

Patterns of Adjustment in Shopping and Food Consumption of North Korean Defectors (Saeteomins) in South Korea from Extreme Poverty to Affluent Society

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Abstract: North Korean defectors (saeteomins) are not fully capitalizing their newly-found freedoms to buy, to own, and to consume in a choice-loaded South Korea. The study reveals saeteomins are having some difficulty in adjusting to their new marketing environments in the South, which is one of Asia's richest countries. They experience discrimination in market places and ignorance of brand names, all of which discourage them from going to modern supermarkets or even to traditional Korean markets. Instead, they shop for food items in nearby expensive neighborhood stores. The saeteomins eat rice two times more than they did in North Korea while the consumption of potatoes, corn, and wheat flour has decreased substantially.

Key words: North Korea; defection; saeteomin; food consumption

JEL codes: D91, P46

1. Introduction

There are two Koreas: North Korea and South Korea. The former has been a centrally planned communist system that has brought a dismally failed economy to 23 million people, many of whom have been starving, while the latter has developed into an advanced, market-oriented country that ranks among the world's largest economies. An increasing number of North Koreans are leaving their homeland to seek better lives in South Korea or elsewhere. The overall total stands at now more than 23,500 in South Korea only (MOUonekorea 2012).

1.1 Geography of North Korea

North Korea offers a unique opportunity of insight into the geography of the region due to its proximity to emerging global markets; China and Russia through which the country can be extended to Europe and other economic interests. To guide effectively, an internal administrative map of North Korea, Figure 1 shows three countries adjacent by land; China, Russia, and South Korea.

North Korea shares the longest border with China, 1,353 km (85% of the 1607 km of North Korea's land line) and Russia is connected for 16 km (1%) at the tip of the northern end. The two Koreas are demarcated 238 km (14%). The country also has two seas: the Sea of Japan in the east and the Yellow Sea in the west, bounded by

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2,495 km of the two costal lines combined.

From Figure 1, we learn about the administrative division of the country into nine provinces or states and one special city, Pyongyang, that is the capital of the country. There are four provinces closely adjacent to China; Hamgyong-Bukdo, Yangang-Do, Chagang-Do, and Pyongan-Bukdo. These four provinces can be called “northern states” while Pyongyang is located in the southern part of North Korea.

2. Objective of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate how North Korean defectors adjust to their new consumer lives in South Korea focusing on food consumption habits and food shopping patterns. Given the limited right of choices, the people in North Korea can hardly be called “consumers” as they have few choices in daily life from shopping outlets to product items, not to mention such things as our five basic rights of freedom: speech, religion, assembly, press, and petition. After relocating to South Korea, the new living environment of North Korean defectors is a “foreign world” to them: new political system of democracy, new economic system built on consumer choice and consumer satisfaction. Entirely new to them is the social system of South Korea and the consumer culture loaded with heavy foreign products and global brands. Promotional information of products and services are new things they must learn from scratch for their new lives in South Korea.



Figure 1 North Korea Administrative Divisions (University of Texas 2005)

3. Justification

While the number of studies of how the North Korean defectors dealt with human rights and social adjustment are abundant to date, only a limited number of studies have focused on their consumer lives and shopping patterns. A pioneering study in Korean language of the defectors' consumer lives were published by Rhee and Rha (2007) who reported that North Korean defectors in general neither believe in consumer rights nor do they function as rational consumers; as a result, they are reluctant to claim their consumer rights, among several findings. The narrative study interviewing 11 defectors found that the North Korean defectors lack an understanding of an effective consumption concept as a consumer entity and consequently rely heavily upon limited shopping outlets such as traditional Korean markets and Internet shopping malls instead of trying out large department stores.

The number of North Korean defectors (saeteomins) in South Korea has been increasing steadily during the last decade, except a slight decrease recently because of the extreme surveillance of the new leadership of North Korea. The number will continue to increase in the future unless the North Korean economy reverses its course from poverty to prosperity. The latest number is estimated to be as high as 23,500 and it is highly likely to increase in large numbers as various non-government organizations find ways to assist 100,000 to 300,000 North Korean refugees outside North Korea that are seeking to enter mostly South Korea or the United States (Ko, Chung, and Oh, 2002; Chang, Haggard and Noland, 2006)

4. Methodology of the Study

4.1 Research Setting

The study was conducted in Daegu, the third largest city of South Korea. Since the division of Korea into two states, sporadic defections of North Koreans had taken place. However, starting from the 1990s, increasing numbers of North Koreans have been crossing the border to China with the ultimate goal of reaching the more affluent South Korea or the United States.

