

ETHNIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP OF KOREAN NEW ZEALANDERS: RESTAURANT BUSINESS AS SELF-EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE

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Introduction

While there were a few hundred Koreans living in New Zealand before the late 1980s, Korean migration to New Zealand began in earnest in the early 1990s. This was after the New Zealand Government changed its immigration policy at the end of the 1980s and began to accept non-European immigrants. Soon after, many Koreans immigrated to New Zealand and their numbers grew sharply through the 1990s. This was because Koreans perceived New Zealand as a favourable country in which to live where their children could attain a better education while the adults could enjoy a more leisurely lifestyle. The 1997 financial crisis in Korea pushed many Koreans to return to their homeland, but by 2000 the number of Korean immigrants grew again and the number surpassed 20,000 in 2002. Soon, however, the growth rate of Korean immigrants slowed due to the restrictive immigration policies of the New Zealand Government. At the same time, many Koreans who had immigrated to New Zealand re-migrated to other countries such as Australia, Canada and the US in search of better opportunities. Many others returned to their homeland for the same purpose.

The New Zealand Census (conducted in 2006) showed that there were 30,792 Koreans in the country, making Koreans the third largest Asian group after Chinese and Indians. About 70% of Koreans are concentrated in the Auckland region, and within Auckland, the great majority of Korean immigrants live in the North Shore area. Korean New Zealanders are relatively young with half of them aged below 25 years old, reflecting the fact that many Korean families migrated here for their children's education.

Koreans in New Zealand are generally envied by their friends and relatives in South Korea as the latter believe that the former enjoy a leisurely lifestyle in a clean environment with a good education system. While many Korean immigrants enjoy their lives in this country, they feel that their employment opportunities are very limited. The unemployment rate among Korean immigrants in New Zealand is higher than that of other migrants including Chinese New Zealanders (Meares *et al* 2010: 35).¹ The income

1 According to a New Zealand Department of Labour (2006 census), the median income of Asian immigrants in New Zealand was \$14,500, which is lower than those of other racial groups such as Pacific Islanders (\$20,500), Maori (\$20,900), and Europeans (\$25,400). In addition, in the same year 27.6% of the Asian population earned less than \$5,000, compared with 12.1% of the whole population, 13.9% of Maori, and 17.2% of Pacific Islanders.

level of Korean New Zealanders is also lower than those of other Asian groups and more than half of the Korean immigrants to New Zealand say that their total income is not enough to meet their everyday expenses (Meares *et al* 2010; Morris 2007). In part, this is due to the relatively younger age of Korean migrants, indeed many are young students.

In any case, one third of Korean New Zealanders are unemployed, and such a high unemployment rate and the associated low income levels reflect the challenges Korean New Zealanders face in adapting to a different environment in New Zealand. Local Korean newspapers have been describing the status of the Korean community in New Zealand as “a total crisis” already for several years. Such an on-going sense of crisis represents the current economic status of the New Zealand Korean community, and this also causes re-migration to other countries as well as return-migration to Korea. In particular, young people who failed in finding jobs after finishing their tertiary education often return migrate to Korea (*cf.* Koo 2010).

Table 1 Permanent and long-term migration of South Koreans to New Zealand (1990-2012).

Year	Arrivals	Departures	Net	Total Number
1990	460	42	418	
1991	650	126	524	927
1992	847	144	703	
1993	2,533	147	2,386	
1994	3,019	131	2,888	
1995	3,953	267	3,686	
1996	3,161	477	2,684	12,753
1997	1,293	724	569	
1998	723	792	-69	
1999	694	644	50	
2000	1,077	1,032	45	
2001	2,420	1,215	1,205	19,026
2002	3,503	1,624	1,879	
2003	3,228	2,434	794	
2004	2,204	2,884	-680	
2005	1,769	2,492	-723	
2006	1,896	1,825	71	30,792
2007	2,068	1,861	207	
2008	1,908	2,069	-161	
2009	2,136	2,152	-16	
2010	1,983	2,195	-212	
2011	1,727	2,150	-423	28,806
2012	1,584	1,707	-123	

Sources: (1) New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006;
(2) NZ Statistics.

