

INDIVIDUALIZED MASCULINE CITIZENSHIP: STUDY ABROAD MEN AND MILITARY
SERVICE IN SOUTH KOREA

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of the politics of citizenship in the context of South Korea's ardent globalization and neoliberal reforms, through the stories of men who have spent extensive period time studying outside of South Korea, whom I call "study abroad men"¹ in this thesis, and their military service in South Korea. My ethnographic research demonstrates that these study abroad men are both legally and culturally limited in their belonging abroad when they come of age and attempt to work and settle down after their education. Thus, despite their life and education abroad from an early age, these transnational young men deeply value enhancing the possibility of a viable future in South Korea; those who want to open up their possible futures in South Korea even come to appreciate compulsory military service (currently required to serve at least for two years, only for men) as an opportunity to secure full membership, a militarized masculine citizenship, in South Korea. Analyzing the ways in which study abroad men who value flexibility and mobility along with cosmopolitan aspiration make sense of and give meaning to military conscription in South Korea, I argue that study abroad men secure individualized masculine citizenship through a military service that is highly classed and largely pursued for individual benefits; as such their service differs from the dominant discourse in South Korea that legitimizes military conscription as an equal sacred duty of every male citizen for the sake of nation. I further argue that this pursuit of national membership through military service is not necessarily contradictory with cosmopolitan aspirations or flexible citizenship strategies. I specifically locate this project in contemporary South Korea, a site which offers a productive vantage point from which to grasp the tension between the global and national.

¹ Here, by the term "study abroad men," I refer to those who studied abroad alone beginning from primary education or those who studied in international schools in various countries accompanying their parents stationed overseas and then went to American colleges. I provide more detailed definition of study abroad men I studied

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: MILITARY SERVICE FOR NATIONAL AND FLEXIBLE CITIZENSHIP	45
CHAPTER 3: LIFE ABROAD LEADS TO THE MILITARY: BEING COSMOPOLITAN AT HOME	83
CHAPTER 4: FROM “ENVIABLE OTHER” TO “ONE OF US”? : INDIVIDUALIZED MASCULINE CITIZENSHIP THROUGH MILITARY SERVICE	118
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	151
BIBLIOGRAPHY	162

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a study of the politics of citizenship in the context of South Korea's ardent globalization and neoliberal reforms, through the stories of men who have spent extensive period time studying outside of South Korea, whom I call "study abroad men"² in this thesis, and their military service in South Korea. My ethnographic research demonstrates that these study abroad men are both legally and culturally limited in their belonging abroad when they come of age and attempt to work and settle down after their education. Thus, despite their life and education abroad from an early age, these transnational young men deeply value enhancing the possibility of a viable future in South Korea; those who want to open up their possible futures in South Korea even come to appreciate military service as an opportunity to secure full membership, a militarized masculine citizenship, in South Korea. Analyzing the ways in which study abroad men who value flexibility and mobility along with cosmopolitan aspiration make sense of and give meaning to military conscription in South Korea, I argue that study abroad men secure individualized masculine citizenship through a military service that is highly classed and largely pursued for individual benefits; as such their service differs from the dominant discourse in South Korea that legitimizes military conscription as an equal sacred duty of every male citizen for the sake of nation. I further argue that this pursuit of national membership through military service is not necessarily contradictory with cosmopolitan aspirations or flexible citizenship strategies. I specifically locate this project in contemporary South Korea, a site which offers a productive vantage point from which to grasp the tension between the global and national. I give

² Here, by the term "study abroad men," I refer to those who studied abroad alone beginning from primary education or those who studied in international schools in various countries accompanying their parents stationed overseas and then went to American colleges. I provide more detailed definition of study abroad men I studied compared to other types of study abroad students in terms of class and family trajectory in later part of this chapter.

particular attention to South Korea's tightening military conscription in the name of equality among citizens while the South Korean state and society pursue rapid globalization and neoliberal reforms, causing ever-increasing class disparity.

In this introductory chapter, I start with a brief historical review about South Korea's neoliberal transformation, particularly focusing on education and conscription in the following section of the Introduction to historicize pre-college study abroad and military service in the particular context of contemporary South Korea. I argue that the case of South Korea is important to the study of citizenship because its tightening military conscription through changing laws on citizenship and military service as a response to the problem of equity reveals the fraught processes of micro-negotiation between the democratic principle of equality and the reality of class disparity/class privileges intensified under the neoliberal reforms and ardent globalization.

I am primarily interested in the intertwined dynamics of the cultural logics and material processes embedded in neoliberal global capitalism and simultaneously informed by and situated in particular local contexts, which make pre-college study abroad and return to South Korea for military service thinkable, practicable, and desirable for study abroad students I met. As Aihwa Ong writes, anthropologists "pay ethnographic attention to how subjects, in given historical conditions, are shaped by structures of power... and how they respond to these structures in culturally specific ways" (Ong 1999, p.22 and 23). Following this call, I examine how study abroad men live through the tension between the global and the national; between the self-development and individual freedom that neoliberal reforms emphasize and their compulsory military service in South Korea. By doing so, this dissertation complicates the binary view of simple opposition between the global and the local; the transnational and the national, by

ethnographically analyzing transnational practices of individuals (i.e., study abroad and returning back to South Korea for military service) situated simultaneously within the workings of global capitalism and particular cultural regimes.

Having introduced my thesis in short, the rest of the Introduction is organized into four sections: First, I articulate key theoretical frameworks such as flexible citizenship and cosmopolitan membership, and write about the neoliberal transformation of citizenship and military service, drawing on previous scholarship. Doing so, I introduce the particularity of the South Korean case within the previous scholarly discussions of citizenship and military service. Second, I elaborate on the historical specificity of the neoliberal transformation in South Korea, focusing particularly on education and conscription, in order to historicize and further contextualize my ethnography in later chapters on study abroad experiences and military service. Third, I introduce my informants, fieldsite(s), and methodologies, along with a short introduction to my approach to class and a brief analysis of two distinctive sub-groups among study abroad students drawing on the scholarship of education abroad in South Korea and beyond. Finally, I outline the rest of chapters.

Citizenship and Military Service

In this section, I locate this thesis within the previous scholarly discussions on citizenship and military service in the context of globalization and neoliberalization. I draw on two theoretical frameworks regarding the transformation of citizenship – flexible citizenship and cosmopolitan/global citizenship in chapter 2 and chapter 3 respectively. Flexible citizenship, coined by Aihwa Ong (1999), refers to the neoliberal strategies of using (multiple) citizenship – using citizenship for its instrumental benefits – both by states and individuals. States can provide

citizenship and residency in exchange for skilled labor and other resources such as financial assets for investment (Joppke 2010; Ong 1999; Shachar 2006). Migrant-receiving countries can lure globally competitive talent with resources by offering citizenship, while migrant-sending countries can tolerate the dual-citizenship of their emigrants when their remittances to home countries and their human capital are valued (Shachar 2006; Jones-Correa 2001; Faist and Kivisto 2007). Indeed, there is a global trend of increasing acceptance and tolerance of dual citizenship (Sejersen 2008; Legomski 2003). As an example of the instrumentalization of citizenship by the state, with “an investment estimated to exceed \$2.5 million, one can “buy” Austrian citizenship, without any prior residence, language, or even interview requirement” (Joppke 2010, p.160). The South Korean state also adopted the strategy of flexible citizenship for its own survival and development in the global economy as I review in chapter 2 (see Kim 2013 for a review of the development of dual citizenship in South Korea).

Individuals also pursue flexible citizenship strategies for their own benefits. Preferring multiple citizenships, individuals seek “to both circumvent and benefit from different nation-state regimes by selecting different sites for investments, work, and family relocation” (Ong 1999, p.112). Ong analyzes the holding and use of multiple passports as strategies of flexible citizenship. While I also show that having a legal flexibility is an important part of flexible citizenship strategies, I further suggest that flexible citizenship strategies in a broader sense or the increasing significance of instrumental benefits of citizenship largely explains the ways in which study abroad men give meaning to their citizenship and military service in this thesis, by studying both those with and without legal flexibility (e.g., dual citizenship and permanent residency).

While my main argument about the individualized citizenship that study abroad men secure through military service largely draws on the discussions of flexible citizenship and broader instrumentalization of citizenship as a result of neoliberalization and globalization, I also build on the discussions of cosmopolitan/global citizens or post-national identity, which call attention to the moral and political aspects of global-interconnectedness, the potential to overcome the problems of nation-states and build a real sense of global community (Cheah and Robbins 1998; Beck 2006; Appadurai 1996). While the two theoretical frameworks – flexible citizenship and cosmopolitan membership/post-national belonging – try to explain increasing global movement of people beyond the border of nation-states, the focus of the two are different as I explained above. Thus, in this thesis I show the instrumentality of study abroad and flexible citizenship in these young men’s transnational life trajectories, while also giving attention to their appreciation of a sense of being in the world beyond instrumentality, drawing here on the discussions of cosmopolitanism. Doing so, I point out that calculations of practical benefits are intricately intertwined with cosmopolitan aspiration, as study abroad men I met narrate about their study abroad experiences and membership both in South Korea and overseas.

Regardless of the different emphasis of flexible citizenship and cosmopolitanism, what these two approaches share is that they both point to the decreasing significance of national belonging or national identity in calculations of flexible citizenship strategies and in the lives of world citizens as cosmopolitans respectively. However, my research indicates that the sense of national belonging and national identity are still significant factors in calculations of flexible citizenship strategies (chapter 2 and 4); and I argue that cosmopolitan belonging does not contradict national belonging in the lived realities of study abroad men (chapter 3). Rather, my informants appreciate their full national belonging through the completion of military service in

South Korea to pave the way for better flexible citizenship strategies and further mobility, including (but not limited to) the possibility of a life in South Korea. However, I also emphasize that the appreciation for national belonging stems largely from the concrete, individualized benefits that it grants and less from abstract and collective patriotic ideals.

With the transformation of citizenship under neoliberalization and globalization as aforementioned, the meaning of military service or the linkage between military service and citizenship also has been changed. Historical work on nineteenth- and twentieth-century European and North American societies and Israel have documented the strong link between military service and citizenship (Krebs 2006; E.Cohen 1985; Weber 1976; Flynn 1998). In many modern nation states, military service, as part of conscription system, was considered a core duty of male citizens.³ This was also the case in South Korea. With the implementation and legitimization of conscription for more than a half century in South Korea, conscription has been recognized as a necessary rite of passage for achieving full citizenship for men in South Korea (Moon 2005a; Kim 2001; Kwon 2001; Moon 2005b). Particularly emphasizing the rhetoric of the “universality” of conscription in a country where a primordial sense of ethnic homogeneity based on shared blood is still widely believed (Grinker 1998; Shin 2006), conscription was understood to be a core institution where the idea of homogeneity as well as the sense of full belonging of all male citizens regardless of their social backgrounds could be reproduced through the shared military experiences (Lie 1998; Kim 2001).

In recent decades, however, with the end of Cold War and the changing nature of war, scholars have highlighted a broad trend in Western countries away from mass armies based on

³ The famous exception to male conscription is the case of Israel where both male and female citizens are required to serve in the military.

conscription towards the technology-intensive professional army (Haltiner 1998; Janowitz 1972; S.Cohen 1995). Scholars have also pointed to the incompatibility of mass conscription with both the democratic principles of freedom and individual rights (Flynn 1998) and the neoliberal principle of individual and economic freedom (Cowen 2006). Indeed, in the United States, neoliberal theorists, in an unlikely alliance with members of the anti-war movement, advocated for the end of the “conscription tax” and the introduction of All Volunteer Forces (AVF). AVF was supported and adopted in order to “minimize government interference with the freedom of the individual to determine his own life in accord with this value” (Gates Commission, 1969; cited in Cowen, 2006, p.173). Thus, some have argued for the weakening role or outright loss of meaning of military service in the politics of citizenship (Shaw 1994; Abrams and Bacevich 2001; E.A.Cohen 2001; Morgan 2003).

While appreciative of these efforts to theorize the transformation of the military and its relation to citizenship after the end of Cold War and with neoliberalization, I view these changes not as an end but a reconfiguration of the relation between citizenship and military service, building on exploratory work on the neoliberal and global reconfiguration of citizenship in relation to military recruitment particularly in the US and Britain (Cowen 2006; Eichler 2014). What the end of conscription brought about with neoliberalization and globalization was the transnational recruitment of soldiers from the Global South to the Global North, and often in exchange for or in expectation of citizenship.⁴ For example, the US military offers an opportunity for fast-track citizenship in exchange for military service; *The New York Times* reports that “the American military will begin recruiting skilled immigrants who are living in this

⁴ It is important to note that people in the Global South are often recruited to serve in the military of Global North *without* the offer of citizenship. Eichler (2014) provides a critical analysis of this important point and underscores the unequal global political economy of citizenship as a driving factor.

country with temporary visas, offering them the chance to become United States citizens in as little as six months.”⁵ The US military also offers posthumous citizenship “to an alien or noncitizen national whose death resulted from injury or disease incurred on active duty with the U.S. armed services” which can provide surviving immediate family members’ immigration benefits.⁶ In parallel with states’ provision of citizenship in exchange for military service, individuals may serve in the military as a way to seek citizenship (as well as salary and other benefits) in the Global North. On the other hand, it is also possible to evade military obligations in the home country by securing citizenship or residency in another country, as some South Korean flexible citizens do. In this sense, conscription and military service are still deeply linked to the contemporary politics of citizenship, and I explore the topics of citizenship and military service in South Korea as I consider this broader context.

Against the backdrop of a general trend towards the end of conscription and the decline of a mass army in the West, the recent tightening of conscription through legal changes in both the Nationality Law and the Military Service Law in South Korea, which I review in Chapter 2, seems to be a markedly different response to the general trends of marketization of the link between military service and citizenship. Indeed, South Korea is one of eleven countries with compulsory military service among thirty-four OECD (Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation) countries. In the last decade alone, four countries (Germany, Poland, the Slovak Republic, and Sweden) have abolished or begun the process to end military conscription (Choi and Kim forthcoming). In Chapter 2, I suggest that the strengthening of military conscription has been largely understood as a response to the instrumental use of citizenship and

⁵ *New York Times*, Feb. 14, 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/15/us/15immig.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

⁶ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) webpage, <https://www.uscis.gov/n-644> and <https://www.uscis.gov/policymanual/HTML/PolicyManual-Volume12-PartI-Chapter8.html>.

the class-based privileges of flexible citizens in South Korea, which has been intensified with globalization and neoliberalization. Though the South Korean strengthening of citizenship-military service linkage seems to veer from the broader global trend, I argue that the ways in which individual men make sense of and give meaning to compulsory military service, mainly based on individualized concrete benefits (e.g., rights to work and live in Korea, and recognition of capability to work well in Korean companies), echo the larger global trend of serving in the military in exchange for something else, including citizenship.

In studying the relationship between citizenship and military service, another core aspect we should pay attention to is gender. In general, conscription has institutionalized military service as the duty of men across national contexts, fostering a close relationship between citizenship, military service, and masculinity (Blom 2000; Dudink, Hagemann, and Clark 2007; Feinman 2000; Kronsell 2012; Snyder 2003; Yuval-Davis 1997). Even in the case of Israel where both women and men are required to serve in the military, it has been documented that military service and soldiering are still understood to be mainly masculine (Sasson-Levy 2002, 2003, and 2007). Using concepts such as “full citizenship” and “first-class citizenship,” feminist scholars have written about the gendered nature of citizenship in relation to a system of universal male conscription (Enloe 1993; Yuval-Davis 1997; Walby 1994). In addition, it is understood that militarized masculinity inherently entails a corresponding femininity and is built on the assurance that women will do their “proper” roles (Enloe 1993; Sassen-Levy 2007). The close link between a male-only conscription, masculinity, and gendered citizenship has been also well-documented in the South Korean context. Military service has been understood as a necessary step for achieving “normal” male adulthood, and the shared and imagined common military experiences among men have a powerful impact on the “normal” male subjectivity and gendered

culture in wider South Korean society (Lee 2001; Moon 2005a; Kim 2001; Kwon 2001 and 2005; Moon 2005b). In *Militarized Modernity: Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*, Seungsook Moon (2005b) thoroughly analyzes how “universal” male military service affected and enabled gendered citizenship making during the mass mobilization period for national development under the authoritarian governments, and during the democratization period in the 1990s. To fully understand how the reconfiguration of citizenship-military service linkage under neoliberalization and globalization affects the ways in which gender plays out in the politics of citizenship in South Korea, we would need to conduct full-scale systematic research focusing on gender and military service in contemporary South Korea. In this thesis, analyzing the issues of citizenship and military service, I will keep in mind that any discussions of military service as a way for full belonging and equality regardless of class are thoroughly gendered from the beginning, since in South Korea military service is not required for female citizens.⁷ In addition, studying men and their experiences in the military, I show how military culture and experiences take on the role of shaping “normal” male adulthood and shared understanding of the “proper” traits of South Korean men in chapter 4.

Before I move to the specific context of contemporary South Korea’s neoliberalization and globalization, I should provide a few caveats to carefully introduce this thesis. First of all, it is not my political aim to promote military service among study abroad men as a way to secure full belonging in South Korea. Rather, I appreciate how study abroad men give meaning to their military experiences as their own way of making sense of their military duty *within the given structures* in which they have to live. Indeed, some of my informants mentioned that they would

⁷ Though female citizens are not required to serve in the military, they can choose to serve as professional (both commissioned and non-commissioned) officers. Structural and cultural challenges to these female officers in the Korean military because of gender (see, for example, Moon 2002) and how these might change, if any, with neoliberal reforms will be another important research topic.

not have done military service, were it not for the compulsory military service requirement for South Korean male citizens. Furthermore, much of the value and meaning study abroad men attach to their military service springs from the very fact that military service is “universal” for every male citizen. Thus, instead of celebrating military service as a means to attain full belonging, with this study, I am critical of how military conscription is deeply naturalized and how military culture pervades in the South Korean society even outside of the military camps to the extent that even those who spent many of their formative years abroad take it for granted that they will join the military in order to gain full belonging in South Korea. Because study abroad men I met needed both cosmopolitan belonging and national belonging, they found it necessary to serve in the military. In addition, the fact that what study abroad men learned in the military was expected to be useful in their later life in South Korea, particularly in their work life, testifies that militarized culture is still deeply embedded in South Korean society.

Second, by saying that national belonging and the sense of national identity were still important for these study abroad students, I do not assume ethnic or national homogeneity in South Korea. Rather I show that their legal South Korean citizenship or Korean ethnicity did not automatically provide them full belonging in South Korea. Indeed one of my informants once jokingly told me that there are three kinds of people in South Korea – Korean Koreans, foreigners, and study abroad students.⁸ Study abroad students frequently thought of full national belonging as something they had to make an effort to secure rather than something that was naturally given to them, particularly considering their education and upbringing abroad. In later chapters, I provide detailed accounts of how they felt different from other South Koreans

⁸ Though I do not fully agree with his categorization, I wanted to show how one of my informants was making fun of and playing with the distinction between study abroad men and other Koreans. This somewhat exaggerated statement hints at the ways in which study abroad men feel about their differences from other Koreans.

particularly at the beginning of their military service and their need to learn how to adjust to Korean style organization and to interact with Korean Koreans. In this way, study abroad men made sense of their military service as a way to earn full membership in South Korea, which is questioned because of stereotypes or prejudice that creates a view of study abroad students as almost contaminated and over-globalized (partly echoing the classical view of cosmopolitans who are supposed to be free from national or any other kinds of cultural attachment), a point which I will elaborate in chapter 4.⁹ Other scholars have also pointed out this possibility of problematic membership even in home countries among those with transnational childhoods, “caught between two nations, educational systems and ways of growing up” (Orellana et al. 2001, p.583). In the South Korean context, Abelmann and Kang (2014) also note that children who studied abroad with their moms accompanied while their fathers worked in South Korea, also known as “geese family” children, are “ambivalent cultural figures” who are expected to be “proper Koreans” who can and should fulfill their national and filial duties as well as flexible global citizens with their education abroad. Analyzing the national belonging and national identity of study abroad men, I also call attention to their ambivalent membership in South Korea which can be problematized in light of their upbringing abroad, but at the same time, can be celebrated in light of their identity as globalized elites who can speak fluent English and can be competitive in the global economy because of their educational credentials abroad. Their ambivalent membership, which I call “Enviably Others” in chapter 4, is deeply related to the specificity of the broader neoliberal transformation of South Korea, to which I turn below.

The Neo-liberal Transformations of South Korea – Education and Conscription

⁹ In chapter 4, I analyze study abroad recruits in the military as “Enviably Others,” simultaneously as global elites with a foreign education and problematical Koreans whose cultural membership in South Korea is questioned in light of their growing up overseas.

In this section, I elaborate the historical specificity of the broader neoliberal transformations of South Korea, focusing particularly on education and conscription. Based on this historical condition, I situate my ethnography of study abroad and military service in later chapters. I show how study abroad and military service in South Korea became a desirable and understandable option to my informants. In my review of the neoliberal transformation of South Korea, I give particular attention to the tension between the neoliberal transformations that emphasize individual (economic) freedom and the democratic ideal of equality among citizens. The tension between individual (economic) freedom and the egalitarian ideology in South Korea is, I argue, crucial to explain the stories of military service among study abroad students, as I write about in later chapters, and to understand the logic of the Korean state's tightening military service in the middle of neoliberal reforms, as I write about in chapter 2.

As an anthropologist of South Korea, Jesook Song (2009) sharply argues that the liberal project of political, social, and economic democratization at the post-authoritarian historical moment coincided with the neoliberal transformation. The 1990s has been appreciated as a “betwixt and between” decade, after decades of oppression by military authoritarian regimes and the struggle against it, which began with “tremendous hope” but ended with lots of “collapses” (Abelmann 2003, 4-7). In the atmosphere of excitement and hope, in 1994, the first democratically elected civilian president (1993-1997) Kim Young Sam formally adopted “Globalization Policy” (*Segyehwa chôngch'aek*), promising to move South Korea to the level of first world developed countries. This “Globalization Project” affected all facets of government policies as well as the lay people's understanding of the world in which they lived. Samuel Kim (2000, xv), in his book titled *Korea's Globalization*, argues, “Perhaps no state in the post-Cold War world has cast its lot with globalization as decisively or as publicly as Korea did under the

Kim Young Sam government.” At the same time, globalization became part of the world people live in; Sojin Park and Nancy Abelmann suggest that “the idea of what it means to be South Korean is transforming: increasingly, to be South Korean means to be South Korean ‘in the world’” (2004, p.650). However, this globalization project which the Kim Young Sam government began with such a hope ended with the so-called IMF crisis (or the Asian Financial Crisis)¹⁰ at the end of 1997 along with political crisis of the regime itself, which included several corruption scandals.¹¹

The presidential election of Kim Dae Jung in 1997 was widely celebrated as a step forward for democracy in South Korea, considering that Kim Dae Jung was the first opposition-party president and he had been politically oppressed during previous military regimes. However, unfortunately, the new regime had to cope with the disastrous IMF crisis as soon as Kim Dae Jung came to office. Faced with the national crisis, the Kim Dae Jung government continued to strongly pursue the previous globalization project and adopted various neoliberal policies as a way for South Korea to overcome the crisis, and survive and be competitive in global economy. During his regime, the sensibility of “insecurity” and “uncertainty” became widespread among ordinary South Koreans, after large-scale layoffs and unemployment problems as a result of structural adjustment and neoliberal reforms after the IMF crisis; individual freedom and responsibility for self-development and self-reliance were also emphasized (see, e.g., Koo, 2007; Lee and Hewison, 2010; Lim and Jang, 2006; Song, 2009, 2011), which was reflected in educational reforms I turn to now in the next section.

¹⁰ I use the term ‘IMF crisis’ following South Koreans’ common usage of the term to refer to the financial crisis in 1997. IMF (International Monetary Fund) bailed out South Korea’s debt crisis in 1997, and the name itself came to signify the financial crisis in 1997 and the following broader neo-liberal transformation of South Korea (Park 2006).

¹¹ At the end of Kim Young Sam’s presidency, several famous corruption scandals in relation to his son, Kim Hyun-Chul and the Hanbo corporation broke out, and threatened the morality and legitimacy of the regime itself which was believed and expected to promote political, social, and economic democratization.

Education

While the South Korean education system has been considered egalitarian, with its emphasis on standardization, equal opportunity, and uniformity (though its actual effects are debatable), since the late 1990s neoliberal educational reforms have been pursuing more decentralized curriculum and educational choices for education consumers (Abelmann et al. 2012; Mok et al. 2003; Park 2006; Seth 2002). Scholars have documented that new levels of consumption and material desire among the middle classes and upper classes became visible in the 1980s and 1990s (Janelli and Yim 1993; Nelson 2000), as people were “unleashed from both the constraints of decades of authoritarian regimes and the austere culture and ideology of dissent” (Abelmann 2003, p.143). The class disparity in terms of consumption and lifestyle became more visible in the late 1990s as neoliberal transformation affected all facets of society and “worked to magnify class privileges in Korea” (Koo, 2007, p.16; see also, Song 2011). It was particularly striking to see these transformations in educational reforms, considering that education has been believed to be simultaneously a path to social mobility and an institution that provides equal opportunity regardless of class in South Korea: there is thus a longstanding tension between mobility and equality in South Korean education (Seth 2002). Regarding the recent educational reforms toward privatization and marketization of education, diversification, and deregulation, about which I explain more below, Michael Seth (2002, 169), a historian of South Korean education, considered it the “most radical” change in the history of contemporary South Korean education.

With this neoliberal educational reform, raising “creative citizens” who are independent and competitive in the global economy became important (Abelmann, Park, and Kim 2009; Song 2009; and Mok et al. 2003). Such a goal could not be realized with the previous authoritarian governments’ education policies with emphasis on standardization and uniformity in education

(Lee 2001; Seth 2002). While schools still formally remain relatively uniform in light of the state's school equalization policy,¹² South Koreans have tried to pursue these new educational values in the private after-school market (Park 2006). In the name of equality of educational opportunity, private after-school education was legally prohibited¹³ until April 2000 when the Constitutional Court finally judged the state ban on the private after-school education since 1980 as unconstitutional. The Court recognized that individual parents have both responsibility and rights to educate their children according to their own values as basic human rights (98 hön-ga 16 and 98 hön-ma 429, 2000.04.27). Even before the 2000 Constitutional Court decision in the context of the post-authoritarian government, the increasing ascendance of the middle class and rising consumerism, there was increasing development and diversification of after-school education services and programs, and the state did not strongly enforce the ban on the private after-school education throughout the 1990s (Nelson 2000; Seth 2002; Sorensen 1994). With the 2000 ruling and neoliberal education reforms that emphasized creativity, diversification, and individual freedom and responsibility, the private after-school education market flourished in the new millennium, even as (or perhaps because) many South Koreans suffered from economic hardships after the IMF crisis, with few limits to secure equal educational opportunity (Park 2006). Indeed, according to the Korean Educational Development Institute Statistics on private education expenditure, 73.6 percent of primary school students participated in the private after-school market in 2010 compared to 15 percent in 1980, 22 percent in 1991, and 54 percent in 1997, which speaks to the recent and rapid expansion of private after-school education market in

¹² There have been exceptions to this school equalization policy as in the case of foreign language high schools and science high schools. Since 2002, private high schools with more autonomous discretion about curriculum, student selection, tuition, etc. have been introduced. With the expansion of these autonomous high schools since 2009, the number of schools that have received an exception to the school equalization policy has greatly increased.

¹³ Few exceptions from the state ban on private after-school education included athletics, art, and t'ae kwon do (Seth 2002, p.159).

South Korea (Yang 2003, p.289, re-quoted from Park 2006). Sojin Park (2006, p.15), an anthropologist of South Korean education, asserts that private after-school education sector emerged “as a frontier of the sheer privatization and marketization of education” while the public (or the formal) schooling was in crisis. This increasing reliance on the private after-school education market and the transfer of responsibility for children’s education from the public to the individual families echoes the broader trends of neoliberal transformation (see Foucault 1991; Rose 1999; Mok and Welch 2003).

