Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Negotiation between Identities: A Case Study on Korean International Students in the United States

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Abstract: Based on in-depth interviews and FGI, the study explored how Korean students as non-native residents in the United States negotiate their identities. The researcher interpreted the data as suggesting that consumption of ICTs by this group accounted for both the extent to which its members engaged in cultural relaxation and the acquisition of a cultural toolkit which allows them to function in the new culture. Furthermore, drawing an interpretative map, the researcher argues that the process of negotiating identities through consumption of ICTs would be understood in relation to structural conditions and personal experiences which in turn relate to cultural capital. Further, implications of the study are also discussed.

Key words: ICT, negotiating identities, diaspora, cultural toolkit, cultural capital, FGI

INTRODUCTION

According to the Institute of International Education's Report Open Doors 2009, Korean students are the third largest source of foreign students in higher educational institutions in United States, after students from India and China. The report said that the number of Korean student enrollments increased 9% to 75,065 in the 2008-2009 academic year. In addition, according to the statistical report by DHS of United States, the number of Korean students in United States was 127,185 which was ranked highest of the total number of foreign students in 2008. Not surprisingly, these students contributed nearly 20 billion dollars to the US economy in 2010 through tuition expenditures and living cost, according to Department of Commerce in the US.

Nevertheless, Korean students have rarely been discussed in academic scholarship, even though they represent a large portion of the US student population there by might be potentially crucial. Only in higher education several comparison studies have worked on their academic goal achievement (Byun, 1990; Choi, 1997; Kim *et al.*, 1997). Otherwise, the studies dealing with this issue in Korea have been rarely found, although obtaining an US degree has offered an occupational and social prestige in Korean society.

In the mean time, the relationship between consuming Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and shaping identity has been broadly discussed in the field of communications which is related to two socio-cultural phenomena, i.e., globalization and the development of new information and communication technologies prevent us from solidifying a stable identity and the emergence of postmodern theories offers us the alternative explanations for the multiple constructions of identity. According to these theories, identity has been constructed by such multiple factors as class, gender, age, race, ethnicity and religion. Therefore, identity is not singular, unified and stable but continuously changing, multilayered and decentralized. That is, identity should be regarded as a "production which is never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (Hall, 1990). However, it is still questionable how these multiple identities are interrelated and constructed. In order for response to this question, it is necessary to understand the way in which a person constructs his/her identity and interprets and negotiates the multiple identities within the broad socio-cultural condition on which he/she is.

Thus, the present study explores how international students in the United States shape their group or individual identity considering the influence and consuming ICTs on the construction of cultural identities and meanings about the self. More specifically, the researcher investigate how Korean international students in United States shape their identities and how the ICTs consumption is associated with the negotiating process, considering the fact that the way of constructing identity and the way of consuming ICTs is different for these types of students, depending on their present and future socio-economic status. Furthermore, based on the findings of the association between the consumption of ICTs and the socio-cultural condition where individuals face, the present study attempts to visualize the process

of negotiating identities by drawing a map of relations between motivation consumption of ICTs and achievement.

Negotiating identities and ICTs (theoretical review)
Consuming ICTs and negotiating between identities: No doubt that communication entails processes that shape identity as well as processes that have the potential for minorities to improve their cultural literacy. For most of society, it is no longer possible for identity to be shaped entirely through one's immediate community and family. In the current technology-saturated society, the construction of a personal identity can be seen as somewhat problematic and difficult and it is certain that people respond to and make use of imagery presented in the popular media in understanding themselves, the world at large and thus in constructing their identities. Furthermore, the mass media provides a wide-ranging source of cultural opinions and standards as well as differing examples of identity. Therefore, a number of media and communication studies dealing with identities and media focus on the ideological representation of identities through the media rather than on how media shapes identity. For example, in critiquing the racial ideology of mainstream media and society through an investigation of representations of Asians and Asian Americans, Shim (1998) stresses that media texts are coupled with the dynamics of socio-political economic practices of production as well as the dynamics of the audience's consumption. It is necessary, therefore, to understand the formation of ethnic identity as it relates to media use. In particular, members of ethnic minority groups draw on media from their home countries in order to hold onto their identities under diasporic conditions. Obviously, this phenomenon is closely associated with achieving their socio-political right as well as it is also embedded in fundamental issues of globalization and immigration.

