

KOREAN POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES, 2000
Demographic Characteristics and Socio-Economic Status

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Introduction

The U.S. Census Bureau reported 1,076,872 Koreans residing in the United States as of April 1, 2000 (<http://www.census.gov>). These are the people who identified themselves as “Korean alone.” If those people who reported themselves as “Korean in combination with other Asian or other race” are added, the total number amounts to 1,228,427. The figures for mixed-heritage persons belonging to two or more ethnic and/or racial groups should be used with caution, especially for comparative analysis, because categories containing these individuals are not mutually exclusive. For this reason, in this analysis the “Korean alone” population figure was mainly used.¹

Of the 1.08 million Koreans, approximately 379,000 (35.2%) are U.S. born and 698,000 (64.8%) are foreign born. Of the 698,000 foreign born, 341,000 (48.9%) are naturalized U.S. citizens. The U.S. born together with naturalized citizens (720,000) now comprise two-thirds of the total Korean population in the United States.² “Koreans in America” may have been an appropriate term for the 1990s and before, but now the more appropriate term would be “Korean Americans.” This change in designation also reflects the transformation of their identity.

Population and economic data for this study are drawn from the 1997 Economic Census, the Population Census 2000, and the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).³ Immigration statistics have been drawn from the annual Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.⁴ Utilizing these statistics, this paper attempts to highlight basic demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the Korean population in the United States as of 2000.

Immigration

Korean immigration to the United States has proceeded in four distinct periods. The first period is between 1883, when the diplomatic relationship between the United States and Korea was established, and 1902, when the first organized migration of Korean laborers to Hawaii started. Approximately 200 to 400 Koreans came to the United States during this period.⁵ By the time the first organized group of Korean immigrants arrived in Hawaii in 1903, a small Korean community had already formed in San Francisco and Los Angeles respectively.⁶ Among well known Koreans in this group are So Jai-pil (Phillip Jaisohn), So Kwang-bom, Syngman Rhee, and Ahn Chang Ho.

The second period starts from 1903, with the arrival of Korean laborers to Hawaii, and ends in 1924, with the ban of all Asian immigration by the U.S. government. Some 7,000 Koreans were recruited to Hawaii as plantation laborers, from January 1903 to July 1905.⁷ Most of these immigrants were young bachelors and were brought in to meet the labor demand on Hawaiian plantations.⁸ From 1910 to 1924, approximately 1,100 Korean picture brides were brought in, about 900 to Hawaii and about 200 to the mainland.⁹ About 540 political exiles came by way of China and Europe without passports during this period.¹⁰ Approximately 289 Korean students were able to arrive with passports issued by the Japanese government between 1921 and 1940.¹¹ Between 1924 and 1945, no Koreans were admitted to the U.S. as immigrants. About

1,000 Koreans of the pre-1924 immigrants eventually returned to Korea according to the anecdotal documents of early Korean organizations. Due to a great imbalance of the sex ratio and anti-miscegenation laws, many of the first wave immigrants stayed single throughout their lives. As a result, the Korean population in the United States did not grow much until 1950, numbering around 10,000. They were mostly concentrated in Hawaii and California.

American intervention in the Korean War initiated the third phase of Korean immigration. American soldiers stationed in Korea played a significant role by bringing Korean brides, arranging adoption of war-orphans to American homes, and sponsoring students to come to the U.S. Between 1951 and 1964, approximately 6,500 brides, 6,300 adopted children, and 6,000 students came to this country.¹² These three groups constituted a significant component of the Korean immigration to the United States during this third phase. Additionally, many of the exchange scholars, scientists, government workers, physicians, and nurses who arrived during this period became permanent residents later on.

The fourth phase occurs after the Immigration Act of 1965, which abolished the national origin quota system based on race, and allowed Koreans for the first time to immigrate to the United States as families. Until this time, Korean immigrants came mostly as individual laborers, students, picture brides, war brides, and orphans. However, between 1965 and 1970, students-turned professionals, guest nurses, and physicians were able to apply for permanent residence visas, and became a major component of Korean immigration. Subsequently, these professionals, together with the wives of U.S. servicemen, petitioned for their respective spouses, siblings, and parents to immigrate as well. Since 1970, relatives of the permanent residents, or citizens, have become an overwhelming majority of the Korean immigration to the U.S.

Consequently, Korean immigration to the United States accelerated, until the 1980s. Between 1948 and 1950, only 107 Korean immigrants were admitted. During the 1951-60 decade, 6,231 Koreans were admitted. The number jumped to 34,526 between 1961 and 1970, constituting 1.04% of the total immigrants admitted to the United States. The number of Korean immigrants admitted during the 1971-80 period exponentially grew to 267,638. These Koreans constituted 6% of the total immigrants admitted to the U.S. in that decade, and ranked third in number surpassed only by Mexicans and Filipinos. Korean immigration peaked during the next decade (1981-1990), when 333,746 Koreans were admitted, constituting 4.6 percent of the total immigrants and ranking fourth after Mexico, the Philippines, and China. The number of annual admittance, however, has steadily declined after reaching its peak of 35,849 in 1987. Although the number of Korean immigrants admitted in 1999 was only 12,301, one of the lowest levels recorded since 1972, the number in 2000 increased to 15,214. About one-half of these numbers, however, represents those who are already in the United States and have their status changed to permanent residency. Only about 7,000 to 8,000 Koreans per year are actually arriving from Korea in recent years as immigrants.¹³ As a whole, a total of 806,414 Korean immigrants were admitted to the United States between 1948 and 2000.

The 164,166 Koreans admitted between 1991 and 2000 were less than one-half of those Koreans admitted during the previous decade and represented 1.8 percent of the 9,095,417 immigrants admitted to the U.S. Korea was the only country to experience such a drastic decline in immigration in the 1990s. Other countries, for the most part, maintained their usual patterns

of immigration flow. The drastic decline of Korean immigration in the 1990s may be due to the improved conditions in politics and economy in Korea since the late 1980s. While Korean immigration to the U.S. has slowed substantially since 1987, the volume of Chinese immigration has remained at a high level. In 2000, China, together with Hong Kong, with 49,060, ranked second to Mexico in the total number of immigrants admitted to the United States.

The steady and substantial flow of immigration from Korea has accelerated the size of the Korean population in the United States. It increased from about 10,000 in 1950 to 70,000 in 1970, and again to 355,000 in 1980. The number reached 799,000 in 1990 and, as of the year 2000, it reached 1,077,000 (Korean alone) or 1,228,000 (Korean alone plus Korean in combination with others). The Korean alone population constituted 0.38% of the 281,422,000 U.S. population. During the last thirty-year period, the Korean population in the United States increased by more than 15 fold.

Three Categories of Koreans

The total number of ethnically, and/or racially, mixed Koreans accounts for 12.34% of the 1,228,000 people of Korean ancestry. The multi-ethnic Koreans mixed with other Asians are 22,550, which account for 1.84%. The 129,005 multi-racial Koreans account for 10.50%. Altogether, 151,555 persons are identified as Koreans with multiple ethnic and/or racial heritages. The Korean's rate of mixing with other ethnic or racial groups is among the lowest of the major Asian groups. On the other hand, ethnically or racially mixed people account for 30.66% of all people of Japanese heritage, 4.83% mixed with other Asians and 25.82% with other races. Among the Chinese, mixed-heritage persons constitute 15.52%, 5.03% mixed with other Asians and 10.49% with other races. As the children born to the post-1965 immigrants enter into reproductive ages, the number of racially or ethnically mixed Koreans should increase significantly.

The percent of multi-ethnic and/or racial Koreans varies greatly from state to state. Hawaii has the highest number and proportion of multi-ethnic/racial Koreans with 43% of all persons of Korean heritage to be of mixed ethnic and/or racial heritage – 14.5% mixed with other Asians, and 28.6% with other races. Many of the U.S.-born descendants of the first-wave Koreans who immigrated at the turn of the twentieth century still live in Hawaii and their out-marriage rate is very high.¹⁴ The proportion of the mixed heritage persons among Koreans in Hawaii is even higher than that of the Japanese (32%).

