

Transclave Economy:  
Immigrant Business Survival in An Era of Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

The ethnic enclave economy – the spatial clustering of immigrant enterprises where immigrant owners employ workers of their own ethnic or migration background – has been portrayed as a protected labor market where immigrant business owners and workers build beneficial or exploitative relationships. Scholars’ characterizations of the ethnic enclave economy have been dichotomized. Optimists argue that it allows immigrants to avert labor market discrimination and racism in a host society. Specifically, immigrant workers can find entry-level jobs with ethnic enterprises despite their limited socioeconomic capital, while employers take advantage of easy access to cheap, loyal workforces. Pessimists, in contrast, claim that this enclave effect is insignificant. They point out that workers are underpaid and that the heavy reliance on ethnic ties hampers employers from innovation and expansion. Over the last several decades, the persistent debate over the positive functions of the enclave economy, which is called the enclave effect, has expanded our knowledge of the social mobility of immigrants in a receiving society.

Despite its significant contribution, a limitation of this debate is that scholars assume this economic ecosystem is static rather than fluid. The majority of enclave economy articles capture the earlier stage of the developmental trajectory of the immigrant economy, which is dominated by a single-ethnicity group and small mom-and-pop businesses. Under this premise, they examine the economic performance of the immigrants in that exceptional temporal context. Consequently, they pay little attention to the constantly changing nature of the enclave economy and interpret the ethnic enclave as an equilibrium place where socioeconomic conditions (e.g., ethnic diversity, immigration law, economic vibrancy) are stable. However, in highly globalized urban settings, the enclave economy undergoes consistent ethnic diversification, stratification, and spatial reconfiguration as a result of the socioeconomic changes in a host society and the inflow of people from different countries, who maintain continuing connection to their home societies.

By utilizing mixed methodology, including geostatistical analysis, interviews, surveys, and longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork from 2020 to 2021, this dissertation reveals how the enclave economy has developed into a multiethnic contested place where immigrants from different backgrounds cooperate and compete. To highlight the variable nature of the enclave economy, I incorporate the transnationalism framework and propose the term *transclave economy*. I argue the *transclave economy* is developed by the transnational inflows of labor, capital, and

heterogeneous culture into an immigrant economy. In this variable system, the enclave effect should be understood as a fluid capability whose function is contingent to the time and context that each enclave economy participant is situated in. The framework will be applied to the case of nail salons in New York City, where the largest cosmetology service cluster is located and the majority of workers and owners are immigrant women. Ultimately, this dissertation contributes to highlighting the enclave economy as a system of *becoming*, rather than a system of *being*, which is an increasingly important perspective in understanding multicultural city environments.

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# Transclave Economy

## Immigrant Business Survival in An Era of Pandemic

**Soyoung Park**

Doctoral Dissertation | August 17, 2022

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# 1 Introduction

The ethnic enclave economy – geographical clustering of immigrant residents and enterprises – has long been celebrated by scholars as a protected labor market where both immigrant workers and employers benefit from its strong ethnic networks. Immigrant workers find entry-level jobs from immigrant enterprises in ethnic enclaves where English language fluency is not necessarily required. Employers benefit from access to cheap, loyal workforces and tacit business information when their enterprises are located in enclaves (Bird & Wennberg, 2016; Cueto & Álvarez, 2015; Evans, 1989; Lo & Teixeira, 2015; Waldinger, 1995). Scholars have named this mutually beneficial relationship in a co-ethnic setting “enclave effects” where both workers and business owners obtain material and non-material resources from geographically clustering together.

However, the coronavirus pandemic has posed new threats to the livelihoods of immigrant businesses. For many immigrant businesses in the United States, working from home was not an option during the pandemic because they are disproportionately represented in in-person service sectors, such as restaurants and personal care services (Eraydin et al., 2010; Neumark et al., 2011; Pekkala Kerr & Kerr, 2020). Consequently, social distancing restrictions in the nation have put considerable downward pressure on immigrant-owned businesses. This disadvantage is further aggravated as their marginalized social statuses are combined: women, people of color, and immigrant status. Recent studies reveal that the coronavirus pandemic has hit small businesses owned by minorities, immigrants, and women harder than any other group (Beland et al., 2020; R. W. Fairlie, 2020).

The pandemic has damaged the positive function of enclave economies that provide easy-access entry-level jobs and protect immigrants from mainstream labor market competition. Juliana Kim (2020), reporting for the *New York Times*, documents that more than half of the nail salon workers in New York City are estimated to have lost their salon jobs. Those who came back to their workplaces after the lockdown was lifted in July often split their work hours with other manicurists to work part-time, in order to adapt to a significant decline in customer visits. Sergazinas's report on Chicago (2022) and Yee and their colleagues' work on New York City

(2021) present that Chinese-owned businesses faced significant revenue decline and massive job loss. Some articles on Chinatowns in the United States (Yee et al., 2021; Sergazina, 2022) articulate that xenophobia and Anti-Asian sentiments from the public have further hindered small businesses in ethnic enclaves from the quick recovery of walk-in traffic.

Such transitions in ethnic enclaves and enclave economies, however, are part of a historical trend. Recently, the temporal dimension of space and the multi-ethnic inflow of immigrants started to gain attention from an increasing number of immigration studies scholars, such as Luk and Phan (2005), Barabantseva (2015), Çaglar and Glick Schiller (2018), and Wang (2020). For example, Anderson and colleagues (2020) argue that ethnic enclaves are comprised of many layers of time and, at certain periods of time, the evolution path of ethnic enclaves departs from our traditional understandings of how they form and function. Specifically, they discover that Sydney's Chinatown is not merely an ethnic enclave exclusively occupied by Chinese populations but also acts as an "Asian hub" where people from other Asian backgrounds settle; there they add new cultural diversity, influenced by nearby Koreatown and Thaitown. As such, the studies on the temporality or the flexibility of immigrant communities illuminate the changing dynamics among places, migrant flows, and urban restructuring.

Despite the evolution of contemporary ethnic enclaves into a multi-ethnic, evolving place, scholars have stuck to the traditional idea that views ethnic enclaves as a static system. Their definition of the enclave economy, spatial clustering of immigrant businesses where owners and the majority of workers are from the same ethnic backgrounds (Portes & Stepick, 1993; Y. Zhou, 1998b), has been rarely challenged. However, this foundational definition does not hold its validity in a number of immigrant-receiving societies. Global cities have been increasingly diversified and it is becoming more challenging for a single immigrant group to occupy a dominance in a specialized industrial sector (Chin, 2005; R. Lee, 2019). In addition, because of the persistent connection that immigrants have with their homelands, the enclave economy changes its form and functions over time with the interaction of the transnational resources and culture that immigrants bring from the sending societies.

To overcome the aforementioned limitation, I incorporate the transnationalism framework and propose a concept, *transclave economy*, that provides us a theoretical tool to understand the evolving process of the enclave economy as a product of the transnational flow of people.

Transnationalism scholars suggest that an immigrant community is an ever-changing system that changes its form and functions as a response to the continuing interaction with two worlds: immigrants' sending countries and receiving countries (L. G. Basch et al., 1994; Portes, 1997a; Crang et al., 2003). Under these hyper-mobile circumstances, multiple ethnicities became a primary part of an enclave and these groups coexist and compete together in a shared neighborhood (Kim, 2015; Collins, 2020b). By adopting this framework, this dissertation proposes that an enclave economy should be understood as a contested, fluid economic system where a persistent inflow and outflow of multi-ethnic immigrants places evolutionary pressure and drives structural change. Moreover, this paper criticizes the dichotomous perspective of the enclave effect, arguing that the enclave effect is conditional and rather functions only when certain conditions are met over time.

In the following sections of this chapter, I first present research questions and hypotheses. Second, I conduct a literature review on ethnic enclave economy and transnationalism and subsequently bridge these two scholarly traditions, thereby addressing the simplistic point of view of the traditional enclave economy theory. Third, I explain the rationale behind the case selection – nail salons in New York City – and demonstrate how this case effectively challenges our traditional way of understanding the economic ecosystems of immigrants. Fourth, I outline the mixed method techniques and data that are chosen for this study. Lastly, the final section provides a high-level overview of how the rest of the dissertation is comprised.

### 1.1. Research questions and hypotheses

The overarching goal of this dissertation is to understand the increasingly complex nature of the enclave economy in the context of transnationalism. I aim to achieve this goal by answering the following three questions. First, this dissertation asks what constitutes the diversity of the transclave economy. Immigrant neighborhoods in contemporary urban settings have multiple layers of diversity. Contemporary immigrant enclaves are characterized by their interethnic interactions, multicultural engagements, and transnational mobility. Gao-Miles (2017), for instance, rejects the traditional notions of ethnic enclaves, such as Chinatown. Instead, they argue that contemporary enclaves should be understood as a result of “interstices and

discontinuities” that are created by everyday connectivity among immigrants across ethnic boundaries. This research question aims to illuminate what sets of social, cultural, and spatial diversity make up the nail salon industry, which has long been perceived as a homogeneous immigrant economy: a Vietnamese-dominant market, mom-and-pop shops, and female workers and owners.

I hypothesize that the transclave economy is constituted by three broad categories of diversity activating at different scales: the individual traits of immigrant participants (e.g., owner’s ethnicity, gender), enterprise characteristics (e.g., employment size, establishment year), and environmental context (e.g., geographical locations). I postulate that these micro-, meso-, and macro-scale elements come together to make up the multiethnic landscape of the contemporary economic system of immigrants. Building on existing transnationalism scholarship, my speculation is that the geographical location of an enterprise and the owner’s country of origin are closely associated with each other. More specifically, I expect those nail salon owners who brought higher socio-economic capital from their home country are more likely to operate their business in wealthier, White neighborhoods, whereas their counterparts with limited assets and privilege tend to cluster in underserved, people-of-color areas.

Second, especially when it comes to the ethnic compositions, this paper asks what are the determining factors that drive the enclave economy to become ethnically diversified over time. It has been well documented that many enclave economies start from the monoclave economy where the ethnic composition of immigrant participants is homogeneous (K. L. Wilson & Portes, 1980; Y. Zhou, 1998b; Portes, 1998; Alberts, 2005; Min, 2008). On the other hand, it has been also reported by an increasing number of researchers that immigrant neighborhoods in a host society have changed and become more multiethnic and multi-cultural than before (Luk & Phan, 2005; Shin, 2018; Wang, 2020). However, the link between these two traditions is still understudied; it is still largely unanswered under what conditions the transition from the homogeneous system to the heterogeneous system is triggered in the context of migrant communities and transnationalism.

Responding to that question, I hypothesize that a range of transnational forces of the immigrant-sending societies and receiving societies, including geopolitics, interethnic competitions, cultural norms, and gendered obligations, act as the evolutionary pressure that

triggers the adjustments of the enclave economy. For example, I expect that not only the changes in the immigrant-receiving society, New York City, but also the shifting circumstances in multiple sending societies, including Korea, China, and Latin American countries, restructured the labor market of New York City nail salons. In addition to this hypothesis, I posit that the transclave economy is not simply an amalgamation of multiple ethnicities but rather a contested place of the ethnic stratification where the extension of the global power relations persistently affects the relations of immigrants from different cultural backgrounds.

The third question asks, when external shocks hit, what types of immigrant businesses in the transclave economy perform better despite the major disruptions. As a probing question, this thesis asks what coping strategies nail salon workers and business owners develop to navigate the economic crisis. The key theoretical concept of this dissertation is the interplay of time and space; by highlighting the fluid, temporal aspect of immigrant economies, I aim to answer whether mutually beneficial relationship among co-ethnic members – the so-called enclave effect – continues to protect their economic stability during hazardous events. In analyzing the determining factors of business disruptions, this dissertation factors in the owner's co-ethnicity with their customers, as well as their co-ethnicity with their workers, to examine if the co-ethnic customers are likely to be loyal and continue to use the services during the challenging time. The probing question further asks whether other societal factors, such as owner's gender, residency period, previous entrepreneurial experience in a home country, and employment size, contribute to shaping the performance difference across immigrant enterprises as well as ethnic effects.

Building on the existing scholarship, I hypothesize that business units where employers and employees share the same ethnicity tend to receive less adverse impacts after an economic disruption, compared to their non-coethnic counterparts. While the enclave effects of owner-customer co-ethnicity have been relatively understudied in the enclave economy scholarship, compared to the effects of owner-worker co-ethnicity, I expect that the businesses that mainly serve co-ethnic customers are more likely to perform better economically after a disaster than businesses with customers from a different ethnicity. I postulate that, in the midst of an economic downturn, customers prefer to support local businesses where the owners are from a similar cultural background, thereby contributing to the better resilience of co-ethnic enterprises. In addition, my hypothesis on other societal factors is that salons, where immigrant owners have

previous experience in running their own businesses, perform better economically than those without previous experience, mainly because the owners can utilize the tacit knowledge and know-how they collected from the past entrepreneurial failure and success.

## 1.2. Case selection

The transclave economy framework is applied to the case of nail salons in New York City, where ethnic makeup is increasingly diverse and immigrants from different ethnic groups maintain links with their homelands. In the context of the New York metropolitan area, New York nail salons were a booming industry rapidly before the coronavirus pandemic. The number of salons has more than tripled over the past ten years.<sup>1</sup> Among the many geographical areas in New York, I specifically chose New York City nail salons as the research case because it represents the highly globalizing nature of the enclave economy in the United States. There are around 4,000 nail salons in New York State, of which New York City is home to nearly 2,000 shops and 10,000 workers alone.<sup>2</sup> Particularly, the labor composition of New York City nail salons has been reported to be ethnically and culturally diverse compared to other regions in the United States, where Vietnamese women occupy a large share of the manicurist labor market. The heterogeneous ethnic composition of the New York City job market is well documented in newspaper articles and labor activist documents, which report on manicurists from Korea (Kang, 2010; Saltzman, 2018), China (K. Song, 2011; Bernstein, 2015; Nir, 2015a), and Nepal (Pearson, 2012; Adhikaar, 2015).

Table 1-1 shows there were 2,070 nail salons in New York City in 2019, constituting 7.4% of all nail salons in the nation (27,939) and 48.4 % of those in New York State (4,279). In 2019, nail salons alone created 9,671 jobs in New York City. While the number of nail salons in New York City decreased by 2.2% from 2014 to 2019, the number of paid employees and annual payrolls increased by 39.9% and 65.3%, respectively. However, it is noteworthy that the number of establishments and workers may be underestimated in the government source, considering the

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<sup>1</sup> US Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Projections (2019). Retrieved March 14, 2022, from <https://projectionscentral.com>

<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau, County Business Patterns (2019). Retrieved March 15, 2022, from <https://www.census.gov>

informal nature of the industry. Some cosmetologists provide manicuring services in barbershops or hair salons and, as in other low-wage jobs, a substantial number of undocumented workers are employed in New York City nail salons (Bernhardt et al., 2008; Kang, 2003; Oh, 2007). While most of the salons are micro-sized (fewer than ten workers), there has been a burgeoning of luxurious franchise-style shops in the region, such as Paintbox (paint-box.com) and QQ Nail Spa (qqnailspa.com).

Table 1-1. Industrial portrait of nail salons (NAICS: 812113) on three geographical scales

	New York City	New York State	United States
<b>Number of establishments</b>			
2014	2,116	3,968	20,293
2019	2,070	4,279	27,939
5-year changes	- 2.2%	7.8%	37.7%
<b>Number of paid employees (for pay period including March 12)</b>			
2014	6,913	12,523	68,428
2019	9,671	19,532	113,553
5-year changes	39.9%	56.0%	65.9%
<b>Annual payroll (\$1,000)</b>			
2014	99,478	184,049	1,157,652
2019	158,610	332,231	2,370,331
5-year changes (%)	59.4%	80.5%	104.8%
<b>Number of establishments by employment size (% share)</b>			
2014			
Below 10 (micro)	2,011 (95.0%)	7,136 (97.7%)	19,117 (94.2%)
10 to 49 (small)	104 (4.9%)	161 (2.2%)	1,170 (5.8%)
Above 49 (medium)	1 (0.1%)	2 (0.1%)	6 (0.0%)
2019			
Below 10 (micro)	1,848 (89.3%)	3,822 (89.3%)	25,463 (91.3%)
10 to 49 (small)	217 (10.5%)	452 (10.6%)	2,456 (8.7%)
Above 49 (medium)	5 (0.3%)	5 (0.1%)	18 (0.0%)

Note 1: New York City is the calculated sum of data of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island.

Note 2: Employment size definition follows the guideline of OECD.

Source: US Census Bureau (2014, 2019)

The nail salon industry has been one of most women- and immigrant-dominant sectors in New York City. It is estimated that Korean or Chinese owners run more than 80% of the nail



salons located in the Greater New York City area (including the New Jersey region) and the majority of salon workers are immigrant women from Asian countries (Fung, 2014; Seo et al., 2019; You & Zhou, 2019). For example, in the case of ABC Beauty Academy, one of the largest beauty schools in Queens, 819 individuals took a 2011 June nail specialty examination in Chinese, while only 31 took the examination in English (Walsh, 2012). On the other hand, ILR Worker Institute provides demographic information on workers. Based on the survey, they estimate that 88% of nail salon workers are foreign-born and Chinese (39%) is the most frequently used primary languages among workers, followed by Spanish (19%), Vietnamese (14%), English (12%), and Korean (11%). Kang (2010) points out that the dominance of the immigrant women in this beauty service niche attributes to the socio-cultural expectations of gendered, racialized roles of Asian women: being docile, submissive, and having small, nimble hands.

In this ethnically-diverse context, the New York City nail salon industry forms a distinct network of participants. It includes a range of business owner networking groups (e.g., The Chinese Nail Salon Association, Korean American Nail Salon Association Of New York Inc (KANSA), Nail Industry Federation of New York), worker advocates (e.g., NY Healthy Nail Salon Coalition, Adhikaar, New York Nail Salon Workers Association), vocational training institutions (e.g., ABC Beauty Academy, Brittany Beauty Academy Bronx), and local governments (e.g., regulatory interventions, such as the 2015 International Mechanical Code for nail and hair salons). Also, the network reaches out to incorporate immigrant business owners in other sectors, such as hair salons and restaurants. For example, one of the respondents in my 2020 January fieldwork noted that Korean restaurants and Korean nail salons build a reciprocally beneficial relationship by advertising each other's business to their clients and sharing customer groups.

Despite the increasing significance of New York City's nail salons in the regional economies, studies on the NYC nail salon industry have disproportionately centered on public health issues, leaving work-related topics largely understudied (Just et al., 2010; S. A. Walsh, 2012; C. Basch et al., 2016; Pavilonis et al., 2018). However, labor in these salons began to receive substantial attention from academia and the public when a controversial *New York Times* article was published in 2015, titled "The Price of Nice Nail (Nir, 2015a)." In this piece, Nir (2015a)

exposed continuing mistreatment of workers in some salons. Nir pointed out that employers exploit immigrant workers, especially those without documentation, by paying them less than the minimum hourly wage, delaying payments, and asking them to pay for their own training. The inferior work condition of these nail salons is also well documented in a recent publication by ILR Worker. After conducting a survey and a focus group in 2021, they found that only half of the participants reported that they are paid the minimum wage required by the government. The data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the average hourly wage for nail salon workers New York City metropolitan area is approximately \$13.7, which is \$1.3 less than the minimum wage in New York City (\$15) and \$9.2 less than the living wage for a single adult (Glasmeier, 2022).

The coronavirus pandemic added complexity to the existing socioeconomic and political landscape of New York City nail salons. Since the first confirmed case was on March 1, 2020, New York quickly developed into an epicenter of the pandemic, and it had more confirmed cases than any other US state, as of April 10, 2020 (Dzhanova, 2020; West, 2020). Nail salons in New York City were drastically upended by the pandemic because of the physically intimate nature of the work and the stigma that clients have against Asian populations as disease carriers (Laviertes, 2020). While Mayor Cuomo denied rumors about a potential stay-at-home order approval on March 18th, on March 28 an order was issued for all non-essential businesses (including nail salons) to mandatorily shut down (Axelrod, 2020; Feuer, 2020). As one of the sectors categorized in Phase 3, nail salons were allowed to re-open on July 6 at 50% capacity with (1) mandatory face coverings and gloves and with (2) waiting rooms and walk-ins discouraged. The timeline of the New York City pandemic can be outlined as follows:

Table 1-2. Timeline of coronavirus and nail salon policy development in New York City

Date	Coronavirus Policies	Nail Salon Policies
March 1, 2020	First confirmed coronavirus case in NYC	
March 7	A state of emergency declared by Governor Cuomo	
March 16	Public schools closed	
March 17	Bars and restaurants closed (delivery allowed)	
March 18	All but essential business mandated to cut their workforce density by half	
March 22	Non-essential business shutdown started (including nail salons)	Shutdown period
April 27	Application for SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) started	
May 7	Shutdown order extended to June 6	
June 8	Phase 1 reopening started	
June 22	Phase 2 reopening started	
July 6	Phase 3 reopening (including nail salons) started	Mandated to use N-95 or N-100 masks, gloves, protective eye equipment; Allowed in 50% capacity <sup>3</sup>
October 6	Zoned shutdown announced <sup>4</sup>	
December 14	Indoor dining banned	
December 31		Tip credit for nail salons eliminated <sup>5</sup>
January 11, 2021	Application for SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) re-started	
October 3		Deadline of mandatory ventilation system equipment for nail salons <sup>6</sup>

Since reopening in Phase 3, on July 6th, a number of nail salons have been struggling to sustain their business to this day. It is reported that customer visits briefly surged right after the lockdown was lifted in July because of pent-up demand; however, customer traffic started to

<sup>3</sup> The Official Website of New York State (2021). Retrieved May 1, 2021, from <https://ny.gov/nail-salon-safety-what-you-need-know/information-nail-salon-owners>

<sup>4</sup> Zoned shutdown map is available at:

<https://nycgov.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=021940a41da04314827e2782d3d1986f>

<sup>5</sup> The Official Website of New York State (2021). Retrieved May 1, 2021, from

<https://governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-end-subminimum-wage-across-miscellaneous-industries-statewide>

<sup>6</sup> The Official Website of New York State (2021). Retrieved May 1, 2021, from

<https://governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-new-ventilation-standards-nail-salons>

plummet afterward (Hou, 2020; J. Kim, 2020). According to an October 2020 survey of 161 nail salon owners, published by the New Industry Federation of New York (2020), client appointments at the state's nail salons had decreased by half, and revenues had dropped by more than 40%. As a consequence, many nail salon workers lost their jobs. A report by the New York Nail Salon Workers Association (2020), which is based on survey results from 594 nail technicians, points out that only half of the nail technicians returned to work by 2020 August and the majority of returnees experienced reduced-hour work days.<sup>7</sup> To ease the economic hardship, public and private aid efforts, including the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and mutual aid funds from worker advocate groups, attempted to compensate for lost income.

### 1.3. Data and methods

In this section, I discuss the data and methodologies that each chapter – chapter 3, chapter 4, and chapter 5 – is based upon. This dissertation follows a mixed methodology protocol to highlight the rapidly changing nature of the transclave economy. There has been an enduring debate on the merits of quantitative methodology and qualitative methodology in social science. However, an increasing number of scholars, such as Creswell and their colleagues (2003) and King and others (1994), began to recognize the risks of using a single method and suggest that the weakness of each approach can be offset by combining both. Migiro and Magangi (2011), for example, point out that mixed-method studies can have more robust evidence through the convergence of findings. This dissertation aims to locate the quantitative and qualitative approach elements in a single case, New York City nail salons, and discover both macro-level patterns and micro-level narratives of the immigrant community.

Chapter 3 combines the presumptive surname list method, spatial analysis, and interview to analyze the ReferenceUSA database, which contains address-level information on nail salons in New York City. Ultimately, this approach uncovers the multiple layers of diversity embedded in the transclave economy. ReferenceUSA is a large national database that is annually updated

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<sup>7</sup> New York Nail Salon Workers Association (2020). Retrieved April 8, 2022, from <http://workersunitednynj.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/COVID-Survey-Results-FINAL-9-23-2020.pdf>

based on Data Axle's Yellow and White Pages on 70 million firms throughout the United States. This extensive database offers a set of individual-level attributes on owners and their enterprises, such as firm's name, owner's gender and name, employment size, sales, and establishment year (McDevitt, 2014; Hipp et al., 2019; Watson, 2021). In addition to its provision of the micro-level data, ReferenceUSA has been praised for its high sensitivity that accurately reflects the actual location of businesses (Fleischhacker et al., 2012; D'Angelo et al., 2014). In December 2020, I accessed the ReferenceUSA nail salon database, resulting to collect 5,252 verified records on nail salons established from 1879 to 2019 across five boroughs – Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island – in New York City, by limiting the searched records to NAICS code 812113.

While the ReferenceUSA database does not provide ethnicity records explicitly, this chapter infers the ethnicity of listed owners by adopting a presumptive surname list method.<sup>8</sup> Many secondary databases from government and non-government sources cannot be readily used to study the distribution of ethnic-owned businesses because of the lack of information on respondent's ethnicity at a granular level; however, a presumptive surname list method has been widely used in the field of public health as an alternative solution to guess the ethnicity of populations of interest and to overcome the lack of ethnicity data (B. C. Choi et al., 1993; Nanchahal et al., 2001; Mateos, 2007; Carr et al., 2022). Ethnicity is defined as a group of people who share social norms, language, and history and, from an anthropological perspective, people in the same ethnic group often share surnames as a product of the collective ancestry roots (Tjam, 2001; Taylor et al., 2011). Therefore, surnames have been used as a convenient proxy that allows researchers to identify the cultural background of individuals.

Motivated by the surname method developed in public health studies, this study took the following steps to construct the ethnicity-coded dataset for nail salons in New York City. First, I conducted archival analysis research on published articles on a presumptive surname method that summarizes commonly-used surnames for Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Hispanic populations in the United States (Rosenwaike, 1994; Word & Perkins, 1996; Lauderdale &

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<sup>8</sup> Another advanced technique is called Bayesian improved surname geocoding (BISG), which infers individual's ethnicity from surname and residential address (Elliott et al., 2008; Adjaye-Gbewonyo et al., 2014; J. T. Clark et al., 2021). However, because ReferenceUSA does not offer geographical information on where a business owner lives, I decided not to apply this method despite its high-level accuracy.

Kestenbaum, 2000; Quan et al., 2006; S.-O. Lee, 2011; Taylor et al., 2011) and established a merged surname list. Second, I matched this merged name list with ReferenceUSA records on New York City nail salons by using the R statistical computing language. For example, if the owner's surname of a salon x is Chen, one of the surnames listed as a Chinese ethnicity in the list, this matching process tags the salon x as a Chinese nail salon. As the result, the ethnicity-coded dataset identifies 718 Chinese nail salons (163 unique surnames), 452 Korean salons (67 unique surnames), 178 Vietnamese salons (29 unique surnames), and 95 Hispanic salons (62 unique surnames) in New York City, out of 5,252 nail salons listed in ReferenceUSA.

By using the ethnicity-coded ReferenceUSA nail salon records, I conducted a descriptive statistical analysis on the industrial overview of these four target ethnic groups in the New York City nail salon industry. For example, the questions answered here include: when they entered in the market in 1990, who are the early pioneer ethnic groups and who are the late runners, which group's salon market is most feminized when it comes to owners' gender, which groups outperform with higher sales and larger employment size, and where each group is located at the county level. Through these questions, this section illuminates how trifold layers of diversity – individual traits of owners, enterprise characteristics, and environmental context – constitute the transclave economy, thereby producing the issues of inequality and privilege.

Spatial analysis was then applied to the ethnicity-coded ReferenceUSA records to explore the spatial distributions and clustering of nail salons. The third element of diversity – environmental context – has long been neglected in the enclave economy scholarship. Previous scholars chose a large metropolitan area (For example, Portes (1987) on Cuban immigrants in Miami and Zhou and Cai (2006) on Chinese immigrants in Los Angeles) as a unit of analysis and generalized their findings to the city as a whole. However, economic geographers and economists have proven with their empirical data and analysis that intra-city agglomerations of firms and businesses play a key role in shaping heterogeneous economic activities (Cong et al., 2014; Glasmeier, 1988; Rosenthal & Strange, 2003). To effectively highlight diverse geographical contexts, I deploy a series of mapping techniques in this section, including Kernel Density Estimation.

Kernel Density Estimation is one of the non-parametric methods that evaluate the probability of a hotspot event in a given geographical area (Seaman & Powell, 1996; Bonnier et al., 2019). This technique is often used to produce smooth visualization of location data that connects core

areas with a high density of point or polyline data and surrounding areas. The predicted density given a new x-y location is expressed as (1). Specifically,  $i$  ( $1, \dots, n$ ) is the point data that falls within the radius distance of the designated x-y location,  $pop_i$  is defined as the population field value that point  $i$  has, and  $dist_i$  equals the distance that exists between the x-y location and point  $i$ . This dissertation conducted Kernel Density Estimation by using the Kernel Density function equipped in ArcGIS Pro.

$$Kernel\ Density = \frac{1}{(radius)^2} \sum_{i=1}^n \left[ \frac{3}{\pi} \cdot pop_i \left( 1 - \left( \frac{dist_i}{radius} \right)^2 \right)^2 \right]$$

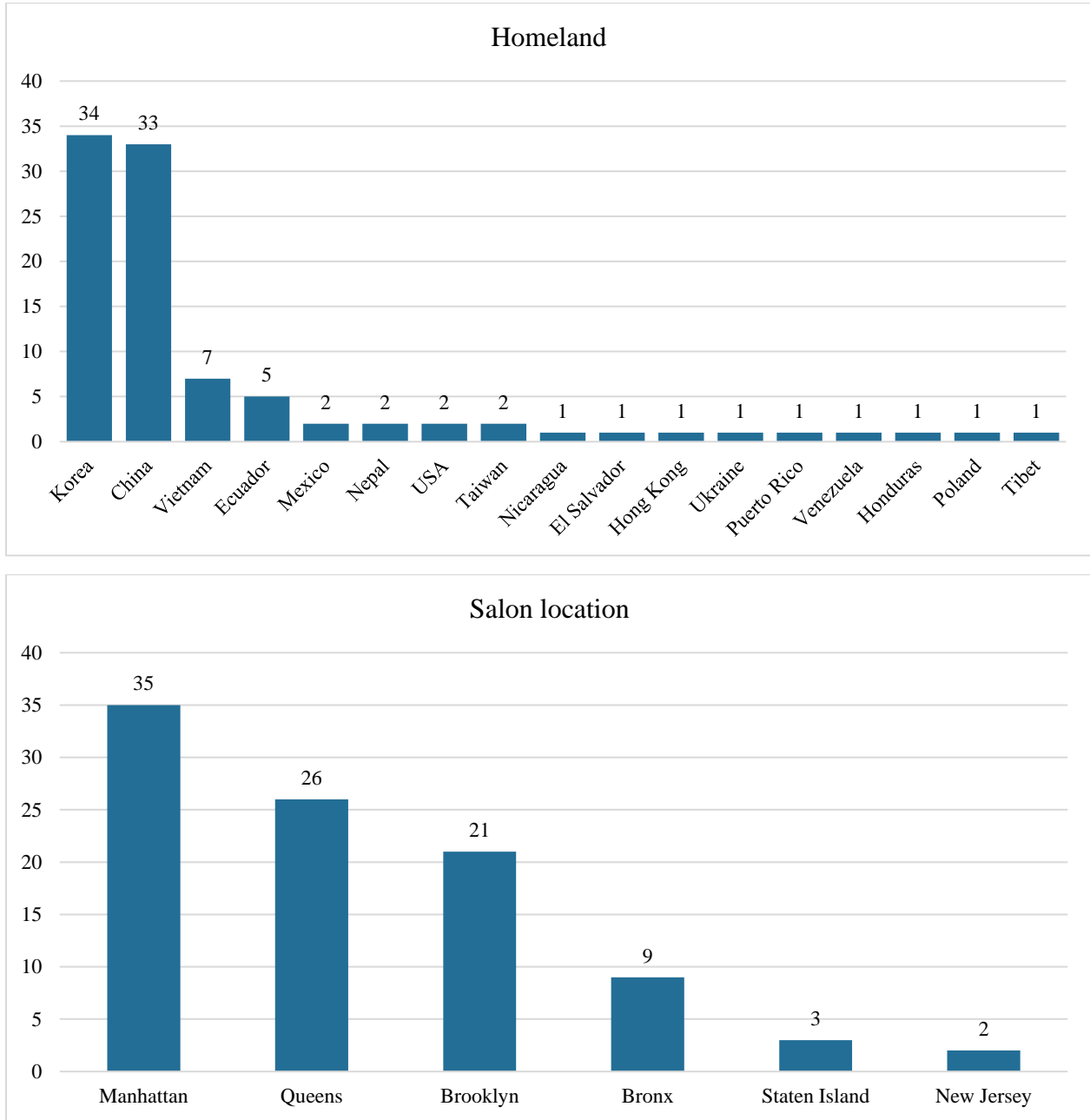
For  $dist_i < radius$

Chapter 4 takes the most qualitative side of this dissertation. This chapter analyzes 96 interviews of salon owners and workers collected from the ethnographic fieldwork in 2020 January (January 11 to 25) and 2021 January (January 3 to 31). By using the collected narratives, it illuminates how transnational forces from both immigrant-receiving societies and home societies have fueled the ethnic diversification and hierarchical construction of a nail salon sector. The participants were non-randomly recruited through phone calls and salon walk-ins. While some interviews lasted around 10 minutes, a number of interviews lasted from 30 to 120 minutes and were conducted in two languages: Korean and English. The interviews with nail salon employers and employees were mainly conducted in nail salons or public spaces, such as a café, depending on the respondent’s preferences. When reporting the final results, each respondent was de-identified for confidentiality.