Here again, it is crucial to recall the fact that an identity is not a fixed thing and thus it is difficult if not impossible to maintain the version originally constructed in the first place if such a point could even be identified. In other words, identity is constructed and changes constantly over time and it can even be radically transformed (Hamley, 2001). Currently, identity has been discussed as floating, multiple, fragile and highly susceptible to change. Especially, as the digital new media and technology become embedded in everyday life media has taken a primary role in knowledge production communication and creative expression (Buckingham, 2008). This means that we can easily access and interact with and in remote and virtual worlds through the media which has a fundamental influence on the formation of one's behavior, sense and identity. In other words, it is easy for everyone to present multiple versions of themselves through virtual worlds, membership in any number of fragmented groups, email addresses expressing many different aspect of the self and icons in virtual worlds.

Media, identity and diaspora: Furthermore, with globalization, a concept that merits attention is diaspora which is defined as "a decentralized relation to ethnicity, real or imagined relations between scattered people who sustain a sense of community through various forms of communication and contact and who do not depend on returning to a distant homeland" (Peters, 1999). Appadurai (1996) suggested that modern identities are connected to individual and social groups that form new types of transnational culture. It seems clear that diasporic conditions worldwide have become much more complex. Being on the margins means being on the boundary line that distinguishes insider from outsider. Therefore, in applying this concept of diaspora, many studies have attempted to explain the relationship between the diaspora and the media with a particular focus on the media's representations of transnationality, hybridity and diaspora.

The concept of diaspora was originally used to refer to the expelled but it has also been used to establish an "understanding of migration, people's multiple sense of belonging and loyalties beyond national boundaries" (Georgiou, 2006). That is as space becomes more transnationalized, local culture and identity also become associated with processes of globalization. Therefore, according to Georgiou (2006) current studies focus on those who directly experience de-territorialization and re territorialization and those who transfer or sustain distinct identities as well as social relations within and across nation-states. In the same manner, Vertovec (1999) argues diaspora is often used "to describe practically any population which is considered 'deterritorialized' or "transnational".

Thus, the term diaspora has been referred for explaining how ethnic minorities use their home country media to share specific information and to distribute community-based information as well (Ogan, 2001; Zhou *et al.*, 2006). For example, in a study of the relationship between transnational identity and media focusing on Latinos in Liverpool (Bailey, 2007) found that diasporic Latin identities have been constructed in the different positions where they locate themselves within discourses of history and culture in the present, rather than in an essentialized past. Also, she took the position

that the media experience of Latin Americans in Liverpool created possibilities for them to question and renegotiate their identities. At this point, it is necessary to be reminded that ethnicity is not an unproblematic or easy to-define concept as Ito (1999) properly pointed out the ethnic group refers to "a minority group whose culture/race is different from the majority culture/race of society." Reminded the concept diasporic identity is associated with the political empowerment and thus is synonymous with the extended definition of transnational identity or transnational collective identity" (Adamson, 2008) the researcher highlights that diasporic populations struggle to negotiate the conflicting traditions and mores of their home countries and their new countries and they do so from a minority status position (Barth, 1969). Therefore, as Georgiou (2006) stressed, any celebration of hybrid identities should not overlook the material reality of being doubly marginal.

ICTs and cultural capital/cultural toolkit: Consuming ICTs can contribute to forming a cultural toolkit. Swindler (1986) suggested that the concept of a cultural tool kit could shed light on how racial inequality is reproduced. According to Swindler (1986) "culture influences action by shaping a repertoire or 'tool kit' of habits, skills and styles from which people construct strategies of action." It is worth noting, too that even if a cultural tool kit does not affect action directly, it creates ways of organizing and evaluating reality for individuals and groups (Emerson *et al.*, 1999). And Lacy (2007) also observed that the tool kit model contributes to an individual's ability to negotiate daily life by focusing on the social identities to make up the black middle-class tool kit. Undoubtedly, language is a very important factor in shaping identity and it is associated with and a marker of "cultural capital." According to Lacy (2007), "cultural capital constitutes the means by which public identities are staked out." Lacy's definition is an important one as it points to how people interpret the status of others and to the possibility that people can use their cultural capital in systematic ways in order to cope with discrimination and even assume the appearance of owning different kinds of social capital. Further, it is possible to expand the concept of cultural capital as a means of helping immigrants make a smoother transition and assimilate more effectively into their new countries. The cultural codes and resources of mainstream high culture reproduce social inequality and the possession of these cultural resources of dominant culture enable "others" to participate in the symbolic communication process (Bourdieu, 1983; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). That is to say, knowing certain social codes and decorum helps people communicate, shows respect and identifies oneself