In Korea, it proved surprisingly difficult to meet any North Korean defectors that are willing to allow the survey interviews. Though the authors approached them through an intermediary, they faced a stone wall in conducting the interviews. Very few were willing to open the door to them. It was very much like a situation that a newspaper reporter experienced years ago in which he said none of the North Korean defectors would talk to him unless he paid them for the interview (Ho, 2005). He explains that the defectors think they have nothing to gain, often much to lose, by talking. They dread having their lives exposed to South Koreans who already look down on them for their inability to function in a free and capitalistic society.

A capable North Korean defector was made available to act as an intermediary for help and the author managed to interview 28 defectors residing in Daegu, a southern city of 3 million people, the third largest in South Korea to secure 27 effective sample points. In contrast to interviews conducted in the U.S. where few of the interviewees expected monetary rewards in general, the author had to bring a box of grapes or fruits to entice the interviewees' cooperation.

4.2 Definition of Saeteomin (North Korean Defector)

Several different terms are used to refer to the group of refugees from North Korea: talbukja, North Korean person, saeteomin, and North Korean defector. Talbukja and North Korean defectors are proper for the literal

expression meaning “the people who escaped North Korea” or fled North Korea. However, this report avoids the two expressions as they are loaded with some political implications. At the same time, North Korean person is too general to be used for the specific study. Saeteomin is a choice for two reasons. First, the expression means “people newly settled” or “people in a new land”. Second, in January 2005, South Korea’s Ministry of Unification announced the use of saeteomin for its future applications.

4.3 Parallel Translation of the Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire for the study was designed in English with three parts: two identification questions of the saeteomins, nine demographic questions, and fifteen research questions on shopping outlet choice, food consumption patterns, and issues related to shopping experiences in South Korea. The shopping experience question was asked in an open-ended question form.

An English version was translated into Korean with the help of the said intermediary, and the Korean version was translated back to English by the author to be objective. There were some Korean language adjustments by the intermediary because of the different nuances between South Korean and North Korean dialects.

5. Sample Characteristics of the Study

5.1 Gender of the Respondents

The twenty-seven saeteomins interviewed for the study are composed of four males and twenty-three females as shown in Table 1. The lop-sided gender distribution is not a surprise at all considering that the majority of the saeteomins (75% in 2006) were females. In the early days, the defectors from North Korea were predominantly males but in recent years, the majority has been females.

Table 1 Sample Characteristics

Gender	Number (%)
Male	4 (14.8%)
Female	23 (85.2%)
Total	27 (100%)

5.2 Home in North Korea

The majority of the respondents for this study were female saeteomins. They were more likely to stay home as housewives and were therefore available for interview during the day. One noticeable common characteristic of the group was their home province in North Korea from which they fled. Seventeen out of the twenty seven came from Hamgyong-Bukto. This lop-sided statistic skewed toward one province may cause one to view the data set as a non-representative sample but it is understandable as to why 63 percent of them are from Hamgyong-Bukto. First, Hamgyong-Bukto as shown in Figure 1 is closely adjacent to China separated by the Tumen River of which upstream is shallow enough to allow people to cross over to the Chinese side (So, 2009; McCurry, 2012; Harlan, 2013; and Rajvanishi, 2013). Second, the North Korean government restricts the freedom of geographic mobility. They are required to report any relocation of their residence. This means that people in any non-bordered province will have little chance to run away from North Korea. North Koreans residing on or near the Chinese border seem to have the advantage when it comes to fleeing their own country.

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Table 2 Home Province from North Korea

Province	Distribution
Hamgyong-Bukdo	17 (63%)
Hamgyong-Namdo	2 (7.4%)
Yanggang-Do	2 (7.4%)
Pyungan-Namdo	2 (7.4%)
Pyungan-Bukdo	1 (3.7%)
Hwanghae-Bukdo	1 (3.7%)
Kangwon-Do	1 (3.7%)
<u>Chagang-Do</u>	<u>1 (3.7%)</u>
Total	27 (100%)