The respondents had dissimilar socio-demographic characteristics as a result of the purposive sampling process pursued to obtain narratives from diverse ethnic groups. Specifically, 73 out of 96 participants were salon owners while 23 of them were salon workers. The list of interviewees covers 16 localities of origin, including Korea (34), China (33), Vietnam (7), Ecuador (5), Mexico (2), Nepal (2), USA (2), Taiwan (2), Nicaragua (1), El Salvador (1), Hong Kong (1), Ukraine (1), Puerto Rico (1), Venezuela (1), Honduras (1), Poland (1), and Tibet (1). The largest number of participant’s salon workplace was located in Manhattan (35), followed by Queens (26), Brooklyn (21), Bronx (9), Staten Island (3), and New Jersey (2). Two interviewees located

in New Jersey had a previous work experience in New York City. The detailed profile of the interview participants is summarized in Figure 1-1:

Figure 1-1. Interview participant demographics



Source: fieldwork interview (January 2020, January 2021)

For chapter 5, I conducted the mixed-method analysis on the basis of the fieldwork interviews and the survey collected from 115 nail salons after the coronavirus outbreak: from January 3 to



31, 2021. Based on this analysis, this chapter elucidates the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on New York City nail salons and the divergent coping strategies of immigrant participants. The survey form was translated and distributed in five languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Spanish. The survey targeted all nail salon owners who were currently operating their businesses in the middle of the pandemic. The questionnaire listed 29 questions, which include six questions that asked the participant's sociodemographic information (e.g., education, country of origin, age, gender), eight questions that asked information on business characteristics (e.g., number of workers, country of origin of workers, language that is most commonly used when communicating with workers), and 15 questions about their perceived impact of the coronavirus pandemic on their businesses (e.g., rent overdue, revenue decline rate) and their coping strategies.

A pilot study on the survey was conducted by sending the survey to three nail salon owners who were included previously during the initial fieldwork period in January 2020. This pilot allowed the study to minimize survey errors that could possibly be attributed to the order of questions, word choice, and perception of sensitive questions.<sup>9</sup> The survey was voluntary, and participants were allowed to decline to answer any or all questions at any time, without adverse consequences. After minor adjustments based on the pilot study<sup>1</sup>, between January 3, 2021, and January 31, 2021, 115 responses were recorded through non-random sampling. Both descriptive and statistical analyses were performed through Excel and R programming.

For the data processing, hypothesis testing was conducted to test the relationship between a range of socio-demographic variables, including co-ethnicity of members, and the economic performance during the pandemic. By doing so, this dissertation identifies whether the co-ethnic relationship among enclave economy participants predicts better economic performance than the non-coethnic relationship, thereby testing the validity of the enclave effect hypothesis. However, it is noteworthy that, because of the non-randomness of samples, this study limits its interpretation only to the collected samples of 115 nail salons and does not extend its generalization to the whole population. The quantitative analysis of the survey was further

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<sup>9</sup> For example, the original version had a question that required respondents to fill in their 2019 December and 2020 December revenue in absolute dollar values. Based on the feedback from the pilot participants, I changed it to ask for relative changes from 2019 December to 2021 December in order to more indirectly measure the impact of the pandemic on their revenue.

supplemented by the interview data collected from nail salon owners and workers in 2021 to capture the nuanced perceptions and experiences of nail salon participants.

The methodology of each chapter is summarized in Table 1-3:

Table 1-3. Methodology table for Chapters 3 to 5

	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
Research questions	“What constitutes the diversity of the transclave economy?”	“What are the determining factors that drive the enclave economy to become ethnically diversified over time?”	“What types of immigrant businesses in the transclave economy present better economic performance despite the major disruptions?”
Types of method	Mixed methodology	Qualitative methodology	Mixed methodology
Data	ReferenceUSA, Census data, interview (n = 96)	Interview (n = 96)	Survey (n = 115), interview (n = 96)
Data processing	Presumptive surname list method, Kernel density estimation	Qualitative analysis on the interviews	Descriptive analysis, hypothesis testing

#### 1.4. Limitations of this research

One of the most critical concerns about this research lies in the positionality of the researcher. The term positionality refers to an individual’s fixed or subjective position, such as race, ethnicity, culture, social class, age, value, and beliefs, which a person has in regard to research work (Savin-Baden & Howell-Major, 2013). Such positionality shaped by the researcher’s lived experience is likely to dictate the research process, such as methodology selection and interviewee recruitment. Banks, (1998) points out that there are two types of researchers in cultural research: insiders and outsiders. He notes that being a cultural insider, who share the same cultural and linguistic background with the study participants, is more ideal than being a cultural outsider since they are more likely to discover hidden social phenomenon based on strong social connections.

For this dissertation, the researcher's ethnic identity as a Korean woman generated the risk of overrepresentation of Korean narratives and underrepresentation of non-Korean voices. The researcher's identity as a Korean woman helped quickly build a rapport with Korean salon respondents because of the position of a cultural insider. The position as a "legitimate member of the community (Liamputtong, 2010, p. 110)" enabled me to conduct research in a more nuanced and sensitive manner. On the other hand, it was quite challenging to build trust to obtain an interview approval and extensively comprehend the cultural nuances that they described. Moreover, while Korean salon respondents were able to articulate their narratives in their mother tongue, non-Korean participants' ability to express their opinions was limited due to linguistic barriers and cultural differences.

Acknowledging personal status that can potentially influence every step in the research process, this study undertook several strategies to mitigate the analytical bias induced by the researcher's positionality. First, this study translated the business disruption questionnaire, which was used for the basis of chapter 5, into five languages: English, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish. Making it available in the major group's mother tongue was intended to lower the cultural and linguistic barrier and make the research result more inclusive for diverse groups of participants. Second, to compromise the relatively high rate of interview declines of the non-Korean salon owners and workers, I spent disproportionately longer time conducting fieldwork in their residential enclaves, such as Jackson Heights (Hispanic immigrants) and Flushing (Chinese). Throughout the process of data collection and processing, this research paid special attention to the position differentials among culturally-heterogeneous participants and their contexts being examined.

Not only ethnicity, but also the social status of salon interviewees affected their research participation and engagement. Most notably, workers had a high tendency to be reluctant to voice their opinions about their post-migration and working experiences in nail salons due to a presumed fear of upsetting their employers and losing jobs. Adding to that, the greater portion of salon workers had a limited English proficiency than salon owners. Even if the interview approval was obtained, this blocked the researcher from collecting detailed insider views and thoughts due to the language barrier. Not often but sometimes employers were vocally displeased when asked for permission to talk to their workers; a series of articles issued by the *New York*

*Times* and other newspapers (Nir, 2015a, 2015b; Sainato, 2022) disclosed the labor exploitations in New York City have heightened their vigilance against any investigations and visits by researchers. Because of this hurdle, this dissertation relied primarily on the narratives of business owners in analyzing workers' experience in the enclave economy, while a limited number of direct interview quotes from workers were utilized.

## 1.5. Chapter outline

The overarching objective of this dissertation is to understand the fluid, ever-changing nature of today's enclave economy in the context of the transnational flow and engagement of immigrants. By doing so, this study challenges the simplistic notion of the traditional enclave economy and points out that the enclave effect – a reciprocal relationship based on co-ethnicity – should be understood as conditional to temporal circumstances. To effectively serve these goals, the remaining chapters are organized as follows:

- Chapter 2: Incorporating transnationalism into the enclave economy theory
- Chapter 3: Socio-spatial diversity of the transclave economy
- Chapter 4: The making of an evolving transclave economy: a historical view
- Chapter 5: The divergent influence of the pandemic on transclave economy

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the scholarly sources from three academic traditions – ethnic enclave, enclave economy, and transnationalism – and attempts to bridge the conceptual divide among them. Ethnic enclave scholars point out that the notion of a single-ethnicity, static immigrant community is becoming outdated as a number of immigrant communities have restructured into multiethnic places and their habitats have begun to overlap with one another (Collins, 2020b; Kim, 2015). Indeed, the enclave economy scholarship (Wilson & Portes, 1980; Portes, 1987; Werbner, 2001; Sanders & Nee, 2021), an economic subset of immigrant communities, has depicted immigrant-dominant economies as a static, solitary, and socially-isolated system detached from the ethnic diversification process and transnational shifts happening in both immigrant-sending and receiving societies. By drawing on the transnationalism framework, this chapter proposes the term, transclave economy, and suggests

that the enclave economy should be recognized as a fluid system that constantly evolves with persistent interaction with external conditions, due to the transnational engagement of multiethnic immigrants.

Chapter 3 scrutinizes the multi-layered diversity of New York City nail salons with special attention to spatial heterogeneity. Applying the presumptive surname list method on ReferenceUSA, this study constructs an ethnicity-coded dataset of nail salons and examines the market segmentation by diverse ethnic groups. While the enclave economy has been regarded as being homogeneous and monolithic, the result shows that three layers of diversity— micro-level (the individual trait of salon owners), meso-level (firm characteristics such as business size), and macro-level (environmental context) diversities – was constituting this immigrant-dominant industry and each ethnic group was occupying different segments of the hierarchical structure of entrepreneurship. Additionally, this chapter uses several geospatial techniques, such as Kernel density estimation, to demonstrate how nail salons had a great tendency of forming spatial agglomeration depending on customer base, the timing of entry, and ethnic groups. The motivations of location choice of nail salon owners between co-ethnic and non-coethnic markets were further investigated based on the analysis of interview narratives collected from fieldwork.

Chapter 4 answers the question of what fuels the enclave economy to become ethnically diversified over time in the context of transnationalism. Based on interview data collected from 96 salon owners and workers, this study reveals that transnational influences from both home societies and host societies of immigrants have restructured ethnically and economically homogeneous nail salons into the transclave economy, where a heterogeneous group of immigrants finds their entrepreneurial and employment niche. Specifically, the ethnic composition of the market has been diversified as a result of homeland geopolitics, such as changes in emigration policies, the 1997 financial crisis, and shifting US conditions, such as the growing number of Hispanic residential enclaves. Consequently, New York City nail salons became a contested place where transnational immigrants who maintain strong connections with homelands compete to occupy the upper segment of the ethnic hierarchy in the system.

Chapter 5 focuses on the question of what factors determined better economic performance among New York City nail salons during the coronavirus pandemic. Using a business disruption survey collected from 115 nail salons from January 3 to 31, 2021, this chapter demonstrates that

the pandemic put a disproportionately adverse impact on different groups of nail salons. In particular, this study reveals that co-ethnicity among immigrant members, including business owner-worker relationships and business owner-customer relationships, does not necessarily guarantee superior economic performance during major economic disruptions. This finding undermines the traditional hypothesis of the enclave effect that co-ethnic immigrant participants in the enclave economy form a reciprocal relationship and provide better chances of economic success and mobility in a host society. In addition, this study explores how immigrants develop transnational coping strategies by utilizing homeland resources and networks to overcome the unprecedented economic disruptions.

## 2 Incorporating transnationalism into the enclave economy theory

### 2.1. Multiethnic enclaves: beyond traditional immigrant community studies

#### *Introduction*

This section elucidates the process in which the ethnic enclave has transformed into a multiethnic place where members and their shared cultures dynamically change in accordance with intensified globalization and inter-ethnic interactions. Classical migration theorists, including the Chicago School and ethnic enclave researchers, tend to view immigrant communities as a solitary place where a single immigrant group voluntarily or involuntarily forms a residential and commercial clustering within a city. However, such theories based on the idea of co-ethnicity began to be undermined by an increasing number of scholarly findings highlighting the evolutionary processes of immigrant communities, with examples of more than one ethnic group overlapping a living sphere over generations. The emerging studies pointed out that ethnic enclaves evolve into multiethnic, contested systems that adapt their form and functions in accordance to shifting geopolitics, out-migration of early settlers, and in-migration of newcomers from different home societies.

#### *Assimilation theories and ethnic enclave studies*

The concept of ethnic enclaves, or migrant enclaves,<sup>10</sup> has been influential in the study of migration, and provides a useful theoretical framework to explain immigrants' lives upon migration. While definitions used in the literature have some variations, many agree that an ethnic enclave has spatial clustering of both immigrant residency and immigrant-owned businesses, which often correspond to one another (Abrahamson, 2005; Page, 2019). Before the classic assimilation theory waned around the 1960s, ethnic enclaves in the United States had been viewed as interim places where immigrants would eventually assimilate into the receiving nation (Glazer, 1993; Varady, 2005). Robert Park, for example, proposed the idea of race

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<sup>10</sup> The terms ethnic enclave and migrant enclave have been used interchangeably in academia (Elo et al., 2019; Hack-Polay, 2019)

relation cycle and elaborated that immigrants' incorporation into a host society is comprised of four stages: contact, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation. He argues that an increasing contact of dissimilar groups with different racial backgrounds will initiate the race relations cycle and the cultural differences of immigrants will eventually fade over time (Park, 1928, 1950).

The Chicago School tradition tends to negatively portray these temporary ethnic enclaves as ghettos of exclusion. The foundational thinkers, Park (1915, 1928) and Burgess (1924), attribute racial problems to the slow assimilation process of immigrants in cities. Through their assimilation lens, a high concentration of immigrants in a specific geographical area is regarded as a source of contagious intimacy, where unemployment, poverty, and urban crime burgeon. Applying ecological model on the city of Chicago as their social research laboratory, they claim that immigrants and their children living in residentially segregated areas, such as Chinese in Chinatowns and Italian immigrants in the Little Sicilies, suffer from the combination of a range of social problems, such as poverty, marginality, and social disorganization. Such social problems, however, is not permanent and they occurs as an in-between stage to inevitably move onto the assimilation to the mainstream society from their ecological model scenario (Park, 1915, 1924; Park et al., 1925; Park, 1928). They ultimately argue that the ethnic identities of immigrants gradually dwindle as their places of residence spatially disperse over time (Alba & Nee, 2009; Portes & Rumbaut, 2014).

Theories of assimilation, however, are challenged for their assumptions about the involuntariness of immigrant spatial clustering. Peach (2005), for example, criticizes how these theories fail to distinguish between voluntary segregation of immigrants from involuntary ghettos. Peach opposes the claim that "ghetto" and "immigrant clustering" refer to the same phenomenon. Instead, he argues that clustering is one of the most effective spatial strategies for a group of minority people who wishes to preserve their separate ethnic identity from others, while ghettos are often based on involuntary segregation. The presumption that immigrants' geographical segregation is a temporary stage before ultimately assimilating into the host society is questioned. Historically, it has been proven by a number of scholarly writings that the visible geographical concentration of immigrant settlements and their ethnic social ties continue to persist to date (M. Zhou & Logan, 1989; Andersen, 2010; van Liempt, 2011; Stabrowski, 2018; Bruce Newbold, 2021).



Since classic assimilation theories lost their hegemony in migration studies, research on ethnic enclaves has been polarized into positive and critical perspectives. Rather than depicting enclaves as ghettos, many scholars highlight them as a site of voluntary segregation born out of necessity. Specifically, they claim that ethnic enclaves provide strong co-ethnic networks, easy access to housing, a protected labor market, and sources of cultural tourism (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2016; Saarinen, 2017; Keles et al., 2019). Kang (2019) and Martén and others (2019), for example, arrive at the similar conclusion that living in an ethnic enclave is particularly beneficial for less-privileged immigrants with few socio-economic assets, such as undocumented immigrants and international refugees. Martén and colleagues (2019) use the case of international refugees in Switzerland to suggest that refugees who are assigned to areas with a high concentration of co-ethnic populations exhibit a lower unemployment rate than those assigned to regions with low- or medium-level representation of their compatriots.

On the other hand, enclave scholars with a critical approach argue that the social and cultural conservatism in immigrant communities blocks the upward mobility of their members (Greenman & Xie, 2008; Shin, 2011; Chan, 2018). Using the case of international refugees, Stein (1986) claims that enclaves trap immigrants in an ambivalent position where they are socio-economically disconnected from both their homeland and the receiving society. From an immigrant entrepreneurship perspective, it has been documented by several scholars that ethnic enclaves can act as a disabling factor that suppresses the growth of immigrant-owned businesses (Bates, 1994; K. Clark & Drinkwater, 2000; Walton-Roberts & Hiebert, 1997). For example, Aldrich and Waldinger (1990) point out that a high concentration of immigrant businesses that serve co-ethnic businesses can spark intense interethnic competition and generate insufficient economic returns for immigrant business owners and workers.

#### *Multiethnic turn in ethnic enclave studies*

An increasing number of scholars, however, began to challenge the co-ethnicity premise that the classic assimilation theories and previous ethnic enclave studies made (Luk & Phan, 2005; Kim, 2015). Namely, they challenged the validity of the traditional ethnic enclave scholarship which depicts residential segregation as a solitary, monolithic community where a single dominant ethnic group retains their cultural identities and heritage (Krase, 2002; Abramson et al., 2006). Instead, they claim that multiple ethnic communities tend to overlap with one another in

shared neighborhoods as a result of the hypermobility of populations and increased globalization (Luk & Phan, 2005; A. J. Kim, 2015; B. Collins, 2020b). Calling the late 1990s a “new golden age of multi-ethnic neighborhoods (p. 287),” Zelinsky and Lee (1998) point out that ethnically homogeneous communities, such as the classic examples of Chicago immigrants and Boston’s old Italian North End, are no longer prevalent in the increasingly diversified urban landscape. Immigrants are becoming widely spread out across cities since they enjoy a greater scope of locational options for economic activities in a host society than in the past with the help of the advance in telecommunications.

Despite its historical prominence in the assimilation literature, ethnic homogeneity does not apply to many ethnic enclaves now. The term “multiethnic enclaves (p. 249),” (Collins, 2020a, 2020b) highlights how cities in Western societies became increasingly diversified, and as a consequence, how the territories that ethnic communities occupy started to intersect with one another. Responding to research documenting how immigrants working in ethnic enclaves have higher returns in human capital (compared to the mainstream labor market), Collins notes how it implicitly assumes ethnic homogeneity, which does not hold true since circumstances in the highly globalized cities have changed over generations. With the constant movement of immigration and out-migration within neighborhoods, the co-existence of multiple ethnicities has generated collaborations and conflicts over hegemony among heterogeneous ethnic groups. Using the empirical case of Wilshire Center in Los Angeles, Collins argues that the contemporary ethnic enclaves are increasingly becoming a contested place where cultural preservationists and hybrid advocates in Los Angeles compete with each other over the value of authenticity and diversity.

Similarly, Terzano (2014) undermines the notion of co-ethnicity in previous immigrant community studies by contending that there are two consistent forces that drive diversification in ethnic enclaves. The first force is when a once-homogeneous ethnic neighborhood goes through a demographic transition as new ethnic groups move into the area for housing, jobs, and business opportunities and they coexist. One of the notable studies on this kind of ethnic diversification is the scholarly work of Murdie and Teixeira (2011) on Little Portugal in Toronto where the effects of gentrification caused early Portuguese settlers and recent non-Portuguese immigrants to coexist in a shared neighborhood. In Terzano’s second scenario, the resident populations of

the original ethnic group shrank as a result of the aging population and out-migration, and while the co-ethnic business owners remained in the area, the workers and customer base were replaced by newcomers.

Chinatowns are the primary empirical objects of analysis through which scholars have theorized multiethnic enclaves (Luk & Phan, 2005; W. Li, 2005; Abramson et al., 2006; Ang, 2016; K. Anderson, 2018; K. Anderson et al., 2019). These scholars commonly oppose the classic ethnic enclave scholarship that defines an enclave as being comprised of a single cultural group and characterizes Chinatown as an spatially-bounded and fixed configuration (Anderson, 1987, 1991; Kwong, 1996; Tchen, 2001). For instance, by using the case of Chinatown in Manchester, England, Barabantseva (2015) points out that traditional Chinatown studies capture only a fraction of the many layers of ethnicities co-existing in the enclave (e.g., Thai, Vietnamese, and Korean) and obscure the ethnically-diversifying aspect of the community. She calls for analysis that factors in temporal dimensions of immigrant spaces and highlights the shifting trajectory of enclave restructuring. In a similar vein, Li (2005) illustrates that Chinatowns developed into a new type of multiethnic and multilingual settlements that served as a port of entry for many non-Chinese working-class immigrants. As such, new forms of Chinatowns have sprouted globally, and Chinese immigrants account for only a limited portion of the overall plurality of the population.

Such an understanding of immigrant spaces as fluid, variable places aligns well with the theoretical assumptions underpinning the academic field of critical geography (Thrift, 1999; Amin & Thrift, 2002; Legendijk et al., 2011; Barabantseva, 2015), which emphasizes the relationality, temporality and plurality of urban spaces. A major theme within the field of critical geography is to undermine the orthodox views of space as coherent territory, by demonstrating that it is internally multiple as a result of the interconnectedness. For example, in her book, *For Space*, Doreen Massey (2005) points out that space is the product of multiplicity and interrelations. She recognizes that multiple trajectories of time coexist in space and that spaces are always under construction in constant interaction with surroundings. Recent publications on the intersection of migration and relational geography, such as works by Legendijk and colleagues (2011) and Meeus and others (2019), avoid the territorial trap and refuse to regard immigrant cities as culturally-homogeneous and static containers. Instead, the local immigrant is

a product of dynamic, global flow and processes. Despite the relative lack of temporality in ethnic enclave studies, the growing migration literature focuses on how these fluid trajectories create a condition in which a diverse group of immigrants share their time in an enclave (Barabantseva, 2015).

### *Summary*

In sum, the assumption of ethnic homogeneity in the theorization of immigrant placemaking is empirically contested and theoretically outdated. There is thus a growing need for a focus on the studies of immigrant neighborhoods that treat cities as multiethnic, evolving, and fluid. A number of ethnic enclaves are not exclusively mono-ethnic as they were in the past. Rather, contemporary ethnic enclaves are transitional and old settler immigrants are becoming a small part of the heterogeneous group of immigrants from different cultural backgrounds. The following section discusses one of the central parts of the immigrant community – enclave economy – and scrutinizes how the notion of a static, monolithic immigrant community has limited the way academics interpret the economic activities of immigrants.

## 2.2. Enclave economy theory and its limitations

### *Introduction*

Building on the previous discussion on the evolving nature of ethnic enclaves, this section particularly focuses on the economic subset of the ethnic enclave: ethnic enclave economy. Originating from the dual labor market theory, the enclave economy scholarship has helped illuminate the positive and negative roles of co-ethnic workplaces that assist or hinder the upward mobility of immigrant employers and employees. However, this section criticizes its outdated definition, which is based on the premise of co-ethnicity and geographically-bounded space. Instead, it urges enclave economy studies to accurately reflect the contemporary immigrant communities where single-ethnic participants are losing their dominance over the market and enclave participants are ethnically diversified. Moreover, this section argues that the enclave economy should be understood as a subset of broader global systems such as

immigrants' host societies and home societies, and that it constantly evolves its functions by interacting with interconnected surroundings.

### *The origin of the enclave economy scholarship*

The origin of the enclave economy theory dates back to the late 1970s, in Michael Piore's monograph *Birds of Passage* (1979) – the foundational treatise of dual labor market theories. Dual labor market theorists criticize the conventional economic point-of-view that attributes labor market inequalities to human capital differentials and the personal choices that individual agents make (Piore, 1972, 1979; Elger, 2015). The core idea of the dual labor market theory is that the labor market is divided into “good jobs” and “bad jobs.” Namely, the labor market is segmented into two parts: primary and secondary sectors. Workers in the primary sector enjoy high wages, job security, better chances of promotion, desirable working conditions, and greater return to human capital development due to extensive training opportunities given at their workplaces. On the other hand, the secondary sector lacks these upper-tier benefits. The secondary sector, in this dichotomous economic system, is characterized by their dead-end, lower-paid jobs with frequent non-standard work arrangements. The mobility across these two job segments is highly restricted, and this immobility is likely to be maintained throughout the individual's life course.

People who fill job positions in the secondary market have traditionally been minority populations, and under global settings, international immigrants have been illustrated as a major component of this peripheral marketplace (Piore, 1979; Fan, 2002; Takenoshita, 2006). In particular, immigrants have received consistent attention from scholars as one of the major workforces addressing the labor shortage of the secondary labor market in many developed countries. Asato (2012), for example, points out that immigrant workers tend to experience downward mobility and stay within the secondary sector in a host society due to limited negotiating power, lack of transferable skills, and job market discrimination. DeFreitas (1988) claims that immigrants are more inclined to accept these sweatshop jobs and tolerate unfair treatment than native-born people, because they aim to stay in the foreign society temporarily as a means to improve the social status of their families left behind in their home countries.

Employers' strategies and perceptions have been pointed out as the main cause of the segregation of immigrants in the secondary market (Waldinger & Lichter, 2003; Donato &

Bankston, 2008; MacKenzie & Forde, 2009). More specifically, employers who run manual labor-intensive (i.e., secondary sector) companies tend to suffer disproportionate costs from economic flux and sudden economic decline, compared to those from capital-intensive firms. As a way to prepare for these pressures, employers in the secondary market prefer to hire immigrant workers rather than native-born workers, because they are comparatively easy to lay off (Piore, 1979). Furthermore, their perceptions of immigrants as being “docile” with “strong loyalty” and “righteous attitudes” play a key role in motivating employers to actively recruit foreign-born workers. Citing interviews with employers in the oil industry in Southern Louisiana, Donato and Bankston (2008) indicate that these traits of immigrants help owners make additional profits in the form of reduced turnover, fewer compensation claims, and a willingness to overwork.

In the US, a tremendous number of foreign populations have flowed into the nation since the 1980s, causing the labor market to be deeply stratified based on citizenship and legal status (Massey, 1995; Phillips & Massey, 1999; Hudson, 2007). Dual labor market writings on the intersection of migration and labor segmentation in the United States workforce primarily focuses on why and how lesser-skilled immigrant workers flowed into the secondary sector of the labor market in the United States. For instance, Piore (1973) looks at the Puerto Rican immigrant workers in Boston and how they tend to hold dead-end jobs in a city that possesses a number of secondary sector characteristics: low wage, instability, and little chance of promotions. Rochin and Nuckton (1980) focus on the occupational assimilation process of undocumented Mexican immigrants and explain that these immigrants come to fill the employment vacuum that native-born workers are reluctant to fill. Calling working-class immigrants the “new Black urban underclass (p.2),” Duster (1988) demonstrates how immigrants from non-European countries, such as Latin America and Asia, are preferred by employers and find their employment niche in below-minimum-wage menial service work such as laundromats and hotels.

The dual labor market literature perceives immigrant workers and their economic activities as part of the secondary sector because of the characteristics that a number of immigrant-owned workplaces share: small firm size and low-wage menial labor (Bonacich, 1978; Waldinger, 1985). They assume that immigrants are trapped in the secondary labor sector and their upward mobility is highly constrained. However, Wilson and Portes (1980) challenges this dichotomous

point-of-view and suggest the presence of an alternative third market, enclave economy. They claim that immigrants' employment opportunities are not restricted to the secondary market. Rather, they find jobs in the "enclave economy (p.304)," where an immigrant business owner is from the same country of origin of the immigrant workers. By using the case of Cuban immigrants in Miami, Wilson and Portes argue that this self-enclosed enclave economy provides immigrant workers with reasonable return to their human capital, in which the mainstream secondary sector fails for workers. In this publication, the initial definition of the enclave economy is based on the co-ethnicity between workers and business owners.

A year after this groundbreaking study, Portes (1981) proposed to include the spatial clustering of establishments as one of the central elements that constitute the enclave economy. This revised definition has become the conceptual forefather of later enclave economy scholarship (Light et al., 1994; Davis, 2004; Banerjee et al., 2020). Specifically, Portes remarks that two conditions should be met for any immigrant-owned businesses to be categorized as an enclave economy: (1) the immigrant-owned businesses are spatially clustering and (2) a number of these businesses employ numerous workers who are from the same ethnic background as their owner. The work written by Portes and Jensen (1992) further articulates the nature of the territorial agglomeration, by defining the enclave economy as a spatially clustered network of immigrant-owned enterprises that create jobs for numerous co-ethnic workers. The co-ethnicity of business owners and workers and the locational clustering of these businesses are inextricably linked since many immigrant entrepreneurs strategically establish their businesses in their ethnic enclaves, such as the case of restaurants in Chinatown, to leverage ethnic resources in a proximate distance (Zhou, 1998a; Zolin et al., 2016).

#### *Enclave economy debate: enabling or disabling factors?*

Following the pioneering thinkers, Kenneth Wilson and Alejandro Portes, the ethnic enclave economy has been considered relatively positively in the discourse of ethnic enclave studies. The optimists of the enclave economy theory emphasize the material and non-material merits of the engagement in enclave economies. Immigrant workers gain higher returns to their human capital from working in enclave economies: they have easy access to jobs, protection from outside competition, job training opportunities, promotion to managerial and supervisory positions, training for future self-employment, and help in starting their own businesses (Portes & Bach,

1985; Gold, 1994; Hum, 2000; Kim, 2003; Zhou, 2010). For example, Lin and Zhou (2005) uses the case of Chinese immigrant women in New York and documents the benefits that immigrant women workers in the ethnic enclave economy reap. Specifically, they point out that immigrant Chinese women often find it easier to obtain job positions with flexible working schedules and employers who are more tolerant of the presence of their children in the workplace in Chinatown than non-Chinatown areas. While they often provide lower wages than the mainstream economy, Chinese women still choose enclave jobs because it allows them to serve multiple social roles as income producers and caring mothers.

Immigrant business owners also have competitive advantages when their businesses are located in areas with a high concentration of co-ethnic populations (Olzak & Nagel, 1986; Portes, 1998). A thick co-ethnic network of enclaves offers immigrant entrepreneurs various advantages, including loyal employees, steady customers, venture capital, and access to immigrant support organizations (Aldrich et al., 1985; Bates, 2012; J. Zhang et al., 2016). Masurel and colleagues (2002) and Sequeira and Rasheed (2006) claim that personal co-ethnic networks play a key role in stimulating immigrant-owned enterprises' growth especially in the early stages of the business cycle, by facilitating capital lending processes, marketing, and information acquisition. Bailey and Waldinger (1991), for example, focus on the employer's benefits in the enclave economy and argue that the investments in training are likely to be quickly repaid through continuing loyalty if they hire co-ethnic workers. This mutually beneficial relationship between immigrant employees and employers is often called "ethnic solidarity (Sanders & Nee, 2021; Waldinger, 1993; Alberts, 2005; Min, 2008)" in which these two actors are closely tied based on social obligations, in addition to their monetary contracts.

One contribution by enclave economy proponents is the differentiation of the enclave economy from the secondary sector, suggesting that immigrants create a distinct third labor market. They emphasize the self-empowering and mutually-reciprocal economic ecosystem of immigrant participants. However, an increasing number of scholars have begun to criticize this optimistic point-of-view and argue that the enclave effect is insignificant. Instead, opponents put emphasis on the importance of immigrants' incorporation into the mainstream economy (Mar, 1991; Model, 1992; Logan et al., 2003; Xie & Gough, 2011; Sanders & Nee, 2021). Sanders and Nee (1987), for instance, criticize the optimistic view of Wilson and Portes (1980) and argue that



the benefits of the enclave economy are disproportionately distributed to select members. For example, using the earning data of Cuban and Chinese immigrants in Miami and San Francisco, they conclude that the enclave economy provides better earnings for immigrant business owners, while the benefit is minimal for immigrant workers. Also, based on statistical analysis, Logan and others (2003) point out that immigrants working in the enclave economy are economically disadvantaged and their average hourly wages are lower than those employed in counterpart labor sectors.

The critical theorists claim that ethnic enclaves may be disadvantageous for some immigrant business owners, as well as immigrant workers (Sanders & Nee, 2021; Yuengert, 1995; Razin & Langlois, 1996; Aguilera, 2009). Running a business in enclaves can be rather costly to immigrant business owners since in some cases, they have to make counterproductive decisions for their sales to meet the obligations expected by co-ethnic immigrant fellows (Geertz, 1963; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Kim, 1999). Also, scholars note that immigrants may be reluctant to leave their ethnic market because of conformity, thereby self-constraining their creativity and future innovation (Mora & Dávila, 2005; Drori et al., 2010; González & Campbell, 2018) Mora and Davila, 2005; Drori et al., 2010; Gonzalez, 2017). Sequeira and Rasheed (2006) illustrate in their paper that a heavy reliance on ethnic resources in an enclave prevents immigrant businesses from growing outside of their local community in the long term. They conclude that the cultivation of non-coethnic weak ties may become more crucial in achieving horizontal expansion of enterprises later in the business cycle.

However, Light and other researchers (1994) criticize the opponents' argument and claim that these immigrant workers and employers would have been unemployed or under-employed without the existence of the ethnic labor market. For example, they point out that the evidence on relative wages is not sufficient to substantiate their opponents' claim. Instead, they factor in the economic contribution of ethnic enclaves to group employment. Considering the unemployability of a number of immigrants with less marketable skills (e.g., low language proficiency, lack of work authorization) in the general labor market, the ethnic enclaves still benefit their workers and business owners by providing some income and enabling their smooth incorporation into the labor market in the foreign country. Similarly, Echeverri-Carroll and Mora (2020) remark that even if immigrant business owners and workers earn less than they would

when employed in the mainstream labor market, the positive functions of enclave economies cannot be easily ignored, as they allow immigrants to avert labor market discrimination in a host society.

