

ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATORY

RESEARCH REPORT #8

**AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF KOREANS IN QUEENS, NEW YORK
AND ELSEWHERE IN THE UNITED STATES**

Preliminary Report for Joint Statistical Agreement 89-16

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**An Ethnography of Koreans in Queens, New York
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I Brief History of Korean American Immigration

a. Three Waves of Immigrations

The first wave of Korean immigrants to the U.S. took place between 1903 -1905. Some 7000 Korean males, came to Hawaii as farm laborers. Within a few years 1000 of them returned to Korea. Approximately 2000 of the early immigrants left Hawaii and came to the Mainland. Between 1907 to 1924 several thousand more Koreans came to the U.S. as "picture brides" (Houchins, and Houchins 1976).

Not until the Korean War did Korean immigrants come in substantial numbers. Passage of the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 increased the number of Koreans. They came as refugees, wives of American servicemen, war orphans and students. Between 1951 and 1964, 6,400 Korean war brides and 5,300 orphans came to the U.S. (Hurh and Kim, 1984).

The liberalized immigration law of 1965 opened the door to Asian immigrants, and resulted in a chain migration pattern that increased the size of the Korean American population by fivefold from 70,000 to 355,000 between 1970 to 1980 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1981). Average annual Korean immigration figures reached 30,000 around 1975. Since 1980, the annual immigration varied between 32,000 and

33,000 (U.S. Department of Justice; 1952-1986). By 1990 the number of Korean Americans is expected to be somewhere between 814,000 (Bureau of the Census, 1989) and a million (Min, 1988). The 1965 law allowed the following two groups to bring their relatives into the U.S.: 1) wives of U.S. servicemen and 2) students and professionals. Between 1953 to 1980 about 15,000 students came to the U.S. and only around 10 percent returned home (Illsoo Kim, 1987). During the period 1966 to 1979 about 13,000 Korean doctors, nurses and pharmacists immigrated to America (Illsoo Kim, 1987). The number of Korean war brides immigrating during the period 1962 to 1983 reached about 80,000 (Illsoo Kim, 1987). Once initial immigrants were somewhat settled, the cycle of migration chain started. An immigrant sends for his/her spouse, children and his/her parents (the 2nd preference). After obtaining his citizenship, he brings over his brothers and sister (the 5th preference). These siblings in turn invite over their spouses, children, and their parents.

Although the exact figure is not known, a sizable number of Koreans have illegally immigrated to the U.S. There are several ways illegal immigrants enter the U.S.: 1. one goes underground after his/her visa status is expired (visitor's, student's, businessman's); or 2. one crosses into the U.S. from the Mexican or Canadian border; or 3. one enters through an airport into the U.S. on his/her apparent destination of Mexico, Canada or one of the South American countries. During my research field work on Korean Americans

conducted in New York city in the summer of 1989, I encountered several individuals who managed to change their status into that of legal resident immigrants after having lived as illegal aliens in the U.S.

Korean immigrants tend to concentrate in a few states where large metropolitan areas could provide relatively favorable economic opportunities for new comers. In 1970, 14% of Koreans resided in Hawaii, while California accommodated 24% and New York 8.6%. In 1973, the states of California and New York attracted 33% of all Korean immigrants: California received 22% and New York 11% (Koo and Yu, 1980). In 1976, 17% of Korean-Americans reported their residence in California (U.S. Department of Justice, 1976). However, in contrast to other Asian American groups, Koreans are more widely dispersed in all states. For example, 41% of all Koreans settled in the Western region compared to 81% of the Japanese and 57% of the Chinese populations; 19% of Koreans were drawn to the South compared to 8% of the Chinese and 5% of the Japanese (Yu, 1977). In 1979, 15% of all Koreans lived in Los Angeles county, while New York City had 6% of the group. Chicago and Honolulu drew 4% and 3% of this population respectively (Koo and Yu, 1980). According to the 1980 Census (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1981), the share of Koreans reported to live in California increased to 29.3% in 1980, followed by New York (9.6%), Illinois (6.8%), and Hawaii (5.1%). Thus the recent Korean influx was concentrated in urban areas (67%).