In the continental United States, states with a relatively small number of Koreans such as North Dakota, Idaho, New Mexico, Arkansas, and Oklahoma tend to show a high percentage of mixed-heritage Koreans. More than a quarter of all Koreans in these states are ethnically or racially mixed. Korean women married to American soldiers and Korean children adopted by American homes have been a significant component of Korean immigration since the Korean War and they tend to settle all over the United States.¹⁵ Children born to these Koreans apparently contributed to the high rate of multiple heritage persons in these states. On the other hand, states with a relatively large number of Koreans such as California, New York, New Jersey, and Maryland show a relatively low rate of mixed-heritage Koreans. These are also the states where a large number of more recent immigrant families have settled. In these states,

persons of mixed-heritage constitute less than 8% of all Koreans. Propinquity is apparently a factor here. As people of a common ethnic heritage share a vicinity, the higher the chances that they will meet and marry with one another.

Distribution

Koreans, like other East Asians, have traditionally been concentrated in the Western region of the United States. Hawaii and California have been home to the great majority of Koreans until the 1950s. Nevertheless, the pattern of geographic distribution has changed significantly since the 1960s; Koreans have been quicker than other Asians to disperse themselves across a wider region in the United States. They are visible in most of the metropolitan areas in the United States. The 2000 Census reveals that 44% of Koreans are located in the West, 23% in the Northeast, 12% in the Midwest, and 21% in the South. For the general population, the percentage shares are 24% in the West, 19% in the Northeast, 21% in the Midwest, and 36% in the South.¹⁶

California continues to be the state with the largest number of Koreans, with 345,882. During the 1990-2000 decade, the Korean population in California grew 33%, similar to the growth rate for Koreans in the nation, 35%. Thus California's share of the total Korean population was about one-third, both in 1990 and in 2000. New York's growth rate of the Korean population during this decade, 25%, was significantly lower than the national average, but was still second in size in 2000 with 119,846 Koreans. Forty-three percent of Koreans are concentrated in these two states. Illinois was the third ranking state in size of Koreans in 1990, but their rank fell to fourth in 2000, with 51,453 Koreans. This state's Korean population increased 24% during this decade, much lower than the national average. On the other hand, New Jersey's growth rate of the Korean population, 70%, was nearly twice as high as the national average becoming the third most populous state for Koreans in 2000, with 65,349 Koreans. This was in part due to a heavy influx of Koreans to the New Jersey portion of the greater New York metropolitan suburbs during the 1990s.

The fact that the two most populous states for Koreans, California and New York, contain 43% of all Koreans, as well as the fact that three-quarters of the total Korean population are concentrated in just 10 states, suggests that Koreans experience a relatively high degree of geographic concentration. Nevertheless, these rates are not as high as other Asian groups. Chinese and Japanese, for example, show a much higher degree of geographic concentration. California and New York are the two most populous states for the Chinese, representing 57% of the total Chinese population in the U.S. Furthermore, California and Hawaii contain 62% of the total Japanese population.

As compared with other Asians, Koreans are under-represented in the West and over-represented in the South. The 2000 Census counted 73% of the Japanese, 68% of the Filipinos, 50% of the Vietnamese, and 49% of the Chinese in the Western states, in comparison with 44% for Koreans. Contrarily, the Korean's presence in the South is relatively much higher than other Asians. Twenty-one percent of the Koreans were found in Southern states whereas only 10% of the Japanese, 14% of the Chinese, and 13% of the Filipinos were located in the region. Meanwhile, 55% of the Black population and 34% of the White population were counted in the South.

Table 1. Korean Population by State, 1990 -2000

State	1990		2000		Percent Change
	Number	%	Number	%	
California	259,941	32.54%	345,882	32.12%	33.06%
New York	95,648	11.97%	119,846	11.13%	25.30%
New Jersey	38,540	4.82%	65,349	6.07%	69.56%
Illinois	41,506	5.20%	51,453	4.78%	23.97%
Washington	29,697	3.72%	46,880	4.35%	57.86%
Texas	31,775	3.98%	45,571	4.23%	43.42%
Virginia	30,161	3.78%	45,279	4.20%	50.12%
Maryland	30,320	3.80%	39,155	3.64%	29.14%
Pennsylvania	26,787	3.35%	31,612	2.94%	18.01%
Georgia	15,275	1.91%	28,745	2.67%	88.18%
Hawaii	24,454	3.06%	23,537	2.19%	-3.75%
Michigan	16,316	2.04%	20,886	1.94%	28.01%
Florida	12,404	1.55%	19,139	1.78%	54.30%
Massachusetts	11,744	1.47%	17,369	1.61%	47.90%
Colorado	11,339	1.42%	16,395	1.52%	44.59%
Ohio	11,237	1.41%	13,376	1.24%	19.04%
North Carolina	7,267	0.91%	12,600	1.17%	73.39%
Minnesota	11,576	1.45%	12,584	1.17%	8.71%
Oregon	8,668	1.09%	12,387	1.15%	42.90%
Arizona	5,863	0.73%	9,123	0.85%	55.60%
Nevada	4,315	0.54%	7,554	0.70%	75.06%
Indiana	5,475	0.69%	7,502	0.70%	37.02%
Tennessee	4,508	0.56%	7,395	0.69%	64.04%
Connecticut	5,126	0.64%	7,064	0.66%	37.81%
Wisconsin	5,618	0.70%	6,800	0.63%	21.04%
Missouri	5,731	0.72%	6,767	0.63%	18.08%
Oklahoma	4,717	0.59%	5,074	0.47%	7.57%
Iowa	4,618	0.58%	5,063	0.47%	9.64%
Alaska	4,163	0.52%	4,573	0.42%	9.85%
Kansas	4,016	0.50%	4,529	0.42%	12.77%
Alabama	3,454	0.43%	4,116	0.38%	19.17%
Kentucky	2,972	0.37%	3,818	0.35%	28.47%
South Carolina	2,577	0.32%	3,665	0.34%	42.22%
Utah	2,629	0.33%	3,473	0.32%	32.10%
Louisiana	2,750	0.34%	2,876	0.27%	4.58%
Nebraska	1,943	0.24%	2,423	0.23%	24.70%
Delaware	1,229	0.15%	1,991	0.18%	62.00%
New Hampshire	1,501	0.19%	1,800	0.17%	19.92%
New Mexico	1,464	0.18%	1,791	0.17%	22.34%
Rhode Island	1,294	0.16%	1,560	0.14%	20.56%
Arkansas	1,037	0.13%	1,550	0.14%	49.47%
Mississippi	1,123	0.14%	1,334	0.12%	18.79%
Idaho	935	0.12%	1,250	0.12%	33.69%
D. of Columbia	814	0.10%	1,095	0.10%	34.52%
Maine	858	0.11%	875	0.08%	1.98%
West Virginia	777	0.10%	857	0.08%	10.30%
Montana	668	0.08%	833	0.08%	24.70%
Vermont	563	0.07%	669	0.06%	18.83%
South Dakota	525	0.07%	584	0.05%	11.24%
Wyoming	402	0.05%	412	0.04%	2.49%
North Dakota	526	0.07%	411	0.04%	-21.86%
Total	798,846	100.00%	1,076,872	100.00%	34.80%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Census 1990, 2000.

The relatively high concentration of Koreans in the South as compared with other Asians may be attributed to the fact that Koreans do not have as strong an ethnic networking infrastructure in the West as the Chinese and Japanese. The immigration of wives of American

soldiers has been a significant component of the post-1950 period, and contributed to the wider geographic distribution for Koreans. The high rates of entrepreneurship among Koreans also have contributed to their wider dispersion over the nation. During the 1990s, the Southern states showed the highest rates of increase for Koreans than in any other region. The Korean population in Georgia experienced the highest increase rate, 88%, among all 50 states. The high growth rate was particularly noticed among states on the Atlantic coastal region. Six of the 10 fastest growing states (Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Delaware, Florida, Virginia) for the Korean population were from the South. Between 1990 and 2000, Southern states showed the highest increase rate of the Korean population at 46%.

Koreans live in large metropolitan areas and a great majority of them live in the suburbs. Ninety-six percent of Koreans in the United States are found in metropolitan areas, while, in contrast, 80% of the general population resides in metropolitan areas. Korean immigration to the United States since 1965 has typically been an urban-to-urban migration,¹⁷ from large urban centers of South Korea to the large metropolitan areas of the United States.