as able to function in a particular society. Overall, the cultural tool kit theory gives some implications to the way of explaining negotiation between identities consuming ICTs. That is ICTs as a cultural tool kit, can contribute to the formation of new cultural capital as well as cultural literacy for ethnic minorities. As Farkas (2003) notes, it is clear that "culturally shaped skills, habits and outlooks", i.e., by using the ICTs as a way to obtain a cultural tool kit, a person can acquire more social capital or at least the appearance of it and in same cases there will be little if any difference between these.

Socio-cultural condition associated with ICTs consumption: A number of sociological studies about minorities and (pan) ethnicity address the importance of structural conditions such as the structure of opportunities, spatial segregation and the family as well as individual factors (Lee and Bean, 2004; Lopez and Espiritu, 1990; Nagel, 1995). For example, Okamoto (2003) explored the structural conditions affecting the expansion of ethnic boundaries or the construction of a pan-national or pan-ethnic identity. However, the main topics of these studies look different from each other. Some focus on explaining why and how ethnic groups enforce a certain version of ethnicity for their members whereas others try to establish reasons for the existence of multicultural phenomena such as intermarriage and multiracial identification which contribute to the weakening of racial boundaries.

Considering the conflict arguments, the researcher explores the structural condition of motivation for Korean students to study in the US which may play a crucial role in shaping their identities. For example, Kim (2008) argues that the motivation for studying in the United States is coupled with four multi-layered structures and contexts; Korean academic structure, educational attainment and socio-economic status in Korea, formation of the global hierarchy of the university and micro level interaction. According to Kim, a US degree and language is crucial because a US degree and English can offer Korean students an opportunity to achieve higher socioeconomic status in Korea. Also, the socio-structural factor of motivation for studying in the US could be interconnected to their future decision of whether or not they return to Korea. These two factors are associated with obtaining the cultural capital through the consumption of ICTs. Considering that the ICTs play an important role in experiencing the US culture, even if the factor of ICTs consumption is not independently operated, the present study explores how the process of negotiating identities through the ICTs consumption is related to structural condition and personal experience in terms of obtaining a US degree and forming global and cultural capital.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to investigate how Korean students use their home country's media and ICTs in negotiating identities, the researcher explored three specific areas. First, assuming that Korean students use home media and ICTs to obtain information and for other purposes, the researcher explored how Korean students use their home media and the importance they attach to it. Next, the researcher investigated Korean student's media and ICTs use patterns, i.e., how different use patterns influence the way they negotiate identities. The third question focused on the relationship between ICTs consumption and the student's socio-cultural condition. In exploring these areas, the researcher offered a way of mapping the relationship between ICTs consumption and socio cultural condition as that relationship affects their negotiation of identities.

Methodologically, the researcher began by conducting in-depth interviews with eight Korean students who have been enrolled for at least 2 years in US universities. A face-to-face interview was conducted with each of four interviewees and the other four interviewees each participated in either a telephone or an online interview. Each interview took around 2 h. The in depth interview format was designed as an initial step toward understanding how they negotiate their identities and how the negotiation of identities is related to the formation of global capital. However, having conducted a preliminary examination of the findings from eight interviewees, the researcher decided to hold a focus group interview with eight undergraduates because the researcher sought to determine whether differences obtain between undergraduates and graduates in terms of the processes of identity negotiation including motivations for studying in the US and perceptions of and responses to socio-cultural pressure. The researcher assumed that the process of undergraduate's identity negotiation might be more flexible and dynamic in comparison with graduate students who are more likely to have more set ideas about themselves and more definite plans for the future. The focus group interview and the in-depth interviews began with such general questions as the following:

- Do you expect your experiences in the US to be beneficial to your future life no matter where you will live?
- What kinds of media and ICTs do you particularly enjoy and why?
- What kinds of discontentment have you experienced in your studies in Korea and do you feel satisfied with your studies in the US?