However, the urban proportion is the lowest among all other Asian American groups, even lower than the U.S. national average (74%) (Yu, 1977).

b. Korean American Community in Queens

There were only several hundred students and wives of American servicemen in the metropolitan area of New York until the immigration law of 1965 took effect. With passage of the 1965 law, professionals - doctors, nurses, and pharmacists came in as 3rd preference category immigrants. Subsequently, professionals, students, and wives of the G.I.s brought their spouses, children and parents. Now the migration chain is in full motion.

Two groups of early Korean immigrants came and settled in the Queens area. The first group were employees of the Korean businesses and government who came to the U.S. to participate in the 1964 World's Fair held in Flushing Meadow. Some of those Korean participants decided to stay in the U.S. rather than go back to Korea. Already there were Japanese Americans and some Chinese Americans in the Flushing area. Japanese businessmen, working on their overseas assignments in the New York City area during the 60's and 70's, were attracted to the Flushing area for its relatively inexpensive rents and convenient access to the transportation system. In the late 70's an Asian food store,

and a few Asian restaurants opened along the Main Street area of Flushing.

The second group of Koreans to settle in Queens were professionals who came to the U.S. with the liberalized 1965 immigration law. They also brought many relatives with them. Many of these families chose to settle in the New York area. One of the circumstances revolved around the fact that during the 60's the Korean government sent a large number of miners and nurses to West Germany. Many nurses married over-educated yet underemployed Korean miners in Germany. A substantial number of these Korean nurses took advantage of the 1965 law, and immigrated to the U.S.. Then, they brought their husbands, children and often their parents over. Another rapidly accelerating migration cycle was started.

In the early 70's, Korean nurses started moving into the apartments near several large hospitals where they worked. In Elmhurst, two large apartment buildings stand right across the street from the Elmhurst Hospital in Queens. Since the mid-70's these two apartment complexes have been nearly taken over by Korean nurses. It was a classic textbook case of the invasion-succession cycle of immigration and residential settlement pattern in operation.

II. Community Characteristics

a. Geographic Distribution of Korean American Population in

Queens

In 1980 the census reported 62.3% of 23,000 Korean Americans in New York City resided in Queens. Until recent years, the number of Asians, Blacks and Hispanics in Queens was small. "Queens was white" (Sanjek, 1988). However, in 1980 Queens contained a substantial number of minority populations. Out of 1,900,000 total population, 19% was Black, 14% Hispanic, and 5% Asian. Among Asians, Koreans ranked third in population size after Chinese and Asian Indians.

In mid-1989, the population size of Korean Americans in the New York City area is estimated to be somewhere between 73,000 (Min, 1989) and 75,000 (an informal estimate given by New York City Planning Council, summer, 1989). Min (1989) estimates the distribution of Korean American in the New York City in 1989 to be as follows: 68.5% in Queens, 12% in Manhattan, 10% in the Bronx and a little over 2% for Staten Island. Korean Americans in Queens settled along the # 7 subway line. Coming into Queens from Manhattan, along the # 7 line, clusters of Koreans are found in Sunnyside, Woodside, Elmhurst, Corona, Jackson Heights, and then in Flushing where the subway ends. Flushing has the largest concentration (33.6%) of Korean Americans in New York City. Other parts of Queens - Elmhurst, Woodside, Jackson Heights, and Bayside have 17%, 12.5%, 6%, and 6% of Korean population respectively.

Sunnyside attracts more recently arrived Koreans who commute to Manhattan for their work. The area has light industrial facilities, and warehouses mixed with low rental apartment buildings. Several large Korean restaurants, Oriental food stores, Korean owned gift and card shops, coffee shops, liquor stores, fish stores, and electronic equipment stores are found along Queens Boulevard in the Long Island City area.

Recently, lower crime rates and somewhat lower rents for apartments have induced Koreans to move into the traditionally Greek neighborhood of Astoria.

Woodside has had an Irish identity. Koreans who are somewhat economically well-off buy and move into single family houses in this area. Along the subway line, many apartments have Korean tenants in this area. In the last decade, other Asian groups also settled here. On Queens Boulevard, particularly around subway stations, Korean Americans have many ethnic restaurants, oriental grocery stores, as well as other type of stores that cater to the wider community - liquor stores, grocery stores, luggage and bag shops, florists, bars, gift and card shops.