Table 2. Korean Population in Selected Metropolitan Areas, 2000

Metropolitan Area	Number	Percent
Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange-San Bernardino-Ventura, California Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA)	257,975	23.96
New York-North New Jersey-Long Island, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania CMSA	170,509	15.83
Washington, D.C.-Baltimore, District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia CMSA	74,454	6.91
San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, California CMSA	57,386	5.33
Chicago-Gary-Kenosha, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, CMSA	46,256	4.30
Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton, Washington CMSA	41,189	3.82
Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland CMSA	29,309	2.72
Atlanta, Georgia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	22,317	2.07
Honolulu, Hawaii MSA	21,681	2.01
Dallas-Ft Worth, Texas CMSA	18,123	1.68
Boston-Worcester-Lawrence, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, Connecticut, CMSA	15,560	1.44
San Diego, CA MSA	12,004	1.11
Houston-Galveston-Brazoria., Texas CMSA	10,341	0.96
Total for 13 Metropolitan Areas	777,104	72.16
Total Koreans in the United States	1,076,872	100.00

NOTE: Only areas with at least a population of 10,000 Koreans.
SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Census 2000.

Within metropolitan areas, more Koreans (57%) live in the suburbs than in the central cities (40%). The rate of suburbanization for Koreans is one of the highest among major racial/ethnic groups. Asian Indians are the only group with a higher percentage living in metropolitan suburbs (59%). For the general population, about 50% live in the suburbs, while 30% live in central cities.¹⁸ The high rate of residential suburbanization for Koreans is in part due to their relatively high levels of educational achievement. Asian Indians as a group also exhibit one of the highest income and educational achievement levels in the United States. The suburbs attract Koreans mainly because the suburbs usually have better schools.

Although Koreans generally live in metropolitan areas, they are especially concentrated in the largest areas. The largest number of Koreans is found in the Southern California metropolitan region called Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange-San Bernardino-Ventura, CA Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA). More than a quarter million (257,975) Koreans living in this five-county area constitute nearly one-fourth of Koreans in the United

States. The next largest area of Korean concentration is the area encompassing New York City and surrounding metropolitan areas of New York, Northern New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. More than 170,000 Koreans live here and constitute approximately 16% of the Koreans in the United States. Forty percent of all Koreans in the U.S. are found in these two metropolitan regions. As seen in Table 2, 72% of Koreans in the U.S. live in the 13 metropolitan areas, each of which has at least 10,000 Koreans.

Age and Sex Composition

As compared with other groups, the Korean population is relatively young. According to the Census 2000, its median age is 32.4 versus 35.3 for the total U.S. population. This is not necessarily because of high fertility, but rather attributed to the recency of the Korean immigration. The post-1965 immigration has been largely a family migration. Adult parents and young children represent the majority of these immigrants. The proportion of the Korean population 65 years of age and over is 6.75%, while the proportion for the total population is 12.06% as of 2000. However, census data demonstrate a continued increase of the elderly population for the Koreans. The proportion of the Korean population 65 years and over increased from 2.40% in 1980, to 4.30% in 1990, and again to 6.75% in 2000.

In terms of the sex ratio as measured by the number of males per 100 females, Korean females generally, when compared to the national population, are significantly overrepresented between the ages of 20 to 54 years. As shown in Table 3, sex ratios of the Korean population in these age groups are much lower than the general population. This is largely due to a sustained imbalance of sex ratios among Korean immigrants; that is, a significantly higher number of females than males among young adult immigrants. For example, the numbers of Korean males per 100 females admitted between 1996 and 2000 were 59.90 for 20-24 years of age, 37.99 for 25-29, 58.67 for 30-34, 68.48 for 35-39, and 73.21 for 40-44.¹⁹ This pattern of sex imbalance in favor of young adult females has continued ever since the latest immigration wave began in 1965. The only counterbalancing force to this pattern has been the sex ratio of U.S. born Koreans, which has followed a general pattern of the U.S. population. Young Korean female adults, in comparison with their male peers, appear to be more attracted to the prospects of new opportunities in America. Social and economic opportunities open to the young adult females in Korea are also less favorable relative to their male counterparts. Korean males in the earlier period, 1903-45, suffered a great deal due to a shortage of female counterparts. Now, the problem has completely shifted to the opposite sex, due to the shortage of males.

The sex ratio imbalance is reversed for Koreans under 15 years of age. Korean males outnumber Korean females for every five-year age interval below age 20. The sex ratio imbalance is more notable when compared to the general U.S. population. This is again due to the imbalanced sex ratios among immigrants favoring males in the youngest age groups. This imbalance reflects the age-sex structure of the Korean population in Korea. In recent years, due to the male preference of Korean parents, sex-selective abortions were carried out in alarming rates although the practice is illegal. A much higher number of aborted female fetuses contributed to the unusually high imbalance in the sex ratios for the younger population. The population structure of Korean Americans 19 years of age and under reflects these imbalanced sex ratios. Sex ratios for Korean immigrants are 118.85 for under five years of age, 107.30 for

5-9 years of age, 114.39 for 10-14, and 116.30 for 15-19, while the corresponding ratios for the total U.S. population are 104.75, 104.93, 104.90, and 105.29.

Table 3. United States Total and Korean Population by Age and Sex, 2000

<i>Total Population</i>	Males	% of Males	Females	% of Females	Total	% of Total Population	Sex Ratio*
Under 5 years	9,791,115	7.33%	9,346,859	6.67%	19,137,974	6.99%	104.75
5 to 9 years	10,504,352	7.87%	10,010,859	7.15%	20,515,211	7.50%	104.93
10 to 14 years	10,469,540	7.84%	9,980,260	7.12%	20,449,800	7.47%	104.90
15 to 19 years	9,623,303	7.21%	9,139,940	6.52%	18,763,243	6.86%	105.29
20 to 24 years	8,690,853	6.51%	8,728,437	6.23%	17,419,290	6.37%	99.57
25 to 29 years	9,363,065	7.01%	9,500,542	6.78%	18,863,607	6.89%	98.55
30 to 34 years	9,925,396	7.43%	10,109,995	7.22%	20,035,391	7.32%	98.17
35 to 39 years	10,915,338	8.17%	11,300,990	8.07%	22,216,328	8.12%	96.59
40 to 44 years	10,799,229	8.09%	11,236,407	8.02%	22,035,636	8.05%	96.11
45 to 49 years	9,665,666	7.24%	10,142,567	7.24%	19,808,233	7.24%	95.30
50 to 54 years	8,461,727	6.34%	8,925,567	6.37%	17,387,294	6.35%	94.80
55 to 59 years	6,414,817	4.80%	6,913,082	4.93%	13,327,899	4.87%	92.79
60 to 64 years	5,064,864	3.79%	5,620,371	4.01%	10,685,235	3.90%	90.12
65 years and over	13,862,098	10.38%	19,136,034	13.66%	32,998,132	12.06%	72.44
Total	133,551,363	100.00%	140,091,910	100.00%	273,643,274	100.00%	95.33
<i>Korean Population</i>							
Under 5 years	28,796	6.35%	27,272	5.64%	56,068	5.98%	105.59
5 to 9 years	32,470	7.16%	30,061	6.22%	62,531	6.67%	108.01
10 to 14 years	33,204	7.32%	30,580	6.33%	63,784	6.81%	108.58
15 to 19 years	33,113	7.30%	31,368	6.49%	64,481	6.88%	105.56
20 to 24 years	34,224	7.54%	36,293	7.51%	70,517	7.53%	94.31
25 to 29 years	46,740	10.30%	48,597	10.06%	95,337	10.18%	96.18
30 to 34 years	43,320	9.55%	43,206	8.94%	86,526	9.24%	100.26
35 to 39 years	38,498	8.49%	43,350	8.97%	81,848	8.74%	88.81
40 to 44 years	39,330	8.67%	45,297	9.37%	84,627	9.03%	86.83
45 to 49 years	29,676	6.54%	35,840	7.42%	65,516	6.99%	82.80
50 to 54 years	27,023	5.96%	31,211	6.46%	58,234	6.22%	86.58
55 to 59 years	22,588	4.98%	24,232	5.01%	46,820	5.00%	93.22
60 to 64 years	18,812	4.15%	18,651	3.86%	37,463	4.00%	100.86
65 years and over	25,859	5.70%	37,265	7.71%	63,124	6.74%	69.39
Total	453,653	100.00%	483,223	100.00%	936,877	100.00%	93.88

*Sex Ratio = Males per 100 Females.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Census 2000.