*Limitation of the enclave economy scholarship: a static system*

Over the last several decades, the persistent debate over the positive and negative functions of enclave immigrant businesses has expanded our knowledge of the economic integration of immigrants. Despite the contributions of this research, however, the discussion is not free of limitations. First, the enclave economy scholarship has failed to consider the ethnic diversification of immigrant economic ecosystems. This issue is related to an outdated definition of the enclave economy, which is at odds with the reality of the contemporary immigrant economic systems. To be identified as an enclave economy in the classical theory, the following three conditions must be met: (1) a high degree of co-ethnicity among workers and business owners, (2) industrial specializations of immigrant businesses, and (3) spatial clustering of immigrant businesses (Portes & Stepick, 1993; Y. Zhou, 1998b; Kasinitz & Vickerman, 2001). However, as global cities become increasingly diverse, immigrant employers in enclaves are beginning to hire an increasing number of non-coethnic workers, and it is becoming more challenging for a single ethnic group to dominate a specialized industrial sector (Chin, 2005; Kim, 2018; Lee, 2019). As Kim (2015) notes, the traditional generalization of ethnic business establishments—a co-ethnicity of immigrant-owned businesses—does not hold its validity in most urban settings as a significant number of enclaves have become multiethnic.

The negligence of ethnic diversity led to a lack of nuance in analysis on the internal diversity of the enclave economy, where a range of ethnic groups occupy different segments within the hierarchical industrial sector. For examples, Cardon and colleagues (2008) criticize “the assumption of ethnic homogeneity (p. 295)” and call for the re-evaluation of the ethnic entrepreneurial population. They point out that a fundamental presumption that immigrant entrepreneurship scholarship makes is that all minority groups are relatively more homogeneous than their native-born counterparts when it comes to business owner’s demographic characteristics, business size, and so on. Despite the high level of individual heterogeneity, multiple ethnic groups are grouped together as a single unit of analysis. In a similar vein, several studies on immigrant-owned businesses have discovered that ethnicity is a meaningful factor that

predicts divergent business outcomes and owner characteristics, such as owner's human capital, business motivations, revenue, success rate, and geographical locations (Breitenecker & Harms, 2010; Fairlie & Woodruff, 2010; Smith & Tolbert, 2018).

Additionally, the notion of spatial clustering of immigrant businesses, which is one of the three essential elements of the definition of the enclave economy, lacks academic rigor in the context of ethnic diversification. The concept of the enclave economy is spatial as well as sociological; for example, the foundational theorists, Portes and Jensen (1989), stress that ethnic enclave economy refers to a geographical manifestation where immigrant businesses are highly concentrated and maintain close interactions. While claiming to be about a geographical framework, they uncritically adopted the notion of spatiality as a metaphor, rather than a scientific analytical tool. A number of previous works have roughly defined entire metropolitan areas (Portes, 1987; Sanders & Nee, 1987; Logan et al., 1994), such as Miami for Cuban economies and Honolulu for Japanese economies, as the enclave economy. Given the new urban setting where more than one ethnic group participates in the enclave economic activities in an area, more academic attention is needed to elucidate where businesses of diverse ethnic communities are clustered at a granular geographical level and where their terrains overlap, thereby creating a dynamic spatial relationship in a metropolitan setting.

The second limitation of the enclave economy theory is that it has neglected the conjunction of time and place, thereby interpreting enclave economies as static systems where structural contexts are stable. As a result, scholars have failed to capture the dynamically evolving nature of enclave economies, which change, adapt, and recover in response to a myriad of disturbances and interactions over historical time (Schiller & Çağlar, 2013; Barabantseva, 2015). However, it has been claimed by a number of social scientists that social, political, and economic systems should be studied within a broad time spectrum, rather than in snapshots that capture the cross-sectional reality at a certain point of history (Thelen, 2000; Castree, 2009; Araujo & Easton, 2012; Steen, 2016).

While understudied in the enclave economy scholarship, structural changes of host societies and their impact on immigrant communities have received substantial attention from a broad range of migration studies. Some examples include the studies on the changes in immigration law and regulations (Durand et al., 2001; Massey & Pren, 2012), the short-term impacts of

economic recessions (Menjívar & Enchautegui, 2015; Sisk & Donato, 2016), and intra-ethnic demographic shifts (Reitz & Somerville, 2004; Alberts, 2005). For example, focusing on law and regulations, Reitel (2013) contends that there are four functions of the nation-state borders – defense, control, regulation, asymmetry – and which functions they serve is flexibly determined by the power relations between two countries and their attitudes towards the transborder mobility of people in a specific time period. Also, the work of Alberts (2005) reveals that the strength of ethnic solidarity varies across time and generations due to the demographic changes. Using the case of Cuban immigrants in Miami, she argues that their social cohesiveness dwindled as the deep rifts created due to the social class gap between the old settlers – Golden Exiles who are racially white, educated, and rich – and the newcomers, the Marielitos with relatively lower human capital. As such, while there has been a growing academic interest on the evolving aspects of the immigrant community, enclave economy studies tend to take the structural factor of the host society into account less thoroughly.

As described above, an account of the structural changes in host societies is largely missing in the enclave economy theory in spite of its importance; however, this dissertation points out that the negligence on the influence of immigrants' home societies is even greater. This narrow definition of the enclave economy is challenged by Werbner (2001) and Valenzuela-Garcia and colleagues (2017), who claim that their depiction of the enclave economy as a territorially fixed place is outdated and fails to capture its connection to broader global systems. In particular, Valenzuela-Garcia and colleagues (2017) argue that the enclave economy is de-territorial and circumstantial, and it constantly changes through interactions with different immigrant actors who have prolonged connections with their home societies after leaving. Similarly, Landolt (2001) argues that immigrant businesses should be understood as one of the small pieces that make up a large transnational economic system as a whole, where immigrants sustain socio-economic connections with the home country to fulfill family obligations and overcome scarce resources available in a host society.

Home societies and the enclave economy mutually influence each other and evolve together over time. On one hand, home societies continue to influence the business strategies and activities of immigrants in foreign countries (Kushnirovich & Heilbrunn, 2008; Aliaga-Isla & Rialp, 2013; Qiu & Gupta, 2015; Dheer, 2018; You & Zhou, 2019). In particular, it has been

demonstrated that emigration-friendly policies and the availability of resources in home countries, such as opportunities to acquire skills and education, strong ethnic ties, and financing sources, determine the success likelihood of immigrant-owned businesses in receiving societies (Duan et al., 2020, 2021). On the other hand, migrant-sending societies are influenced by the business activities and financial investments, mainly in the form of remittances, performed by their emigrants (Maas, 2005; Vaaler, 2011; Ambrosini, 2014). Castañeda (2013), for example, found that the remittances sent from emigrants change the industrial structure of their home countries, by feeding the significant growth of package delivery services, money transfer companies, and currency exchange agencies there. Considering these findings, the enclave economy scholarship should factor home societies into their analyses to achieve a more holistic understanding of immigrant businesses as a part of the global economic system.

### *Summary*

In summary, enclave economy, the term suggested by Wilson and Portes (1980) in their groundbreaking publication to demonstrate the beneficial relationship between co-ethnic workers and employers, has lost its relevance over time. A negligence of the variability of the enclave economies and their interconnectedness to other systems has led to two main issues. First, most enclave economy scholars paid little attention to the increasing diversification of the ethnic composition of immigrant workers and business owners in numerous immigrant communities globally. Second, they failed to consider the evolving and fluid nature of the enclave economy, which organically responds to the structural changes in both host societies and home societies. Under these new enclave circumstances, one may ask: in what direction do forms and functions of the enclave economy change over historical time? What drives the ethnic diversification of the previously-homogeneous enclave economy? Which ethnic groups benefit from transnational connections with their homelands, while others have fewer available transnational resources, creating a new power dynamic and inequality among ethnic communities? Would the enclave effect – the beneficial relationship between immigrant employers and employees – still hold even when economic disruptions occur in a receiving country?

The next section draws on the transnational framework to overcome the limitations of the enclave economy theory and to find a theoretical tool to effectively answer those questions. Through this theoretical concept, the aim is to interpret the enclave economy as a fluid, ever-

changing, contested economic ecosystem where its forms and functions change as the product of the immigrants' interactions with multiple localities: a host society and multiple sending societies.

### 2.3. Transnationalism framework: interpreting enclaves as fluid systems

#### *Introduction*

To overcome the aforementioned limitations of the traditional enclave economy theory, which describes immigrant business clusters as being static and mono-ethnic, this section incorporates the transnationalism framework and underlines the fluid nature of the enclave economy. Furthermore, it illustrates how the enclave economy changes its form and functions from time to time as a response to two societies: immigrant-sending societies and receiving societies. In doing so, this section suggests a new theoretical concept, the transclave economy, an emerging form of immigrant economic systems in which workplaces are increasingly multiethnic and both immigrant employers and employees maintain transnational connections with their homelands.

#### *The origin of the transnationalism scholarship*

Over the last several decades, the transnationalism framework has been developed to accommodate a tremendous breadth across a range of academic disciplines, including cultural anthropology and economic sociology. The first appearance of transnationalism as a conceptual tool for migration studies can be found in a work by cultural anthropologists Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Christina Szanton Blanc. Their pioneering book, *Nations Unbound* (Basch et al., 1994), underscores the boundary-blurring effect of migratory flows and claims that today's pattern of migration flow is qualitatively different from that of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Previous philosophical thought, largely influenced by the Chicago School, argued that immigrants' cultural ties and connections to social relationships in their homelands are severed as they cross borders and settle in the receiving societies. However, in opposition to such methodological nationalism, transnational anthropologists argue that contemporary immigrants are less bounded by national boundaries and instead maintain multiple linkages with both their

host and home communities due to advances in communication tools and transportation (Schiller et al., 1992; Basch et al., 1994).

Alejandro Portes' foundational works helped incorporate transnationalism into mainstream discourse (Portes, 1996, 1997b, 1999). Specifically, Portes (1997a) suggests three criteria for identifying members of transnational communities: they are often bilingual, capable of easily moving between different co-ethnic locations, and maintain close connections with two societies (i.e., home and host country). In addition, Portes contends that the transnational phenomenon should involve a significant number of populations and rapid communication across borders. In his works, Portes particularly focuses on working-class immigrants from developing countries and examines how these individuals sustain economic, political, and socio-cultural connections with both worlds – receiving and sending countries – to survive. This concept of transnationalism from below (Smith & Guarnizo, 1998) was empirically demonstrated by the Portes and colleagues (1999), who illustrated how a heterogeneous set of transnational activities of three Latin American immigrants groups, Colombians, Salvadorians, and Dominicans, are triggered by their individual needs and circumstances.

The transnationalism concept articulated by Portes and his colleagues is contrary to the notion of transnationalism from above, which is controlled by a limited number of economic, political elites (Smith, 1990; Guarnizo, 1997; Mahler, 2017). The basic idea of transnationalism from above is that global corporations and nation-state governments exercise their power and influence over two or more countries and produce economic imperialism on a global scale. Those who are deprived of opportunities to participate in this hegemonic activity on the other hand, generate counter-hegemonic forces that shape their new modes of urban life by circumventing multi-scalar structural control across local and global structures and by utilizing resources from multiple nations. Transnational activities are those initiated and sustained by noninstitutional actors, be they organized groups or networks of individuals across national borders. Portes (2001) points out that many transnational activities from below are conducted in an informal way and are individually undertaken without the involvement of state or corporate actors. These activities include running a business to import goods from their home countries and establishing political associations in their homeland while staying in a foreign society.

Notwithstanding its contribution as a precursor to transnationalism theory, Portes' strict definition of transnationalism has been criticized by a number of scholars (Kivisto, 2001; Crang et al., 2003; Guo, 2010). Crang and colleagues (2003), for example, criticize Portes for too narrowly specifying a transnational group as having a significant number of people involved and having access to unlimited communication across nation-state borders. They acknowledge the benefits of such an extension of the academic concept; however, they contend that Portes' transnationalism concept is not free from the issue of minoritization since not many immigrant communities fall into this strict definition. Also, while celebrating the democratic and empowering nature of transnationalism, Mahler (2017) points out that transnationalism's focus on working-class immigrants neglects a variety of social classes and hierarchies that make transnational activities heterogeneous. Mahler remarks that Portes and colleagues' discussion excludes a substantial number of immigrants, such as wealthy overseas Chinese and South Indian entrepreneurs, who transform traditional power relations by maintaining transnational lifestyles.

*Today's transnationalism: a critical assessment*

In order to capture a larger variety of social phenomena and immigrant communities, a broader concept began to be proposed by an increasing number of scholars (Vertovec, 1999; Mazzucato, 2008; Gielis, 2009). Most representatively, Thomas Faist proposed an inclusive definition of transnationalism and coined the concept of transnational social space as an alternative. Using spatial metaphors, Faist (1998, 2000) defines transnational social space as the circulation of people, goods, symbols, and material culture across nations. This perspective views immigrants as creating their own social space by integrating different localities and sustaining their social and symbolic ties with them in their everyday lives. In his work, space refers not only to a physical container, but also to broader social settings, which include opportunity structures, social life, and values that an individual constructs after cross-border migration (Faist, 1998). Vertovec (1999) contributes to expanding the definition by identifying six sub-categories of transnationalism: transnationalism as consciousness, a social morphology, cultural reproduction, political engagement, paths to capital, and a reconfiguration of place.

One of Portes' premises – unlimited communication with a home society – is challenged as researchers find that transnationalism does not require physical movement or immigrants' sustained involvement with a homeland. Rather, intangible transnational practices of immigrants



detached from the home country, such as identity construction and a sense of belonging, started to be incorporated as one of the elements of transnational practices (Resnik, 2006; Jongwilaiwan & Thompson, 2013; I. Kim & Vang, 2020). For example, Jongwilaiwan and Thompson (2013)'s work on Thai wives in Singapore is illustrative of the non-physical, symbolic transnational practices. By coining the term transnational patriarchal bargaining, they examine how a Thai woman is forced to meet double expectations that require her not only to act like a Singaporean wife by following the rules of Singaporean Confucian traditions but also to provide care services like a foreign domestic worker by physically caring for aged parents-in-law. Also, Ghorashi (2004) defines 'trans' simply as 'beyond the borders' in her work and explores how national identity becomes transnational without direct communication with people or organizations in an original homeland.

As the definition of transnationalism expanded, the identification of participants in transnational activities became increasingly diversified. In particular, immigrants who temporarily stay in a foreign country (Collins, 2012; Babis et al., 2021), immigrants who move between more than two countries in their lifetime (Boswell & Ciobanu, 2009; Sperling, 2014), and second-generation immigrants who perform transnational activities and shape their dual identity (Somerville, 2008; Lee, 2011) became emerging subjects of transnationalism studies. In general, the transnational discourse of the past decades offers an optimistic view of migrants' autonomous empowerment and highlight the emancipatory power of transnationalism (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Willis & Yeoh, 2002; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Optimistic researchers point out that transnational practices enable immigrants to organize political activism (Landolt, 2008; Bermudez, 2010), to maintain heritage language and culture (Kwon, 2017; Jeon, 2020), to maintain multiple belongings (Leitner, 2012; Leitner & Ehrkamp, 2006), and to resist against the patriarchal family structure and gain power by financially supporting families back in a home country (Petrozziello, 2011; Vershinina et al., 2019).

In the early 2010s, however, scholars started to undermine the optimistic view, draw on a critical theory, and add sensitivity to social class – wealth, citizenship, and race – in their analysis of the intersection of transnationalism and migration (Cook, 2011; K. Walsh, 2014; Meier, 2016; Kunz, 2016). For example, focusing on the emergence of the transnational elite class, the work by Kunz (2016) views the transnational practices of expatriates as the continued

reproduction of global power relations and inequality. Wealthy immigrants, such as European expatriates and their families in ex-colonial countries, are likely to maintain their social status, rather than lose it, as opposed to the majority of working-class immigrants whose occupational and social statuses are often downgraded upon migration. Privileged immigrants often build their gated community with their capital and strong social network, which allows them to conveniently maintain transnational lifestyles and be minimally affected by the customs and values of the receiving society (Pow, 2011; Kordel & Pohle, 2018). These scholarly works on transnational elites challenge the celebratory nature of previous transnationalism studies and point out that transnational practices are used to maintain the social status of those who are privileged and consolidate power inequality on a global scale.

From the perspective of working-class immigrants, recent studies undermine the traditional belief that the advent of new communication technologies and transportation empowers lesser-privileged immigrants to build transnational strategies and circumvent structural oppression. Instead, they contend that the opportunities to build beneficial transnational strategies between two localities are restricted for the more vulnerable groups of immigrants (Boccagni, 2015; Barglowski, 2019; Haagsman & Mazzucato, 2021). For example, Abrego (2009)'s work on Salvadoran immigrants in the United States reveals that immigrant women tend to have greater expectations to send remittances to their left-behind children in the homeland, compared to their male counterparts. While some children benefit from family remittances – in fact, there is a new social class in major immigrant-sending countries called the “remittance bourgeoisie (Smith, 2006; p. 50)” – the economic burden induced by the gendered expectation for immigrant women to be a main caregiver for their children often leads them to make significant sacrifices and suffer economically. Moreover, many immigrants who are of lower socioeconomic status or undocumented have limited freedom to travel to visit their hometown family members and often live in unsafe neighborhoods where their mobility is highly restricted (Passel & Cohn, 2008; Dreby & Adkins, 2010).

While there was substantial criticism from geographers that the transnationalism approach used space as a metaphors and disguised complex spatial phenomena (Carter, 2005; Collyer & King, 2015), in the late 1990s, Katharyne Mitchell made an attempt to bring back geography into the center of the transnationalism discussion and to overcome the limitation of the metaphorical

notion of space (Mitchell, 1997b, 1997a). Following her influential works in the field of geography, there has been an increasing academic endeavor to place and conceptualize transnational processes through a spatial lens (Cocola-Gant & Lopez-Gay, 2020; Collyer & King, 2015). More specifically, urban geographers and urban theorists have challenged the orthodox framework that perceives immigrant communities as coherent static spaces by adapting the idea of transnationalism. They underlined the disruptive power of the transnational swirl of populations on urban fabrics and the continual reconfiguration of immigrant communities in cities over time and generations (Mitchell, 1997b; Yeoh & Chang, 2001; A. J. Bailey et al., 2002; Ehrkamp, 2005; Leerkes et al., 2007; Blunt, 2007; Modai-Snir & Plaut, 2021). The emphasis on the transnational flow of humans and capital has helped geographers reimagine ethnic enclaves as a fluid container, which is constantly re-shaped by both sending and receiving societies, rather than as fixed units (Amin & Thrift, 2002; F. L. Collins, 2012).

Understanding the high degree of fluidity of immigrant communities, transnationalism urbanists argue that power relations among immigrants were influenced, as the country of origin and socioeconomic class of the enclave members became diversified in numerous cities (Machimura, 2005; Abramson et al., 2006; Molina et al., 2015; Shin, 2018). Shin's writing (2018) on a traditional Korean enclave in New Malden, UK is an exemplary work that reveals how heterogeneous groups of immigrants negotiate their economic and cultural hierarchy in a shared neighborhood. Three immigrant groups in New Malden – North Korean, South Korean, and Korean Chinese (Joseonjok) – experience that their geopolitical context of their home societies largely dictates their relationship building with one another in the host society. More specifically, South Koreans tend to occupy upper segments of the cultural and economic hierarchy as association leaders and employers of other two groups, by leveraging their previous work experience in a capitalist society with higher socio-economic capital. This enclave hierarchy, however, is always being contested and challenged as the power of China in the global economy grows and North Korean defectors begin to receive humanitarian support and attention from the UK government.

### *Summary*

Addressing several limitations of the enclave economy theory, the transnationalism framework exerts its main usefulness in its presupposition of a space as a fluid, contested system

that adapts its form and function to respond to two worlds: immigrants' home societies and host societies. Two assumptions made by the enclave economy thesis are effectively challenged by the transnationalism scholarship. First, their depiction of the enclave economy as a static, contained place is undermined by the evolving process of transnational immigrant communities. That is, it has been well documented by transnational urbanism scholarship that immigrants do not sever their previous connections upon their migration, and their social, economic, and symbolic connection with their homeland, as well as their host society, continues to affect their behaviors and relationship with other urban actors, thereby restructuring the enclave system. Second, their presupposition of the socio-spatial dominance of a single ethnic group in the enclave economy is refuted by the findings of transnationalist scholars that reveal that immigrant communities are becoming multiethnic and multi-class, often with more than two ethnic groups competing within a cultural and economic hierarchy in a shared enclave.

Utilizing the newly coined term, transclave economy, the following sections examine how nail salons in New York City—an enclave economy traditionally believed to be occupied by a single ethnic group—have transformed into a complex socio-spatial space of multiple ethnicities as a product of transnational globalization.

## 3 Socio-spatial diversity of the transclave economy

### 3.1. Quantifying the threefold diversity of New York City nail salons

#### *Summary*

In this section, I explore the diversity of an immigrant industry by constructing an ethnicity-coded database of New York City nail salons. Methodologically, I apply a presumptive surname list method to business listing data to analyze market segmentation by presumptive ethnic groups. The results challenge a premise, common in enclave economy scholarship, that within-industry immigrant businesses are homogeneous or monolithic. Instead, using geospatial analysis, this research reveals the diversity inherent in the enclave economy. It builds a typology of diversities in the enclave economy at three scales: micro-level (individual trait of salon owners), meso-level (firm characteristics such as business size), and macro-level (environmental context) diversities. This analysis reveals that ethnicity plays a significant role in determining which sub-groups occupy preferable positions in this stratified economic system, thereby producing a new mode of inequality within this immigrant-dominant industry.

#### *Data processing: applying the surname method to ReferenceUSA records*

Because of its granular geographical level and high sensitivity, ReferenceUSA has been widely used as a secondary data source for geospatial analysis of business units (Zarsky, 2007; Fleischhacker et al., 2012; Mansury et al., 2017). It provides full address information for each enterprise, including latitude, longitude, street address, neighborhood, city, county, and state. Scholarly articles based on the ReferenceUSA database have analyzed a range of business types in the United States, such as tobacco stores (D'Angelo et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2016), engineered stone businesses (Macmurdo et al., 2021), and food stores and restaurants (Vilme et al., 2020). ReferenceUSA has relatively high sensitivity: Fleischhacker et al. (2012) test the sensitivity of five different data sources for restaurants and convenience stores, including local health county, state agriculture department, Dun & Bradstreet, online yellow pages, and ReferenceUSA. When compared with a ground-truth dataset, which was constructed based on the field site visits,

Internet searches, and phone calls, ReferenceUSA data shows relatively high sensitivity for those business units relative to other sources.

Methodologically, this study adopted the presumptive surname list method from the public health studies to infer the ethnicity of the nail salon owners based on their surnames listed in ReferenceUSA. While ReferenceUSA does not provide ethnicity data explicitly, it contains the business owners' surnames for each enterprise unit as well as its details on over 30 categories of business information. A presumptive surname list method, which is widely used by immigrant public health researchers, makes the anthropological assumption that an individual's surname reflects the culture and ancestry that a person communally shares with their community and ethnic groups. The surnames listed in ReferenceUSA allowed this research to build the ethnicity-coded database that matches each nail salon with its presumptive ethnic group, such as Chinese and Vietnamese.

More specifically, two steps were taken to create the ethnicity-coded database based on ReferenceUSA. First, I conducted archival analysis on published surname lists and extracted commonly-used Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Hispanic surnames (Rosenwaike, 1994; Word & Perkins, 1996; Lauderdale & Kestenbaum, 2000; Quan et al., 2006; S.-O. Lee, 2011; Taylor et al., 2011). Second, by using R, I matched this collection of ethnic surnames with ReferenceUSA data on 5,252 nail salons in New York City. For example, if the owner's surname of a nail salon  $x$  is Choi, this matching process annotates the salon  $x$  as a Korean nail salon since Choi is one of the surnames listed in the Korean name archival collection. As a result, I identified 718 Chinese salons, 452 Korean salons, 178 Vietnamese salons, and 95 Hispanic salons in New York City. Table 3-1 below summarizes the number of nail salons for each group, identified surnames, and scholarly articles that I referred to collect ethnic names:

Table 3-1. List of surnames extracted from RefereceUSA database

Ethnicity (# of salons)	Owner's Surname (# of salons)	Reference
Chinese (718)	Chen 75, Lin 52, Li 50, Liu 35, Huang 25, Zhang 22, Wang 21, Zheng 21, Wu 19, Yang 14, Wong 12, Yu 12, Chan 11, Zhou 11, Xu 9, Cai 8, Chang 8, Dong 8, Lu 8, Zhao 8, Zhu 8, Gao 7, Ye 7, Cheng 6, Jiang 6, Lam 6, Wei 6, Chi 5, Feng 5, Fu 5, Jin 5, Kin 5, Lan 5, Tang 5, Hu 4, Ng 4, Pan 4, Ren 4, Shi 4, Xie 4, Yan 4, Yin 4, Chin 3, Deng 3, Fan 3, Gu 3, Hee 3, Liang 3, Qin 3, Qiu 3, Sun 3, Teh 3, Weng 3, Yuan 3, Chao 3, Cheung 2, Dai 2, Fang 2, Guo 2, He 2, Ji 2, Kwan 2, Lau 2, Lei 2, Ling 2, Nan 2, Niu 2, Pang 2, Qi 2, Shen 2, Tao 2, Thoo 2, Tsui 2, Wan 2, Wen 2, Woo 2, Xia 2, Xing 2, Xue 2, Yap 2, Yip 2, Yong 2, Yue 2, Zhong 2, Zhuo 2, Bai 1, Chau 1, Chiang 1, Ching 1, Chow 1, Choy 1, Chu 1, Chuong 1, Ci 1, Cu 1, Cui 1, Ding 1, Fei 1, Fun 1, Fung 1, Gang 1, Ge 1, Gim 1, Gou 1, Guan 1, Gui 1, Guk 1, Gung 1, Hao 1, Heng 1, Heong 1, Hsiao 1, Hua 1, Hui 1, Hung 1, Jaing 1, Jing 1, Ke 1, Leu 1, Leung 1, Lo 1, Lou 1, Louie 1, Lung 1, Luo 1, Mao 1, Miao 1, Miu 1, Mou 1, New 1, Ngu 1, Ou 1, Ping 1, Pui 1, Pun 1, Qiang 1, Qu 1, Qun 1, Quong 1, Ruan 1, Sen 1, Shao 1, Sheng 1, Sho 1, Shu 1, Shun 1, Sue 1, Sze 1, Teng 1, To 1, Tong 1, Tse 1, Tu 1, Wing 1, Yau 1, Yee 1, Yeung 1, Yuet 1, Zeng 1, Zhen 1, Zhi 1, Zhuang 1	Rosenwaike (1994), Lauderdale & Kestenbaum (2000), Quan (2006)
Korean (452)	Kim 104, Lee 80, Choi 25, Park 25, Chung 18, Hong 12, Kang 12, Cho 9, Han 9, Shin 9, Moon 8, Yi 8, Chong 7, Kwon 6, An 6, Jang 5, Jin 5, Jung 5, Kwak 5, Soon 5, Ahn 4, Gong 4, Ko 4, Nam 4, Pak 4, Seo 4, Song 4, Yoon 4, Baek 3, Sin 3, So 3, Cha 2, Choe 2, Chon 2, Eun 2, Hwang 2, Jun 2, Min 2, Sang 2, Son 2, Su 2, Woo 2, Yoo 2, Youn 2, Ban 1, Byeon 1, Chun 1, Hyun 1, Jeon 1, Ju 1, Kam 1, Kwack 1, Mok 1, Na 1, No 1, Paek 1, Ryoo 1, Sa 1, Shim 1, Suh 1, Suk 1, Um 1, Won 1, Yim 1, Yo 1, Yun 1	Rosenwaike (1994), Lauderdale & Kestenbaum (2000), Lee (2011)
Vietnamese (178)	Nguyen 50, Tran 32, Bui 11, Huynh 10, Pham 9, Cao 8, Vu 7, Dang 5, Le 5, Do 4, Ngo 4, Truong 4, Doan 3, Hoang 3, Phan 3, Dao 2, Dinh 2, Duong 2, Luu 2, Ly 2, Thai 2, Giang 1, Luong 1, Phu 1, Quach 1, Quang 1, Thanh 1, Van 1, Vo 1	Rosenwaike (1994), Lauderdale & Kestenbaum (2000), Taylor et al. (2011)

Hispanic (95)	Cabrera 6, Rodriguez 5, Diaz 4, Mejia 3, Rivera 3, Romero 3, Villegas 3, Alfaro 2, Castro 2, Garcia 2, Gomez 2, Gonzalez 2, Gutierrez 2, Hernandez 2, Lopez 2, Nunez 2, Ortiz 2, Quinones 2, Ramirez 2, Sanchez 2, Abreu 1, Alicea 1, Almonte 1, Alonso 1, Amaya 1, Aparicio 1, Arias 1, Bueno 1, Calderon 1, Caraballo 1, Cardenas 1, Carrasco 1, Castillo 1, Chavez 1, Cruz 1, Delacruz 1, Duarte 1, Espinal 1, Fernandez 1, Figueroa 1, Flores 1, Galindo 1, Guzman 1, Henriquez 1, Laboy 1, Martinez 1, Matos 1, Medina 1, Morales 1, Navarro 1, Pena 1, Prieto 1, Reyes 1, Sandoval 1, Santiago 1, Sosa 1, Torres 1, Valencia 1, Valles 1, Varela 1, Vargas 1, Vasquez 1	Word & Perkins (1996)
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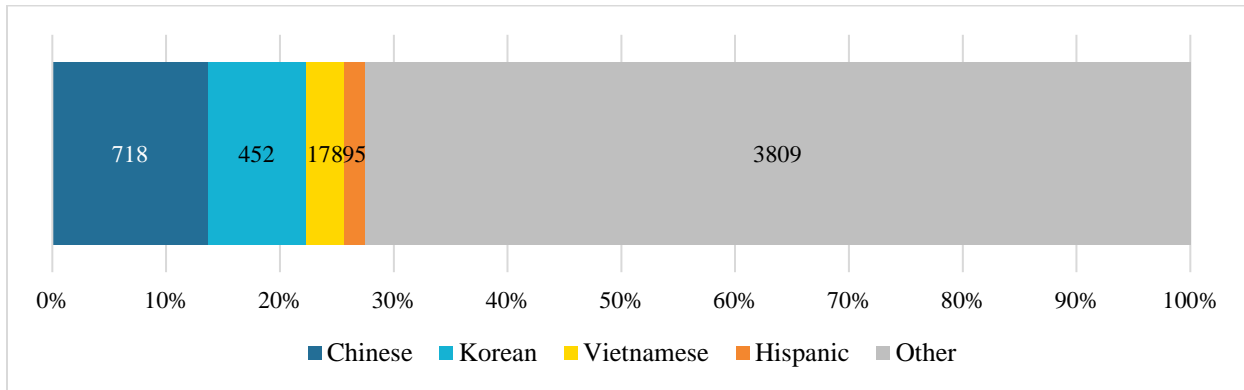
Source: ReferenceUSA (2020)

However, I acknowledge some limitations inherent in this method. First, this database does not take into consideration of the cases where an individual changed their surnames on marriage or the person is an American-born descendant of immigrant ancestors. Therefore, some samples may have been wrongly annotated to a certain ethnic group regardless of their true cultural identities. Second, this data excluded spelling mistakes on surnames, thereby having possible risks of underestimation of the number of ethnic nail salons. Third, several surnames listed in Table 3-1 are also used in other countries as a result of the history of colonization and migration. For example, the owners of some Hispanic-tagged nail salons might be Filipino, Chamorro or from other communities previously colonized by the Spanish Empire during the early modern period.

Figure 3-1 below shows the presumptive ethnic compositions of New York City nail salons based on the surname list method:



Figure 3-1. Surname-coded ethnic composition of nail salons



Source: ReferenceUSA (2020)

Approximately 73.1% of nail salons are categorized as “other” in the ethnicity-coded ReferenceUSA dataset. The category “other” does not necessarily mean all of them are non-ethnic salons where owners are native-born Americans. Rather, this significant portion of populations is the collection of owners with minor surnames of one of the four target ethnic groups, owners from other minor ethnic groups in the market, such as Ukraine and Nepali, and cases of spelling mistakes. As shown in figure, the biggest ethnic group in New York City nail salons is Chinese (718, 13.0%), followed by Korean (452, 8.6%), Vietnamese (178, 3.4%), and Hispanic (95, 1.8%).

*Threefold diversity: individual traits, firm characteristics, and environmental contexts*

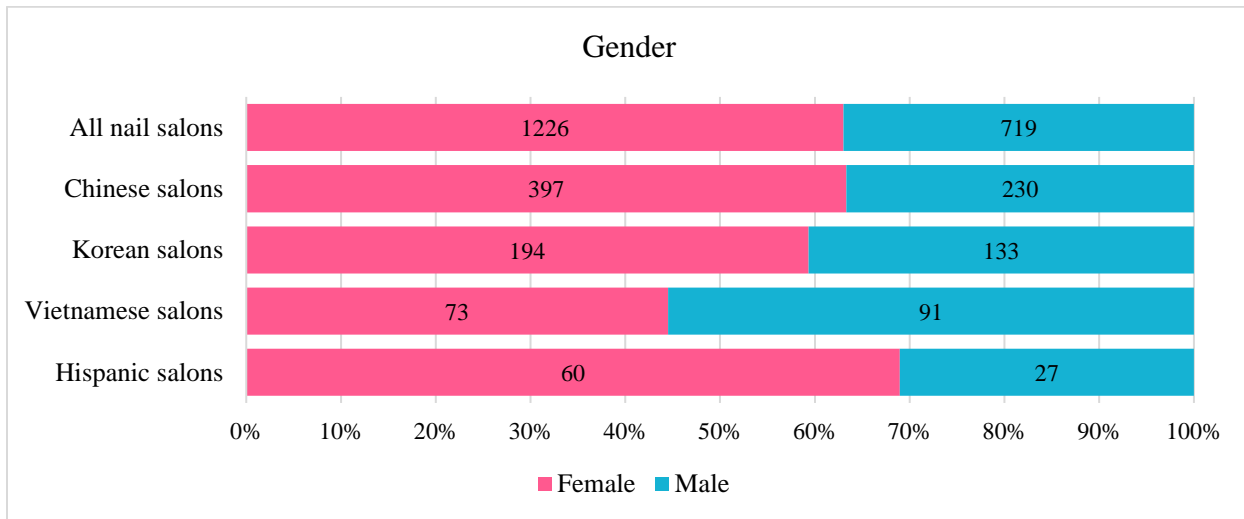
In Figures 3-2 to 3-4, I segment these four major ethnic groups—Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Hispanic—by their individual traits (owner’s gender), firm characteristics (firm’s age, employment size, square fit size, and sales), and environmental context (geographical location of a firm) to demonstrate the layers of diversity in this industry at different scales.