I situate the study abroad project of the South Korean young men I write about in this context of contemporary South Korean education, transformed by the neoliberalization and globalization of South Korea. While appreciating the liberal potential of study abroad to become an alternative educational path that fosters creativity, individual freedom, and cosmopolitanism (Lee-Chung 2014; Abelman et al. 2014), I am also attentive to the fact that early study abroad as a social phenomena in the 2000s can be understood as an expansion of private after-school education (Kang and Abelman 2011; Ihm and Choi 2015); it is hard to clearly separate neoliberal and liberal aspects of recent educational changes (Rizvi 2005; Y.Lee 2001; Lim 2011). Kang and Abelman (2011) argue that early study abroad has been “‘domesticated’ in that it is understood not as a discrete education field abroad, but instead an extension of South Korea’s highly stratified and competitive education market” (p.89; see also Ihm and Choi 2015 for analysis of pre-college study abroad as an extension of the South Korean private education market). Indeed, scholars have asserted that “South Koreans shoulder the highest education expenditures of any people in the world” in ever expanding private after-school market, which has been considered as one of the driving forces of pre-college study abroad (Lo et al. 2015, p.9; also see Park 2006). English education has one of the biggest after-school markets in light of

globalization in South Korea, and mastery of English is often described as a purpose of pre-college study abroad by study abroad students and their parents, which has been analyzed as the pursuit of the image of the global citizen or cosmopolitan aspiration implied in fluency in English (Park 2009; Park and Lo 2012; Park and Abelmann 2004). As the sense of insecurity and unemployment problems became widespread in South Korea since the IMF crisis and as raising global citizen with fluent English skill became paramount, pre-college study abroad became one of the ways in which South Koreans made efforts to raise their children to be creative and competitive in a globalized neoliberal economy.¹⁴

Likewise, I consider the social phenomena of pre-college study abroad in South Korea and the stories of study abroad men in this context of and as a product of South Korea's neoliberalization and globalization since the late 1990s. Though I situate study abroad project of my informants in this particular contemporary South Korean context, I also recognize that the South Korean story of education abroad is part of global trend of the globalization and neoliberalization of education, and the increasing mobility of students around the world, from a global perspective (Altbach and Peterson 2008; Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka 2010; and Shields and Edwards 2010). Indeed, the number of students worldwide who study outside of their country of origin increased by nine-fold between 1963 and 2006 (Varghese 2008, p.15) and the number of students who receive college education outside of their country of origin has doubled since 2000 (OECD 2013, p.1). What is distinctive about the South Korean case is the extent of participation and desire in this transnational education practices as social phenomena, which

¹⁴ Abelmann et al. points out that one of the world's highest college attendance rates in South Korea makes upper-tier or foreign university degree a more valuable asset (2015, p.5).

some might call “education exodus” (Abelmann et al. 2015).¹⁵ I do not and cannot fully explain why study abroad became explosive particularly in South Korea. In this section, I tried to understand the explosion of study abroad given the context of simultaneous pursuit of globalization and neoliberalization including educational reforms. In addition, though I do not discuss here in detail, I want to suggest another possible factors to consider in a longer Korean historical perspective in order to explain the intensity of the study abroad phenomena in South Korea. First, the intensity of interests in and meanings attached to education for national development and individual class mobility in South Korea, which is called “education fever” or “South Korea’s obsession with education”(Seth 2002), can partly explain the explosion of private after-school market and study abroad in the face of neoliberalization and globalization. Second, “the value of foreign training and degrees is a veritable *sine qua non* of South Korean modernity and development narratives” (Abelmann et al. 2015, p.6), as educational capital in Japan was crucial to secure white-collar job in a Korean city during the Japanese colonial rule (Robinson 2007) and student returnees from the US were considered elites who were capable of developing the nation utilizing what they learned overseas since the postwar period in the twentieth century (Yoon1992). Thus, the well-established value of study abroad as crucial for professional success in South Korea would help deeper understanding of recent explosion of study abroad in South Korea. While I contextualize study abroad practices in South Korea mainly in light of globalization and neoliberalization, I also do point out that the recent

¹⁵ The number of international students at colleges and universities in the United States increased by 31 percent to a record high of 764,495 in the 2011/12 academic year compared to that of a decade ago. Among those international students, 72,295 students were from South Korea in the 2011/2012 academic year. South Korea has been holding the third leading place of origin for students coming to the United States since 2001/02 academic year after China and India. Given the size of whole population of China and India compared to that of South Korea, we can say that study abroad of South Korean students has been quite phenomenal (2012 OpenDoors)

phenomena of study abroad in South Korea need to be understood in the context of global trend of increasing student mobility and of longer Korean history of study abroad and education.

The understanding of early study abroad as an extension of the highly stratified private after-school education market in South Korea is also reflected in the South Korean legal restrictions on pre-college study abroad. Pre-college study abroad had not been allowed until 2000 according to the Regulations on Study Abroad. Before 2000 amendment, study abroad was allowed for only “those who completed high school education or are recognized as having equivalent education” according to the law, with a few exceptions (the Regulations on Study Abroad, Article 5).¹⁶ The South Korean state had been tightly controlling study abroad by limiting the issuance of passports before 1988, but in the 1990s, the law banning pre-college study abroad was not fully effectively enforced. Particularly as the South Korean state adopted globalization and neoliberal policies for its own survival and competency in the global economy, it became widely understood that official policy aside, the state did very little to control/penalize the illegality of early study abroad, which was itself a product of the globalization and neoliberalization of South Korea.¹⁷ Faced with the increasing number of pre-college study abroad students, the Ministry of Education made an attempt to fully lift restrictions on pre-college study abroad regardless of the completion of compulsory education in Korea in 1999, but it was unsuccessful because of public outcry that such a measure would only spur greater educational migration that would intensify the privileges of upper classes. Instead of the complete liberalization of pre-college study abroad, thus, beginning in 2000, the South Korean

¹⁶ Exceptions from the ban on early study abroad before the completion of compulsory education include 1) middle school students who have special talent in science, art, and sports, and are recommended by their principal and recognized by the Ministry of Education; 2) those who accompany their parents who have been stationed overseas.

¹⁷ See, for example, *Kyunghyang News*, 2007.02.13, available at http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?artid=200702131808211&code=990105; and *Nocut News*, 2007.05.11, available at <http://www.nocutnews.co.kr/news/291994>.

state officially allowed for pre-college study abroad only for those who had completed their nine-year compulsory South Korean education. Regardless of this legal restriction, the number of those who leave for foreign countries before college for the purpose of study abroad has increased about sevenfold from 2,259 in 1995 to 16,515 in 2011, with the peak at 29,511 in 2006, according to the Korean Educational Development Institute (2012). Elementary school students accounted for the fastest growing age sector among the pre-college study abroad students in the 2000s (Ihm and Choi 2015). The actual number of students who leave for pre-college education overseas would be in fact much higher, given that the numbers above exclude those students whose parents choose to work or study overseas primarily for their children's education overseas or have legal residency in another country often motivated for education abroad. The stories of study abroad men I write in later chapters should be understood in this context of the transformation of South Korean education in relation to globalization and neoliberalization, of which one product is the explosion of pre-college study abroad including the cases of my informants.

Conscription

While aforementioned privatization and marketization of education broke the longstanding balance/tension between the ideal of equality and the social mobility desires of South Koreans in the realm of education, the ideal of equality has been maintained at least rhetorically in the realm of conscription - the "universal" military conscription of male citizens in South Korea. As I review in detail in chapter 2, the South Korean state has tightened its control of military conscription to stipulate that every able-bodied male citizen serve in the military. This is different from the broader trend in industrialized countries of ending conscription, as I introduced earlier in this chapter. Considering the distinctiveness of this maintenance or even

tightening of conscription in South Korea, I suggest that it is important to give attention to the specificity of South Korean neoliberal transformation. As I provide a brief review of conscription in South Korea below, I am particularly attentive to the fact that the ideal of equality and the ways in which universal conscription has been politicized as a symbol of equality affected the course of changes in conscription in the era of globalization and neoliberalization. In order to historically situate the recent tightening of conscription (Chapter 2) and study abroad men's understanding of conscription (chapter 4), I turn now to the history of conscription in South Korea paying particular attention to the ideal of equality below.

The first Military Service Law was announced in August 1949 right after South Korea established its own separate government from North Korea. Less than a year later, the Korean War (1950-1953) broke out, requiring the Military Manpower Administration (MMA) to develop its administrative capacities. After the Korean War and with the division of the two Koreas, the modern conscription system was implemented in South Korea in 1957 (Moon 2005a). Under the current Military Service Law, all able-bodied adult men must serve in the military for at least twenty-one months.¹⁸¹⁹ Considering the high risk, sacrifice of time and labor, and hardship of living in remote barracks apart from one's previous life without proper reward, the idea of equality among citizens worked to legitimize "universal" military conscription, together with the trauma of the Korean War and geopolitical tension with North Korea (Moon 2005; Choi and Kim forthcoming). The logic of justifying military conscription by the state and the military is well expressed, for example, by a previous Chairman of the National Defense Committee, Kim

¹⁸ The duration of military service varies depending on the options: 21 months for the army, 23 months for the navy, and 24 months for the air force. In the case of serving as commissioned officers after completing a 4-year college education, it is required to serve for three years. The duration of alternative routes of military service is about three years, and the duration of the term for a public service worker is 24 months.

¹⁹ After their service in the military, the discharged men continue to perform their military duty in reserve forces for eight additional years including attendance at annual military training.

Haksong: “Korea is isolated like an island in the Cold War. To secure its peace, we need strong national defense that can ensure watertight security. To that end, it is required to build a social climate of *equal* military service for *everybody*. ... It is our job to establish a culture of fair military service by making a legal and policy framework that ensures military service of social elites.”²⁰

Notwithstanding the rhetorical emphasis on equality, the implementation of conscription in South Korea has never been equal or universal. Sons of upper- and upper middle class families could avoid conscription or were able to be assigned to easier units and positions²¹ using money and connections. It was also possible for them, using economic resources, to obtain forged physical examination and medical records and be exempt from the conscription based on physical and psychological criteria. Considering the presence of alternative routes of military service, the wealthy and the powerful also could complete their military service by choosing relatively less challenging duties. As alternatives to regular military service, which often involves life in remote barracks, a supplementary service program has developed, currently called the social service members program (*sahoebongmuyowŏnjedo*), usually for those who were diagnosed as not capable of regular military service for health reasons. The recruits in the social service members program usually commute from their own residence to public offices usually doing office work. In addition, since 1973 there has been a special program for qualified researchers and workers in particular fields to work in research centers and companies designated by the military in lieu of military service, depending on the need for skilled labor and

²⁰ Cited in *Kookbang Daily*, Sept 3, 2008

²¹ What soldiers actually do in the military vary depending on their job assignments and the locations of military service. Generally speaking, field soldiers/combat soldiers have more military training, spend more time on manual work such as cleaning and weeding, while soldiers in office work in front of computers making documents and taking care of other administrative works as an assistant to professional officers. In addition, depending on military occupational specialties, there are soldiers who are specialized in driving, cooking, repairing/maintaining weapons, communication, translation/interpretation, etc.. They work according to their specific job assignment during work hours, and live together with other conscripts in the same unit sharing the living complex.

economic development. Except the four-week basic military training, conscripts in this special program can enjoy off-camp ordinary life working for profit and accumulating human capital. Implemented between 1982 and 1990, upper-class citizens also could easily complete military service simply by attending graduate schools. The so-called Officers with Master's degrees program (*söksajanggyoje*) granted qualified graduate students only six months of military service as officers after their graduate school education, justifying this on the grounds of their potential contribution to national development as “prospective special professional members.” Both legally and illegally, the wealthy and the powerful had more ways in which they could evade the military service; there have been so many corruption cases in the history of the modern conscription system in South Korea. Indeed, the exemption rate among prime ministers²² and ministers of departments has been much higher than that of ordinary Korean men, which is around 6 percent – 26.6 percent in the Roh Moo Hyun government,²³ 28.5 percent in the Lee Myung Bak government, and 20 percent in the Park Guen Hye government.²⁴ In addition, it was reported that the exemption rate among the owner family members of the biggest conglomerate in South Korea, Samsung, was 73 percent.²⁵

Though class-based problems of conscription is an old problem, the myth of “universal” conscription was broken and became the object of public scrutiny only as South Korea simultaneously went through democratization and neoliberalization in the 1990s. During the period of authoritarian military rule (Park Jung Hee, r.1961-1979, Chun Doo-hwan, r.1980-1988

²² Prime minister in South Korea is a different position from that in a parliamentary cabinet system, and she/he is appointed by the president and works as the principle executive assistant to the president.

²³ This exemption rate includes those who did not serve in the military because they had served prison sentences for student demonstrations, democratization movement, and etc.

²⁴ Cited in *Hankook Daily*, August 31, 2015, available at <http://www.hankookilbo.com/v/bf6669e7aed748e1827e65cfb90d25f7>

²⁵ Cited in *Han'györe Newspaper*, Feb 23, 2015, available at http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/679242.html

and Roh Tae-woo, r.1988-1993), it was almost unthinkable to question any of the problems of conscription. Military elites dominated all sectors of South Korea including politics and business, and the military was shielded from outside criticism and monitoring. Military security was widely accepted to be paramount in the face of the geopolitical tension of the Cold War. It was the transition from authoritarian military regimes to civilian government (Kim Young Sam government, r.1993-1998) and the following regime changes to the opposition party (Kim Dae Jung government, r.1998-2003 and Roh Moo-Hyun government, r. 2003-2008) that finally brought the fairness of conscription open to question.

Under the civilian regimes since the 1990s, auditing of conscription practices was enhanced and audit reports were published regularly. As the information about class-based problems of conscription was open to public, service evasion of the rich and powerful became a popular media topic, and the issue of candidates' and their sons' military service has been covered in every local and national election since the 1990s. While the class-based problem regarding who must serve in the military is common in other countries, under both conscription and voluntary recruitment systems,²⁶ the problem of equality of military service was intensified particularly in South Korea. The central importance of “universality” of military service in legitimizing and securing popular acceptance of conscription would partly explain the intensity of the problem of equality in the case of conscription in South Korea. As Seungsook Moon suggests, “the problem of equity in military conscription is amplified in Korea because ... *the state has paid lip service to the universality of military service to ensure the popular acceptance of military service in the divided nation*” (2005b, p.74-75; italics added). In addition, considering that *universal* conscription had been understood as a symbol of equality and fair society in South

²⁶ For the contemporary American case, see Eichler, 2014; Cowen, 2006; for the case of Bolivia, see Gill, 1997; and for the case of France, Britain, and the US from the historical perspective, see Flynn, 1998.

Korea, the newly elected civilian regimes had to make an effort to ensure the “universality” of conscription in order to differentiate themselves from previous authoritarian governments and to search for new sources of legitimacy (Choi and Kim, forthcoming; Moon 2005a), when there was an atmosphere of hope for social and economic democratization following political democratization.

The rhetoric of “universality” of conscription has been maintained and even tightened in recent decades, even though it bumps up against neoliberal reforms that emphasize individual freedom and responsibility. Answering the question of why South Korea’s (neo)liberal governments had to make an effort to maintain the universality of conscription rather than ending conscription would require separate systematic research, but here I cautiously suggest that the ways in which universal conscription has been highly politicized in relation to the existing ideal of equality partly explains the particularity of the South Korean case. As more and more class-based corruption cases of conscription were reported under civilian governments in the 1990s, maintaining the “universality” of conscription became an acute political concern in South Korea. Since the late 1990s, as neoliberal changes in general “worked to magnify class privileges in Korea” (Koo, 2007, p.16; see also, Shin and Chang, 2000; Song, 2011), it was impossible to maintain the ideal of equality in the face of reality and the South Korean state had to face public rage against ever increasing class disparity, one symptom of which was military evasion for citizenship reasons by upper class citizens, as I elaborate in chapter 2.

As political democratization coincided with neoliberal transformation in South Korea as aforementioned (Song 2009), hope for social and economic democratization which could lead to an equal and fair society met with the reality of ever increasing class inequality. Against this background, inequality in conscription has been treated as a social evil to fix rather than as an

intrinsic problem of the conscription system. In particular, using flexible citizenship strategies for the purpose of military evasion – to avoid military conscription by choosing foreign citizenship over South Korean one before 2005 or by acquiring foreign citizenship, further exposed the class-based problems of conscription and thus further politicized the issue of conscription in relation to the ideal of equality (Choi and Kim, forthcoming). In one famous example, a pop star, Yoo Seungjun (Steve Yoo), was harshly criticized and forbidden from ever visiting South Korea again after he decided to acquire American citizenship in 2002, naturally losing South Korean citizenship and getting rid of his military duty in South Korea; he broke his previous promise to the public to serve in the military. In addition, as one of many cases in which sons' military evasion for citizenship reasons caused controversy in hearings to confirm the appointment of new ministers and prime ministers, Jang Sang, a prime minister nominee in 2002, failed to be confirmed in a hearing due to her son's choosing American citizenship over the South Korean one and having not served in the Korean military. In response to this class-based strategy of military evasion and severe public rage against it, the Korean state tightened military conscription through a series of legal reforms regarding citizenship and military service, about which I provide a detailed review in chapter 2. My analysis of conscription in relation to citizenship and how individual study abroad men understand and give meaning to military conscription should be understood within this historical context of South Korea.

Field Sites and Methodological Approach

Study Abroad Men and Methods

My dissertation is based on two years of ethnographic field research in South Korea (September 2011- August 2013) – during the late period of the Lee Myung Bak regime (2008-2013) through

the very early presidency of Park Guen Hye (2013- present). I lived in Seoul, where the majority of study abroad men stay when they come to South Korea for family visits, summer vacation, and international summer school offered by colleges in Seoul; I occasionally traveled to other parts of South Korea to have interviews with those who had families in other cities such as Daegu and Busan or who were serving in military camps outside of Seoul. The study abroad men whom I interviewed were mostly in their 20s. They were born in the late 1980s or the 1990s, went abroad mostly in the first decade of the twenty-first century during their K-12 education (in some cases, before K-12 education), and were attending or recently graduated from colleges (mostly in the US) when I met them in the field. They departed for study abroad when the early study abroad phenomena in South Korea reached its peak after the aggressive pursuit of globalization and neoliberal reforms began in the 1990s, and my field research was conducted when the boom of the early study abroad phenomena was producing a large number of (soon-to-be) college graduates.

I chose to conduct field research in Seoul, expecting that Seoul would be the place where I would be able to meet with various kinds of study abroad men most easily given that South Korea is incredibly concentrated in Seoul. At the beginning, I wanted to recruit study abroad men who had studied in diverse locations – different locations in the US and different countries. Indeed, diverse study abroad men from different locations visited South Korea mostly in summer and winter vacation, and many of them were staying in South Korea before/in/after their compulsory military service. While my choice of Seoul in South Korea as a location for field research enabled me to meet with study abroad men from different locations, it also forced me to focus on a particular group of study abroad men, which was unintended result of my choice of field site. As I met with study abroad men whom I could interview in South Korea (though I had

a few email and Skype interviews), I naturally came to study a particular group of study abroad students that had close connections to South Korea. Most of the men I interviewed visited South Korea every summer (or sometimes every summer and winter) during their education abroad, had parents who either lived in South Korea or planned to return to South Korea after their jobs stationed overseas, and hoped to open the possibility of life in South Korea after their study abroad. Because frequent visits to South Korea and keeping close ties with South Korea are common among those who studied abroad alone or who studied abroad accompanying parents who had work stationed overseas, my research in South Korea came to largely exclude geese family children²⁷ who studied abroad with usually the accompaniment of their mothers, while their fathers worked in South Korea and financially supported their education abroad.²⁸

Class

Another important aspect of the group I studied is their class status. Most of my informants identified themselves as upper- or upper-middle class, and in my analysis I follow their own class identification. This echoes the taken-for-granted common sense idea in South Korea that only upper or upper-middle class people can afford education abroad for their children. However, I recognize that there are study abroad students with different class backgrounds, and consequently different kinds of schools, locations, and experiences (Kim 2010; Kim 2014; Ihm and Choi 2015; Park and Bae 2015). Sujung Kim, in her paper (2014), for example, examines

²⁷ I did have a few interviews with geese family children. They were in South Korea at the time of the interviews – one was serving in the military, another was working in a Korean company after graduation from an American college, and another was visiting family during summer vacation. Though I was able to meet with some geese family children in South Korea, I found out that it was much less likely for geese family children to frequently come back for a visit to South Korea.

²⁸ At the same time, I am also attentive to the fact that the boundary between geese family children and other study abroad students is not clear-cut. One form of study abroad can lead to another form depending on family circumstances and other factors in their transnational journeys. However, here, I wanted to indicate that my research is more focused on those students who tend to have more frequent trip back and forth between South Korea and their locations of study abroad. I largely exclude those geese family children who came to have more rooted and immigrant-like life and develop a sense of home abroad.

Korean international students from lower class families attending community colleges in the US. Their narratives about national belonging and their experiences abroad are quite different from what I learned from upper- and upper-middle class students. Thus, I analyze the issues of legal and cultural citizenship among study abroad students with a keen sense of their particular class status rather than trying to generalize about all study abroad students. Their being upper- or upper-middle class students afforded them an opportunity to study abroad in nice schools (often times boarding schools in the US or international schools in other countries for primary education, and American colleges), and in turn, their class status and their particular study abroad experiences enabled them to be recognized as global elites who could speak fluent English and who went to nice schools in the US when they return to South Korea. Their particular class status affected their understanding and experiences of military service in South Korea, a point I elaborate in chapter 4.

By giving attention to study abroad men's upper- and upper-middle class backgrounds, however, I do not treat class as a static independent variable which can be reduced to be a 'thing' or 'location' based on "one aspect of their identity" (e.g., the kind of jobs and the level of income), following the critical scholars who emphasize the 'relational' approach of class (Abelmann 2003; Bourdieu 1987; Kelleher 2003; Somers 1994). As Loïc J.D. Wacquant writes, "Class identities, practices, and 'lived experience' are not 'afterthoughts' tacked on preexisting classes; they enter into the very making of these classes" (1991, p.51 re-quoted from Abelmann 2003, p. 18), I consider class as 'process' and my ethnographic account of study abroad and military experiences among upper- and upper-middle class study abroad men as a 'process' of class making (maintenance). I view study abroad as a process of and a space for making a particular class of students who have a certain cultural and social capital to be recognized as

global elites in South Korea (of course enabled by economic and other capital of their parents) (Bourdieu 1987). I also analyze, in chapter 4, military service as a social space in which study abroad men develop different class identities – those who considered themselves to be just ordinary middle class came to realize that they were privileged upper class people living with other soldiers with different class backgrounds in the military. In addition, I also give attention to study abroad as a class marker in South Korea; I write in detail about how study abroad students are automatically understood to be from rich families and how this affects their treatment and experience in the military in chapter 4.

Though this dissertation research focuses on study abroad men, it also partly reveals the intergenerational aspects of class that other scholars of class have emphasized (Abelmann 2003; Steedman 1987). Using the life history method and hearing narratives from the beginning of study abroad during primary education until their coming of age as college students or recent college graduates, I am attentive to the role of family, particularly parents, in the relation to class, as decision makers and supporters of children's education abroad. Considering the early age when study abroad men left for education abroad, it was usually parents who made the decision to send their children abroad and who continued to financially and emotionally support the overseas education of their children. Indeed, many study abroad men I met confessed that they became appreciative of their parents who provided such precious opportunities of study abroad, when they served in the military and realized that study abroad was not an available option for everyone.

Moving Subjects and Sedentary Researcher

The main ethnography in this dissertation centers on study abroad experiences and military experiences that happened in various locations in different countries and military barracks in

South Korea. Logistically, it was impossible for me to participate and observe study abroad experiences from primary education to college in multiple locations. It was also impossible to participate and observe the military experiences of study abroad men in South Korea, because it was not allowed for a non-military personnel researcher to be present in the military barracks. To wit, my field was “placeless.” During my field research, I did not have a place to go everyday to observe and interact with people I studied. This problem was a challenging one, more so because much of the theoretical and methodological development of anthropology has been based on the assumption of a physical site for ethnographic fieldwork (Gupta and Ferguson 1997), and intensive participant observation, rather than just communication in dialogue, is expected for good ethnography (Clifford 1992; Amit 2000). Following scholars who have been thinking about this challenge to ethnography that has come about partly because of rapid globalization and increased transnational mobility (Marcus 1995; Kurotani 2004; Ong 1997), I tried to study people who continue to move – the study abroad men I met traveled between South Korea and their schools overseas, and between military barracks and the outside world (though limited, of course), while I was living in Seoul, South Korea. Though I sometimes traveled to different cities and different regions of South Korea to meet with study abroad men, I was not able to directly observe their study abroad experiences and military experiences. Thus, I used in-depth interviews as my main method during field research. All interviews were conducted mainly in Korean, while my informants used some English words and sentences during our conversation, particularly when they talked about study abroad experiences.

In his review about multi-sited ethnography, George Marcus (1995) suggested that the life historical method could be one of the ways in which an ethnographer can construct multi-sited research. Instead of following study abroad men to their site of education and to military

barracks, I learned about their life in multiple places through their narratives, often times beginning from their departure for education abroad to the present situations and future dreams. My decision to conduct field research in South Korea enabled me to meet with study abroad men who studied in diverse locations, but at the same time limited my interaction with them to only during their temporary presence in South Korea. In the case of men on their duty of military service, my interaction was also limited to weekend visits or vacation time. In order to complement, at least partly, the limits of my methodology, I made friends with many of the study abroad men on Facebook, and observed their postings and interaction with their friends/family on their individual pages. It was helpful to get a sense of “being in the field” which individual interviews alone cannot fully provide, particularly because Facebook sometimes was one of the main methods of communication with long-distance friends and family members while they studied abroad and served in the military. I also observed Korean international students’ summer activities in Seoul, including a job fair organized by a study abroad students association, particularly targeting study abroad students.

Recruiting Process and Limits of Research

Considering the absence of a physical place to go in order to find and meet with study abroad men, I used online clubs and various Facebook pages to initially make contacts with study abroad men. I sent messages to members of online clubs constituted of South Korean men who have served in the military through a special program for “voluntary” conscripts with residency abroad/dual citizenship, most of whom received primary education abroad and many of whom were attending colleges in the US. I also sent online messages to members of Facebook pages of summer international schools offered by Korean universities mainly targeting study abroad students spending their summer vacation in Seoul. I introduced myself, my project, and asked

their willingness to share their stories of study abroad and thoughts about military service in South Korea through the online messages, and many of them responded. As I met with some of my initial contacts, the process of recruitment easily became a snowballing method – as study abroad men directly introduced me to their friends and also suggested me to utilize their Friends list in their individual Facebook pages.

Even though my informants did not personally know me and I had nothing else to offer to them beyond a cup of coffee I usually treated during our interviews in cafes, surprisingly many study abroad men positively responded to my initial online messages. Considering their tendency to appreciate diverse experiences and meeting with diverse people, they considered having a interview with a researcher is possibly an interesting experience they've never had before. In addition, they were curious about me as a PhD student in an American graduate school. I often received questions about my graduate program, funding, and job prospects after graduation. I also felt that my informants considered me as one of the study abroad students. Indeed, some of my informants explained their willingness to share their stories with me as something natural, because they believed that it would be good for study abroad students to help each other.

It was easier for me to meet with those who were spending summer vacation in South Korea or who were enjoying their relaxed time between discharge from the military and going back to school in the US. It was more difficult for me to contact with study abroad men on military duty, because their internet access and their availability for interview were limited. Even if they said they were willing to share their stories, they were usually too busy to meet with me during their short precious off-camp vacation. Among those who did not respond to my messages, there were many who were serving in the military at that time. I also came to know later that my messages in Facebook sometimes went to filtered message box people did not

regularly check, which partly explains why some people did not respond to my messages besides simple unwillingness to share their stories for no practical benefits.

Another important reason to explain some of study abroad students' unwillingness to interview, I think, would have been their failure to adjust in the military or their decision not to serve in the military in the case of dual citizenship holders or permanent residency abroad holders. Based on the stories of my informants and their talking about general atmosphere among study abroad students and about their friends, I am confident to say that majority of study abroad alone students and students who began their education abroad following their parents who were stationed overseas (Third Culture Kids as I explain in the next section) tend to serve in the military. However, I also do recognize that there are many study abroad students who decided not to serve in the military and try to settle down abroad particularly when they have legal status overseas, more so with families living abroad. Because they knew that military evasion for citizenship reasons was harshly criticized in the South Korean society, I think I was able to have only a few interviewees who decided not to serve. In the case of those who experienced failure and hardship in the military, it would have been more difficult for them to share their stories. I have a sense that study abroad students in general tend to adjust to the military and manage to successfully complete their military service, as my informants shared their stories and their friends'. However, I heard about a conscript who came to the military in South Korea after having grown up in Germany and college education in Britain. He failed to adjust to the military, had no one to talk to, and was totally isolated and excluded from social relations in the living complex of his unit. He volunteered to do KP duty with his aim to make fusion food using both German and Korean recipes; what he faced in the reality during his military service was scolding that he was not able to make even a rice well, which is the most basic everyday food in South

Korea. As time went by, he was not allowed to cook regardless of his job assignment as KP duty, and what he actually did in the military was nothing else except cleaning and weeding. Because one of my close acquaintances was serving in the same unit with him, I asked if he was willing to meet with me and share his stories. His answer was, “are you kidding me?” in his own words. Another failure story I heard is from one of my informants about his own younger brother who suffered from serious depression during his military service due to difficult relations with other senior soldiers. Though I heard these two failure stories of military experiences from someone else, I never had a direct interview with someone who felt his military experience were a total failure. Thus, I recognize that possibly the cases of military failure are missing in my following ethnography due to limits of recruiting in the field; and I analyze my interview data with this possible limits in mind.

Study Abroad Alone Students and the Third Culture Kids

As aforementioned, the two groups of study abroad men I mainly studied were students who studied abroad alone and Third Culture kids. The common trajectory for students who studied abroad alone was attendance at (junior) boarding schools for their primary education and entrance into American colleges, all while their parents were living in South Korea. Students who studied abroad alone usually chose to go to boarding schools in the US instead of public schools, because it was not an available option to go to public schools for those without American citizenship/permanent residency and without parents who held work/student visas. In other words, as international students, if they wanted to study alone in the US, they had to go to private schools. Even for those with dual citizenship, boarding school was a desirable option considering that they studied abroad alone, far away from parents. Given that boarding schools are considered an institution for upper-class elite education in the US with expensive tuition and

living expenses (Cookson and Persell, 1991;Gaztambide-Fernández 2009), their attendance at boarding schools attests that students who studied abroad alone were from upper class families.

The term, third culture kids (TCK) was first coined by Useems and the most cited book (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001(1999)) on the subject defines TCK as “an individual who, having spent a significant part of the developmental years in a culture other than the parents’ culture, develops a sense of relationship to all of the cultures while not having full ownership in any” (p.26-30). According to this definition, students who study abroad alone can also be included as TCK, because they also grew up abroad. However, in this dissertation, I do not consider students who study abroad alone to be TCK, because TCK usually refers to children who grew up abroad following their parents who have worked abroad, including missionary kids²⁹ and military kids³⁰ (Lanford 2012). I specifically use the term TCK to refer to those study abroad students who went abroad following parents who were professionals and stationed overseas. According to my data, TCKs from South Korea usually tend to attend international schools taught in English, often times in more than one country, and receive college education either in America or back in South Korea.