Table 4. Korean Immigration by Age and Sex, 1996 – 2000

	Males	% of Males	Females	% of Females	Total	% of Total	Sex Ratio for Total
Under 5 years	5,211	15.37%	4,392	10.60%	9,603	12.75%	118.65
5-9 years	1,470	4.34%	1,370	3.31%	2,840	3.77%	107.30
10-14 years	3,028	8.93%	2,647	6.39%	5,675	7.53%	114.39
15-19 years	4,317	12.73%	3,712	8.96%	8,029	10.66%	116.30
20-24 years	1,310	3.86%	2,187	5.28%	3,497	4.64%	59.90
25-29 years	2,057	6.07%	5,415	13.07%	7,472	9.92%	37.99
30-34 years	2,569	7.58%	4,379	10.57%	6,948	9.22%	58.67
35-39 years	3,154	9.30%	4,606	11.12%	7,760	10.30%	68.48
40-44 years	3,462	10.21%	4,729	11.42%	8,191	10.87%	73.21
45-49 years	2,767	8.16%	2,795	6.75%	5,562	7.38%	99.00
50-54 years	1,785	5.26%	1,586	3.83%	3,371	4.48%	112.55
55-59 years	1,015	2.99%	1,091	2.63%	2,106	2.80%	93.03
60-64 years	709	2.09%	911	2.20%	1,620	2.15%	77.83
65-69 years	464	1.37%	729	1.76%	1,193	1.58%	63.65
70-74 years	282	0.83%	418	1.01%	700	0.93%	67.46
75-79 years	171	0.50%	237	0.57%	408	0.54%	72.15
80 years and over	88	0.26%	164	0.40%	252	0.33%	53.66
Unknown age	46	0.14%	55	0.13%	101	0.13%	83.64
Total	33,905	100.00%	41,423	100.00%	75,328	100.00%	81.85

SOURCE: Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1996 – 2000

Family and Marriage

Table 5. Family Type By Presence and Age of Own Children, All Persons and Korean, 2000

United States	All Persons	Percent	Korean	Percent
Total:	71,787,347	100.00%	241,054	100.00%
Married-couple family:	54,493,232	75.91%	196,963	81.71%
With own children under 18 years:	24,835,505	34.60%	106,726	44.27%
Under 6 years only	5,892,433	8.21%	27,269	11.31%
Under 6 years and 6 to 17 years	5,316,384	7.41%	17,902	7.43%
6 to 17 years only	13,626,688	18.98%	61,555	25.54%
No own children under 18 years	29,657,727	41.31%	90,237	37.43%
Other family:	17,294,115	24.09%	44,091	18.29%
Male householder, no wife present:	4,394,012	6.12%	12,183	5.05%
With own children under 18 years:	2,190,989	3.05%	3,130	1.30%
Under 6 years only	594,889	0.83%	679	0.28%
Under 6 years and 6 to 17 years	284,895	0.40%	241	0.10%
6 to 17 years only	1,311,205	1.83%	2,210	0.92%
No own children under 18 years	2,203,023	3.07%	9,053	3.76%
Female householder, no husband present:	12,900,103	17.97%	31,908	13.24%
With own children under 18 years:	7,561,874	10.53%	14,958	6.21%
Under 6 years only	1,532,745	2.14%	2,098	0.87%
Under 6 years and 6 to 17 years	1,274,233	1.78%	1,057	0.44%
6 to 17 years only	4,754,896	6.62%	11,803	4.90%
No own children under 18 years	5,338,229	7.44%	16,950	7.03%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Census 2000

According to the Census 2000, there are 338,196 Korean alone households, with an average size of 2.77, as compared with 2.59 for total U.S. households. The total number of Korean families counted in the census is 241,054, with an average size of 3.30 versus 3.14 for all U.S. families. The difference between Korean and U.S. averages can be attributed to the variation in family types between the two. While 82% of the Korean-American families are married-couple families, 76% of the U.S. families are as such. These figures reflect a relatively stable family structure for Koreans as compared with the general population. Furthermore, 54% of the Korean married-couple families have own children below 18 years of age, while 46 percent of U.S. married-couple families have such children. Female householder families, with no husband present, constitute 13 percent of Korean families as compared with 18 percent of all U.S. families. Moreover, families with children under 18 years of age living with a single parent constitute 14.5 percent of all Korean families with children under 18, while 28.2 percent of the U.S. families with children under age 18 live with a single parent.²⁰ The traditional emphasis placed on family welfare over individual interest contributes to the maintenance of a stable family structure among Korean Americans. This relative family stability among Koreans partly contributes to the high educational achievement of their second generation as seen in the following section.

Koreans show one of the lowest divorce or separation status among major racial and ethnic groups according to the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) statistics. As shown in Table 6, Koreans in a divorced or separated state constitute 6.1 percent of all Koreans 15 years of age and over, while the corresponding figure for the nation as a whole is 11.8 percent. Asian Indians are the group with the lowest level of divorce or separation, with 3.4 percent. The Chinese show the second lowest proportion, with 4.3 percent. Koreans are the third lowest group. The black population shows the highest

proportion, with 17.4 percent of its population 15 and over being in a divorced or separated state. The divorce and separation rates for Asian Indians, Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese are substantially lower than blacks, Hispanics, and whites.

Table 6. Marital Status by Race and Asian Ethnicity, 15 Years of Age and Over, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey PUMS Data Set, 2000

Race/Ethnicity		Marital Status					Total
		Married	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Never Married	
Vietnamese	Count	587	47	38	27	327	1,026
	Percent	57.2%	4.6%	3.7%	2.6%	31.9%	100.0%
Korean	Count	572	34	51	8	300	965
	Percent	59.3%	3.5%	5.3%	.8%	31.1%	100.0%
Japanese	Count	792	88	89	12	329	1,310
	Percent	60.5%	6.7%	6.8%	.9%	25.1%	100.0%
Filipino	Count	1,272	97	105	34	575	2,083
	Percent	61.1%	4.7%	5.0%	1.6%	27.6%	100.0%
Chinese	Count	1,655	112	108	34	761	2,670
	Percent	62.0%	4.2%	4.0%	1.3%	28.5%	100.0%
Asian Indian	Count	1,210	61	43	18	450	1,782
	Percent	67.9%	3.4%	2.4%	1.0%	25.3%	100.0%
Native American	Count	1,022	106	242	70	651	2,091
	Percent	48.9%	5.1%	11.6%	3.3%	31.1%	100.0%
Black	Count	9,442	2,140	3,239	1,334	10,156	26,311
	Percent	35.9%	8.1%	12.3%	5.1%	38.6%	100.0%
Hispanic	Count	12,637	963	1,940	784	8,186	24,510
	Percent	51.6%	3.9%	7.9%	3.2%	33.4%	100.0%
White	Count	142,833	17,444	24,160	3,590	54,753	242,780
	Percent	58.8%	7.2%	10.0%	1.5%	22.6%	100.0%
Total	Count	166,427	20,700	29,248	5,583	73,403	295,361
	Percent	56.3%	7.0%	9.9%	1.9%	24.9%	100.0%

Hispanic is not a racial category and the U.S. total does not include the Hispanic total. Total includes all others not presented in the table.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey PUMS Data Set. <http://www.census.gov/c2ss/www/Products/PUMS.htm>.

Socio-Economic Status

Education

Koreans, similar to other Asian groups, continue to exhibit one of the highest levels of educational achievement. According to the 1990 Census, the percentage of persons 25 years of age and over with at least a bachelors degree was generally high for most Asian groups as compared with the national average: 58% for Asian Indians, 41% for Chinese, 39% for Filipinos, 34% for Japanese, 34% for Koreans, and 17% for Vietnamese. The corresponding figure for all persons in the U.S. was 20%. For the U.S. born persons, the figures were 44% for Asian Indians, 51% for Chinese, 22% for Filipinos, 34% for Japanese, 32% for Koreans, and 17% for Vietnamese. For the general U.S. born population, the figure was 20%. For both U.S. born and foreign born groups, the educational level of Asians far surpasses the national average.