5.3 Marital Status

One of the most puzzling answers to the authors was about their marital status. A common answer to the question of marital status was “I cannot answer” or “Not sure”. Table 3 shows that half responded as “Married” and the other half as “Not sure”. The information in Table 4 offers a clue to this riddle. Those North Korean defectors interviewed in fact spent four years and seven months on average outside of North Korea before reaching their ultimate destination, South Korea. These females with a mean age of 37.8 years face extreme hardship to survive and were likely tempted to rely on different men who could have fathered children most commonly while hiding in China but at the same time the females are still married to the men left behind in North Korea. Because of these unusual circumstances, the female respondents’ answers to the marital status question became ambiguous. This problem extends further complication when they find a suitable man in South Korea whom they are willing to marry. The South Korean government cannot issue a new marriage license until they receive the divorce judgment from North Korea whose court will not even consider issuing such a judgment for the defectors. No Korea approves the other Korea as a legitimate Korea.

Table 3 Marital Status

Marital Status	Number (%)
Married	13 (48.1%)
Not sure	13 (48.1%)
Missing	1 (3.7%)
Total	27 (100%)

5.4 Many Years of Astray

The saeteomins in the study sample seem to spend more than four and half years somewhere outside of North Korea before reaching South Korea, as shown in Table 4. Obviously many of them would spend 55 months more likely in China, as shown in Figure 1, where they can cross the border easier and wait for the right opportunity to come to South Korea. These 55 months are critical period as they are under the mercy of the Chinese policy in which some Chinese police could become harsh against the North Korean defectors by sending them back to North Korea in which case they will be shot to death as they are national traitors as specified in the North Korean Criminal Justice (Kim, 2003).

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Table 4 Years Away From North Korea and Family Characteristics

Years away from North Korea before reaching South Korea	55 months
Years lived in South Korea	36 months
Mean age of the sample group	37.8 years
Mean family size in South Korea	2.7 members

5.5 Education and Occupation

Table 5 illustrates the educational background of the saeteomins in the sample respondents. More than half of the sample North Korean defectors had received a high school education in North Korea, but once they reached South Korea, they tended to reenter the educational process. Eighty-five percent (85.2%) of them had attained 2 years of college or less in North Korea; 4 years of college or higher education level accounted for only about 15%. However, after moving to South Korea, they tended to increase their educations substantially and now fifty-five percent of them have a 4 year college education or more.

The educational backgrounds of the North Korean defectors are reflected to a certain degree in the occupations they hold in South Korea. Forty-four percent (44%) of the sample respondents were laborers while they were in North Korea but many of them went to school (37%) after arriving in South Korea. The laborer category was the most commonly declared occupation prior to arrival in South Korea. Table 6 shows that the number of the laborers dwindled from 12 to 7, but few have moved upward into white-collar jobs after they settled in South Korea. Many saeteomins are still continuing their education through attending colleges.

Table 5 Education

Education	In N. Korea	Cumulative (%)	In S. Korea	Cumulative (%)
High School	15 (55.6%)	55.6%	6 (22.2%)	2.2%
2-year College	8 (29.6%)	85.2%	6 (22.2%)	44.4%
4-year College	3 (11.1%)	96.3%	11 (40.7%)	85.1%
Graduate School	1(3.7%)	100.0%	4 (14.9%)	100.0%
Total	27		27	

The information shown in Table 5 shows a dramatic improvement in their education level from more than the half of the sample group. They had high school education (55.6%) while they were in North Korea, and after three years in South Korea, the majority of them enhanced their education and obtained the four year college degree (40.7%). However, the benefits of their educational accomplishments are not clearly evidenced in Table 6. Those who were laborers in North Korea (44.4%) have not moved up to hold better jobs yet. It is evident that the three year period is not long enough to move up in their occupation in the adjustment process.

Table 6 Occupation

Type of Occupation	in North Korea	In South Korea
Laborer	12 (44.4%)	7 (25.9%)
Student	1 (3.7%)	10 (37.0%)
Office Worker	7 (25.9%)	4 (14.8%)
Health Worker	5 (18.5%)	2 (7.4%)
House wife	0 (0.0%)	2 (7.4%)
<u>Missing</u>	<u>2 (7.4%)</u>	<u>2 (7.4%)</u>
Total	27	27

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In summary, the majority of the sample group is composed of females originating from Hamgyong-Bukto with a mean age of 37.8 years old (male 35.5 and female 38.2) and many of them have been continuing their education in South Korea in an effort to claim more skill-based employment leaving laborer jobs behind.