At the beginning of my field research, I was fascinated by the diverse trajectory of TCKs and was excited about the potential to learn about how they might be different from students who studied abroad alone mainly in the US (or in Canada). However, as I met with more and more study abroad men in the field, I was surprised to realize that TCKs and students who study abroad alone were not that different in terms of their logic in explaining their study abroad, military service, and their identity and belonging. The differences I found between the two

²⁹ Missionary kids(MKs) are the children of missionary parents who work on the mission field abroad, and thus born and/or raised abroad.

³⁰ Military kids as TCKs refer to the children of a parent or parents serving full-time typically in the United States Armed Forces; they tend to move to many countries following their parents’ assignments.

groups largely stem from the presence or absence of parents and from the frequency of movement during their education abroad. TCKs considered that students who studied abroad alone tend to be more independent because they had to adjust to their new life in a foreign country alone without parental help from an early age, while TCKs grew up with their parents usually until they went to college. Some TCKs told me that their friends who studied abroad alone seemed to experience more challenges in adjusting to the military, because students who studied abroad alone were used to managing their life independently from an early age and it was not easy for them to follow orders from superiors in the military. On the other hand, TCKs also considered that their adjustment to the military might be easier because going to the military was just one more movement and adjustment to a new place after a transnational life trajectory of frequent movement. In addition, I learned that students who studied abroad alone were more enthusiastic and celebratory about their primary education abroad, because they understood their life abroad as a choice that was made solely for their own educational benefit. On the other hand, TCKs sometimes confessed their complaints or uneasy childhood due to frequent moving because of their parents' job posts, though they also appreciated their educational opportunities abroad in retrospect. Other than these differences, students who studied abroad alone and TCKs seemed to be similar as international students in American colleges, particularly in regards to the issues concerning this thesis – citizenship and belonging.

Regardless of where TCKs went to international schools, I did not find any differences depending on the locations of their education. Whether TCKs studied in Singapore, Indonesia, Paraguay, Egypt, Russia, Vietnam, etc., they usually did not develop any sense of attachment to local cultures and places. Regardless of where they studied, they were South Korean international students who received an American style (or sometimes British style) education in

English. In my interviews with TCKs, it was rare to hear about how their study abroad experiences and lives were different depending on the locations of their stay, or to hear about how different cultures in various locations affected their identity and belonging in a significant way. Rather, what I heard from them was their own surprise about how easy it was for them to adjust to their colleges in America even though they had never lived in the US. I write in detail about how South Korean international students tend to have isolated social lives within the Korean student community in chapter 3, and therefore their college life in America is surely different from that of American students. However, their college life in America, their identity and belonging, and their future plans did not seem to be very different from that of students who studied abroad alone and spent many of their formative years in the US.

Thus, I do not treat these two groups as comparative cases in this dissertation. Despite the seemingly different transnational trajectory of education, I rather highlight the fact that students who study abroad alone and TCKs share the same logic for making sense of their study abroad and military service in South Korea. In their education, they share the purpose of becoming competitive in the neoliberal global economy and experiencing the broader world; the meaning of global education is to receive American style education in English, leading them to attend American colleges. To wit, wherever they were, study abroad men I met were living in the same transnational space of global education where American style education and going to college in the US are recognized as the most desirable option to seek. Even those who went to college in Canada or TCKs who returned to South Korea for their college education shared this view of the centrality of American education. Even before I asked questions about their choices to go to colleges in Canada or South Korea instead of the US, study abroad men tried to rationalize their choice not to go to American colleges frequently in terms of expensive tuition and high living

costs, and opportunities to secure permanent residency/citizenship in Canada (compared to the US). In their narratives, study abroad men who did not go to college in the US made efforts to explain their choice to me, because they also shared the logic of global education in which the centrality of American education is taken for granted. In addition, as I mainly divide study abroad men into these two groups, I also recognize that the boundary of these two groups is not clear-cut. Indeed, some study abroad men began their education abroad as TCKs, but later became students who study abroad alone, which makes sense given the fact that the two groups share the same logic of making sense of, desiring, and participating in education abroad.

The two groups of study abroad men also share their understanding of study abroad as a temporary residence in a foreign country, rather than an opportunity to develop rootedness and a sense of belonging in the country of their education or to seek membership in it. Study abroad alone students kept their home in South Korea where their parents lived and they spent every summer and winter vacation there. TCKs also understood that their parents would eventually return and live their later lives in South Korea (if not yet), and considered that they had a home in South Korea, if any. I suggest that my dissertation, which focuses on these two groups, provides a comparative case to the scholarship on educational migration. In the case of South Korea, scholars have documented the stories of geese family – children who studied abroad usually with the accompaniment of their mothers, while their fathers worked in South Korea financially supporting them. According to previous studies, geese family children tend to develop more of a sense of attachment to the US, considering that they have a home in the US where they grew up with their mother and siblings, and often times hold permanent residency/dual citizenship or are in the process of acquiring legal residency (Lee-Chung 2014; Lee and Koo 2006; Finch and Kim 2012), while the study abroad experience of my informants

were more likely to take the shape of a temporary residence for education in a foreign country. In the case of geese family, it is usually the fathers who travel for family gatherings (Lee and Koo 2006), while in the case of children who study abroad alone, it is usually the students who travel to visit family and spend vacation in the home country. In addition, this dissertation adds a comparative case in the discussion of student migration from other East Asian regions in the 1990s including “parachute kids” who study abroad alone and “satellite children” and “astronaut families”³¹ from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan usually involving family migration and multiple passports with considerable political motivation in the aftermath of 1989 Tiananmen Massacre and in light of the sense of uncertainties about the 1997 return of Hong Kong to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as well as the usual motivation for educational migration – for better educational opportunities and mobility for their children (Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Mitchell 2004). I also expect that the stories of study abroad alone students and TCKs can shed light on understanding of recent explosive increase of Chinese study abroad students from pre-college education in the US.³² Understanding study abroad not as a path toward migration or a more rooted life in a foreign country for South Korean students who study abroad alone and TCKs, I argue, explains their need for belonging in South Korea (a home country) and consequently their military service in South Korea. I now proceed to a brief description of each of the dissertation’s chapters.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter 2, “Military Service for National and Flexible Citizenship,” I review the recent legal changes in citizenship and conscription law in South Korea with the stories of four “South Korean” men who each hold a different legal status overseas (i.e., dual citizenship, permanent

³¹ See, for example, Waters 2002, 2005, and 2006; Zhou 1998.

³² The number of Chinese students enrolled in private American high schools increased from 4,503 in 2008 to 23,795 in 2013, according to the US Department of Homeland Security (Lo et al., 2015, p.22).

residency overseas, foreign citizenship, and no legal status overseas respectively). With my examination of recent legal changes – the tension between the recognition of flexible citizenship and strengthening military conscription, I argue that (strengthening) military conscription has been appreciated as a response against the instrumental use of citizenship and the class-based privileges of flexible citizens in South Korea. In addition, through my analysis of instrumental understanding of legal citizenship by individual men, this chapter highlights the possible discrepancy between legal citizenship and national identity. Considering legal citizenship does not necessarily translate to national belonging and national identity particularly for flexible citizens and there is a sense of constant legal changes in citizenship to recognize the strategy of flexible citizenship, I further claim that the completion of military requirement, for individual transnational men, become an important way and a stable marker of national belonging, sometimes more powerful than having a legal citizenship status in South Korea.³³

Chapter 3, “Life Abroad Leads to the Military: Being Cosmopolitan at Home,” turns to the lived experiences of study abroad, introducing two stories from Sungwhan and Chulgi. Closely following their own narratives of study abroad as a cosmopolitan project as well as instrumental educational strategy, this chapter documents the ways in which study abroad students (re)make the meanings of cosmopolitanism from their full adjustment and belonging to American schools to their having a sense of living in the world and a capability to work with foreigners when necessary even after their return to South Korea. Indeed, while Sungwhan and Chulgi celebrated their full belonging in American boarding schools as cosmopolitan belonging,

³³ Legally, military service is conditional upon legal citizenship in South Korea. Thus, in a legal sense, it does not make sense to compare legal citizenship with military service in terms of national belonging. However, here I compare the two, following the ways in which individuals give meanings to and narrate about military service and legal citizenship. The comparison appeared powerfully particularly when my informants were talking about their possible acquisition of foreign citizenship in the future after their completion of military service (naturally losing their South Korean citizenship).

they realized the legal, cultural, and emotional limits of their belonging in the U.S. exemplified by their segregation in American colleges. It is based on their limited belonging and marginalization overseas that they took it for granted to serve in the military and secure full national belonging in South Korea. Appreciating their own celebratory tone of speaking about study abroad as a cosmopolitan project even with their recognition of marginalization abroad and their plan of eventual return to South Korea, I view my informants' cosmopolitan project of study abroad not as a failure but as a distinctive mode of cosmopolitanism. Thus, I argue that the sense of cosmopolitan belonging is possible alongside national belonging in South Korea, and that their cosmopolitan potential is still open even after they settle down in South Korea (or they can be cosmopolitans at last in South Korea).

Chapter 4, "From 'Enviably Other' to 'One of Us'?: Individualized Masculine Citizenship through Military Service," examines study abroad men's military experiences and the value of full membership, "militarized masculine citizenship," which they earn through their military service in South Korea. First, I introduce the conflicting images of study abroad recruits in the military, as global elites and "Enviably Others" whose adaptability in the military and broader cultural membership in South Korea is questioned in light of their education abroad with presumably privileged sheltered life abroad. Then, I analyze how study abroad recruits try to fit in as South Korean men and also as global elites employing diverse strategies such as covering up and utilizing their differences depending on situations. Drawing on my interview data, this chapter shows study abroad men's understanding of military service as a useful way to secure full legal and cultural citizenship and launder their contaminated image as "Enviably Others" in order to live and work in South Korea. I argue that their completion of military service provides study abroad recruits with a "formal" certificate of becoming "One of Us" – militarized

masculine citizenship – in the South Korean society, regardless of whether they embrace or are critical of militarized masculinity. With my analysis of study abroad men’s logic to make sense of military service in light of their individualized concrete benefits, I further claim that their militarized citizenship is individualized citizenship. I also point out that their classed military experience and the highly classed nature of their militarized masculine citizenship belie the rhetoric of equality in conscription as an equal duty of male citizens for the sake of nation.

Chapter 5, “Conclusion” recaps the dissertation’s main themes and arguments, and reflects on the ways in which this dissertation can intervene in creating a better and critical understanding of citizenship and conscription. I also propose possible comparative research with the case of Israel and Taiwan to delineate the workings of neoliberal logics in the changing politics of citizenship and its linkage to military conscription given the particular historical and cultural context.

CHAPTER 2: MILITARY SERVICE FOR NATIONAL AND FLEXIBLE CITIZENSHIP

Recent legal changes in citizenship and conscription law in South Korea suggests the country's seemingly paradoxical initiatives to, on the one hand, legally accommodate internationalization of its own people (e.g., recognition of dual citizenship); while, on the other hand, insist that transnational *men* are at once national beings who are obligated to fulfill military service. Trying to make sense of this seeming paradox, in this chapter, I review the recent legal changes in citizenship and conscription law in South Korea with the stories of four "South Korean" men who each hold a different legal status overseas (i.e., dual citizenship, permanent residency overseas, foreign citizenship, and no legal status overseas respectively). Examining the legal changes regarding citizenship and conscription law with the men's lived realities of the law, I aim to shed light on the relation between two different dimensions of citizenship in South Korea – citizenship as a legal status, being a member of a state (*Staatsnation*); and citizenship as an identity, a sense of national belonging (*Volksnation*). I show that formal membership in the state does not necessarily translate into the sense of national belonging, particularly for flexible citizens who tend to choose citizenship according to practical benefits rather than their sense of national belonging. Particularly I try to show the significant meaning of compulsory military service among flexible citizen men in the context of the politics of citizenship of South Korea which have rapidly transformed in the era of globalization.

I suggest that it is important to consider laws governing citizenship and male universal conscription together, considering the powerful role of the conscription in the making of national citizens in South Korea (Kim 2001; Moon 2005a; Lie 1998); and the fact that universal male conscription has been the prickly issue in relation to the recent recognition of dual citizenship. The recognition of dual citizenship was opposed on the grounds that upper class South Koreans

would be able to abuse their dual citizenship as a way to avoid their compulsory military service. According to a survey conducted by Maeilkyungje newspaper in 2008, 1,395(64.9%) of 2,148 respondents opposed dual citizenship, and 67.5% of them indicated the possibility of misuse in order to avoid military service as the reason.³⁴³⁵ Thus, through the following review of recent legal changes in citizenship and military conscription, I argue that (strengthening) military conscription has been appreciated as a response against the instrumental use of citizenship and the class-based privileges of flexible citizens in South Korea. In addition, through the stories of four men with different legal status overseas, I assert, that for dual citizenship/permanent residency holders, military service can attest their loyalty and full national membership in South Korea which their legal status alone cannot fully provide; for some flexible citizen men, their service in the military can become the primary marker of national membership in South Korea even in the case of losing South Korean legal citizenship as they acquire foreign citizenship in the future after the completion of military service.

Paying attention to universal male conscription as a way to both maintain national citizenry for the South Korean state and to secure full national belonging for flexible citizens directs attention to gender. It reveals the gendered aspect of the politics of citizenship in South Korea. Recent legal changes in citizenship and military conscription suggest that South Korea is investing more to secure its male flexible citizens (who could afford the legal flexibility regarding citizenship/residency abroad)' completion of national duty of military service, while female flexible citizens are not afforded parallel opportunities – or from another perspective do

³⁴ Re-quoted from Lee 2011

³⁵ Aside from such public opinion and general understanding that dual citizenship can be misused for military evasion, in the reality, some people were not enrolled because dual citizenship was not allowed. Before 2005, because dual citizenship holders by birth had to choose one citizenship before the age of eighteen, those who chose foreign citizenship did not have military duty. In addition, because those who voluntarily acquire foreign citizenship are not allowed to keep South Korean citizenship, they cannot be enrolled.

not need to fulfill parallel responsibilities. Military service as an important way of full belonging in South Korea for male flexible citizens is neither an available option nor a must-to-do requirement for female citizens.

My approach to citizenship is focused on the two aspects – citizenship as legal status and citizenship as identity. As Christian Joppke (2007) delineates different dimensions of citizenship as status, rights, and identity, citizenship can mean multiple things and scholars who study the issues of citizenship have been focused on various aspects. Responding to previous scholarship which tends to examine citizenship with central focus on its “functional” context drawing on T.H. Marshall (1950)’s rights-focused citizenship theory, Brubaker(1992) in his agenda-setting work suggested that citizenship in a nation-state should be studied with the question of nationhood and national identity in mind, and that the politics of citizenship and its legal criteria are first and foremost concerns of the politics of identity. Brubaker (1992)’s call for the study of citizenship – its institutional boundary of membership and the questions of identity – has been addressed by the recent scholarship on citizenship and migration in South Korea (Seol and Skrentny 2009; Lee 2010 and 2012; Choe 2006; Kim 2012). Appreciating Brubaker’s call and joining the recent scholarship on citizenship in South Korea, this chapter also pays attention to the legal membership as organized by the South Korean state and citizens’ national belonging to the South Korean nation simultaneously. Studying the legal criteria of citizenship with the questions of national belonging, as Chulwoo Lee (2012) pointed out, does not assume any easy isomorphism between citizenship as legal status and citizenship as national identity. Rather, this chapter will highlight the possible discrepancy between legal citizenship and national identity, particularly among flexible citizens, and the role of military conscription when legal citizenship alone does not fully guarantee national membership and belonging.

My use of the term, “flexible citizenship,” draws on Aihwa Ong (1999)’s theorization of flexible citizenship. In the era of globalization, in order to “accumulate capital and social prestige in the global arena, subjects emphasize, and are regulated by, practices favoring flexibility, mobility, and repositioning”; flexible citizens seek to “both circumvent and benefit from different nation-state regimes by selecting different sites for investment, work, and family relocation” (Ong 1999, p.6 and p.112). While appreciating Ong’s explanation of the instrumental use of citizenship by individuals, my study complicates our understanding of flexible citizenship by suggesting that flexible citizenship can be a national project as well as individual one, as globalization can be pursued as a national strategy. Here, in the context of South Korea, flexible citizenship and national citizenship are not contradictory. A review of the recent legal changes regarding citizenship and conscription provides a clear site for examining the ways in which flexible citizenship has been utilized in the interests of the South Korean state to secure globally talented citizens who are expected to contribute to South Korea with their global competitiveness including skills (e.g., English proficiency) and resources (e.g., financial ability to invest). In addition, the stories of four transnational men with different legal status in South Korea and overseas tell us that flexible citizenship cannot be understood separate from the issues of national belonging. Though individuals do not become flexible citizens in the name of national interests, the facts that globalization strategy has been pursued by the state as I introduce in chapter 1, and flexible citizenship encouraged for the national interest; “to be South Korean means to be South Korean ‘in the world’”(Park and Abelmann 2004, p.650) - are surely important factors for these individuals’ decision to study abroad and embark on their own transborder life projects. Even though four men I introduce in this chapter tend to appreciate their legal citizenship according to instrumental benefits, they still appreciate their sense of belonging to South Korea in various

ways and to various degrees. It is with these concerns in mind that they make sense of their compulsory military service in South Korea.

In addition, this chapter adds the story of an understudied group of upper-/upper middle class “flexible citizens” to the scholarship of citizenship and migration in South Korea. Previous studies have documented South Korea’s efforts to reconfigure the boundary of its membership faced with increasing transnational mobility of people, mainly through the examples of Korean Chinese and non-ethnic residents in South Korea including migrant workers and marriage migrants. I appreciate the point of previous studies – the Korean nation is a “hierarchical nationhood” with Korean Chinese and Korean minorities in the former Soviet Union at the margins, and the resident citizens at the center (Seol and Skrentny 2009). With the case of “flexible citizens” in South Korea, I try to complicate the concept of “hierarchical nationhood,” particularly the center. While I agree that the overseas Koreans in the West, mainly Korean Americans, are legally placed between Korean resident citizens and ethnic Koreans from China and the former Soviet Union countries in the hierarchical nationhood (i.e., as an overseas Korean with F-4 visa under the Overseas Korean Act), I question the assumption that legal citizenship can guarantee the top position in the hierarchical nationhood. My study suggests that many of “flexible citizens” are not necessarily resident citizens, and that they are actually willing to renounce their South Korean legal citizenship for an American or Canadian one. Thus, I argue that “flexible citizens” who can utilize their Korean membership (i.e., both legal citizens and ethnic Koreans with F-4 visa) as well as extra legal membership in other countries, preferably the US and Canada, can be at the top of the hierarchical nationhood.

In the following sections, I review the recent legal changes in citizenship and military conscription, and I also show the lived realities of laws through stories of four study abroad men.

This study suggests that we can make sense of seemingly contradictory initiatives of South Korea – on the one hand legally promoting internationalization of its own people, while on the other hand meticulously securing these transnational men as national beings who have an obligation for military service by understanding “flexible citizenship” is a national strategy of South Korea. I argue that military service became a tool for the South Korean state to maintain the rhetoric of social equality among citizens while it has instrumentalized legal categories of citizenship including the recent conditional recognition of multiple citizenship and for individual transnational men, the completion of military requirement became an important way and a clear marker of national belonging.

The State-Nation Nexus of South Korea – History and Present

In order to fully understand the current politics of citizenship of transnational South Korean men, it is necessary to consider South Korea’s strong ethnic nationalism (Shin 2006). There have been debates about whether Korea as a nation existed before the era of modern nation-states (Schmid 2002). Though it is not the purpose of this paper to join the debate and argue for either side, I want to point out that a primordial sense of strong ethnic-centered national identity is still prevalent in South Korea and homogeneity of the “Korean people” based on shared blood is commonly believed (Grinker 1998; Shin 2006). The strong ethnic nationalism and the believed homogeneity among Koreans have been commonly considered as responsible for the principle of *jus sanguinis*, in the South Korean nationality law.³⁶ The principle of *jus sanguinis* was applied only via paternal lineage until 1997, and the amendment of the Nationality Law in 1997 allowed transmission of South Korean citizenship from either parent. However, at the same time, the state-nation nexus which has been strongly supported by the ethnic nationalism in South Korea is

³⁶ Patric Weil (2001) points out the problems of dichotomizing civic and ethnic notions of nationhood and simply linking them with *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* respectively (re-quoted from Lee 2012, p.87). See Lee 2012 for historical development of the legal citizenship in South Korea.

facing challenges from the increasing presence of different groups of ethnic Koreans and non-ethnic residents in South Korea including North Korean refugees, Korean Chinese, marriage migrants from China and other Southeast Asian countries, and migrant workers in South Korea. Faced with more and more diverse population in terms of ethnicity and nationality, with increasing transborder mobility of people, South Korea has tried to reconfigure the boundary of its membership through a series of Nationality Law amendments and the introduction of Overseas Korean Act, which legally define who constitutes Koreans. It is in this historical and contemporary South Korean context that I now situate the legal changes regarding citizenship and military conscription.

Legal Transformation: South Korean Citizenship as a Legal Status

In this section, I examine the legal changes regarding citizenship to see how the legal boundary of citizenship has been changed in South Korea. Particularly, I focus how ethnicity and class have played roles in this reconfiguration of legal boundaries of South Korean citizenship. To this end, this chapter reviews legal changes and administrative practices regarding overseas Koreans including the Overseas Korean Act passed in 1999, and the recognition of de jure dual citizenship for qualified groups from 2011. I suggest that ethnicity definitely played an important role in these legal changes since foreign citizen ethnic Koreans (*oegukkukchök tongp'o*) have received preferential treatment in this legal constitution of Korean ethnizens, while this legal transformation has been also hugely colored by political economic interests of the South Korean state by giving preferences to ethnic Koreans from so called Western countries with skills and resources over members of the old diaspora (i.e., in China and the Commonwealth of Independent States)

The Act on Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans (hereafter, Overseas Korean Act or OKA) was passed in the South Korean National Assembly in 1999. Under the OKA, ethnic Koreans who are citizens of foreign countries (*oegukkukchök tongp'o*) were given a preferential treatment as “ethnizenship” using Bauböck (2007)’s term, or de facto dual citizenship as Kim (2013) analyzed. Those who secured the status of overseas Koreans under the Act became able to enjoy almost the same status and rights as South Korean citizens in terms of length and conditions of stay, the right to work for profit, financial and real property ownership, and the national health insurance coverage. However, the law was not created in order to embrace all ethnic Koreans around the world as de facto citizens/ethnizens of South Korea. In the context of post-Financial Crisis South Korea, the OKA was specifically “designed to encourage overseas Koreans’ participation in South Korea’s economic recovery by facilitating their investment in South Korea.”³⁷ To that end, in the original OKA passed in 1999, members of old diaspora, the majority of whom left the country before the foundation of Republic of Korea including Korean Chinese and ethnic Koreans in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS, the former Soviet Union), were excluded.

In order to be eligible for the overseas Korean status under the Act, the person had to be a former Korean national or a direct offspring of former Korean nationals. For those who left the country during the Japanese colonial rule before the foundation of the Republic of Korea, which is the case for the majority of Korean Chinese and ethnic Koreans in the CIS, OKA Enforcement Decree made in 1999 required an impossible condition to satisfy - the former nationals of Korea must have been legally recognized as Korean before he/she attained a foreign nationality (Art. 3).

³⁷ Assemblymen Yim Söngbo, recorded in The Che-200 hoe kukhoe pöpche saböp wiwönhoe hoeüirok, che-2 ch’a (National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, Seond Legislation and Judiciary Committee of the 200th National Assembly meeting minutes), February 5, 1999, p.10.

Faced with huge criticism from Korean Chinese migrants, various activist groups, and with a decision of the Constitutional Court that the Act was ‘uncomfortable’ to the Constitution, the OKA was amended in 2004. The revised OKA included a direct clause that former nationals who emigrated before the foundation of the Republic of Korea are part of overseas Koreans, and the amended OKA Enforcement Decree erased the distinction between emigrants before and after the establishment of the Republic of Korea. Though this amendment in 2004 expanded the boundary of possible beneficiaries of OKA, in reality the main beneficiaries of the Act have been ethnic Koreans in North America, while F-4 visa which the OKA created was not an easily available option for ethnic Koreans from China and the CIS. The Ministry of Justice has issued a separate visa of H-2 for co-ethnic migrant workers mainly from China in designated low-skilled job sectors, and only those Korean Chinese who have prominent professional jobs or academic degrees from higher education in South Korea can apply for F-4 visa status under the OKA (Lee 2012). Consequently, even after the amendment in 2004, the OKA was intended to attract resource-rich overseas Koreans and to recruit global talents who can speak fluent English among overseas Korean population. The Overseas Korean Act opened a way to utilize the strategy of flexible citizenship for qualified overseas Koreans who are expected and imagined to be resource-rich and globally competitive so that they can contribute to the economic recovery of South Korea after the IMF crisis in 1997.

While the OKA allowed working and living in South Korea without any legal difficulties for some qualified ethnic Koreans with foreign citizenship and F-4 visa in South Korea, the 2010 amendment on the nationality law allowed de jure dual citizenship, also for a certain group of people. We can see the 2010 amendment of the nationality law as an extension of the 1999 OKA, considering the fact that the major beneficiaries of the amendment overlap with those of the 1999

OKA; and the South Korean state intended, through the legal changes, to utilize the strategy of flexible citizenship for its own interests. Initiating the amendment, the Minister of Justice explained the reasons for the amendment as follows: “Because the current nationality law is firmly based on the principle of single nationality, there have been many cases in which people renounced or lost their South Korean nationality. Thus, in order to correspond with the international current and the national interest, we would like to conditionally allow multiple citizenships.”³⁸As the Minister of Justice indicated, the 2010 amendment on the nationality law allowed dual citizenship, but only conditionally for those who may renounce their South Korean nationality because they have dual citizenship by birth, and for people who are expected to be beneficial for the national interest.

Under the 2010 amendment, beginning in 2011, South Korean young men and women who have dual citizenship by birth (usually from upper-/upper middle class family) are able to retain multiple citizenships as long as -- in the case of men – they fulfill their military obligation, pledge not to live as foreigners in South Korea (i.e., by only showing their foreign passport), and uphold the duties of South Korean citizens, including the payment of taxes. The beneficiaries of the 2010 amendment on the nationality law also included foreign (both ethnic and non-ethnic Korean) talents acquiring or reinstating South Korean citizenship who have special contribution to South Korea or who can contribute to the South Korean nation in special areas such as science, economy, art, or athletics, as well as marriage migrants, returning adoptees, and return migrants older than 65 years old. The 2010 amendment can be seen as targeting ethnic Koreans (besides the group of marriage migrants), the same group of beneficiaries of the OKA. Even the inclusion of foreign talents can be interpreted as targeting overseas ethnic Koreans, considering the fact

³⁸ The Che-287 hoe kukhoe pŏpche sabŏp wiwŏnhoe hoeüirok, che-2 ch’a (National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, Seond Legislation and Judiciary Committee of the 287th National Assembly meeting minutes). February 16, 2010, p.49.

that South Korea is not a commonly preferred destination for cosmopolitan belonging by non-Korean global talents.

While the main target of the 2010 amendment was ethnic Koreans, ethnicity did not play a decisive role alone. Just as the OKA was intended to attract a certain group of overseas Koreans with skills and resources, the 2010 amendment was also intended to recruit global talents who can contribute to South Korea. The 2010 amendment was more apparent about its intention – it clearly indicated that South Korea is willing to offer its citizenship to global talents regardless of ethnicity by including foreign talents (though in the reality, its main beneficiaries would be ethnic Koreans).³⁹ In addition, the amendment erased the residency requirement of five years for foreign talents (both ethnic and non-ethnic Korean) who acquire South Korean citizenship compared to two years of residency requirement for marriage migrants.⁴⁰ By providing preferential treatment to ethnic Koreans with skills and resources, I suggest that ethnicity and class were two pillars of the recent legal transformation regarding citizenship in South Korea.

Legislative Changes to Tighten Military Conscription

Relative liberalization of citizenship regime in South Korea described in the previous section has not come alone. Instrumental use of legal citizenship by recognizing flexible citizenship of some qualified people has come with seemingly contradictory legal changes to strengthen military conscription of transnational male citizens. I interpret these synchronous changes – the recognition of flexible citizenship and the strengthened control of male conscription, particularly

³⁹ Eleana Kim (2007 and 2012) documents the ways in which even the returning adoptees are imagined to be global talents who grew up in Western countries and speak fluent English in neoliberal South Korea.

⁴⁰ Marriage Migrants are one of the beneficiaries of the 2010 amendment. Together with global talents, returning adoptees, and returning elderly older than the age of 65, marriage migrants are allowed to retain their original citizenship as they acquire South Korean citizenship under the amendment (The Nationality Law, Article 10). The inclusion of marriage migrants in the beneficiaries of the 2010 amendment requires a separate research to inquire the meaning of this change.

for transnational recruits – in two ways. First, I suggest that the meticulous control of transnational recruits became more important for the South Korean state to assuage general South Korean public’s discomfort for recognizing dual citizenship considering the fact that it is usually an available option only for upper-/upper middle class. Second, I argue that strengthening military service for transnational recruits can be a backlash against the increasing use of flexible citizenship strategies, utilizing permanent residency and foreign citizenship, and it serves to demand national identity in order to secure citizenship.

Faced with the increased trans-border mobility of people, the South Korean government and the legislators implemented a series of legislative changes to tighten the military conscription of male citizens. Until 2004, those with permanent residency overseas were exempted from the military service, but the Military Service Law was amended so that permanent residency overseas does not provide automatic exemption from conscription beginning in 2005. Instead, they can legally postpone their conscription until the age of 37, if they continue to live overseas; but they have to serve in the military if they want to reside in South Korea for more than six months per year or work for profit in South Korea before the age of 38. Under the current Military Service Law, those with permanent residency overseas can be exempt from the conscription from the age of 38; they were able to be exempt from the draft from the age of 36 before December 31, 2010; and it was the age of 31 before February 5, 1999 (Article 149 of the Military Service Law Enforcement Decree). These changes of the age limits made it more difficult for young men with permanent residency overseas to work and live in South Korea without serving in the military.