The Census 2000 Supplementary Survey PUMS data provide a similar picture. Asians continue to display higher levels of educational achievement when compared to the national average. According to the PUMS data, the six Asian groups mentioned above and the national average have all increased their proportion of educational attainment, with the Asian level far

exceeding the national average with the exception of Vietnamese, the most recent immigrant community. Asian Indians maintains the highest level of educational attainment with 64% of their overall population 25 years of age and over possessing at least a bachelor's degree. The corresponding figure for Koreans is 49%. For other Asian groups, they are 52% for Chinese, 42% for Filipinos, 42% for Japanese, and 23% for Vietnamese. The national figure is 27%. For the U.S. born population, the corresponding figures are 65% for Chinese, and 55% for Koreans. For whites the figure is 28%. Again, the national figure for U.S. born persons is the same as the overall figure, at 27%. Although the educational level of U.S. born Koreans is twice as high as the general population, it falls significantly below the level for the U.S. born Chinese, both in 1990 and 2000. The gap in educational achievement rate between Koreans and Chinese has been reduced substantially between 1990 and 2000, as the number of U.S. born children 25 years of age and over born to the post-1965 Korean immigrants increased greatly during the decade.

Table 7. Educational Attainment by Race and Asian Ethnicity, 25 Years of Age and Older, 2000

Race/Ethnicity	AGE			Educational Attainment		Total	
				Less than BA/BS	BA/BS or Higher		
Vietnamese	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	12	22	
				Percent	54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
		Born outside U.S.	Count	640	183	823	
			Percent	77.8%	22.2%	100.0%	
		Total	Count	652	193	845	
			Percent	77.2%	22.8%	100.0%	
Korean	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	24	53	
				Percent	45.3%	54.7%	100.0%
		Born outside U.S.	Count	374	357	731	
			Percent	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%	
		Total	Count	398	386	784	
			Percent	50.8%	49.2%	100.0%	
Japanese	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	433	737	
				Percent	58.8%	41.2%	100.0%
		Born outside U.S.	Count	254	192	446	
			Percent	57.0%	43.0%	100.0%	
		Total	Count	687	496	1,183	
			Percent	58.1%	41.9%	100.0%	
Filipino	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	178	261	
				Percent	68.2%	31.8%	100.0%
		Born outside U.S.	Count	846	658	1,504	
			Percent	56.3%	43.8%	100.0%	
		Total	Count	1,024	741	1,765	
			Percent	58.0%	42.0%	100.0%	
Chinese	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	116	329	
				Percent	35.3%	64.7%	100.0%
		Born outside U.S.	Count	992	968	1,960	
			Percent	50.6%	49.4%	100.0%	
		Total	Count	1,108	1,181	2,289	
			Percent	48.4%	51.6%	100.0%	
Asian Indian	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	34	69	
				Percent	49.3%	50.7%	100.0%
		Born outside U.S.	Count	499	903	1,402	
			Percent	35.6%	64.4%	100.0%	
		Total	Count	533	938	1,471	
			Percent	36.2%	63.8%	100.0%	
Native American	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	1,339	1,570	
				Percent	85.3%	14.7%	100.0%
		Born outside U.S.	Count	92	10	102	
			Percent	90.2%	9.8%	100.0%	
		Total	Count	1,431	241	1,672	
			Percent	85.6%	14.4%	100.0%	
Black	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	16,447	3,025	19,472

				Percent	84.5%	15.5%	100.0%
			Born outside U.S.	Count	1,459	468	1,927
				Percent	75.7%	24.3%	100.0%
		Total		Count	17,906	3,493	21,399
				Percent	83.7%	16.3%	100.0%
White	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	138,986	53,466	192,452
				Percent	72.2%	27.8%	100.0%
		Born outside U.S.	Count	11,586	4,166	15,752	
			Percent	73.6%	26.4%	100.0%	
		Total		Count	150,572	57,632	208,204
				Percent	72.3%	27.7%	100.0%
Non-Hispanic White	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	134,300	52,545	186,845
				Percent	71.9%	28.1%	100.0%
		Born outside U.S.	Count	6,507	3,362	9,869	
			Percent	65.9%	34.1%	100.0%	
		Total		Count	140,807	55,907	196,714
				Percent	71.6%	28.4%	100.0%
Hispanic	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	7,670	1,335	9,005
				Percent	85.2%	14.8%	100.0%
		Born outside U.S.	Count	8,649	1,142	9,791	
			Percent	88.3%	11.7%	100.0%	
		Total		Count	16,319	2,477	18,796
				Percent	86.8%	13.2%	100.0%
All Persons	25 and Over	Place of Birth	U.S. Born	Count	162,284	58,389	220,673
				Percent	73.5%	26.5%	100.0%
		Born outside U.S.	Count	21,039	8,698	29,737	
			Percent	70.8%	29.2%	100.0%	
		Total		Count	183,323	67,087	250,410
				Percent	73.2%	26.8%	100.0%

Hispanic is not a racial category and the U.S. total does not include the Hispanic total. All Persons include all other categories not presented in the table.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey PUMS Data Set. <http://www.census.gov/c2ss/www/Products/PUMS.htm>.

Work

A major source of livelihood for Koreans in the United States is undoubtedly the entrepreneurship of the small business. Surveys conducted in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Atlanta indicate that about one-third of Korean immigrant householders engage in a self-owned business, about one-fifth in professional work, and the rest in other salaried occupations.²¹ A typical pattern in the 1970s for a newly arriving family was to start a small business with capital saved from a few years of labor on assembly lines, maintenance companies, and other blue-collar jobs. Nowadays, many immigrants start businesses shortly after arriving in part due to the strong economy and the liberalization of foreign exchange laws in Korea.

The 1997 U.S. Economic Census provides detailed information regarding the status of business firms owned by minorities. It supports many of the anecdotal pictures of Korean business patterns that have been reported in the Korean media. According to the economic census, Asian and Pacific Islander-owned businesses totaled about 913,000 firms, employed more than 2.2 million people, and generated \$306.9 billion in revenues in 1997. The vast majority of Asian and Pacific Islander-owned firms, 71%, were unincorporated businesses owned by individuals.²² Koreans rank third among Asian groups in terms of the number of firms owned, 135,571, after the Chinese and Asian Indians, respectively. However, their business concentration is the highest among all ethnic and racial groups examined. The ratio of the proportion of business firms owned by an ethnic or racial group divided by the proportion of that group's population in the U.S. is 1.713 for Koreans, 1.467 for Japanese, 1.411 for Chinese, 1.335

for Asian Indians, 1.174 for Vietnamese, 0.615 for Filipinos, 0.459 for Hispanics, and 0.315 for Blacks. The Korean ratio of 1.713 is derived by dividing the proportion of Korean-owned firms (0.65%) to the total number of firms in the United States by the proportion of the Korean population (0.38%) to the total U.S. population. A ratio of 1 indicates that the proportion of business ownership of one group is the same as its proportion of the nation's total population. Korean's ratio indicates that their rate of business ownership is 71% higher than their share of the population in the nation. The ratio for Blacks shows that their rate of business ownership is 68% less than their share of the population. According to the data, Koreans represent a merchant class.

Korean business ownership varies widely by the type of industry. The Korean population may constitute only 0.38% of the U.S. population, but they own 1.49% of all retail trade firms in the United States. The 42,916 Korean-owned retail trade firms make up 32% of all business firms owned by Koreans. Korean businesses have the highest concentrations in apparel and accessory stores (concentration ratio=13.00), food stores (12.59), general merchandise stores (9.53), apparel and other textile products (9.03), textile mill products (7.24), eating and drinking places (5.43), personal services (4.41),²³ and local and interurban passenger transit services (3.58). The high concentration of Koreans in these types of industries partly explains their concentration in large urban centers and their dispersion over wider regions as compared with other Asian groups. These firms are mostly small in scale, labor intensive, and family, or individually, operated. The heavy concentration of Koreans in these areas reflects their relatively recent immigration history. A high concentration in these types of retail and personal services is also observed among Vietnamese, whose immigration history is more recent than that of Koreans. On the other hand, Chinese, with a longer history in the United States, show a much wider range of business concentration as compared with Koreans.

