

Cross-country Occupational Continuity and Changes: Korean Remigrants in New York Garment-related Businesses

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[Abstract]

This article examines occupational continuities and transformations among Koreans who migrated first to Latin America and then to the United States, in this case, to the New York area. Among Koreans' concentration in many niches of the New York economy, this article focuses on their involvement in the garment industry and related dry-cleaning businesses. Empirical data were obtained from open-ended, in-depth interviews with 102 Korean New Yorkers from Latin America. This article, utilizing the city-as-context framework, examines Korean remigrants' adjustment processes in the United States within the specific context of the New York economic structure. It explores how relevant garment business experiences affected and shaped the remigrants' resettlement in New York. This study categorizes Korean remigrants into three groups according to their involvement in the garment industry during transnational migration. Interestingly enough, one type of small business especially popular among Koreans who formerly participated in the garment industry was dry cleaning. Korean remigrants used their previous economic experiences in Latin America in different ways to adjust to specific local conditions, such as historical

transformations in the New York garment industry.

Key Words: Latin America, Garment Industry, Remigration, New York, Dry Cleaning

I. Introduction

Korean immigrants in the United States are known to widely engage in several types of labor-intensive small businesses (Kim 1981; Min 2001). This article specifically examines occupational continuities and transformations among Koreans who immigrated to Latin America and then to the New York area. This group in the Korean diaspora is called Korean remigrants and includes Korean immigrants who have made multiple transnational migratory movements and those of Korean descent born outside Korea who later moved to another foreign country. This article is concerned with Koreans who came to the United States via Latin American countries and, among Koreans' concentrations in many niches of the New York economy, focuses on their involvement in the garment industry and related dry-cleaning businesses. Empirical data were obtained through open-ended, in-depth interviews with 102 Korean remigrants from Latin America residing in the New York area.

Disproportionate majorities of Korean immigrants in Latin America are engaged in the garment industry. For instance, nearly 90 percent of Korean immigrants in Argentina and approximately 80 percent in Brazil are believed to be in the textile and garment industries (Shin 2009: 317). In this study, 72 of the 98 households¹⁾ studied had at least one family member who had participated in the clothing business in Latin America. During transnational movements to the United States, however, Korean remigrants tended to experience occupational changes depending on personal

and ethnic resources and local labor-market conditions. This article examines whether and how Korean remigrants' previous experiences in the Latin American garment industry affected their resettlement in the United States.

Previous research on Korean Americans from Latin America focused on the continuity of their involvement in the garment industry in various countries in the Americas, or, more specifically, the contributions of Koreans from Brazil to U.S. development, particularly to the Los Angeles garment industry (Shin 2009: 335). Koreans are noted to "have been a successful ethnic group in pursuing the entrepreneurial route into apparel manufacturing. The more successful entrepreneurs among them are those who arrive in Los Angeles with manufacturing knowledge and financial resources" (Kim and Chang 2009: 165). It is also pointed out that some Korean immigrants in Latin America relocated to Los Angeles for the specific purpose of expanding their garment businesses in the United States (Lee 2007: 21). Previous studies, however, have overlooked the specific local conditions in various U.S. cities which have caused the diversification of the occupational experiences of Koreans formerly engaged in the Latin American garment business.

The city-as-context framework questions the suitability of the nation-state as the natural unit of analysis in migration studies and, instead, emphasizes the significance of the unique features of particular cities in urban research (Foner 2003: 21). This article considers New York to be one of the primary remigration destinations for Korean immigrants and treats it as a key unit of analysis. In "Bringing the City Back In: Cities as Contexts for Immigrant Incorporation," Brettell(2003) points out important factors to consider in immigration research: the presence or absence of residential ethnic enclaves, the structure of the city's labor market, the available economic opportunities, and the character of racial and ethnic relations in the city. Utilizing the city-as-context framework, this article examines Korean remigrants'

adjustment processes in the United States within the specific context of the economic structure of New York, particularly the impact of the historical development of the New York garment industry on Korean remigrants. Considering Asians and Asian entrepreneurs' historical role of subcontractors in the U.S. garment industry (Bonacich, Ong & Cheng 1994; Hu-DeHart 2002: 213), this study also investigates possible intercountry changes in Korean remigrants' roles or positions in the garment-industry hierarchy. Given this focus, this article categorizes Korean remigrants as 1) those who did not engage in the Latin American garment industry but later entered the New York garment industry; 2) those who were involved in the Latin American garment industry and entered the New York garment industry; and 3) those who participated in the Latin America garment industry but not the New York garment industry.