With these changes in the Military Service Law, the Nationality Law was also amended in 2005 to tighten control over compulsory military service of dual citizenship holders. Before

2005, it was possible for dual citizenship holders to renounce their South Korean citizenship before the age of twenty two; and in that way, male dual citizenship holders had a way to avoid their military service. Together with the OKA, they were able to avoid their military duties and at the same time enjoy de facto dual citizenship in South Korea. The strategy of upper-/upper middle class South Koreans to avoid military service by choosing foreign citizenship, mainly American citizenship, while enjoying their life as upper class ethnic Koreans in South Korea under the OKA, became widely criticized by the public. However, from May 24, 2005, the option became unavailable. The newly amended nationality law states that those who were born abroad (in the countries with the principle of jus soli) while their parents were overseas without the purpose of residence cannot renounce their South Korean citizenship before they complete their military service. This legislative change on the nationality law received strong public support, because it addressed the public resentment about some South Koreans (usually upper- and upper middle class)' strategy of avoiding military conscription choosing the foreign citizenship (most often, the U.S. citizenship) over their South Korean ones. Indeed, thousands of South Koreans rushed to renounce their South Korean citizenship before the new nationality law became effective; and majority of them were men before completing military service.⁴¹

In addition to the fact that universal male conscription has been strengthened for equal treatment of every male citizen regardless of class background, it is possible that universal military service can be a way to secure citizens with national identity. In South Korea, compulsory military service has been an important institution to produce national male citizens with a myth of cultural homogeneity as well as class homogeneity (Lie 1998, p.47 and 101). In

⁴¹ In 2004, the number of men who renounced their South Korean citizenship was 1270, and among them, 1208 men had not served in the military, while only 137 women renounced their South Korean citizenship. In 2005, the number of men who renounced their South Korean citizenship increased to 2711, and among them, 2611 men had not served in the military, while only 230 women renounced their South Korean citizenship (Lee, 2011).

that vein, overseas recruits usually with permanent residency overseas or dual citizenship participating in a special recruitment program specifically made for them have been highly celebrated by the military and the media reports. They were featured as becoming real South Korean men through the military service despite all their different life trajectories and experiences abroad. Thus, I interpret the increased control of conscription for transnational recruits as a way to ensure certain level of national identity and national belonging among flexible male citizens.

If we look at the synchronous changes in legal citizenship and military conscription together, we can see that who can/should serve the military has changed slowly and conservatively compared to decisions about who can acquire South Korean legal citizenship. While the South Korean state was actively pursuing globalization and recognizing flexible citizenship as national strategies from the 1999 OKA to the 2010 amendment of the nationality law, South Korean resident citizen men from so called multicultural families (usually with a Korean father and a marriage migrant mother) were not asked to serve in the military. It is surprising if we compare with the case of transnational Korean recruits who should serve in the military in order to live and work in South Korea, which has been tightened during the first decade of the twenty first century. It was not until 2010 that the Military Service Law deleted the clause that non-ethnic Korean men with different skin color/race are exempted from the conscription (Art 65 of the Military Service Law and Art 136 of the Military Service Law Enforcement Decree).⁴² I interpret this temporal gap between active inclusion of transnational ethnic Koreans and reluctant later inclusion of “multicultural” (with different skin color) men as a sign of the resiliency of the ethnicity-centered national citizenship in South Korea, which is

⁴² In addition, naturalized South Korean citizens including longtime resident ethnic Chinese in South Korea are exempted from the “universal” conscription (Art 136 of the Military Service Law Enforcement Decree).

more apparent in the question of military recruitment than that of legal citizenship. Based on the reviews of recent legal changes on nationality and military conscription, I argue that tightening military conscription of transnational recruits and dual citizenship holders reveal the tension between the ideal of social equality among citizens and the reality of class inequality; and the instrumental use of citizenship (i.e., flexible citizenship) and the ethnicity-centered national citizenship.

Stories of Citizenship and Military Conscription – Four men with Different Legal Status

In this section, I will introduce the stories of four transnational South Korean men with different legal status. Their stories – how they feel about their citizenship in South Korea and elsewhere, and how they think about their military service in South Korea – show us the lived realities of the legal transformation of citizenship and conscription reviewed in the previous sections. I feature these four men because of their distinctive legal status overseas (i.e., dual citizenship, permanent residency overseas, foreign citizenship, and no legal status overseas) and consequently different legal options they have in South Korea. I highlight, in spite of their different legal status overseas and in South Korea, their shared needs and desire for national belonging in South Korea with their instrumental perception of legal citizenship. Through the four stories, I will argue that military service can be a more important marker of being a member of a nation (*Volksnation*) than having a legal citizenship. The completion of military requirement becomes more meaningful particularly for these transnational recruits for whom the easy isomorphism between legal citizenship and national belonging cannot be always expected; and their Korean belonging can be questioned because they spent most of their formative years overseas as I elaborate in chapter 4.

Yoojun's Story – Dual Citizenship Holder

When I met with Yoojun for an interview at a café in an upscale neighborhood of Seoul in May of 2013, he was enjoying his relaxed summer after his discharge from the military until he was to return to Columbia University in New York City in late August. Yoojun holds dual citizenship of South Korea and the US because he was born in the US when his father was studying abroad for his PhD. Yoojun grew up in South Korea from the age of three until he graduated from middle school, and he has studied in the US from high school as a study abroad alone student. His family has been living in South Korea – his father is a professor in Seoul, his mother is a part-time researcher, and his older sister is a college student in Seoul.

Yoojun began his twenty one months of military service right after he finished his freshman year in Columbia. Considering his plan to work in the US after graduating college and he has better chances to secure a decent job in the US with his American citizenship compared to other international students, I was curious how he decided to serve in the South Korean military and how he felt about his military experience in South Korea. As Yoojun said:

It is a lie if I say I had never thought about avoiding military conscription. But I did not think about not serving the military that much. It was just natural that I serve in the military, because all my friends [from South Korea] who went to high school and college together in the US were joining the military. In addition, I grew up in South Korea until middle school, and I just thought that I should go to the military someday since I was young. That did not change much even with my study abroad from high school in the US. My parents did not mention about not serving in the military, either. My military service was taken for granted in my family. If I do not serve, I cannot work for profit in South Korea until 35, and I wanted to talk about military experiences with my friends... there

were many reasons. Later in my life, I want to come back to South Korea and live here...
this is another reason.

Even though Yoojun has dual citizenship and he is attending Columbia University with future plan to work in the US, his military service has been considered a due trajectory of life.

Under the current nationality law and the military service law which I reviewed in previous section, Yoojun cannot renounce his South Korean citizenship before he completes his military duty because the 2005 amendment of the nationality law stipulated that those who were born abroad (in the countries with the principle of jus soli) while their parents were overseas without the purpose of residence cannot renounce their South Korean citizenship before conscription. Yoojun was born overseas when his father was studying abroad, and his family came back to South Korea after his father graduated. With the 2005 amendment, the option of living in South Korea as an overseas Korean exempted from the military requirement became unavailable to Yoojun. Yoojun remembered the 2005 amendment which strengthened the control of conscription among dual citizenship holders in South Korea: "At that time many people chose to keep American citizenship over South Korean one (before the revised law became effective). I was too young to do anything about it, and we were just looking at how things go." From 2005 to 2010, before the 2010 amendment, people like Yoojun had to serve in the military, and then they had to choose which citizenship they want to keep. Consequently, there were those who renounced their South Korean citizenship even after they served in the military, living in South Korea as an overseas Korean under the OKA.

Yoojun was able to keep his dual citizenship after serving the military, because the 2010 amendment of the Nationality Law allowed South Korean young men and women who have dual citizenship by birth to retain multiple citizenships. He was so relieved by the fact that he did not

have to choose between South Korean citizenship and American citizenship, because that would have been a hard choice to make. When he first went to his barrack, other soldiers asked him about the US which he felt that he did not know much about. As Yoojun remembered:

I don't know about the US well. When I was a high school student, I was in the US but only in the school in the middle of the desert [Yoojun went to a boarding school in Arizona]. In college [at Columbia University], I did not go around much [He told me later that he just studied so hard after he realized that it was very difficult for him to have a vibrant social life with American students on campus.] When I was asked about America, I did not know well. They asked, 'Have you been to a baseball game of Major League in the US?' I said, 'no.' They asked, 'How are American parties?' and I said, 'I have not been to an American party.'"

Despite his legal citizenship in the US and his American education since high school, he felt that he belonged to South Korea and he did not know much about America, which itself partly testifies that legal citizenship and national identity/belonging do not always correspond.

Yoojun's sense of belonging to South Korea, however, would not have been naturally translated into his choice of South Korean citizenship over American one, if he had to choose one between the two under the nationality law before the 2010 amendment. He said,

I feel I am so Korean. But I am not sure which citizenship I would have chosen, if I had to. Practically, it is more beneficial for me to choose American citizenship. I am not really sure how I would have made decision if I can keep only one citizenship. I am so glad that I did not have to make decision to choose one over the other.

Regarding the benefits of American citizenship, he added,

You know the work and study program in the US? I am eligible for that because I am a US citizen. Because college tuition is so expensive, that is a big help to lessen financial burden for my family. I can also have a part-time job and legally make money while I attend the college, because I am a US citizen. I did not know about these benefits of the US citizenship when I was in high school.

For Yoojun, the value and meaning of American citizenship was very instrumental as a way to secure financial benefits during his study and as an asset to secure jobs in the US. On the other hand, South Korean citizenship was meaningful to him because he feels sense of belonging to South Korea as well as its instrumental benefits such as rights to work and live in South Korea. Thus, while military service has been a due course of life for Yoojun since he was little, he is not sure which citizenship he would have chosen if he had to do one over the other. Yoojun's story exemplifies flexible citizenship strategies, considering his emphasis on instrumental benefits of legal citizenship with his national identity aside. Given the instrumental use of legal citizenship – American citizenship in the case of Yoojun, citizenship as legal status can be flexible, but citizenship as identity and as membership to nation is not as flexible as legal citizenship.

Sangjin's Story – Permanent Residency Holder of Canada

When I met with Sangjin in 2012, he has been working in a prominent company in Seoul for one and half years after he graduated from a good American state university in 2011. Even though he is a South Korean citizen with permanent residency in Canada, his life has been spread across multiple places beyond Korea and Canada as he began his study abroad as a TCK (Third Culture Kid) and later became a geese family child in Canada. Sangjin was born and grew up in South Korea until he was five years old; then he left for Middle East accompanying his father who was stationed overseas from one of the big corporations in South Korea. Sangjin lived in Dubai for 5-

6 years, in Egypt for 5-6 years, in Canada for 2-3 years, and in the US for four years. Sangjin was in the first year of international high school in Egypt, when his father was asked to come back to South Korea by the company. Considering that Sangjin and his three-years-younger brother have not received a South Korean education, Sangjin's parents were concerned about their adjustment in South Korean schools and they wanted their sons to continue "international" education. Thus, Sangjin's father went back to South Korea alone, while the rest of his family went to Canada for education of the two sons. They applied for Canada Federal Business/Investor Program by taking over a small restaurant in Canada, and secured permanent residency for all family members. Sangjin attended international schools in Dubai and Egypt, and he went to a public high school in Canada. While Sangjin and his younger brother were attending schools in Canada, Sangjin's father was living in Seoul as a geese father⁴³ and his mother managed the restaurant the family took over for the purpose of securing permanent residency, taking care of the two sons.

At the time of the interview in December 2012, Sangjin was a South Korean citizen with permanent residency of Canada, and his younger brother and his mother were Canadian citizens. Sangjin's father had given up his permanent residency of Canada because he was not able to satisfy the residency requirement of two years during the five-year period to keep his legal status in Canada, because he had to stay and work in South Korea. While Sangjin's younger brother and mother were able to acquire Canadian citizenship by living in Canada for more than three years with permanent residency, Sangjin remained a permanent resident of Canada since he decided to go to college in the US before he met the three-year requirement for Canadian

⁴³ Geese fathers refer to those who remain in South Korea financially supporting their children's education overseas, while geese mothers reside overseas accompanying their children. See Introduction of this thesis for more detailed discussion of geese family in relation to different types of study abroad including study abroad alone and the third culture kids.

citizenship. In 2012, while Sangjin was working in South Korea living with his parents in Seoul, Sangjin's younger brother was working in the US after graduating from a college in Canada and an MA program in accounting in the US. Under the current military service law, Sangjin who has permanent residency of Canada *cannot* work or live in South Korea until the age of thirty-seven if he had decided not to serve the military, and his younger brother, with Canadian citizenship (who lost South Korean citizenship), *can* work in South Korea without serving the military, utilizing his "ethnizenship" as an overseas Korean with F-4 visa under the OKA.

During the interview, Sangjin's tone speaking about his citizenship and military service was sarcastic, and his feelings toward his South Korean citizenship and his completion of military service were full of ambivalence, which belies any easy understanding of citizenship as status and citizenship as identity among transnational people. Since he was able to legally postpone his military conscription until the age of thirty seven if he continues to live overseas, it was possible for him to try to secure a job in the US or to go back to Canada where he holds permanent residency instead of serving in the military and coming back to South Korea. However, he decided to come back to South Korea--where he has not lived since he left for Middle East at the age of five--in order to serve in the military in 2008 after his junior year in college in the US. He chose to complete his military requirement for various reasons. First, many of his college friends from South Korea were joining the military, which made his decision to go to the military natural and easier. Second, Sangjin wanted to open up the possibility of working and living in South Korea, where his parents live. Third, he wanted to keep at least his South Korean nationality even though he has been away for most of his life. As Sangjin explained,

Because I have been moving from one country to another so many times, I have been always afraid of the idea that I might lose my identity. ... Since I lived here and there, I

did not know where I should consider 'home.' People categorized me as South Korean but I did not have any memory about South Korea. South Korea. I have asked myself many times if I am really South Korean.

I tend to interpret that this lack of sense of belonging anywhere in the world made him to choose to serve in the military and open up the possibility of life in South Korea. His parents were ambivalent about his decision to go to the military in South Korea. At first, Sangjin's parents wanted him not to serve in the military and get a job overseas. At the same time, however, his father who has been working for a big corporation in South Korea suggested that military experience would be beneficial for Sangjin considering that he can learn culture of Korean companies in the military.

At the time of the interview in 2012, Sangjin was thinking of going back to Canada for a MBA program beginning in 2014 and securing Canadian citizenship.⁴⁴ Since it is not allowed to have dual citizenship for people like Sangjin who voluntarily acquire a foreign citizenship under the current nationality law, Sangjin's acquisition of Canadian citizenship would mean that he would lose his South Korean citizenship even after his completion of military service. Sangjin was open to possibility of life anywhere in the world, and he thought that Canadian citizenship would be more beneficial than South Korean in other countries of the world.

Hee Jung: Then are you going to give up your South Korean citizenship?

Sangjin: Since it is not allowed to have dual citizenship for me yet, I will see what I should do later. I went to the military because I wanted to keep South Korean citizenship though. ... I think I have done enough for South Korea since I completed my military

⁴⁴ At the time of writing this thesis in 2016, Sangjin is still living in South Korea, working for the same company. Regardless of his desire to secure Canadian citizenship and possibility of life abroad, I interpret that his continuous stay in South Korea shows the difficulties of securing life abroad (including expensive tuition for MBA program and uncertainties of life abroad after school) and the importance of life in South Korea as a viable option for study abroad men.

duty. I have things to say. If people ask, “Why did you give up your South Korean citizenship?” then I can say “I’ve done my military service.” Then, they will say “Then it is OK, no problem.”

Sangjin’s understanding of citizenship and military conscription above suggests the importance of military conscription for national belonging in South Korea. Even if he loses his South Korean citizenship, his completion of military service can provide a way of national belonging to him because “he has done enough for South Korea” and he has “things to say to other Koreans,” in his words. In addition, he alluded to the possibility that he might be able to have dual citizenship later by saying that it is not allowed yet, and he will see what he should do with his South Korean nationality later. Sangjin’s story shows that there is a sense of constant changes in the Nationality Law (in the direction of recognizing more legal opportunities of flexible citizenship), while the completion of military service continues to be at the core of national belonging which is powerful enough to guarantee national belonging even at the absence of legal citizenship of South Korea. That is why Sangjin can be confident about his national belonging even if he becomes a Canadian citizen and gives up his South Korean one in the future. While Sangjin feels reluctant to give up his South Korean citizenship, it is possible that he will acquire Canadian citizenship over South Korean one if he has an opportunity in the future. Even though he does not have an urgent reason to have a Canadian citizenship, he felt that Canadian citizenship would have more practical value for his later life, particularly given that he wants to go abroad again in the future. The ways in which Sangjin understands South Korean citizenship clearly unsettle any taken-for-granted assumption about easy isomorphism between legal citizenship and belonging; and power of legal citizenship to solely decide the place in hierarchical nationhood.

Though Sangjin supported his younger brother's decision to become a Canadian citizen and to be exempt from the military service in South Korea, he did not regret that he served in the military. It provided him the legal ability to work in South Korea and to live with his parents. Though Sangjin was not totally satisfied with his life in South Korea, he recognized that working and living in South Korea was a viable and precious option for which he completed his military duty. Sangjin's parents were happy that their second son made it to settle down abroad, but at the same time, they missed him dearly; and they were happy to live with at least one son, Sangjin, in South Korea together. Further, Sangjin appreciated that he was able to meet his current girlfriend while he was working in Seoul after his charge from the military service. Sangjin said, "I am thinking that I came back to South Korea in order to meet my future wife, though I am not totally happy that I had to spend those precious twenty- one months in the military." His completion of military service secured him a way to realize his personal belonging with his parents and a girlfriend as well as his national belonging, which was not possible without military service in South Korea. Sangjin's story suggests that his desire and needs for national belonging are important factors in his calculations for flexible citizenship strategies; and that the presence of military conscription complicates the instrumentalization of citizenship.

Dohyuck's Story – Failed to Secure Legal Status Overseas

I met with Dohyuck, a geese family student, in a city of *Gyungshangnamdo*, southern part of the Korean peninsula, where he was serving as an air force officer. When we met in 2012, he was just beginning his long journey in the military, which was to end in 2015. As an officer, Dohyuck had to serve for three years, which is longer than other regular track of military service as soldiers. He began his military service at the age of twenty-seven, a bit later than other recruits, because he had not originally planned to serve. Dohyuck contemplated not serving the military

while working for a company that could sponsor his permanent residency in the US for two years, but he decided to quit his job and join the military. At the time of our interview in 2012, Dohyuck's father was working as a government officer in a city of *Kyungsang* province, while his mother and a younger brother who was a college student were still living in the US.

Dohyuck returned with eyes full of tears to South Korea to join the military on the very day his South Korean passport would expire. Dohyuck became so emotional leaving the US, where he grew up for more than ten years and he considered home, and his heart ached thinking of his mother and a younger brother left behind in the US. It was his first visit to South Korea since he left for the US ten years and five months earlier. Dohyuck was born and grew up in South Korea until he was in the third year of middle school, and he began to live in the US from 2001 as a middle school student. He went to public middle school and high school in the US, and he is a graduate of a good state university in the Midwest. His mother decided to go to the US with her two sons for the purpose of their education, while Dohyuck's father stayed in South Korea financially supporting the education abroad of his two sons.

Compared to other study-abroad students I interviewed, Dohyuck was particular in a sense that he wanted to live as a Korean American, and he considered Georgia, where his mother and a younger brother live, as his home rather than South Korea.⁴⁵ It is actually quite understandable considering that he had not visited South Korea for more than ten years during his formative years, until his mid 20s, and he grew up in the US living with his family. Dohyuck said, "To be frank, I did not consider myself as an international student. While other study abroad students from South Korea hang out with only other Korean students, I had many

⁴⁵ See Introduction for more discussions on the comparison between geese family children like Dohyuck and other study abroad students such as study abroad alone students and the Third Culture Kids.

American friends, and I went to many parties with them. I felt that I am culturally half-American – I have been a big fan of American football.”

As we can see from his quotation above, Dohyuck felt that his life was not different from other South Koreans holding permanent residency in the US. His self identity as Korean American notwithstanding, he was unhappy about the fact that his legal status was same as other international students holding F-1 visa. He was upset that he had to pay expensive full tuition for college just like other international students because he was unable to secure legal status in the US. In addition, he was really sad when he realized the limit of his ability to secure a job in the US after graduating college in 2009 because of his status as an international student with F-1 visa. He really tried hard to find a job in the US, going to every career fair he could and submitting so many resumes, but he was not able to make it. Dohyuck said, “You know that. You need at least a green card to secure a job in the US. It is not impossible for an international student to find a job in the US, but it is hard.” Dohyuck’s story provide another case of discordance between legal citizenship and the sense of belonging – he felt and desired the sense of belonging in the US but he was not able to acquire legal citizenship or permanent residency. His sense of belonging in the US notwithstanding, it was challenging for him to even find a job in the US due to his lack of legal belonging in the US.

Dohyuck’s family applied for green card two times under his father’s name and mother’s name respectively, but they failed. At first, Dohyuck’s mother had an E-2 visa as an employee, because one of her friends had a small business in the US. On the document, she was an employee, but she never worked for the company. In that way, Dohyuck and Dohyuck’s younger brother were able to attend public K-12 schools in the US living with their mother, which was not an easily available option for study abroad students in general. After a few years of their stay

in the US, Dohyuck's father came to the US to stay with his family for two years by attending a MA program in the US. Even though his taking time off from his work meant that he would be out of the elite track to promotion and higher positions in the bureaucracy, he decided to spend two years in the US in order to be with his family and to secure legal status of their family in the US. Permanent residency meant affordable college tuition for two sons, stable legal status of their family, and possibly two sons' adult life in the US. Dohyuck's parents took over a small business in Atlanta and applied for a green card. However, the business deteriorated, as they were duped by a broker, and their application for green cards was rejected for two times. Dohyuck's family had to sell the business with a huge financial loss and no fruit of permanent residency. Dohyuck and Dohyuck's father talked about their failed attempt to secure permanent residency with full of remorse, which led to Dohyuck's military service in South Korea.

Graduating from college, Dohyuck applied for Optional Practical Training Visa (OPT) which required him to find a sponsor company within ninety days. If failed, he had to leave the US, his home, where his mother and a younger brother were living, because he had no valid visa to stay in the US after graduating college. Luckily, within the ninety-day period, he was hired by a foreign branch of a South Korean company, which was easier for him than securing jobs in other American companies. The Korean company that hired him provided a sponsorship for his permanent residency, which meant that if he stayed in the company for several years until he secured permanent residency, he would not have to go to the military in South Korea and could lawfully settle down in the US. Despite that option, Dohyuck finally elected to join the military in South Korea.

Dohyuck really contemplated his options before he decided to join the military in South Korea. His first option was to avoid the military service and to stay in the company he was

working for until he secured permanent residency in the US. However, working in a South Korean-owned company in a small American town for several years provided neither the cosmopolitan belonging nor national belonging he wanted and needed, and he would not have been able to change his job for several years, until he attained permanent residency. He was living in a small American town alone, without any social life or close friends to hang out with except playing golf. He waited and waited for weekend in order to go home in Atlanta where his family and friends lived. It took four hours to drive from where he worked to Atlanta, and he traveled every weekend. Even though he was not happy with his life, he was not able to do anything about it unless he served in the South Korean military. Dohyuck already experienced the limits of his belonging in the US – without legal belonging in the US, he failed to secure a job in an American company. Under the Military Service Law, Dohyuck's belonging in South Korea was also precarious. Even though Dohyuck held South Korean citizenship, he was not able to renew his South Korean passport without serving in the military. During his study in a college, he had been able to postpone his military service as a college student. Once he graduated, he was not able to postpone the military service, and the expiration date of his passport was coming up. He felt insecure about having no valid passport of South Korea and no legal belonging in the US. It meant that he could not leave the US until he secured permanent residency, and he could not visit South Korea, where his father lived, for several years. Once Dohyuck entered South Korea, he would be conscripted soon and he could not, of course, leave South Korea without a valid passport. Without the completion of military service in South Korea, he would become the opposite of flexible citizens who have mobility and flexibility.

The other option he had was to register in a graduate school in the US, which would have provided him a few more years to figure out his ways in the US. If he had enrolled in a graduate

school in the US, he would have been able to postpone his military service in South Korea and renew his passport, and perhaps try to find opportunities to secure jobs in better conditions.

However, he felt that he was not ready to apply for top tier graduate schools in business, and was reluctant to go to graduate school solely because he needed an F-1 visa to stay in the US and to postpone his military service in South Korea.

The reasons why Dohyuck decided to complete his military duty in South Korea are more than securing legal status in South Korea and beyond having a valid passport. Dohyuck told me that news reports about famous TV stars who had avoided military service, and how they were hugely criticized by the public, also affected his decision-making. He said, “Even if I stayed in the US and was successful in the future, would other South Korean people recognize me as a successful South Korean? I felt that I would be criticized by the South Korean public for not having served in the military.” Dohyuck also elected to join the military because his father was living alone in South Korea. He wanted to spend some time, during his military service, with his father, who he thought of as lonely for living alone in South Korea. Dohyuck felt sorry for his father, who had suffered financial burden due to business failure in the US, his failed attempt to secure permanent residency, and consequently the expensive college tuitions for two sons (as international students have to pay more than in-state students in state universities). The completion of military service felt more important for him, because Dohyuck knew that it would be impossible for him to even visit his father in South Korea without serving the military at least for several years.

Compared to the options Doyuck had in the US without serving the military in South Korea, he calculated that his military service would benefit his cosmopolitan belonging and national belonging with better opportunities. If he could go back to the US after his discharge

from the military, as he wanted to go to a top MBA program, Dohyuck believed that his three-year military experience as an officer would be beneficial for his application because his leadership experience as an air force officer would be highly recognized in the US. If he decided to settle down in South Korea at the time of his discharge, he expected that he could get a decent job in South Korea with his bachelor's degree from a good US institution, his English proficiency, and his military service as an air force officer, which companies in South Korea tend to value. His sense of identity as a Korean American who grew up in the US with his mother and a younger brother for more than ten years did not provide him a way of belonging in the US, due to lack of citizenship as legal status. Even if he was able to attain legal residency in the US, he would not have felt totally free from his desire for belonging in South Korea, as he was thinking about his future recognition in South Korea. His South Korean legal citizenship alone also did not guarantee his national belonging because he was not able to renew his passport, visit his father in South Korea, and imagine a future life in South Korea without serving the military. It was by serving the military in South Korea, Dohyuck became able to open up his possibilities of cosmopolitan belonging and national belonging, and more opportunities for his future.

Kyungsik – a Canadian citizen without military duty in South Korea

I met with Kyungsik in Seoul, South Korea, during summer 2012, for an interview. He was, like many other study-abroad students who study in the US or Canada and spend their summer in South Korea usually visiting their families, attending one of the international summer schools offered by Korean universities during summer vacation in Seoul. Kyungsik, a Canadian citizen, was a college student in Canada. He was born and grew up in South Korea until his first year in middle school, and his parents decided to migrate to Canada for his and his younger brother's education. Kyungsik's family applied for an immigration visa through Federal Skilled Labor

program, utilizing his father's work experience as a teacher in French with national recognition in South Korea. Luckily enough, his family's immigration application was successful, and they were able to migrate to Canada as permanent residents. Kyungsik and his younger brother now have Canadian citizenship (they lost their South Korean citizenship because the law does not allow people who voluntarily acquire foreign citizenship to keep both citizenships, compared to those who hold dual citizenship by birth). Kyungsik's father has shuttled between South Korea and Canada, and now he has a trading business between the two countries. Kyungsik's father still holds permanent residency of Canada with his South Korean citizenship.

Other than the fact that Kyungsik secured Canadian citizenship during his study abroad in Canada, his life did not seem much different from other South Korean international students in Canada and the U.S. Kyungsik spoke fluent Korean, actively participated in a soccer team composed of "Korean" students in Canada, and even had future plans to work in South Korea (which he could do because of the Overseas Korean Act). Like other study abroad students, he visited South Korea every summer, and he was contemplating the option of working in South Korea utilizing his English ability. Kyungsik commented on his national identity as follows:

I have a strong patriotism (i.e., toward South Korea). On the college campus where I am attending in Canada, there are not many South Korean students. There is only one soccer team composed of South Korean students, and I added the South Korean national flag on the uniform of our team, which I designed. I wanted to show that our team is a South Korean team. To that extent, I really like South Korea.

Even though he was a citizen of Canada, his national identity was South Korean and his life was just like other South Korean students in North America moving between South Korea and Canada.

Kyungsik explained the disparity between his legal status as Canadian citizen and his national identity as South Korean as follows:

I needed to choose one citizenship between Canadian and South Korean one from the age of eighteen. At that time, I chose the Canadian one, because I can always recover South Korean citizenship considering that my grandmother and my father are South Korean citizens. I heard that it only takes two weeks to recover South Korean citizenship.

However, I will never recover Canadian citizenship once I give it up. Thus, it is more beneficial to keep Canadian citizenship for now unless I can hold dual citizenship.

Talking about his citizenship choice, Kyungsik showed me his ID card in South Korea as an overseas South Korean (*cheoedongpocheng*). The ID card said that Kyungsik was an overseas Korean with F-4 visa, which meant that he had practically almost no barrier to settle down in South Korea. Kyungsik added, “This F-4 visa guarantees my permanent stay and work in South Korea. Practically there is no problem if I hold this visa to venture my life here.”