Table 8. Characteristics of Business Firms in the United States by Race and Asian Ethnicity, 1997

	Total Firms	Total Sales/Receipts (\$1,000)	Average Sales per Firm	% of Firms with Employees	Average # of Employees Per Firm
United States	20,821,934	18,553,243,047	891,000	25.43%	4.96
Black	823,499	71,214,662	86,000	11.32%	0.87
Hispanic	1,199,896	186,274,582	155,000	17.66%	1.16
Asian / Pacific Islander	912,960	306,932,982	336,000	31.76%	2.41
Asian Indian	166,737	67,503,357	405,000	40.30%	2.94
Chinese	252,577	106,196,794	420,000	35.86%	2.74
Filipino	84,534	11,077,885	131,000	17.25%	1.30
Japanese	85,538	43,741,051	511,000	27.25%	3.07
Korean	135,571	45,936,497	339,000	36.94%	2.46
Vietnamese	97,764	9,322,891	95,000	19.38%	0.81

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 1997 Economic Census.

The average of annual sales and receipts per Korean-owned firm is \$339, 000 for the nation as a whole. This is substantially less than those of the Japanese (\$511,000), Chinese (\$420,000), and Asian Indian (\$405,000) firms, and is far less than the national average (\$891,000) for all firms. The national average confirms the dominant position of white-owned firms. The average for Korean-owned firms, however, is far higher than Hispanic (\$155,000), Filipino (\$131,000), Vietnamese (\$95,000), and Black (\$86,000)-owned firms. In terms of the number of employees, Korean firms also stand in the middle. The data clearly situate Korean-owned firms in the middle of the American business structure. It also illustrates a racial

hierarchy existing in corporate America, where without strong political leverage, Koreans often become scapegoats.

Why do Koreans concentrate in small business? Language difficulties and unfamiliarity with American culture hinder them from finding an occupation in mainstream society commensurate with their education and work experience. Operating a small business at the margins of mainstream industries in a harsh work environment is a practical choice for many of them. Korean small businesses stay competitive by working longer hours, mobilizing ethnic resources, and family labor.²⁴ Oftentimes husbands and wives work together to operate the family owned business without enjoying vacations or weekends.²⁵ Their children also help during the after-school hours. Running one's own business may be difficult and risky, but the potential profitability is the driving force. Nevertheless, these Korean merchants occupy a necessary but marginalized niche in the mainstream industrial structure, like foot soldiers in the battlefield. Some do well, but many still struggle as seen in the income statistics.

The feeling of control of their work environment represents yet another important reason for the high concentration of entrepreneurship among Koreans. A critical issue that Korean immigrants face when they arrive is status inconsistency and the ensuing erosion of self-esteem. The most important factor in adult self-esteem is related to a person's occupation.²⁶ Owning a business gives psychological satisfaction for being one's own boss, in Korea referred to as a *sajangnim* (President). Many immigrants therefore opt for entrepreneurship.

Income

The Census 2000 Supplementary Survey PUMS data show two distinct qualities for Koreans in terms of their respective median family, household, and individual income when compared to other Asian groups, races, and the nation as a whole. Firstly, Koreans seem to defy the strong correlation between the levels of educational attainment and economic prosperity by recording incomes far less than expected when compared to other groups of similar educational achievement. Secondly, the fact that the mean family, household, and individual income for Koreans is notably higher than their median and that their respective standard deviations are the highest for all Asian and racial groups, indicates that Koreans experience a high disparity in income among themselves. They show an extremely skewed income distribution relative to other groups. Simply, the Koreans have a polarized economic stratification. The mean family, household, and individual income for Koreans all fluctuate around the national averages surpassing blacks and Hispanic, but significantly trailing behind the Asian Indians, Japanese, and Chinese. The mean family income for Koreans, \$72,600, is just slightly over the national figure of \$66,000. The mean individual income for persons aged between 25 and 64 is \$32,807 for Koreans as compared with the national average of \$35,017. This mean for Koreans is far ahead of Native Americans, blacks, and Hispanics, but substantially lower than Asian Indians, Chinese, Japanese, and whites. However, when comparing the median, Koreans fall below the national level for all three categories (family, household, and individual) of income. In all three categories, the median for Koreans is again substantially below Asian Indians, Japanese, and Chinese. The median individual income for Koreans is among the lowest of all racial and Asian ethnic groups presented in Table 11. This discrepancy between education and income is more apparent among foreign-born Koreans.

There are several possible explanations about this discrepancy between education and income for Koreans. Firstly, the tendency to concentrate in self-owned business is highest for Koreans as discussed above, yet their businesses are still mostly in retail and personal service sectors where profit margins are slim. Secondly, although Koreans possess a relatively high education level, they experience greater difficulty adjusting to a new environment due to their English limitation. Thirdly, Koreans are relatively new immigrants when compared with Japanese and Chinese, and accordingly, lack an efficient system of ethnic networking and a strong economic resource. Lastly, it is possible that some Koreans may just underreport their income, in light of the fact that a high proportion of Koreans engage in self-owned, cash-based small businesses.

In contrast, the situation is quite different among U.S. born Koreans. U.S. born Koreans exhibit one of the highest education levels as compared with other groups. Chinese are the only group that shows a higher level. In family, household, and individual income, U.S. born Koreans are ahead of all other groups, except the Chinese as well. The number of U.S. born Koreans in the PUMS data set is relatively small, and one needs to exercise caution in interpreting the numbers. However, it is apparent from the data that although the first generation Korean immigrants still struggle, the U.S. born second generation Koreans seem to fare well in terms of education and income. It is expected that as more second generation Koreans enter into adulthood, the gap between education and income will ease steadily.

Table 9. Mean and Median Yearly Family Income by Race and Asian Ethnicity by Place of Birth, 1999 – 2000

Place of Birth	Race and Ethnicity	Mean (\$)	N	Std. Deviation	Median (\$)
U.S. Born	Vietnamese	52,410.00	7	40,348.35	54,600.00
	Korean	73,895.33	15	52,594.00	70,000.00
	Japanese	79,979.13	280	61,044.37	65,350.00
	Filipino	70,744.92	64	48,604.85	63,850.00
	Chinese	106,352.98	116	87,029.54	86,700.50
	Asian Indian	59,150.00	18	40,309.37	48,900.00
	Native American	43,058.16	683	35,501.63	35,000.00
	Black	43,160.03	8,306	38,859.26	34,000.00
	White	69,317.48	78,079	65,612.18	54,000.00
	Non-Hispanic White	69,863.44	75,713	66,062.85	54,500.00
	Hispanic	49,038.10	3,937	44,290.30	39,800.00
	Total	66,216.51	90,056	63,533.06	51,800.00
Born outside U.S.	Vietnamese	70,970.91	290	71,497.02	55,850.00
	Korean	72,491.67	261	95,147.12	50,000.00
	Japanese	91,107.39	110	92,622.87	66,750.50
	Filipino	82,329.04	507	70,607.46	68,000.00
	Chinese	77,335.21	712	66,847.87	60,750.00
	Asian Indian	97,473.01	565	90,231.58	75,500.00
	Native American	42,109.29	41	36,623.42	31,100.00
	Black	52,342.42	770	44,165.63	41,500.50
	White	64,723.47	6,015	68,372.39	46,000.00
	Non-Hispanic White	76,899.82	3,671	76,051.08	57,555.00
	Hispanic	44,468.67	3,896	44,418.36	34,000.00
	Total	64,541.11	11,266	66,639.84	47,000.00
Total	Vietnamese	70,533.45	297	70,935.83	55,700.00
	Korean	72,567.96	276	93,274.32	50,000.00
	Japanese	83,117.87	390	71,426.17	66,000.00
	Filipino	81,030.64	571	68,557.55	67,000.00
	Chinese	81,400.50	828	70,686.89	63,850.00
	Asian Indian	96,289.80	583	89,338.75	75,000.00
	Native American	43,004.43	724	35,540.78	34,700.00
	Black	43,939.06	9,076	39,417.70	35,000.00

	White	68,988.88	84,094	65,823.68	53,600.00
	Non-Hispanic White	70,188.83	79,384	66,573.67	54,700.00
	Hispanic	46,765.35	7,833	44,410.02	36,000.00
	Total	66,030.22	101,322	63,887.80	51,200.00

Hispanic is not a racial category and the U.S. total does not include the Hispanic total.
Total includes all other categories not presented in the table.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey PUMS Data Set.
<http://www.census.gov/c2ss/www/Products/PUMS.htm>.