II. Korean Remigrants in New York Garment-related Businesses

After Arriving in New York

In their economic resettlement process in New York, some Korean remigrants were more affected by new contacts and local conditions than previous experiences or transnational networks. For example, Chanho, without any clothing-related skills or previous experiences in Argentina and Brazil, became involved in the New York garment industry. He was more influenced by his post-U.S. immigration experiences in their occupational adjustment. Chanho, who was born in 1964, immigrated to

Argentina with his family in 1986. Before he came to New York in 1991 to embark on his further studies, the only employment experience that he had was working at a Korean restaurant for about a year. In New York, at first, Chanho worked for his friend's uncle to whom he was connected by his classmate at a community college. His boss formerly worked at Samdo, a large Korea-based apparel company, and then ran a garment import company in New York that mostly dealt with men's wear. Chanho and his boss purchased textiles from China and had the textiles manufactured into clothes in Korean-owned factories in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Haiti. Then, they imported and sold the final products to American buyers.

Koreans in the New York garment industry come from a diversity of backgrounds and socioeconomic milieux. Some Korean employees that were involved in the Korean corporations' garment exports to the U.S. were often employed as branch managers in New York. Some of them later became independent entrepreneurs who engaged in the garment import business in New York. Their professional expertise or networks which were acquired both in Korea and the U.S. were gradually imparted to other Korean immigrants. Chanho, after his relocation to New York, was incorporated into Koreans' New York-Central America garment network, and was trained under his boss for two and a half years. In 1995, Chanho started his own business, which operated a small factory engaged in printing and embroidering basic clothes. Since he did not have sufficient start-up capital to emulate his boss's international business, he focused only on the locally-produced clothing business. In 2008, when he realized that the manufacturing industry was no longer profitable, he closed his factory. Without operating his own factory, he now works as a clothing distributor to wholesalers nationwide.

Chanho emphasizes the centrality of personal networks in immigrants' career and employment decisions. "Haven't you heard that, in New York, people say that the

person who picks you up at the airport will determine your career?" he asks. "You just follow what that person does." He believes that he might have taken another career path if he had had a chance to encounter with others in different businesses. Chanh'o's entry to the industry was initiated by New York Korean immigrants who were already in the business. Through his personal connections to acquaintances, he secured a job opportunity and was incorporated into the New York garment industry. He also acquired the professional contacts and knowledge necessary for starting his own business which were significantly related to his former boss's.

In other instances, personal networks among remigrants attracted those who were engaged in other types of business in Latin America to the New York garment business. Rosa's parents began their sewing factories in New York.

Because my parents brought some money from Korea, we opened a large grocery store in an affluent, native-Argentine residential area. Then, in 1985, I came alone to New York to study, and my family followed me five years later in 1990. One day, someone we knew from Argentina asked my parents to help oversee their garment factory in Manhattan. The husband, who became ill, and worried about his wife taking charge of the factory alone, thought my parents could help her with their Spanish-speaking skills. At first, my parents only helped the woman as a factory manager. Then, with the help of the woman, they started their own garment factory in the same building in 1992.

Rosa's parents did not have relevant experiences or skills in the Latin American garment industry. However, they could enter the New York garment business via a key contact who guided them in the initial launching of their business. With sufficient capital, her parents could invest in renting the space and employing the necessary personnel, including managers, as well as unskilled or highly skilled workers.

Another unique group of respondents who were not fully engaged in the Latin American garment industry independently but become involved in the New York garment business includes adult children of entrepreneurs. Many respondents recall helping their parents as interpreters or operating sewing machines in their childhood in Latin America. An early exposure to a parents' clothing business tends to influence remigrants' entrepreneurial aspirations later in life. A number of younger-generation respondents or their siblings have engaged in the garment-related business in New York or majored in subjects like Fashion Design, Merchandizing, and Pattern-making. Among these clothing-related majors, some intended to join the garment business after college, but others simply wanted to acquire the degree easily, using their familiarity with fashion from previous experiences in family business.

Continuing from Latin America

Mr. Chun remigrated to the U.S. in order to expand his Brazil-based company that deals with dyeing sewing threads and to establish another subsidiary factory in the U.S.