Table 7 Number of North Korean Defectors into South Korea

Year	1990- 1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Male		90	179	564	514	468	625	422	510	570	609		
Female		58	133	479	625	813	1269	961	1509	1974	2200		
Total entered	<100/year	148	312	1043	1139	1281	1894	1383	2019	2544	2809	2927	2376

Source: Ministry of Unification, South Korea; Chosun Ilbo, Joongangdaily.joins.com.

6. Analysis of Shopping Outlets Used

Upon their arrival in South Korea, one of the most dramatic changes the saeteomins experienced was the freedom of choice they were now given as a consumer. Under their previous lives in the planned economic system, they were hardly called “consumers” because they were supposed to be supplied with almost anything necessary for life, from housing to food. If needed, though limited, they could purchase items at the government stores with the wages or salaries they earned. They consumed the products produced under the government plans and bought them at the price set by the government, visiting stores or cooperatives designated by the government. As a result, there was little or no room for personal decisions of products to choose, places of purchase, or prices to negotiate, not to mention the absence of promotional information since there were no private enterprises. Instead, rather than promotion, they were bombarded with propaganda.

Table 8 Shopping Outlets in N. Korea

	Jang Ma Dang	Self-Supply	Relative Help	State Store
Shop/Source	24 (89%)	14 (52%)	14 (52%)	n/a
Missing	3 (11%)	13 (48%)	13 (48%)	n/a
Total	27 (100%)	27 (100%)	27 (100%)	n/a

Unlike their lives in North Korea where no shopping outlets were available other than Jang Ma Dang, similar to farmers market and state stores as shown in Table 8, now the saeteomins in South Korea have a number of shopping outlets to choose from; modern department stores, general discount stores, traditional Korean market where varieties of specialty stores are densely congregated, small neighborhood stores, home shopping networks on television, Internet stores, and even mobile trucking stores to name only the major ones, as shown in Table 9. Understanding their shopping outlet preferences is important because each outlet targets different segments of consumers with different products and price levels.

Information in Table 9 reveals clear choices of shopping outlets by the saeteomins in the study. Among the six outlet choices, almost sixty percent (59.3%) declare small neighborhood stores as the first choice to shop, followed by large discount stores with twenty six percent (25.9%) and traditional Korean markets with fifteen percent (14.8%). It is surprising to find the department stores, most of which are highly modernized and visibly westernized in display with product assortment, are far behind in the saeteomins’ preference as a shopping outlet.

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Table 9 Preference of Shopping Outlets in S. Korea

Preference	Department Store	Large Discount Store	Traditional (Korean) Market	Small Neighborhood Store	Home Shopping Networks	Online Shopping
1st	1 (3.7%)	7 (25.9%)	4 (14.8%)	16 (59.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
2nd	3 (11.1%)	4 (14.8%)	7 (25.9%)	6 (22.2%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)
3rd	4 (14.8%)	5 (18.5%)	4 (14.8%)	3 (11.1%)	2 (7.4%)	0 (0.0%)
4th	6 (22.2%)	5 (18.5%)	2 (7.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (7.4%)	0 (0.0%)
5th	2 (7.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (11.1%)	2 (7.4%)
6th	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (7.4%)	3 (11.1%)
Missing	11 (40.7%)	6 (22.2%)	10 (37.0%)	2 (7.4%)	17 (62.9%)	21 (77.7%)
Total	27 (100%)	27 (100%)	27 (100%)	27 (100%)	27 (100%)	27 (100%)

The preference of small neighborhood stores and large discount stores over traditional Korean markets (hereafter called traditional markets) and department stores by the saeteomins merits further investigation because our finding is contrary to the common conception that the saeteomins that have limited income would prefer to shop at traditional markets where the majority of shoppers can save money through haggling and negotiation of purchase price. To help explain this puzzling question, Table 10 for brand name awareness and Table 11 for identifying shopping barriers have been generated. The two tables are designed to offer some insight into why the saeteomins prefer to shop at the small neighborhood stores in which the products are most likely priced higher than those available in the traditional markets. Here the readers are advised that the information in Table 10 was collected with closed-multiple choice questions while that of Table 11 is reorganized from the answers obtained by the open-ended question, "Please state the most pressing barrier in shopping practice in South Korea."