Table 10. Mean and Median Yearly Household Income by Race and Asian Ethnicity by Place of Birth, 1999 – 2000

Place of Birth	Race and Ethnicity	Mean (\$)	N	Std. Deviation	Median (\$)
US Born	Vietnamese	50,727.65	17	90,593.90	17,600.00
	Korean	71,549.67	30	68,287.94	60,240.00
	Japanese	71,659.75	411	59,403.59	59,120.00
	Filipino	60,618.26	112	45,284.24	49,912.50
	Chinese	81,605.11	206	77,609.92	61,310.00
	Asian Indian	44,652.50	56	39,079.30	37,750.00
	Native American	40,736.90	942	38,388.44	31,900.00
	Black	38,321.78	12,500	36,989.43	29,400.00
	White	59,381.00	115,972	61,454.56	44,850.00
	Non-Hispanic White	59,703.52	112,770	61,831.90	45,000.00
	Hispanic	45,974.77	5,262	43,226.19	36,000.00
	Total	56,969.32	133,757	59,433.73	42,640.00
Born outside US	Vietnamese	68,216.12	345	72,355.08	51,000.00
	Korean	62,064.43	358	84,845.26	41,650.00
	Japanese	67,855.16	204	82,404.26	46,500.00
	Filipino	78,401.71	610	70,730.93	62,550.00
	Chinese	70,026.27	940	67,026.37	53,900.00
	Asian Indian	90,203.88	696	86,630.01	70,550.00
	Native American	38,002.02	55	34,904.90	29,550.00
	Black	48,130.72	1,070	43,309.73	37,950.00
	White	57,642.02	8,412	64,773.84	40,000.00
	Non-Hispanic White	64,341.55	5,579	71,252.19	44,500.00
	Hispanic	44,029.72	4,657	44,135.35	33,600.00
	Total	58,793.19	15,084	63,910.16	41,775.00
Total	Vietnamese	67,394.84	362	73,254.38	50,065.00
	Korean	62,797.82	388	83,645.41	42,010.00
	Japanese	70,397.74	615	67,857.38	55,400.00
	Filipino	75,643.06	722	67,697.35	61,900.00
	Chinese	72,107.63	1,146	69,155.35	55,740.00
	Asian Indian	86,811.76	752	84,853.96	68,100.00
	Native American	40,586.03	997	38,193.46	31,800.00
	Black	39,095.22	13,570	37,617.67	30,000.00
	White	59,263.39	124,384	61,685.95	44,400.00
	Non-Hispanic White	59,922.15	118,349	62,315.39	45,000.00
	Hispanic	45,061.56	9,919	43,663.99	35,000.00
	Total	57,154.15	148,841	59,904.93	42,500.00

Hispanic is not a racial category and the U.S. total does not include the Hispanic total.
Total includes all other categories not presented in the table.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey PUMS Data Set.
<http://www.census.gov/c2ss/www/Products/PUMS.htm>.

Table 11. Mean and Median of Total Person's Yearly Income by Race and Asian Ethnicity by Place of Birth, 25 – 64 Years of Age, 1999 – 2000

Place of Birth	Race and Ethnicity	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Median
U.S. Born	Vietnamese	30,235.00	20	28,569.27	22,000.00
	Korean	51,086.51	43	67,012.79	32,080.00

	Japanese	43,749.91	520	42,001.61	37,115.00
	Filipino	33,363.28	232	33,030.53	29,750.00
	Chinese	51,753.45	275	61,008.62	38,000.00
	Asian Indian	37,170.82	61	33,508.00	30,000.00
	Native American	23,856.09	1,393	23,674.39	19,200.00
	Black	25,200.75	16,072	26,038.28	20,400.00
	White	37,160.28	149,765	46,186.02	28,000.00
	Non-Hispanic White	37,440.18	145,028	46,516.27	28,000.00
	Hispanic	26,838.53	7,858	30,196.78	21,000.00
	Total	35,659.95	173,514	44,307.09	26,900.00
Born outside U.S.	Vietnamese	28,961.92	764	34,630.66	20,050.00
	Korean	31,656.37	683	52,514.87	20,000.00
	Japanese	39,623.75	355	60,492.62	22,000.00
	Filipino	32,949.37	1,299	36,234.45	27,250.00
	Chinese	35,539.77	1,681	43,778.40	24,000.00
	Asian Indian	46,015.05	1,313	60,912.78	30,000.00
	Native American	20,217.65	98	15,609.10	17,450.00
	Black	27,168.70	1,755	27,651.46	22,000.00
	White	31,865.42	12,457	47,147.27	20,000.00
	Non-Hispanic White	39,884.09	7,213	54,930.47	26,000.00
	Hispanic	20,085.69	8,861	28,676.40	15,000.00
	Total	30,570.62	25,078	43,679.36	20,000.00
Total	Vietnamese	28,994.40	784	34,474.56	20,050.00
	Korean	32,807.19	726	53,623.33	20,000.00
	Japanese	42,075.87	875	50,337.42	34,000.00
	Filipino	33,012.09	1,531	35,757.43	27,800.00
	Chinese	37,819.30	1,956	46,908.37	27,000.00
	Asian Indian	45,622.40	1,374	59,982.57	30,000.00
	Native American	23,616.94	1,491	23,244.10	19,000.00
	Black	25,394.49	17,827	26,207.25	20,700.00
	White	36,753.69	162,222	46,281.87	27,000.00
	Non-Hispanic White	37,555.97	152,241	46,951.63	28,000.00
	Hispanic	23,259.55	16,719	29,592.46	17,100.00
	Total	35,017.27	198,592	44,260.50	26,000.00

Hispanic is not a racial category and the U.S. total does not include the Hispanic total.
Total includes all other categories not presented in the table.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey PUMS Data Set.
<http://www.census.gov/c2ss/www/Products/PUMS.htm>.

Conclusion

Koreans enthusiastically responded to the drastic liberalization of U.S. immigration laws in the 1960s, and for the first time in Korea's history, large numbers of Koreans moved to the United States. The number of Koreans in America has increased at an accelerated rate during the 1970s and 1980s, and now has reached more than one million in number. Koreans have become a visible and significant minority in this multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation. This hard-working, highly-educated, and actively organized ethnic community is increasing its stake in the American society. The impact will be tremendous when the second-generation Koreans reach a mature adulthood. As the Korean stake in political and economic affairs is reaching the significant threshold of becoming a viable participant in the American community, the volume of Korean immigration appears to have slowed down.

Aspects of Korean culture and values have influenced the demographics of Korean American society in several ways. These norms reflected in Korean American society may vary in degree, but they still allude to the characteristics found among Korean Americans. The family structure of Koreans in the United States still reflects the stability of the traditional Korean family, as reflected in the higher proportion of children living with both parents and the lower

divorce and separation rates as compared with other groups. When looking at the age and sex structure of the Korean American population, two distinct patterns appear that reflect a gross imbalance in its composition. As the younger Korean population in the United States – those 14 years and under – reflects a sex ratio significantly higher than the national average favoring males, the adult population – those 20 years and older – experiences the exact opposite trend showing a much lower sex ratio than the national mean favoring females. Both trends can be attributed to the influence Korean immigration and Korean social norms have held over the demographics of Korean Americans. Korea is a male-dominant society. These preferences affect the Korean American landscape by making the prospects of immigrating to the United States more attractive to a disproportionately large amount of adult Korean females, and by tolerating the artificial manipulation of births based on gender which favors males.

