Chapter 7
Korean Families

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Abstract This chapter provides a brief overview of the literature on Korean families living in the United States and Canada. According to the 2010 U.S. Census data, there was a 43% increase in the Latino and Asian populations between 2000 and 2010, leading to 14.7 million for the Asian population in 2010 (Hong et al., 2014). Korean Americans ranked as the fifth largest Asian population (Jang et al., 2015; Min, 2013). By 2018, about 1.5 million were Korean Americans (Asian alone category; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018a). There is a smaller but growing Korean population in Canada, with 190,000 residents according to the 2016 Census of Canada. About 150,000 people reported Korean language as their mother tongue and about 70 percent of them (109,000 people) indicated Korean language as language spoken most often at home (Statistics Canada, 2017). Given their substantial presence as an Asian ethnic group in both the United States and in Canada and more importantly, the increasing heterogeneity of the population, this chapter reviews and expands the existing literature on Korean families. Specifically, this chapter examines the diverse characteristics of Koreans in the United States and Canada, and how these factors can be closely linked to supporting the well-being of adults and children in Korean families.

Keywords Korean Canadian · Korean American · Korean families · Family relationship · Family rolves · Ethnic identity · Bicultural · Cultural-ethnic socialization

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This chapter examines the diverse social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the Korean population in the United States and Canada, and discusses their implications for the psycho-social well-being of Korean families and implications for informed practice. Although smaller in number than Chinese and Filipino communities in these two countries, the Korean population is a well-established ethnic group with over 100 years of settlement in the U.S. and over 60 years in Canada and there is continued growth through migration. According to the 2010 U.S. Census data, there was a 43 percent increase in the Latino and Asian populations between 2000 and 2010, leading to 14.7 million for the Asian population in 2010 (Hong et al., 2014). Korean Americans ranked as the fifth largest Asian population (Jang et al., 2015; Min, 2013). By 2018, about 1.5 million were Korean Americans (Asian alone category; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018a). There is a smaller Korean population in Canada, with 190,000 residents according to the 2016 Census of Canada but it is one of the fastest growing 'visible minority' groups and the ninth largest immigrant group in the country (Park, 2012). About 150,000 people reported Korean language as their mother tongue and about 70 percent of them (109,000 people) indicated Korean language as the language spoken most often at home (Statistics Canada, 2017).

With the backdrop of their relatively large and growing presence as an Asian ethnic group in both the U.S. and in Canada, and more importantly, of the increasing heterogeneity of the population, this chapter reviews and expands the existing literature on Korean families. In doing so, we attempt to portray the complexity within this particular ethnic group; however, we are cognizant that we are limited by the foci of publish literature, which does not often adequately capture the diversity and dynamism within a given and evolving population. It is important that in such worthy endeavors to understand ethnic groups, we must all be aware of and avoid tendencies to essentialize them and to paint them with a broad brush. With this caveat, we begin this chapter with a brief history of immigration to both countries. Then we provide a profile of families in terms of family migration, family structure, age, and generation, religion, and cultural values, economic integration and educational attainment. In the context of increasing heterogeneity among young Korean families, the remaining sections address how Korean youth negotiate ethnic identity and highlights research on social roles and responsibilities that promotes healthy functioning among Korean Canadian and Korean American families.

Brief Immigration History

The history of migration for Koreans to the U.S. and Canada is often characterized by distinct periods or waves (Lee, 2016). The U.S., compared to Canada, has a much longer history of Korean migration with the first wave arriving in the early 1900s to work at sugar plantations in Hawaii. Since that early period to the 1960s, Korean migration to the U.S. consisted of political refugees from Japanese colonization, students, and military children and wives (Yoon, 2012). The largest migration waves that shaped the Korean-American community took place from the mid-1960s onwards, due to changes in the immigration policy, and the migration flows were composed of predominantly economic and family migrants seeking permanent residency.