In 1987, with L-1 visas, I brought some company employees in Brazil to the U.S. and set up a sewing thread factory in the Bronx. In Brazil, I dealt mostly with local Brazilian customers. In New York, while my wife took care of factory matters with Latino workers, me and other sales employees met with potential buyers. Every day I visited at least 30 garment factories in the New York and New Jersey area, and tried to get orders. Also, I made business trips to Central America, and I got orders from Korean garment offshore factories there. Actually, the business continued to expand until I retired in 2007.

Among respondents who were engaged in the Latin American garment industry, 22.5 percent, seven out of thirty one, have continued to work in the same industry in New York. Although some remigrants, including Mr. Chun, expanded their business from Latin America to the U.S., most Korean immigrants in this group were newly incorporated into the preexisting New York garment industry. By 1950, New York was a major center for U.S. manufacturing and apparel production was its anchor, accounting for 32.8 percent of manufacturing employment. With its masses of foreign-born workers, New York rose to become one of the world's top producers of apparel(Fernandex-Kelly 2006: 13). According to a report *NYC's Garment Industry: A New Look?*, apparel production shops have been traditional entry point into business ownership for immigrants. In the 1980s and 1990s, this was particularly the case for Asian immigrants, especially Koreans and Chinese (The Fiscal Policy Institute 2003: 11).

It was in the late 1970s when Koreans first began engaging in New York garment manufacturing. At the peak of the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, there used to be over 500 Korean-owned garment factories in the New York and New Jersey areas, which were staffed with 25,000 employees, of which 70 percent were Korean (Lee 2005; Lee 2011: 149). Mr. Cho, who is in his 60s, also recalls,

Since 1978, I moved around and lived in Latin American countries like Paraguay, Chile and Brazil until I came to New York in 1983. Without enough money to start my own business, I looked for a job in Korean newspaper ads. Around 1983, half of the job ads were related to the garment factory. For a while, the garment business was popular among New York Koreans. I remember that there used to be lots of Korean-owned factories in Manhattan.

Because of the lack of capital or unfamiliarity with the New York garment industry,

some respondents could not start their own business immediately after their remigration. Even then, when labor demands were high in garment manufacturing, Korean immigrants could easily land a job as skilled workers, such as experienced sewing-machine operators or pattern-makers. With the influx of Latino workers into the Korean garment business, Korean remigrants could also be employed as managers of Hispanic workers. Their previous experiences and Spanish language skills were advantageous in their job-seeking experiences. Mr. Ban comments as follows,

I moved to New York in 1994. I was already in my 50s at that time, and, at first, no one wanted to employ me. In Argentina, I sewed and sold clothes for about 20 years. I just visited a garment factory in Manhattan and demanded that the boss give me a chance to prove myself. I worked hard to organize textile storage and to make pattern-making much easier. Considered to be useful, I was soon employed as a manager, in charge of organizing textiles and managing Latino workers. The job was a good one for my age and I was glad that I could utilize my previous experiences.

Those who came to New York when garment manufacturing was at its peak and those with some capital have successfully operated their garment factories in New York. Ms. Baek, who is in her 60s, recalls,

Only two days after I arrived in New York in 1989, I secured a job as a sewer in a Manhattan garment factory. In the past, I was always a boss of my own business and I brought some money to start the business. Yet I was also new to New York and wanted to familiarize myself with the New York garment industry. So, I began to work at the factory as a sewer. I already had sewing skills, and due to my previous immigration experience, I quickly adjusted. Soon, I became a manager in another Korean factory. I got paid 1,400 dollars a week.

After one and half years, she opened her own garment factory and sewed clothes that were ordered by large American companies, such as Macy's and J.C. Penny, until 2008. Both Mr. Ban and Ms. Baek were quickly incorporated into the New York labor market without the assistance of immediate personal networks. Both of them testify that they found their first jobs in New York through Korean newspaper job ads. Due to the already well-developed garment industry, where they could utilize their previous experiences and skills, they did not have much difficulty in their economic resettlement. Just as Koreans who went to Latin America with previous experience in the Korean garment industry had occupational advantages, Korean remigrants could utilize their personal resources usefully in the New York garment industry. In addition, during their time in Latin America, Korean remigrants acquired not only relevant business experiences but also Spanish skills. Korean remigrants could utilize their Spanish skills and previous working experience both as employers and employees. Particularly suitable for managers of a Latino workforce, Korean remigrants had a better chance of employment than Koreans who came to the U.S. directly from Korea, and also quickly ascended the ranks of the garment industry, even when they started as a sewer.

