with me and play with me, even though I didn't speak English. So I remember like hand gestures stuff. And they thought that was funny. We learned and play together. That's how I most effectively learned English, hanging out with those kids.</p>	<p>High-achieving student -&gt; valedictorian</p> <p>Easy to make friends Nice, friendly, approachable peers</p>
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### Case 9

Transcribed data	Initial coding
<p>Participant: Um obviously, there were challenges at first, because I didn't speak any English at all--any language, culture. But I think I had easier than others, considering how people, like when they are young, are more approachable and friendly, and they actually make the effort to kind of like go above and beyond, to each means.</p> <p>Researcher: Sure, and you were only nine when you arrived in Canada, right?</p> <p>Participant: Yeah.</p> <p>Researcher: I see. And if you had to go back to your memories of being in the ESL program--did your school, first of all, have an ESL program?</p> <p>Participant: Yes.</p> <p>Researcher: Okay, and do you remember how long it took you for you to graduate from the ESL program?</p> <p>Participant: I think it was like one or two years.</p>	<p>Challenging at first but easier than others</p> <p>Easy to make friends</p> <p>Friendly and approachable peers</p> <p>1-2 years of ESL</p>

### Case 10

Transcribed data	Initial coding
<p>Participant: Oh, um... So when I first went to school here, it was grade 2. We came here in April 2001. Once we settled and... um, I think in May or June, that's when they signed me up to go to school. So I only did like a few weeks of grade 2. And then I remember I didn't have ESL then, I think because it was so close to the end of the year. But when I started grade 3, in grade 3, I did ESL like for the whole year, and I think in grade 4, they put me in ESL for the first, like, maybe couple of months of school, and they saw that my English was good enough. So, overall, I did a bit over a year of ESL classes, and I was pretty much I guess fluent by the time I was in grade 4.</p> <p>Researcher: It's quite fascinating how fast you learn when you're young.</p>	<p>No ESL upon arrival</p> <p>Learned English fast</p>

<p>Participant: When you're young, yeah. I had zero English. I remember when I first came, I think they did like a little test to see what my English level was, and I remember them showing me pictures of like different objects: like school, apple, and like fruits... and, you know, these like everyday objects. And I remember only knowing how to say apple. Like, I still remember that binder she showed me, and I remember thinking so, I was so embarrassed, like I didn't know any English, right? I was only grade 2, though, so I was like really young. But I still felt embarrassed that I didn't know anything other than like hello, goodbye, and like apples. But like, in grade 4, I was pretty much... all set. It was good enough, and I didn't have to stay in ESL.</p> <p>Researcher: Yeah, sure. Nobody's English is perfect when you're still adjusting, right? Plus, I don't know if native speakers in grade 2, their English would be perfect. Was it any stressful for you, if you remember, the process of learning English?</p> <p>Participant: I don't remember exactly, but I do remember like feeling really lost, because I had no idea what was happening. I remember like the kids around me would tell me that it's lunchtime—like, I didn't even understand that it was lunch period. They would all take out their lunch boxes, and I was just sitting there, like, not sure what was happening. I didn't know. And I remember this girl beside me: like, she showed me her lunch bag and pointed to it, like, 'it's time to eat' kinda thing. That's how I figured out things when I went to school in grade 2. So that was like the couple of weeks of grade 2. But then, in grade 3, at the same school, there was one other Korean student in my class. But she was second generation, so she didn't know that much Korean. But because she did know a bit of Korean, our teacher, like, she tried to set us up, so we could be like a pair—so the other friend could translate for me and help. But it didn't really work out, because she didn't know that much Korean: she was getting frustrated, because I wasn't understanding what she was saying. You know. And we were only in grade 3, so like we were really young. And, um, it was a big responsibility for her to, you know, to like have to care for me and everything. I remember feeling very frustrated because I didn't understand what's happening in class. Like, I remember taking home this worksheet for homework, and I didn't know what to do. And like, when I showed it to my dad, like, he didn't really understand what had to be done, either. So I remember in the beginning of grade 3, which was like my real full year of schooling here, feeling very frustrated. Apart from that one Korean girl, there was no one who really spoke enough Korean to help me understand. But then, I don't think I struggled to make friends, in the end. You know when you are young, you just get along without really having to speak English properly.</p> <p>Researcher: Yeah, sure. And about the ESL classes, do you have any memories?</p> <p>Participant: To be totally honest, I don't really remember. Like, I just remember being in a small group of kids. But I don't remember like what I learned, what the teacher made us do.</p>	<p>Remembers feeling ashamed during the level test</p> <p>Vague memories</p> <p>Negative sentiment: felt lost</p> <p>Negative experiences (Korean-Korean pair set up by the teacher)</p> <p>Dad unable to help with homework</p> <p>Negative sentiment: felt frustrated</p> <p>Easy to make friends</p>
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### EXAMPLE OF GROUPING CODES INTO THEMES

*Topic section/Theme: Learning English in School*

Main themes	Categories
Overview of perceived experiences	Experiences were mostly positive
	Experiences were mostly negative
Positive experiences	Made friends easily with cross-ethnic/racial peers
	Learned English easily and fast
	Positive ESL experience
Negative experiences	Acculturative stress linked to the language acquisition
Vague memories	