Despite that Kyungsik could live and work in South Korea as an overseas Korean, he still held a desire for South Korean citizenship. He was even strongly willing to complete his military duty in South Korea if he could keep both his South Korean and Canadian citizenship, which was not allowed under the current nationality law in South Korea. I asked him, “Since you are a Canadian citizen, you don’t have a military duty, right?” He answered, “Not yet” instead of “No.” Kyungsik added that he may have military duty in the future if the law changes such that he can hold dual citizenship. Kyungsik said, “I have no difficulty living in South Korea without serving in the military. However, I kind of want to have South Korean citizenship, because I am a Korean.” He expressed his hope to have dual citizenship or recover his South Korean citizenship

in the future depending on the situation including his life trajectory and the possible legal changes.

Kyungsik was open to the both possibilities – life in South Korea and in Canada. While he wanted to get a job in South Korea after graduating college in Canada, he also wanted to live in Canada for his future children’s education when he raises kids. After that period, Kyungsik wanted to go back to South Korea when he gets older. He said:

I am not sure where I will eventually settle down in the future. ... I think I will follow the path of my parents, shuttling between South Korea and Canada. ... My brother will go to college next year (i.e., from Fall 2013), and my parents plan to continue living both in Canada and South Korea as they do now – they have home in Seoul, and in Vancouver. They have work and family in South Korea, and they also need to visit us in Canada. Indeed, they hope to have another home in Hawaii in the future so that they can stay for four months in Seoul, four months in Vancouver, and another four months in Hawaii, though I am not sure whether it will come true.

As such, Kyungsik and his family were effectively utilizing the strategy of flexible citizenship in that Kyungsik was able to freely navigate his South Korean and Canadian futures even without the two years of military requirement. Kyungsik’s story tells us that a certain group of young men who were able to secure foreign citizenship (not by birth) are left out of the meticulous control of the South Korean state to secure every male citizen serves the military including transnational recruits who want to have a life in South Korea. In addition, the story he is telling us clearly shows that citizenship as legal status and citizenship as identity and belonging do not necessarily square in this era of increased mobility of people.

With the review of recent legal changes and the stories of four men about their citizenship and military conscription, I have argued that formal membership in the state does not necessarily tell us much about the sense of national belonging and national identity, particularly in the case of flexible citizens. Yoojun, holding dual citizenship of the United States and South Korea, asserted that he did not know much of America despite his legal citizenship and education in the US. Sangjin with Canadian permanent residency lived in Canada only for a few years, but he desired to secure Canadian citizenship in the future even if he had to renounce his South Korean one. Dohyuck considered Atlanta, Georgia, as his home, and he wanted to venture his adult life in the US even though he did not have legal belonging (i.e., permanent residency or citizenship) in the US. Kyungsik considered himself as a Korean with strong nationalism, but he lost his South Korean citizenship and chose to become a Canadian citizen. I suggest that all of these four men spoke to instrumental notion of citizenship – they tended to value their legal status overseas for practical benefits (e.g., lower tuition and better chances to get jobs overseas), and they were, to some extent, willing to give up their South Korean citizenship to secure a citizenship overseas even though they expressed their emotional attachment to South Korea.

As I reviewed the recent legal changes in the Nationality Law and the establishment of the Overseas Korean Act, the South Korean state has utilized and officialized the strategy of flexible citizenship. With the recent legal changes, Yoojun was able to keep his dual citizenship after his military service, and Kyungsik was able to live and work in South Korea without any practical difficulty as an overseas Korean with F-4 visa. I also showed, however, that these recognitions of instrumental use of citizenship for the national interest came with measures to deal with upper class privileges and to maintain national citizenship in South Korea. Here, we can recall that the South Korean state has strengthened its regulation and control of military

conscription particularly for flexible citizen men while legally accommodating internationalization of its own people. Thus, Yoojun became unable to renounce his South Korean citizenship and be exempt from the military conscription, and Sangjin would not have been able to work and live in South Korea until the age of 37 if he had not served in the military.

The examination of recent legal changes – the tension between the recognition of flexible citizenship and strengthening military conscription – with four ethnographic stories together calls our attention to the discrepancy between law and the reality. When the easy isomorphism between legal citizenship and national belonging cannot be always expected particularly for flexible citizens, the laws are based upon the assumption that there is a clear boundary between overseas Koreans and upper-/upper middle class Koreans according to their legal status. When more and more upper-/upper middle class South Koreans are trying to utilize the strategies of flexible citizenship navigating their different possibilities in different locations including study abroad and work abroad, sometimes securing permanent residency overseas and even a foreign citizenship, the laws regarding citizenship and military conscription categorize them into distinctive groups depending on their legal status overseas. Here, I want to remind that the four men in this chapter have different legal status overseas and consequently different legal options in South Korea, despite their shared needs and desire of national belonging to South Korea (in varying ways) and their study/life abroad. Kyungsik with Canadian citizenship can work and live without military service in South Korea, while the other three men had to serve in the military in order to have adult life in South Korea. Among the three, Sangjin had the option to postpone his military service until the age of 37, while the option was not available for Yoojun and Dohyuck.

For all of the men, although each differently inflected by their legal status overseas, national belonging was important for the practicalities of their future life and for their sense of

self. It is in this vein that they understand and made sense of their military requirement in South Korea. Even Kyungsik, a Canadian citizen, felt that he might need to do the military service in South Korea in the future, if the law changed such that he could hold dual citizenship. Indeed, as I have reviewed in this chapter, there have been frequent legal changes regarding citizenship and military conscription during relatively short time period from the late 1990s to 2010, and I was able to feel the sense and expectation of continuous legal changes in citizenship in the stories of four men. Particularly, Sangjin and Kyungsik suggested the possibility and expectation of their holding dual citizenship in the future given the trajectory of legal changes to recognize the strategy of flexible citizenship. On the other hand, what remained constant or was even strengthened was the meaning of military service for national belonging in flexible citizenship strategy. Here, we can recall Sangjin's assertion that his completion of military service will guarantee his full belonging in South Korea even if he lost his South Korean citizenship in the future. Thus, I suggest that service in the military can be a primary marker of national membership in South Korea even at the time of losing a legal citizenship, particularly among flexible citizens whose legal citizenship does not necessarily translate to their national belonging.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the complicated relation between citizenship as legal status and citizenship as identity partly because of the ways in which the four men understand the legal citizenship mainly for the practical benefits show that legal citizenship alone cannot judge where to stand within the hierarchical nationhood.

The centrality of military service for national membership among flexible male citizens also calls our attention to the gendered aspect of the politics of citizenship in South Korea. While the legal changes have tried to secure male citizens as national beings who must serve in the

⁴⁶ I analyze their narratives of need/desire for national belonging through military service as almost necessary and conducive to their future possibilities in South Korea (rather than for its own sake) in this dissertation.

military, the strategy of flexible citizenship by female citizens has not been regulated as much as the case of male citizens. This gender gap in the laws asks a question about possible implications for female transnational citizens, and about gendered citizenship in South Korea more broadly. I suggest that South Korea is investing more to secure its male transnational citizens as national beings, which can possibly bring two sides of the coin for female transnational citizens. On the one hand, it may bring more flexibility and mobility to female citizens – they can renounce their South Korean citizenship anytime without conditions, and they can work and live in South Korea anytime they want without further requirements. On the other hand, military service as an important way of full belonging in South Korea for male citizens who value flexibility and mobility is not an available option for female transnational citizens⁴⁷ whose Korean belonging can also be questioned due to their life abroad. With the scope of my research mainly focused on men, it is hard to make a strong claim about the implication of this gender gap in the laws governing citizenship. However, one important lesson is that recent legal changes on citizenship and military conscription unveils the gendered nature of South Korean citizenship and asks further study about it, when it is easy to be overlooked in light of celebratory moments of legal changes in South Korea in favor of gender equity including the 1997 amendment of the Nationality Law which allowed transmission of South Korean citizenship from both parents, a big change from the principle of *jus sanguinis* via only paternal lineage.

With this combined review of legal changes on citizenship and military conscription and the stories of four men, I have argued that tightening military conscription was a response to the officialization of flexible citizenship, in order to appease the public discomfort to the classed privileges; and for individual transnational men, the completion of military requirement becomes an important way and a clear marker of national belonging. I thus suggest that military

⁴⁷ unless female flexible citizens want to serve in the military as professional officers

conscription of flexible citizen men offers a productive vantage point from which to grasp the ways in which South Korea and South Koreans are trying to balance between the global and the national.

CHAPTER 3: LIFE ABROAD LEADS TO THE MILITARY

Being Cosmopolitan at Home

In chapter 3, considering study abroad both as an instrumental strategy for gaining success in a globalized capitalist economy and as a cosmopolitan project of experiencing and belonging to the broader world, I aim to describe lived experiences of study abroad, giving attention to what study abroad students expect, aspire to, and experience overseas. By doing so, I try to complicate the binary view of understanding study abroad as either an instrumental strategy or as cosmopolitan aspiration. I delve into the meaning of being cosmopolitan from the perspectives of study abroad students, the perspectives that were being made and re-made throughout the course of their study abroad experiences. Introducing two stories from Sungwhan and Chulgi among many I encountered during my field research, I show that while study abroad students celebrated their study abroad experience as a cosmopolitan project, particularly during their middle/high school years, they also (often later) realized the legal, cultural, and emotional limits of their belonging in the U.S. as well as their need for national belonging during their college years in the U.S. This is the reason why these students often took it for granted to serve in the military and sometimes even appreciated their compulsory military service in South Korea, which I write about in detail in chapter 4. Study abroad students' need for national belonging and their completion of military duty in order to work and live in South Korea may seem to be contradictory with a classical understanding of cosmopolitanism, usually understood to be against identification with a particular nation/nationality. However, I view my informants' cosmopolitan project of study abroad not as a failure but as a distinctive mode of cosmopolitanism among a particular group of Korean study abroad students, closely following their own narratives of cosmopolitanism – living in the world and experiencing the broader

world, which they appreciated simultaneously with their desire and needs for national belonging. I argue that the sense of cosmopolitan belonging is possible alongside national belonging in South Korea, and that their cosmopolitan potential is still open even after they settle down in South Korea. It speaks to my discussion of study abroad both as an alternative path for liberal human development and as an expansion of highly stratified private education market in South Korea where raising globalized and creative citizens have been emphasized. Study abroad students' simultaneous appreciation of cosmopolitan belonging and national belonging should be understood in light of the fact and expectation that they would be able to be recognized as globalized elites in South Korea (chapter 4), while they experienced their limits of belonging abroad (mostly in the US).

Study Abroad as a Cosmopolitan Project

Pnina Werbner (2008) summarizes “ideal” cosmopolitanism as “ideas of tolerance, inclusiveness, hospitality, personal autonomy, (and) emancipation” (p.17) which are universal human ideals and understood to be against the nation and other collectivities. According to this understanding of classical cosmopolitanism, a cosmopolitan is understood to be a person in the world who is not tied to any of the specific cultures, customs, ideas, and traditions of his or her own nation or community (Beck and Sznaider 2006). I find parallels between the understanding of cosmopolitans as free from national or other kinds of cultural attachment and the theorization of the relation between globalization and identity. Scholars of globalization have hoped for and anticipated the development of a post-national identity, which can overcome some of the incapacities and problems of nation-states. For example, Ulrich Beck argues, “What people dream, how they would like to be, their everyday utopias of happiness – these are no longer tied to a particular geographical area and its cultural identities” (2000, p.65). Arjun Appadurai(1996)

has also anticipated a post-national identity formation through globalization.⁴⁸ According to this logic, it is highly likely that we will encounter more and more cosmopolitans whose identities are not tied to a particular nation-state in this globalized era. If we follow these explanations of post national identity formation through globalization, study abroad students who spend most of their formative years abroad would be natural candidates for cosmopolitans.

Indeed, recent scholarship on study abroad in East Asia and beyond has begun to pay attention to its potential as a cosmopolitan project that produces cosmopolitans through global education (Abelmann, Newendrop, Lee-Chung 2015; Lee-Chung 2014; Park and Abelmann 2004; Rizvi 2005) as well as its instrumentalities in a globalized capitalist economy (Lee and Koo 2006; Kang and Abelmann 2011; Waters 2005 and 2006). In analyzing the case of study abroad from South Korea in light of cosmopolitan aspiration and experiences, I follow the call from revisionist theorists to understand cosmopolitanism as lived experiences of encountering the world by diverse groups of people including working class and the marginalized. Providing critique on the “ideal” or “normative” view of cosmopolitanism as elite and Western-centered, scholars made efforts to understand cosmopolitanism as lived experiences, using phrases such as “discrepant,” “working class,” “vernacular,” and “marginalized” cosmopolitanism (Beck and Sznajder 2006; Clifford 1997; Werbner 2008). Though my informants are elites (from upper or upper-middle class families who are able to provide their children with educational opportunities abroad) rather than the marginalized who are the focus of revisionist theories of cosmopolitanism,

⁴⁸ According to Appadurai (1996), the three implications of postnational formation are: 1) “The first is temporal and historical and suggests that we are in the process of moving to a global order in which the nation-state has become obsolete and other formations for allegiance and identity have taken its place”; 2) “The second is the idea that what are emerging are strong alternative forms for the organization of global traffic in resources, images, and ideas – forms that either contest the nation-state actively or constitute peaceful alternatives for large-scale political loyalties” 3) “The third implication is the possibility that, while nations might continue to exist, the steady erosion of the capabilities of the nation-state to monopolize loyalty will encourage the spread of national forms that are largely divorced from territorial states” (p.168, 169).

I show that their study abroad cosmopolitan project is different from classical cosmopolitanism as philosophy or “ideal” cosmopolitanism. As noted in the literature (Abelmann, Newendrop, Lee-Chung 2015; Lee-Chung 2014; Park and Abelmann 2004), study abroad as cosmopolitan project is often times deeply intertwined with instrumental benefits and material interests. As Amy Borovoy(2010) writes, cosmopolitanism as “liberal” dream for universal human ideals and growth and as “neoliberal” instrumental strategy are often intertwined and look very similar that it is difficult to clearly separate one from the other. In this chapter, I look closely at how cosmopolitan aspiration and instrumental strategy are both important for study abroad students to make sense of the reality of their being abroad, which is expensive and often times leads them to lives far away from their parents and the comforts of home from an early age. I will highlight their different modes of narrating their experiences – the celebratory mode of talking about boarding school experiences in contrast with their ambivalent reflections about their college experiences in the US. By doing so, I aim to delineate what these students wanted to achieve versus what they experienced through study abroad, how they (re)made ideas of cosmopolitanism in their own lives as they got older and were faced with changing circumstances in boarding schools and American colleges(i.e. segregated social life). In addition, I suggest that their limited belonging abroad and consequently remaking ideas of cosmopolitanism, together with their prospect as globalized elites which I write about in chapter 4, are central factors to explain study abroad students’ needs and desire for national belonging and often taken-for-granted path to military service in South Korea.

In my efforts to appreciate study abroad as a cosmopolitan project as well as an instrumental educational strategy, I recognize caution from scholars who warn against the tendency to take it for granted that international education will produce cosmopolitan citizens.

Fazal Rizvi (2005) notes, “The meaning that the students attach to cosmopolitanism is highly contradictory and is linked more to their strategic interests within the emergent global economy and culture than to any broader moral conception” (p.3); and also critiques that “... international students participate in an economic exchange, and are likely to be concerned less with moral and political dimensions of global inter-connectivity than with its strategic economic possibilities. As a result, their cosmopolitan outlook is likely to be framed by their strategic interests. ... ultimately, international education is used by international students to better position themselves within the changing structures of the global economy, which increasingly prizes the skills of inter-culturality and a cosmopolitan outlook” (p.9).

I cannot agree more with Rizvi’s critique that study abroad students are more concerned with strategic instrumentality of international education rather than moral or political dimensions of cosmopolitanism. The main purpose of study abroad for my informants was to learn English, receive education in good American colleges, and secure decent jobs within the global economy. Recall my discussion in Introduction that study abroad students with different transnational trajectories shared the centrality of American education participating in the same space of global education. However, stories I introduce in this chapter reveal that narrow instrumentality alone cannot fully explain the meaning of study abroad from the perspectives of study abroad students. Thus, I try to appreciate the sense of “being in the broader world” and the desire to become “citizen(s) capable of living at home in the world” (Anagnost 2000, p.412) as study abroad students narrate their experiences abroad in their own right, beyond the instrumentalities of the education abroad. Appreciating recent efforts to understand study abroad as a cosmopolitan project beyond its narrow instrumentalities (Abelmann, Newendrop, and Lee-Chung 2015; Kang 2015; Lee-Chung 2014), this chapter will add the voices of study abroad students – how they

(re)make and live with the ideas of cosmopolitanism as they study abroad from pre-college to college education. Though the meanings study abroad students attach to cosmopolitanism might fall short of what some theorists of classical cosmopolitanism might have hoped for in terms of their broader moral conception and universal human ideals, I aim to appreciate their sense of being in the broader world as their particular way of understanding and living cosmopolitanism in their reality. In addition, I show that the particular meaning study abroad students attach to cosmopolitanism does not necessarily stand against the nation or the nation-state. In the next section, introducing Sungwhan's and Chulgi's study abroad experiences, I try to elucidate the meaning of cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitan belonging in the lived realities of study abroad men, suggesting still significant ties (though changing as I elaborate in chapter 4) between transnational life and national belonging. I question how they understand and develop the meaning of cosmopolitan belonging in their experiences of study abroad, and what the relationship between their cosmopolitan belonging and their national belonging might be.

Sungwhan's Story

Sungwhan graduated from a boarding school and a prominent private college in the US. He was a study abroad alone student while his family – his parents and his older brother – lived in South Korea. When I met him in Seoul during the summer of 2013, Sungwhan was preparing for an exam in order to become a commissioned officer specializing in English interpretation, as a way to complete his military duty in South Korea. I introduce Sungwhan's story for two reasons. First, his story echoes many other study abroad students – his celebratory tone of speaking about his high school experiences and his struggles since attending college. Second, his story provides a powerful window through which we can understand what study abroad students expect to achieve and experience during their education abroad, considering his particularly active efforts

to figure out and realize the purpose and reason for study abroad in relation to his cosmopolitan and national belonging.

I begin the story by describing his high school experience. Sungwhan was proud of his experiences and achievements in his high school. In response to my question about his high school life, Sungwhan said:

I am so proud of my high school life. It might sound snobbish, but I was highly recognized at the school. In American high schools, recognition comes from how much a person can and is willing to contribute to and serve other students, the community, and society. I was an RA (Resident Advisor) in the dormitory which was highly recognized at the school. RAs had lots of power including authority to bring a student to an on-campus trial. In addition, I was appointed as a member of the ruling committee for the student trials. The committee was composed of three teachers, one male student, and one female student. I was the male student representative in the committee, and we wrote documents about what a person did wrong and how he/she should be punished. I also participated in our school branch of Amnesty International for three years. Our supervisor was the Dean of Academics of the school, and he knew a case of a political prisoner in Syria whose older brother was living near our school in the US. We had a campaign of signature-seeking and made lots of efforts to publicize the case. At the beginning, I was doubtful about the impact of this signature-seeking campaign, but later, it became an issue of diplomacy between the US and Syria, which meant a lot to me and my friends at that time. Another important part of American high schools is sports. I played soccer, and was also a captain of the school crew. In many ways, I was recognized as a leader. I was polite as well as close to my teachers. I was recognized as a

leader among American students while I was also friendly with other Korean international students. I was kind of a model international student from the perspective of the school.

Sungwhan's celebratory mode of speaking about high school life was shared with many other study abroad students I met during research. Though the extent to which a person was able to perform and achieve in an American high school differed from individual to individual, it was quite common to hear celebratory descriptions of high school life. My informants were proud of their adjustment to foreign schools, education in English, socialization with American students, and their participation in various extracurricular activities which they usually compared disparagingly to exam preparation centered South Korean education.

My interpretation is that Sungwhan was so proud of his high school life because his instrumental drive and his cosmopolitan desires were both met simultaneously. His socialization with American students was instrumental in that he was able to improve his English skills, and his active participation in extracurricular activities was necessary to enter a good university. However, his satisfaction with his high school life did not only come from its instrumentality but also from his sense of belonging to a broader world – the American high school. This became more evident in his struggles to figure out the meaning of study abroad as he entered the college, a description of which I will introduce below.

After successful high school years, Sungwhan went to a nice private university in the US. For Sungwhan, going to a good university in the US had been a dream since he began to study abroad first in Canada during middle school and then later in the US during high school. It was clear from his stories about high school that he worked very hard and lived with passion not only

to get good grades but also in other aspects of high school life, including sports, student communities, volunteer work, etc. However, as soon as he achieved his long time dream of going to a nice college in the US, he felt lost. Sungwhan said,

For the first two years in my college, I mostly made friends with Korean students on campus. I was in a serious relationship with a Korean girl, joined a soccer team composed of only Korean students, and actively participated in a Korean church. Being with Korean friends, I felt comfort. As I entered college, I did not feel any [instrumental] need to hang out with Americans. After my experience of high school life, I knew that I would have no problem hanging out with American friends, and of course, my English had become fluent enough by the time I entered college. Thus, at that time, I had no purpose or motivation to pursue anything further in college. I did not know what to do. I became skeptical about my college life, when I compared it to my passionate high school life. I kept asking myself why I was here [at a private college in the US], paying so much money for tuition and living expenses. I did not know what I could earn in an American college with such a cost. I was physically in the US, but I did not feel that I was in the US.

Sungwhan's struggle and sense of loss as he entered college provides a powerful window through which we can understand the study abroad project of these students more clearly.

Sungwhan's story tellingly shows that the value and desire students attach to study abroad are beyond mere instrumentality. As I wrote earlier, high school life was easier for Sungwhan because his achievement of instrumental needs and cosmopolitan aspirations overlapped – while he prepared to go to a nice college learning English and adapting to American high school life, simultaneously he was able to become a core member of the American high school community.

In college, on the other hand, it was more difficult because he did not feel any instrumental need

to socialize with American students, and there were not many chances to make friends with American students due to relatively independent style of college life compared to boarding school life where everyone lived together and joined the extracurricular activities and sports teams organized and led by the school. In addition, realizing a long time dream of going to a nice American college after an arduous journey of going abroad as a middle school student and adjusting to a foreign school far away from his family and home, Sungwhan appreciated the “comforts” he felt from his Korean friends and Korean students’ community. Also important was that Sungwhan made so much effort during his high school, not dreaming about college life and experiences, but dreaming of going to a good college itself. In his own words, as soon as he entered the college, Sungwhan had “no purpose or motivation to pursue anything further in college” and he did not “know what to do.” As these factors worked together as he began his college life, Sungwhan came to live within his “comfort zone” among his Korean friends; and began to feel something is lacking, questioning why he was studying at an American college spending so much money. I interpret that this is the moment when Sungwhan came to clearly realize that the meaning of study abroad or what he wanted to achieve through study abroad was more than learning English and getting a credential from a good university – cosmopolitan aspiration of experiencing and living in the world.

Sungwhan’s struggles in college were shared by many other informants I met, though of course to varying degrees and with different ways to deal with the issue. Sungwhan was a special case in that he actively made great efforts to discover his own way of accomplishing cosmopolitan belonging in college. After spending two years of his college life mostly within the Korean student community, he decided to try something new, which he knew he couldn’t experience anywhere except at an American college - joining a fraternity. Sungwhan was the

only one who tried to join a fraternity among the Korean study abroad students I met. Sungwhan explained how he decided to join a fraternity:

I started to wonder about this question: If I go back to the US five or ten years after I graduate, would there be even one American friend who would be happy to see me again? I couldn't even think of one person. There was no American friend I could think of at that time. I felt that something was wrong with my college life. Thus, I tried to find a way to make friends with American students, but it was not easy. It wasn't the fact that I was a foreign student that made it hard, but because the junior year is not the usual time for making new friends, it was hard for me to meet American students that I could get close to at that time. This was my first reason for joining the fraternity. Second, I wanted to experience and learn about American culture. What I was able to learn in the boarding school was very limited, and I felt that I did not know much about American college life and culture. Third, I wanted to complete my military duty in South Korea as a commissioned officer specializing in English interpretation, and I needed to practice English more. At that time, I was not using English at all except for classes, though I was in the US. As I was thinking about these issues, there was also an event that triggered my decision to join the fraternity. It was a lecture by a professor for Korean international students, organized by a Korean student association on campus. The professor said, "Get out of your comfort zone," pointing out that Korean students isolated themselves and did not challenge themselves to do something new when there were so many opportunities on campus. It just hit my mind. After the lecture, I made up my mind to join the fraternity right away.

Though Sungwhan mentioned his need to practice English, considering his fluent English at that time, it was more about socializing with American friends and experiencing American college life and culture that led him to a fraternity in his junior year. In addition, his decision to join a fraternity was partly due to the realities of American campus where it was difficult for Sungwhan to meet with and get close to American students. Sungwhan tried to explain with the time of college life – “the junior year is not the usual time for making new friends,” and he asserted that the difficulties to make friends with American students did not come from his being a foreign student. I will elaborate more on this issue of the ways in which study abroad students tried to make sense of their segregated college life and the realities of American campus in later part of this chapter.

Compared to Sungwhan’s celebratory tone of speaking of his decision to join a fraternity, he was somewhat ambivalent about how successful his trial to join a fraternity was. In addition, responding to my question on his fraternity experiences, he did not talk about it much. Regarding his fraternity experiences, Sungwhan said:

It is not that I was not able to adjust to the fraternity or get along with the members there. There was no problem, but it was not easy. When I say “not easy” I am not referring to my adjustment, but to my emotional comfort there. In the fraternity, it took me a long time and great energy until I felt comfortable. Whether it was successful or not, I am proud that I tried. I think it was a meaningful experience.

Sungwhan was happy that he had the experience of being in a fraternity, but it seems that he did not feel a full sense of belonging in the fraternity. The fraternity was something exciting and new, but it did not provide a sense of comfort and feeling of home. Also important to note is that

Sungwhan emphasized his capability to adjust to the fraternity and get along with the members there, the issue of his emotional comforts aside. It was shared by many other study abroad students to claim their cultural flexibility and capability to socialize with American students, regardless of their realities of segregated college life. I suggest that the capability (or the belief on having the capability) to socialize with American students was core of study abroad students' sense of cosmopolitan belonging, the sense of living in the world, though they did not feel emotional comfort doing so.

While Sungwhan was thinking of what he needed/wanted to experience in American campus, he kept active in the Korean students Association (KSA) on campus, and he served as a president in his senior year. Sungwhan was so proud and passionate about what he contributed to the KSA, through his strong attachment and sense of belonging there. Sungwhan said:

I was so committed to the KSA and I had a lot of attachment. It might be true that I spent more time on working for the KSA as the president in my senior year than on studying for the entire four years of my college life. I felt a strong responsibility as president, and found it fruitful to be able to provide better benefits for many Korean students through my efforts. When I became president, there were no historical records of the KSA despite its 15 years of presence on campus. Thus, I made an official website for the KSA, and applied to make it an official chapter on campus.

Sungwhan's strong commitment and attachment to the KSA shows that his sense of belonging to the Korean student community was still very important, even while he tried a new way of belonging to the broader world – joining a fraternity in an American college. Joining either group alone was not sufficient for him to feel happy and satisfied. Again it is important to remember

that Sungwhan felt lost when he socialized only with Korean students during his freshman and sophomore years. While he was happy to try a new opportunity available on campus, Sungwhan also needed to belong to the KSA and have a strong sense of attachment there. He was also more close to his Korean friends. For Sungwhan, cosmopolitan aspiration and his need for national belonging were not contradictory; rather he wanted the two simultaneously to achieve satisfaction. This is also evident in his thinking of the future.

When I asked Sungwhan about his plans or thoughts about his future after military service in South Korea, he said:

I am not sure yet. I might go to a graduate school in the US or try to work first in South Korea. I will see what I want to do next during my military service for three years. If I go to a graduate school, I want to major in IR [International Relations] because I like to work in the public sector on the global stage. Whatever job I end up doing later, what I know for sure is that I do not want to limit myself to South Korea. I already saw the big world, and I do not want to come back to confine myself to South Korea. I'm interested in working for international organizations such as the United Nations, and it would be great for me to work for human welfare and a better world. My interest in international public sector jobs does not mean that I have no interest in working in and for South Korea. I have a big ambition to transform exam-centered South Korean education to more well-rounded American style education. In addition, what is ideal for me would be building a successful career in the global arena and then getting high recognition in South Korea just like the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. He is said to be a strong candidate for next presidential election in South Korea due to his career as a secretary-general of the UN, though he has not admitted his intention to do so.

In Sungwhan's thinking about his future, he wants simultaneous belonging in global and national spheres. He hoped to work in the global space as a cosmopolitan, which has the potential to bring him high recognition in South Korea. In Sungwhan's mind, cosmopolitan belonging and national belonging were not contradictory. Rather, they were complementary to each other. Cosmopolitan belonging would give him the satisfaction of being a member of a broader world, but at the same time would not necessarily give him the feeling of comfort and sense of full belonging that national belonging would be able to provide. In this light, we can make sense of Sungwhan's perception of compulsory military service in Korea.

As I mentioned earlier, when I met with Sungwhan, his life was occupied with preparation for an exam to become a commissioned officer specializing in English interpretation. Considering his life trajectory of studying abroad since middle school and his desire to work abroad in the future, I was curious about how he made sense of his military duty in South Korea. Contrary to my expectations, completion of military service in South Korea was not something Sungwhan agonized over, asking why he had to go through it. As I explained above, national belonging had been still important for Sungwhan even when he pursued cosmopolitan belonging during study abroad. Sungwhan thought that military service was something necessary for him to secure full membership in South Korea. Without military service, he could not renew his South Korean passport after study abroad, and of course he could not live in South Korea. He mentioned that even many of his study abroad friends with green cards or dual citizenship went to the military in South Korea, because they wanted to settle down in South Korea right after school or after some work experiences abroad.⁴⁹ In the case of Sungwhan, he wanted to be highly recognized in South Korea after attaining success in the world, and he was not sure where he

⁴⁹ As I reviewed in chapter 2, it is legally required for those with green cards or dual citizenship to complete their military service in South Korea in order to work and live in South Korea before the age of 37.

would begin his career. Working and living in South Korea was a viable option which he couldn't easily give up. In these circumstances, Sungwhan took it for granted that he would go to the military rather than contemplating why he had to do it.