- Do you enjoy American movies and drama?
- Have you ever thought about your cultural/national identity seriously before?
- Do you think the media and ICTs are a crucial factor in the ways that identity issues are constructed in this group discussion?

Both the focus group interview and the personal in depth interviews were recorded and the transcripts were partly translated into English. The researcher led the discussion but did not participate much.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The relaxation of cultural tension (cultural shift or cultural reinforcement?): Most interviewees are using Korean media and ICTs but the purpose of use is rather different with each interviewee. However, for most Korean students, the primary purpose for using Korean media and ICTs is enjoyment. M: Ever since I found out about this awesome website that streams all kinds of Korean dramas shows and movies, I've been hooked on watching Korean stuff way more than I used to before I can definitely have a good time watching American TV but I can empathize and identify with characters and situations in Korean dramas more easily. They're fun amusing and know what Koreans want. D: Yes, I watch Korean drama a lot. I think I watch Korean drama here more than in Korea. I used to watch them usually on the weekend before going to bed or when having dinner. G: It's Just habit. In my case I watch Korean TV when eating something (Fig. 1).

When the interviewees watch Korean movie, drama, even when they use internet, they use them for relaxing rather than for other purposes. This means that they relax from the tension associated with a different language and culture by consuming their home country media. I would say that this use could be called "the relaxation of cultural tension". If so, what does the cultural tension mean? In my observation, this tension happens when Korean students feel stressful particularly in speaking English and consequently realize that they are in the minority group. They seem to think that most of the problems begin from language. Therefore, when they need to take a rest, it comes to mean that they would like to find their way out of this 'mes's. Frequently, as the in case "D," Korean media and ICTs use becomes the cultural habit apart from the US cultural codes.

Obviously, media and ICTs play a key role in shaping a cultural toolkit. According to Swindler (1986), "culture creates ways for individuals and groups to organize experiences and evaluate reality." These activities become
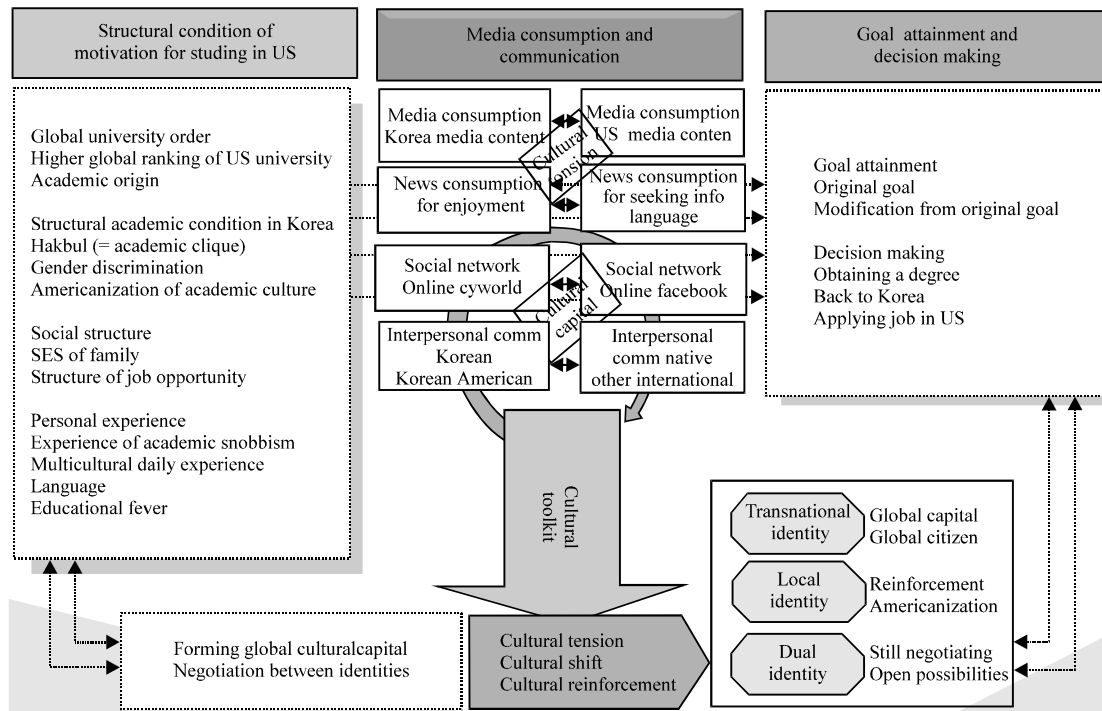
Fig. 1: Mapping the process of negotiation between identites