Elmhurst and Jackson Heights have no particular white identities. Still there are pockets of old Jewish, Italian, and German residents in this area. In recent years these neighborhoods have absorbed substantial numbers of Koreans, Chinese, East Indians, and Latin Americans. Around the

Elmhurst City Hospital, many apartments have a high proportion of Korean residents. The 7th street area between Broadway and 82nd street has a variety of Korean stores. Jackson Heights is known to have relatively high crime rate. However one finds a large number of Asian stores owned by Koreans, Chinese, and Asian Indians.

Corona has been an Italian area. North Corona and East Elmhurst have seen a sharp increase in American and West Indian Black residents. Along Roosevelt Avenue, Corona has a high concentration of Hispanic groups. In North Corona, on Queens Boulevard, there are clusters of warehouses and run-down vacant lots. Some Korean owned light manufacturing facilities, and automobile repair shops are found in this area. Toward the east end of Corona a cluster of Asian owned car body shops and repair shops appear near Shea Stadium.

Flushing has not only the largest concentration of Koreans but also the largest cluster of other Asian American populations. As one gets closer to Flushing on a # 7 subway train, one notices only a handful of non-minority people in the train even during rush hours. When you get off the train and exit to the Main street, you will find several blocks on the southeast side of Main Street rapidly changing into a bustling Chinese business district. There are rows of Chinese restaurants, Chinese bakeries, grocery stores, and a number of Chinese owned banks. As you walk along Main street, store signs soon change into Korean on both sides of the street. There are several large Korean restaurants, fish

stores, butcher shops, baby toys and clothing stores, furniture stores, Video shops, adult dress shops, beauty salons, barber shops, gift and card shops, and the ever present green grocers on nearly every corner. Along Union Street and Roosevelt Avenue around the subway station, again, you will find a dense concentration of Korean owned stores with store signs in both English and Korean. Three Korean banks are in this area. Furthermore, many of the business and apartment buildings are owned by Korean Americans. On school yards and playgrounds in this area, you will see children from many different ethnic backgrounds. Their grandparents can be seen chatting with other elderly and watching over their grand children.

In Flushing, Korean Americans are heavily concentrated in the area defined by College Point on the west, Northern Boulevard on the north, Murray Hill Avenue on the east, and Main Street and Kissena Boulevard on the south. Most housing in this area is multiple family dwelling units, and large high-rise apartments. In some of the large apartment buildings, Koreans may occupy over 50% to 70% of the residential units. There are several large Korean Churches, medical offices, and social service centers located in this area.

Many Korean Americans, once they are economically settled, move out to more desirable suburbs or more established quiet residential sections of Queens -- North Flushing, and Bayside to the north; Forest Hill and Rego

Park, traditional Jewish neighborhoods to the south. Farther out, some well established Koreans move into Douglaston, Little Neck, Great Neck and Manhasset. Following the residential movements of Japanese businessmen, some well-to-do Koreans have moved to Westchester, the Scarsdale area in New York, and Fort Lee in New Jersey.

b. Social Network and Living Arrangements

i. Social Interactions

Most Koreans have relatives living nearby. Hurh and Kim (1988) report 70% of them have contacts with their relatives at least once a week. Slightly under 93% of them had contacts with their relatives at least once a month. In their sample, Hurh and Kim (1988) found that 81% had Korean friends, whereas only 38% of them reported any American friends. Koreans find their Korean friends through old school ties from home, or church affiliations, or at the place of work. Their American friends are acquired mainly through their place of work. They often describe their friendships with Americans to be problematic due to their cultural differences and the language barrier which makes them frequently feel uncomfortable. Being new immigrants, Korean Americans tend to have an ethnically enclosed social network. Even those who reside in mostly white suburban neighborhood areas develop and maintain their Korean friends

through ethnic Korean churches and ethnic voluntary organizations. From Long Island, Scarsdale, Westchester, they drive into Queens to attend church services or to participate in functions of voluntary organizations. They do their regular grocery shopping at ethnic grocery stores, and frequently eat out at ethnic restaurants in Queens and Manhattan. Whether they live in suburbs or in areas with heavy Korean concentrations, they have close affiliation with ethnic institutions. This is an important factor to be taken into consideration in planning an effective outreach program. Since there are several clusters of Korean residents and Korean operated businesses in Queens, many Korean Americans claim that they can get by, without much problem, using the Korean language alone.