It is in this context that many Korean immigrants favour self-employment. While they are engaged in a variety of businesses, many Koreans choose the restaurant business. Ever since the first Korean restaurant opened on Upper Queen Street in 1991, many other Korean immigrants have ventured into this business. Today there are about 200 Korean-run restaurants in the Auckland region alone. This is approximately one restaurant for every 150 Koreans and these restaurants represent about 10% of all businesses owned by Korean immigrants in New Zealand (New Zealand Korean Restaurant Association; NZKRA).

Considering the importance of the restaurant business to Korean immigrants, this article explores the development of ethnic entrepreneurship in the restaurant business and the strategies that Korean restaurateurs use to survive in the competitive Auckland restaurant market. As a background to Korean New Zealanders' ethnic entrepreneurship, we will first look at the economic situation of Korean immigrants in New Zealand. Then, we will examine Korean self-employment practices in the restaurant industry in the Auckland region. In so doing, we will look at the similarities and differences between the activities of Korean New Zealanders and Korean Americans in this particular type of business and its environment. Finally, the article will explain how Korean restaurateurs in New Zealand have adopted and developed new strategies to survive in the market. Such a study will deepen not only our understanding of the restaurant businesses that Korean New Zealanders run but also of the general conditions of the Korean immigrant community in this country.

Ethnic Entrepreneurship among Korean Immigrants in New Zealand

Korean migrants in North America are known for their high rate of self-employment that reflects the employment barriers caused by linguistic and cultural disadvantages that they face in their new home (Light & Bonacichi 1998; Yoon 1995). In some cases Koreans found 'ethnic business niches' and established 'ethnic hegemonies' in which they controlled most of the processes in the industry. Examples of this kind of industry include dry cleaning businesses in the US garment industry in Argentina, and sushi businesses in the US. Success factors include conventional elements (economic disadvantage, ethnic resources, ethnic enclaves, middleman minority strategies, niche-seeking based on ethnic and class resources). Similarly important, however, are the historical and economic environment factors. In the case of the garment industry in Latin America, Korean success in the particular industry was largely due to the timing (old and retiring Jews and new younger Korean migrants in the North and South Americas). Changes in the global economic environment were also important including a fabric production shift from Europe to Asia in the 1970s; Korea's dominance in garment manufacturing and fabric production; the existence of cheap labour such as the illegal migrants from Latin America in North America and Bolivian migrants in Argentina.

In New Zealand, Korean migrants perceive that they face much bigger challenges than their counterparts in North America due to the much smaller size of the New Zealand market. Like their counterparts in the US, Korean immigrants in New Zealand have the highest rate of self-employment, higher than the averages of the locals or even

of Chinese immigrants (Meares *et al.* 2010), who are known for their entrepreneurial skills. Today Korean New Zealanders run more than 2,000 businesses in New Zealand, which is a surprisingly large number if we consider that there are only about 32,000 Koreans in the country. Similarly, research in Australia also confirms that Korean immigrants in Australia show a very high rate of self-employment, in fact the Korean rate of self-employment is twice as high as the Australian average (Collins & Shin 2012). The high number of Korean businesses in New Zealand also indicates that the scale of their businesses is rather small.

Why, then, do Koreans in New Zealand show such a high rate of self-employment? Ethnic entrepreneurship has attracted academic attention for a long time and there are two prominent theses in explanation of ethnic entrepreneurship: the cultural predisposition thesis and the economic disadvantage thesis.

According to the cultural predisposition thesis, certain ethnic minorities have a predisposition to self-employment due to their traditions or family background. For example, according to this school, certain ethnic groups tend to have strong cultural predispositions towards thrift, hard work, community cohesion and self-sufficiency. In discussing Korean immigrants in North America, researchers often explain the prominence of ethnic Korean entrepreneurship in terms of their willingness to work long hours, the reliance of Korean businesses on unpaid family labour and extended kin networks (Yoon 1995, 328; Park 1997, 47). A strong work ethic, the importance of class and status, and rotating credit associations (*kye*) among Korean immigrants are factors that are cited as originating in their cultural traditions (Light & Bonacich 1988, 18-19; Min 2000, 718). They also underline the fact that Korean immigrants are culturally homogenous, share the same language, and maintain a strong sense of ethnic solidarity and attachment in spite of their dislocation from their homeland. Strong social networks such as Korean churches and alumni associations also explain geographic clustering and specialization in specific types of business (Light & Bonacich 1988).