Occupational Changes in the New York Labor Market

Among thirty-one respondents who were engaged in the Latin America garment business,²⁾ 77.4 percent (twenty four out of thirty one) changed their occupation or business upon remigration to New York. Some factors that effected these transformations include more diversified niches in New York's Korean economy, the climate of the New York garment industry, the amount of their capital and the differences in the industrial systems between Latin America and New York. Current

new businesses among Korean remigrants who were previously engaged in the Latin American garment industry include work in nail salons, restaurants, dry cleaners, deli shops, hardware stores, gift shops, liquor stores, and employment agencies. Korean immigrants in New York have developed more diverse types of niche businesses. One of the reasons for this is the large size of the Korean community in New York compared to those in Latin American countries. This has led to business opportunities in various Korean enterprises catering to co-ethnic consumers. Korean immigrants who were already absorbed into the small business sector in Latin America tend to continue engaging in entrepreneurship, partly due to their lack of U.S.-education and English proficiency.

Difference in the Structure of the Garment Industry in Latin America and New York

Korean immigrants in Latin America have developed a niche clothing market that caters to mainly lower- or middle-class customers. Korean immigrants manufacture affordable clothes that are popular in the local markets. With less start-up capital, Korean immigrants can begin engaging in garment manufacturing or mechanizing processes. In New York, however, structural differences often prevented many respondents from engaging in the clothing industry. The Korean remigrants realized that operating retailing or wholesaling businesses required a much larger amount of capital and involved higher risks. Moreover, since residences and workplaces are strictly separated, rent and stricter labor regulations can be significant problems in New York. In the highly industrialized and saturated New York garment industry, small-scale garment makers cannot compete with mainstream clothing companies or imported goods.

Moreover, even respondents who have continued in the New York garment business concentrate on sewing companies, often serving as subcontractors for larger U.S. companies. Won Suk, who was born in 1971, came to New York in 1989. He compares different experiences regarding his family's garment business before and after remigration to New York.

In Brazil, we had a two-story building. We sold the clothes on the first floor. On the second floor, we purchased and cut textiles and did sewing. Some of the sewing works were sent to other Korean factories. My father began his business from sewing, and then, wholesaling, and engaged in both manufacturing and wholesaling in the end. Yet, in New York, we did sewing only for American manufacturers, like sewing the goods that were sold at Macy's.

Ae-Ra, another remigrant from Brazil in her 40s, runs a wedding shop in Long Island. Her accounts resonate with Won Suk's observations.

Koreans' positions in the Brazilian garment industry are like those of established Jewish businesses in New York. Korean Brazilians have already taken over the garment industry and control all the parts of the industry. They deal with textiles and engage in the manufacturing process, such as designing, cutting, and sewing, to whole/retail sales. However, there are limitations that the Korean remigrants face when breaking into the mainstream clothing industry in New York. Even when garment manufacturing was booming in New York, the only options open to most Korean businesses was control of sewing parts as subcontractors.

In Latin America and the U.S., Korean remigrants have taken different positions in the larger hierarchy of the local garment industry. According to Soyer (2005: 18), in

the last decades of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first, large retailers and designers with their own labels dominated the New York garment industry, together with some firms with established brand names. Although many of them were based in New York, they seldom do any manufacturing themselves. They preferred to maintain flexibility and keep costs down in a highly competitive market, letting contractors do the work for them and sending more and more of their orders overseas. Some Koreans, who participated in the Latin American garment industry, have continued engaging in the same business, mostly concentrating on sewing companies. Depending on the local context of ethnic division of labor within the garment business, Korean remigrants utilize their previous experiences in different ways and degrees.

Historical Shifts and Their Aftermath

As pointed out above, the companies eager to reduce production costs began to relocate operations first to other American cities and then to foreign locations. By 1996, the apparel production in New York had slipped to only 7.9 percent of manufacturing employment and 2.2 percent total employment citywide (Fernandez-Kelly 2006: 13-14). Since around 2005, the garment manufacturing in New York has sharply declined. Due to a series of free trade agreements introduced in the 1990s and the liberation of quotas (Shin 2009: 322), cheaper textiles and apparels have been imported. In addition, American garment companies began relocating their production sources abroad. This structural change adversely affected Korean-owned garment businesses in New York, since most of them were dependent on the demands of large American companies for their sewing works. Some of them decided to close or relocate their factories to foreign countries such as Mexico, or

other Central American countries. Ms. Baek, who started as a sewer to become a garment factory owner, recalls,

We started with one factory in 1991 and later it became two. We did the sewing for 28 American companies, and didn't close the factories until we got orders from only three companies in 2008. The companies didn't give us work anymore. Moreover, it was almost impossible for us to compete with the cheaper clothes from China and the lower labor costs of Chinese immigrants in New York.