Similar to the U.S., military family members and education migrants comprised important groups in the pre-1960 flows of Korean migration to Canada, and this included theology students who studied temporarily in Canada to eventually return and assist Canadian missionaries in Korea (Yoo, 2002; Yoon, 2012). Canada's immigration policy opened doors to non-European permanent migrants in the early 1960s and thus the post-1960 wave is marked by the beginning of permanent migrants from South Korea to Canada (Kim, Noh, & Noh, 2012). And as a testament to the permanent nature of their migration, the majority of immigrants, in both places, have naturalized into citizens (Min & Kim, 2013).

Since the 1960s, Korean migration to the U.S. and Canada has generally been characterized by highly skilled and business migrants, family members, and foreign students, and continuous migration streams along with past waves shape the contemporary Korean population in both places, which can be found in the larger urban centres like Los Angeles, New York, Toronto, and Vancouver (O'Connor & Batalova, 2019; Park, 2012). Emigration from Korea during this new wave of immigration to the U.S. and Canada was initially driven by Korea's unstable economic and political conditions, as well as Korea's bilateral connections with each country (Kim, Yun, Park, & Noh, 2012; Min, 2010). For the most part, immigrants to both the U.S. and Canada were highly educated and sought economic mobility for their children but due to their differences in immigration policies over subsequent decades, Korean migrants to the U.S. tended to be sponsored family members, and in Canada, they were economic and business class migrants. The desire for an improved quality of life and for cultural capital in the form of English language education have motivated more recent middle-class Korean migrants, replacing past motivations related to poorer economic and political conditions in South Korea (Kim, 2015). While they arrive wealthier than their predecessors did, this latest wave of mostly education migrants share their desire for a better life (for a more detailed description of the history of migration; see Min (2013), Joo and Lee (2018) for the U.S., and Kim, Yun, et al. (2012), for Canada).

It is important to note that the focus of this chapter is on families who live in the United States and Canada after migration as a family unit and their experiences as reflected in the literature. The unique migration experiences of other types of Korean

families in the United States and Canada has received some research attention but this body of work is not discussed here. Specifically, we are referring to the experiences of transnational families (i.e., families living separately in different countries while maintaining close ties and considering themselves as a family unit, families of international students), and families of North Korean refugees (for a more detailed description of these families' experiences, see Finch and Kim (2012), Jeong, You, and Kwon (2014), for the U.S., and Dorman et al. (2017), Kim, Yun, et al. (2012), Kim and Kwak (2019), for Canada).

A Social, Cultural, and Economic Profile of Korean Families

How families take shape within ethnic communities depends on myriad factors, including migration patterns, social, demographic, and cultural dynamics, as well as educational attainment and economic integration. In this section, we offer a profile of Korean families along these dimensions focusing on family migration, family structure, age, and generation, religion, and cultural values, economic integration and educational attainment.

Where we tend to think of migrants as young unattached adults in search of educational and economic opportunities, overwhelmingly high proportions of Korean immigrants arrived as families with school-aged children (Kim, 2014); and the presence of children creates an incentive to move as parents seek quality of life for their families and social mobility. In 2016, of 160,000 Korean Canadians who had indicated marital status, close to 60 percent of them were married, about 35 percent were never married and not living in common law relationships, and about 4 percent were either divorced or separated (Statistics Canada, 2017). Similarly, in the U.S., close to 60 percent of Asian Americans reported their marital status as married, which was the highest compared to other racial groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018b). Specific to Korean families, over two thirds of Korean families were married couples, and about 15 percent of families had children under the age of 18 years living with a single parent (Yu, Choe, & Han, 2002). The lowest divorce or separation status was reported among Koreans, compared to other racial and ethnic groups (Yu et al., 2002).