The cultural predisposition thesis, however, has been criticised sometimes for its disregard of the fact that ethnic communities' entrepreneurship can vary according to the country where migrants settle, and the time period in which the migration occurs. Although Korean immigrants show a strong link to entrepreneurship in the Americas, such a link seems to be weaker in other parts of the world (Wadeson *et al.* 2008). For example, Koreans in China do not show a strong tendency toward entrepreneurship in China even though they have lived there for more than a century.²

The economic disadvantage thesis, on the other hand, stresses the disadvantages that immigrants face in host societies, and these include racial/ethnic discrimination, language barriers, and the unrecognised credentials of migrants. Researchers emphasised that the

2 This might be related to China's being a socialist country. However, before the 1940s when China became a communist country, Korean Chinese were largely engaged in agricultural activities. Some Koreans in the Soviet Union, meanwhile, showed entrepreneurial acumen even under the communist regime while most of them also engaged in agricultural activities (*cf.* Song 2010 b).

reason why Korean immigrants to the US have such a high rate of self-employment is that it is very difficult for them to find jobs due to their insufficient language skills and the host society's discrimination. Regardless of their qualifications back home, the only jobs that they can normally get are blue collar jobs. Therefore, the self-employment of Korean immigrants in the US and New Zealand can be explained by the limited number of opportunities in the general labour market (*cf.* Yoon 1995; Lee 2008).

Many Koreans in New Zealand say that language barriers prevented them from being employed in the New Zealand job market even though in most cases they had the necessary job skills. In addition, most jobs that were available to them were low-wage jobs, and they were reluctant to take those jobs. Indeed, most Korean immigrants experience occupational down-shifting on arriving in New Zealand and often this pushes them to self-employment. As a matter of fact, most businessmen say that they first tried to find work before opening their small business. The high level of self-employment among Koreans in Auckland seems to reflect a strategy through which they try to overcome some of the challenges they face in New Zealand (Meares *et al* 2010: 97; Lee 2008).

The economic disadvantage thesis also has been criticised for its disregard of the difficulties of entering into self-employment. Wadeson (2008: 584) emphasises that entrepreneurship, ethnic or not, requires a certain degree of knowledge about the industry and clientele, access to finance, the ambition to succeed and favourable contextual factors such low barriers to entry. In running their businesses, Koreans rely extensively on co-ethnic contacts and pre-existing networks and this is also a factor in their entry into a certain business. In fact, Korean immigrants today have relatively good ethnic and class resources such as the strong desire for success and a high educational level, and this helps them to move to self-employment. Korean immigrants also have certain ethnic resources such as access to inexpensive and reliable labour, i.e., family members. As matter of fact, most Korean restaurants in Auckland, like their Chinese, Vietnamese and Indians counterparts, are very much family businesses and rely heavily on family members. Korean credit associations, like *kye*, also help small businesses by offering them access to cheaper finance.

Then, there are also other factors that determine ethnic entrepreneurialism. They include contextual factors such as class resources, opportunities, and the policies of both the host and sending countries. In the case of New Zealand, the ethnic business behaviour of Koreans has also been influenced by the multiple changes in New Zealand's immigration policies over the last twenty years. The introduction of the long-term business visa scheme in the early 1990s attracted many Korean immigrants, who, otherwise, would have difficulties in obtaining immigration visas. As the long-term business visa requires that applicants set up a business as soon as they arrive in New Zealand and show its viability within two years, Korean immigrants in this visa category must give their all to run successful businesses. Therefore, many Koreans opened Korean restaurants, lunch bars and cafes, and the ownership of these businesses tends to change frequently.