In my study of Korean Americans in Los Angeles in 1982, I found the patterns of social interaction and residential settlement among Koreans to be much similar to the patterns I discovered in New York. Recently immigrated Korean Americans in Los Angeles are heavily concentrated in the neighborhood along Olympic Boulevard surrounded by Western Avenue, Hoover Street, Wilshire, and Pico Boulevards. The area includes, what is known locally as the Pico heights, Sanford and Rimpau districts. It represents low rent districts of ethnically mixed neighborhoods surrounding a central business district.

In this area, known as "Korea Town", heavy clusters of ethnic business establishments are noticeable by their store

signs written in Korean and by the ethnic decor of the stores. These are large shopping centers with Korean ethnic banks and supermarkets, restaurants, furniture shops, sporting good stores, medical centers, dating services, fortune tellers, herbal doctors and acupuncturist offices. All these shops could be found in the district along Olympic, Vermont, Western and Harvard. The degree of completeness in ethnic life is somewhat more comprehensive in Los Angeles than in New York. One could shop in Korean grocery stores, eat in Korean Restaurants, bank in an ethnic bank, patronize a Korean beautician (or a barber), worship in a Korean church (or a temple), stay in an ethnic hotel, and see Korean doctors, in this area. Newcomers to Los Angeles continue to be initially attracted to the Pico Heights, Sanford and Rimpau districts which serve as their launching stations (Yu, 1980). As the Korean community in L.A. expands, an increasing suburbanization is observed. More established segments of the community are moving out to suburbs noted by freeway access: Hawthorne and Gardena in the south; Dawney and Cerritos in the southeast; Monterey Park and La Puente in the east; and Van Nuys in the northwest. At the same time, many Koreans are settling north of the Olympic area within the L.A. city limit -- Los Feliz, and Hollywood area (Kang, 1982). Again no matter where they may reside, Koreans keep very close affiliation with their ethnic institutions -- ethnic churches, ethnic voluntary

organizations, and ethnic stores. Their social associations are largely with their fellow Koreans.

ii. Housing

Settlements of minority populations in Queens have been rather recent developments. Korean Americans live in racially mixed neighborhoods. There is no ethnic enclave which one could call a Korea Town. More recently arrived immigrants tend to live with their relatives who assisted them in coming to the U.S. Often brothers and sisters and their spouses and their children all move into a house or an apartment of the person who invited them to immigrate. They remain in the same residence until they can find suitable employment and have some minimum financial security. Soon younger relatives find their own residence, and move out. However, many older parents stay with their adult children.

In cramped apartments elderly parents frequently share a room with their grandchildren, or stay on the floor in the living room area. Most urban apartments are designed for a small nuclear family. This situation makes living conditions uncomfortable for both young and old generations. About 40% of the elderly move out to their own apartment when they qualify for SSI and/or housing subsidies (Kang, 1982). In the Queens area, some recently arrived single persons who work in the city reside in rooming houses where multiple beds are set up in a small room, or live in a living room

which is partitioned to accommodate several beds with each bed separated by screens or by curtains. Some boarding houses are operated by elderly Koreans, who provide two or three meals a day and a shared double or triple room depending on the size of the room. We also found some unrelated elderly people sharing an apartment together.

Hurh and Kim(1988), Kang (1982), and Yu (1982) report rather high residential mobility of Korean Americans in their studies of Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles respectively. Due to frequent change of residence in the Korean American communities, all these research groups encountered great difficulty in locating individuals selected in their research samples. Cooperation of ethnic churches and voluntary organizations is of essential importance to trace addresses of these mobile individuals.