Table 10 shows that a large percentage of the respondents (46.2%) are either not familiar at all with the brand names of the products in the market or only partially familiar. This is understandable because the saeteomins are in the process of acculturation into the South Korean culture that is new to them. The two Koreas have been separated for more than half-century since 1953. This unfamiliarity might cause the saeteomin consumers to feel less decisive in purchase decisions of many products and to have high level of cognitive dissonance. Therefore they are unsure of expected shopping outcomes ranging from a product choice, the price paid, and the market they visit.

Table 10 Degree of Familiarity of Brand Names in South Korea

Degree of Familiarity	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not Familiar At all	4	15.4	15.4
Little Familiar	8	30.8	46.2
Half Familiar	10	38.4	84.6
Completely Familiar	4	15.4	100.0
Missing	1		
Total	27	100.0%	

The uncertain feeling of a product choice may be aggravated by shopping barriers they may have until the time they are fully assimilated or submerged into the South Korean culture. Table 11 lists some major shopping barriers the saeteomin consumers face in their daily lives. The most serious barriers seem to stem from languages; foreign languages—mostly English—as well as the Korean language itself.

With respect to foreign language, the first most inhibiting factor in their shopping process is foreign-worded brand names. English in particular is an insurmountable challenge to many saeteomins who already feel like a

foreigner in South Korea. In South Korea, English has been the first foreign language required throughout their academic curricula from the seventh grade. In recent years, it has been the government policy that all children will start English lessons from the earliest stage of childhood education. However, in North Korea it has been a different story. Speaking English was condemned or scolded except for selected persons on unique occasions. In a nutshell, most North Koreans have little knowledge of English. Many children in South Korea are growing up in an English-familiar environment in contrast to the prohibited language in North Korea. When one of the authors visited a saeteomin's household for an interview, he learned that the child in the eighth grade has an excellent academic performance in every course but English.

Another reason related to the foreign-worded brand names is a trend in South Korea that an increasing number of new products or services are branded in a foreign name, more likely in English, French or German. For example, during the first half of 2008, 74 percent of newly-constructed apartment complexes were named in a foreign language. The belief was that the foreign language branded apartments were higher quality and therefore could be priced higher (Kim, 2009). Innumerable Korean words have been rapidly replaced by English words and now some parents have difficulty in communicating with their college educated children whose vocabularies are full of English or foreign words.

The second most inhibiting factor is the Korean language itself and their accent. Even though Korean is the common language used by the people on Korean peninsula, the political and physical separation of more than a half century has resulted in a significant difference in pronunciation and accent. The vendors in traditional markets or department stores quickly recognize saeteomins by accent and they take advantage by charging higher prices or providing less quality service, seemingly practicing discrimination against the saeteomins.

Table 11 Major Shopping Barriers in South Korea

Types of Shopping Barrier	Frequency	Valid Percent
Foreign words in brand names	4	28.6
North Korean accent	3	21.4
Unfamiliar with brand names	3	21.4
Lack of market information	1	7.2
No refund or return allowed	1	7.2
No major problems	2	14.2
Missing	13	
Total	27	100.0

The uncomfortable state of mind and the unfamiliar market information seem to keep the saeteomins from going to the traditional markets and the modern department stores and instead they confine them close to their residence by shopping at the nearby neighborhood or convenience stores despite the higher prices. The frequent visits to the convenience stores may build personal relationships between the store owner and the lonely saeteomins, establishing a comfort zone between them.

7. Analysis of Adjustments in Food Consumption

7.1 Food Expenditures

The information in Table 12 shows a stark contrast in food consumption patterns of the saeteomins before

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and after their defection to South Korea. First, in North Korea they had to spend almost all their money for food items which amounted to be 84.78% compared to 63.08% in South Korea. There is a significant difference in grain consumption before and after their defection. However, the poor economic situation worsened by draughts and flood in the 1990s caused North Korea to be dependent on foreign assistance in food, provided mainly by Japan, South Korea, and the United States in the recent decades. Among many, one estimate claimed as many as two million people died of famine (Kim, 2010) and another study showed a dramatic impact of the food shortage on nutritional supply on the North Korean children. The study revealed that children of seven years old in North Korea are seven centimeters shorter in height than those of the same age in South Korea.