In the case of Korean migrants, support from the homeland government is increasingly important. This is thanks to the diasporic engagement policy of the South Korean Government active since the end of the 1990s. South Korea has been giving

virtual extra-territorial citizenship rights (voting rights, recognition of dual nationality and so on) to its diaspora, and it also has been actively building networks among the elements of the Korean diaspora and between the diaspora and their ethnic homeland. In recent years, with its effort to promote Korean food overseas (the 'Globalisation of Korean Food Project'), the South Korean Government has provided various types of support for Korean restaurants overseas, and this includes helping restaurateurs to standardise menus, publishing Romanised menus of Korean dishes, offering training opportunities to Korean restaurateurs overseas, and promoting Korean food through the major media. Since 2012 the South Korean Government has been holding training sessions for Korean restaurateurs in Auckland. Though the benefit of such events has been very limited so far, one can expect that this would have some kind of positive impact on Korean restaurant businesses in the long run.

Though many Korean immigrants are self-employed, it should be pointed out that in New Zealand their income is lower than those of some other Asian ethnic groups. This is congruent with other research on Korean migrants (*cf.* Morris 2007).³ Therefore, many Korean immigrants experience considerable financial hardship after arrival in New Zealand.

As stated above, the 2012 survey shows that there were about 2,000 businesses in Auckland run by Koreans (*Good Day New Zealand* August 2012). According to the survey, Koreans are concentrated in ten business sectors and the most popular sectors are construction and the restaurant industry (Table 2). There are 200 Korean restaurant businesses and this is the second most popular business sector among all Korean-owned businesses in Auckland right after the construction sector where the number of businesses is 220. Other business types popular with Korean entrepreneurs include real estate agencies, religious organisations, hair salons and skin care clinics, health food stores, groceries and general stores. Interestingly, there were 90 international student service businesses (ranked 8th), followed in popularity by automobile service and accessory businesses (ranked 9th) and 'cleaning' businesses (ranked 10th). Self-employment in jobs such as cleaning, painting, and construction are relatively new for Korean businessmen, and the number of people entering such industries has increased over the last ten years. Due to the active bilateral relations between New Zealand and Australia, the Korean communities in the two countries also influence each other. For example, in the late 1970s very few Koreans in New Zealand entered subcontracts in the cleaning and construction industries but the two industries were the major Korean business sectors in Australia and at the time there were about 20 businesses in Sydney (*cf.* Söl 2002: 278).

Most of these businesses are ethnic businesses and heavily rely on Korean immigrants. The range of occupations entered by Korean immigrants has grown continuously through the 1990s and 2000s, but most remain ethnic businesses in terms of their source capital and business operation (Lidgard & Yoon 1998). Other scholars

3 However, many of them have their own home either in New Zealand or in Korea (Meares *et al* 2010). In this regard, Korean immigrants are different from Pacific Island immigrants.

also point out that Koreans frequently run their own businesses such as souvenir shops, restaurants, travel agencies, and dairies (Yoon & Yim 1997). These are also small in scale and deal mostly with Korean customers and suppliers, relying very much on their own ethnic communities. There is a need for them to expand their business areas to cater to the needs of mainstream New Zealand consumers.

Table 2 Korean businesses in Auckland (2012).

Business	Number	Rank
Construction (including building, painting, plumbing, flooring and so on)	220	1
Restaurants (Korean, Japanese, Chinese, cafes and so on)	200	2
Real estate	170	3
Religious Services (Christian, Buddhist and others)	150	4
Hair and skin care	130	5
Health food	120	6
Groceries and marts	100	7
International student services	90	8
Automobile services(service, accessory and others)	70	9
Cleaning	50	10

Sources: *Good Day New Zealand* (August 2012).