As for the individual traits of ethnic owners, Figure 3-2 exhibits that each ethnic group forms different gendered market structures. The most distinctive pattern here is that Hispanic salons are most feminized when it comes to owner’s gender, with 69.0% of them are owned by people identified as women. On the other hand, Vietnamese salons are the most gender-balanced: 44.5% of them are owned by woman while the remainder are run by male owners. Both Chinese and Korean salons have a slightly greater prevalence of women owners (63.3% and 59.3%,

respectively), similar to the average of all nail salons (63.0%). There are few empirical studies that provide an estimation of the gender makeup of nail salon owners and studies that estimate the share of female workers do not control for their cultural origins (Sharma et al., 2018).

Overcoming the scarcity of ethnically-identified data, Figure 3-2 shows that women ownership varies from 44.5% to 69.0%, depending on the salons’ ethnic backgrounds.

Figure 3-2. Individual trait: owner’s gender



Source: ReferenceUSA (2020)

The overrepresentation of female owners in Hispanic nail salons could be explained by machismo codes in Hispanic communities. Francisca, one of three manicurists employed in a nail salon located in Flatbush, gave me a piece of a clue to explain the highly-feminized labor market of Hispanic nail salons. Francisca, an Ecuadorian immigrant who moved to the United States when she was 10, worked as a manicurist for the last 4 years. Around that time, I became interested in the fact that many of my interviewees were from Ecuador and sought to learn what societal factors draw Ecuadorians into nail salons. As the conversation unfolded, Francisca described the story of the ethnic niche of Ecuadorian immigrants and the gendered occupational niche that blocks Ecuadorian men from entering the salon industry. She noted:

People get different jobs. There are a lot of Mexicans and Hondurans in construction, and, well, some Mexican women work in construction too. [...] But women and men usually do different jobs. Nail is a woman’s job, of course. I guess it is too feminine for men? It is like, I don’t work in construction because I am not strong like a man, and men don’t work in salons because that’s too feminine. They would feel embarrassed if they have to tell people that they are manicurists. That sounds funny. [...] I am not sure why there are many Ecuadorean

technicians in nail salons but I think, maybe, because of friends? I got a job because of my Ecuadorean friend.

(Francisca, Ecuadorian nail salon worker, Flatbush)

Francisca's narrative above implies that there is peer pressure or cultural taboos among Latin American communities that code manicure as a woman's job. Nail salon owners from Latin American countries, such as Mexico and Venezuela also mentioned that it is more "natural" for women to run a "feminine" business, like nail salons. Francisca also put emphasis on the importance of the social networks in getting the first job in a foreign country, indicating that Hispanic men move through different recruiting channels by fellow men and flow into male-dominant industries such as construction. Of course, Hispanic identity is not homogeneous. Since Hispanic identity comprises a heterogeneous group of people from different countries with unique cultures and histories, this dissertation refrains from making a broad assumption about the masculinity culture of Hispanic communities and its impact on a gendered occupational niche in nail salons.

On the other hand, Vietnamese respondents tended to understand the salon business as family work, rather than women's work. The following is a narrative on perceived "feminine work" from a Vietnamese man who runs a nail salon in the Bronx. Peter was a Vietnamese man whose nail salon was known in the neighborhood for its quality services and beautiful designs. When I visited Peter's salon in the Bronx, he was extending a Black woman's nails with acrylics and red dip powder. Because his schedule was packed with appointments, we decided to proceed with the interview while he was in service, with the customer's permission. When asked about people's perception of this "feminine" occupation, he noted:

In the beginning, I didn't like this job because at that time I thought it was more like a girly job. But I enjoyed the design so I actually grew from there. [...] This is not the matter of women's job or men's job. This is a family business for me where my aunts, my uncles, and my friends work.

(Peter, Vietnamese nail salon owner, South Bronx)

The narrative from Peter reveals how working as an immigrant man in a female-dominant industry does not compromise his masculine identity, by using the notion of a lucrative family business. During his college, he started to work as a part-time manicurist for his aunt's nail salon to pay for his tuition and rent. "When I was young, I always liked to draw and it was the best way to kill my time," he said. However, even though he knew he had artistic talent, he

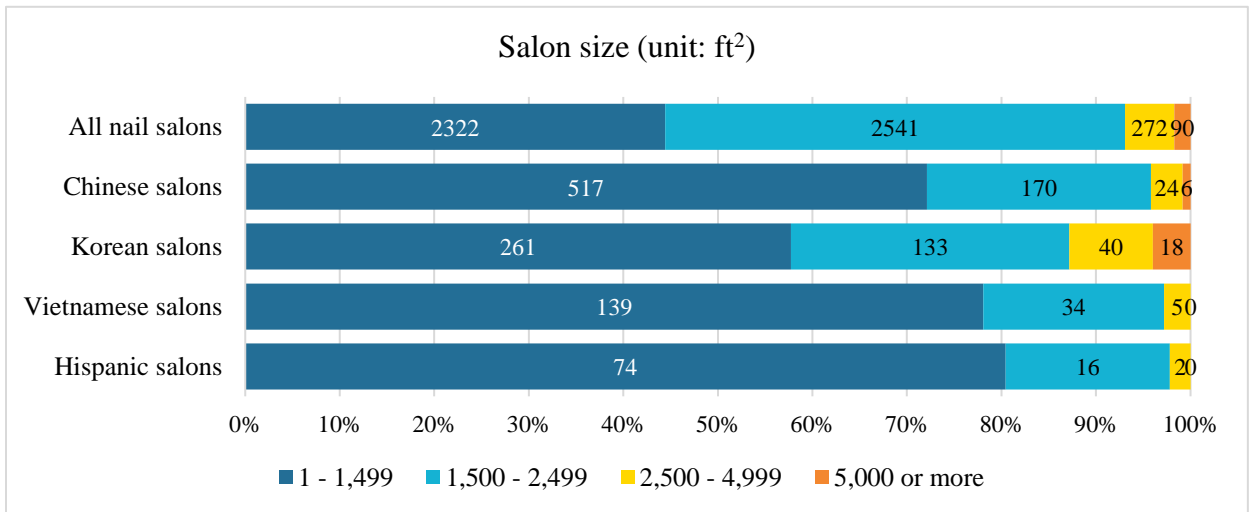
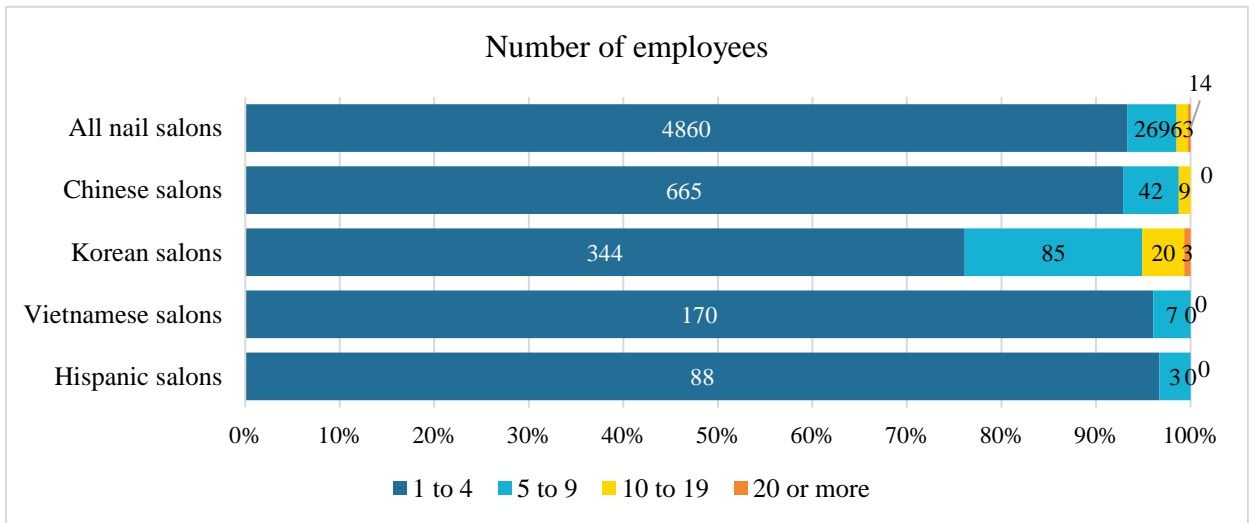
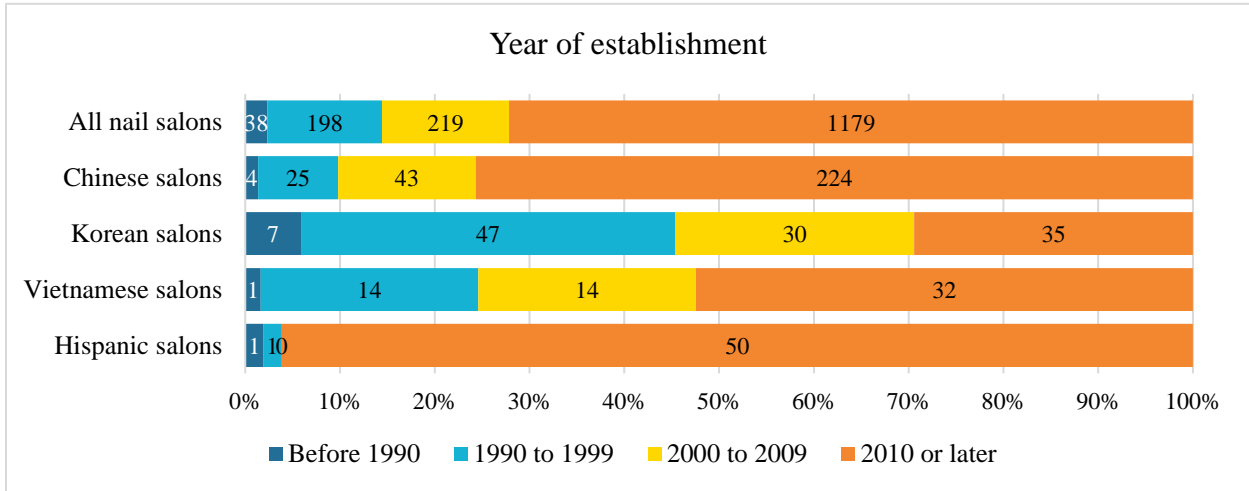
experienced some inner conflict when he had to decide whether to choose a manicurist as his lifelong job after graduation. While interviewing, he repeatedly tried to emphasize that his nail salon is a remunerative family business, which he runs it as a breadwinner to feed his wife and two children, rather than a “girly job.” A focus on family business was also expressed by James, who co-manages a nail salon in Flatbush with his brother. “Vietnamese people have been doing this for years and years and it is a family business where I grew up,” he noted. He remarked that he is free from gendered stereotypes because of his ethnicity; the salon industry has been a traditional niche market for the Vietnamese community and, therefore, people tend to perceive him and his brother as “Vietnamese manicurists” instead of “male manicurists.”

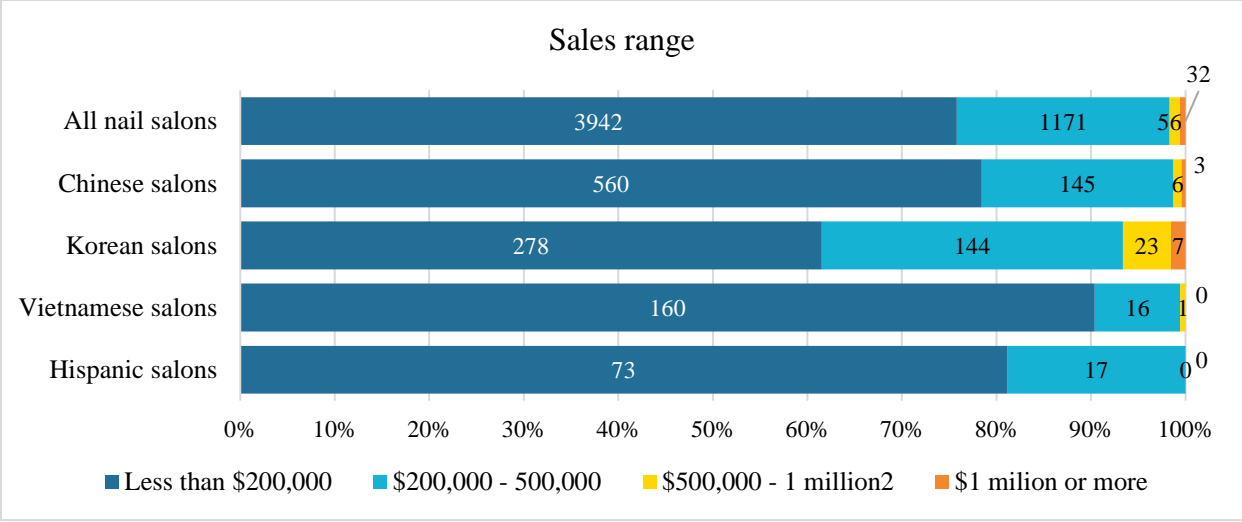
While Figure 3-2 shows the diverse composition of nail salons in the transclave economy at an individual/micro-level, Figure 3-3 displays firm characteristics, a meso-level form of diversity. Overall, New York City nail salons fall into the Small Business Administration’s definition of “small business” because a majority of establishments employ less than 10 people and generate annual revenue of less than \$250,000. Among them, the most disparate groups in terms of their sociodemographic profile were Korean, Chinese, and Hispanic. Nail salons are likely to be older, larger, and wealthier if they were owned by Koreans and Chinese, while Hispanic nail salons are expected to be younger, smaller, and more impoverished in general.<sup>11</sup> In detail, 96.2% of Hispanic salons opened after 2000, 96.7% of them employ less than 5 workers, and approximately 81.1% of them have annual sales less than \$200,000. This may mean that Hispanic salons are less resilient to the coronavirus pandemic than other cultural groups due to limited cash flow, short tenure in the market, and a consequent weak support network. This will be further discussed in chapter 4.

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<sup>11</sup> However, the representation of the year of establishment across ethnic groups might be less accurate than in other tables. Because ReferenceUSA’s data reports the most up-to-date information about owners (e.g., first name, last name, and gender) of nail salons, the owners of salons when first established could have differed from the current owners recorded in the updated database.

Figure 3-3. Firm characteristics: age, employment size, salon size, and sales





Source: ReferenceUSA (2020)

One of the interesting aspects here is that Vietnamese salons have achieved less financial success than those owned by Koreans on average, even though both groups were early entrants to the market. Many Korean and Vietnamese salons were established before 2000 (45.4% of Korean salons and 24.6% of Vietnamese salons, respectively), a period that several interviewees called the “golden age of nail salons” because a range of growth opportunities, lower competition, looser regulations, and cheap labor costs. However, as shown in Figure 3-3, Vietnamese salons followed a similar growth trajectory to Hispanic salons. Their average sales, for example, are the lowest among all ethnic groups, with 90.4% earning less than \$200,000 annually. Their distribution of employment size, square footage, and sales is nearly identical to that of Hispanic populations, who are comparatively late entrants to the market.

This gap among the two pioneer groups—Korean and Vietnamese—may be the result of the disparity in socioeconomic capital that each group was able to utilize in their host society. A number of scholarly works report that Korean immigrants have greater attainment of college education, more economic assets, better health conditions, and higher business ownership rate than Vietnamese immigrants (Huang & Carrasquillo, 2008; Xiao et al., 2020; R. W. Fairlie, 2020). Considering that seed money, education, and business experience are three of the key determining factors of entrepreneurial success (Robinson & Sexton, 1994; Dickson et al., 2008), we can infer that Korean nail salons owners may have benefitted from accessing a range of material or non-material resources, such as wealth that they brought from their home country and

know-how from previous entrepreneurial experience, while Vietnamese owners were excluded from these opportunities. Initial differences in social endowments may have led to divergent trajectories of entrepreneurial success between Korean and Vietnamese communities in the city.

Moreover, strong co-ethnic networks and the active co-ethnic organizations consolidate the privileged position of Chinese and Korean nail salon owners in the market. New York has the Chinese Nail Salon Association and the Korean American Nail Salon Association of New York (KANSA). Both of their offices are located in Flushing and they were still in action when I visited New York in January 2021. Their main day-to-day services include managing online group chats (e.g., WeChat<sup>12</sup> for Chinese owners, KakaoTalk<sup>13</sup> for Korean owners), organizing monthly meetings and seminars, and lobbying for salon owners' interests. Collective political actions led by these two organizations, such as a recent protest against the *New York Times* article "The Price of Nice Nails" and a lawsuit against the New York State's new regulation on nail salon workers, are well documented by media (Fuchs, 2015; Nir, 2015b). This series of collective efforts feeds back into the ethnic advantage of Chinese and Korean immigrants, consequently widening gaps between other ethnic groups. By comparison, there was still no official establishment of co-ethnic nail salon organizations that serve the Vietnamese and Hispanic populations in the region.

At a macro-level, the geographical location of enterprises plays a key role in shaping diverse entrepreneurial experiences in the transclave economy of nail salons. Figure 3-4 divides the four ethnic groups by which borough in which they are located. As a whole, Queens has the largest number of nail salons (1,594, 30.3%), followed by Manhattan (1,344, 25.6%), Brooklyn (1,333, 25.4%), Bronx (670, 12.8%), and Staten Island (311, 5.9%). By ethnic groups, Chinese salons are overrepresented in Brooklyn (34.6% of Chinese salons), Korean salons in Manhattan (41.8% of Korean salons), Vietnamese salons in the Bronx (43.3% of Vietnamese salons), and Hispanic salons in the Bronx (36.8% of Hispanic salons). This geographical pattern aligns with the distribution of respondents in my fieldwork. The most frequent places that interviewees were recruited through in-person visits were as follows: Koreans in Midtown Manhattan; Chinese in

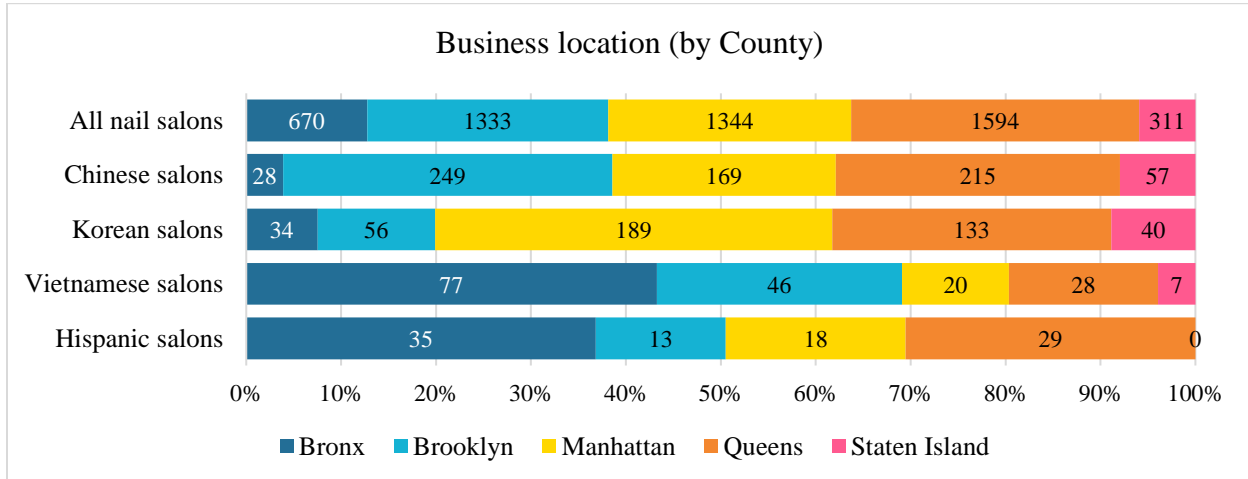
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<sup>12</sup> WeChat (Wēixìn) is a messaging app launched in 2011, and one of the most popular social media in China (Tu, 2016; Montag et al., 2018).

<sup>13</sup> KakaoTalk is a messenger app released in 2010, and the largest social media platform in Korea (Eunjeong, 2013).

Downtown Brooklyn, Bensonhurst, and Sunset Park; Vietnamese in the South Bronx; and Hispanics in Jackson Heights.

Figure 3-4. Environmental context: geographical location of firms



Source: ReferenceUSA (2020)

Overall, this three-layer diversity at the individual, enterprise, and the environmental level were bound up with ethnic hierarchy and power relations. Korean and Chinese salons were overrepresented in the upper segment, while Hispanic and Vietnamese salons were clustered in the lower segment of the stratified landscape. Specifically, Korean and Chinese nail salons were more likely to have larger employment sizes, higher revenue, and be located in affluent neighborhoods, such as Midtown Manhattan, relative to other ethnic groups. Hispanic salons, for example, had a strong tendency to be located in underserved neighborhoods and hire less than five manicurists. Reinforcing this stratification, the fieldwork conducted from 2020 to 2021 revealed that Korean and Chinese salon owner respondents were more likely to have own more than one nail salons whereas other owners, such as Hispanic and Vietnamese, had a single salon under their management.

Such inequality across multiple ethnic groups was illustrated by two women’s narratives during the fieldwork: Sandy, a Korean nail salon owner, and Olivia, an Ecuadorian manicurist. For example, the story of Sandy, who owns one of many Korean nail salons in Upper West Side, Manhattan, showed the privileged, upper segment of the industry. In the middle of the interview, she began to talk about why she thinks the *New York Times* article on labor exploitations of nail salons should be corrected to reflect a more holistic view of nail salon businesses. As one of the



market pioneers who started her own salon in the early 1980s, she remarked that this industry changed significantly over a couple of generations, and it is unrealistic to frame this business simply as a “filthy sweatshop.” Sandy admitted that some salons have bad working conditions, such as violations of minimum wage and understaffing. However, she emphasized that many nail salons in Manhattan are larger, fancier, and have better labor conditions for their workers because of the tips that they receive from wealthy clients and the tight labor market and talent wars in the area. She remarked as follows:

I think they [the *Times*] wrote an article based on the interviews with some nail salons in the Bronx. Not all nail salons are filthy sweatshops. In this area, nail salons are a high-end spa business that provides all-in-one wellness and beauty services. We have a lot of wealthy clients, they tip a lot, and our service prices are high. I have more than 20 workers and I pay them a competitive wage. If you don't, your salon cannot survive in this neighborhood. Did you smell a relaxing aroma scent when walking in our store? It's really good, isn't it?

(Sandy, Korean nail salon owner, Upper West Side)

On the other hand, Olivia, an Ecuadorian manicurist at a nail salon owned by her co-ethnic boss in the South Bronx, described the lower segment of the industry. Her workplace was a hair salon that provided manicuring services as a side business. As the only worker paid for nail services at the salon, she was in charge of opening up the salon early in the morning, cleaning the workplace, and closing in the late evening, working every day from 8 am to 8 pm. When asked how much she was satisfied with her current work, she replied:

Not good. Manhattan was good. I got more money in Manhattan because of tips. People tip 5 dollars basically. That's the minimum in Manhattan. People sometimes give 100 dollars as tips. Very generous people. Here, people have no money and no tip. Rich people live in Manhattan. Poor people live in the Bronx. And Manhattan has many workers. I had time to take a rest. It was no stress. But here, only me. Many stresses. Sometimes many customers walk in at the same time. Very difficult day.

(Olivia, Ecuadorian nail salon worker, South Bronx)

Being the only employee of the Ecuadorian-owned small nail salon in the South Bronx was never easy for Olivia. According to her, Manhattan nail salons on average have more employees, higher tips, and lower intensity of labor, compared to salons in less-privileged areas like the Bronx. “My first boss was a Korean and the second boss was a Chinese,” she said when asked who were the owners of the nail salons when she worked in Manhattan. She had hoped to continue to work in an Asian nail salon in Manhattan because of the superior benefits and work

conditions; however, she recently decided to get a job in the Bronx where her family lived to be a “good mom” for their kids and provide them with a better education. Olivia was the breadwinner for her family of six people, including four children and her unemployed husband who recently lost his job, and she wasn’t able to afford to hire someone who could babysit her young children when she worked away in Manhattan.

### *Summary*

In sum, using the presumptive surname list method, this section quantifies the internal diversity of the enclave economy, which has been underexplored largely due to the data unavailability. It reveals that New York City nail salons are not a homogeneous market where small, family-owned stores were dominated by a single ethnic group. Rather, this enclave economy has a wide variation in owner demographics, business records, and geographical locations of the salons. In particular, owners’ ethnicity was closely related to the stratification of this immigrant-dominant industry. For example, Vietnamese and Hispanic salons took the bottom layer of the market hierarchy, obtaining the lowest revenue and smallest employment size among the four ethnic groups. Koreans and Chinese salons were situated in the upper segment of the market, generating higher revenue and larger job openings for immigrants. Through the framework of three layers of diversity—individual-level, firm-level, and environmental-level—this study demonstrates that the enclave economy comprises diverse ethnic groups that assume different segments of the highly stratified industrial market.

The next section will delve into the last layer of the diversity presented—environmental context—and investigate the spatial manifestations of the transclave economy. The enclave economy is a geographical concept as well as a sociological concept that stresses the spatial clustering of immigrant businesses. However, a rigorous spatial analysis has been largely missing and the existing literature tended to refer to a large metropolitan area as a metaphor for the enclave economy (Portes, 1987; Zhou & Cai, 2006). To address this limitation, the next part of the thesis continues to use the ReferenceUSA data and analyzes how the enclave economy participants are located and clustered at a granular level, forming a mosaic of spatial diversity.

### 3.2. The third layer of diversity: spatial distribution of nail salons

#### *Introduction*

This section further explores the third layer of diversity—environmental context—by describing the spatial layout of New York City nail salons by multiple ethnic groups through the application of ArcGIS techniques. In enclave economy scholarship, little effort has been made to understand the spatial relationship that immigrant groups have with other immigrant groups. In addition, previous studies chose a whole city (e.g., Chinese communities in Los Angeles and New York City, Cuban communities in Miami) as a geographical unit of analysis and neglected the multi-layered diversity within the local system. However, considerable research has been conducted by economic geographers and economists to capture the firm-level spatial distribution of businesses and its significant implications for economic activities (Glasmeier, 1988; Malmberg, 1996; Rosenthal & Strange, 2003; Marshall, 2009; Cong et al., 2014). In this section, each nail salon is treated as a unit of geographical observation, rather than being assumed to be distributed randomly in a city. Ultimately, this section illuminates ethnic clustering at a granular geographical level.

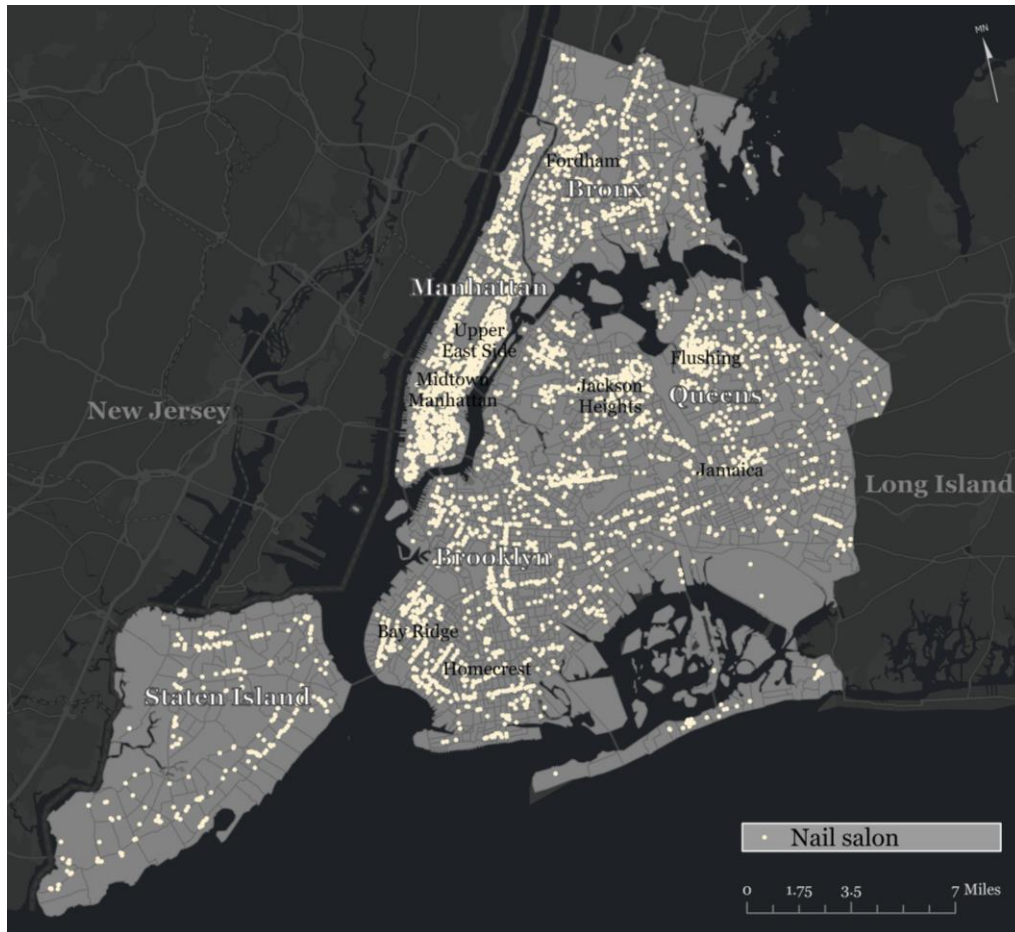
#### *Data processing: applying spatial techniques on ReferenceUSA records*

Two steps were performed to accomplish this goal. First, using the ethnicity-coded ReferenceUSA records, I created a series of dot maps on New York City nail salons by historical time, in an effort to identify spatial patterns of growth and expansion of nail salons from the early 1900s to 2020. Second, I conducted Kernel density estimation, one widely used interpolation technique for point location data (Kalinic & Krisp, 2018; Pratamasari et al., 2020), to detect where nail salons are agglomerated and dispersed in a city. Kernel density estimation works by computing curved surface on each location point (Kalinic & Krisp, 2018). To apply this method, I divided the dataset by ethnic group and investigated whether each ethnic group of nail salons has their own clustering pattern, distinct from other groups.

#### *Spatial distribution of nail salons in New York City*

Figure 3-5 below displays the overall spatial distribution of nail salons across five counties in New York City. One dot (light yellow) represents one nail salon business unit:

Figure 3-5. Spatial distribution of nail salons in New York City (n = 5,252)



Source: ReferenceUSA (2020)

The most significant pattern from Figure 3-5 was the high degree of nail salon agglomeration in Manhattan, the largest central business district (CBD) of New York City. There were approximately 59.2 salons per square mile in Manhattan, which was the highest establishment density among the five boroughs (19.2 in Brooklyn, 15.8 in the Bronx, 14.7 salons in Queens, and 5.4 in State Island). Among 1,344 units, the neighborhood with the most nail salon establishments in Manhattan was the Upper East Side (11.7%, 157 salons), followed by the Upper West Side (6.9%, 93 salons) and Midtown East (6.5%, 88 salons).<sup>14</sup> In alignment with this finding, a number of researchers have pointed out that CBDs exert a strong pull on businesses, contributing to the formation of business agglomeration (Matthew, 1993; Shearmur, 2007; Jung

<sup>14</sup> In terms of firm density, Lincoln Square has the highest density of nail salons established (0.9 establishments per acres) in Manhattan, which is followed by Union Square (0.8) and Bowery (0.4).

& Jang, 2019). Since one of the most distinctive advantages of CBD clustering is easy to access to the large consumer populations, we can infer that salon owners choose Manhattan to decrease the costs required for a consumer search and increase walk-in traffic.

Outside of Manhattan, at a neighborhood-level, Flushing (Queens) and Flatbush (Brooklyn) had the largest and second-largest number of nail salon establishments respectively, out of 286 neighborhoods recorded in the ReferenceUSA database. Specifically, Flushing was home to 257 nail salons while Flatbush hosted 115 salons. Both firm densities per square mile and the absolute number of establishments were higher than Manhattan's Upper East Side; Flushing had 183 nail salons per square mile and Flatbush has 112.7 salons per square miles, which is 207.7% and 127.5% greater than the Upper East Side, respectively.