In addition, Sungwhan added strategic value to his military service by choosing to serve as a commissioned officer specialized in interpretation. Sungwhan expected that, through this position, he would learn how to work in the Korean society, accompanying generals as a commissioned officer in charge of interpretation, which could be helpful to his career after discharge. Sungwhan also considered his military service to be a new experience, like study abroad or traveling to meet with the broader world. Another reason he valued completing his military service as a commissioned officer for interpretation was because of the possibility it could offer him to build a strong network among elites in South Korea. According to Sungwhan, most commissioned officers tended to be graduates of elite universities in South Korea or good universities in the US. In other words, being a commissioned officer for interpretation meant membership in a strong community of elites, which could be a precious asset for his future in South Korea. Furthermore, serving as a commissioned officer, particularly one specialized in interpretation, would be beneficial in the Korean job market because big corporations prefer applicants who are guaranteed to have English fluency, good educational backgrounds, and work experiences in the military as officers. Even though Sungwhan was not sure where he would work in the future, he appreciated the opportunity to earn belonging to an elite group in South Korea and recognition in South Korean society. Thus, Sungwhan even asserted that he was “dying to go to the military” as a commissioned officer specialized in interpretation, which requires selection through a highly competitive exam. The ways in which Sungwhan, who studied abroad with cosmopolitan aspirations – his desire to live in “the big world” rather than to

confine himself to South Korea , understood and valued his military service in South Korea shows us that cosmopolitan and national belonging can be complementary rather than contradictory.

In addition, I want to comment that Sungwhan's story suggests that there is the potential for international education to produce cosmopolitans (in a more ideal sense as thinkers of classical cosmopolitanism might have hoped for) who are concerned with human welfare and contributing to a better world as much as, if not more than, they are strategically interested in a changing global political economy. In other words, in his desire to work for international organizations to do good, Sungwhan's instrumental interests to be successful in the global arena and his cosmopolitan aspiration to be a member of a broader world and to make the world better are intertwined, just as Borovoy (2010) points out. As Rizvi (2005) writes, of course Sungwhan's study abroad project was hugely colored by his instrumental desire to be successful in a globalized capitalist economy. However, we cannot fully understand Sungwhan's struggles to belong more widely to an American university instead of remaining only within the Korean student community solely as instrumental calculation. Similarly, Sungwhan's appreciation of the opportunity to participate in Amnesty International in his high school and his desire to work in an international organization in order to contribute to the welfare of the world cannot be fully explained by strategic instrumentality alone.

I recognize that Sungwhan is a special case because he was more reflexive than many others, active in figuring out the meaning/reasons for his study abroad and more concerned with experiencing the broader world, so far as to join a fraternity in his junior year. He was also particularly interested in working in the public sector to make the world a better place, rather than working in private companies. Considering his particularity in relation to cosmopolitan

belonging and aspiration among study abroad students, I want to compare Sungwhan's story with Chulgi's, which I will introduce in the next section. I introduce Chulgi because, unlike Sungwhan, he tended to value the comfort of national belonging more than cosmopolitan aspiration to experience and live the American campus. However, Chulgi still considered his study abroad to be a cosmopolitan project. Comparing Chulgi's story with Sungwhan's, I try to elucidate the way in which study abroad students understand their study abroad as cosmopolitan project and the relation between cosmopolitan and national belonging in their lives.

Chulgi's Story

Chulgi was attending a prominent private college after he graduated from a famous boarding school in the US as a study abroad alone student, while his parents were living in Korea. When I met him in Seoul during his summer vacation in 2013, Chulgi was staying in Seoul working as an intern, like many other study abroad students, to prepare for later job applications. Chulgi completed his military service after his freshman year in college, and he planned to go to a law school in the US after college as a way to secure a professional job in South Korea in the future.

Like Sungwhan, Chulgi celebrated his middle school and high school experiences in the US. He emphasized many times during the interview that he had such a good memory of junior boarding school to the extent that he asked his parents to send his younger brother in South Korea to the same school for study abroad. The junior boarding school where Chulgi attended is a very small sized school with less than 300 students, which means that there are 50-60 students in each cohort. Because there were so few students living together in the dormitory, it was relatively easy for Chulgi to make friends with everyone, including American students and Korean international students. According to Chulgi, everyone was close to each other. Though

his best friends were Korean international students, Chulgi was proud that he became a core member of the school community and made close friends with American students.

Chulgi joined the school soccer team. Because he was relatively tall for his age, Chulgi was selected as a member of the varsity team when he was in seventh grade. He was very proud of this because most of the other seventh graders belonged to the second or third string soccer teams. Besides sports activity, Chulgi also enjoyed other aspects of his junior boarding school life. Chulgi said:

I was also able to get the good grades that I wanted. In addition, in eighth grade, I wanted to try to get a leadership position, and I ran as the representative of our cohort and was selected. Also, there was a school tradition of senior committee representatives, who were from the 9th graders, to select the next year's senior committee members from amongst the 8th graders whom they thought had potential to be leaders. I was selected as a member of the senior committee by the 9th graders.

Through all of these extracurricular activities, Chulgi felt a sense of full belonging to his school and felt pride and satisfaction.

In contrast to his celebratory mode of remembering middle school life, Chulgi was ambivalent about high school. Because he went to a very famous large boarding school, it was not easy for Chulgi to adjust to it, particularly coming from a small family-like junior boarding school. Even though he tried hard, he was not able to excel as he did in junior boarding school in terms of academic grades, sports, and other extracurricular activities. In addition, when he joined the school in 10th grade, other students already had their own cliques because many of them had started in 9th grade. This only added one more layer of challenge for Chulgi as he sought to make

close friends with American students. Even though he had a hard time adjusting to the new school, however, Chulgi made a lot of efforts to make it at his new school for the sake of his own personal satisfaction and also for his college applications. Considering the importance of extracurricular activities and leadership experiences in getting into a good college, Chulgi actively participated in the model UN club and served as vice president. He also joined an environmental activism club that rallied against global warming. In his own words, he did “make efforts to go to a nice college.”

Chulgi seemed to go through the stage of questioning the reasons/purpose of study abroad and realizing the gap between his cosmopolitan aspiration of full belonging to his American school and the realities of being marginalized as an international student, which Sungwhan had experienced in college, in high school. Though Chulgi tried hard to belong to the school community, he talked about his extracurricular activities as “efforts to go to a nice college” rather than as a way to belong to the community and make close friends. This explanation was different from the one he had used when talking about his middle school life with excitement. I interpret his ambivalent tone when talking about his high school experiences as an expression of his lack of full belonging to the school, and his own re-thinking of the meaning/purpose of study abroad as a cosmopolitan project. While Chulgi made some friends with American students through sports and other formal school activities, his close friends that he hung out with everyday were mostly international students from Southeast Asia and Hong Kong as well as from South Korea. Faced with realities that were different from his junior boarding school experiences, Chulgi had to make sense of the fact that his school activities served his instrumental purposes, but did not give him a full sense of cosmopolitan belonging. Even though he wanted to make friends with American students, he ended up socializing mainly with other

international students. While Chulgi felt that he was a core member of the school community in junior high school, he realized that he was not able to fully belong to the mainstream in high school.

While Chulgi struggled to accept and make sense of his lack of belonging in high school, he tried to join the school community and to participate in extracurricular activities with other American students because it at least served his instrumental purpose of preparing for college applications, for which various extracurricular activities and leadership experiences were valuable assets. The other way of explaining this would be that various extracurricular activities were readily organized by the school and were available for Chulgi to join. However, once he entered the college he wanted to go to, Chulgi no longer needed to join clubs or other kinds of social activities with American students even for instrumental purposes. Chulgi said:

Once I entered college, I did not have any American friends. It was not only me who experienced this, but all the Korean international students as well. Compared to middle school and high school, university is big with so many students. Thus, if you don't make a particular effort, you do not naturally become friends with American students. Most Korean students [including Chulgi] tend not to have any particular intention of hanging out with American students. On the other hand, it becomes natural to hang out with Korean students. Even before entering college, Korean students who got admission from a certain school socialize with other students who got admission to the same school in South Korea during the summer [this is usually the case because many study abroad students stay with their family in South Korea during summer vacations].⁵⁰ Korean

⁵⁰ Just like Korean students attending universities in South Korea, it was often the case that KSAs (Korean Student Association) of American universities hold welcoming events for new freshmen students in Seoul during summer over dinner and drinks.

students become close with each other during the summer, and they do not need to make any effort to make new friends when they go to school in the US. To be honest, it is a matter of comfort. Korean students including me feel comfortable hanging out among Korean students because we are from the same country. At one point I felt that there was something wrong with hanging out only with Korean students at an American college. In order to try to belong outside of the Korean students' community, I joined a volleyball club. I used to play volleyball in high school, and I wanted to continue. However, I went to the club only a few times, and then did not want to bother to continue.

Chulgi's stories echo Sungwhan's college experiences in that he socialized only with Korean students without joining any of the other extracurricular activities available on the American campus outside the Korean student community, and then later felt that something was wrong. Echoing Sungwhan's accounts of his struggles in college, Chulgi also could pinpoint a moment when he felt that something was wrong about a social life that was limited to the Korean community. Even though he did not feel any instrumental need to socialize with American students and participate in American college life outside of the Korean student community, Chulgi felt wrong about his college life. I suggest that this moment when Chulgi felt that there was something wrong about his life within the Korean student community reveals purposes and expectations about study abroad that study abroad students might not even have been aware of when they began their study abroad. Chulgi's feeling wrong and Sungwhan's struggle in college show that they wanted to achieve and expected to experience more than just the instrumental benefits of study abroad like learning English and earning a degree from a prominent American college. I interpret that their uneasy feelings about isolated college life within the Korean community came from their cosmopolitan aspiration to experience and belong to the broader

world – the American campus in this case. Until high school, doing various extracurricular activities and joining the school sports teams simultaneously served both their instrumental purpose and their desire to belong to the school community socializing with American friends and teachers. However, once they entered colleges, they no longer felt their needs to participate actively in American college life outside of the Korean community because they already knew how to speak fluent English and they had successfully entered a nice college. In addition, the shift between the environment of their high schools and the environment of their colleges served as another reason for Korean students' isolated social life in college – the big size of colleges and more independent life style in colleges made it more difficult for Korean international students to naturally make American friends whereas small boarding schools tended to foster a close-knit environment. In college, on the other hand, the presence of KSA and its holding various Korean students' events actively including welcoming gatherings for incoming Korean students made it relatively easy to make Korean friends. Consequently Chulgi, like Sungwhan and many other study abroad students, hung out only with Korean students once he entered college. But this consequently made him feel that something was lacking; this was namely because his cosmopolitan aspiration was not satisfied in this new college environment where he was surrounded only by Korean friends.

Though Chulgi and Sungwhan shared moments of feeling wrong about their Korean-student-centered college life, their responses were quite different, given their different attitudes and ideas about cosmopolitan and national belonging. Compared to Sungwhan, who problematized his exclusively Korean student-centered social life and actively found ways to change it by joining a fraternity, Chulgi was relatively easy on himself regarding his isolated social life within the Korean community in an American college. Though he tried to join the

volleyball club as a way to come out of the Korean community, it did not take long for him to realize that going to the club was tiresome rather than fun and exciting. It was not a difficult decision to quit the club for Chulgi. In Chulgi's own words, it was "a matter of comfort" and he embraced the fact that he was much more comfortable with Korean friends.

Chulgi's relatively laid-back attitude about his Korean student-centered social life in an American college speaks to his future plan of coming back to Korea as soon as possible after graduation. Chulgi said:

Even though I went to America at an early age, I have never thought of myself as an American. I want to come back to South Korea as soon as possible after studying because America cannot be my country and I always feel that I am a minority in the USA. I hate that feeling of being a minority. ... I have been thinking that I will come back to South Korea as soon as I finish school. It has been too long since I lived with my parents. I knew one Korean senior student who is relatively old – 30 years old – who was doing an undergraduate study at the same college as me. He graduated from a Korean university, and then he came to our school because he wanted to experience study abroad. He just graduated this year, and I asked him about his future after graduation. He told me that he will go back to South Korea right after graduation, and will get a job there. He expressed his resentment about having lived far away from his family and not having been able to be present to close his grandmother's eyes. He bemoaned his American life, asking why he was living here [in the US], being cynical about the proper reward for study abroad considering such emotional costs living far away from home. Listening to his story, I felt empathy. I hope that I can live near my parents in South Korea after marriage in the future.

Right after college, Chulgi planned to go to a law school in the US, and he wanted to get a job utilizing his American lawyer license in South Korea. For study abroad students I've met during field research, it was quite frequent to hear about their plans to return to South Korea right after graduation so that they could begin their careers in South Korea. Though many of them wanted to build some work experiences abroad, they tended to want to come back to South Korea in later years to settle down, if not right after college. In addition, regardless of their desire to have work experiences abroad, many study abroad students tend to get their first jobs in South Korea because it is not easy to secure good enough jobs abroad in countries like the US where they studied as foreigners. And there are people like Chulgi who wanted to come back to South Korea as soon as possible and also people like Sungwhan who wanted to build his career in the world. However, even Sungwhan, who aspired to work and live abroad, was open to the possibility of building a career and life in South Korea, preferably after his success abroad. Coming back to South Korea after study abroad was, to some extent, an important, viable and desirable option because of the sense of belonging and comfort it provided; these comforts included the presence of family and friends as well as legal rights to work and live in South Korea as Korean citizens, in comparison to the lack of belonging in the US where many of study abroad students have "feeling of minority" in Chulgi's words and segregated college life. I write that returning to South Korea was a desirable option *to some extent* because some study abroad students want to return after a few years of working abroad, or someday in the future after achieving some success, while there are also people who want to return right after school like Chulgi.

When study abroad students like Chulgi talk about their lack of belonging as a minority in the US and their plan to return to South Korea after all those years of education abroad, how do we understand students' confident and often times celebratory mode of speaking about their

study abroad projects despite their recognition of huge financial and emotional costs? Of course one important reason would be their potential to have good jobs in South Korea as globalized elites. If Chulgi gets a job in South Korea as an international lawyer with his American law degree as planned, it can be said that he will have utilized the instrumental benefits of study abroad in South Korea. Surely education abroad and fluent English skills would be helpful on the job market in South Korea, considering the emphasis on globalization in all sectors of the Korean society as I introduced in Introduction. Also recall my discussion in Introduction that study abroad can be understood as an extension of highly stratified education market in South Korea to raise creative citizens who can be competitive in global economy. Because of this potential to utilize their study abroad in South Korea, they appreciated and needed their belonging in South Korea and were willing to serve in the military in order to secure full membership (both legally and culturally) in South Korea, which I give a detailed discussion in chapter 4. In addition, study abroad students commonly celebrated their experiences of broader world and emphasized their desire to continue to live in the world even after they return to South Korea, which I call cosmopolitan aspiration. I suggest that their cosmopolitan belonging – their life in the broader world and their feeling connected to the world – gives them additional satisfaction about their study abroad experiences.

Considering study abroad students' aforementioned struggles in college, which often resulted in an isolated social life and eventual return to South Korea after their graduation, the conclusion that they valued cosmopolitan belonging they earned through their study abroad experiences might not be obvious. However, from the perspective of study abroad students, their desire for cosmopolitan belonging through study abroad did not go unfulfilled. As I was talking to them, I sensed more appreciation and celebration of study abroad than regret. Most of them

even expressed their desire to send their future children to study abroad if they could make enough money to finance it.

In order to understand the ways in which study abroad students consider their study abroad as an opportunity for cosmopolitan belonging rather than cosmopolitan failure, I call attention to how Chulgi made sense of his social life within the Korean community in an American college. Recall that Chulgi never considered America to be his country or desired membership in it. Similarly Chulgi rationalized his Korean student centered social life as a choice that he made for the sake of his own comfort and not something that was driven by his failure to belong to broader American campus life. Celebrating his adjustment and performance during his K-12 education in the US, particularly his middle school experiences, Chulgi thought that he had successfully cultivated an ability to socialize with American students and participate in various campus activities if he wanted to and made the effort to do so. However, in college, Chulgi did not feel the need to make additional efforts to socialize outside of the Korean community, because he already knew how to speak fluent English and claimed to be confident that he could work and socialize outside the Korean community when necessary. From the perspective of Chulgi, the cosmopolitan belonging he secured through study abroad was an ability and confidence to work and socialize with foreigners in English rather than full (American) belonging in the reality and his sincere enjoyment of it. Chulgi's rationalization of isolated social life in college and his understanding of cosmopolitan belonging also echo Sungwhan's emphasis on his ability to adjust to a fraternity and get along well with American students, despite the fact that he did not feel comfortable and needed great energy for his adjustment. I will deal with the issues of their feeling of being a minority or of uneasiness to

socialize with American students, despite their claim to social/cultural flexibility and confidence to do so if they want and if it is necessary, in later parts of this chapter.

Chulgi's understanding of the meaning of cosmopolitan belonging was remade as he moved from middle school to high school, and to college. When Chulgi's instrumental needs to learn English and to attend various social activities with American students in middle/high school for college application preparation simultaneously served his cosmopolitan aspirations, he was excited by the sense of full belonging to the American school community he secured. However, as he entered college and had a segregated social life for "the matter of comfort" in his words, I interpret that the meaning of cosmopolitan belonging for Chulgi shifted from full belonging to the American school community to having a capability for or confidence in living in the world and working with foreigners when necessary during his college years.

It is possible, for some, to consider Chulgi's college life as a failure of cosmopolitan belonging, particularly given that he planned to return to South Korea after his education abroad. However, I do not intend to judge whether his cosmopolitan project was either a success or a failure. Rather, I aim to elucidate Chulgi's own logic of appreciating his study abroad as a cosmopolitan project, and take his cosmopolitan strivings as "real" even though it is difficult to separate cosmopolitan desire from instrumental strategies of study abroad. His appreciation of study abroad as a cosmopolitan project continued to be alive even in his life in South Korea. While Chulgi valued national belonging and even military service to secure full membership in South Korea as I write about in detail in chapter 4, his striving for national belonging and his physical presence in South Korea did not preclude cosmopolitan belonging. Chulgi boasted that he was the "unofficial president" of the Korean alumni association of his junior boarding school. He organized an alumni gathering with different cohorts of Korean students in South Korea

during summer vacation where many study abroad students visiting Korea as well as those who were already working in South Korea after graduation could join. Chulgi was happy to have a network of close friends in South Korea who could share both a Korean background and study abroad experiences. Chulgi also happily talked about his friends overseas. For example, he had a close friend from Thailand who he went to high school with in the US. Chulgi's Thai friend invited him to Thailand, and Chulgi went there with his Korean friends from middle school and the Thai friend hosted them during their travels. Chulgi was able to feel connected to the broader world outside of South Korea through a network of friends who shared the same study abroad experiences or who physically lived overseas even if Chulgi lived in South Korea. In addition, Chulgi expressed his desire, if it was financially viable, to send his future kids to study abroad just as he had because he really appreciated the opportunity to study abroad and the experiences that the broader world had afforded him. Considering his plan to go to law school in the US and get a job as an international lawyer in South Korea, it was also likely that his work would be related to affairs and issues outside of South Korea. In these ways, Chulgi seemed to value his cosmopolitan belonging – his experiences of broader world, feeling connected to the world, maintaining a network of study abroad friends, and his ability/confidence to work with foreigners in English, even during his life in South Korea.

I tried to closely follow the logic of study abroad students regarding their experiences abroad, including their isolated social life in colleges, and to understand their changing ideas of cosmopolitanism. But I also recognize that race, which study abroad men never directly brought up during interviews, is also important to consider to fully understand their segregated college life. It is challenging to delineate the workings of race in Korean international students' segregation, when students did not (did not want to) explain their situation in terms of race. As

Abelmann (2009), in her ethnography of Korean American students and their segregation in an American college, suggests, race works “less often with the blunt hand of racist incidence (although there are those too) and more often as the daily warp and woof of the fabric of college life and meaning making” (p.159). Indeed, as my informants talked about difficulties in hanging out with American students, they never mentioned of any outright racialized exclusion or xenophobia as possible reasons. Rather, they talked about their segregation as a matter of *comfort*.

While I do appreciate study abroad students’ ways of understanding segregation as a matter of comfort, particularly considering their shared experiences of pre-college study abroad and similar socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, I also want to point out that we need more than the word “comfort” to fully explain the persistence of segregation, especially when the discomfort the students described largely came from a particular distinction of race and ethnicity. Appreciating Abelmann’s assertion that “it makes no sense to categorically distinguish self-segregation from some sort segregation proper” (2009, p.3-4), I call attention to the possible reasons and forces which led to the persistence of segregation, or in other words, race or ethnicity based segregation as a source of comfort. Though my informants never spoke about race as a source of their own segregation, they did indicate their being a minority or at least being different as a source of their problems socializing with American students and belonging to American campuses. Their difference did not mean difference in an ideal multicultural sense as equal to something else, but difference distinct from the mainstream/normative culture of American campuses. Recall that Sungwhan and Chulgi confessed their fatigue in making continuous efforts to adjust to and belong to American spaces. During fieldwork, it was common to hear that study abroad students had to pretend to be someone else in order to socialize with

American students and belong to American campuses. I cautiously interpret their feeling different (in a hierarchical sense) and their need to be someone else in order to belong to American campuses as telling us about their being marginalized compared to “a veritable hegemonic norm, a constellation of a validated American life”(Abelmann 2009, p.162), whiteness.

Here, I want to provide a brief comparison between segregation of study abroad students I am focusing on in this thesis and that of Korean American students Abelmann writes about in *Intimate University* (2009). I believe that this comparison is a productive one which highlights the particularity of study abroad men I study and will speak to my larger argument that study abroad men’s lack of belonging overseas resulted in their needs and desire for full membership in South Korea for which they were willing to serve in the military. Both South Korean study abroad students and Korean American students shared the realities of segregation⁵¹; and the institutional context of contemporary American colleges (and beyond) where the embrace of multiculturalism and diversity paradoxically silenced race (Carby 1992; Prashad 2001). Thus, students in the both groups never explicitly talked about race as they problematized their own segregation on campus.

However, the two groups differed in their understanding and responses to their segregation on campus. Korean Americans’ understanding of their segregation was mainly related to the particular racialized burden as Korean Americans – namely, they were responding to the racialized images of the model minority and the instrumental striver, as well of the children of small entrepreneurs. It was also classed in that Korean Americans often narrated that

⁵¹ Segregation in schools is not a problem only applicable to South Korean international students and Korean American students. For another example, see Tatum 1997.

in their college life they could not afford the ideal liberal college education with experience of diversity which was thought to be available for others with greater economic freedom and different (or lesser) parental pressures (compared to the “typical” Korean parents who were thought to want fast graduation and getting a job soon) (Abelmann 2009). Thus, for Korean American college students, “it was Koreanness that came to stand for all that was negative and illiberal”(Abelmann 2009, p.13), and intraethnic othering was prevalent, regardless of their life within the ethnic fold.

On the other hand, Korean study abroad students I met did not particularly problematize Koreanness, nor I did hear about intraethnic othering among the study abroad students. I suggest that their backgrounds of upper/upper-middle class and their nationality as South Korean are important factors in explaining these differences. Considering their relative economic freedom to study abroad, Korean study abroad students did not share the burden of racialized and classed stereotypes that Korean American students had to deal with, as instrumental strivers and often as children of small entrepreneurs who were stereotyped as striving for material success. Rather, Korean study abroad students appreciated that they were able to receive relatively liberal education and experience diversity (at least during their primary education, if not in colleges), compared to South Korean education, which they thought of as exam-centered with rote-memorization and too much competition. They tended to have relative freedom to experience what they would like to try for their own growth, including the option to go to graduate school, compared to Korean Americans’ sense of pressure to get a job as soon as possible as aforementioned. In addition, Korean study abroad students mostly did not share the desire or the (legal) possibility for full American belonging which Korean American students aspired to through their intraethnic othering, their effort to distinguish themselves or their families from

other Korean Americans. Study abroad students were fully aware of the fact that they usually paid more expensive tuition than domestic American students, were mainly excluded from opportunities of scholarship programs and diversity initiatives, and they had less chance to find a job in the US due to their lack of legal belonging (i.e., green card or citizenship). Together with their daily experiences as a minority who were different from a hegemonic norm of American life, and their segregated social life in colleges, these marginalization as international students led study abroad students to question why they had to strive for American belonging when it seemed legally and culturally impossible. Recall Chulgi's assertion that he wanted to return to South Korea after graduation because "America cannot be my country and I always feel that I am a minority in the USA. I hate that feeling of being a minority" in his own words. Thus, I argue that segregation of Korean study abroad students in American colleges should be understood in light of race and exclusion as foreigners, as well as of comfort, as they narrated. In contrast to Korean American students who desired full American belonging and problematized Koreanness and segregation, Korean study abroad students came to react to their particular experiences of marginalization and exclusion by questioning the need for American belonging and by appreciating and aspiring their full Korean belonging. Considering their prospect to find good jobs and to be recognized as globalized elites in South Korea, as I described throughout this thesis, national belonging became more important for these study abroad students.

I also want to remind that study abroad students' celebratory tone of speaking of study abroad and their appreciation of study abroad as cosmopolitan project even after they experienced segregated life in colleges do speak to their changing ideas of cosmopolitan belonging as aforementioned. While they considered their successful adjustment and belonging to American school as their cosmopolitan belonging during their primary education, study

abroad students came to think that cosmopolitan belonging did not necessarily mean American belonging in the face of their realities of segregation in colleges. Though they recognized that they were not able to fully belong to American colleges, they still considered their study abroad project as a way for experiencing the broader world and having a sense of living in the world, which would not be necessarily contradictory with national belonging and life in South Korea.

In this chapter, through the lived experiences of cosmopolitanism in the lives of two study abroad students, I tried to shed light on the ways in which study abroad students understand their own education abroad both as instrumental strategy and as cosmopolitan project. Sungwhan and Chulgi were celebratory about their middle/high school experiences because they were able to simultaneously pursue instrumental benefits and cosmopolitan belonging. When they were not able to feel the sense of belonging outside of Korean study abroad students' community in colleges, they became to question the meaning and purpose of study abroad. Even though Sungwhan and Chulgi had different responses to the moment of feeling that 'something is wrong' about their Korean students centered college life, what the two men shared was the understanding that study abroad project was both an instrumental educational strategy and a cosmopolitan project; and that both national belonging and cosmopolitan belonging were important for their satisfaction and happiness. Closely following and analyzing the stories of Sungwhan and Chulgi, this chapter argues that national belonging and cosmopolitan belonging can be complementary rather than contradictory; the eventual return (or plan of return) to South Korea does not necessarily signal the failure of the cosmopolitan project (at least from the perspectives of study abroad students). As they faced with and made sense of the reality of segregation in colleges, I suggest that they came to have desire for and appreciate their full national belonging. In addition, I show that the meaning of cosmopolitan belonging that students

attach to their study abroad can shift from a sense of belonging to the American school community in their middle/high schools to securing capability or confidence to live in the broader world and socialize with foreigners in English when necessary during college years. Understanding both their need for national belonging as well as their cosmopolitan aspiration (and limits) will be the basis of appreciating how study abroad students make sense of and give meaning to their experience of military service in South Korea, which I write about in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: FROM “ENVIABLE OTHER” TO “ONE OF US”?

Individualized Masculine Citizenship through Military Service

Previously, I have examined the needs and desires of study abroad men for Korea belonging through their stories of study abroad. In Chapters 2 and 3, I documented how their lack of sense of belonging overseas (both legally and culturally) made it feel to them almost necessary to pursue a life in South Korea. Ironically, with the social questioning of their upbringing and education abroad, their sense of belonging in South Korea is not guaranteed either. Here, in Chapter 4, I show how study abroad men deal with their conflicting images in South Korea as global elites with a foreign education and “Enviably Others” whose cultural membership in South Korea is questioned in light of their growing up overseas. I argue that they earn their full citizenship by becoming “one of the Koreans” through their military service, which is supposed to guarantee their full belonging in South Korea. However, I also point out how the rhetoric of equality in conscription and becoming “One of Us” through military service are belied by the highly classed nature of their militarized masculine citizenship, which is largely pursued for individual benefit.

Citizenship, Military Service, and Masculinity

As I discussed in Introduction in detail, scholars have documented a close relationship between citizenship, military service, and masculinity across national contexts of modern nation-states, considering that conscription has institutionalized military service as the duty of male citizens (Dudink, Hagemann, and Clark 2007; Enloe 1993; Feinman 2000; Kronsell 2012; Sasson-Levy 2002, 2003, and 2007; Snyder 2003; Yuval-Davis 1997). It has been also studied how this close relationship between citizenship and military service were changed in light of the end of Cold

War, the changed nature of military towards technology-intensive professional army, and the effects of neoliberalization and globalization (Haltiner 1998; Cowen 2006; S.Cohen 1995). Considering the broader trend towards the end of conscription and the decline of a mass army in the West, the recent tightening of conscription through legal changes in both the Nationality Law and the Military Service Law in South Korea, which I reviewed in Chapter 2, seems to be exceptional, particularly regarding the maintenance of strong link between military service and citizenship. However, in this chapter, building on exploratory works on the neoliberal and global reconfiguration of citizenship in relation to the military (Cowen 2006; Eichler 2014), I show the ways in which individual study abroad men make sense of and give meanings to their military service in South Korea echo the broader neoliberal logics of individual calculations and marketization of military. Based on my analysis of study abroad men's logic to make sense of and sometimes appreciate military service in South Korea in light of their individualized concrete benefits, I argue that the citizenship they secure through military service is *individualized* citizenship. By using the term, "individualized citizenship," I emphasize that even in the areas such as military service where we expect the most nationalistic sense of citizenship and even when national identity and legal citizenship coincide, the ways in which study abroad men give meanings to citizenship and military service have been largely individualized.