Korean-run Restaurant Businesses in Auckland: Challenges and Responses

1. Development and Challenges

As stated above, many Korean immigrants choose restaurants as the business sector in which to begin their self-employment projects. They normally open Korean restaurants serving ethnic Korean food because they have a comparative advantage in that market. According to the Auckland Korean Telephone Directory published in 2005, there were 209 restaurants in Auckland run by Koreans, and more than 40% of them were Korean restaurants. The New Zealand Korean Restaurant Association’s “Auckland Korean Restaurant Guide 2013” lists 67 Korean style restaurants in the Auckland region with their names and contact details.

The first Korean restaurants appeared on the upper part of Queen Street in the early 1990s when the number of Korean immigrants and students were arriving from Korea was increasing. Ilmi Restaurant opened on Queen Street in 1991 and was the first Korean restaurant in New Zealand. At that time the restaurant’s customers were almost 100% Korean immigrants and students. Queen Street was a good location for such a business as a large number of students lived around the area due to the presence of two universities and numerous English academies in the Auckland CBD. In addition, rent in that area was cheaper than in downtown Auckland.

Table 3 Korean-owned Restaurant Businesses in 2005 and 2013.

Year	Korean style	Japanese	Chinese (Korean style)	Western style (cafes, lunch bars, bars)
2005	84	61	14	50
2013	67 (according to the New Zealand Korean Restaurant Association)	19	10	34

Sources: Auckland Korean Telephone Directory (2005) and Korean Business Directory by the *Good Day New Zealand* (2013) (<http://sydney.goodday.co.nz/index.php?mid=auckland&category=5567&page=2>).

Not long after Ilmi Restaurant was opened, a few more Koreans opened similar restaurants on Queen Street. By the late 2000s Queen Street would host more than ten Korean-owned restaurants. They were modest and inexpensive restaurants. In the beginning their customer base was Korean students living in the Auckland City Centre and Korean immigrants. Due to their location, in a place where pedestrian traffic is high, they also served some New Zealanders who developed a taste for Asian food. By the late 2000s the main customers of many of these restaurants were Chinese students, whose numbers are far greater than those of Korean students.

Increasing Competition

As one Korean restaurant opens, others follow suit. Soon the upper part of Queen Street was filled with many Korean-run restaurants including Japanese and Korean-style Chinese restaurants. Often existing business collapses when it does not compete well with the new ones. Before 2000, there were several small Korean restaurants and only three to four big ones, which catered for group tourists from Korea. In the period of 2000-2005 the number of Korean restaurants grew continuously and by 2005 there were 84 Korean restaurants (as seen above). Still most of these restaurants catered to Koreans. As the competition got tougher, some shifted to Japanese style restaurants such as sushi bars. Competition intensified in the period from 2005-2007 as the number of Korean restaurants continued to grow.

Over-competition among Korean restaurants brought many negative results to the owners of those restaurants. First of all, the Korean restaurants had to reduce their prices to compete with rivals. In addition, they had to increase the level of services that they offered – such as increasing the number of side dishes – to keep their customers. This inevitably squeezed the already thin profit margins and in addition the New Zealand economy was sluggish in the period from 2007-2009, and this eventually pushed some 30% of Korean restaurants into bankruptcy or closure (NZKRA; New Zealand Korean Restaurant Association 2012).

Why, then, was there such high competition in the restaurant business? The long-term business visa scheme, which was introduced in the early 2000s, was one contributor to this. As the Asian financial crisis was over by the early 2000s, Koreans

began to migrate to New Zealand again. However, the English score required for the general immigration quota was too high for many to achieve. Therefore, many Koreans chose to come through the newly introduced Long-term Business Visa Scheme, which requires them open a business in New Zealand. Many Korean migrants chose this visa scheme as a means to obtain permanent residency, and often bought an 'easy' business to run. While the 'easy' businesses they chose were often lunch bars and cafes, that do not require too much work but are easy to maintain (so that they can maintain their visa status while their children get a free public education),⁴ many Korean migrants also chose the restaurant business and this intensified the competition in the restaurant business. Knowing that Korean immigrants with such visas would want to buy restaurant businesses, a few restaurateurs sold their businesses after creating a viable brand. For example, the former owner of the popular Korean restaurant, Nalbune Restaurant, in the Auckland CBD sold it to a new owner after the restaurant became popular. Then, that individual opened another restaurant (Bongane Restaurant), and sold that restaurant after making it a profitable business.