In terms of age and generation, first-generation Korean immigrants are aging in both countries (Han, Choi, Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2008; Kim, 2014), while, at the same time, second-generation Koreans (i.e., born in the U.S. or Canada) and subsequent generations are increasing in numbers. Specifically, about a third of Korean-Americans were under the age of 25 years (Min & Kim, 2013), representing a large group of children and young adults immersed in multiple cultural contexts, which, in turn, influences their ethnic identities and sense of community, a topic to which we will turn later in the chapter. Such shifts in immigrant generations may be linked to increased rates of interethnic and interracial marriages. For example, interethnic and interracial marriages were more frequently reported among second-generation Korean Americans, particularly among women (Jacobs & Labov, 2002; Kim, 2018), compared to first-generation Koreans.

Despite high rates of ethnic intermarriage, emphasizing and taking pride in one's culture and its traditions – also known as cultural-ethnic socialization – seems to be prevalent among many Asian Americans, regardless of their generational status (Brown & Ling, 2012). This suggests that what Korean Americans find relevant for marriage (i.e., how families are formed), appears to extend beyond ethnicity or cultural-ethnic values and, instead, is closely tied to other social determinants (e.g., gender, socioeconomic status, place of residence and geographic proximity, and social networks) (Lee, 2004). A study examining different aspects of women's interracial marriage indicated that interpersonal similarity (e.g., based on educational and occupational experiences or opportunities) were strong predictors of interracial marriage (Chen & Takeuchi, 2011). Thus, as second and subsequent generation Koreans choose diverse education and work opportunities, they belong to multiple social groups and interethnic and interracial marriages become viable and desirable.

Interethnic and interracial marriages for Korean families is one of the contributing factors to emerging heterogeneity in Korean ethnicity. What it means to be racially and ethnically Korean in the U.S. and Canada is diversifying. One of the fastest growing Korean American populations is biracial/multiracial Koreans (i.e., children of interethnic and interracial marriages that include Korean heritage). They represented 17 percent (about 280,000) of the total Korean American population in 2010. The U.S. Census data reported an 82 percent increase from 2000 to 2010 (Hoeffel, Rastogi, Kim, & Shaid, 2012), and the number is expected to grow because multiracial Korean Americans tend to report higher rates of intermarriage than single-race Korean Americans (Min & Kim, 2013). Mixed-race populations and heterogeneity in Korean ethnicity continue to grow in South Korea as well ("*damunwha*", Kim, 2016), consistent with the emerging trends in the U.S., and Canada. Thus, there is increasing heterogeneity in the lived experiences of Korean families, in terms of how the families are formed and the ways in which Korean ethnicity or identity may be defined by the individuals.

Socio-culturally, local churches are often a centralized place where multiple generations socialize, get exposure to, and practice Korean culture and tradition (Min, 2010), with two thirds of Korean Americans affiliated with Christian churches, for example (Lee, 2019). In Canada, approximately 50 percent were Christian, and the remaining half reported they were either of no religion, Catholic, or Buddhist (Park, 2012). In addition to religious influences, families are shaped by cultural values such as *ga-jok* (family) (Choi, Tan, Yasui, & Hahm, 2016; Kim, 2006).

For many Koreans, the word *Ga-jok* conveys the sentiment of belonging and connection and it carries a strong sense of "we-ness" (*woori*), solidarity, and shared responsibility to one another (Choi & Han, 2008; Yoo, Lee, & Yoo, 2007). This meaning of family relationships is heavily influenced by the historical and sociocultural context for Koreans that emphasizes loyalty, righteousness, respect, trust, and sharing responsibility for the welfare of others (Kim, 2006; Yu et al., 2002). It is believed that the cultural importance of *ga-jok* crystallized in the social climate after the Korean War in the 1950s, which placed many Koreans at risk of experiencing extreme poverty and hardship, and thus compelled nuclear families to unite together and rely on each other for survival (Cheah & Park, 2006), and its continued

relevance underscores its intergenerational reproduction. Resilience and adaptation to life stressors and adversity as a collective unit is one of the defining features of Korean families, based on caring relationships among its members, attachment, and exercising flexibility to meet each other's needs (Lee et al., 2004).