possible by providing a 'toolkit' of ideas, habits, skills and styles. The toolkit itself does not determine perspectives or actions but limits them (Emerson *et al.*, 1999). What they attempt to obtain are the "cultural codes," in order to be good at English and American culture. So, we need to identify the core cultural character of the toolkit for the Korean international student which serves as the framework for negotiating their identities. It is notable that they are still using such Korean Internet Services as news and debate programs and online messenger, even though some people become accustomed to their cultural codes. A from time to time I have to read the online news, not because I really want to seek some info but I feel stressful doing work in English. I feel better when I see Korean news, flash image cartoon, whatever. G: When I study, if I seek some information, some headlines come to reach my eyes. I read them but I don't try to find them on purpose because these are usually sports or entertainment news. I mean my works are about analyzing study and writings and I used to work all night. So, watching a Korean TV show and movie is easier for me to take a good rest.

Additionally, it is also interesting that most interviewees are consuming Korean internet news for enjoyment, not for seeking information. As cited above, they feel relaxed when consuming Korean news, just because it is written in Korean. This means that language of various cultural codes, is the deeply shaped barrier.

On the other hand, I found, from interviews that some interviewees scarcely use the Korean media and ICTs. They say that the primary reason is that they have to improve their language skill, stressing that the consumption of Korean media and ICTs is not helpful for overcoming the language barrier. Rather, they try to regularly watch American comedy, drama and news. F: I rarely watched Korean drama but I like American drama. I already watched lots of 'Mi-d' in Korea. I enjoyed such drama as CSI, Doctor House and Prison Break. I like a psycho-thriller rather than a love story. It fits me more than Korean ones. H: I came to watch Korean TV. One of the reasons is for improving English. So, I didn't watch it on purpose. Then I don't enjoy that. But, my younger bro really like Korean TV shows. Everyday he watches Korean TV like "Muhandogoen (means unlimited challenge)" and "Gag-concert".

Further, some interviewees already enjoyed American drama. They experience 'Mi-d' culture (it means the phenomenon of consuming US drama as a kind of popular culture in Korea). Due to the media hybridity, many Koreans, staying in their home country, used to enjoy the American culture. Some of them could already obtain some cultural codes through this experience. Therefore, their prior experience needs to be considered as a pre condition in adapting to US culture. It is unclear whether or not this ready-obtained cultural experience will be helpful for Korean students to settle down. But actually,

some students are consuming both countrie's cultural goods and it looks clear that it makes it easy for them to negotiate between identities.

One of the interviewees ("Case C") who has stayed in several countries and used English for a long time is interesting because she has a long transnational experience. She said, "I'm gonna die if I can't watch the Korean TV. I'm hooked on it". In her case, she consumed Korean television in order to reconfirm her identity as a Korean. In any case, I found that interviewees including Case "C," who stayed in the US were continuously re shaping their identities no matter how this re-shaping happened.

Different patterns of media consumption: Each interviewee used the media and ICTs three and a half hours daily, on average. Clearly, the way of consuming media and ICTs depends on their respective situations. Therefore, I try to interconnect to different social and personal conditions to understand the way in which they consume media and ICTs. Another interviewee ("Case A"), who enjoys 30 Rock and Family Guy, says that he can't help watching the US comedy and drama shows in order to keep up with his colleagues because they always talk about these shows. Interestingly, now he has begun enjoying American TV more than Korean. He gets cultural codes as a result of keeping in contact with the US culture. In this way, media and ICTs consumption is related to offline communication. A: I have to watch them only for a survival. In my case, I have no Korean colleagues in our lab. I need friends and don't wanna be a target for bullying. I watch what they like the day before lab meeting and I used to talk with them.