While there is increasing competition between Korean style restaurants in Auckland, Korean restaurateurs organised themselves and in 2011 the New Zealand Korean Restaurant Association (Jaenyu Hanin Eumsigöp Hyöphoe; NZKRA) was formed. This organisation includes Korean restaurants, Japanese restaurants, Korean-style Chinese restaurants, cafes and other restaurant businesses run by Koreans in New Zealand. It supports its members through collective purchasing, and also provides various services. The formation of such an organisation was possible due to the 'Globalisation of Korean Food' policy pursued by the South Korean Government. Korean restaurateurs in New Zealand were provided with standard English menus for Korean dishes and in 2012 the South Korean Government sent a training team, comprised of marketing specialists and a chef, for the Korean restaurateurs of New Zealand.

2. Responses and Strategies

After 2009 some successful Korean restaurateurs and Korean immigrants with more capital began to increase the size of their restaurants. Faro in Lorne Street is a good example of such a restaurant. At the same time, some Korean restaurants specialised in BBQ, *sundaeguk*, *gamja-tang* (pork-bone soup with potatoes and other vegetables), and so on. An extreme case was a puffer restaurant, which specialised in puffer fish dishes. Such efforts were adopted for survival in a competitive environment and were also made possible by the emergence of a few new generation restaurant owners, who came with new ideas and visions.

4 Often, for those who chose 'easy' businesses such as lunch bars running their business profitably was not the main goal. Their main goal was maintaining a business so that they could keep their visa status. This way, they could educate their children in New Zealand public schools for free while the adults could play golf, which is very expensive in Korea, cheaply. After they failed to renew their long-term visa status (due to their unprofitable business operations), they happily returned to Korea with their children after selling their business to new migrants who came from Korea for a similar purpose.

De-Ethnicisation

De-ethnicisation – lessening the Korean exterior or façade of Korean food and making it more universal – is a common strategy for some Korean restaurateurs to adopt. A good example of such a strategy would be the No.1 Pancake Shop on Lorne Street. This shop originally sold ‘hottök’, a freshly fried pancake-like snack with sweet sugar inside. Then, gradually the shop developed other menu items by varying the contents of the pancake, for example filling it with cheese, sweet red bean paste, meat, and vegetables. Eventually it became a very popular place and on any day one can see a long queue of young people eagerly waiting for their favourite pancakes. This is an excellent business model in many regards. The shop occupies a tiny space in an exterior wall of another restaurant, and it serves very simple food, which is easy to prepare (only pan-frying). The pancakes are only a few dollars but they can be a meal for some people. The place became so popular that the New Zealand Herald reported it as a successful business.

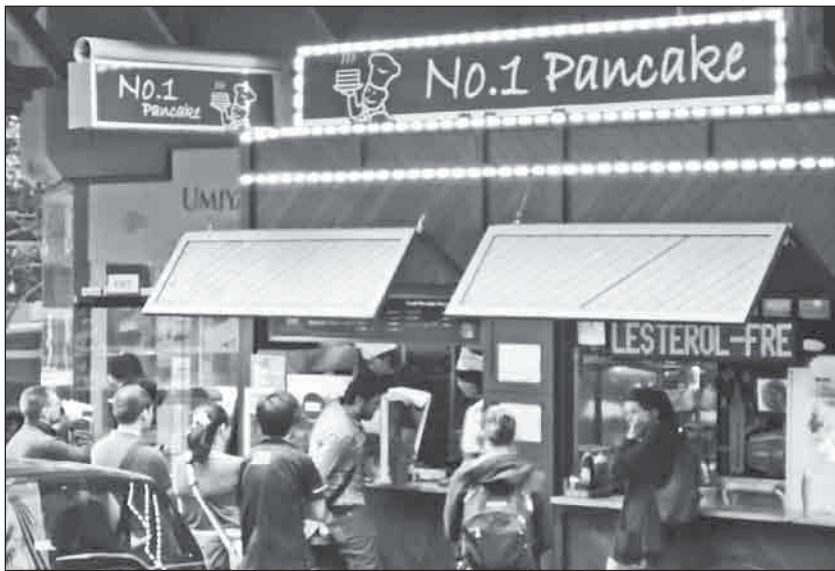


Figure 1. No.1 Pancake Shop in Auckland CBD.