The high educational attainment of immigrants, a growing ethnic community, the contemporary nuclear family structure and its concomitant sense of attachment, identity, and duty offered migrating families the class and ethnic capital for certain types of employment. Many first-generation Korean families historically turned to self-employment for their livelihood, such as small business ownership and entrepreneurship, after migration (Kim & Ha, 2010; Thomas & Ong, 2015; Yu et al., 2002). These small businesses ranged from retail (e.g., convenience stores; general merchandising stores; food stores) and clothing/garment businesses (e.g., apparel stores; dry cleaners) to hospitality and service industry (e.g., restaurants; nail salons) (Yang, Colarelli, Han, & Page, 2011). In addition to bank loans, the financial capital to start up the business often came from their own investment and savings, particularly brought from Korea for business migrants (Kim & Ha, 2010), or loans from family members or a close friend (Park, 2010). Korean families who owned small businesses often worked together for very long hours – well over the regular full-time, 40-hour week, which limited their availability for social-cultural integration in the U.S. and Canada. Their overrepresentation in self-employment was possible in part by pooling family labour and resources, which also had the effect of leading to stronger kinship ties and also ties to co-ethnic community members.

Changes to employment trends for Korean families began in the early 2000s (Min, 2013). Self-employment rates decreased among Korean Americans, which was attributed to increasing numbers of second and subsequent-generation Koreans gaining employment opportunities outside of the family business and in other sectors, such as in health care. In a policy report from the IOM Migration Research and Training Centre (Lee, 2016) that was based on the 2014 American Community Survey results, the percentage of Korean Americans who held occupations in the retail trade industry gradually declined from the first generation of immigrants (15 percent) to second and subsequent generations (10 percent). In contrast, for occupations in the professional, scientific, and technical services sector, there was an increase from 9 percent among first-generation Koreans to 14 percent for subsequent generations, and an increase in the health care and social assistance sector as well (from 8 to 13 percent, respectively). Among Korean Canadians, Kim (2010) reported that the three most common occupations were managers from various industries (31 percent), those working in sales and service (24 percent), and professionals in business, finance, and administration (12 percent). Reduced language barriers among recent immigrant families and emerging non-immigrant temporary residents (e.g., international students) also contributed to changes. While small business ownership and entrepreneurship still remain predominant, they now represent the economic experiences of fewer Korean families.

High educational attainment explain recent changes to employment trends. Increasing numbers of second and subsequent-generation Koreans seek employment opportunities outside of family business and in various sectors commensurate

with their education. Park (2012) found that in 2006, the majority of Korean Canadian adults over age 25 had one or more combinations of an academic certificate, diploma, or degree, which was four times higher than the general Canadian population in the same age group. Close to 60 percent of first- and second-generation immigrant youth in Canada were attending university in 2006, at a rate that was two times higher than the general population (Sweet, Anisef, Brown, Walters, & Phythian, 2010). About a decade after, in 2016, this pattern was consistent, and the proportion for one or more combinations of an academic certificate, diploma, or degree was 65 percent of Korean Canadians over the age of 15 years (Statistics Canada, 2017), about two thirds of the population. Similar patterns are found in the U.S. Close to 50 percent of the first-generation Korean Americans and 55 percent of the second and subsequent generations of Korean Americans over the age of 25 years had at least a bachelor's degree (Yu et al., 2002), about twice the rate in the general U.S. population. Moreover, according to the 2016 Census Profile, of the 74,000 Korean Canadians who had obtained a university certificate, diploma or degree at the bachelor level or above, about 25 percent of them had a post-graduate education (Statistics Canada, 2017). All of these findings highlight the strong emphasis on education among Korean families in the U.S. and Canada, which, again, is transmitted from generation to generation.

In summary, Koreans in the U.S. and Canada tended to migrate as a nuclear family and maintain a nuclear family structure, they are an aging immigrant population with rising numbers of second and subsequent generations who are interethnic and interracial, and they are kinship-oriented and are influenced by values of respect, trust, and shared responsibility within the family. These characteristics have, in part, also shaped the patterns in employment and educational attainment.