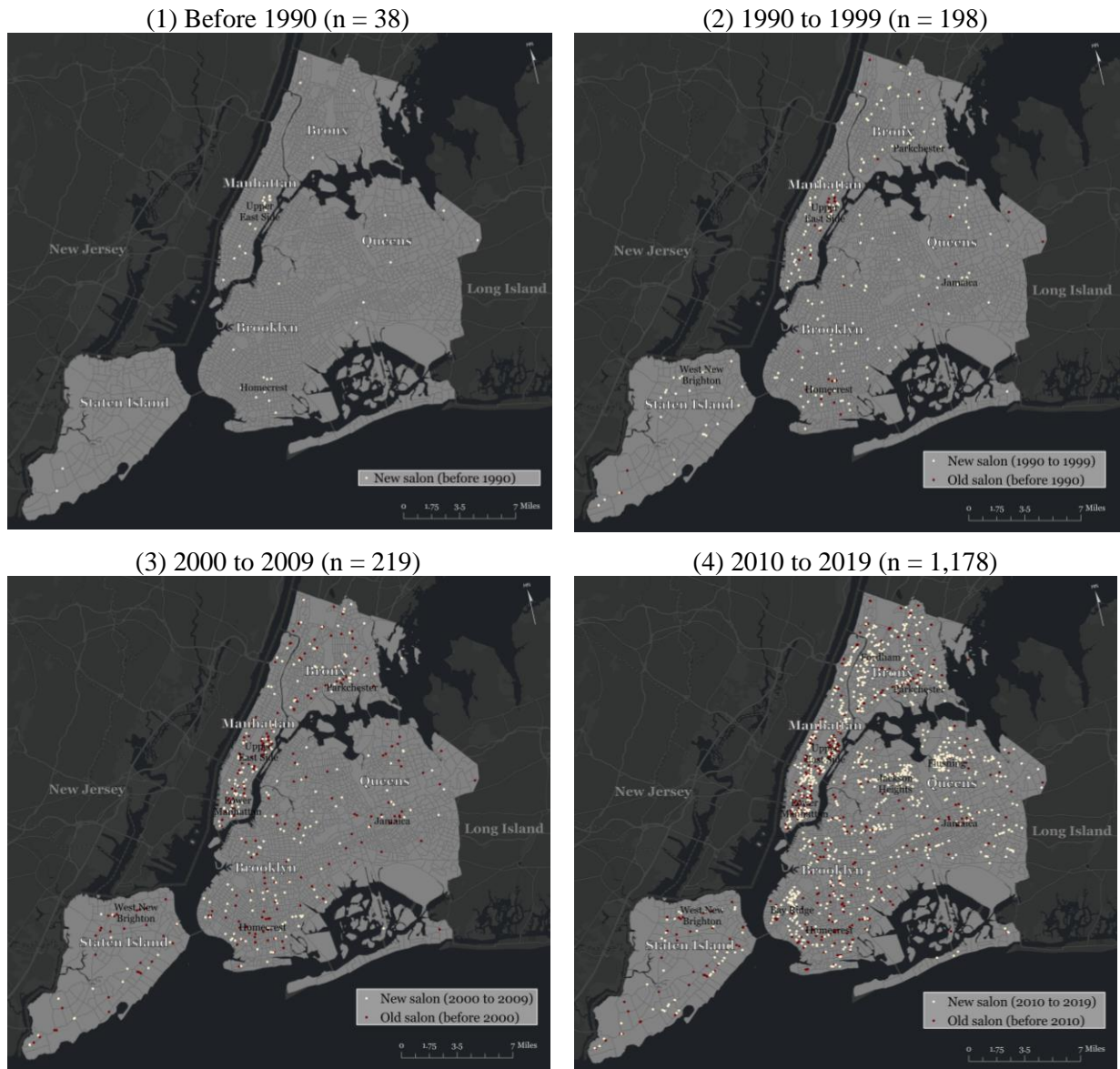
Two socio-demographic factors may have attracted nail salons into Flushing and Flatbush. In Flatbush, the high population density may have provided a large pool of client base for nail salons, thereby pulling new entrepreneurs and their establishments. Flatbush had the highest population density (approximately 104,000 per square miles<sup>15</sup>) among 64 neighborhoods seated in Brooklyn and, therefore, it may have been a market magnet in a Brooklyn area that attracts both customers and immigrant entrepreneurs who seek for profit-making areas. In Flushing, a large Chinese population may have appealed to Chinese entrepreneurs who want to leverage co-ethnic resources, such as proximity to home, Chinese amenities, network, and low-wage Chinese workers.

For the next step of the analysis, a series of nail salon distribution maps were created for several historical time periods using ReferenceUSA records to observe time-dependent changes in nail salon distribution: (1) before 1990, (2) 1990 to 1999, (3) 2000 to 2009, and (4) 2010 to 2019. In Figure 3-6, one light-yellow dot indicates one nail salon established during a given period, while one dark-brown dot represents one salon unit founded before that period.

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<sup>15</sup> Neighborhood Tabulation Areas (NTAs), 2020 NYC OpenData. Retrieved April 8, 2022, from <https://opendata.cityofnewyork.us/>

Figure 3-6. Historical changes in distribution of nail salons in New York City (n = 1,634)



Source: ReferenceUSA (2020)

Before 1990, small number of pioneer nail salons were opened, dispersed throughout New York City's five boroughs, exhibiting a high degree of spatial randomness (Figure 3-6 (1)). The first nail salon in New York City, recorded in ReferenceUSA, was established in 1879 and was located in Flushing, Queens. The spatial distribution of nail salons still showed a great deal of randomness until 1999 (Figure 3-6 (2)); however, a few salons started to form a visible cluster within the Upper East Side, a residential area known for its affluent residents, art galleries, upscale boutiques, and fancy restaurants (Gordon et al., 2011; Schuetz, 2014). This node might

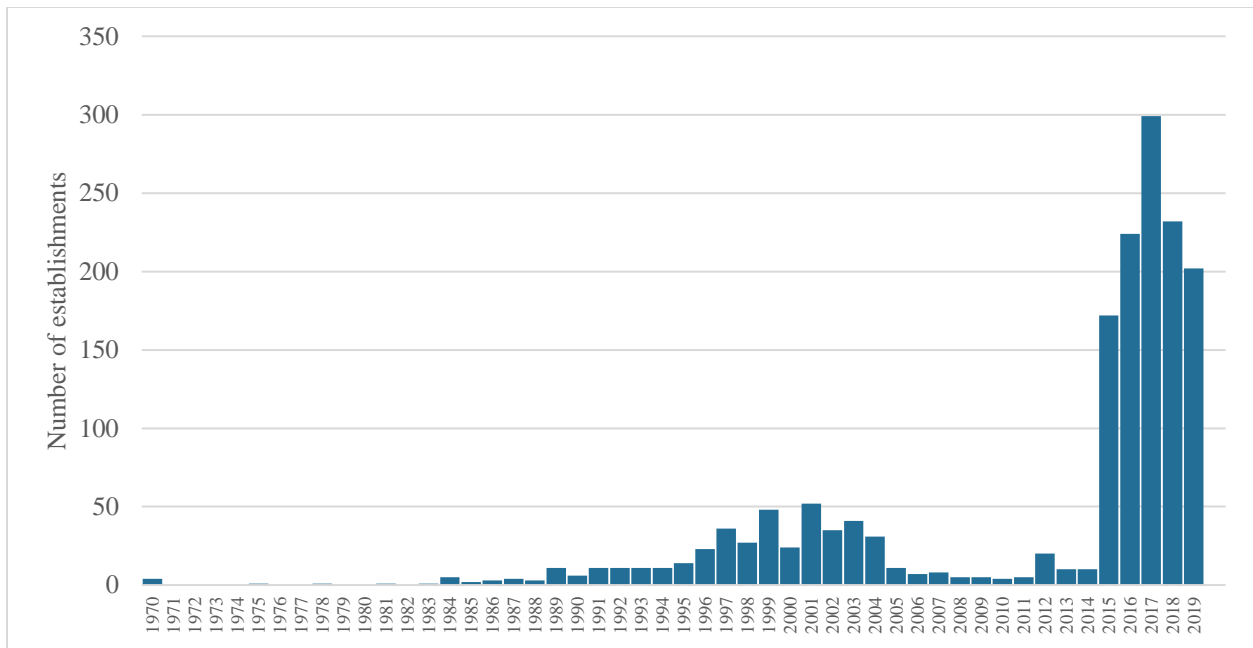
be where the demand was greatest due to a high concentration of women’s workplaces and wealthy customers who could afford this new beauty service. Several nail salon owner interviewees remarked that the 1990s were when Korean women started to find the industry by word of mouth, because the manicuring business did not require special licenses and training and was thus “easy money.” A number of salons opened in the four boroughs outside Manhattan. Compared to the before-1990 period, the number of salons in explosively from 1990 to 1999: 800% in Staten Island, 775% in the Bronx, 440% in Brooklyn, 440% in Queens, and 257% in Manhattan.

Figure 3-6 (3) reveals the continuing growth of Manhattan as a manicuring epicenter from 2000 to 2009. Lower Manhattan, a host to one of the nation’s largest Chinatowns, started to have a noticeable geographical clustering of nail salons in this period. The emergence of Lower Manhattan as a center of nail salon nodes may be attributed to Chinese women’s inflow into the manicuring industry and a preference to open their businesses in their co-ethnic communities. From 2010 to 2019, the spatial clustering intensified, with nodes forming in select areas: Jackson Heights, Flushing, and Sunset Park (Figure 3-6 (4)). While multiple clusters have developed over time, it is noteworthy that each node was home to a particular ethnic group’s nail salon businesses. For example, based on the surname-coded records, it is estimated that 24.5% of Flushing nail salons are Chinese-owned (63 out of 257), 15.4% of Jackson Heights are Hispanic-owned (6 out of 39), and 31.6% of Sunset Park nail salons are Chinese-owned (25 out of 79).

Overall, the absolute number of new establishments of nail salons continued to grow, but the annual growth rate was largely determined by the global financial circumstances. Figure 3-7 displays that the number of new salons slowly continued to grow up until around 2000, and was significantly suppressed from the early 2000s to the mid-2010s. This may be the aftermath of three financial crises—the 1997 Asian Crisis, the 2001 Dot-com bust, and the 2007 Subprime mortgage crisis—which consequently reduced the purchasing power of nail service customers. Due to New York’s position as a financial capital of the world, worldwide financial crises may have put downward pressure on the income available for the city’s residents to pay for non-essential services like nail salons. One of the interview participants, Jane, added that September 11 attacks in 2001 caused a significant loss of tourist visits in New York, driving the closure of nail salons in which the main client base was tourists and discouraging some manicuring

workers, like herself, from opening up their own salons. Since 2015, new establishments started to increase again, reaching its highest in 2017 when 299 new salons opened throughout the region. However, it is important to note that because the geo-coding of ReferenceUSA data officially began in 2003 it is possible that the count of nail salon establishments prior to 2003 might be less accurate. The records before 2003 were geo-coded based on the current Infogroup Business Database, and not all old establishments were recorded.

Figure 3-7. Number of nail salon establishments by year from 1970 to 2019



Note: two nail salons, established in 1879 and 1915 respectively, were omitted from this visualization.  
Sources: 2020 Reference USA

Source: ReferenceUSA (2020)

*Intersection of ethnicity and agglomeration patterns of nail salons*

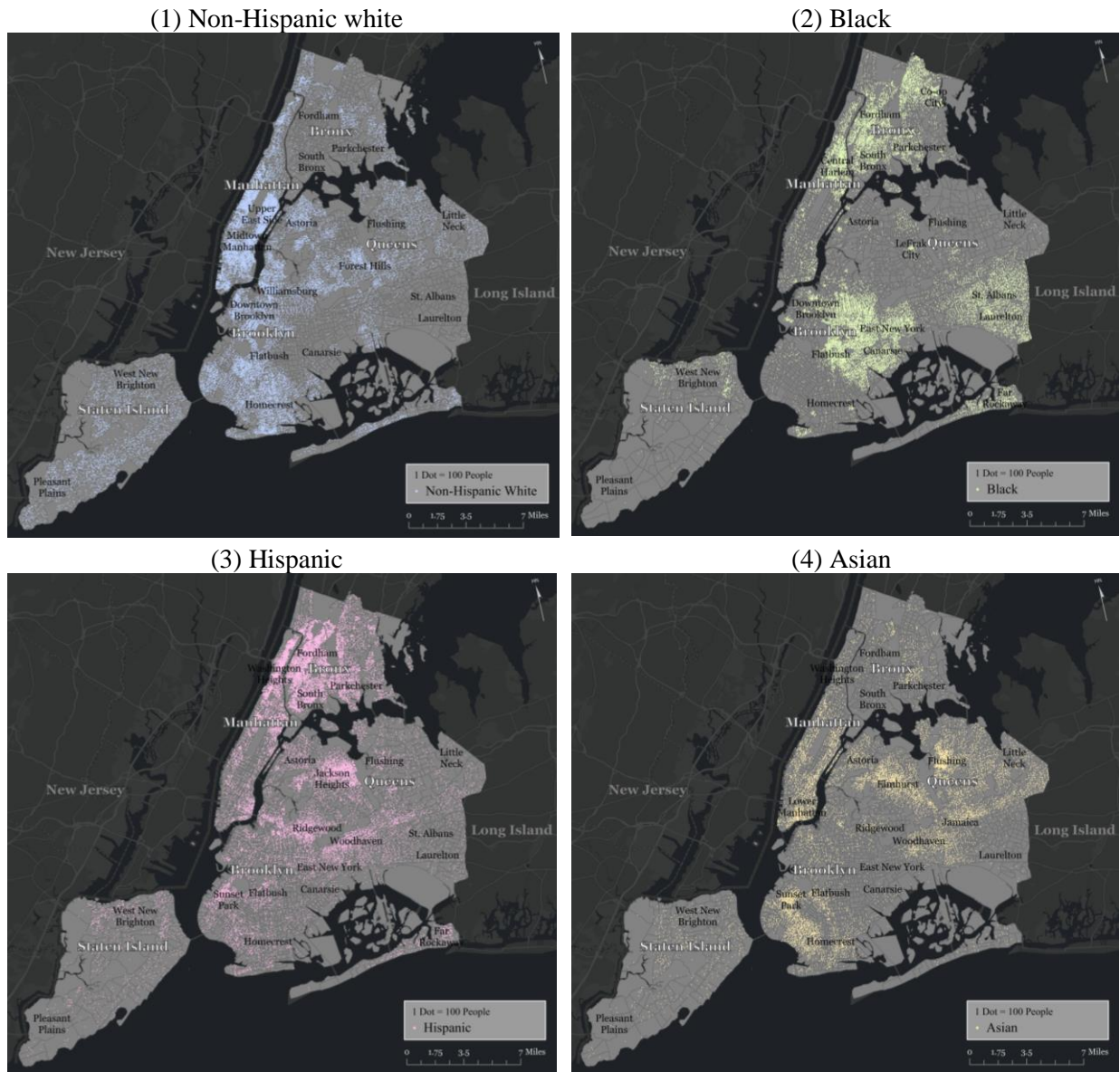
New York City has had a high level of racial segregation (Lewis Mumford Center, 2001; Rosenbaum & Argeros, 2005) and this may imply that each salon cluster targets different racial groups. Specifically, each cluster presented above may have geographic accessibility to particular racial communities, which has the potential to be their main client group or worker pool. Figure 3-8 displays the dot distribution of populations by a racial group at a Census block group level. Non-Hispanic white residents were clustered in Manhattan, including the Upper East Side, Upper West Side, and Midtown Manhattan. Some minor clusters of non-Hispanic whites



existed in Forest Hills, Queens, and Downtown Brooklyn. Black residents were highly clustered in the Brooklyn area which covers East New York, Canarsie, and Flatbush. Black residents are also concentrated in Central Harlem, Co-op City and other residential areas in the Bronx, and the southern Queens area, including St. Albans and Laurelton. Hispanic residents were largely segregated in Jackson Heights and Corona, Queens, Washington Heights, Manhattan, and throughout the Bronx in general. Asian populations are concentrated in Flushing and Elmhurst in Queens, Sunset Park in Brooklyn, and Lower Manhattan.

This geographical pattern of population in New York City has two implications for differentiating each salon cluster. First, the three main salon clusters in Manhattan – the Upper East Side, Upper West Side, and Midtown East – may serve a number of non-Hispanic white residents as well as tourists and nearby office workers. Second, Queens’ largest salon cluster in Flushing benefits from easy access to a large pool of Asian clients and available Asian manicurist workers. Third, Brooklyn’s salon cluster in Flatbush is likely to target Black clients for their business, a racial group which is strongly segregated within the borough.

Figure 3-8. Population distribution by race in New York City

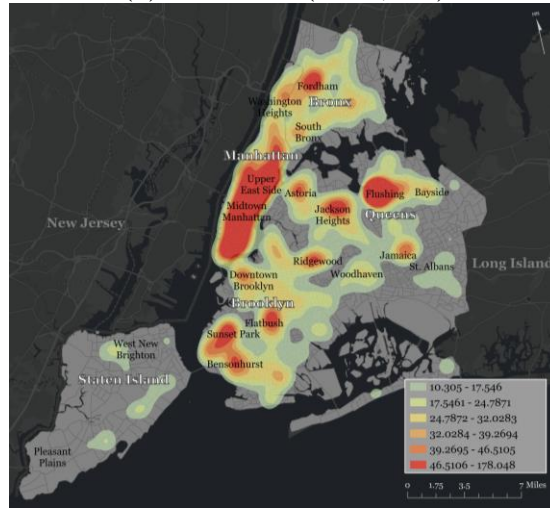


Source: US Census (2020) American Community Survey 2016-2020 (5-year estimates)

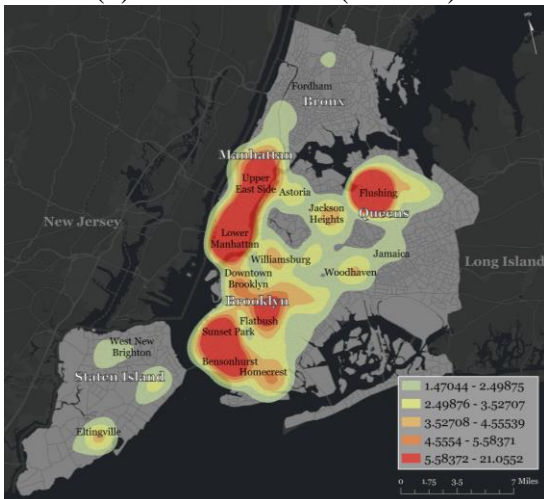
To compare the geographical pattern of the whole population with that of ethnic nail salons, the point location of nail salons was further broken down by the owner’s presumptive ethnicity. Figure 3-8 displays a series of heat maps generated from the kernel density algorithm and visualizes the spatial density of nail salon establishments by each ethnic group. Areas with the highest density of nail salons are represented as red hotspots (See Figure 3-9).

Figure 3-9. Hotspot Kernel Density of nail salons in New York City (Classification: standard deviation)

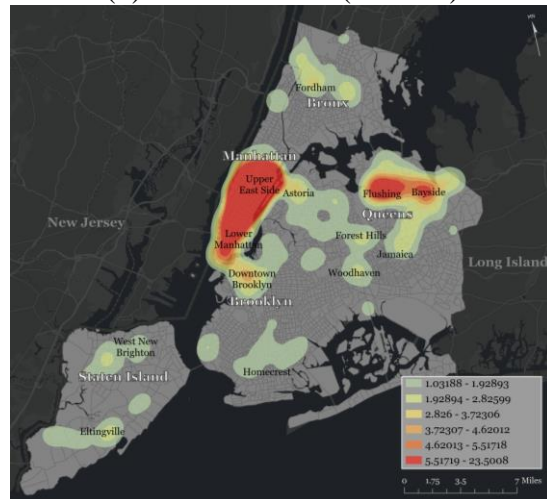
(1) All salons (n = 5,252)



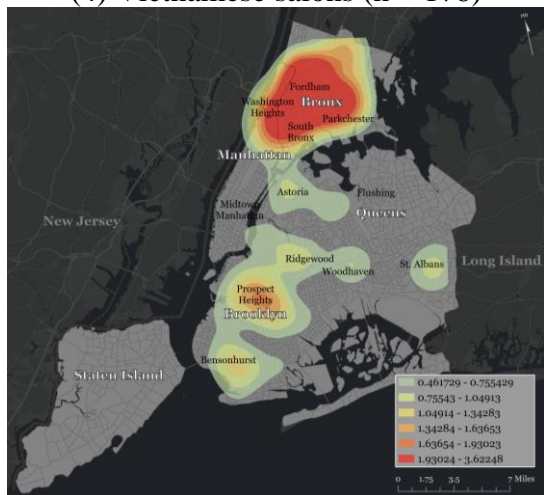
(2) Chinese salons (n = 718)



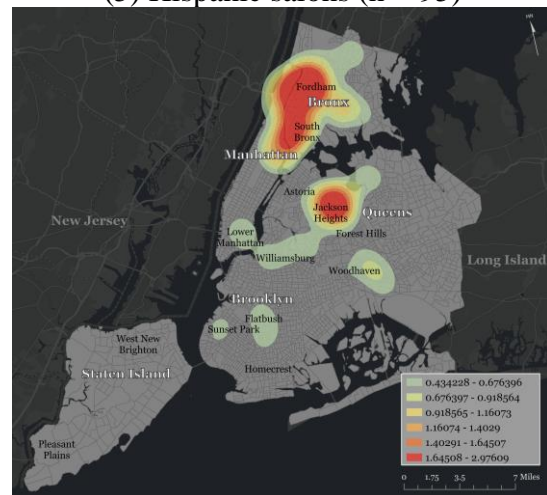
(3) Korean salons (n = 452)



(4) Vietnamese salons (n = 178)



(5) Hispanic salons (n = 95)



Source: ReferenceUSA (2020)

In Figure 3-9, ethnic nail salons were clustered in localities in which co-ethnic residents are also concentrated. Chinese and Korean groups, in particular, have developed multiple nodes in their residential enclaves as well as Manhattan. The Chinese salon group had visible hotspots in both the Manhattan area, particularly the Upper East Side and Chinatown, and some fast-growing peripheral Chinatowns, such as Flushing, Sunset Park, and Bensonhurst (Robbins, 2015; Yu, 2016). Korean salons formed a large agglomeration in Manhattan and some local clusters in Flushing and Bayside, neighborhoods where many Koreans started to move in since the 1990s (Min, 2012, 2017). Combined with the result from Table 3-6, this suggests that Korean and Chinese nail salons are comprised of two subgroups: non-ethnic market salons that serve non-Hispanic white residents and ethnic market salons that serve co-ethnic customers and prioritizes the accessibility of co-ethnic resources.

Vietnamese and Hispanic salons, to the contrary, have no significant hotspots in Manhattan. Instead, Vietnamese salons have a single hotspot in the Bronx, including Fordham Heights and Parkchester, neighborhoods that have been documented as destinations for Vietnamese refugees and immigrants (Dolnick, 2010; Tang, 2013). Hispanic salons form double hotspots in the Bronx and Jackson Heights, places in which immigrants from Columbia, Bolivia, and Peru settled (Hughes, 2015; Navarro, 2017). Overall, the significant overlap between salon hotspots and residential enclaves verifies traditional scholarship that argues immigrants have a strong preference for co-ethnic communities as the location of their businesses (Fong & Shen, 2011; M. Zhou, 2013).

### *Summary*

In sum, this section scrutinized the third layer of the diversity of the transclave economy—environmental context—with a geographical lens. Along with industrial specialization and a high proportion of co-ethnic workers and employers, spatial clustering of businesses is defined as one of the three primary elements of the urban enclave economy (Portes & Stepick, 1993; Kasinitz & Vickerman, 2001). Despite an emphasis on geographical insights, prior approaches have largely remained spatially blinded and used space as a metaphor rather than a quantifiable academic subject. Using street-level, ethnicity-coded ReferenceUSA data, this section dissected spatial

elements of the enclave economy by time period, a race of residents, and owner's presumptive ethnicity. This spatial analysis demonstrated the internal heterogeneity of the transclave economy, which is comprised of a spatial mosaic of diverse nail salon groups that are differentiated by their market entry timing, customer base, and ethnic background.

Most notably, each of these four ethnic groups was overrepresented in different geographical areas at the borough level: Chinese salons in Brooklyn, Korean salons in Manhattan, and Vietnamese and Hispanic salons in the Bronx. While some ethnic nail salons were located in markets with few co-ethnic residents, such as Midtown Manhattan and Upper East Side, most nail salons were agglomerated in traditional ethnic enclaves. Some unanswered questions remain. Considering this context, we may ask what determines a business owner's location preference between a co-ethnic market and a non-coethnic market. Specifically, what benefits do owners expect to obtain by opening a salon in traditional residential enclaves? Given that the residential concentration of co-ethnic populations provides a strong client core for immigrant businesses and protected markets (Aldrich & Waldinger, 1990), why do some business owners choose to set up their salons in a non-coethnic market, rather than in a co-ethnic market? What are their priorities? To answer these questions, the next section investigates how the utility of co-ethnic neighborhoods is perceived by nail salon owners in accordance with their individual and structural circumstances.

### 3.3. Location selection: varied perceived benefits of co-ethnic neighborhoods

#### *Introduction*

Building on the previous discussion on the diverse geographical locations of nail salons, this section explores what motivates nail salon owners to choose certain locations to establish their enterprises in a host society. To do so, I explore how the perceived utility of the co-ethnic market varies depending on their gender, post-migration experience, beliefs, and continuing connection with home societies. As presented in the previous section, nail salons across different ethnic groups have a strong tendency to cluster in areas with a high concentration of co-ethnic populations, such as Flushing (Chinese), Bayside (Korean), and Jackson Heights (Hispanics).

This finding aligns with the traditional argument that ethnic motivation is crucial for immigrants in choosing their business location; immigrant entrepreneurs establish their businesses in co-ethnic neighborhoods, expecting to have better access to ethnic resources, such as low-wage workers, loyal customers, and information flows (Evans, 1989; Portes & Manning, 2005; Mora & Dávila, 2006). However, little is known about whether the value the co-ethnic market could bring is differently perceived across different subgroups of immigrant business owners. For example, is the perceived value of an ethnic enclave greater for some groups than for others? If it is, which owners are most likely to establish their businesses in areas with a high concentration of co-ethnic populations? How does their sustained transnational relationship with home societies and their network shape their motivations in choosing salon locations?

*Co-ethnic market preference: the influence of age, discriminations, and gender norms*

One of the most noticeable findings was that the advantages that immigrants seek from an ethnic enclave primarily differed by owners' age. More specifically, this study found that elderly nail salon owners have a stronger preference for having a business in a co-ethnic community, compared to the younger group, due to the community's proximity to friend groups and a sense of belonging that this transnational social place provides. Eleanor, a Chinese salon owner in her early 60s in Manhattan Chinatown, described a sense of belonging and emotional support from her ethnic peers as one of the big motivations to open her salon in this Chinese neighborhood. She noted:

I came to the United States and asked people what they do for a living and what I should do for a living. They said nail is a good business for women. So, I started to work at my friend's nail salon. It was a good time. I made a lot of money so I set up a new salon in Upper Manhattan. Every day was a war. I fought with time because every day was really busy. Later, I got old and wanted an easy life. When you get old, your body wants to have a comfortable life. I had a nail tech who had worked for a very long time. She was both a worker and a friend of mine. I gave her my salon and started a new one here. [What motivated you to choose this location?] My husband has a restaurant near here. It's a Vietnamese restaurant. My friends from China are here and there, too. When you get old, you miss your country and your people. It's fun to have business here. This is like little China. [...] I am old and I made enough money. I bought a house in New York and I paid my son's college tuition. I do it for fun. It's my hobby. Maybe I can make more money in the Bronx or Brooklyn, but that's not what I want.

(Eleanor, Chinese nail salon owner, Manhattan Chinatown)

As Eleanor's narrative describes, a neighborhood with a high concentration of co-ethnic residents provided a strong sense of acceptance and belonging for elderly immigrant entrepreneurs. When asked to name a few benefits of having a nail salon in their ethnic neighborhood, the most commonly repeated keywords among respondents in their 50s, 60s, and 70s were "friends," "feels like home," "close to a church," and "easy life." As a first-generation Chinese woman in her early 60s, Eleanor depicted her first 30 years in the United States as a war and explained how intense her life was as she struggled to make a success of her nail salon in Upper Manhattan. She then emphasized that as bodies become weaker and homesickness grows stronger with age, Chinese immigrants often decide to settle in Chinatown as a final destination to enjoy their later stages of life. Other respondents in their 60s, such as Megan (Korean salon owner, Bayside) and Judy (Chinese salon owner, Flushing), pointed out that they were not interested in revenue growth as a business strategy; rather, they chose an enclave as a business location for its transnational lifestyle as Eleanor did.

From the perspective of elderly immigrants, the emotional benefits brought by running a business in a co-ethnic market and maintaining everyday transnational practices appeared to outweigh its financial penalties. A number of senior owners remarked that a highly homogeneous co-ethnic community has never been an attractive market for those whose main priority lies in growing their business and maximizing profits. According to them, a highly homogeneous ethnic enclave puts significant upper limits on business growth and expansion in the long run, thereby preventing them from expanding into the broader consumer base. Nonetheless, many senior respondents accepted the financial disadvantage induced by economic isolation and rather sought a sense of belonging by establishing their enterprises in the ethnic enclave.

Joseph, a mid-50s Korean man who had run a nail salon with his wife in Staten Island for 20 years, was preparing to relocate his salon to the area of Palisades Park and Fort Lee, one of the largest Korean enclaves in the United States. When asked what motivated his relocation plan, his response echoed Eleanor's thoughts on the emotional support that the residential enclave provides for immigrants. He said:

White supremacy here has been harder than the coronavirus pandemic. It's a politically conservative area. People became more explicit after Trump was elected. And it got worse with the pandemic. From what they see, whether you are from China or Korea, you are all Asians. Some customers think Asians are lesser than them. They make white supremacist

comments without any hesitations. It makes the business very difficult. We've reduced the business by 90%, selling pedicure chairs, and we're going to sell all of it in the summer. So, when the pandemic ends, I will not live in Staten Island but go to New Jersey. [Are you retiring this summer?] No. We will still do the business. But I'm going to do it on a small scale. I don't want to live too competitively. I will open a nail shop in a place where a lot of Koreans live.

(Joseph, Korean nail salon owner, Staten Island)

Joseph's remark was illustrative of the life trajectory that immigrants develop "reactive transnationalism (Itzigsohn & Saucedo, 2002, p. 772)" throughout their course of migratory life. Reverse transnationalism refers to the phenomenon that discriminatory events or negative perceptions of the host country gradually increase the transnational involvement of immigrants (Snel et al., 2006, 2016). Joseph mentioned a Korean traditional proverb, "following a friend to Gangnam," which means that you decide to do something simply because your friend does it. Joseph noted that he had acted on his friend's advice about 20 years ago that nail salons in white neighborhoods in Staten Island are a "blue ocean" without competition. However, a series of discriminatory and racist incidents in which his clients targeted him and his Asian workers led him to pursue a transnational life in an ethnic residential area. Joseph's story indeed affirms previous scholarly findings on reactive transnationalism: the more an immigrant experience discrimination in a host society, the more they seek for engagement in co-ethnic networks (Itzigsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005; E. G. Green et al., 2014; Redclift & Rajina, 2021).

Likewise, younger immigrants in their late 20s to 40s exhibited a moderate preference for co-ethnic communities as their business location. However, the most common perceived benefit among them was the ease of childcare, rather than community belonging. For example, when asked why she opened her salon in a local Koreatown in New York City's Bayside neighborhood, Lia didn't mention anything related to emotional benefits or a sense of belonging, as many elderly respondents had. Instead, she said it was mainly because of the convenience of childcare:

Because it is close to home and my kids are at home. People who are diligent don't mind opening their stores in Long Island and picking up their workers every morning. They wake up early in the morning, pick up Asian people from Flushing, and go to their salons in Long Island. It is quite difficult to find workers in Long Island so they have to bring workers from other neighborhoods. [...] I have two children, so it is hard to pick up workers early in the morning, every day. I just can't do that. One of the good things about running a business in Long Island is that you save a lot of money. If you do business here in New York City, you pay a lot of tax. You don't need to pay for sales tax in Long Island. Rent is cheap too. The



minimum labor cost is 15 dollars per hour here in New York City, but it's only 14 dollars in Long Island. I've worked here in Bayside for 4 years just because it's close to home and kids. When I decided to open my own salon 4 years ago, many good nail salons in Long Island were up for sale. At that time, my children were too young so I gave up all the Long Island options. I had to compromise.  
(Lia, Korean nail salon owner, Bayside)

It was often observed that a number of women like Lia, even those from very different cultural backgrounds and ethnic groups, tended to seek ways to balance work and family through locating their enterprise in co-ethnic neighborhoods. This was one of the most noticeable differences from their male counterparts, who appeared to be less restrained by childcare obligations. Lia was a woman in her early 40s who previously worked as a secretary in Korea and came to the United States with her husband for their children's education. She remarked that Long Island, especially Nassau County, and Bayside are near one another and compete for the same nail salon customers. While Long Island is preferred to Bayside in general due to its lower labor costs and cheaper rent rates, she chose Long Island as a destination for one single reason: the convenience of childcare. As a mom of 8-year-old and 5-year-old children, she felt obliged to spend as much time with them as possible and be available 24 hours a day for them when needed, even if she works full time. Other female owners, regardless of ethnicity, income, or the employment status of their husbands, repeated the story that their geographical freedom was bound to their home and where their kids are located.

Some female workers also moved around to different workplaces multiple times, from lucrative salons to below-average-profit salons located in residential enclave areas, for the purpose of reconciling work and family. One of the interviewees who followed this path was Olivia, an Ecuadorian manicurist in the South Bronx who married when she was 16 years old and is now a mother of four children. She had to quit her high-paying manicurist job in Midtown Manhattan (where clients paid generous tips) and moved to a small hair salon in the South Bronx, where she rents a small corner space for her nail service. Carolyn, an Ecuadorian nail technician who works in Jackson Heights, told that her career plan to open a home-based salon was like catching two birds with one stone: being a stay-at-home mother for her children but still making a constant income. Taking the children to the workplace has never been a reliable option for her since it largely depends on whether she has a good relationship with her employer and other workers, who must be willing to accept some inconvenience. Her plan at the time of the

interview was to equip her living room with a manicure desk and manicure racks and to invite her customers by appointment through Instagram. “It is illegal to leave your kids alone and I don’t have anyone who can take care of them — so this is best I can do,” Carolyn added during the interview.