I further claim that the citizenship military service offers is *individualized masculine* citizenship, considering that every able-bodied man is required to serve and the militarized masculinity come to be recognized as hegemonic normative masculinity shared by those who served in the military. Scholars have also noted that normalizing militarized masculinity as hegemonic South Korean masculinity was accompanied by marginalizing and distorting masculinity of men who cannot/do not serve and femininity of women (Lee 2001; Kwon 2005;

Lee 2005; Kim 2001). I use the term, “militarized masculine citizenship” to refer to having a “formal” certificate as “One of Us” with militarized masculinity – the recognition of full legal and cultural belonging as South Korean men that study abroad recruits attain through their military service, which is particularly meaningful for study abroad men in light of their image as “Enviably Other” who enjoyed privileged sheltered life overseas. Their securing individualized masculine citizenship through military service does not necessarily mean their genuine embrace of militarized masculinity or their actual sense of full belonging. By serving in the military and sharing the “same” military experiences with other male citizens, however, study abroad men can be recognized in the broader South Korean society as South Korean men who have “proper” manly traits, hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005), such as their ability to work well in a hierarchy (how to respect seniors, and how to be a leader to juniors), and physical and mental strength to endure hardships of military life and beyond as disciplined subjects; and can develop their ability to be or pretend to be “One of Us” when necessary, which study abroad students can learn during their military service.

In this chapter, in my analysis of study abroad men’s military experiences and their militarized masculine citizenship, I take the factor of class, which can easily be elided in dominant discourses of conscription that emphasize the principle of equality, especially seriously. As previous studies have documented, universal male conscription in South Korea has been understood and legitimized as a shared and homogenizing experience of all male citizens regardless of their different socioeconomic backgrounds (Moon 2005a; Moon 2005b; Kwon 2001; Lie 1998). However, with not all men fulfilling the same military duty nor sharing the same military experience, their socioeconomic backgrounds matter. For instance, scholars and media reports from the 1990s have documented how the sons of lower-class families have borne

the burden of military service while the sons of upper class families have utilized their money and power to either evade their military service or choose alternative, less risky routes (Moon 2005b). Adding to this previous scholarship on the class-based nature of recruitment, this chapter aims to show how class continues to matter in shaping the experiences of men both during and after their military service. Analyzing the stories of study abroad men from upper- and upper-middle class families, I show how both their lives in the military and the meanings and values that they attribute to their military experience are classed. In addition, by paying close attention to the particularities of the study abroad men – their status as “Enviably Others,” their global life trajectories, and their instrumental understanding of citizenship—this chapter aims to shed light on the effects of globalization and neoliberalization on the ways in which study abroad men understand and appreciate militarized masculine citizenship. By doing so, I wish to provide a fuller understanding of the meanings of militarized masculine citizenship in the era of globalization and neoliberalization.

By examining the military experiences and masculine citizenship of study abroad men, this chapter contributes to the existing scholarship on military service, citizenship, and masculinity in two ways. First, while many studies of gender and the military tend to focus on the practices of militarized masculinity in the military proper (Ben-Ari 1998; Agostino 1998; D. Morgan 1994), my approach to militarized masculinity pays attention to the interplay between the military and society in constructing and maintaining the notion/value of militarized masculinity. It thus fully appreciates Moon (2005b)’s point that the cultural politics of gender in the broader society is what legitimizes and maintains universal male conscription. Second, scholars in the critical studies of men and masculinity have analyzed masculinity not as a coherent whole, which is fixed and stable, but a “configurations of practices” (Connell 2005)

with possibilities for change and negotiation. In the context of the military, scholars have documented the multiple masculinities that are possible in the contemporary military system depending on the job (e.g. rank-and-file soldiers, technical specialists, combat soldiers, administrative workers, etc.) (Barrett, 1996; Sasson-Levy, 2002). In addition, scholars have examined the concept of hierarchical masculinities through exploring the military experiences of socially and culturally marginalized groups including immigrants, racial minorities, and working class people (Gill 1997; Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport 2003; Sasson-Levy 2003b). Following this line of inquiry, my study analyzes how upper- and upper-middle class study abroad men experience militarized masculinity and how they give meaning to their militarized masculine citizenship by reflecting on their double-sided and class-based image as global elites and “enviable others.”

In studying militarized masculinity, this chapter also recognizes that a certain notion of militarized masculinity inherently entails a corresponding femininity (Gutmann 1997; Enloe 2000). Although the main object of this study is militarized masculinity, I thus try to think through the implications of this militarized masculinity for a corresponding form of femininity. Considering my main focus on men and male perspectives, this attention to femininity is very cursory and requires further research. However, I do think that how study abroad men feel about male-only conscription and what they think of as benefits of military service which their female counterparts do not have reveal important understanding and assumptions about gender in South Korea. My point here is not about whether either study abroad men or women are better off with the institution of male only conscription. Though perhaps no women would envy men for their military conscription, study abroad men I interviewed did not have many complaints about the fact that their female counterparts do not have the compulsory military duty. Thus, I am more

interested in the cultural politics of militarized masculinity and corresponding femininity, which play an important role to maintain and make sense of the status quo – universal male conscription.

In the sections below, I draw on my interviews to show how study abroad men, who are viewed as “Enviably Others,” become “One of Us” through their military service. Then, I analyze the meaning of becoming “One of Us” and the militarized masculine citizenship which study abroad men claim to earn through their military service, by reflecting on their upper-/upper middle class and global life trajectories in particular. Analyzing how study abroad recruits view and deal with militarized masculinity for their own survival and adjustment, and how they appreciate militarized masculine citizenship for concrete practical benefits, I argue that what study abroad men secure and appreciate through their military service is individualized masculine citizenship.

Military Experience: From “Enviably Other” to “One of Us”

Being “Enviably Other”: The Contradictory Images and Treatment of Study Abroad Students

Hojin, who had just been released from his military service and was planning to go back to his college in the US at the time of our interview in 2013, told me a story that he had heard from his two bosses in the military. One boss, a commissioned officer, was happy to have him in his personnel administration unit because he assumed that Hojin, as a student at an American college, would be smart and capable. The other boss, a non-commissioned officer, however, was worried that Hojin would be a bad soldier because he was too Americanized (*mikukmulül mököšö*). The two images of Hojin by his two bosses highlight the contradictory ways in which study abroad men are viewed in the military (and beyond in the South Korean society). Namely, study abroad

men are stereotyped as elites who attend nice schools in the US and are able to speak English well. At the same time they are viewed suspiciously as young people who are likely selfish and stubborn.⁵²

The double-sided nature of their images also leads to very different treatments of study abroad men in the military. On the one hand, their ability to adjust to military life is questioned by their superiors because they are seen as problematically “global”—that is, lacking the proper comportment required by a hierarchical organization. On the other hand, their foreign language abilities, particularly English, and their experiences overseas are often recognized and rewarded in the military (with better job posts, various detached service opportunities, free flight tickets, and, if they have a permanent address abroad, longer vacations). These contradictory images of study abroad men in the military echo the images of study abroad returnees in the broader South Korean society, simultaneously as high class cosmopolitan elites indexed by their English proficiency and as dubious moral characters of arrogant and pretentious snobs (Lo and Kim 2015). The contradictory images of study abroad returnees in South Korea also speak to the conflicting images with which South Koreans view the United States (the most desired destinations of study abroad), “at once an object of material longing and materialistic scorn, a heroic savior and a reactionary intruder. Material desire and moral approbation, longing and disdain, have been twin responses to many of the trappings of American culture”(Abelmann and Lie 1995, p.62). These contradictions are also related to the understanding of cosmopolitan as someone who is open to other cultures and people and competent in the world without any particular attachment to cultures of his or her own nation or community, as I discussed in chapter 3. Depending on one’s perspective, the idea of cosmopolitanism can be celebrated for universal

⁵² For more discussion on possible negative images/views of study abroad students and the difficulties of being a returnee in South Korea, see Lo and Kim 2015.

human ideals and world citizens, but at the same time, it can be viewed “negatively, as implying treachery to one’s country, disloyalty to one’s nation; someone who is rootless and does not take seriously the more fundamental duties to one’s own community, tribe or nation” (Rizvi 2005, p.8).

Though every transnational recruit faces these contradictory treatments, how and to what extent they experience them depend on many different factors and individual circumstances. For example, if study abroad men are assigned to a unit with many other study abroad men, their education abroad does not make them “Others” among the other soldiers. On the other hand, if they are the only soldier with study abroad experience, then their status as “Enviably Other” becomes heightened and they are more likely to become objects of envy, jealousy, and curiosity.

The image of study abroad men as global elites with a foreign education and fluent English skills is often recognized and rewarded at two levels – one, at the institutional level of the military and the other at the individual level of social relations with other soldiers. At an institutional level, study abroad men tend to have more options to complete their military duty.⁵³ If they have permanent residency overseas or hold dual citizenship, they have the option to serve in the military on a special track for transnational recruits (*yǒngchukwǒnpyǒngsa*). The special track for transnational recruits provides a week-long training program specifically for transnational recruits, and they can choose three locations in one of which they will be assigned to serve. Among my informants who completed military service on that special track, all but one

⁵³ I should note that KATUSA is one of the most popular options for military service among study abroad men because it allows relatively easier military service with frequent weekend outings, better infrastructure, and continuous opportunity to utilize their English skills. However, I do not necessarily discuss KATUSA here, because it is also popular among college students in South Korea, and KATUSA is selected based on luck (meaning their education abroad is not particularly recognized or rewarded in the process).

served in the greater metropolitan area of Seoul.⁵⁴ The one interviewee who chose to serve in Daegu (a large city in the middle of the country) did so because he had his parents living there. If the study abroad men do not qualify for the special track, they can still apply for jobs that utilize their English skills such as special duty for interpretation. These job posts are often located in elite administrative units. Among study abroad men, the commissioned officer position for interpretation was very popular because it showed off their bilingual language ability and provided a good opportunity to network with highly educated commissioned officers. It was widely understood that the commissioned officer position was highly beneficial for later getting a job in Korean companies. Indeed, when I interviewed Sungwhan, whom I introduced in Chapter 3, he was busy studying for this highly competitive test to recruit commissioned officer for interpretation. As he put it, “I study night and day for this test. Other than exercising and taking shower which take about an hour and a half every day, I study and practice interpretation with my study partner.” Even if study abroad men enter the military on a regular track, they are likely to be assigned to office jobs and elite administrative units because they are considered elites capable of working in administration.⁵⁵

In terms of their everyday interactions with other soldiers, study abroad men quickly realize that they are objects of envy and curiosity. The envy often begins from day one when the study abroad recruits are asked to speak in English, for starters to offer their self-introduction in English; this sits oddly with many of their fellow-soldiers who cannot even understand what they have said in English. Some senior soldiers put them to the test by demanding them to translate American movies while covering the Korean subtitle with their hands in order to prove their

⁵⁴ Serving in and around Seoul was widely understood as a privilege compared to serving in remote areas far away from cities.

⁵⁵ I should note that not all study abroad men were assigned to office jobs and elite administrative units. I meant it was more likely for study abroad men, compared to other ordinary recruits. I met some study abroad men who served in forward units and in combat branch.

English ability. Furthermore, they are frequently asked about American girls and American party culture. Some of my informants also had the experience of being asked by other soldiers to help them study English. Many people in their 20s are required by Korean companies to submit their TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) scores when they apply for jobs. Still others sought out advice about short study abroad trips to the United States to study English, which they planned to pursue after their military service.

The influence of their being enviable elites with education abroad differs case by case, and sometimes it went beyond being a simple object of curiosity or being a help for other recruits for their English training. The image of study abroad men as global elites can cause tensions between them and other (particularly senior) soldiers who are jealous of their study abroad experience and the preferential treatment that they receive in the military. The following story by Sanghyun is a case in point.

Once other soldiers and officers know that I went to school in the US (*mikukyuhsaeng*), you know there are certain feelings like ... I would be competent in English. My appointment was packaging parachutes which made other people in the unit wonder why such a man with study abroad experience came to this unit to package parachutes, you know. There were sayings like I should have been assigned for administration work. Indeed, when I went to the unit I was assigned for packaging parachutes, officers there had me translate some documents and training books written in English to Korean. As officers ordered me to do translation work, I had to do it, which made other senior soldiers jealous of me. They complained that I was not doing what I am supposed to do with them. Indeed, though my appointment was a soldier for packaging parachutes, I spent significant time on administrative work, translation, and I was also sent out for

detached service of interpretation during the joint South Korea-U.S. military exercises. As I think now in retrospect, I did various things in the military because I was a study abroad student, which other soldiers hated. One senior soldier who began his military service one year earlier than me even asserted that he will assuredly have better life than me after discharge, begrudging me my study abroad experience and consequent different chances I have in the military.

Sanghyun's story above shows how the privileged position of study abroad men in the military can cause tensions with other soldiers. I interpret the grievances of senior soldiers against Sanghyun as arising not just from the fact that he was doing translation work in the office than packaging parachutes but because this translation work, which he was able to do because of his study abroad experience, is understood to be part of upper- and upper-middle class privilege. Within the military, where every conscript is expected to be equal except for earned differences in rank, this suppressed difference of class threatens to puncture the myth of equality, which legitimates universal male conscription in South Korea (Moon 2005b; Choi and Kim forthcoming).

Chulgi's story (whom I introduced in Chapter 3) below also highlights how the image of study abroad recruits as global elites simultaneously connotes class-based privilege as sons of upper- and upper-middle class families. Not only that, it also reveals how their life abroad and classed background work together to make their masculinity questionable from the beginning of their military service. Imagined to have grown up in a sheltered and affluent overseas environment, their ability to successfully adjust to military life is questioned from the beginning.

During his military service, which he completed in 2012, Chulgi was a runner in an artillery unit in Paju, Gyeonggi, near the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas. Unlike many other study abroad recruits who work in military offices if they have not already been recruited for interpretation positions or jobs in KATUSA, Chulgi served as a field artilleryman. As the only one in his camp with study abroad experience, he had to deal with the image of being an “Enviably Other” when he first went there. As he put it:

When I first went to the camp, senior soldiers teased me for being a study abroad student and for my parents having a home in Seoul (i.e., in contrast to the provinces – as South Korea is incredibly concentrated in Seoul, this is a particularly meaningful distinction). They assumed that I had grown up without any hardship. Ok, I admit that I went to boarding schools in the US from middle school and enjoyed a privileged life. But they don’t need to take so much joy in watching me suffer. Once I was part of the dining hall team and the sink was clogged. Since I was a private soldier (the lowest level), I had to reach into the drainage with my bare hands. I did what I had to do even without a stiff look, and do you know what the other soldiers asked me? “You haven’t done this kind of dirty work in Washington [DC], have you?” It just pissed me off.

I suggest that this comment– “You haven’t done this kind of dirty work in Washington [DC], have you?” – captures the image of study abroad recruits as an “Enviably Other” where the stereotypes of being global and upper class are intertwined. From the perspectives of other soldiers, someone who studies in Washington DC is understood to have an affluent family background and naturally unsuited to “dirty work” in the military. Because study abroad recruits were considered to be those who have not done any hard or dirty works abroad with their upper- and upper middle class background, they often felt that they were looked at skeptically,

especially at the beginning of their service. The image of global elites is able to bring better job assignments and opportunities in the military, but their being elites with education abroad becomes just another side of the same coin with their being “Others” with distinct class and educational background whose ability for successful military service is not taken for granted.⁵⁶

Self-Recognition as “Enviably Other”

Faced with their contradictory treatment in the military, study abroad men quickly realize how South Koreans view them. Military experience effectively lifts the veil on their privilege. With the military giving them the opportunity to meet South Korean men from different class and educational backgrounds, some men come to understand their class background differently. Those who had considered themselves as ordinary members of the middle class compared to the super rich kids around them in American schools come to appreciate that they too are “enviable others.”

The aforementioned Sungwhan, who was preparing for the test to become a commissioned officer for interpretation, talked about his friends who discovered their class privilege in the military:

The majority of study abroad students come from (upscale) neighborhoods in Seoul like Kangnam, Seocho, and Bundang, so they do not know where they stand in terms of class. [Sungwhan is only one whom I met from Tongyeong, a small city in the southern part of South Korea]. They know that they are well-off but they don't know how much. Making friends with other study abroad students who are not just upper-middle class but upper

⁵⁶ Their image of “Enviably Other” in the military speaks to the findings of previous scholarship on return migration in that feeling home and easy re-adjustment in home country are not guaranteed for returnees. See, for example, Conway and Potter 2009; Tsuda 2009.

upper class doesn't help. As far as I know, only 1 % of South Koreans make more than US\$100,000 a year.⁵⁷ It costs that much just to study in the US with tuition at US\$50,000 dollars and another US\$50,000 for living expenses.⁵⁸ [Sungwhan attended a private university in the US, which tends to cost more than a public university]. Thus it is easy for study abroad students to lose sight of where they stand in terms of class in South Korea.

Self recognition of their being upper class and classed privilege of study abroad was not the only thing they discovered in the military. Some reported that they felt different from other soldiers due to their education abroad. Here, I introduce two stories of Yonghun and Anthony to show how their study abroad makes adjustment to the military more challenging.

After completing high school and then his sophomore year in a well-known private university in the US, Yonghun went to the military on a regular track, where he was assigned to the army situation room (vs. field job) due to his educational background. Yonghun's adjustment to the military was so difficult at the beginning. Yonghun explained that his inability to adjust to the hierarchical nature of the military was due to his study abroad experience. As he put it,

I had a very hard time adjusting to the military hierarchy. You know that in the US, you should express your opinion to your teachers and professors. In the military, I had no sense of obeying my superiors. In retrospect, I think that was the main issue--I argued against my seniors, which I should not have done in the military. That is something I

⁵⁷ It is true if we consider only wage income excluding other kinds of income such as rental income and interest income.

⁵⁸ I checked tuition and other expenses for undergraduate program in Columbia University, a private university, where many study abroad men I met attended. Tuition for undergraduate students was 23,423 dollars per term during 2013-14 academic year with almost additional 10,000 dollars for housing per year. Considering other fees, health insurance, and living expenses including meals as well as their flight tickets between South Korea and the US (usually more than 2,000 dollars for round-trip during summer vacation), I think Sungwhan's estimation of study abroad costs in private universities is close to the reality.

really learned in the military. For instance, I was a member of a military choir that was responsible for cleaning the church. When the senior soldiers asked me to clean it in a certain way, I suggested an alternative method. I should not have done that. I learned a lot. I talked to my seniors a lot, and they asked me not to express different or alternative ways when there is an order from above. They told me that I was giving them a hard time.

For Yonghun, adjusting to the military was very difficult because he had been trained to be outspoken in the US. It was also difficult because he had been used to managing his own life living apart from his parents in South Korea. In the military, on the other hand, he had to learn how to follow orders like other soldiers that made him realize how he was different from them due to his life abroad. Their different training in the US – to be outspoken and freely express their own ideas/opinions – and their self-management from an early age without their parents partly explain the stereotype of study abroad recruits as stubborn and impertinent from the perspectives of officers and other soldiers in the military.

Another study abroad recruit, Anthony (a Third Culture Kid), also experienced a culture clash in terms of the hierarchical nature of the military. After failing the trials for KATUSA and a special track for those with English skills, he joined the army on a regular track and was assigned to a job repairing tools in a factory. Later, however, because of his study abroad background, he was transferred to an office job specializing in information operations. Like Yonghun, Anthony also felt uncomfortable with the hierarchical military culture.

As you know people say they do establish military discipline... If I grew up in Korea, I would have a full sense of hierarchy, the relationship between seniors and juniors, but I don't. I tend to think that they [other soldiers] would do fine without disciplining given

their age, which is not shared by other soldiers. I [a senior soldier, corporal] am not authoritative or I don't try to instill the spirit of military discipline to my junior soldiers. I am just easygoing with them. However, there is expectation that a corporal would be authoritative to maintain military discipline. Nobody says that I am wrong or anything... but I feel that I am different. Some of my cohort soldiers [with the same rank] even asked me why I am not authoritative enough to establish military discipline.

When I asked him how he felt when senior soldiers tried to impose military discipline, he replied, "It was fine. I just let it go. You know I can adjust to a new environment quickly because I accompanied my mother, a diplomat, to many different countries. So I did not want to waste my energy fighting back. I just wanted to ensure my survival and sense of well-being."

Yonghun and Anthony share the common hardship to adjust to the military hierarchy because of their upbringing abroad. However, I want to remind the reader the different modes of appreciating militarized masculinity by Yonghun and Anthony. While Yonghun emphasized that he had learned a lot in the military and was celebratory about his adjustment to the military hierarchy, Anthony adapted to the military by "just letting things go." In other words, the particularity of being a study abroad recruit does not tell us the whole story of how well study abroad recruits adapt to the military and give meaning to their militarized masculinity. In the next section, keeping in mind the different modes of appreciating militarized masculinity by study abroad recruits, I will further analyze their strategies in adjusting to the military.

It is hard to know how many study abroad men felt different from other soldiers because of their class status and education abroad to what extent. Due to the limits of my research samples as described in the introduction, it was mainly those who claimed their successful

completion of military service that I was able to interview. Thus, it was not easy to learn about the cases in which study abroad men feel that they are too different to adjust to the military. However, my general sense after two years of field research with study abroad men is that they tend to adjust to the military well enough not to feel that they are too different from other Korean soldiers, of course recognizing the limits of my sample as well as the presence of exceptions and heterogeneity of individual experiences. Indeed, most of my interviewees stated that they had no particular difficulty in adapting to the military other than overcoming certain stereotypes at the beginning. One possible explanation of their emphasis on their relatively easy adaptability in the military would be their wanting to portray themselves to a researcher (and to other people) as fully South Korean men who have cultural flexibility to study abroad and work well in the military. It is possible that they were also reacting to the images of study abroad students and discourses in South Korea that question their proper “Koreanness”(Lo and Kim 2012 and 2015). In addition, I attribute their adaptability to the particular characteristics of study abroad students who decided to join the military in South Korea. Though they have received education abroad, they usually maintain deep connections to South Korea. Not only do they usually have parents living in Korea, they also make frequent trips back to South Korea every summer. Also they maintain close social relations with other South Korean international students in American colleges and entertain the high possibility of returning to South Korea in the future to live and work. These references in South Korea and their possibility of life in South Korea as a viable option (as I discussed in chapter 2 and 3) enabled and motivated them to celebrate their cultural flexibility (rather than to emphasize their differences) to adjust to the military by becoming “One of Us” from “Envious Others,” which I will discuss in detail in following sections.

Becoming “One of Us” in the Military?

Recognizing the contradictory and double-sided nature of their image as “Enviably Other,” study abroad recruits often try to become “One of Us” in the military by strategically utilizing/covering up their differences or wholeheartedly embracing a militarized masculinity. I use the phrase “One of Us” to emphasize how soldiers in the military—whatever their background—have to assimilate to some extent in order to survive in the military and how the completion of military service provides full membership as “One of the Korean men,” and not to imply that they do, in fact, become homogenized. That means, whether they resist or not, study abroad recruits have to wear the same uniform, eat the same meal, sleep together in the barracks with other Korean soldiers, and live within a strict military hierarchy. Though all recruits need a period of adjustment to military life, study abroad recruits encounter a particular layer of adjustment due to their growing up overseas and image as “Enviably Other.”

In order to overcome their image of “Enviably Other” and become “One of Us,” study abroad men whom I interviewed employed various strategies. The most common is to cover up their class difference as much as possible. For example, Chulgi, who had put his hand into the clogged drain full of food scraps, kept the cost of his tuition at his university in Washington D.C. a secret. He said:

When a senior soldier asked me about the tuition for my American university, I instinctively felt that I should not tell him. So I told him a considerably reduced amount (approximately 10,000 dollars). Still he and the other soldiers were very surprised at the “high” amount! When they asked me what kind of car my parents drove, I described my mother’s car which is an older model compared to my father’s. After that, when my parents visited on the weekend, I asked them to drive my mother’s car.

Besides hiding these class differences, study abroad recruits were also very careful not to reveal too much of their transnational life trajectory. Anthony, whom I introduced in the previous section, grew up in various places including New York City, Bangkok, and Geneva following his mother on her various diplomatic postings. However, he simply told other soldiers that he was a study abroad student in the US. When I interviewed Anthony over lunch in his military camp where he was a corporal during the weekend, he kept his voice very low, which I interpreted as part of his careful effort not to reveal his being “too different” from other soldiers. In that way, Anthony, like Chulgi, was trying to become “One of Us” than the “Enviably Other.”

However, the efforts to become “One of Us,” I suggest, are not intended for its own sake. Study abroad recruits tried to cover up their differences *when needed* in order to survive in the military – by avoiding unnecessary nagging of senior soldiers and by socializing well with other soldiers in the barracks. This tendency is well reflected in Chulgi’s and Anthony’s changes in terms of efforts to become “one of us” as their ranks went up from privates to senior soldiers. Chulgi, who tried to hide his relative class privileges at the beginning of his service, added that he did not have to make efforts to cover up his classed differences when he became a corporal, because there was no one who could nag him for his background [considering that Chulgi had power over his junior soldiers in the military hierarchy]. Recall that Anthony hid his discomfort over the military discipline when he was a junior soldier by just letting it go; but as he became a senior soldier he had relative freedom not to actively participate in disciplining his junior soldiers, which could reveal his differences to other soldiers. Thus, I interpret the efforts of study abroad recruits to cover up their differences, particularly at the beginning of their military service, as a survival strategy. In other words, as Anthony put it, they made efforts to become “One of Us” in order to ensure their survival and well being.

Examining their efforts to cover up their differences as survival strategies can also explain the ways in which study abroad recruits utilize their differences in order to improve their military life. It was common to hear the same study abroad recruits who tried to hide their classed differences also utilize their English skills [also a class marker as it is an outcome of study abroad] for better job assignments and easier military duties. As I have mentioned earlier, some of them helped other soldiers with English study, sometimes even leading an English study group in the barracks. Thus, depending on the circumstances and their own calculations, study abroad recruits chose to either cover up or reveal these differences. Sangjin, whom I introduced in Chapter 2, even utilized the stereotype of “Enviably Other” to pursue an easier military life. As he put it:

As you know, there is still a tendency to consider a life abroad as the privilege of affluent families. To be honest, I exploited that stereotype to make my life in the military easier. If people think that you are from a rich family, they would not bother you much. It is not that I said that I was rich. Because people already thought that way, I did nothing to disabuse them of that notion. In addition, because people think that I would be somewhat different in terms of language and mindset due to my upbringing abroad, I also made use of it to make my life in the military more comfortable.

Sangjin was unusual in that he took advantage of the double-sided image of “Enviably Other” in order to make his military life more comfortable rather than try to fit in as “One of Us.” His use of the stereotype of being an affluent study abroad recruit was likely possible because of his permanent residency in Canada. Not only was this permanent residency an actual legal means to evade the military service, it also made people potentially more understanding of his personal differences. This resident status also contributed to his assignment in one of the elite military

institutions in Seoul with less diverse soldiers in terms of their socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Though unusual, along with other aforementioned cases, Sangjin's story tells us that study abroad recruits employ various strategies to deal with their image of "Enviably Other" in order to successfully complete their military service.

Both Sangjin's indifference to becoming "One of Us" and Anthony's discomfort with military discipline also show us that efforts to successfully complete the military service is not a wholehearted embrace of militarized masculinity. Rather, there are varying responses towards militarized masculinity including Yonghun's celebration of his military experience as an opportunity to learn how to live in a hierarchy to Sangjin's indifference to and Anthony's discomfort with militarized masculinity. Therefore, the question remains: When study abroad recruits do not celebrate or appreciate militarized masculinity, how do they make sense of their military service? What do they gain from spending two years of their life in the military? In the next section, I try to shed light on these questions by exploring the meanings that study abroad recruits attribute to their military service after they get discharged.

The Value of Militarized Masculine Citizenship

By now, it should be clear that military service is essential for a man's achievement of normative full masculine citizenship in South Korea, a full membership as South Korean men with "proper" masculinity which is expected to be learned in the military including ability to work in a hierarchical organization and to endure hardship of military life and beyond.⁵⁹ This is more so for study abroad men for whom Korean belonging is not naturally guaranteed in light of their cosmopolitan outlook with stereotype of having a sheltered life. As I discussed in the previous

⁵⁹ Also see, Kim 2001;Kwon 2005; Lee 2005;Moon 2005a.

section, individual study abroad men have different understandings and feelings about militarized masculinity. However, their ambivalent or even negative attitudes to militarized masculinity do not mean that the completion of military service has no value. Rather, whether they appreciate their militarized masculinity or not, their completion of military service provides them with a “formal” certificate of becoming “One of Us”, militarized masculine citizenship, in the broader South Korean society. In this section, I show the ways in which study abroad men appreciate their militarized masculine citizenship in light of its benefits within their possible futures in South Korea, regardless of whether they embrace or are critical of militarized masculinity.

Analyzing the stories of study abroad men who completed military service, I call attention to the ways in which they give meanings to the militarized masculine citizenship earned through this service. Different from the hegemonic rhetoric of military service as the equal duty of all citizens for the nation, the study abroad men’s understanding of military service and militarized masculine citizenship is very instrumentally oriented for their own personal gain. Witnessing many study abroad students who utilize their transnational capital, including a foreign citizenship or permanent residency overseas, to evade military service, they understand better than anyone else that not every male citizen serves in the military. Thus, they make sense of their military duty in personal terms such as gaining an opportunity to work and live in South Korea. I interpret their individualized understanding of militarized masculine citizenship as a corollary part of their instrumental view of legal and cultural citizenship within their global life trajectories.