Supporting Korean Families: Ethnic Identity

In light of growing racial and ethnic heterogeneity among young Koreans and families, this first section discusses the factors that may influence the process in which Korean youth negotiate ethnicity and ethnic identity. The focus is on highlighting ethnic identification and cultural-ethnic socialization for Asian Americans, with some studies specific to Korean youth. Then, the findings are integrated to inform practice when supporting ethnic Korean families.

From a psychological perspective, a sense of belonging and feeling connected to family and preferred social groups are critical to the development of identity and individuality, as well as mental well-being. In identity negotiations, bicultural identification was defined as a process in which a person negotiates ethnic identity within the U.S. or Canadian multicultural landscape to achieve a sense of belonging to more than one group (Bulut & Gayman, 2016). Bulut & Gayman's 2016 study with 3271 first-generation Asian and Latino Americans in the U.S. revealed that most of the first-generation Asian Americans were categorized as 'Recent Arrivals' (34 percent) and 'Bicultural' (31 percent). The 'Bicultural' group, which showed

strong ties and affinity to both cultures of the U.S. and the ethnic heritage, reported the most adapted mental health functioning, suggesting a potential benefit of maintaining ties to both their new country and the country of origin on individuals' well-being (Bulut & Gayman, 2016). Berry and his colleagues (2006) found a similar pattern in ethnic identification with youth across 13 different countries. Youth who fell in the 'Integration' profile of having high involvement in both their ethnic and national cultures reported the least problems with mental health and school adjustment, compared to youth with other ethnic identification profiles (Berry et al., 2006). With first- and second-generation Korean American youth specifically, the benefit of an 'integrated bicultural identity' with a strong sense of 'being Korean' and ethnic distinction and solidarity in Korean culture (Choi, Tan, et al., 2016) was also documented. It is evident that maintaining ties to one's ethnic heritage and culture, and flexibly integrating those values and cultural practices into one's sense of self, can be beneficial for identity negotiation and individuals' well-being.

However, the dichotomized notion of bicultural identification, as Bulut and Gayman (2016) suggested, may not be encompassing the ethnic identification process often prescribed by Koreans in the U.S. Kim (2010) found that second and subsequent generations of Koreans have begun to create space (e.g., establishing new local churches, as "a self-constructed hybrid third space") that embraced their unique shared identities. At the same time, there is growing recognition of the layering of identities in contrast to a binary perspective, that is, the layering of ethnicity, nationality, race, and panethnicity (Kim, 2018), and the importance of exploring the intersectionality of such identities with gender, sexuality, and social class. Building connections and engaging in dialogues and various social activities through this type of space may have allowed opportunities for healthy cultural-ethnic socialization, as opposed to joining and trying to fit in the pre-existing mainstream or primarily ethnic Korean institutions (Kim, 2010).

Moving away from the dichotomized notion of bicultural identification, when supporting Korean families, helping them to create space for dialogues and engaging in active and intentional process of cultural-ethnic socialization is recommended (Yoon et al., 2017). Cultural-ethnic socialization toward integrated multi-identity may encompass having a right balance of participation in Korean, American/Canadian, and other activities and striving for strong Korean, American/Canadian, and other identities (Choi, Tan, et al., 2016; Kim & Wolpin, 2008; Lee, 2019). Through an active process of cultural-ethnic socialization, parents and practitioners can guide youth to intentionally explore their ethnic heritage and culture and develop a healthy integrated identity. It is worth noting that a high level of perceived discrimination was linked to limited ties to both their ethnic and national cultures (Berry et al., 2006). An active process of cultural-ethnic socialization can provide opportunities to bring attention to explicit and implicit messages related to race and ethnicity that Koreans receive from parents, family members, peers, and in their social contexts. In this process, any negative, stereotypical messages and experiences of perceived discrimination, such as being insulted or feeling unaccepted because of one's race or ethnicity (Berry et al., 2006), can be examined and

intervened. Actively making sense of the messages and then negotiating between their multiple social identities may help to developing a healthy integrated one.