*Non-coethnic market preference: material and non-material gains*

Whereas nail salon owners who had obligations to take care of young children were more likely to sacrifice the enterprise’s growth opportunities and choose ethnic residential areas, younger groups— in their late 20s to early 30s—tended to be more profit-oriented and had a stronger preference for larger markets regardless of co-ethnic composition. The availability of reliable caregivers— either paid nannies or grandparents—relieved their child-rearing burden and allowed them more spatial flexibility when choosing business locations and maximizing potential revenue growth. One of the nail salon owners with whom I discussed this topic was Helena, a young Chinese owner of a nail salon located in Parkchester in the Bronx, which had a visible dominance of African Americans and people of Hispanic origin (Gurock, 2019). Helena said:

I don’t do business for Chinese people. They don’t get nail service. I do business for Black people and Spanish people. Once you become a friend with them, then they trust you. If they trust you and like your service, they advertise your salon and bring new clients. Business grows quickly if you are a good person and your service is good. Flushing is actually not good [for a nail salon business]. People are not interested in nails. I just sleep there. [...] But it is difficult to find workers in the Bronx. I have one Spanish but the other workers are all Chinese. I like to work with Chinese because it is easy. They speak in Chinese. It is hard to find Chinese people living here so, every morning, I drive to Flushing and Long Island and pick up my workers very early in the morning. Like 4 am. In the evening, I give them a ride, too. I repeat and repeat. [...] I have one daughter but she’s taken care of by my mom. My mom retired and she loves babies. She is living together with my family to raise my baby and mom cooks too. I miss my daughter a lot, so I try to video-chat her every day when I am free at work.

(Helena, Chinese nail salon owner, Parkchester)

Previously a school teacher in a rural area in China, Helena quit her job and came to the United States with her parents to pursue a better life in this foreign, urbanized land. Helena remarked that her business in this African American neighborhood, where she does not share many cultural commonalities as a foreign-born Asian immigrant, would have been extremely challenging without the help and sacrifice of her mother. As she accumulated a decent amount of

money after four years of working as a nail technician in Flushing, she once seriously considered opening a nail salon in the same neighborhood because of its proximity to her home and her newborn daughter. However, she was quickly discouraged by recent rent hikes, heated competition among Chinese nail salons, and limited growth potential due to the homogenous customer base. When she was debating whether to remain a nail technician in Chinatown or open her nail salon outside Chinatown, it was her mother who volunteered to be a primary caregiver and encouraged Helena to make the optimal choice for her business site. Ultimately, the multi-generational kinship ties enabled Helena to distance herself from obligatory care work and to make a rational location decision that maximized her profits as a business owner.

Some immigrants chose to establish their businesses outside their co-ethnic markets, where same- or similar-sector businesses were agglomerated and they had lower costs in attracting target consumers. The agglomeration of nail salons, hair salons, and beauty product suppliers was perceived as a double-edged sword among many nail salon owners; they may benefit from customer attraction and knowledge spillover, but they may be disadvantaged by the heightened competition in pricing and the limited number of laborers. This perception of the non-enclave agglomeration effect was well revealed by Elizabeth. She was an owner of a nail salon located in Corona, Queens, and an employer of a diverse group of immigrants, including Vietnamese, Chinese, and Mexican employees. While her business was in a Hispanic-dominant place, she always tried to hire at least one Vietnamese upper-level nail technician for ease of communication and worker management. “I want to be with my people and they [Vietnamese] are actually good at nails,” Elizabeth added. In the middle of the interview, I asked her what motivated her to open her nail salon in the Hispanic part of town. She pointed to “competition” and “a lot of customers”:

Competition. Competition is a good reason to open. [Can you please tell me a little bit more about what you mean by competition?] What that means is that a lot of nail salons mean a lot of clients. It’s a supply and demand. You know a supply and demand, right? Competition may be bad. You need to compete with other salons. But I saw the good side of it. Many competitions mean many clients. If I am confident in my skills, it’s always an opportunity. I always find a better opportunity. Experience is the key. And the good attitude. And hard work. I know I am good enough, so I found a place with a lot of competition.  
(Elizabeth, Vietnamese nail salon owner, Corona)

For revenue-oriented entrepreneurs like Elizabeth, the high level of clustering of nail salons indicated the increased probability that clients regularly visit the area to use their services, compared to more isolated locations. Furthermore, areas with a high concentration of Hispanic and African American residents, such as Fordham, Corona, and Jackson Heights, began to attract an increasing number of new nail salons not only because of the agglomeration of existing nail salons, but also because of lower rent prices. In these areas, earlier-settled, homogenous groups of immigrant owners perceived this massive inflow of newcomer owners from different countries as a new threat to their livelihood. For example, Bella, a Salvadorian nail salon owner in Jackson Heights, complained that Asian immigrants neglect the moral codes of business, open up salons on every corner, and take away other salons' regular customers by charging an "unbelievably low price" for their services. Laurel, a Honduran nail salon owner in Jackson Heights, also remarked that the Chinese nail salon community was growing quickly by offering competitive prices and speedy services. In response to the emergence of the new competing group, she has developed survival strategies by focusing on "expensive but quality" nail services, especially acrylic nail extensions, to bring back her co-ethnic customers.

However, one of the major sacrifices that immigrants make in running a business in their non-co-ethnic neighborhood was the access to information passed through the social network of the co-ethnic small business owners. One example was Richard, who was a male Korean nail salon owner in Jackson Heights. He and his wife used to run a nail salon in Westchester County, the area just north of New York City, and mostly served affluent white neighbors in the town. When he reached 60, he hoped to retire to South Korea; however, his retirement plan was discouraged by his wife's wishes to open up a new nail salon that can generate some revenue to better prepare for retirement. They eventually sold their Westchester salon and moved to Jackson Heights to start a new business. The rationale behind choosing this particular location was because they had a strong preference for Hispanic customers, who were perceived as a high-profit market at that time. While his revenue increased, he suffered from isolation in his first two to three years in the neighborhood. As described in the following narrative, he was quite unsatisfied with his limited access to the Korean salon owners' network and their community on KakaoTalk, one of the largest mobile messaging apps used by Koreans:

Yes, it's a bit far from the Korean community. Information [from a Korean community] is a bit slow. They [Korean salon owners] have Manhattan KakaoTalk group chat and Brooklyn

KakaoTalk group chat. But there's nothing like "Jackson Heights" KakaoTalk group chat. So, when I first came here [Jackson Heights], I made a lot of trial and error. But now I got used to it. It's not a big problem anymore. The owner next door became my friend. I'm now used to the loud singing on the street, too. I hear the news about these people's countries and learn what's going on in their countries. I came here because I thought this market is great. I like doing business in Latino towns. They are easygoing. They are never picky. They do expensive nails regularly.

(Richard, Korean nail salon owner, Jackson Heights)

When it comes to choosing the business location, Manhattan occupied a symbolic position among immigrant nail salon owners, especially within a Korean community. For example, one of the Korean nail salon owners in Midtown Manhattan, Patricia, explicitly stated that she chose Midtown Manhattan because the psychological satisfaction and social status that this location brings outweighed the annual financial cost to maintain the business in this expensive area. She noted:

Manhattan is special. Of course, the rent is expensive. People are picky. This area has been destroyed by the coronavirus the most in New York. I know it may be more lucrative to run a business somewhere peripheral. Nevertheless, I will continue to run a salon for another 10 years here in Manhattan. I have no relocation plan. Having a business in the middle of Manhattan means that you are a successful Korean. In Korea, if I say to people that I have a business in Manhattan, people look at me differently. They respect you. They become interested in what you talk about. They don't know what is the Bronx or Long Island. But Manhattan – it doesn't need any explanation in Korea. [...] I came to America having nothing. I befriended successful people here, which I would have never been able to dream of if I were in Korea. I live in Long Island and, whenever I see Manhattan's building forest on my commute on a train, it gives me a powerful feeling. It's like watching a movie. Manhattan is so beautiful and has a special place in my mind. It's really symbolic to me that I have my own little shop in the corner of this wonderful megacity. Manhattan is special. It gives me confidence.

(Patricia, Korean nail salon owner, Midtown Manhattan)

Other ethnic interviewees in that area often reported that they were driven by economic motivations in choosing this location, such as access to transportation and a large pool of customer groups. This geographical context effectively lowered the cost associated with searching for higher-earning consumers, such as office workers, Manhattan residents, and tourists. However, several Korean nail salon owners reported that they were strongly motivated by the psychological utility that this high-cost area provides for them within the ethnic community in New York or in Korea. Their responses to the question of why they established their businesses were often associated with non-financial motivations and verbally described

with keywords like “symbol of success,” “American dream,” and “pride.” This finding extends our understanding of the traditional immigrant business scholarship, by revealing that the utility of the non-ethnic market for immigrants not only comes from its larger economic returns relative to the co-ethnic market (Ram & Hillin, 1994; McPherson, 2019), but also from reputational gains that they can obtain within their transnational community.

### *Summary*

In summary, this section illuminated that the business location choice of immigrants is a product of economic and non-economic motivations. In particular, the expected benefits of ethnic markets, or ethnic neighborhoods, were perceived differently by nail salon owners depending on their social circumstances, such as age, gender, and ethnic background. For instance, co-ethnic markets provided emotional support for the elderly salon owners and accommodated the childcare obligations of female salon owners with children. On the other hand, non-co-ethnic markets, such as downtown Manhattan, offered greater economic benefits, such as a large customer base for profit-oriented young salon owners and transnational reputational gains for some Korean members. For those groups, the perceived utility of co-ethnic markets was minimal. Ultimately, this section points out that the value of the co-ethnic market is differently perceived by subgroups, shaping a highly diverse economic system of immigrants in a city.

### 3.4. Conclusion

Using the case of nail salons in New York City, this chapter examines the multi-layered diversity of the transclave economy with a spatial lens. Specifically, this chapter proposes the following conclusions. First, the socio-demographic characteristics of nail salons, including owners’ traits, firm attributes, and environmental contexts, vary by ethnic groups. Within this manifold system, Vietnamese and Hispanic-owned salons are overrepresented in the bottom segment of the market hierarchy where the business revenue is thin and employment size remains small, whereas Koreans and Chinese-owned salons dominated the upper segment in the market. Second, in relation to spatial diversity and heterogeneity, nail salons are not randomly

dispersed, but instead cluster by the timing of market entry, customer base, and owner's presumptive ethnicity. Third, while the spatial analysis shows the strong clustering of nail salons in co-ethnic communities, the interview narratives reveal that the perceived utility and usefulness of the co-ethnic market vary by their individual contexts, such as gender norms, age, post-migration experience, and transnational engagement.

Based on the aforementioned findings, this study makes three major theoretical contributions. First, this study confirms the hypothesis of Cardon et al. (2008) that criticizes previous studies' assumption of ethnic homogeneity among minority entrepreneurs and claims multifaceted diversity within immigrant-dominant industries. The publications written by Cardon et al. (2008) and other scholars (Haltiwanger et al., 2017; Martinez & Avila, 2019) criticize the simplistic assumption of minority businesses as homogeneous, even while the internal heterogeneity of native-born, white-owned enterprises has been scrutinized. In addition, traditional scholarly works on the enclave economy have assumed that the enclave economy is a homogeneous group of immigrant businesses, where co-ethnic enterprises are dispersed throughout the city, a majority of businesses are occupied by male immigrants, and the business size and revenue remain relatively small, compared to mainstream economies (Mar, 1991; Portes & Stepick, 1993; Kasinitz & Vickerman, 2001). This study presents the high degree of heterogeneity of immigrant-dominant industries. For example, New York City nail salons are constituted by three layers of diversity, including individual traits of salon owners (micro-level), firm characteristics such as business size (meso-level), and environmental context (macro-level) heterogeneities. Although ethnicity is a strong predictor of these characteristics for each nail salon, motivations for location choice transcend ethnic boundaries and are affected by other socio-cultural variables, such as gender norms (e.g., childcare obligations), age, and experiences of discrimination.

Second, this study demonstrates the idea of "spatial heterogeneity in entrepreneurship" (Breitenecker & Harms, 2010, p. 176) by identifying geographical distributions and clusters of immigrant businesses across a range of structural variables, such as the timing of entry and ethnicity. Although both geocoded data and geoprocessing software are widely available, few efforts have been made to incorporate spatial analysis and geographical insights into the studies on immigrant-owned businesses (Wang & Walcott, 2010; Guerra & Patuelli, 2014; Webster & Kontkanen, 2021). Using granular-level georeferenced data, this study elucidates an

understudied aspect of immigrant business activities: that the enclave economy is not a spatially random process, but rather a clustered mosaic of heterogeneous groups of immigrant-owned businesses. For individual salons or salons within the same ethnic group, such locational variations of nail salons may play a significant role in dictating growth opportunities, major customer base, and vulnerability to economic disruptions such as the pandemic.

Third, this study contributes to the understanding of female business owners, which have been largely neglected in the field of ethnic enclaves and the enclave economy. There has been a continuing tendency to theorize about immigrant communities and their economic activities revolving around male immigrants (Grasmuck & Grosfoguel, 1997; Andersson & Hammarstedt, 2011). However, with the rising rate of female immigrant business owners across the globe, the gendered process is becoming a topic of high theoretical relevance (Levent et al., 2003; Essers et al., 2010; Collins & Low, 2010). This chapter demonstrates that the gender-blind theoretical framework of the traditional enclave economy scholarship has failed to uncover the gender-specific behaviors and challenges in the system. For instance, gendered obligations to take care of children and be a good mother act as a strong motivation for immigrant women to choose co-ethnic residential enclaves for their business site, despite the expected financial disadvantages. On the other hand, immigrant men build compensatory strategies to preserve their masculine identity in this female-dominant industry.

The methodological contribution of this study lies in the introduction of the presumptive surname list method into the analysis of immigrant business studies, where ethnicity data has been largely unavailable at an individual level. Ethnicity data has been lacking in many publicly-available data, causing ethnic variations in the population to be masked and generalized in a number of previous studies (Kolonel et al., 2000; Quan et al., 2006; Elliott et al., 2008; Fremont et al., 2016). The majority of secondary databases issued by government or non-government agents do not provide individual ethnicity data at a granular level (Aspinall & Jacobson, 2007; Hellerstein & Neumark, 2008; Ashenfelter & Card, 2010), especially when the research scope narrows to particular industry sectors like nail salons. However, by inferring the ethnicity of business owners on the basis of their surnames, this study suggests one method to overcome the technical challenge of quantifying the actual diversity of the immigrant-owned business by



ethnicity. Through this method, theoretical and practical understanding of the internal diversity of the transclave economy by ethnic groups could be extended.

This chapter suggests two policy implications for city planners and community development leaders who work for multiethnic immigrant communities. First, policy interventions should take into consideration the multifold diversity of economic activities. Today's enclave economy combines heterogeneous groups of enterprises and immigrant business owners whose economic interests, concerns, and cultural heritage are divergent; therefore, we should expect that such diverse stakeholder participants would react differently to the same social phenomena, such as gentrification, economic downturns, and community interventions. Second, policymakers should pay special attention to inequality issues arising from the ethnic hierarchy inherent in immigrants' economic system and identify priorities for the economic development of immigrants in the area.

We now have a comprehensible understanding of what constitutes the diversity of the transclave economy. However, we still have little understanding of the individual and structural factors that fuel the diversification and evolution of the transclave economy. While this chapter revealed the diversified enclave economy as a snapshot capturing the present status of this economic system, the historical development of nail salons is still unexplored. We may ask: what developments transformed New York City nail salons into a transclave economy over several generations? What societal factors, in particular transnational forces, triggered the transition from a previously homogeneous economic system of nail salons? These questions are examined in the next chapter: the making of an evolving transclave economy.

## 4 The making of an evolving transclave economy: a historical view

### 4.1. Building market hegemony by using ethnic resources: the case of Korean nail salons

#### *Introduction*

Using the case of Korean immigrant nail salons in New York City, this section discusses the early stages of transclave economy formation. From the 1970s to the 1990s, the nail salon market had a high degree of informality. Because this market was fairly new, there was little competition, and business activities remained largely outside of the state government's attention. As a result, Korean immigrants quickly built reciprocal relationships with one another and accommodated newcomers to bypass entry-level training and quickly move up to the entrepreneurial class. This hegemony building, based on the ethnic solidarity and the first-mover advantage, allowed Korean immigrants to dominate the upper segments of the labor market of New York City nail salons.

#### *Employment niche formation of Korean immigrants: push and pull factors*

Before Korean immigrants entered the beauty industry, a majority of workers and employers in New York City nail services were Jewish immigrants from Post-Soviet states. The labor structure, including occupation specialization, remained simple. However, this homogeneous system started to break down in the early 1970s as Korean immigrants began to work at a number of Jewish nail salons. The influx of Korean immigrants in New York can be best understood as the product of geopolitics in the United States and Korea. In the United States, the Immigration Act of 1965 and the abolition of the quota system based on country of origin led to a dramatic increase in Asian immigrants, including Koreans, in the mid-1960s. On the other side of the Pacific Ocean, the growing middle class after the Miracle on Han River<sup>16</sup> and intensifying social conflicts due to military dictatorship motivated people in Korea to look outward toward developed countries for upward mobility and a democratic way of life. As a result of the

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<sup>16</sup> The Miracle of Han River (Han-gang) refers to the remarkable economic and industrial growth of South Korea from the 1960s to the 1990s (Chung, 1993; Bencuya, 2014).

geopolitical changes in these two countries, many Koreans immigrated to the United States seeking better lives. Indeed, the majority of contemporary Korean American populations in the United States are recorded to have arrived after 1965 (Min, 2006, 2011).

The 1976 Eilberg Act and Health Professions Education Act further influenced the socio-demographic composition of Korean immigrants and created a new working-class group – Korean manicurists – in New York City. While previously only highly skilled professionals such as scientists, engineers, and doctors could afford to enter the United States, these laws blocked the flow of privileged skilled populations from Korea to protect job opportunities for native-born populations during the economic recession. Consequently, after 1976 Korean immigrants were mostly comprised of lower socioeconomic background populations who entered the United States through survival circuits, rather than the upper circuit of globalization (Sassen, 1991). This filtering effect created a new transnational working class of Koreans in New York City. Unlike earlier settlers, they filled in the service sectors where work conditions were less favorable with long work hours and low wage rates. They flocked to businesses, such as dry cleaning, deli shops, and nail salons, which do not require high vocational skills or English proficiency.

Among several industrial sectors that had constant demand for low-skilled immigrant workers, nail salons were particularly favored as a niche market by Korean women. The most significant pull factor cited by Korean interviewees was its low barrier to entry. Indeed, almost anyone was allowed to work for nail salons regardless of their legal status, language proficiency, and previous occupational skills. Until the mid-1980s, when the New York State government began to require all manicurists to be licensed, the labor market filled with undocumented Korean immigrants and those who needed quick money. “I think the US government turned a blind eye to what salon owners did at that time because we [nail salon populations] were small,” said Barbara, a 72-year-old Korean woman who is respected by other Korean fellows as one of the pioneers of the Korean nail salon community. Working as a manicurist for 15 years and as an owner for the last 30 years, she observed innumerable cases where nail salons became a refuge for undocumented Korean immigrants. However, these newcomers often endured exploitation given their limited options, working more than 10 hours every day and handing their tips over to the owners.

Hope, a Korean woman who has run a nail salon in Little Neck, Queens for the last 15 years, directly experienced these conditions during the boom of nail salon jobs among the New York Korean community. When asked for an interview, she replied, “Of course, there must be a reason why the Lord sent you here.” Hope describes herself as a devout Christian and often relies on her religion to help explain challenges and the unfair treatment that she endured as a novice salon worker back in the early 1980s. While Hope described abysmal pay and inferior working conditions in the past, she stressed that she did not have many other options considering her lack of English proficiency and transferrable skills. Furthermore, she did not know how to drive at the time, and many nail salons offered a pick-up shuttle service for their workers. It was quite rare for Korean women to have a driver’s license and own a car in the United States, and their spatial mobility was largely constrained at home under a patriarchal environment; therefore, nail salons that offered free shuttle services quickly gained popularity as ideal workplaces among women who wanted to earn pocket money and contribute to their household finances. Hope describes her day-to-day life as a manicurist as follows:

There are a lot of stories that are hard to hear without tears. I worked for a Russian Jewish owner back then. There was no pedicure chair when I was a manicurist. We just put water in a small basket, placed people’s feet on our knees, and pedicured them. And if an owner told you not to come to work the next day, then it was over. You were fired. At the time, there was no law protecting workers, so whatever your boss said was the law. But it is God’s intention. To suffer and learn from it. He brought me here and I became a stronger person. [...] Yes, you were often treated badly but still, nail salons were a great option for many Koreans. Forty years ago, in a Korean newspaper, half of the recruiter page was filled with advertisements to find nail salon workers. They were printed in the smallest font size to fit on the page, like a sesame seed. Many manicurist postings said, “beginners welcome,” “no experience needed,” and “free pick up.” How great is this? When Korean women come here, they don’t speak English, they don’t have any skills, and driving is not easy. But where else is there a job that takes you to work and doesn’t require English skills? That’s why manicurist was one of the most popular jobs among Korean women at that time.  
(Hope, Korean nail salon owner, Little Neck)

*Building an entrepreneurial niche as Korean women: the role of social and human capital*

Koreans who used to work for Jewish nail salons started to establish their own salons, leveraging manicuring skills and worker management skills that they learned from their employers. The emergence of new actors in the market – Korean nail salon owners – further accelerated the inflow of Korean workers. The recruiting process that Korean salon owners used to hire Korean newcomers through a family member or friend was called “airport scouting” by

several interview participants. This term referred to a situation in which nail salon owners would make contact with newcomers extensively even before their flight to New York City, and newcomers at the airport would be scouted by co-ethnic immigrants who would pick them up. This informal recruiting channel allowed Korean nail salon owners to dramatically decrease the time and cost necessary to search for new workers compared to other owners. Denise, a Korean nail salon owner in Midtown Manhattan, benefitted from “airport scouting” herself. She identifies as a second-generation Korean manicurist who entered the market in the early 1990s and was employed by a first-generation Korean manicurist. She described the process of getting her first job in New York City as follows:

You get the job offered by the person who picks you up at the airport. We are immigrants so we have no idea how everything works in America. If the person is a laundryman, you get a job at a laundromat. If the person is a manicurist, you get a manicurist job. It’s as simple as that. The person who picked me up was my best friend’s friend. His wife was the owner of several nail salons at that time. A few weeks after I arrived, she asked me to help with one of her salons as a manager. I said “I don’t speak any English. How would I possibly work as a manager?” And she said “I trust you. The only job you need to do is to look after the money” She said she would have someone fluent in English assist me so that I can just look after the finances. Because I didn’t do manicuring work, I was able to see the whole process of how the business works and I eventually opened my own salon in Harlem.  
(Denise, Korean nail salon owner, Midtown Manhattan)

As described in Denise’s narrative above, a transnational network between Korean immigrants in New York City and newcomers coming from Korea enabled many new immigrants to achieve upward mobility and quickly enter the entrepreneur class. It was not uncommon that Korean manicurists were able to skip the training process and move up to higher job segments through the support of their co-ethnic owners. Denise is a perfect example of this accelerated social ladder. Previously an art academy director in Korea, she had no prior experience with the nail salon business or providing personal care services. Moreover, her intermediate-level English skills were not sophisticated enough for her to work in a managerial position in other sectors. The salon owner, who was her best friend’s personal network, did not make an issue out of her limited work experience and assigned Denise as a manager with full responsibility of managing the money. “That’s why I don’t know how to do manicures, but I always hire people who have the best skills,” Denise noted. Since then, Denise has opened three nail salons and accumulated enough wealth to support her family and relatives as a successful businesswoman, all without needing to build her career from the bottom of the labor market.

This co-ethnic connection has been a driving force for the disproportionate number of managerial positions occupied by immigrants from particular Asian countries such as Korea. Currently, in 2022, the manicurist labor market in New York City is largely divided into managerial and worker positions, and fieldwork revealed that Hispanics are overrepresented in the latter segment of the market. Indeed, whereas the Hispanic group has no noticeable entrepreneur community evolved yet in the salon industry, the labor composition of Korean immigrants follows an inverted triangle structure with a narrow base and wider top. That is, Korean immigrants are overrepresented in the owner population, especially in Midtown Manhattan areas, while Korean immigrants are underrepresented in the worker population across different nail salons in New York City. This labor structure can be understood as a product of the co-ethnic economic hegemony that Korean immigrants constructed in the industry's early development period, and this structure continues to provide a landing pad for the upward mobility of the co-ethnic community today.

Some respondents added that Korean women's strong preference for job positions involving people management rather than being managed by others also contributed to the rapid growth of Korean-owned nail salons in the city. In offering her assessment on the overrepresentation of Koreans in owner and managerial positions in nail salons, Hannah, a Korean salon owner in the Upper East Side, remarked that Korean women have a propensity for avoiding working under people for a wage. "Without exception, all Korean women that I have met were not satisfied with their current manicurist position and wanted to be a boss at the end of the day," Hannah noted. According to her, many Korean women worked under others as manicurists for a short period and quit their positions as soon as they learned occupational and management skills and could open their own salons.

Such entrepreneurial tendencies may be attributed to the high level of educational attainment of Korean women and their expectations on career achievements (Cameron et al., 2001; Oh, 2006). Kelly, a previous Samsung employee and graduate from a prestigious university in Korea, offers an illustrative case of how prior investment in human capital motivates immigrant women to pursue self-employment in a host society. Kelly remarked that she refused to take "typical Asian women's jobs," such as nanny and manicurist positions, since she wanted to utilize her college degree and work experience in a white-collar profession back in Korea. However,

because of the lack of English proficiency and the discrimination in the job market in the United States, her plan to obtain a white-collar job was discouraged. Instead, she decided to take over one of the nail salons owned by her aunt mainly because she thought that the title of the boss and the role of managing other people better suited her educational level. Her narrative is as follows:

Originally, I worked as an office worker at Samsung after graduating from college. My husband started working in the United States. We were in a long-distance relationship for a while but it was quite challenging. It was too hard so I decided to come to the United States. It was a tough decision because I had to give up my prestigious job and college title. When I first came, I didn't want to start from the bottom. I didn't want to be a manicurist or nanny, because that's a waste of my experience. I thought about studying English more and preparing to get a white-color job at a big corporate firm, something like Samsung. At that time, I didn't think I would live in America for this long. My aunt had three nail shops and she asked me if I was interested in managing one of them. It was really an attractive offer because it meant that I could become a business owner right away in America, like a CEO. I thought that nothing could go wrong. I was planning to do this job for a little while, with the intention of handing it over to someone else. And then going back to Korea or getting an office job. I planned to run a salon for only two or three years, but it's been a few decades. [...] It's physically exhausting when you get older, but I'm holding it in because, still, my title is boss. People call me a boss. Honestly, I don't want to work for others. I think I deserve better than that.

(Kelly, Korean nail salon owner, Downtown Brooklyn)

From a worker's perspective, the labor market segmentation was fueled by the invention of acrylic nail extension techniques in numerous Korean-owned nail salons. During the interview, acrylic nails were often referred to as acrylic tips, fake nails, and artificial nails, by interviewees. Acrylic nail extensions left higher profit margins than regular polish services and clients had to visit nail salons more frequently as the removal required special peel off devices and techniques. Because of its high skill barrier to entry, it took a few years for manicurists to be able to provide satisfactory acrylic extension services for clients. This technological advance led to the creation of a new occupation called nail technicians (or "nail tech"), which became the highest seniority position for manicurists, requiring on average five years of work experience.<sup>17</sup> As the nail salon sector remained highly homogeneous, nail technician positions were quickly filled by Korean immigrant women. At the time of the fieldwork, nail salon occupations that workers could obtain

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<sup>17</sup> However, some interviewees claimed that it could take around three years to be promoted to a nail technician depending on the learning speed and talents.

were segmented into three parts, in order of skill level: pedicurists, manicurists, and nail technicians.

Figure 4-1. Samples of acrylic nail designs at a Flushing nail salon (photographed by the author on January 16, 2020)



Ashley remarked that there was fierce intra-ethnic competition among Korean nail salon owners to secure skilled nail technicians in the 1980s and 1990s, as having workers who could provide acrylic nail extensions was closely related to sales. She explained:

You have to use a special person for a special job. So, the number of special people you have determines whether the salon succeeds or not. It didn't happen a lot, but when 80 to 90 percent of nail shops were owned by Koreans, some Korean people would poach the top technicians from another salon, saying, "I'll give you more money." Relationships among some Koreans turned sour because of that. There weren't a lot of people like that, but it happened sometimes.

(Ashley, Korean nail salon owner, Midtown Manhattan)

*Tales of another early entrant: Vietnamese immigrants*



Not only Koreans but also Vietnamese immigrants benefitted from the co-ethnic network in this early development stage of the enclave economy. A number of early market entrants who started their manicurist career in the 1970s and 1980s pointed out that Vietnamese immigrants were another pioneering group alongside Koreans who entered the market long before salons began to sprout up on every corner in New York City. Though its direct influence on the manicurist labor market in New York City is unclear, many scholars attribute the creation of the Vietnamese manicurist group in the United States to Tippi Hedren, a humanitarian who helped twenty refugees from Vietnam receive nail service training and open nail salons in California back in 1975 (Mucci, 2012; Phan, 2016). Most Vietnamese interviewees remarked that when they first arrived in New York City, their relatives had already entered the nail salon industry. Because of this, they were able to land jobs without significant issues. They also added that they were able to skip the entry-level positions and move up to higher job segments. For example, Peter, a Vietnamese nail salon owner, shared his story:

First, you normally have to learn mani and pedi. That is a lot easier and quicker to learn. And then once you begin to feel comfortable, your skills with painting and, most importantly, taking care of customers, improve. Then the owner will let you know how to do nails. Some places teach you but some places hire people who already know. Normally, they pick the best one to start doing nails because nails need more interactions with customers. Because pedicure is fairly simple. You just work your way up. In some places, when there are not a lot of workers, salons hire workers who can do both. But the places with more employees, they would like people who do nails to focus on nails, and the people who do pedicures to focus on pedicures. [...] But I was lucky enough that my older sister worked at nail salons for about 10 years. She taught me how to do this job. So, I was able to skip the pedicure part. (Peter, Vietnamese nail salon owner, South Bronx)

Interview narratives illustrate that Vietnamese immigrants were one of two early frontier groups, along with Korean immigrants, in the nail salon industry in New York City. However, a counterintuitive finding was that Vietnamese nail salons ultimately became a relatively small presence in the city relative to their Korean and Chinese counterparts. One possible hypothesis is that Vietnamese owners may have lost their ground in the competition against Chinese and Korean nail salons because of the relatively small number of co-ethnic workforces available, low socioeconomic capital, and absence of politically active co-ethnic organizations.<sup>18</sup> Martin was

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<sup>18</sup> Chinese nail salon owners have the Chinese Nail Salon Association and the Korean American Nail Salon Association of New York serves the Korean community, both of which are active in community organizing.

one of the interviewees who mentioned the sudden decline of the Vietnamese manicurist group in New York City:

Vietnamese first started the nail salons in America. When I came to America, I started learning nails from a Korean owner. Originally, my aunt came here first and worked at a Korean nail shop. I came later and I worked at the place where my aunt was working for. So I learned from both the Korean boss and my aunt. At that time, there was no school, so I had to go to the salon and learn by working. [...] A lot of second-generation Vietnamese in New York do nail supply. First generations, like me, work as a nail technician. But many Vietnamese manicurists moved to California. I don't know why. In the past, we were second to Koreans but people left New York. We are small now.  
(Martin, Vietnamese nail salon owner, Flatbush)

### *Summary*

This section explored the early developmental trajectory of the transclave economy where the immigrants started to find their employment and entrepreneurial niche in the industry. Through persistent intra-ethnic collaborations and conflicts, the first mover group – Koreans – built an ethnic hegemony that asserted economic dominance over the nail salon sector in a receiving society. During the early stage when the market was unsaturated and the nail service had plenty of room to grow, Korean immigrants successfully capitalized on their ethnic social ties to move into the entrepreneurial class. In addition, their strong propensity for entrepreneurship, which may originate in the high educational achievements of Korean female immigrants and their high expectations for career achievements, contributed to the rapid increase of the Korean-owned salons in the city. On the other hand, another early entrant group, Vietnamese immigrants, quickly increased the number of salons in the city at the early stage of enclave diversification but ultimately lost their presence in the industry, becoming a fading competitor.

Despite the rapid increase of Korean immigrants in New York City nail salons, their market dominance began to be undermined as the result of the global economic transformation in their home country, severance of the inflow of co-ethnic workers, and the creation of massive labor shortages. The next section examines how this labor crisis was resolved with the introduction of a new market player, Chinese immigrants, and the consequent diversification of the transclave economy.

## 4.2. Shifting homeland geopolitics and the inflow of Chinese workers into interstices

### *Introduction*

This section examines how changing homeland geopolitics and national economies fueled the ethnic diversification of New York City nail salons. Furthermore, it uses the case of Chinese immigrants as new emerging actors to illustrate that this diversification became a central part of the transclave economy. In the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the international mobility of working-class Korean populations into the United States was highly limited. Korean nail salon owners in New York City who had long relied on the persistent labor market entrance of Korean newcomers began to employ Chinese workers to address the urgent labor shortage. However, the multiethnic environment of Korean and Chinese immigrants came with conflicts provoked by cultural differences and discrimination. Through cross-cultural interactions, competition, and exclusion, these transclave economy participants contributed to the reconfiguration of the industry and employment niche over time.