Japanese sushi bars

While some chose to open Korean restaurants, utilising their unique ethnic resources, some others found that sushi bars a better option. Therefore, an increasing number of Koreans choose to deal with Japanese food (particularly sushi), or Western food (in cafes and lunch bars). The 2005 telephone directory of the Korean community lists 61 Japanese restaurants –14 Chinese (Korean-style Chinese food), and 50 Western-style cafes, restaurants, and bars (Han, 2007: 182).

The first owners of Japanese restaurants in Auckland learned sushi-making at the main Japanese food chain St. Pierre's Sushi and opened sushi bars. Sushi was just beginning to be popular among Aucklanders, and sushi bars were better than Korean restaurants in many regards. First of all, sushi bars do not require a large space especially if they are of the takeaway variety. Secondly, making sushi does not require as much labour or ingredients as preparing Korean food. This means less staff, less kitchen space, and lower rent. Best of all, sushi bars attract main stream customers, which Korean style restaurants could not. Finally, profits from sushi bars are generally higher than those from Korean style restaurants. Locals normally do not know if the proprietors are Korean or Japanese or simply do not care. Japanese restaurant owners wear Japanese style uniforms and use Japanese style décor. Between 2005 and 2007 many Koreans joined this business area and soon some of those people who used to run Korean restaurants shifted to sushi bars or Japanese style restaurants. Soon, Koreans began to dominate the sushi bars of Auckland, and today about 70% of Japanese restaurants in New Zealand are owned and operated by Koreans.

Re-Ethnicisation for Chinese Customers

Korean restaurants in Auckland have also been influenced by demographic changes in the city. Until the mid-2000s when there were many Korean students learning English, Korean restaurants both in the Auckland CBD and suburbs where Koreans were concentrated did relatively well. However, when the number of Korean students decreased in the late-2000s, these restaurants saw their sales drop. Nevertheless, as the number of Chinese students continued to increase in the Auckland CBD, some Korean restaurants that successfully catered to those Chinese students began to prosper. As their customer base shifted from Koreans to Chinese, these restaurants also went through various changes in their menu and staffing policies. Popularity of Korean restaurants among Chinese is similar in Sydney (Collins & Shin 2012: 38).

The Korean restaurants in Upper Queen Street have for some time mostly catered to Chinese students, who live in the area where there are many student accommodation facilities. To cater to the tastes of these young Chinese the restaurants have focused on new items such as *gamjatang*, which Chinese call 'potato and pork bone soup' (土豆猪骨汤). These restaurants have also changed their menus, and the signs on the wall to Chinese. They also hire Chinese staff to serve Chinese customers better, but at the same time also keep Korean staff to maintain a 'Korean' atmosphere.

While these Korean style restaurants changed their original concept to cater to their new Chinese customers, they also re-ethnicised their businesses to attract Chinese customers. Changing the menu and the staff are good ways to attract Chinese customers but the restaurants also have to display the Koreanness that these new customers have come to experience. Therefore, they decorate their restaurants in such a way as to emphasise their Korean 'authenticity'. Such efforts come in many different forms and one of them is to reveal such identity in the name of the restaurant. The 'Seoul' restaurant on Upper Queen is a good example. In addition to the big English signs reading, 'Seoul', the restaurant's signboard also contains four Chinese



Figure 2. Restaurant Seoul on the upper part of Queen Street.



Figure 3. Kangnam Style BBQ and salad buffet restaurant in Takapuna.

characters, 大韓民國, which indicates South Korea. This is an emphasis of the restaurant's authenticity as a Korean restaurant.

Most Korean style restaurateurs utilise the recent *Hallyu* (Korean wave) phenomenon as a marketing resource for their restaurants. One such example is the Kangnam Style BBQ and Salad Buffet Restaurant in Takapuna, which transformed itself from a Korean style Chinese restaurant.