An active process of cultural-ethnic socialization will become even more relevant in the future, given on-going trends in interethnic and interracial relationships and contact among different immigrant generations (first, second, and beyond) and different immigrant waves. Such increasing heterogeneity suggests greater variability in how Korean families attempt to preserve, negotiate or re-define values and traditions through cultural-ethnic socialization. Some Korean families, with the determination, capacity, resources, and opportunity, will integrate multiple social identities and different values into their everyday lives while others may struggle to integrate these multiple layers in a meaningful way. For the latter, difficulties in cultural-ethnic socialization can have a particularly detrimental impact on parenting practices and formation of identities for young people (Kim, Knudson-Martin, & Tuttle, 2018; Roopnarine, Krishnakumar, Narine, Logie, & Lape, 2014). Rather than leaving families on their own to struggle between different values and cultural practices, this issue can be recognized and addressed at the community level through coordinated programs of their choice, with ample opportunities for healthy cultural-ethnic socialization and for promoting the family and its members' psychological well-being (Paik, Rahman, Kula, Saito, & Witenstein, 2017). Lastly, cultural-ethnic socialization may be perceived differently for multiracial Koreans, who primarily self-identify as American or Canadian given their place of birth and cultural upbringing, but are also treated as 'others' because of their appearances (Kim et al., 2019). However, the literature in this area is limited. Further research is warranted to explore their unique processes of cultural-ethnic socialization.

In summary, the benefit of 'integrated bicultural identity' is evident for Korean families and their well-being. However, creating space that embraces building connections and engaging in dialogues about shared and layered identities seem more suited for Korean families, as opposed to having to subscribe to the dichotomized notion of bicultural identification. The active and intentional process of cultural-ethnic socialization, which also includes helping people to make sense of the experiences of perceived discrimination and stereotypical messages and to effectively challenge them, is recommended for Korean American and Korean Canadian families.

Supporting Korean Families: Balancing Roles

Focusing on the distinctive cultural values within Korean families, this last section presents literature on roles and responsibilities specifically relevant to Korean families in the U.S. and Canada, in order to inform practice to promote healthy family functioning. We highlight key literature on common roles and responsibilities and then integrate the findings to inform practice when supporting Korean families.

The nuclear family structure and propensity to respond to life events as a collective unit, members within Korean families embody human, cultural, and social

capital. It is common then for adult children of Korean families to take on the roles of providing emotional, physical, and financial support for parents when they become older (Choi, Kushner, Mill, & Lai, 2014; Kim, 2014). Accepting a language or cultural brokering role is often the norm and what is expected in being part of an immigrant family. Korean children and young adults often become the advocates and the lens through which their parents navigate the "post-migration world" (Yoo & Kim, 2014). Many Korean parents also make choices and sacrifices in their parenting roles for children, such as relocating to a different city with a better education system and good quality of life (Yoon, 2016) or investing in children's achievement-oriented goals (Cho & Shin, 2008). Being deeply kinship-oriented, a family unit can be a tremendous source of strength and support.

As discussed, when an external social support system is not well established, Korean families rely on their own resources (Bernstein, 2007). Also specific to first-generation families, frequent interactions between family members for the purpose of adjustments and survival in the new country were associated with improved family functioning in the short-term (Rothbaum, Morelli, Pott, & Liu-Constant, 2000). Korean American children who arrived in the U.S. with their parents were less likely to report psychological problems in the short-term than children whose families had separated (Suárez-Orozco, Bang, & Kim, 2010). Cohesive immigrant families that spend more time as a family unit allow each member the opportunity to experience a strong sense of belonging (Chung & Lim, 2014), especially during a time of transition.

An over-reliance on family support and resources alone could, however, lead to social isolation and stress, which may result in an increased level of family conflict (Moon, 2008). Studies on language brokering clearly support this complexity: bilingual Korean children who apply their language skills to advocate and make decisions for their family unit feel both empowered and strained by their imposed roles (Guan, Greenfield, & Orellana, 2014; Kwon, 2014; Shen, Kim, Wang, & Chao, 2014). Moreover, young adults who are second-generation Korean Americans reported that they recognized and often internalized their immigrant parents' hardship and sacrifices while growing up (Kang, Okazaki, Abelmann, Kim-Prieto, & Lan, 2010).