Table 12 Food Expenditures in North Korea vs. South Korea

% in N. Korea	Category	% in S. Korea	Difference in %	Significance
73.56	Food (grain)	47.08	-26.48	0.0001
11.22	Food (non-grain)	15.00	+ 3.78	0.3850
9.71	Personal grooming	18.00	+ 8.29	
State Provision	Housing	State Provision		
	Appliances	2.62	+ 2.62	
	Furniture	3.00	+ 3.00	
	Education	10.44	+10.44	
5.51	Medicine	3.86		
100.00	Total	100.00		

Second, housing was provided in North Korea while it is subsidized in South Korea. Ideally, in North Korea, food, housing, and clothing are to be supplied by the state. In North Korea, a family is simply allowed to use the housing they are occupying because no property is allowed to be owned. The quality of housing allocated is determined by the person's status and party affiliation. As of now, there are five levels; from the single-luxury house for people holding high ranks in the government to the one or two-room public apartment for the working class laborers.

Third, the information in Table 12 shows there are no family resources allocated for appliances, furniture, or education in North Korea. This seems to indicate that the North Koreans have no choice but to be acquiescent to the government policies in their daily consumer lives. However, in their new consumer lives in South Korea, they are exercising the freedom of choice even in education, from which they can exalt their social standing by attaining new skills.

7.2 Food Items Consumed

Among the four categories of food items studied (rice, potatoes, corn, and wheat), the most significant difference is shown in rice consumption. The other three items show a decrease in consumption while rice consumption has increased more than two times for the saeteomins in South Korea. Rice is the most revered food item in Korea as well as throughout the countries in Asia, including Japan and China. Rice is the primary common staple food in Japan. In Chinese culture, rice is the most important grain, of greater value than pearl or jade. In Korean diet, rice is synonymous with a meal, and rice is a must for every meal and every eating occasion. Further, by using the amount of rice possessed, the family's wealth was gauged.

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Table 13 Food Items Consumed in North Korea vs. South Korea

% in N. Korea	Food Item	% in S. Korea	Correlation	Significance
17.79	Rice	41.21	0.038	0.000
21.73	Potatoes	17.79	0.720	0.374
37.76	Corn	21.26	0.579	0.094
22.72	Flour (Wheat)	19.74	0.226	0.924
100.00	Total	100.00		

8. Findings and Conclusion

Simply relying on the 5000 years of long history as a single race and ethnicity until the forced division of the country into two Koreas; South and North by the Korean conflict in 1951, many pundits predicted most saeteomins would assimilate easily into the South Korean culture and capitalistic society but the findings in our study reveals quite opposite in that there are substantial barriers in consumer life as well as personal discrimination that they must overcome (Kim, 2005). Considering the hardships they experienced in North Korea, where eight out of ten defectors had witnessed seeing a person dying from starvation (Chosun, 2009), one might think they are far happier despite their feeling of alienation from Korean society.

They seem to avoid interacting with the general population; instead they cling together with other saeteomins which results in a collective lack of market information related to shopping tasks. This predicament may cause them to shop on television through home shopping networks and the Internet where their ignorance of foreign brands and North Korean accents are minimally exposed.

We may raise a question of why the neighborhood convenience stores are the first most common outlet. There is a possibility that the saeteomins might have a different concept of money and budget from the ordinary persons in South Korea. Still the saeteomins are paid by the Korean government as much as 350,000 won (\$300) per month. They may be less sensitive on the value of money to disregard the price difference between traditional markets for bargain and higher-priced convenience stores.

Another issue to address here is for Korean policy makers to understand the assimilation process of the saeteomins in Korea and include the consumption aspects of their lives into the government assistant program. Food consumption is such a huge portion of our daily life that much of our happiness is hinged on the outcome of shopping decisions ranging from product choice to price paid to the level of satisfaction from the consumption. Consumer life is a significant factor for the happiness of a person overall. Isolation and personal discrimination faced by the saeteomins is not a positive sign of their adjustment in the new Korean society, not to mention the horrible incidence of the Boston marathon bombing by the two brothers one of whom used to say, "I don't have a single American friend." (Bella, 2013).

The Boston Marathon bombing incident is of course too extreme to be a good example here. However, unhappy process of adjustment by the saeteomins could create havoc in South Korea. The short distance between the South and the North Korea could offer an easy reentry opportunity to North Korea by any grumbling saeteomins. North Korean authorities can easily use the repatriates for propaganda purposes which will be exceptionally disruptive in the saeteomin community in South Korea as well as damagingly discouraging those who are yearning for the unification of one Korea.

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