Mr. Seo, one of the core members of the Korean Apparel Manufacturers Association of Greater New York (KAMA) describes the recent situation with Korean garment business owners as follows:

There are about 100 members in KAMA, which is a huge decrease from 500 at the peak of the garment industry in the mid-1980s. Even the size of each factory has shrunk, from 100 to 10 - 20 employees on average. Some of those remaining facilities represent so-called sample rooms, where designers transform their work into a select number of clothes, which are charged a little higher per piece. In the past, not only high-end goods but also medium-priced ones were locally manufactured, but, nowadays, only fast fashion style clothes are manufactured in New York. The relatively small number of 300 pieces for one style are made abroad.

Despite the decline in the overall New York garment manufacturing sector, some respondents (3.9 percent) are still engaged in garment-related businesses. They include transnational sub-contractors, small-scale clothing store owners, and embroidering factories. Many Koreans who used to be engaged in the New York garment industry retired or changed their business. One type of small business that is

especially popular among Koreans with former garment industry experience is the dry cleaning business.

Dry Cleaners

In the global city of New York, Korean entrepreneurs provide services to customers of diverse racial and class backgrounds. One of the popular businesses among Korean entrepreneurs is dry cleaning. Min (2008: 37) mentions that “[a]ccording to the two Korean dry cleaners’ associations in New York and New Jersey areas, there are approximately 3,000 Korean-owned dry cleaners in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area, accounting for about one-half of all dry cleaners in the area.” 11.7 percent of respondents have engaged in the dry cleaning business. Because of its stability, it is a popular business not limited only to Korean remigrants from Latin America, but rather open to Koreans from any background. There are varieties of dry cleaning businesses in terms of size, location, and customers’ racial compositions ranging from a small mom-and-pop store operated by a couple in the Bronx serving racial minorities, to one run by a Korean couple with about 10 Latino employees in Rye catering to more affluent white customers. Some respondents chose to engage in dry cleaning because of their previous experiences in the same business in Latin America. Regardless of the reasons for their choice of the dry cleaning business, those remigrants have some advantages in the business. First, they include seasoned entrepreneurs. Even though not specifically involved in dry cleaning, most of them were engaged in small business in Latin America. Their previous experiences would be helpful in their entrepreneurial activities in New York.

Second, Korean remigrants came to New York with continuous personal networks largely composed of former small-business owners in Latin America. Earlier and

more established Korean remigrants to New York often provide later remigrants with business advice. Information on the availability of good business spots are often circulated within specific communities or circles of friends. Third and most importantly, remigrants are familiar and knowledgeable about clothing, which is helpful in the dry cleaning business. Most of them also have sewing skills, so that they can save the salary of hiring additional employees by doing the alterations themselves. As his second U.S. occupation, Mr. Ban ran a dry cleaning business in Manhattan for several years.

All of a sudden, my clothing company in Manhattan decided to relocate its factories to Mexico. They wanted me to follow, but I couldn't. I wanted to be with my family here. So I needed to change my career and decided to operate a dry cleaning business. I felt familiar with the clothing and I didn't want to do something completely different from my previous career. My knowledge of the clothes was helpful with the business.

Fourth, as in other Korean businesses, owners of dry cleaning establishments often employ Latino workers. Their Spanish skills are particularly helpful in their communications with employees, as well as their interactions with Spanish-speaking customers.

III. Conclusion

The high concentration of Korean immigrants to Latin America in the garment industry is well known, and some Koreans came to the United States with previous immigration and professional experiences of making and selling clothing in Latin American countries. This article examined how relevant garment-business experiences affected remigrants' economic adjustment processes in the New York area and categorized Korean remigrants into three groups according to the continuities and changes in their involvement in the garment industry during transnational migration. First, some remigrants did not engage in the Latin American garment industry but later entered the New York garment industry. These Koreans were influenced either by the new contacts they made after arriving in New York or by the personal network they forged in Latin America and reconnected with in New York. Koreans already in the New York garment business facilitated the new remigrants' entry into the industry. Through personal connections, remigrants secured job opportunities and acquired the professional knowledge necessary to start their own businesses.