Striving for collective harmony and family goals at the expense of individuality can pose an intricate challenge. For Korean families, parents' relationship as a couple may be less prioritized over their parenting responsibilities or commitment to ensure the well-being of children and the family as a whole (Kim, 2013). Given the strong feeling of connectedness ("we-ness") and shared responsibility within many Korean families, how one member of the family behaves is thought to reflect positively or negatively on other family members and the family as a whole. One family member failing to meet expectations, for instance, can induce a feeling of shame among the whole family, as if the other members see it as a failure on their parts (Castillo & Phoummarath, 2006; Kim, Omizo, & Salvador, 1996).

Taken together, for Korean families in the U.S. and Canada, the weight and importance of family relationships requires a healthy balance. It may become a "double-edged sword" when various family roles are in conflict with other

important personal values (Park, Butcher, & Maas, 2004), such as personal satisfaction, freedom of choice, and individuality, all of which are highly valued in Western culture. At the extreme end of role conflict, an individual's well-being may be sacrificed to keep the family intact, such as not reporting domestic violence, elder abuse, or addictions, to prevent perceived shame brought onto the whole family (Choi, Elkins, & Disney, 2016). Promoting through effective communication the development of individuality and external social networks and support, while family members remain cohesive will likely lead to better long-term outcomes. Also, some families may continue to draw upon the support of their family members and their resources in times of struggle, in addition to or instead of seeking resources from external resources (Park, Turnbull, & Park, 2001). Providing validation to such resourcefulness and strength within the family will be crucial before gradually introducing new strategies and working together with families to determine which available supports would work best for their unique circumstances.

There is a clear need for more research to understand the increasingly nuanced social, cultural, economic, psychological, and environmental factors that intersect and influence Korean families living in the U.S. and Canada. We are only beginning to understand how these factors may be integrated into the personal and social identities of being Korean. A thorough exploration is warranted to examine the intersectionality of these socially constructed identities (Kim et al., 2018; Kwon, 2014; Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers, & Jackson, 2010) for Korean families and their link to well-being. In summary, to inform practice, raising awareness of the kinship-oriented roles and family relationships among Korean families is recommended. Each family will have a unique history and circumstances (Schmidtke, 2012) and just as an integrated bicultural identity is beneficial to the well-being of Koreans, it will be critical to work *together* with Korean families to reflect on how they can be supported in balancing various family roles and other important personal values.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief overview of the literature on Korean families in the U.S. and Canada. What it means to be racially and ethnically Korean is rapidly changing in the contemporary period with recent events highlighting racial inequality and microaggressions, and while they share some experiences with other racialized, ethnic, and immigrant groups, Koreans families remain distinct in particular ways. Over time and generations, Koreans in both Canada and the U.S. shift and evolve, and at present, we find some combination of long-term migrants, newcomers, temporary residents (i.e. international students), refugees (i.e. North Koreans) and members of the second and third generations. Both countries share a diversity of Korean people within their borders but differ slightly in their composition. For example, Koreans in the U.S. have a longer history, and there is a greater proportion of native-born Koreans in the U.S. than in Canada.

High levels of education and self-employment along with a growing number of multi-ethnic children through interethnic and interracial unions characterize communities in both places. At the same time, there is evidence that, for some, there are significant issues related to stress and mental well-being particularly among socially isolated families and individuals. Experiences of discrimination are also present leading to different types of coping strategies (Kim, 2018). With the resources available in and external to Korean communities, members established institutions sensitive to Korean culture and language in many urban centres. These ethnic organizations and those external to the community can be effective sources of support. In future, we expect further composition shifts in the Korean population in terms of immigrant generation and multi-ethnic individuals, as well as institutional changes to address emerging issues in both countries.

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