In addition, internet is another space for shaping their identities. Through the internet, interviewees interchange various information such as daily life info, foods, classified ads and otherwise. Also, the internet is useful for sharing Korean media content. There are some famous websites in the United States; kiwidisk.com hanindisk.com, mysoju.com, bada.us and so forth. An interesting point is that Korean students tend to utilize the US-made sites where they can download Korean drama and movie rather than home country sites to enjoy the Korean media content. Korean drama and movie otherwise, they participated sometimes in the Korean American web communities to seek information. In particular, women enjoy hanging out on feminine cohort sites. For example, missyusa.com (http://www missyusa.com) is the most famous site among the Korean wives. They can get some gossip and unpublished

stories, particularly of entertainment news there. B: I don't like to read US newspaper and even Korean one cause I can easily get all kinds of information through the 'missyusa. There's everything that I want. K: I use "cyworld" in contacting with some friends staying in Korea and use facebook with residents in US. Further, interviewees use both Korean and US social network services for the different purpose. They used to contact Korean friends through the Korean social network service, cyworld, meanwhile they are likely to use facebook to contact with their native friends. Even though most interviewees simultaneously use both services, they usually began to use facebook to keep in touch with native friends. The division of using network service enables international students to own "dual social capital" which make a distinction between themselves and native Korean. As a Facebook user gets steeply increased in Korea, network capital.

Experiencing the time space compression: The researcher realized that most of the interviewees had smart phones which had become more popular during the year before the FGI was conducted. Smart phones offers them the ability to make and receive visual calls and to receive and send text messages written in Korean. This increased technological involvement can be considered as participating in and contributing to time space compression as many communication theorists have argued. According to Mosco the concept spatialization as one of three entry points, refers to the transformation of space with time. In accord with Marx's statement that capitalism annihilates space with time, the term spatialization pays attention to time and space as flexible resources or time space compression. J: I have a smart phone. It's very convenient to talk with mom. I can see her face while talking with her with facetime (an application for visual talk). I've spent an hour talking to mom every day which is longer than before. N: I enjoy chatting with my girlfriend in Korea. I can show her where I study where I usually to go. I feel closer to her. I: Me, too. I frequently send her photos with Kakaotoc (an application for visual/text messaging).

Interviewees mostly used these geatures on their smart phones to keep in touch with their families and friends in their home country. They generally did not well communicate with friends in the US by mobile phone except for exchanging information about schoolwork. Such instances of time space compression afford the students opportunities to acquire global socio-cultural capital to acquire a degree of cultural relaxation and to

become more intimate with their home country as well. Thus, increased use of technology may result in increased efforts in negotiating between identities.

In sum, Korean communities on the web offer interviewees breaks whereby they can enjoy their home country's culture by accessing Korean media and ICTs and in a sense to continue to consume it by discussing it both online and offline. In many cases, Korean students, though, access Korean websites in order to connect with the culture in an emotional abd nostalgic way. In addition, Korean students occasionally enjoy the US media as a hybrid culture inasmuch as their consumption of Korean media is not entirely separate from their consumption of US media. Overall, if we are to understand the different patterns of media consumption, it is necessary to consider how much time Korean students spend using ICTs and the specific contexts in which they do so. Furthermore, it is reasonable to expect that media and ICTs-use patterns are associated with interviewee's offline friendships and the degree to which the interviewees use Korean media in comparison with US media.

Different ways of negotiating identities (structural and contextual conditions): The study showed not just that interviewees had respective ways of consuming both Korean and American media and ICTs in order to negotiate identities but consuming them is the process of acquiring a cultural toolkit in adapting to US culture. However, it is not sufficient to mention that ICTs consumption is the only way of negotiating identities even though the ICTs consumption as cultural toolkit could be crucial to negotiate identities. Clearly, it is more complicated with the structural condition for them to decide to study in the United States. In addition, the negotiation between identities is affected by their decisions as to whether they return to Korea or look for a job in the US after getting a US degree.