### *The inflow of Chinese workers: shifting homeland geopolitics in Korea and China*

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the inflow of Chinese workers into the nail salon industry in New York City was triggered by the decline of immigrants coming from Korea due to the economic crisis. The 1997 Asian financial recession was caused by a combination of financial bubble collapse, the sudden withdrawal of funds, and reversed capital inflows (Johnson et al., 2000; Radelet & Sachs, 2000). The economic crises hit the most rapidly developing countries in Asia, including Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Korea. Partnering with the Korean government, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) demanded financial liberalization and the restructuring of the Korean economy. Despite some success, this remedy resulted in devastating after-effects, including the bankruptcy of numerous businesses, skyrocketing unemployment rates, an increase in homelessness, and the collapse of the middle class (Kim & Finch, 2002; Song, 2006). Starting in the late 1990s, there was a sudden decrease in the inflow of working-class Korean immigrants into the nail salon labor market. Many Korean interviewees ascribed this decline to this disastrous financial incident, which they often referred to as “the IMF crisis”. Avery remarked:

It was a total worker shortage. Koreans stopped coming from Korea since the IMF crisis. Korean people who used to work for Russians hired us. And we relied a lot on Korean workers. But after the IMF, people didn't come [from Korea]. The entrance to America was blocked. People had no money for traveling to America. I listened to the Korean radio every day to check the situation in Korea. I was genuinely concerned. I called my friends and asked to send anyone who was interested in working for my salon. It was a desperate time. That's why we started to hire Chinese workers, who used to work in local restaurants.  
(Avery, Korean nail salon owner, Upper East Side)

In addition to the Asian economic crisis, the demographic differences of newcomer Koreans made the labor market even tighter. While the inflow of working-class economic immigrants was largely blocked, affluent Koreans continued to migrate to the city in New York City, albeit in slightly smaller numbers. Korean salon owners remarked that these newcomers were mainly expatriates, their accompanying families, and international students. Interestingly, the impact that Korean nail salons received from the economic crisis was fairly different from that of other Korean businesses. Other Korean businesses, such as tourism companies and Korean restaurants, suffered from a noticeable decrease in customers and revenue, because their main target customers were Korean tourists and residents. In contrast, the customer base of the majority of Korean nail salons was Americans – native-born Black and White residents – so their struggles originated rather from the supply side and the lack of available workers. Some interviewees responded that they once tried to hire Korean international students, but their efforts mostly failed. In describing the severe Korean workforce shortage in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Patricia mentioned the differences in work ethic across generations and across social classes:

After the IMF burst, only people with money came. Many newcomers were young people who came here to study at universities, like NYU. Around the 2000s, because it was so hard to find workers, I hired Korean students. I gave them part-time jobs. They worked pretty hard for the first couple of weeks, and then they disappeared. [...] My son says “All Korean girls are princesses! They are money-eating machines!” Well, that's true to a certain extent. International students do not work hard. They came from wealthy families in Korea, and I bet their parents would never let them wash dishes or put water on their hands. This generation is not desperate enough to get nail jobs. They easily get other jobs that pay them well. They are not as hard-working as we are. They don't have a hunger attitude and they like jobs where they can easily make money.  
(Patricia, Korean nail salon owner, Midtown Manhattan)

Several Korean interviewees undervalued the work ethic of younger generation co-ethnic immigrants. The current generation of Korean immigrants was often described by interviewees as “spoiled,” “weak,” and “self-assertive.” The Korean education exodus (*Jogi Yuhak* in Korean)

shifted the USA-Korea migration pattern in the 2000s, and a number of children and pre-college students from middle- to upper-class households started to be sent to the United States (Yi, 2013; Okazaki et al., 2017). As they settled in the United States after completing their education, some Korean salon owners, such as Patricia (Midtown Manhattan) and Angela (Washington Heights), tried to address the understaffing by hiring these new immigrants. However, from their perspective, the younger generation of Korean immigrants was hard to manage and lacked the proper demeanor to work in the service sector. Comparing the hard life that they endured in the face of severe labor exploitations to the “easy life” that the Korean international students enjoy, they said that the new immigrants do not know how to appreciate the sacrifices of earlier immigrants and the manicurist jobs that they were offered. “If they feel a little bad, they complain immediately,” Angela stated. This conflict resembles the historical phenomenon that employers criticize the work ethic of native-born Americans by making a comparison to foreign-born immigrants, who are subordinate and willing to work in inferior work conditions (Waldinger, 1997; Waldinger & Lichter, 2003).

Crystal attributed the Korean labor shortage to not only the high career expectation of the current generation of Korean women from affluent backgrounds, but also to the increase in the average income of Korean men. In the almost 28 years since she first engaged in the nail salon industry – 10 years as a worker and 18 years as an owner –, she has observed how the ethnic composition of the salon workers changed over time. To some degree, she acknowledged that the workforce crisis became worse because of the lack of interest that younger generation Korean women have in nail salon jobs. However, she stressed that the more crucial reason may be because later-generation Korean men started to have better-paying jobs, compared to the early working-class Korean immigrants; therefore, married Korean women became more selective in choosing their jobs. “You know, if your husband makes a certain amount of money, like 90K, the money you bring from manicurist work does not add much to your household income,” she noted. Crystal’s anecdote implies that the relative income of Korean female manicurists has decreased over time as the competitiveness of their male partners in the labor market increased, thereby making the manicurist job less attractive to this community. She remarked:

It’s been difficult to find a reliable workforce. You know, in the 90s and 80s, Korean immigrants’ education level was low and their English skill was very limited. But now younger people, like college students, are more educated, better off, and they are better at

English. And these people have more job opportunities than the old Korean generations and they usually do not come into this industry. And ... this is just my opinion. It's not proven. I believe the more important reason is in Korean men. Because they started to work in better-paying jobs, it became possible to live as a one-income family for Korean immigrants in New York. In the past, for Korean men who arrived in the United States during the 90s or 80s, there were not many things for them to do. They were less educated, and their English was not so great. The only workplaces that accepted them were laundry and construction. So, it was necessary for Korean women to go outside, get a job, and work to support their families. They had to take whatever jobs they could. But the New York Korean society now is different. They are not desperate enough to take nail jobs.  
(Crystal, Korean nail salon owner, Soho)

To address the labor shortage, a few Korean salon owners attempted to bring co-ethnic workers from Korea directly by utilizing their ties with the home country. A previous leader of the Korean American Nail Salon Association of New York, Ashley, told an interesting story on her transnational cooperation with private and public stakeholders in Korea. Specifically, by leveraging her influence as a community leader, she contacted staffing agencies, immigration offices, and universities in Korea to create a direct hiring channel in which New York City nail salons could contact present, aspiring, or retired Korean manicurists in Korea. While these efforts ultimately failed because of visa restrictions, in January 2020 during fieldwork, she was still trying to build an employment pipeline connecting Korea and New York City:

I reached out to job brokers in Korea. They said they would process a visa on their end and try to send workers for us. I asked them to send me Korean people with good attitudes. A long time later, I contacted the president of one of the universities in Korea with a nail art program. We had a great conversation. Our interests were met. The university wanted to connect students to well-paying jobs and we needed Korean workers. Sadly, all of the students who wished to come here failed in visa processing. They were rejected because of their poor English speaking. I was supposed to get a follow-up call from the job brokers, but I didn't hear back from them ever again. It's much better to work in New York than in Korea for manicurists. Even if you only get a six-month visa to stay here, it's a great opportunity to quickly make money and send it back to Korea. I am still trying to figure out how to bring Korean manicurists to New York. I think it's always best to bring someone who already has good manicuring skills from Korea.  
(Ashley, Korean nail salon owner, Midtown Manhattan)

Over time, the employment vacuum was gradually filled by Chinese immigrant workers. When the inflow of Korean immigrants to the United States dried up, there was an abundant number of both employed and unemployed Chinese women in the city. The Chinese population in the nation rapidly increased as a result of the normalization of USA-China relations and lifted emigration restrictions in 1978 (Holland, 2007; Hooper & Batalova, 2015). Work by Zhou

(1998), in particular, showed that historically New York City has disproportionately attracted less-educated, working-class Chinese immigrants relative to other regions. As a consequence of the inflow of working-class Chinese immigrants, the labor force crisis of Korean nail salons was effectively addressed, and Korean nail salon owners were able to successfully protect the low pricing point and maintain price competitiveness.

Figure 4-2. A Chinese nail salon located in Flushing (photographed by the author on January 16, 2020)



Furthermore, there was a growing demand for Joseonjok in the nail salon labor market because of their cultural similarity and the ability to speak Korean. Joseonjok are ethnically Korean Chinese people who are one of 55 ethnic minorities recognized by the Chinese government, descendants of Koreans who left their home country in the late 1800s and early 1900s. While small in number, this ethnic minority group exponentially expanded during the Japanese colonial era when a number of Koreans voluntarily left their homeland for better economic opportunities or were involuntarily forced to relocate as a part of the urban

development projects led by the Japanese colonial government. A number of these immigrants settled in Flushing, Queens, since it was a home for both Koreatown and Chinatown and they were welcomed by both ethnic labor markets because of their familiarity with both cultures. Joseonjok women in particular were employed as manicurists or masseuses by Korean owners, and they were more favored over Han Chinese by Korean owners because of their cultural proximity. “Every morning, Flushing streets were busy with shuttles that pick up Joseonjok people and transport them to Manhattan’s Korean salons,” one of the interviewees noted.

However, their dual identity as ethnic Korean and Chinese citizens created anti-Joseonjok sentiments among some Korean salon owners. At the time of the fieldwork, some Korean respondents described them as “untrustworthy people” or “people who would stab me in the back.” Anti-Joseonjok bias seemed to grow out of Joseonjok’s transnational capability that they could choose between Korean and Chinese ethnic resources depending on the given context. Brenda, one of the Korean interviewees in Upper East Side, who had previous experience of hiring Joseonjok immigrants, complained that these workers tend to demand the same privileges as her Korean workers, especially promotions. However, Brenda was always reluctant to assign them a managerial position, even though their skills and work experience qualified them, as she thought Joseonjok could opportunistically switch workplaces between Chinese and Korean salons based on offered benefits. Her narrative informs us that the dual identity of transnational immigrants, such as Joseonjok, can be a double-edged sword; their understanding of both cultures ensures them extensive mobility across a broad network of job opportunities, but they can also be the victims of discrimination, underpayment, and limited promotions.

For example, Lynda, a Korean nail salon owner in Manhattan’s Garment District, illustrated how the in-between identity of Joseonjok workers brought conflicting experiences in her salons. She remarked:

Chinese and Nepali people entered the nail industry at a fast rate. This is because Korean people started to hire them because it was okay to pay them less. Korean workers often want more. The proportion of Korean people keeps decreasing. It’s a trend. But, hiring non-ethnic people is not a perfect solution. [...] I also used to hire *Yanbian* people.<sup>19</sup> They speak in Korean, that’s a plus, but it was not so easy to work with them. Korean people have our own way to respect each other. But people from different backgrounds – most of them do not have

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<sup>19</sup> Yanbian people was used in this narrative to refer to Joseonjok. Located in a northeastern part of China, Yanbian is a Korean autonomous prefecture where a number of Joseonjok populations live (Park, 2017; Pulford, 2020).



our courtesy norms. Communication with *Yanbian* people was easy because they speak Korean very well. But their culture or way of thinking was closer to Chinese ones. It was sometimes very confusing. Hiring non-Koreans always brought cultural issues. I mean the cultural difference. Cultural misunderstanding.

(Lynda, Korean nail salon owner, Garment District)

The entrance of the Chinese workforce into the industry was further fueled by their transnational reference<sup>20</sup>, with Chinese immigrants seeing the working conditions of New York City nail salons favorably when compared to their previous work environments back in China. Some Chinese respondents mentioned that they had a low expectation of labor conditions and workers' rights prior to coming to the United States. When asked about personal experiences with labor exploitation, they remarked that working in the United States provided them with better working conditions as well as economic returns. The dual reference that Chinese immigrants judge the work conditions in the United States as an extension of their experience in their homeland made these workers overlook the issues of minimum wage violations, tip theft, and overtime work schedules in the receiving society.

This transnational dual reference was well revealed by Jennifer's story. Jennifer is a Chinese nail salon owner in Bensonhurst, who started her career as a manicurist back in the early 2000s, and she used to work as a domestic worker in Beijing, China. Originally born and raised by a farmer family in a remote rural village, she depicted herself in her hometown as a surplus laborer where farming had been always her male relative's work. To supplement the family income, she moved to Beijing and worked as a domestic worker for about 3 years. Later, she migrated to the United States and was employed in a small nail salon owned by a Korean woman. While her tips were often taken by her owner or her seniors, she remarked that she was still satisfied with the work environment because the economic reward was better than that in Beijing at the end of the day. She noted:

In China, people treat you bad and you get paid little. In America, people treat you bad but you get paid a lot. Chinese workers keep coming because you can make a lot of money if you work hard. Pay is great for manicurists. I lived in the countryside in China, and there were no paying jobs. We had a small land, but only men, like my father and my uncle, worked there. Women? We didn't have good jobs there. The economy was bad. [...] So I lived in someone's house and did babysitting in Beijing. The work was very stressful. Sometimes she

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<sup>20</sup> The original concept, "dual frame of reference" was proposed by Waldinger and Lichter (2003). In their book, *How the Other Half Works*, they argued that immigrants have a strong tendency to evaluate their work circumstances in the host with reference to their previous work experiences in their home society.

[employer] didn't let me go out. She sometimes beat me when she got angry. She was so controlling. [...] Even when their visa gets expired, people stay in America because living here is always better than in China. If you work in Beijing, you can buy food for your family. If you work in New York, you can buy food for your family and even you can buy houses. (Jennifer, Chinese nail salon owner, Bensonhurst)

Jennifer's career trajectory of working as a domestic worker in Beijing and as a manicurist in New York exemplifies the contemporary global outsourcing of women's work. The outsourcing of childcare obligations of women in developed societies to women coming from less-developed communities has been widely documented by a number of scholars (Raz-Yurovich, 2016; Cheung & Kim, 2022). However, the story of Jennifer, who worked as a domestic worker for her woman employer in Beijing and as a manicurist for a Korean woman in New York City, demonstrates that not only traditional childcare responsibilities but also aesthetic labor have rapidly been outsourced to people from less-privileged social backgrounds or women of color. Several Asian respondents in this study – Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese – said that their previous occupations in their homeland were nothing related to manicuring, and surprisingly, they personally did not enjoy or were indifferent to beauty practices, such as manicures, make-up, or fashion. What they commonly agreed on was that nail service is part of an American women's beauty culture, and that they had to assimilate into and re-educate themselves about this culture to be employed as foreign-born Asians.

#### *Responding to workplace discrimination: the emergence of Chinese-owned nail salons*

Chinese workers were often exposed to discrimination in Korean-owned nail salons, where a majority of workers were from Korea. The workplace discrimination against them occurred in a range of forms, such as decreased promotion opportunities, wages, information circulation, and language exchange. Generally, Korean workers received on average higher wages and more frequent promotions to move into upper managerial positions, while Chinese workers were excluded from these benefits. Some cultural discrimination, especially language discrimination, happened in a subtler way. Alexa, a Chinese salon worker in the Upper West Side, remarked that the Korean owner of her prior place of employment tried to suppress the social interactions of Chinese co-workers. She mentioned that the boss was less patient when Chinese workers chatted with one another, scolding them that they were too loud, relative to the Korean workers. Additionally, it was commonly reported that Korean employers and employees shared important

information about the business only in Korean, such as advanced nail skills and tip allocations, thereby excluding Chinese workers from the information circulation.

Erin was one of the respondents who disclosed her personal experience with workplace discrimination. When asked the reason why she quit her previous job, she noted:

I looked at people's feet all day. A Korean worker did the hands. People tipped us three dollars. Then we split it in half, 1.5 dollars each. Sometimes, the client gave us a tip of 5 dollars, and she said, 'this client gave us 3 dollars again. I will give you 1.5 and I will take 1.5 too.' She lied for over a year. I found her lying one day when I was watching the guest paying. I argued with her and complained to the boss. But you know what happened next? I was kicked out. Not her. I don't speak Korean and no one sided me. How can you win when everyone is Korean and you are Chinese?

(Erin, Chinese nail salon owner, Bay Ridge)

To avoid discrimination and to obtain better job security, Chinese workers started to establish their own salons in a range of local areas, such as Manhattan Chinatown, Bay Ridge, and Sunset Park, by leveraging skills they acquired from the Korean nail salons. It was repeatedly reported by both Chinese and Korean interviewees that Chinese salons began to appear in the New York City streetscape in the early 2010s. Generally, the amount of experience as a manicurist that Chinese respondents had prior to opening their own nail salon ranged from 7 to 40 years, which often varied depending on their network, family support, and wealth that they were able to bring from their home country. For instance, Gemma responded that it took about 32 years working as a manicurist for a Korean nail salon to open up her first salon in Homecrest, a small but growing Chinese enclave in Brooklyn. Chinese nail salons, like Gemma's, became an employment hub attracting working-class co-ethnic women living in New York City and adding another layer of diversity to the previously homogeneous nail salon industry. Gemma remarked:

I learned it from a Korean owner in Long Island. I was burned out. I worked so hard all day. The pay was always the same. You work hard but you get paid the same. If you are young, it is okay. You can do it. But it gets hard when you get older. I thought that it would be better to be a boss than to work for a boss. [...] I asked my husband to open a business together and help me. He said yes. We opened this salon together. My husband helped me buy the salon and he did a legal contract for me. He manages workers together. He's very much involved in this business. [...] We hire Chinese people. Some of them are my family and some of them are not. We use Craigslist, Chinese newspapers, and friends. Or sometimes people just walk in and they say they need a job.

(Gemma, Chinese nail salon owner, Homecrest)

Figure 4-3. Pedicure chairs and manicure desks in a Chinese nail salon (photographed by the author with permission on January 16, 2020)



The emergence of Chinese-owned salons in the industry was accompanied by the introduction of a new cultural norm brought from their sending society. One of the most distinguished business patterns of Chinese salons, one that differentiates them from Korean-owned salons, is that male family members often play an active, supportive role in running the salon business together. When asked about family support, Chinese business owner respondents often mentioned that their husband, uncle, or son helped in choosing the business site, operating the business, and providing financial resources. Many Chinese-owned nail salons visited during fieldwork interviews were co-operated by Chinese couples, whereas Korean men were more reluctant to be involved in their female partners' nail salon businesses. The low participation of male family members in Korean New York City nail salons, compared to their Chinese counterparts, may be the result of the strict gender roles and Confucian patriarchal values prevalent in Korea (Moon, 1992; Lee, 2008).

A Korean salon owner, Nara, for example, complained that Korean husbands are uncooperative in general in running a nail salon business since they believe it's "too feminine" and "not a serious job." She argued that Korean men's low engagement was a likely contributor to Korean salons' recent performance fall behind Chinese nail salons, where male members

actively engage in the family business and effectively help save labor costs. “You need at least four or five family members to do a family-run business, but Korean guys are really uncooperative,” Nara stated. According to her, Korean nail salons were continuing to lose their price competitiveness because family resources were highly limited and their labor cost was fixed.

### *Summary*

In sum, this section investigated how the shifting global economies and the geopolitical contexts in a sending society influenced the labor structure of the transclave economy in an immigrant’s receiving society. This finding contrasts with the traditional understanding of the enclave economy as being static; instead, this study highlighted that the enclave economy should be understood as a fluid system where the economic components, such as employment niches and cultural norms, are shaped by the continuing transnational influences by immigrants’ home countries as well as the host country. As the next section discusses, the competitive position between Chinese and Korean nail salon participants in this transclave economy entered into a new phase when Hispanic immigrants entered the market. The next section highlights the ever-changing nature of the transclave economy by looking at the emergence of Hispanic manicurists as a new market player and the construction of new ethnic stratification.

## 4.3. Emergence of Hispanic manicurists filling in the bottom market segment

### *Introduction*

This section investigates the restructuring of the transclave economy as a new actor – Hispanic immigrants – flowed into the bottom segment of the nail salon labor market. Their entrance into the market was fueled by a combination of demand and supply side-effects within the New York City nail salon market. On the demand side, Asian nail salon owners started seeking out Spanish-speaking Hispanic workers in order to replace existing workers with a cheaper workforce, check the growth of non-coethnic businesses, and expand their businesses in Hispanic residential areas. On the supply side, Hispanic immigrants responded to this demand favorably, as employment in nail salons served their need for low barrier-to-entry jobs. It is

noteworthy, however, that a Hispanic community is a pan-ethnic concept (Cuevas-Molina & Nteta, 2022); Hispanic community is comprised of racially and culturally diverse groups of people, and analyzing them as a collective cohort in this section may oversimplify their true effects on the market.

### *Hispanic immigrants as a new market player: supply and demand aspects*

The Hispanic community in New York City has long been dominated by two Caribbean (im)migrant groups, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, though non-Caribbean groups have started to grow in numbers more recently. Miyares et al (2021) provide a detailed overview in their work on the immigration history of Hispanic populations in New York City. Specifically, since Puerto Ricans were unfettered by visa restrictions as US citizens, they rapidly filled the garment industry sector in the city from the 1930s to the 1950s. Dominican immigrants started to grow as a population in New York City around 1965 as the result of geopolitical events of the 1965 revolution, the US military's intervention, and the massive issuance of US entry visas. Later, non-Caribbean immigrants started to flow into the city and form residential clusters segregated by country of origin. For example, a number of South Americans, such as Colombians, Ecuadorians, and Peruvians, settled in the geographical belt that encompasses Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, and Corona in Queens, respectively. On the other hand, many Central Americans, including Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Nicaraguan immigrants, concentrated in suburban areas, such as Nassau County, and commuted to Spanish-speaking workplaces located in New York City.

Three related factors created a specific demand for Hispanic immigrants in the Asian-dominant nail industry in the city. First, Asian nail salon owners had a high demand for a lower-paid workforce to cut their budget on hiring pedicurists. Pedicurists, the lowest segment of manicure jobs, were perceived as replaceable due to the simplistic nature of their work, compared to manicurist and nail technician positions that require more work experience and communication skills. Nail salon owners had started to find it increasingly difficult to fill these lesser-skilled positions with Chinese, Korean, or Vietnamese workers as these groups began to ask for better labor environments and higher wages, and as the price competition among salons became fiercer. As a result of the dwindling ethnic solidarity between co-ethnic Asian employers and employees and the inflow of cheap labor forces, nail salon owners started to replace existing

Asian pedicurists with working-class Hispanic women who accepted lower wages for their time and labor.

The employment niche for undocumented Hispanic immigrants therefore arose as a result of the equilibrium between the socioeconomic benefits these at-risk workers offered a range of urban stakeholders and the low-entry jobs these stakeholders offered in return. Specifically, the interests of immigrant business owners, senior nail salon workers, and clients were commonly rooted in sustaining the employment of undocumented immigrants. First, employers could save costs related to hiring salon workers and increase the profit margin by exploiting the labor of undocumented workers. Second, more senior co-ethnic nail salon workers from Korea and China became liberated from less-favored, lower-end work positions such as cleaning and pedicuring, as these positions started to be rapidly filled by non-coethnic, undocumented immigrants. Lastly, hiring undocumented immigrant workers enabled nail salons to maintain a low price for services, which facilitated a steady revenue stream even as customers faced tighter budget constraints in New York City during the pandemic. Indeed, the commensal relationships among owners, existing workers, customers, and new workers contributed to the consistent inflow of undocumented Hispanic workers into the labor market.

Second, Korean salon owners aggressively recruited Hispanic immigrants in order to stymie competition and to prevent other Asian ethnic salons from growing in their neighborhoods. Specifically, as more non-coethnic Asian workers quit their jobs and opened their own salons nearby, some Korean owners started to preferentially hire Hispanics instead, as they were less likely to have enough capital to establish their own business. The narratives from Heather and Avery present how these two factors motivated their Hispanic recruitment:

Nowadays workers ask for more money for their work. I get that. The problem is that they want everyone's wage to be equal. That's just wrong. You should get paid for what you do. If you do nail extensions, you get paid more. If you don't know how to do fake nails, you get paid less. Pedicure is easy and anyone can do it. The business is difficult now because People's standards got higher. [...] So, I hire Spanish for pedicures. I should continue to hire Asian people because they are the most skilled ones in the market. They know how to do everything, like pedi, mani, and acrylic nails. You should have at least one [Asian worker] for your business. But you can save some money if you hire Spanish pedicurists.  
(Heather, Korean nail salon owner, Upper West Side)

I personally don't hire Chinese, I only hire Hispanics. Five years ago, I hired some Hispanics to work in my salon. These people don't set up shops like Chinese. I think the Hispanic

culture is different. It seems like they prefer to work as an employee rather than setting up a salon. That's why I don't regard Hispanic people as a competitor.  
(Avery, Korean nail salon owner, Upper East Side)

Another factor that motivated Asian salons was a desire to capture Hispanic customers in increasingly Hispanicized neighborhoods. That is, for Asian employers whose enterprises are located in Hispanic-dominant residential neighborhoods, such as Jackson Heights and Washington Heights, recruiting people who can speak Spanish became a business strategy to lower the linguistic barrier with customers. In Hispanic enclaves, such as Jackson Heights, South Bronx, and Corona, it was often observed during the fieldwork that the majority of Asian nail salons had at least one Hispanic worker to improve communication with clients. Lily's story reveals how immigrant owners address the issue of language mismatch between business owners and neighboring residents by hiring workers with a similar cultural background as the main residents. As a first-generation Vietnamese immigrant, Lily encountered challenges in attracting customers in South Bronx to her family-run nail salon. She later hired two Spanish-speaking workers for pedicure and manicure services and this change in the employment structure led to growth in business revenue. When asked the reason why she hired Spanish-speaking workers, she remarked:

This area is mostly Hispanic so we hire Hispanics, like Mexico, and Ecuador. I thought it would be better to hire people within the community. The first is about language, and the second is about culture. This is a Hispanic town and you can't do business without Hispanics. I tried to learn Spanish by myself but it was too difficult. My workers speak Spanish and they translate it for me. [...] Also, some clients like to get nails from their people. It's like... you feel comfortable around the people from the same culture, right? And they easily become a friend with their clients so it is a good advertisement too. They started to come more regularly because they have a friend here. They get nails done but they also come here to chat and have fun.

(Lily, Vietnamese salon owner, South Bronx)

Utilizing the linguistic and cultural capabilities of Spanish-speaking immigrants allowed Asian business owners to effectively access the rapidly-growing clientele group, Hispanic immigrants in New York City.<sup>21</sup> One of the most repeatedly mentioned topics among nail salon owners was that Hispanic women, such as those from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, have a greater interest in nail aesthetics and willingness to purchase nail salon services more

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<sup>21</sup> 2020 US Census estimates that Hispanic residents now account for 28.3% of total populations in New York City.



regularly than Asian women. How a nail salon successfully attracts these passionate customer groups became one of the focal points in determining long-term revenue growth, especially for establishments located in Hispanic-dominant neighborhoods, such as Washington Heights, Manhattan; Bushwick and Cypress Hills in Brooklyn; Jackson Heights and Corona, Queens; and the Bronx. However, in most cases, Asian salon owners chose to assign high-paying positions (nail technicians) to Asian workers and outsource lower-value job positions (pedicurists) to Hispanic workers. Consequently, Hispanic immigrants' access to upper-level job segments still remains highly limited in many Asian-owned nail salons, even though an increasing number of these salons began to hire more Hispanics to cope with the demographic changes in the city.

On the supply side of the labor market, lesser-skilled, vulnerable Hispanic immigrant workers tended to be drawn to nail salons as the result of the low-entry barrier that manicurist jobs have and the severe discrimination that they experience in other job markets. For example, a Venezuelan immigrant, Mariana, noted that she originally wanted to become a teacher for young children in the United States; however, her lack of English proficiency blocked her from achieving that dream. In contrast, she described salon work as an “easy job” that requires little or no proficiency in English. On the other hand, Evelyn (Mexican, Upper East Side) and Victoria (Salvadorian, Sunset Park) were cases in which their undocumented status led them to the nail salon industry. Salon work was an appealing option for them, despite its mistreatment and low wage, because it was one of the most informal economic sectors, operating outside of the government's radar. “We used to have a backdoor that was made for us to run away if police officers visited,” Victoria noted, recalling her old days in one of the nail salons in Long Island. Camila's narrative below summarizes how nail salon jobs became favored by Hispanic women with vulnerable social status in the United States:

I was a college student in Nicaragua. I came here with my family. I've been doing nails 20 years something. I didn't do anything else. It is everything to me. I worked in Manhattan before. The [owner] lady was an American lady. She had a very nice place. The price at that time was higher than now and the regular service, only pedicures and manicures, was 60 dollars. Can you imagine? It was a good neighborhood. Many customers were actors. I remember Julia Roberts came to our place. [what motivated you to work for nail salons at that time?] I don't really remember but maybe it was because it was an easy career to do. I came here with no English. My English is still not perfect but, when I came here, my English was really no good. In nail salons, you say “Hi,” “How are you,” “Thank you,” and that's enough. They don't care about your background too. Whether you have a visa or not. You

know what I mean, right? Most people don't give you a job if you are undocumented. Nail salons don't care who you are. They are like, you just come and work.  
(Camila, Nicaraguan nail salon owner, South Bronx)

Some workers from Latin American countries where beauty salons have an industrial presence often had previous work experience as manicurists in their homeland. The transferrable work skills that some immigrants acquired in their country of origin made their adjustment to the labor market simpler in the receiving society, relative to other immigrant groups. One example was Stella, a young Puerto Rican immigrant woman who migrated to the United States six years ago. Prior to coming to the United States, she worked as a professional manicurist in San Juan for two years and learned essential skills, such as classic manicure and gel polish, that were immediately applicable to the US nail industry context. Since she had already worked for nail salons in her sending country, it was natural to start off her career in something she was already familiar with and therefore could more successfully settle into the new living environment. Her ability to speak fluent English as a Puerto Rican was an additional plus that empowered her to communicate with her non-Spanish-speaking Asian employers. As Stella's case illustrates, the industrial structure of an immigrant's home society often exerts influence on their career choice in a host society. Stella remarked in detail:

I started this job when I was 16, in my country, Puerto Rico. My mom was sick, we were poor, so we needed fast money. I always got my nails done at that age and I loved it so much. I was like, "well, if I learn how to do it by myself, I don't have to pay anyone and then people pay me to do it." Win-win situation, right? So ever since then. There are many nail salons there, so it was not so difficult to find jobs. My first place, I would probably say I worked like 2 months. It was more like a training time. The second salon that I worked in, I'd say like 6 months. The other one was 1 year. [what motivated you to come to New York?] Economical things in Puerto Rico. It is a small island, and the small country doesn't have that much money. So, I came to America to make money. I want to say it has more opportunity, work-wise, but not for nail salons though. Because Puerto Rico has a very strong industry for nail salons. The nail salon industry there is very.... It is almost like here. But over there, it's cheaper-base, I want to say, so you don't make as much money as you would make here. But you do make money. I walked in many nail salons. I went from spot to spot, looking for jobs, basically. This salon always hires people. I just walked in and asked.  
(Stella, Puerto Rican nail salon worker, South Bronx)

In Jackson Heights, I met a Venezuelan woman, Karina, who previously worked for several nail salons in her home country for six years. Similar to Stella's story about Puerto Rico's nail booms, Karina also mentioned the gigantic beauty economy in Venezuela and added that nail salons are rapidly growing as part of Venezuelan women's personal care routines. As someone

who grew up in that social context, it was an obvious choice for Karina to choose a nail salon job in the United States and utilize her manicuring skills that she had acquired from previous work experience in Venezuela. She was working in a salon with a diverse group of workers from Honduras, Mexico, Ecuador, and Venezuela, and about 80 percent of her customers were Hispanic as well. She noted as follows:

We love beauty. Growing up in Venezuela, I liked makeup, hairdressing, and nails of course. Venezuelan women like to groom themselves and look good. I wanted to do what I love and I actually worked as a manicurist in Venezuela. I worked for 6 years. It's been 4 years in New York. And you know, I have nail skills so I tried to find nail jobs first. My first salon was in Walmart. It may be hard to believe but Walmart has a nail salon [she laughed]. My first boss was Vietnamese. Oh no, actually I think they were Cambodians. They were really nice people. I worked there for one and a half years. [...] I think it's about security and insecurity. If you have your nails nicely done, you feel secure. You feel confident when somebody asks you for handshaking. But think that you don't have a nice nail and your nail is a little un-knit. You will be like, you know, very insecure.  
(Karina, Venezuelan nail salon worker, Jackson Heights)

*The construction of precarious lives of Hispanic workers: force-fed Korean culture*

In New York City, nail salons historically played a key role as an asylum that provides a vital livelihood for Hispanic workers, especially those who had working-class backgrounds or were undocumented. However, a considerable number of nail salons took advantage of the precarious status of these workers and many Hispanic salon employees became the target of labor exploitation and abuse. While the majority of the Hispanic workers I met were reluctant to share their stories about the owners' mistreatment due to language barriers and fear, some interviewees were willing to share their personal stories. Some of the most commonly repeated themes included minimum wage violation, tip theft, and additional tasks outside of the contract.

Among many topics, cleaning workplaces was a hot-button issue for both Hispanic workers and non-Hispanic workers. In several workplaces, Hispanic, Nepali, and Tibetan workers – the three ethnic groups that are largely represented in the bottom of the labor market – were in charge of cleaning restrooms and manicuring desks for other salon members. One of the employers that I talked with said that he mandated all members, regardless of their ethnicity and years of experience, to clean the workplace; however, his Asian co-ethnic worker expressed their

discomfort and asked for better treatment than these non-coethnic workers: “Workers complained, saying ‘that [cleaning a restroom] is their [Hispanic people] work,’” he noted.