As pointed out in a previous section, most Koreans move out to single family dwellings in more quiet residential areas or to suburbs as soon as they have economic means to do so.

2. Religion

Somewhere between 70% to 80% of Korean Americans are Christians (Kang, 1982; Hurh and Kim, 1988), whereas only about 25% of Koreans in Korea are of the Christian faith. Korean Americans go to churches primarily for their

religious needs and belief in god. At the same time, they seek social and psychological refuge from the stresses and strains of immigration related adjustment problems through their church related activities. Most Koreans list churches as the most important place to find and form friendships. Many Korean American churches are fundamentalist groups with an evangelical bent. In my survey of Korean American elderly, I found that many Koreans devote much of their time to church related activities. Some attend both morning and evening services on Sundays; Wednesday midweek worship, Thursday neighborhood district prayer meetings, and Friday prayer with fasting in the evening. With limited social and political opportunities in the host society, once they have some economic security established, Korean Americans seek social recognition within the ethnic community. The social positions available in the community are quite limited. There is often intense competition for leadership positions in churches, and other community organizations. The positions of elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers and even ushers are very important to the members.

Preachers and priests with the help of lay church leaders perform a variety of spiritual, social, political, economic, even psychiatric work for their parishioners. They provide advice and consultations for family troubles, problems with children, employment information and referral, housing information and referral, psychological counselling, and often matchmaking services between male and female

members of their churches. Many churches provide after school classes for children, nursery school for younger children, and English classes for the members.

The Korean American Telephone Directory of New York lists 166 Churches, 132 of them are in Queens which is 80% of the total. Flushing has 28% of the total, Elmhurst 8%, Woodside 13%, and other areas of Queens 29%. Min (1988) reports the average size of Korean churches in his New York sample to be 330 members. There are three churches which have over 1,000 members each. In my field work, I found one church with an average weekly collection of \$20,000. Indeed, Korean churches do have powerful influences in many aspects of life in the Korean American community.

Recommendations

1. Community Resources For Outreach -- "Census" Awareness:

a. Ethnic Churches and Buddhist Temples

In my 1982 study of the Korean American community in New York City, I interviewed a random sample^{*1} of 289 Korean Americans. I found most Koreans in New York were Christians (68% Protestants, 7.6% Catholics). Approximately 10.4% of the sample were affiliated with Buddhism. Furthermore, 76.6% of the sample indicated that they attended religious services at least once a month, and 64.3% of them at least once a week. Given the overwhelming majority of the

*1 The random sample was drawn from a sampling frame constructed by snowball technique. Korean-language religious congregations were the points of initial contact for the snowball interviews.

community that attend religious services, churches and Buddhist temples have powerful and extensive influence on the lives of Korean Americans. More importantly, leadership groups in churches (elders, deacons) include influential individuals in business and professional fields. Most churches have active youth groups for college and high school students. The implication of these findings is that support for the Census should be solicited from preachers and priests in the community. The preachers could explain the importance, nature and characteristics of the Census. They could emphasize the strict confidentiality of censusing to their parishioners in their sermons. Church leaders and youth groups could function as key links to individuals in the community to ensure comprehensive censusing. When properly trained, church youth groups could serve as invaluable census helpers. A majority of preachers belong to the Association of Korean American Ministers. Support for the Census from this leadership group in the Association is of utmost significance for the census effort.

b. Ethnic Organizations

There are a large number of social, political, business, and cultural community organizations. Some examples are listed as follows: the Korean American Association of Greater New York, the Association of Fruit and Vegetable Stores, the Dry Cleaners Association, the

Association of Small and Medium Size Business, the Broadway Merchants Association, the Flushing Businessmen's Association, Korean American YWCA of New York, the Korean Senior Citizen's Association of New York, Korean American Social Service Center of New York, Association of Korean Marine Corps Veterans, Seoul National University Alumni of New York, Yee Wha Girl High School Alumni, etc.. The Korean American Telephone Directory of New York (1989 edition) contains 80 such organizations in all.