Second, some Koreans who participated in the Latin American garment industry continued in the same business, mostly in sewing companies. Those who arrived in New York at the peak times of garment manufacturing industry and those with some capital successfully operated garment factories in New York. Korean remigrants utilized their Spanish skills and previous work experiences as both employers and employees. When labor demand in garment manufacturing was high, Korean immigrants could easily land jobs as skilled workers, such as experienced sewing-machine operators and pattern-makers. Especially suited as managers of Latino workforces, Korean remigrants had better employment opportunities than Koreans who came to the United States directly from Korea.

Third, some respondents who were engaged in the Latin American garment business changed their occupation or business upon migrating to New York. Factors driving these transformations included the greater diversity of niches in New York's Korean economy, the climate of the New York garment industry, the amount of the remigrants' capital, and the differences in the industrial systems of Latin America and New York. Due to the decline in the overall New York garment-manufacturing sector, only a few respondents were still engaged in garment-related businesses. Cheaper imported apparels and the relocation of American companies' production sources abroad gave some remigrants no choice but to close their sewing companies or relocated them to other countries. Many Koreans once engaged in the New York garment industry have retired or moved into service-sector businesses. For example, in dry cleaning, remigrants' familiarity with and knowledge of clothing were helpful, and by utilizing their sewing skills, they could do alterations themselves. After remigration to New York for various reasons, Korean immigrants from Latin America have experienced diversified patterns of economic incorporation into the host society. They have used their previous economic experiences in Latin America in different ways to adapt to specific local conditions, such as historical changes in the New York garment industry.

Notes

- 1) Among 102 respondents, four pairs of interviewees were related. Thus, the total number of households that I interviewed accounts for 98.
- 2) Among them, two respondents have retired to New York. Twenty one have engaged only in non-garment business since their relocation to New York; three have initially tried to be engaged in the New York garment business but changed to another business.

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국문초록

중남미출신 한인 재이민자들의 국가 간 직업변화에 관한 고찰: 뉴욕 지역에서의 의류 관련업 종사를 중심으로

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본 논문은 중남미에서 뉴욕으로 재이민한 한인들의 국가 간 직업변화에 관한 연구다. 그들의 의류업과 이와 관련된 드라이클리닝업계 종사를 중심으로 고찰하였다. 본 연구를 위해서, 102명의 중남미출신 재미 한인들을 대상으로 심층인터뷰를 실시하였고, 그 자료를 활용하였다. 중남미출신 재이민자들과 관련된 기존 연구에서는 이들이 국가 간 연속적 이주 과정에서도 지속적으로 각 나라에서 의류업에 종사하고 있는 현상에 주목하였고, 특히 브라질출신 한인들이 미국으로 재이민한 후에 로스앤젤레스의 의류업 발전에 공헌한 점에 중점을 둔 연구가 있다. 이에 반해, 본 논문에서는 뉴욕 경제구조의 맥락에 집중하여, 재이민자들의 재적응 과정을 살펴보았다. 특히, 이전의 의류업 관련 직업경험이 재이민자들의 뉴욕에서의 재적응에 어떤 영향을 미쳤는지를 탐구했다. 이를 위해, 연구참여자들을 초국가적 이주 과정에서의 의류업의 종사유무에 따라서, 세 개의 집단으로 분류하였다. 첫 번째로, 중남미에서는 타업종에 종사했지만 재이주 이후에 의류업에 종사하게 된 경우가 있었고, 또한 중남미에서부터 계속적으로 의류업에 종사하는 한인들이 있었는데 뉴욕에서는 대부분 봉제업에 집중하였다. 연구참여자들 중에는 뉴욕으로 재이민한 후에 직업을 변경한 경우가 있었고, 특히 이들이 선호한 직업으로는 드라이클리닝업을 꼽을 수 있다. 재이민자들은 중남미에서 습득한 경제적 경험을 활용하여, 뉴욕 의류업의 역사적 변화와 같은 특수한 로컬적 상황에 따라서 다양한 방식으로 재적응 하였다.

주제어: 중남미, 의류업, 재이민, 뉴욕, 드라이클리닝

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