E: In my head, it's much tougher and competitive in Korea, simply because there are less opportunities and more people. I think I've gotten used to the job-hunting processes in this country now. I feel more confident in contacting places and going to interviews because American employers don't give a crap about your age gender where you're from (maybe?) and how you look. They only care about or try to look at your skills and compatibility. And yeah, I do believe that Korean employers and employees fail to look at more important things. G: Basically, it's lucky for me to study in US because I can learn PR stuff. It is hardly taught in Korean college. But I'm not sure how well the process of finding a job is going because a personal network is a pretty much important factor for getting a job in Korea rather

than here, I guess. Korean international students used to experience the academic snobbism, daily discrimination from Hak-Boel (academic clique) particularly in the case of women. It is unquestionable that one of the most important motivations is overcoming the structural and personal limitations. However, when interviewees realize they are a minority in the US and hardly get a job as good as expects, they begin to modify their original goals and expectations. Of course, the degree to adopt a cultural toolkit affects the way that they change the decision. Even the case of not being discriminated in Korea, the level of cultural capital that they obtained would be significant factor in making a decision. However, when non-discriminated students in Korea become accustomed to the US culture, they easily get an occupation in the United States and consequently they are likely to identify themselves as someone between global citizens and Koreans, even if they are accustomed to US culture and even may be likely to get a job in the United States. Alternatively, those who experienced discrimination in Korea possibly are likely to choose their identities considering the possibility of uplifting their socioeconomic status.

I: Basically, I have open possibilities. I would like to go wherever I can get a job. If a job is attractive to me, I will be able to return to Korea. But, I still think I have more opportunities to get a better job here. Better choice for me is to stay here when considering my future career. Also, I became more comfortable here. H: The ultimate goal that I came here is for participating in global issues such as global warming, African civil war and helping the refugees after studying. I should overcome any stress from language. So, I try not to contact with any Korean media too much.

The researcher would call such strategic negotiation between identities shown at the latter case 'dual identity' referring to the idea of dual identity coming from the post-colonial theory by Fanon (1967). He proposed the concept of dual consciousness for explaining the nature of the colonized subject and as the way individuals shape two different cultural identities at the same time. The researcher highlights that even though the dual identity seems partly identical to his original concept in that Korea experienced colonization by Japan and transplanted modernization as well, dual identity is not fixed, thereby is a strategic means of struggling identities. Unlike Debois and Fanon's remark, dual identity is not divided into mind and face, i.e., the Korean mind and the US mask and vice versa.

The dual identity can be found even in the case of deciding whether to return to Korea after studying abroad. Those who decide to return also strongly expect

Table 1: The list of the in-depth interviewees

Case	Interview date	Sex	Birth year	University	Degree sought	Major	Length of residence
A	2009/11/21	M	1977	New York Univ.	PhD	Biology	7
B	2009/11/21	F	1978	CUNY	MA	Accounting	5
C	2009/11/19	F	1985	Penn State Univ.	MA	Media studies	4
D	2009/11/22	F	1985	Ohio State Univ.	BA	Communication	2
E	2009/11/29	F	1984	U of Texas, Austin	BA	Journalism	3
F	2009/11/28	F	1979	U of Texas, Austin	PhD	Education	3
G	2009/12/02	M	1982	Illinois State Univ.	BA	Public relation	3
H	2009/12/04	M	1987	Penn State Univ.	BA	Political science	5

The case 'E' has earned degree at the beginning of this year

Table 2: The list of the focus group interviewees

Case	Interview date	Sex	Birth year	University	Degree sought	Major	Length of residence
I	2010/9/21	M	1987	Penn State Univ.	BA	Engineering	3
J	2010/9/21	F	1988	Penn State Univ.	BA	Astronomy	2
K	2010/9/21	F	1985	Penn State Univ.	BA	Media studies	8
L	2010/9/21	F	1985	Penn State Univ.	BA	Education	3
M	2010/11/2	F	1984	Penn State Univ.	BA	Accounting	4
N	2010/11/2	M	1989	Penn State Univ.	BA	Chemical engineering	3
O	2010/11/2	M	1987	Penn State Univ.	BA	Political science	3
P	2010/11/2	M	1988	Penn State Univ.	BA	Business	4

that a US degree and English efficiency would be beneficial in improving their social status in Korea, even though they become syncretized with their original identity. Thus, such reinforcement of local identity, therefore, would be regarded as "Americanized local identity" rather than simply called "local identity." That means that a "dual consciousness" evolves even in the case of those not being well-accustomed to US culture.