This contributes to the globalisation of Korean food. For example, Koreans in the former Soviet Union 'globalised' Korean food such as kimchi throughout the entire Soviet Union (Song 2010b). Korean migrants in North America and Western Europe also contributed to the globalisation of Japanese sushi (Song 2010a). These are all results brought about by the efforts of the Korean diaspora who endeavour to survive in their host societies where they seek self-employment as a means of livelihood.

In addition, due to rising health concerns, the new trends in the Korean restaurant business have been towards well-being, fusion, and healing (NZKRA 2012). These trends are reflected in the Korean restaurants in the North Shore Korean community.

All these strategies are adopted by Korean restaurateurs running Korean-style restaurants in Auckland to attract mainstream customers. In so doing, they contribute to the globalisation of Korean food. The globalisation of ethnic food happens upon multiple layers of historical background and contingency. What we call ethnic foods normally have been developed through a complicated history of trade, colonial rule, geographical proximity with other countries, and the migrations of peoples (Bell and Valentine 1997: 169), and in just this same way Korean immigrants are in the process of creating an ethnic food.

Conclusion

Korean immigrants in New Zealand show a high rate of self-employment, and such ethnic entrepreneurship can be explained by the economic disadvantages they experience in New Zealand, which are largely due to their lack of English skills. Therefore, self-employment is a way of participating in productive activity in New Zealand (Lee 2008). One of the most popular small businesses that Korean immigrants in New Zealand choose is the restaurant business. Initially, Korean immigrants ran Korean (and Korean-style Chinese) restaurants mostly catering to Korean customers. Some Koreans chose to open Japanese sushi bars to cater to mainstream customers. After the New Zealand Government's introduction of the long-term business visa category in 1999, some Korean immigrants who came through the scheme opted to run lunch bars and cafes for mainstream customers.

Korean restaurants have been facing various challenges in New Zealand. First of all, relying heavily on Korean customers, these restaurants have had a very narrow customer base. Korean restaurants experience especially tough times when the numbers of Korean immigrants or students shrink due to changes in the immigration policy of the New Zealand Government or in South Korea's economic situation. Secondly, competition among Korean restaurants has become increasingly harsh as more Koreans

enter that business sector. To survive in this tough environment Korean restaurateurs have developed a variety of strategies. The falling number of Koreans in Auckland has especially influenced the operation of Korean style restaurants on Queen Street.

One of the prominent phenomena in the behaviour of Korean restaurateurs in New Zealand is that many of them run Japanese restaurants. This is another effort by Korean immigrants to find a niche in the already competitive restaurant business, and today about 70% of Japanese restaurants in Auckland are owned and operated by Koreans. Koreans who run Japanese restaurants say that running a Japanese restaurant is easier than running a Korean one. It is the case not only here in New Zealand, but in fact also in North America and Western Europe that Koreans are prominent in the Japanese sushi business. In New Zealand, Korean immigrants have found this niche market particularly useful for themselves.

Instead of serving primarily Korean customers as they did until the late 2000s, many restaurateurs have changed their customer base to include Chinese people, the number of whom is much larger than that of Koreans. In so doing, the menu, decor, and staff of these Korean restaurants have also changed. Conventional menus were replaced with those that Chinese normally favour. Nevertheless, such de-ethnicisation was also accompanied by a simultaneous re-ethnicisation to maintain the authenticity of the Korean restaurants. This will further contribute to the globalisation of Korean food, which is also pursued by the South Korean Government. The South Korean Government's plan to globalise Korean food will have a greater impact on the restaurant businesses of Korean immigrants in the future.

The history of Korean migration to New Zealand is still short with only two decades of history, and Korean ethnic entrepreneurship is still in the process of adjusting to the New Zealand market. Korean New Zealanders will find their niches in New Zealand society as their counterparts in the Americas did. While adapting to the changing environment, Korean restaurant businesses will contribute to the diversification of the culinary culture of New Zealand.

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