A number of community organizations with significant influence in the community could be selected. Selection criteria would be based upon those with large memberships, and those with significant contacts in the community such as social service organizations, and ethnic grocery stores. Again, the support of the community organizations should be solicited by explaining the importance of the census for the Korean American community. The Census outreach workers should emphasize the benefit of political, economic, and social aspects of empowerment for minority groups through Census participation. These organizations would not only facilitate the dissemination of information about the census, but would also contribute economic and human resources to assist in the outreach work for the censusing.

In a newly emerging ethnic minority community, few Korean Americans find opportunities to attain social recognition commensurate with their aspired status in the majority community. The only place where they could achieve

and attain recognizable status is in their own ethnic community. Within the small enclave, valued status positions are limited. Often competition for a few available status positions becomes serious and intense. In organizing a community-wide organization for enhancing and promoting the census, one has to have extensive comprehension of the power dynamics in the Korean community. One also has to be extremely careful in suggesting a workable plan for a coordinated organizational effort in censusing.

c. Ethnic Mass Media

There are 13 ethnic newspapers which include the 4 US editions of 4 major Korean daily papers relayed through a satellite communication device -- Hankook Ilbo, Tong-A Ilbo, Choong-Ang Ilbo, and Choson Ilbo). The community also supports a 24 hour day Korean language radio station and a 4 hour a day ethnic TV program with a large community-wide audience. Each of these media has a sizable portion of their program set aside for public information on events of community-wide interest. Community leaders and scholars are often asked to contribute articles to daily papers, and to appear on radio and TV programs. A number of community leaders and scholars would be effective in publicizing the importance of census.

2. Increasing Participation and Accuracy in Censusing

Census forms, even a short form, do appear intimidating to many immigrants from non-Western countries. First, they are not used to and are often suspicious of surveys, particularly ones that are associated with government. Members of a minority community may often actively or passively resist censusing or may conceal information in censusing. This resistance may be due to the following reasons: 1. illegal aliens are afraid of government agencies; 2. participation in the underground economy; 3. irregular housing arrangements in violation of housing and fire codes; and 4. recipients of government welfare programs.

Second, as Rokkan (1969) described it, the survey type of research is based on the "plebiscitarian model" in which it is assumed that all adults, men, women, heads of households and other members can and do make meaningful choices among alternative choices presented in the survey questionnaire. This type of research is suited for the market oriented enfranchised citizen. This model is difficult to apply to respondents from many non-western cultures.

Increasing the accuracy of the Instruments used

Two of the most relevant issues are: 1. Is the language in the instrument understood by all respondents? 2. Do the

respondents interpret the words used in the instrument the same way as the designer of the instrument intended?

Since the majority of Korean Americans are limited in their use of English, it is desirable to have a Korean translation of the census form made available for census workers and volunteers in the census effort.

a. Translations

i. Equivalence

Translations should have both linguistic and cultural equivalence in meaning for the words and concepts included in the instrument. Some widely used English words simply do not have equivalent Korean words. Full-time or Part-time employment, and Retirement are such words. We have to come up with descriptive ways or gestalt approaches in translating those words (Hurh and Kim 1981).

In their life orientation, Korean Americans are group oriented whereas Westerners have an individualistic perspective (Koh 1988). These cultural differences are reflected in their use of pronouns. Koreans would not use expressions like, it's my church, my work, my wife, my husband, and my son. Even in conversations with complete strangers, the words used are -- our church, our wife, our husband, and our son. Questions about "income" are often

confusing for Korean respondents. Does "income" mean the respondent's personal income, which the respondent seldom considers in personal terms? If it refers to his/her household or family income, how should one delimit the definition of this group? For Korean Americans the meaning of the terms such as household and family, particularly differences between these two terms, will often be confusing. In addition "income" is a particularly sensitive topic. Most Asians are extremely reluctant to discuss their income.

ii Back translations

To make certain that words and concepts used in the instrument have the meanings the designer of the instrument had for those words, several cycles of repeated translations of the instrument between Korean and English should be made until the differences between two language versions are minimal. Pretests of the translated forms with a sample of respondents from widely different socio-economic backgrounds are strongly recommended.

b. Recruitment and Training of Volunteers

For a new immigrant group with little language and cultural familiarity of the host culture, it is essential that the respondents and the census worker and volunteers

share the same ethnic and cultural backgrounds. If they do not share the same background, close monitoring of the effects of these differences should be made.