The study found that interviewees are continuously negotiating their current and future lives. In that process, they lean on the Korean media and ICTs in order to lessen their cultural stress. But as I mentioned above, the negotiation between identities are an ongoing process. This means that they still struggle with two heterogeneous cultures. Obviously, media and ICTs consumption is associated with interviewee's negotiation process. However, ICTs consumption per se is not the only factor that affects the interviewee's negotiation between identities. Rather, from the findings of this study it can be assumed that identity-shaping is moderated by the amount of the interviewee's home media consumption. To be sure, media and ICTs consumption is coupled with structural conditions that shape their lives as they to study in the US (Table 1 and 2).

CONCLUSION

Reminded that communication per se is the process of shaping and negotiating identities, the researcher explored the process in negotiating identities. The present study highlighted that it is necessary to consider the media and ICTs consumption associated with individual's transnational experiences and desires motivated from the discontents in studying in

Korea. Thus, as another entry point for future studies, the researcher attempted to visualize the relations which might be helpful to understand the role of consuming media and ICTs in negotiating and constructing identities (Fig. 1). The negotiation between identities seemed to depend on the degree of how much they use the Korean media in comparison with American media. This formed different patterns of media and ICTs-use. However, it is also important that we don't necessarily overemphasize the effect of media and ICTs on negotiating between identities, just because it is clear that media and ICTs consumption and communication patterns should be also coupled with structural conditions and personal experiences.

Figure 1 implicates the complicated structure for construction of negotiation between identities. As is shown, in the case of Korean international students, the pattern of constructing identities is relatively influenced by how their cultural identities are negotiated through consuming the media and ICTs and communicated with preferred persons. However, it is clear that their consumption of media is not the only factor which can explain the formation of their identities but also it is interrelated to their socioeconomic condition and personal daily experiences.

Drawing on interview, the researcher identified three basic patterns of negotiating identities. Cultural shift can easily occur, like case "A" and "H" which I mentioned above, when the value sought is bigger than the value obtained. Meanwhile, like case "D" and "G" cultural tension can result in cultural reinforcement. At any rate, cultural reinforcement helps Korean students to keep their local identities. It is interesting that their local identities are not the same as they were in Korea. Particularly, even

when reinforcing their local identities, Korean students are likely to prefer the "Americanized local identity." It seems a process to justify their decision to study in the United States.

In addition, three factors are coupled with negotiation between identities: experiences of personal or structural discrimination, degree of using Korean media and decision to return to their home country or not. However, the important thing is that in each pattern, the negotiation between identities is an ongoing process of communication. As case "E" said, "I would say I'm pretty much a well-rounded and well-cultured Korean-Korean. As much as I want to be treated by law as American, I can't really choose my own identity." Like "E," interviewees still negotiate identities for their future lives.

In sum, the present study investigated the way of presenting, interpreting and consequently constructing identity as a "nonresident alien" in the US. In specific, the study explored how the process of negotiating identities through media and ICTs consumption is associated with structural conditions and personal experiences in terms of the obtainment of a US degree in higher education and the extent of their formation of cultural capital. The interview showed that all interviewees were likely to relax from the tension associated with a different language and culture by consuming their home country media. It can be called "the relaxation of cultural tension." Further, most interviewees were consuming Korean internet news for enjoyment, not for seeking information which means that language of various cultural codes, is a deeply shaped barrier when this displaces actual information seeking about US culture and society.

In addition, it was clear that the form of media and ICTs consumption depended on their respective life situations. By interconnecting to different social and personal conditions, the present study suggests that the media dependency as well as the degree of relocating the limited time for using various media can be applicable for explaining their different media and ICTs consumption patterns because media and ICTs use patterns were associated with interviewee's transnational offline friendships and the degree to which interviewees use Korean media in comparison with the US media. To be sure, interviewees had respective ways of consuming both Korean and American media in order to negotiate identities. Also, media and ICTs consumption was the process for interviewees to acquire a cultural toolkit in adapting to US culture. However, to make this process clear, I suggest three different types of identities: transnational, local and dual identity. Through negotiation between identities, interviewees both reinforced their "original identity" or sometimes transgress this boundary. Obviously, the process of negotiation was more complicated with the structural condition for them to decide to study in the United States.

Although, the study indicated that there might be the specific relations between media and ICTs consumption and the process of shaping different types of identities, the current study was not intended to generalize the result. Therefore, it is still necessary to catch up the dynamics of relationship between the media and ICTs consumption and socio-structural condition with the larger context of American culture and society.

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