The data presented here indicate a divergent quality of the Korean American population in terms of citizenship, nativity, language, culture, and socio-economic status. The American-born and English speaking second generation are a significant component of the Korean American community, and their relative share is expected to increase rapidly. Now, two-thirds of Koreans in the United States are U.S. citizens and their identity is definitely a “Korean-American.” At the same time, the economic status in the community is quite polarized. The ever-divergent Korean American population and the significantly reduced volume of new immigration from Korea, point to a rapid transformation of the Korean American community in the near future. The business pattern in the Korean community will significantly diversify and the focus of the immigrant generation small businesses and institutions such as Korean churches and Korean media will have to be broadened in order to survive. These changes will shake up the much isolated community of the first generation Korean Americans and will necessitate the development of social networks with other communities. Those first generation institutions, organizations, and businesses that can not diversify their clientele and can not accommodate the new demands will fade away.

The population size also has a significant bearing not only to the political empowerment of those Koreans who live in the United States, but also on the country they left behind. In this closely tied global village, the number of Koreans, Japanese, and Chinese people living in the United States has a significant affect on the bilateral and multilateral relationships among the United States, Korea, China, and Japan. This significance will only increase in the future. In light of the ever-increasing tide of Chinese immigration to the United States and a significant decline in Korean immigration to the United States, it may be an appropriate time to revisit the proactive emigration policies of the 1960s and 1970s for public debate and policy concern.

The Census 2000 data clearly broadens the scope and definition of the Korean American identity in terms of their language, culture, and progeny. Korean Americans, who do not speak Korean, adopt American values and culture, and have a multi-racial and multi-ethnic heritage, will steadily increase as the main generation of the Korean population gradually shifts to second and succeeding generations, as the Japanese experience has clearly demonstrated. The Korean American is no longer a Korean integrating, or adapting, into mainstream American society, but rather a fusion of Korean and American norms and values forging out their own unique Korean American identity.

Endnotes:

¹ From these numbers, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 182,621 Koreans are “residual foreign born” (<http://www.census.gov/population/documentation/twps0061/ta6-6.xls>). The “residual foreign born” population includes people in “quasi-legal” status who are awaiting action on their legal migration requests as well as “unauthorized” migrants. The numbers specific for these two categories have not been determined, but a great majority of the residual foreign born Koreans are believed to be those persons in quasi-legal status. These “residual foreign born” Koreans are already included in the census totals for Koreans according to the Census Bureau. The theoretical maximum of the Korean population therefore may not significantly exceed 1,228,427, including those Koreans mixed with others, as of 2000.

² U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P20-534; Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2001.

³ <http://www.census.gov/c2ss/www/Products/PUMS.htm>.

⁴ <http://www.ins.gov>.

⁵ Son, Young Ho, “Early Korean Immigrants in America: A Socioeconomic and Demographic Analysis,” Korea Journal Vol. 28, No. 12 (1988), p. 33. Warren Y. Kim, Koreans in America (Seoul: Po Chin Chai Printing Co, 1971), pp. 3-4. Bong-youn Choy, Koreans in America (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979), p. 72. The immigrants during this period were mostly political refugees, students, and petty merchants.

⁶ Ahn Chang Ho’s attempt to peacefully resolve disputes between Korean ginseng merchants in San Francisco in 1902 is a well known Korean anecdote.

⁷ For a detailed political economic analysis of the early Korean immigration to Hawaii, see Wayne Patterson, The Korean Frontier in America: Immigration to Hawaii, 1896-1910 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988).

⁸ Starting with the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, the U.S. Congress enacted a series of laws in order to exclude the Chinese from the United States and by 1900 Chinese were totally banned from entering the country including Hawaii. On the other hand, Japanese laborers in Hawaii organized themselves to demand their rights. There were twenty-nine Japanese inspired work stoppages between 1890 and 1897 and plantation owners looked for another source for more docile labor. See Patterson, Korean Frontier in America, p. 6.

⁹ The number of picture brides varies slightly according to the sources. Bong-youn Choy puts it at around 900 (Koreans in America, Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979, p. 88) and Warren Y. Kim puts it at 1,066 (Koreans in America, Seoul: Po Chin Chai Printing Co, 1971, p. 22). Most of the Korean labor immigrants were poor and not able to afford a trans-Pacific journey to find a spouse. Instead, pictures were exchanged between prospective spouses. Women brought through such arrangements were called picture brides. These brides were better educated than their male partners and led their husbands from Hawaiian farms to Honolulu and California, where they actively took part in church activities and independence movements. For activities of Korean-American women in this period, see Eun Sik Yang, “Korean Women in America: 1903-1930,” in Korean Women in Transition: At Home and Abroad, ed. Eui-Young Yu and Earl H. Phillips (Los Angeles: Center for Korean American and Korean Studies, California State University, Los Angeles, 1987), pp. 167-181. This “picture bride” practice was also common for Japanese and Filipino immigrants at the time.

¹⁰ Warren Y. Kim, Koreans in America (Seoul: Po Chin Chai, 1971), pp. 23-26.

¹¹ Warren Y. Kim, Koreans in America (Seoul: Po Chin Chai Printing Co, 1971), p. 24. Bong-youn Choy, Koreans in America (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979), p.78. Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, Korean Immigrants in America: A Structural Analysis of Ethnic Confinement and Adhesive Adaptation (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), p. 49.

¹² Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, pp. 49-52.

¹³ Of the 15,830 Korean immigrants admitted in year 2000, 7,332 were new arrivals and 8,489 were visa adjustments from nonimmigrant to immigrant status. Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000, Table 11. p. 45.

¹⁴ Wayne Patterson, The Ilse: First-Generation Korean Immigrants in Hawai'i, 1903-1973 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), pp. 123-124.

¹⁵ It is estimated that Korean women married to American soldiers and Korean children adopted to American homes constitute nearly one-quarter of approximately 800,000 Korean immigrants admitted to the United States since 1948 according to statistics published by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

¹⁶ **Northeast** – Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania; **Midwest** – Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas; **South** – Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas; **West** – Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii.

¹⁷ Pyong Gap Min, Caught in the Middle: Korean Communities in New York and Los Angeles, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996), p. 31.

¹⁸ For the white population the ratio of suburb-city living is 54% to 24%. For the Japanese, the distribution is 50% in the suburbs and 41% in the central cities. For the Chinese, the percentage is reversed - 48% in the suburbs and 49% in the central cities. Blacks are largely city dwellers, 53% living in the central cities and 33% in the suburbs. Likewise, more Latinos live in central cities (47%) than in the suburbs (45%).

¹⁹ Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1996-2000, Department of Justice.

²⁰ http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DDTable?_ts=44802365868.

²¹ Pyong Gap Min, "Problems of Korean Immigrant Entrepreneurs," A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Asian Studies Association, San Francisco, March 26, 1988, p. 2; Eui-Young Yu, "Korean Communities in America: Past, Present, and Future," Amerasia 10:2 (1983), pp. 23-35; Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, Korean Immigrants in America: A Structural Analysis of Ethnic Confinement and Adhesive Adaptation (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), p. 226. The Los Angeles Times Poll reported in Karl Schoenberger, "Moving Between 2 Worlds," Los Angeles Times, July 12, 1992, p. A24.

²² U.S. Census Bureau, "Census Bureau News," May 22, 2001, pp. 1-2.
<http://www.census.gov/dcmd/www/embargo/cb1-88.html>.

²³ A high proportion of personal services for Koreans represent those who engage in laundry or dry cleaning businesses.

²⁴ Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, Korean Immigrants in America: A Structural Analysis of Ethnic Confinement and Adhesive Adaptation (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984); Eui-Young Yu, Korean Community Profile, 1990 ; Karl Schoenberger, "Moving Between 2 Worlds," Los Angeles Times, July 12, 1992; Ivan Light and Edna Bonacich, Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Koreans in Los Angeles 1965-1982 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988).

²⁵ Edna Bonacich, Mokerrom Hossain, and Jae-hong Park, "Korean Immigrant Working Women in the Early 1980s," in Korean Women in Transition: At Home and Abroad, ed., Eui Young Yu and Earl H. Phillips (Los Angeles: Center for Korean-American and Korean Studies, California State University, Los Angeles, 1987), pp. 219-247; Kwang Chung Kim and Won Moo Hurh, "Employment of Korean Immigrant Wives and the Division of Household Tasks," In Korean Women in Transition, pp. 199-218.

²⁶ Harold L. Sheppard, "The Potential Role of Behavioral Science in the Solution of the 'Older Worker Problem'," American Behavioral Scientist XIV-1 (September - October 1970), pp. 71-80.