1. Culture, Language, Manner

The interpersonal communications among Korean Americans reflects the vertical social status structure of the traditional culture. It demands the proper use of a complicated set of honorifics. Census workers and volunteers should be particularly careful in the proper use of gender and status related honorifics. In conversations as well as in written communications, the structure of sentences should be congruent with status relationships among the participants in the interaction. Census workers familiar with neighborhoods in the community and preferably from the same ethnic background as the respondents would have an understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviors.

Social Distance

Survey researchers (Lenski, and Legget, 1960) noted that observable status discrepancies between the respondents and the researchers may inhibit the interactions and also may produce biased responses. Census workers and volunteers should dress, behave, and talk in ways that minimize any chance of offending respondents. Overly dressed persons with

stiff official bureaucratic manners are found to inhibit respondents. Respondents may have fear of admitting strangers into their homes. Female respondents may be much less willing to have a male worker or volunteer to come into their homes. Use of indigenous workers and volunteers may reduce many response related problems associated with social status distance, language, and manner.

Social Desirability

Researchers on Korean American communities (Kang, 1985; Hurh and Kim, 1982) report the nagging problem of low validity in certain items used in their research instruments. Keeping or saving "Face" in interactions, particularly with strangers, in social interactions is of utmost importance in the age old tradition of Korean culture. This may involve polite and subtle distortion of facts. Distortion of facts due to a social desirability factor is often noticeable in responses to items such as "education", "income", and "occupation". Frequently one finds a respondent who claims to have a high school education displaying difficulty in writing his/her own name. Korean Americans tend to inflate their education and occupational status, and to understate their "income" (Kang, 1985; Huh and Kim, 1982)

In the outreach effort for censusing, along with an emphasis on the political and economic significance of census for the community, strong emphasis should be placed on the importance of accuracy in responses and the absolute guarantee of confidentiality of censusing.

ii. Key Community Informal Leaders

In the Korean American community, one can find some informal leaders of considerable linkages and influence. In my field work, I found an interesting group of such influential individuals. One elderly lady is a church deaconess. Through church related work she established extensive social network ties in the community. She is the one on whom people call to find out where one could find an available apartment, part-time work, baby sitters, or even a short term loan that could be arranged informally. Another person built her community-wide social network through the job she has in a social service center. She connects the job seekers with employers, renters of apartments and stores with landlords, and sometimes even performs go-between roles for the families with boys and girls of marriageable age. Preachers and priests invariably have those multiple roles in the community with their extensive personal social network. These informal network resources should be fully utilized to maximize the outreach efforts

c. Drop-in Assistance Centers

Churches, temples, and social service organizations along with social and business organizations with wide networks in the community should be identified to serve as drop-in assistance centers for censusing. People in the community could bring their census forms to these centers, and fill them out with the help of trained volunteers. To implement a coordinated effort for outreach, a community-wide organization should be developed. Publicity and educational work, translations of census forms, training of voluntary workers, and community wide mobilization of financial and human resources could be coordinated through the new organization.

Utilization of youth groups in churches for the census outreach is of essential importance. They are the ones with more familiarity of the host culture and language. They could bridge the culturally separate community of new immigrants with the community of the host society. Churches and temples with their large members of parishioners could set up drop-in centers to help their numbers and neighbors complete the census forms with the assistance of trained volunteers located in the churches. In New York, some fifty community leaders representing various organizations got together to organize a community-wide Census outreach committee in June of 1989. They have had some difficulties in getting organized. However, with gentle yet effective advice provided by the New York Census Participation Awareness Project group, the community-wide ethnic outreach

group now seems to be working together. Furthermore, the Association of Korean American Churches of New York is rendering strong support for this effort. A number of social service groups -- Queens Senior Citizens Nutrition Center (Kyung-ro Center), New York Korean Senior Citizens Association (Sangrok Hoe), Queens Korean American YWCA, Korean American Manpower Development Center, Flushing Korean American Association, could serve as drop-in assistance centers for census.