Let me go back to the story of Sangjin who did not try to cover up his differences to become “One of Us” in the military. Even though Sangjin was indifferent to militarized

masculinity and even tried to cynically utilize his image as “Enviably Other” to make his life in the military easier, he still appreciated the militarized masculine citizenship that he earned through his military service. Sangjin secured the legal right to work and live in South Korea. Otherwise, as a permanent residency holder in Canada, he would not have been able to find a job and settle down in South Korea as he had done. In addition, Sangjin appreciated his militarized masculine citizenship as an asset for securing a job in South Korea despite his permanent residency in Canada and transnational life trajectory. As he put it:

[During job interviews] I often received the same question of why I wanted to work in South Korea even though I have permanent residency in Canada. Answering that I wanted to contribute to South Korea through my overseas experience, I told them that was the same reason why I had chosen to serve in the military. The seniors of the company who interviewed me really liked that answer.

The senior management’s response to Sangjin’s answer reveals how study abroad men are expected to relate to South Korea. Namely, they are expected to contribute to South Korea with their global experiences, which requires and includes the completion of military duty. Their individualized calculations to secure militarized masculine citizenship for their chances in South Korea due to their limits overseas should be hidden; instead, they need to emphasize their willingness to contribute to South Korea, which their completion of military service evidences. Sangjin’s answer – his willingness to contribute to South Korea utilizing his cosmopolitan capital, which the senior management of Korean companies really liked, also speak to my argument in chapter 3 that cosmopolitan belonging and national belonging can be complementary rather than contradictory.

Militarized masculine citizenship is also beneficial for securing jobs in South Korea because it deflects stereotypes of study abroad students as being unable to adjust to its corporate culture. Yoosung, who was interviewing for jobs at the time of our interview, also received many questions about his military service. As he put it, “People have certain stereotypes about study abroad students as selfish, impolite, and unruly. But completing my military service has, to a certain extent, helped me to dispel these stereotypes.” With the successful completion of military service serving as a certificate of “One of Us” who can adjust to the hierarchical organization culture, it functions to attenuate the stereotype of study abroad men as “Others” both in the military and beyond.

Many study abroad men shared with me stories of how their military experience helped them to adjust to working in South Korean companies. Sangjin even asserted that he would have quit his job already if he had not gone to the military. Without his military experience, he said that he would have found the hierarchical work culture and overtime without pay to be intolerable. Chulgi also declared that learning to properly interact with seniors, especially using the honorific form of language, was useful during his summer internship in South Korea. Chulgi mentioned a Korean American intern without military experience in his company. Chulgi said, “When he spoke with seniors, he often put his hands in his pockets. I told him that he should take them out. He was really embarrassed that I pointed that out.”

Sangjin’s and Yoosung’s stories suggest that serving in the military service is beneficial for their job prospects in South Korea; and as Sangjin’s and Chulgi’s stories tell us, military training can help their adjustment in the Korean companies. However, I also want to point out that it does not mean that they necessarily embrace or celebrate militarized masculinity and Korean corporate culture. Sangjin, for instance, continued to be ambivalent and even critical of

both institutions. Even though his military training enabled him to endure the hierarchical and work-oriented lifestyle in South Korea, he still expressed his desire to go abroad in the near future. From his perspective, working and living in South Korea is too competitive and it is difficult to enjoy a personal life because of the centrality of work and company in South Korea. When I contacted him again in 2014 after our first interview in 2012, however, he was still working in South Korea. I interpret his continued stay in South Korea despite his dissatisfaction as speaking to his limited options and opportunities abroad, which had made him decide to serve in the military in the first place.

For many of study abroad men, it was in South Korea where they were able to be recognized as cosmopolitan elites indexed by their English fluency and their education in good American colleges, compared to their segregated life in American colleges as I showed in chapter 3. In order to be recognized as cosmopolitan elites in South Korea (rather than problematically global), study abroad men also need full national belonging and the recognition of their ‘proper Koreanness’ (compared to the image of cosmopolitan free from traditions and cultures of the nation) for which militarized masculine citizenship became a valuable asset.

Transnational Politics of Militarized Masculinity

While militarized masculinity is understood to be beneficial for study abroad men in adjusting to Korean companies and settling down in South Korea, its utility is not limited to that country. Using the phrase, “the transnational politics of militarized masculinity,” Seungsook Moon tried to understand the reasons for Korean emigrant men to join the military in South Korea as their strong sense of Korean identity and a strong sense of masculine ethnic nationalism resulting from their relative cultural or racial marginalization abroad (2005b, p.85). While I agree that cultural

or racial marginalization abroad (for example, segregated social life among South Korean international students in American campuses) affected study abroad men's decision to join the military in South Korea, here I am trying to highlight a different aspect of the transnational politics of militarized masculinity through the case of study abroad men. While Moon highlights a strong sense of Korean identity or masculine ethnic nationalism due to emigrant men's cultural or racial marginalization abroad as reasons to join the military in South Korea, I focus more on both *the legal and cultural needs in the reality* for militarized masculine citizenship; and even potential value in their transnational lives. While it was more common for my informants to talk about the merits of militarized masculine citizenship in South Korea proper, some of my informants also mentioned that they were able to or expect to utilize militarized masculinity and militarized masculine citizenship overseas where they study and sometimes work. These stories which I will detail below highlight study abroad men's individualized and instrumental understanding of militarized masculinity in the transnational politics of masculinity beyond the territorial border of South Korea.

Here, I want to re-introduce Dohyuck whose story I analyzed in full detail in chapter 2. Understanding the military service as a way to open up cosmopolitan belonging as well as national belonging to South Korea, Dohyuck, who was an air force officer at the time of the interview, said:

I figured out that the completion of military service would serve my interest not only in Korea but also in the US if I manage to go back to the US after discharge from the military. You know in the US the military experience as an air force officer is highly recognized. The US is the place where the military experience itself [regardless of ranks and kinds of services] is highly recognized. In my case, considering that I majored in

business, I am thinking to go to MBA program, and when they [MBA schools in the US] review applications, having a leadership experience is really important... and military service as an officer is, as I experience now, a leadership experience.

Dohyuck's story above indicates that his militarized masculinity is expected to be a real transnational asset which can help his admission to a top MBA school in the US. Another aspect Dohyuck indicated as a reason he needed militarized masculine citizenship even in a foreign country was for his full belonging or confident relationship with other South Korean men. Regarding his two years of work experience in the South Korean owned company in the US, Dohyuck said, "I had a difficult boss [South Korean] to work with. He scolded me for very small things... you know a perfectionist... Whenever he complained about me, he said that I am not doing well because I did not serve in the military. While I was working for that company for two years, I really felt that people look down on someone if he has no military experience. There are such things in the world of men, to be sure..." Thus, Doyuck felt that he would always feel lack of belonging with other South Korean men wherever in the world if he did not serve in the military.

The meaning of militarized masculine citizenship in terms of the relations with other South Korean men overseas was widely shared by many other informants. Considering that majority of my informants were college students at the time of the interviews, many mentioned the fact that many of their college friends from South Korea studying in the US were joining the military, which made their own decision to go to the military natural and easier.

Other aspects study abroad recruits understood as values of militarized masculinity beyond the border of South Korea include their strong confidence to endure and deal with any

difficult time or harsh challenges in life after so much endurance in the military. In addition, some mentioned that their leadership experiences in the military help their college life in the US, because they could now, after military service, take a better role as a leader to organize and arrange things in group projects for their classes.

As for transnational politics of militarized masculinity, it should be noted that not everyone is equally affected by them. For example, when I interviewed Sanghyun about his military experiences, he told me that he learned his stoic attitude of smiling whether he was unhappy or if someone was physically abusing him. However, he found this ability to endure to be unnecessary in his current job in the US. “When my boss asks me to do something, I can talk back without any consequence,” he said. Likewise, there were also people like Sanghyun who considered militarized masculinity they experienced in the military irrelevant to their life in the US.

Recognizing the variable understandings about the transnational politics of militarized masculinity, however, I do suggest that my account here highlights individualized and instrumental character of study abroad men’s understanding of militarized masculinity and militarized masculine citizenship. Including Dohyuck who expected to utilize his military experience as a spec for his MBA application, those who mentioned the ways to utilize their militarized masculinity and militarized masculine citizenship overseas show how they try to make sense of their military service for their own benefits in their individual lives even abroad. Though those who do not find any value of military service in their lives overseas seem to speak the opposite, I suggest that they also share the same understanding of military service. Their finding no value of militarized masculinity or militarized masculine citizenship in their transnational lives reveals the ways in which these men also try to make sense of military service

in terms of individualized and instrumental benefits rather than military service as a sacred duty for the nation as a Korean man with a strong Korean identity and ethnic nationalism. While some of my informants briefly mentioned that they felt good about their doing good for the nation, the main logics of understanding military service in South Korea came from their calculations for individual practical benefits.

Male Conscription and Classed Understanding of Corresponding Femininity

Appreciating the construction and maintenance of a certain form of masculinity to be dependent on the expectations and assumptions for a corresponding form of femininity (Enloe 2000; Gutmann 1997; Moon 2005b), this section examines the femininity through which study abroad men make sense of their male only conscription. Considering the individualized and instrumental meanings they attribute to their military service, how do study abroad men think about women who do not have to fulfill the same duty? Among the sixty interviewees, no one raised the issue of military conscription as a *male only* endeavor until I brought it up showing how it is naturalized as masculine. Still, contrary to my expectations, they did not have much complaints about women not serving in the military.

Some informants considered a male only conscription system to be fair as men and women possessed different physical strengths and responsibilities in later life such as pregnancy and mothering. Rather than the need to share the burden of military service with women, my informants talked about the need for them to better recognize and understand the men's military experiences. Some even mentioned the potential utility of a short term and compulsory military camp for women to educate them about military life and national security. These responses show

that some study abroad men do not even bother to pay attention to the male only nature of conscription based on their stereotypical understanding of sexed bodies and fixed gender roles.

Another way to rationalize male only conscription was to emphasize the benefits of militarized masculinity and militarized masculine citizenship to which women had no access.

According to Yoosung:

Regardless of how long you've studied abroad, if you are Korean, then you tend to get a job in South Korea. Therefore, I think that the military service is good way to adjust to the Korean work life.

When I asked Yoosung whether female study abroad students did not need the same period of adjustment, he replied:

Yes, I've witnessed some cases of female study abroad students entering big Korean conglomerates and having a hard time adjusting to its work culture. Female study abroad students tend to transfer their jobs more. They tend to end up working in foreign affiliated firms [compared to Korean companies]. I mean in the companies like Korean big conglomerates with such a working culture.. you know.. When I see the culture of the big conglomerates, as I see in the military, there are certain things which would be difficult to endure for women. Considering the difficult work culture in the big Korean companies, most of female study abroad students I know got jobs in foreign affiliated firms from the beginning.. most of them.

Though I cannot take Yoosung's anecdotal account as a way to make a claim about study abroad women, what his story reveals is the ways in which study abroad men rationalize male only conscription as fair enough. Their way of rationalizing male only conscription entails a

notion of femininity which is not suited for successful adjustment in the Korean big conglomerates, which many of study abroad men I interviewed desire to work for in the future.

The ability to adjust to the hierarchical work culture can be questioned particularly more for study abroad women who have to deal with the stereotype of being an “Enviably Other” without the ability to earn a certificate of militarized masculine citizenship like their male counterparts. Whether they directly mention the challenges female study abroad students have in the Korean companies or not, I would cautiously interpret their celebration of militarized masculinity and militarized masculine citizenship as a way to get jobs and to adjust well in the Korean big companies as implying that the corresponding femininity is not suited for working in the Korean big companies.

I also suggest that their understanding of male only conscription as a relatively egalitarian system is based on their particular class and educational backgrounds. In contrast to the debates about the elimination of the extra point system, which gave additional points to male applicants who had served in the military for mostly lower level public employment, study abroad men from upper- and upper-middle-class families tended not to have problems with the male only military service. When the Constitutional Court ruled on December 23, 1999, that this additional points system for those who completed military duty was unconstitutional, there was an emotionally charged reaction both on and off the Internet from conservative sectors of society.

According to Seungsook Moon (2002b), the debate was represented as a war between a homogenized “Woman” and “Man”—that is, a conflict between the issues of women’s equal employment and compensation for men’s military service. However, as I wrote in Chapters 1 and 2, and as Moon has analyzed, the furious indignation of the conservatives against the abolition of

the extra point system largely stemmed from the problem of equity in military conscription. As Moon writes,

The Constitutional Court announced a ruling that progressively supported social minorities, but failed to address class difference among men in conscription. Deeply agitated by this ruling, civil society tended to misdirect its criticism towards women and women's associations and argued for women's conscription in the name of "absolute equality" (2002, p.103).

If the hostile response against women in the extra point system controversy was about class-based inequality in conscription and the sense of deprivation that men felt in not being duly recognized or compensated for their military service, I suggest that study abroad men's relatively benign response to *male only* conscription stems from the own recognition of their own class-based privilege during military service. That is, they recognized the preferential treatment and opportunities that they received in the military due to their study abroad experience and English language skills. They also felt relatively confident that they could utilize their militarized masculine citizenship to work for their own futures in South Korea working for large Korean companies. Their unquestioned classed privilege during and after military service partly explains the ways in which study abroad men value their militarized masculine citizenship in South Korea.

In this chapter, I have shown how study abroad men deal with the double-sided nature of their image as global elites and "Enviably Others." I have examined how they make sense of their military duty and experiences in light of their life after being discharged. Whether they appreciate militarized masculinity or not, they were keenly aware of the benefits of militarized masculine citizenship in South Korea and beyond. Their understanding of military service as a

way to secure their full belonging to South Korea for their future life does not challenge the institution of conscription or the hierarchical culture of Korean big corporations as I had expected in light of their education and life abroad. Rather they understood their military service as a useful way to secure full membership and launder their contaminated image as “Enviably Others” in order to live and work in South Korea. Their classed military experience and instrumental understanding of military duty, however, show signs of rupture with dominant discourses that legitimize conscription as an equal duty of male citizens for the nation. They also disrupt the romanticized understanding of study abroad students as cosmopolitans who are able to unproblematically navigate their life anywhere in the world.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Summary of Contents

With legal changes in the Nationality Law and the Military Service Law in South Korea as I review in Chapter 2, it became almost impossible for South Korean citizen men, regardless of having permanent residency abroad or dual citizenship by birth,⁶⁰ to work and settle down in South Korea before the age of thirty-seven unless they renounce South Korean legal citizenship by voluntarily acquiring foreign citizenship. This strengthening control over conscription of transnational male citizens followed the pursuit of ardent globalization and neoliberalization in South Korea since the late 1990s, products of which include rapid expansion of pre-college study abroad and the conditional recognition of dual citizenship(by birth) for adult citizens for the first time in its modern history. My dissertation started with these seemingly paradoxical initiatives in South Korea: on the one hand, the promotion of the internationalization of its own people (e.g., recognition of dual citizenship and emphasis on education to raise globalized citizens), while, on the other hand, a tightening grip on military conscription management, particularly for transnational citizens, through amendments of its nationality and conscription laws. This seeming paradox paralleled with study abroad students' simultaneous desire for cosmopolitan belonging and national belonging, as seen in the frequently taken-for-granted path to military service in South Korea after all those years of education abroad. Trying to make sense of this seeming paradox, I examined the issues of the military conscription of study abroad students in this thesis as a productive window through which to grasp the ways in which South Korea and

⁶⁰ In the case of Korean Americans with dual citizenship by birth, they are allowed to renounce their South Korean citizenship before March 31 of the year they become the age of eighteen and subject to military service duty, without the completion of military service. In order to give up South Korean citizenship before military service, their parents must have stayed abroad for residential purposes (often times with permanent residency) at the time of their birth abroad. In the case of study abroad alone students or TCKs, it was rarely an available option.

South Koreans are trying to balance or live through the tension between the global and the national. I suggest that the seemingly contradictory initiatives of globalization and strengthening military service of transnational recruits can be understood in light of the fact that globalization and neoliberalization has been pursued in South Korea for the purpose of national development and survival in global economy. South Korean study abroad students' almost taken-for-granted path to serve in the military can be also fully understood in light of the fact that their study abroad began in the context of South Korea's globalization and neoliberalization; and they have the best potential to be cosmopolitans in South Korea utilizing the capital they arduously earned through study abroad.

While strengthening the citizenship-military service link in South Korea seems exceptional considering the broader trend of ending or phasing out conscription, in this thesis I have shown that the tightening of the military service-citizenship link in South Korea is also part of a broader global trend of neoliberal globalization, as mediated by the country's particular historical and cultural context. In Chapter 2, through a review of legal changes on citizenship and military conscription and the stories of four study abroad men, I document the neoliberal changes in the politics of citizenship in South Korea. This study unsettles any taken-for-granted assumptions about an easy isomorphism between citizenship as legal status and citizenship as identity; it also sheds light on the increasing tendency to appreciate legal citizenship in light of the practical benefits it offers as both the South Korean state and South Korean study abroad men share the logics of flexible citizenship strategies. Based on my analysis of citizenship and its relation to military service, I argue that the tightening of military conscription in South Korea should be understood as one of the ways in which the South Korean state responded to neoliberal changes in citizenship as well as to public rage about conscription exemption of upper class for

citizenship reasons, which only exacerbated the sense of ever increasing class disparity in neoliberal South Korea after the IMF crisis.

I further claim, through analysis of the stories of individual study abroad men, that the completion of the military requirement becomes an important way and a clear marker of Korean belonging, even at the possible loss of legal citizenship status (by acquiring foreign citizenship in pursuit of flexible citizenship strategies). Thus, many of the study abroad men I met considered serving in the military as due course in their transnational life trajectory. Given all their education abroad and their cosmopolitan aspirations, their willingness to serve in the military to secure full membership in South Korea requires further explanation. In Chapter 3, I explain study abroad men's logic of making sense of, and often embracing the military requirement---after living much of their lives abroad---as partly a product of their limited legal, social, and cultural belonging abroad (e.g., lack of green card or citizenship in the US and segregation in American colleges). In addition, I show that national belonging becomes more meaningful for study abroad men because they expect to be recognized as globalized elites in South Korea, with a sense of living in the world even while they physically reside in South Korea. I argue that ethnographic stories in this dissertation – transnational practices of individuals (i.e., study abroad and returning for military service and possibly adult life in South Korea) – should be understood as simultaneously situated within the workings of the global and the historical and cultural context of South Korea (and locations of their education abroad in the case of their limited belonging overseas). In addition, as I elaborate in Chapter 4, study abroad men's needs to serve in the military and desire for national belonging are mainly made sense of based on careful consideration for individualized concrete and practical benefits rather than patriotic choices made for the sake of nation or community. By emphasizing individual practical benefits of

military service, I do not mean that national identity and the comfort study abroad students attach to South Korea (compared to the locations of education abroad) do not affect study abroad students' decision to serve in the military. Rather, based on my interview data, I suggest that their emotional attachment to South Korea and their national identity are all important factors in their cost-benefit calculations about military service in South Korea. In other words, because they have national identity as South Korean with emotional attachment to South Korea (as well as potential to be elites in South Korea and their limits overseas), they are more likely appreciate their opening up a possibility of life in South Korea, both legally and culturally through military service.

Thus, while the recent tightening of the citizenship–military service linkage in South Korea seems to be distinct from larger global trend of neoliberalization, I argue that the logics of individual study abroad men in making sense of their military requirement and citizenship echo the broader trend of neoliberal transformation in South Korea and beyond. I further suggest that upper- and upper-middle class study abroad men's instrumental understanding of military conscription and their classed military experiences, as I detail in Chapter 4, disrupt dominant discourses that legitimize “universal” conscription as an *equal* duty of male citizens for the nation and thus do have potential to challenge conscription as it is now in South Korea. I will provide more comments on the implications of this in the next section.

This dissertation contributes to theoretical understanding of citizenship and its linkage to military service in the era of globalization and neoliberalization, not as an end but as a reconfiguration of the relation between citizenship and military service. I have analyzed the particular case of South Korea – its maintaining and strengthening citizenship-military conscription linkage and the ways in which individual study abroad men make sense of military

service – as an example of neoliberal reconfiguration in a particular way mediated by the South Korean context. Particularly I emphasize how the democratic ideal of equality and national identity/belonging (as well as limited sense of belonging overseas) complicates the South Korean state's and flexible citizens' strategies in terms of neoliberal reconfiguration in a significant manner. I hope this dissertation will provide a useful theoretical tool to understand not only the distinctive pattern of neoliberal reconfiguration in South Korea which I have documented in this study, but also in other countries, particularly regarding citizenship and military service, the two core pillars of the modern nation-states.

Challenges to Conscription

While pursuing this dissertation research, I wanted to engage critically in studies of citizenship in relation to conscription, with particular attention to class and the democratic ideal of equality in the context of globalization and neoliberalization. When I began to analyze my fieldnotes and interview data and present my findings, particularly about the ways in which study abroad men appreciated their military service as a way to secure full membership in South Korea, I often received questions about how my research could contribute to critical understandings of conscription. While writing this dissertation, this question has remained in my mind. I want to wrap up my dissertation by revisiting this lingering question. I do not have the ambition or capability to offer any alternative policy suggestions through this dissertation. However, I do think it is important to think about the ways in which this dissertation can intervene in creating a better understanding of the issues of citizenship and conscription, particularly considering the possible effects of producing this anthropological knowledge.

This ethnographic analysis of South Korean study abroad men's understanding and experiences of military service unsettles the taken-for-granted understanding that views

tightening and maintaining universal military conscription as due course in the pursuit of social equality in South Korea. As I show in this thesis, study abroad men rationalized their service in the military because of individual benefits they could secure through military service, not because they believed that universal military conscription is the *equal* duty of all citizens. Of course there are other factors that go into in making sense of military duty, such as sense of responsibility for the nation, patriotic duty, and national defense; I am not saying that study abroad men's sense of military duty for the nation is totally absent. However, I emphasize that their main narratives in making sense of their military duty mainly came from their careful consideration of the benefits of military service given the current legal and cultural regimes of conscription in South Korea in which the cost of draft dodging is too big to consider. Indeed, study abroad men knew better than anyone else about the problems of class-based inequality in conscription. During their education abroad, they met many South Korean male students who decided not to serve for various reasons and with diverse means, including securing legal residency overseas and getting jobs which could lead to legal residency abroad. Some of my informants even talked about their own brothers who made different choices regarding conscription and legal citizenship. Whether study abroad students decide to serve or not depending on individual circumstances, what they share is the logic of their decision regarding conscription and citizenship: a logic of maximizing their individualized concrete benefits in their transnational life trajectory, within the given legal, social, and cultural conditions and limits. They will choose to serve when the benefits of serving in the military are greater than the costs in given circumstances. Study abroad alone students and the Third Culture Kids I mainly study in this dissertation tend to consider their military service in South Korea as a due course of life, because the cost of draft dodging is too big, particularly when they do not have legal flexibility

abroad and/or their parents live/plan to live in South Korea. I suggest that their national identity and the sense of national belonging come to be parts of this calculation, rather than decisive factors regarding citizenship and military service. In addition, the lived reality of military service by upper- and upper-middle class study abroad men reveals that the experiences in the military and the value of militarized masculine citizenship are classed rather than equal for every recruit. Even if every man serves, it does not guarantee that military conscription – military experiences and the value/meaning attached to military service – is equal for every recruit. Thus, this dissertation research questions and further breaks down the myth of “universal” conscription as a way to realize the ideal of equality.

While I recognize that this dissertation is specifically focused on the stories of upper- and upper middle class study abroad men, I suggest that their neoliberal logic of making sense of military service by prioritizing individual interest over that of the community or the nation is shared by the broader South Korean population. Indeed, it has been documented that military conscription in South Korea has been getting unpopular (Moon 2005b). A survey conducted in 2001 indicated that impediment to self-development was the biggest concern regarding military service.⁶¹ In addition, neoliberal logic, with its emphasis on individualized benefits, explains the decreasing percentage of South Koreans who are willing to fight for their country. On a World Value Survey item asking, “willingness to fight for your country in case of a war,” the percentage of South Koreans who responded positively has declined from 85.4 percent in the 1990-1994 wave, to 74 percent in the 2000-2004 wave, and to 63 percent in the 2010-2014

⁶¹ 43% of respondents chose impediment to self-development, followed by lack of freedom (24%), and physical hardship (17%). A Survey on National Security conducted by Social Science Research Institute, Yonsei University. Cited in S-M Lee (2003: 86).

wave.⁶² Thus, though the legal tightening of the citizenship-military conscription linkage of the South Korean state seems distinct from neoliberal transformation, I suggest that the ways in which individuals perceive military conscription in light of concrete individual interests have potential to challenge conscription as an equal duty of every male citizen.

While neoliberal changes in the institution of conscription remains minimal and slow-paced, we can expect to see further neoliberal transformation of military conscription as well as changes in response to the changing nature of war and military, which is shifting towards a technology-intensive army. Indeed, the South Korean state has continued to reduce the service period: in the case of the army, from 36 months to current 21 months. In addition, with the simultaneous progress of democratization and neoliberalization since the 1990s, individual freedom and choice have become increasingly important values and have challenged the legitimacy of universal conscription. For example, the issue of conscientious objection to military service has gained some attention and has been discussed as a problem of human rights. Currently, there are about twenty cases dealing with the issue of conscientious objection in the Constitutional Court,⁶³ and there have been court cases which question the constitutionality of male-only conscription. Therefore, I cautiously suggest that class inequalities in conscription, instrumental understanding of military service and citizenship, and the language of freedom and

⁶² World Value Survey, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>

⁶³ Conscientious objectors are against conscription on religious or philosophical grounds, and they have to serve their prison sentences, currently for eighteen month in South Korea. According to a report on conscientious objection by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), 92.5% (669) of a total of 723 incarcerated conscientious objectors in the world are serving in South Korea (*The Hankyoreh*, July 16, 2013, http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/595909.html). Also see *Hankyoreh Newspaper*, June 18, 2013, http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/592276.html

individual choice, which were all intensified with neoliberal transformation, will continue to challenge military conscription and its relation to citizenship in South Korea.⁶⁴

For Future Research toward a Comparative Perspective

As I delved into the issues of citizenship and military conscription in South Korea, I became curious about other cases of neoliberal transformation of citizenship, military service, and the link between the two. Thus, I propose that having a comparative perspective would be insightful to delineate the workings of neoliberal logics in the changing politics of citizenship and its linkage to military conscription given the particular historical and cultural context. For further research, I suggest that it would be productive to compare this South Korean case, for example, with the Israeli case and the Taiwanese case. As another example of a strongly maintained conscription system with a long history of involvement of diaspora in the military,⁶⁵ the ways in which Jews with foreign citizenship understand and experience their military service in Israel would provide an effective comparison with the Korean case. According to my preliminary search through blog posts⁶⁶ by American men who served in the Israeli military and media reports about Americans serving in the Israeli military,⁶⁷ I have a sense that the military service of Jews abroad in Israel tend to be understood as a response to anti-semitism they experienced abroad, their appreciation of their faith and heritage (e.g., their deep feelings toward Israel after the birthright trip to Israel), and the ongoing military conflict between Palestine and Israel.

Interestingly, the South Korean military has referred to the service by diasporic Jews in the

⁶⁴ At the same time, however, I want to also point out that transition to a voluntary recruitment system would not automatically be translated to social equality in terms of military service, considering that it is also the marginalized who disproportionately serve in militaries under voluntary recruitment systems (Eicher 2014).

⁶⁵ For more details about the military service of diasporic Jews, please refer to “Lone Soldiers Program” of FIDF (Friends of the Israel Defense Forces) available at <http://www.fidf.org/page.aspx?pid=282>.

⁶⁶ For example, see <http://www.americaninIsraeliarmy.com/>; and <http://fromusatoidf.blogspot.kr/p/idf-terms.html>.

⁶⁷ For example, see <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/07/23/world/meast/israeli-military-americans/>; and <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/07/23/world/meast/gaza-israel-u-s-close-to-home/index.html>.

Israeli military in its effort to recruit Koreans overseas to the Korean military. However, what I learned in this project – the logics of South Korean study abroad men in explaining their service in the military – greatly differed from the discourse of long-distance nationalism, which is a deep commitment and attachment to serve for the nation regardless of life and legal citizenship abroad. I am very curious about why diasporic Jews decide to serve in Israel and how they make sense of and experience their military service; I am also curious as to whether the logics of serving in the Israeli military have changed (or remained the same) with the global trend of neoliberalization.

Another interesting case to consider would be Taiwan, which began the process of transition to the All Volunteer Forces (AVF) in 2010. While geopolitical tension as well as the ideal of equality has been an important factor for legitimizing conscription in South Korea, Taiwan provides an interesting exception to the geopolitical explanation regarding conscription as it faces political and military tension with China. Ending conscription was one of the election campaign promises of Taiwanese then-candidate Ma in 2007, and he announced plans to transition to AVF when he began the presidency in 2009 (Yuan, 2013:44). Unlike in Taiwan, no presidents or presidential candidates in South Korea have put forward ending conscription as a major political campaign issue. When Kim Doo-kwan, one of the presidential contenders of the main opposition Democratic United Party, proposed abolition of conscription as his main campaign promise in 2012, his proposal did not generate meaningful public support and he failed to win the Party nomination. Thorough comparison with the Taiwanese case - asking why and how it was possible to abolish conscription in Taiwan and what are the effects of the transition to AVF in Taiwan – will help us to fully understand the reasons and implications of maintaining (even tightening) conscription and to think about a possible future trajectory of conscription and its relation to citizenship in South Korea as neoliberalism and the changed nature of war have

been globally challenging mass army-based conscription. Thus, I wrap up this dissertation proposing further comparative research to better understand the workings of neoliberalism and the cultural logics in the issues of citizenship and military service.

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