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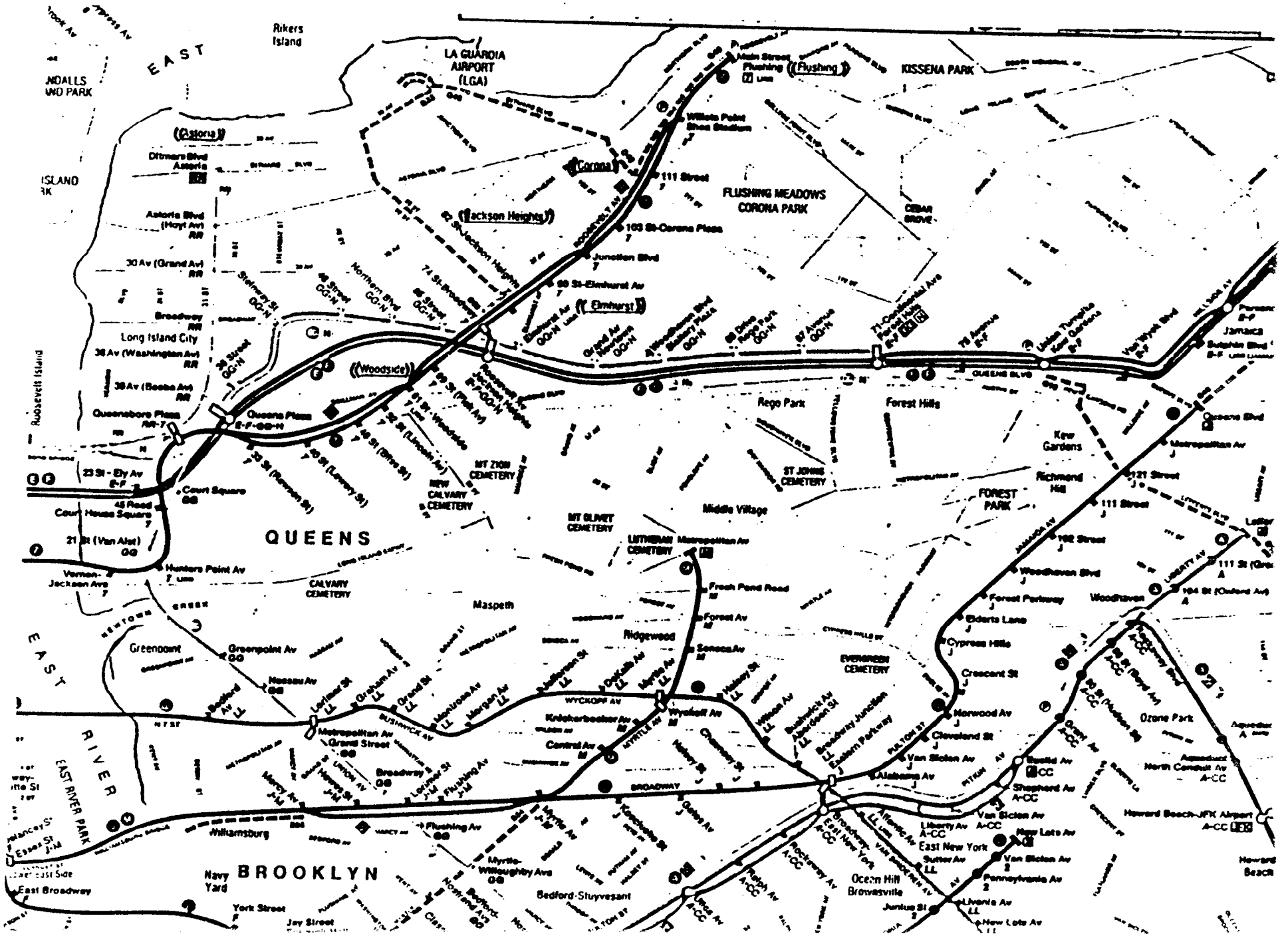
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A Subway Map of Queens, N.Y. (Areas where Koreans cluster are indicated in parentheses)



A Map Of Queens, N.Y. (Areas where Koreans cluster are indicated in parentheses)