A few Korean nail salon owners brought up the cultural notion of *Gyeon-seub* to explain the rationale behind why Hispanic salon workers were underpaid and required to perform extra work unrelated to manicuring labor (e.g., cleaning workplaces). *Gyeon-seub*, which is directly translated as “watching and learning” in English, is a Korean learning-by-doing apprenticeship system where early-career workers work for free or little paycheck and obtain on-the-job training under the supervision of senior workers and employers. In interviews, salon owners tended to say that they view Hispanic workers as *Gyeon-seub* learners who actively participate in on-the-job training rather than as the victims of labor exploitations. Emily, one of the established nail salon owners in Soho, criticized the recent *New York Times*’ article, *The Price of Nice Nails*, arguing that this report is the result of cultural blindness. She argued that it is an industry-specific tacit norm formed over time: newcomers work as an apprentice for the first 6 months or a year to learn from their seniors how to do manicuring work. She noted:

Learning nail skills at beauty schools is not enough for people to properly work in nail salons. This job is all about experience. It can’t be done without experience. A boss should teach you little by little, giving you a little money. Traditionally, beginners were given lunch or bus fees for a few months, rather than wages. [...] I think people outside of this industry misunderstood that point. We follow our tradition of *Gyeon-seub*. People misunderstand our business because they don’t know the concept of *Gyeon-seub*. They are like, ‘why are you giving your workers this little money?’ ‘Why don’t you give them a minimum wage?’ It is because they don’t know our concept. [...] Spanish and Nepalis get small money because they are newbies. They assist other nail technician until they learn all the necessary techniques. This is about roles, not about race.

(Emily, Korean woman, Korean nail salon owner, Soho)

*Gyeon-seub* culture is particularly strong in personal care service sectors in Korea, such as hair salons and barbershops (Lee, 2013; Lee, 2019). Emily made a direct comparison between New York City nail salons and hair salons in Korea and pointed out that newly-hired people are often mandated to provide free or near-free labors for their salon owners for a certain period of time in her home country. In the same vein, another Korean salon owner, Addison, claimed that this labor structure is a part of a tradition that goes back to the birth of nail salons in New York City. She noted that when she first worked for a Korean salon boss in Manhattan 30 years ago, she cleaned the bathroom and was paid only enough to cover transportation. Their anecdotes

reveal the transnational frame of reference that immigrant business owners have. That is, some immigrant business owners that I interviewed during the fieldwork tended to evaluate their treatment of workers in the United States relative to work conditions in their homeland. The following is the detailed narrative from Addison, her response when asked why Hispanic workers are generally underpaid compared to Korean workers in the same workplace:

The *New York Times* wrote an article on only 10 percent of this industry. Like the Bronx. Sarah wrote a whole novel with a ridiculous story. If you treat workers like what she described, it's all against the labor law. The store has to close down. [...] People don't understand our concept at all. We split up the work. When I was a beginner, I had to clean the bathroom by myself too. We have our own rules. Some Latin American people say, "why are you asking me to clean the bathroom?" "why am I the only one who does this?" "you are discriminating against me." They only know how to do mani and pedi. They don't know how to do 'coloring.' They don't know how to make fake nails either. I cannot pay them equally to nail technicians who worked for 10 or 20 years. But for those who know nothing about our culture, we are portrayed as bad human beings.  
(Addison, Korean nail salon owner, Chelsea)

#### *The birth of Hispanic entrepreneurs and their continuing obligations for homelands*

Up until 2022, when the fieldwork was conducted, Hispanic immigrants still had a dominant presence at the bottom layer of the nail salon labor market and a significant portion of them were hired as pedicurists by Asian employers; however, some Hispanic workers started to enter into the entrepreneur community by establishing their salons in Hispanic towns and targeting Spanish-speaking workers and clients. When I visited New York City in 2021, there was a visible formation of the Hispanic nail salon clusters around Roosevelt Avenue and 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Jackson Heights, Queens. Some visual signals of the emergence of Hispanic nail salons included Spanish signboards, Spanish sandwich boards set outside, and recruitment posters attached to the salon windows, written "Necesito Manicurista (manicurists needed)."

Figure 4-4. Manicurist recruitment flyer in Spanish in Jackson Heights (photographed by the author on January 14, 2020)



Bella was a Salvadoran immigrant and was the owner of a nail salon located in Jackson Heights. Her trajectory to becoming a salon owner was a microcosm of New York City nail salon's transformation into a transclave economy; Over the last 10 years, the owner of the salon changed from Polish, to Chinese, to Dominican, and to Salvadoran herself. When first coming to the United States, she was employed as a food server at a restaurant. When asked what motivated her to start her new career as a manicurist, instead of pursuing promotions in the restaurant industry, she replied that it was because of the misogynistic culture in restaurants. Bella explained that judgement on her looks and body shaming routinely occurred in her workplace by coworkers and customers. She started to hope she could work in a more female-dominant workplace, and one of her friends recommended a manicurist job.

Even after becoming an owner, Bella was still providing nail grooming services for her clients. She remarked that there were two reasons for this. First, she noted that it was a matter of loyalty to her clients. The clients she had served as a nail technician prior to the salon opening expected

her to continue to offer services. Second, she mentioned that she needed to save some money on employment by exploiting her own labor in order to fulfill her obligation to send money to her left-behind family in El Salvador. She stated:

Customers follow me. I had my customers when I was a technician before and now they follow me here. It is difficult to say ‘no’ to them. They like me. They like me very much. They liked my services and they still come to my store. They sometimes bring their family and sisters. And I always need to send money to my family back in my hometown. If I hire one more nail technician, that’s a lot of money. They are expensive. Because I myself am a nail technician, I can do nails and save some money on that.  
(Bella, Salvadoran nail salon woman, Jackson Heights)

One of the most noticeable differences between Hispanic groups and Asian salon participants was the weight of the familial obligation to send remittances to their left-behind communities. By doing so, they were fulfilling their social expectations of being a dutiful mother or a daughter in their home society. While a number of Asian salon owners were not present in the workplace, which was one of the obstacles to conducting interviews, it was easy to talk with Hispanic salon owners in person as the majority of them were still working as a nail technician to cut spending on hiring people. When asked why they had to do so, some Hispanic salon owners mentioned that the available cash flow was limited since they had to financially support families in their homelands by remitting a certain amount of dollars. This transnational obligation may have acted as a limiting factor that kept Hispanic-owned salons small in terms of the employment size and the square feet size, relative to other ethnic groups.

While Hispanic immigrants were overrepresented in the bottom segment of the stratified labor market, some interview respondents predicted that in the foreseeable future, Hispanic manicurists will take over Asian manicurists’ employment and entrepreneurial niche. They pointed to age discrimination from salon clients and the aging Asian populations as the main drivers. For example, Jin, a Chinese nail salon owner in Forest Hills, asserted that the representation of Asian immigrants in New York City nail salons will quickly pass into history. Instead, she remarked that Hispanic immigrants will be the majority group as a significant portion of their population are still young and clients have a strong preference to receive nail services from young manicurists. Salon clients tended to have a prejudice against old manicurists, assuming that they would have slow hands and blurry vision that impair their ability

to perform sophisticated services. In explaining the connection between the age discrimination in the industry and the rising Hispanics as the next dominant ethnic group, Jin remarked:

I think Spanish people will be the majority soon because a lot of them are still young. They will take over the industry in the future. Age discrimination is really bad. People don't like old manicurists. They think that old manicurists are slow. They think old people's eyes are not good for manicuring too.

(Jin, Chinese nail salon owner, Forest Hills)

### *Summary*

In sum, this section looked at the process by which Hispanic immigrants found their employment niche in New York City nail salons, transforming previously Asian-dominant immigrant businesses. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that the enclave economy is an evolving unit where its participants and the labor structure are diversified over time with the persistent interaction with multiple home societies of immigrants, including China, Korea, and a number of Latin American countries. The next section builds on this finding and examines the power relations that the heterogeneous group of immigrants construct in the system. Specifically, the following section highlights the geopolitical, contested nature of the transclave economy where immigrant groups build and consolidate ethnic stratification through interactions, exclusions, and discrimination.

## 4.4. Construction of the transclave economy as a contested place

### *Introduction*

This section looks at the construction of ethnic hierarchy in the transclave economy as an outcome of multiethnic contacts, tensions, and negotiations. As the simplistic depiction of the immigrant economy as a monolithic, static place has prevailed in the enclave economy scholarship, the question of how a range of ethnic groups in an increasingly multiethnic economic system conflict and adapt to each other in a host society has received little attention from academia. However, this study reveals that New York City nail salons have evolved into a contested territory where the ethnic hierarchy that earlier entrant groups established is constantly challenged and reconsolidated by a range of transclave economy participants with different



interests and cultural belongings. In this process, a transnational connection between the host society and home societies plays a major role in determining hierarchical power relations among immigrants and generating new forms of inequality.

*The impact of power relations of home societies on post-migration lives*

Korean immigrants had the advantage of the earlier entrants into the nail salon market, by accessing vulnerable immigrant workers from developing countries and constructing the labor hierarchy from scratch. As the earlier settlers, Korean immigrants benefited from the first-mover advantage as it enabled them to establish client loyalty and to have extra time to improve their services before a number of competitors entered the sector and the market became saturated. While the pre-existence of the Korean enclave economy helped non-coethnic immigrant women to find low-entry jobs, they had to comply with the rules and hierarchy that Korean nail salon members had established before their arrival. In many Korean salons, managerial positions were exclusively dominated by Koreans, except for a few cases such as Natasha, a Mexican manager working at a Korean nail salon in Astoria. Korean salon owners provide co-ethnic workers with extensive training opportunities in the long term over a few months to years. On the other hand, the upward mobility of other ethnic groups was highly limited and, therefore, a large portion of mid to lower positions, such as pedicurists and manicurists, were overrepresented by non-Korean workers in many Korean salons.

Another factor that assisted Korean salons' dominance of the upper stratum of the market hierarchy was their utilization of transnational resources. Korean salon owners have effectively gentrified their salons and served upmarket clients by leveraging beauty content produced in Korea. This transnational mobilization was possible as South Korea is the fifth largest exporter of cosmetic products and ranked as one of the top ten beauty markets internationally (Baik, 2021; Seoulz, 2022). One of the most representative examples has been the "Spa Show," a product and technology showcase organized by the Korean American Nail Salon Association of New York (KANSA), which features over one hundred Korea-based companies (H. Choi, 2015; D. Park, 2019). Companies that produce a variety of products, such as gel nail products, facial cosmetics, and eyelash products, were hosted as the interests of two parties – Korean companies and the association – were met. Specifically, the companies wanted to enter into the American market and aim at additional revenue, while the association hoped to scale up the event and maximize

advertising impacts for the association. As a result, not only nail products but also other less-related beauty products, such as massage chairs, eyelash extension kits, aroma massage cream, and facial cream, were presented in the spa show.

This seemingly incoherent invitations and agenda of the spa show brought unexpected benefits to Korean nail salon owners in New York City: knowledge spillover and the gentrification of salons. The exposure of salon owners to adjacent beauty industries, such as massage and eyelash extensions, inspired them to diversify their salon services by adopting new technologies and adding Korean beauty practices to American nail salons. For instance, Ashley, a previous KANSA chairperson, mentioned that some event attendees purchased Korean aroma massage creams from the spa show and started to incorporate Korean massage parlor services into their regular menu. Also, the spa show acted as a platform for intra-ethnic competitions and creative interactions. Korean salon owners who attended this transnational event actively built networks together and learned from what new business items and ideas other salon owners had tried and succeeded. Consequently, industrial innovation occurred in many Korean nail salons.

Ashley depicted the transformation of New York City Korean nail salons into a premium beauty complex as the process of developing “Jjimjilbang (Korean public bathhouse)” culture. In tracing the economic success of Korean salons over the salons owned by other ethnic groups, she remarked that Korean salons achieved premiumization quickly and easily through the persistent interaction with Korean beauty manufacturers, a combination of American grooming culture and Korean beauty technologies and services, such as spa and traditional massage, and the innovation competitions occurring within the Korean community. She remarked:

Koreans began to quit Jewish salons. They learned some skills from Jewish and established their own salons. But Koreans have a business mindset, so they introduced a spa concept. And, in the spa show, you see each other. You see how other salons are doing. People get new ideas. I wouldn't say they steal the ideas but you learn something new every time you talk with other salon owners in this networking festival. [...] Because our services became more premium than other ethnic salons provide, we charged more money. Because we charged more and the revenue increased, we were able to make salons bigger and more luxurious. In the end, we made salons similar to a Jjimjilbang. Because of this uniqueness, Korean ail shops became popular with rich people. People with a lot of money don't go to shabby nail salons. They rather go to luxurious salons and get their entire bodies groomed. We became a tour course too. Tourists from Europe and Africa go to Times Square, take pictures, go shopping, go to Little Italy to eat pasta, and watch Broadway plays. When they

get tired in the evening, you come to luxurious salons to get your nails done and get a full-course massage.

(Ashley, Korean nail salon owner, Midtown Manhattan)

Backward remittances that were sent from the left-behind communities were another privilege factor that consolidated the upper market dominance of the Korean community. Traditional remittances normally refer to the transfer of money to immigrant-sending societies and families left behind (Ran & Liu, 2021). However, a significant pattern in Korean nail salon owner communities was that money flow occurred reversely as Korean salon owners bring financial resources from their home country to invest in their business growth. The financing through the “reverse remittances” (Mazzucato, 2011; Moberand, 2012) from the home country occurred as immigrants sold their businesses (e.g., kindergarten), borrowed money from left-behind families, and withdrew their savings from Korean banks. Korean interview respondents remarked that the cash from Korea helped them to meet their existing financial obligations, such as paying rent, and it let them expand their businesses and acquire new salons.

The direction of the remittance flow was one of the substantial differences between the Korean and Hispanic respondents. Remittances, which were often undertaken backward, were more likely to be an economic benefit among Korean salon owners, whereas remittances were a significant financial burden for a number of Hispanic salon owners who were responsible for the livelihood of the left-behind community. In contrast to the situation where Korea has a relatively high standard of living and the effect of remittances from Korean immigrants is relatively low, for Hispanic immigrants, their remittances to a home country became a crucial currency that their families and entire communities relied on. As a result, relative freedom from remittance obligations gave Korean salon owners a great deal of power over their financial decisions to pursue entrepreneurial growth in New York City. On the other hand, Hispanic groups’ ability to acquire, expand, and grow businesses was highly restricted, as they often had to send back a certain amount of capital to their homelands. Such inequality between Korean and Hispanic immigrants, induced by the global economic structure, has consolidated the nexus between ethnic stratification and market segmentation in New York City nail salons.

Figure 4-5. 2015 Spa Show organized by the Korean American Nail Salon Association of New York (Choi, 2015)



It was often observed during fieldwork that salon owners and some workers, mostly Koreans, complained about the simplistic point of view that major and local newspapers in the United States have. They noted that news reporters tend to depict nail salons as small mom-and-pop-style shops but, in reality, nail salons are as highly segmented as New York City restaurants, which range from cheap franchises to Michelin restaurants. For some of the interviewees, it was a matter of pride. “In Korea, some people give me a pitiful look when I tell them I am a manicurist in the United States and they add ‘that must be really hard,’” said Grace, a manicurist with 30 years of experience who worked in one of the large nail salons at Manhattan. During the interview, Grace tried to draw a boundary between the high-end Manhattan nail salon that she worked at and Chinese salons in the Bronx by highlighting that only higher-end salons can afford to hire someone like her who has unique skills that cannot be achieved within 10 years or so.

#### *Controlling and isolating: micropolitics in New York City nail salons*

Korean nail salons, however, were the contested shared places where different immigrant groups negotiate their intimacies and social boundaries. Calling their non-coethnic workers “sisters” and “families,” some Korean nail salon owners mentioned that they eat lunch together,

discuss family life and children's education, and celebrate workers' birthdays. Despite this intimacy, Korean employers brought global power relations between nations into salon's micropolitics and, by doing so, reaffirmed their advanced position in the ethnic hierarchy, above both their non-coethnic workers and customers. Angela, a Korean nail salon owner in Washington Heights who ran a business with Hispanic workers, built both an ethnic hierarchy and maternalism in interacting with her Hispanic workers. For example, in explaining the consumption behaviors of her Hispanic clients, she offered her own assessment that Hispanic clients prefer to receive services from co-ethnic workers because of their sense of inferiority. Drawing a clear boundary between her own Korean ethnicity and the Hispanic ethnicity of her workers and clients, Angela asserted that clients feel less comfortable receiving nail services from her, not because of language barriers or cultural differences, but because she came from a better-off country. She explained:

Hispanic clients prefer to get nail services from Hispanic workers. I think it's because they feel intimidated in front of us. Just think about it. You don't feel comfortable if you are served by people who are from a wealthier country than yours. [...] I have to educate my Hispanic workers one by one. I teach them how to develop a customer-first mindset, how to find jobs in America, and how to raise kids. We are all foreigners here. But I am older than them and I am more experienced. I am privileged because I was raised in a better environment and I had exposure to good culture. I think it is my responsibility to teach them how to navigate their life.

(Angela, Korean nail salon owner, Washington Heights)

In addition to this ethnic hierarchy, Angela also developed a maternalistic relationship with her young Hispanic workers. Maternalism was oftentimes developed by salon owner interviewees if there was a significant age gap between immigrant workers and business owners. For instance, there was an age gap of about 20 to 30 years between Angela, who was in her early 60s, and her Hispanic employees, who were in their 20s. She emphasized her moral responsibility to educate them as someone who is older, with more life experience, and came from a more developed country. Based on her belief about her cultural superiority and duty of moral guardianship, Angela provided her workers with occupational training and shared her life guidance on jobs, childcaring, and immigration law. After the pandemic hit, Angela encouraged her workers to obtain different occupational skills and leave the nail salon industry as the sector started to decline rapidly. Although Angela portrayed this dynamic as an educational mother-

daughter relationship, these practices were used as a control over workers' labor and to reinforce the ethnic hierarchy between Koreans and Hispanic immigrants in her nail salon.

Korean employers' control over non-Korean salon workers was exercised in various forms. Most notably, a number of workers explicitly complained about control over language usage and linguistic discrimination that was prevalent in their Korean-owned workplaces. In some nail salons, there was a tacit agreement about whose language should be represented and whose language is prohibited. Passive discrimination in day-to-day practices included playing only Korean music and having important conversations with workers in Korean, thereby excluding non-coethnic workers from the information flow. Some employers, furthermore, tried to actively prohibit foreign language usage in their salons, by asking workers to turn off television shows in their own language and to stop talking in their mother tongue in the workplace. Two Chinese women, Rosie and Alexa, who previously worked for a Korean salon owner, shared their stories on how their language was disdained and how Korean bosses and workers established their linguistic power over Chinese workers in salons. They noted:

Korean people only talked in Korean. So, I asked them to speak in English when they talk about important things about tips, work, and so on. They said, "If you think it's unfair, learn the basic Korean language." It's not easy if you already live in a foreign country. Korean is like a third language for me.

(Rosie, Chinese nail salon owner, Williamsburg)

I guess it [working in a Korean salon] was okay but they never liked me watching Chinese TV. They didn't like us talking in Chinese too. They said we talked too loudly. But they were always loudly talking in Korean.

(Alexa, Chinese nail salon worker, Upper West Side)

Furthermore, many Korean nail salon owners did not perceive non-coethnic workers as long-term partners and refused to invest their time and money to train them as managers. Rather, in some cases, workers from outside of the Korean community were perceived to be more replaceable than their co-ethnic workers. For example, Eunice, a Korean nail salon owner in Throggs Neck, the Bronx, found it extremely hard to find Koreans who were willing to commute to Hispanic towns; however, she devoted additional time and energy to hire two Koreans as she needed some workers to be trained as managers to help her with taking care of her new salons in the suburbs. When asked why she didn't hire Hispanic workers and train them, given that the area has an available Hispanic labor force, she explicitly stated that she did not trust Hispanic

workers. Eunice remarked that, because of language barriers and cultural dissimilarity, she did not trust Hispanic workers enough to assign them upper-level positions that are in charge of the salon's cash flow and revenue management. Rather, she preferred to build a long-term reciprocal relationship with co-ethnic workers and maintain a short-term business relationship with her Hispanic workers. She remarked:

I hired a lot of Hispanics because it's an area where many Hispanic people live. I hired some Koreans to train them as managers. There are no Koreans living in the Bronx, and it was really hard to find Korean workers because Korean people avoided commuting here. I hired two people and they have been my precious resources. One of them worked really well and gained my trust, so I was going to give the manager position to her as a manager. I was planning to open my second store in Connecticut and ask her to take care of this Bronx salon for me. But she went back to Korea for a while because of the pandemic. That's why I can't find a manager. This is really unfortunate. [Why don't you ask one of your many Hispanic workers to be your manager?] Two of them have worked here for about ten years but I just don't trust them. I usually leave the key with the staff to come in the morning and set the door open. I never ask Hispanic workers to do that. I only ask Koreans to do that. First, there is a language barrier between me and them. Second, the culture is different. I just can't trust them.

(Eunice, Korean nail salon owner, Throggs Neck)

### *Cultural negotiation and adaptation between different ethnic groups*

Within this solid power structure, which was a continuation of the global power relations, Korean culture and their business standards were accepted by nail salons owned by other ethnic groups as an industry norm. One of the examples was *Pali-pali* culture, a culture of agility that encourages people to act or work as fast as possible (Oh, 2018; Moon, 2019; Rokni & Park, 2020).<sup>22</sup> Betty, a Chinese nail salon owner in Homecrest who had worked at five different Korean nail salons throughout the city, tried to show her ability to speak some Korean words as soon as she realized that I was from Korea. After mentioning some Korean words, she remarked that *Pali* culture was the most challenging culture that took her some time to get accustomed to. She noted that she herself ran a restaurant as an entrepreneur in a city before coming to the United States. Since she had never pushed her workers back in China to rush, at first, she thought that a Korean boss was simply being rude or discriminating against her because of her ethnicity.

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<sup>22</sup> Some scholars interpret that *Pali-pali* culture is the product of the compressed economic development in South Korea (Yin, 2013; Oh, 2018).

However, she noted that it wasn't long before she realized it reflected a difference in cultural practices between Korean business and Chinese business settings.

I've worked at five Korean salons so far. Some were in Long Island and some were in Manhattan. I mostly worked with a Korean boss. I know some Korean words. [...] *Gomawayo* (thank you in Korean), *Unni* (sister in Korean), and... What was *Pal-hae*? You know 'quick' in Korean? [you mean *Palihae*? (be fast in Korean)] Yes, *Palihae*! *Palihae* was something that I struggled with a lot. Korean people are very quick. (Betty, Chinese nail salon owner, Homecrest)

Also, the exploitative Korean apprentice system, *Gyeon-seub*, was reproduced in many non-Korean nail salons which were managed by immigrant owners who previously worked for Korean business owners. Originally, the system of learning-by-doing was transferred to Korean nail salons in New York City from beauty salons in Korea, such as hair salons. More specifically, these business owners in Korea offered small pocket money and transportation fees for their novice workers, rather than regular wages, for what they described as occupational training. This transnational training system was adopted by other ethnic groups in New York City and became rooted as one of the industry norms. Several salon owners from different cultural backgrounds, such as China, Ecuador, and El Salvador, commonly remarked that they followed the system of Korean nail salons where they had been employed and educated workers in a similar way that their previous Korean bosses did. Often calling them trainees or newbies, they stated that they provided their workers with a range of learning opportunities for the first few months after onboarding, such as painting nails, scrubbing feet, and giving a basic massage, in the exchange for their free labor.

Jin, a Chinese nail salon owner in Forest Hills, shared stories about the exploitative trainee-employer relationship in Korean nail salons. She was asked to work for free as an apprentice, finish her lunch within ten minutes, clean the boss's pick-up car, clean the bathroom, and shovel snow without any compensation. Later, Jin was able to escape from the poor working conditions by opening her own nail salon in Forest Hills and hiring Chinese workers. However, she imitated the management strategies and wage structures that she had learned from her previous Korean owners, thereby reproducing another sweatshop of her co-ethnic communities in the area. When asked how much she pays for her workers, without any hesitations, she stated that she has never paid to hire workers for her business, ever since she acquired the salon from an old Chinese man. Her logic was that her employees pay Jin back for occupational lessons by cleaning the bathroom



and doing manicuring for free. She remarked it is a tacit cultural norm within the industry that manicurist women in New York City have practiced for the last several decades. She noted:

I worked for 40 years on Long Island and my bosses were all Korean women. They treated me badly, so I always cried when I came back home. One Korean lady. I worked for her for about 20 years. She was really bad. I had to finish my lunch in ten minutes. She didn't allow me to read any books or newspapers while eating. Every month, I had to clean the inside and outside of her car. It was a pick-up car. It was for picking up workers. On snowy days, I had to shovel snow outside of the salon too. She didn't pay for my shovel work. If no customers on a snowy day, she didn't pay me too. It's really sad because it was not my fault. It was the weather's fault. [...] I don't pay her. I've never paid my workers. Because they learn skills from me. They are paying for my lessons by working. That's how I learned too. I worked with no money too when I had no experience. That's how you learn your nail skills. School is school. Getting a license is not enough. You need real experience. My Korean bosses didn't pay me for months because my skill was not good. I was getting a free lesson from them. This is normal here.

(Jin, Chinese nail salon owner, Forest Hills)

*Empowering through soft skills: English proficiency and upward mobility*

In spite of the unequal power relations and prevalent discrimination, immigrants' communication skills generate a disruptive power that destabilizes the ethnic hegemony and empowers underprivileged salon participants to move up the occupational ladders. This is because the job of a manicurist is not entirely about providing nail service *per se* but, rather, it also involves "emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983)," which demands workers manage their feelings to deliver a service and lead a smooth interaction with customers (Sharma & Black, 2001; Constanti & Gibbs, 2005). Sunny, one of the most famous Korean nail technicians based in Manhattan, emphasized the communication skills of manicurists by describing the job as "nail psychiatrist." Her affluent clients made an appointment with her not only to receive nail services, but also to speak frankly about personal stories that were too inappropriate or embarrassing to share in public. Such intimate interactions may be facilitated by the "otherness" of immigrants (Fassin, 2001; Torres, 2006): the confidentiality of salon conversations is guaranteed as the lives of foreign-born immigrants are isolated from those of native-born residents in a host society. In describing the importance of the emotional work, Sunny remarked:

One of my clients said, "Sunny, you're my nail psychiatrist. If I talk to you, my secret won't go out." Clients bad-mouth their mother-in-law and their husband. Sometimes people talk bad about their supervisors at work too. [...] I'm a woman who has a masculine personality. I'm not good at painting my nails, but I'm good at talking. When I first started working

before, I always prepared some questions to ask every morning. I asked all the clients exactly the same questions. ‘How are you today?’ ‘How’s your daughter?’ ‘How are your parents?’ If you ask them, they talk on their own! What’s really amazing about it is that each customer had different answers and stories. [...] I gave them my heart. Their nails aren’t theirs when I pamper them. Those nails are mine. I did my best every moment.  
(Sunny, Korean nail salon worker, Midtown Manhattan)

Joanna’s comments echoed a crucial theme on immigrants’ empowerment through soft skills, including English proficiency, emotional empathy, and communication abilities. Joanna was a Korean nail salon owner in Chelsea whose salon has employed a number of Hispanic and Nepali manicurists. While she sometimes gave promotion priority to Korean workers, Joanna remarked that upper technician and managerial positions were normally offered to those with great communication skills and adequate English proficiency, regardless of ethnicity, since they directly affect the profit increase. Her narrative was:

Clients give fewer tips to employees with a severe accent. It’s not about racism but about communication. The price for a pleasant conversation is included in the tip. Good communicators are very valuable in this sector and definitely a keeper because they attract a lot of clients and receive huge tips. The requirement for nail technicians and managers is even higher than for manicurists. Yes, I like working with Koreans because communication with me is easy. But, regardless of nationality, I cherish those who have friendly attitudes and good communication skills.  
(Joanna, Korean nail salon owner, Chelsea)

In many cases, Korean nail salon owners had limited proficiency in English and they expressed everyday challenges in communicating fluently with their clients. Because of the language barrier that a number of immigrant employers had, the relative disruptive power of communication abilities became significant in determining horizontal job mobility. The story of Carolyn, a Ecuadorian nail salon owner who used to work in Korean nail salons, exemplified how linguistic skillsets allowed some minority workers to break through the ethnic hierarchy in the transclave economy. Carolyn started off her manicurist career in a Korean-owned nail salon and was fast-tracked to a managerial position despite the lack of co-ethnic support. She attributed her early success to her English skills and her role as an interpreter for her Korean boss. She was able to have a head-start on establishing her own salon later and entering into the entrepreneurial community, by using her experience as a manager of the Korean salon and leveraging managerial strategies that she had learned from her employer. In explaining the connection between linguistic skills and the overcoming of minority status, Carolyn remarked:

I enjoy research about people. Like people researchers. I love talking with clients and learning about their life too. This is a service job so people give you important roles if you are good at having a conversation. If your English is good enough and you are funny, you become popular among your clients, they become your regular, and your boss trusts you. [...] My training in a Korean salon was actually short. I was promoted to a manager pretty quickly because I was pretty talented in listening and speaking in English. My boss's English was not good, so I helped her a lot. If your boss's English is not great, they rely on you a lot. I love learning a new language so it was pretty easy for me.  
(Carolyn, Ecuadorian nail salon owner, Jackson Heights)

### *Summary*

In a nutshell, this section examined the contested nature of the New York City nail salons as a transclave economy, where the ethnic hierarchy has been constructed as the result of interethnic interactions and competition. Despite the overlap of ethnic neighborhoods and increased interactions, the transclave enclave has remained highly stratified in accordance with the global geopolitical hierarchy. This study reveals that the ethnic hierarchy of nail salon participants was a reproduction of the global power relations among their sending countries; Korean immigrants benefitted from a first-mover advantage, abundant transnational resources, and reverse remittances from Korea to rapidly grow businesses in a host society and build an ethnic hegemony, while other groups were excluded from those privileges. However, small fissures in the hierarchy – limited English proficiency of immigrant employers – allowed some minority workers with decent communication abilities to circumvent the ethnic disadvantages and achieve upward mobility in the ethnically stratified labor market.

## 4.5. Conclusion

Proposing the term, transclave economy, this chapter conceptualizes the enclave economy in the context of the transnational engagement of immigrants in a multiethnic setting. The major findings of this chapter are as follows. First, the transnational influence of both immigrant-receiving and sending societies has played a significant role in transforming the ethnically-homogeneous nail salon sector in New York City into a transclave economy. Shifting homeland geopolitics, such as the 1997 Asian financial crisis and lifted emigration restrictions, and changing structural conditions in the United States, including the increase in the number of

Hispanic enclaves, have fueled the ethnic diversification of the nail salon sector. Second, New York City nail salons have developed into the contested geopolitical space where immigrants build, restructure, and challenge the ethnic hierarchy rather than simply assimilating into the mainstream economy in the United States. Notably, their workplaces were a manifestation of the extended global power relations where a certain ethnic group with abundant homeland resources were privileged to occupy the upper segment of the hierarchical enclave economy ecosystem.

This chapter provides several key theoretical contributions to our understanding of the evolution of the transclave economy. First, this study shifts our attention to the enclave economy as a system of *becoming*, instead of the system of *being*, by drawing on the transnationalism framework and highlighting its interconnectedness with a global economic and political order. The static concept of the previous enclave economy articles has treated immigrant economies as being detached from both host societies and home societies. However, this bounded notion does not neatly fit into today's hyperconnected urban context. Enclave economies are embedded within the economic and political structure of the host society and the structural changes in the host country put pressure on the enclave economies to change and adapt (Alberts, 2005; Massey & Pren, 2012; Menjívar & Enchautegui, 2015). Moreover, immigrants do not sever their material and nonmaterial connections with their home societies upon migration and these societies continue to exert influence on the way they seek resources and build relationships with other groups in a host society (Kushnirovich & Heilbrunn, 2008; Dheer, 2018). Their in-between position in the global space renders their forms and functions to be variable and contextual.

Second, this study brings a geopolitical perspective to the enclave economy scholarship. By doing so, it reveals that the multiethnic enclave economy is not simply the “amalgam of two or more ethnicities (Terzano, 2014, p.343),” but rather a place of struggle and power. The geopolitical perspective unravels the relational construction of immigrant communities and inevitable contestations among people over the shared territories (Nagel, 2002; Shin, 2018). Despite its relevance, the political dynamics of inclusions, exclusions, and privileges that the enclave economy participants have created have received less attention than they deserve. Rather than focusing on the economic outcomes of immigrants *per se*, this study stresses the confluence of interethnic conflicts, negotiations, and immigrants' economic systems. Through the lens of

transnationalism, this study illuminates how power inequalities at the nation scale penetrate into immigrants' transclave economy due to the continuing transnational forces and engagements.

We are now left with a good sense of the evolutionary process of the transclave economy and its constantly changing nature with the interaction with both immigrant-sending and receiving societies. However, under these fluid circumstances, it is unclear whether the enclave effect – reciprocal relationship among co-ethnic immigrants – will continue to hold validity across historical time. We may ask: when economic downturns hit, would nail salons where the majority of workers and the business owner have the same ethnic background sustain better economic performances than non-coethnic salons? If the influence of employer-employee co-ethnicity turned out to be insignificant, would the co-ethnicity between a business owner and customers be a stronger predictor of better economic performance during the major economic disruptions? Although there are few studies that examine the contextuality of the enclave effect, the coronavirus pandemic provides a unique empirical prism that allows us to validate the continuing or conditional function of co-ethnic solidarity. In the next chapter, we will further investigate the aforementioned questions and test the enclave effect hypothesis.

## 5 The divergent influence of the pandemic on transclave economy

### 5.1. Descriptive analysis of the survey participants

#### *Introduction*

This section provides an overview of the business disruption survey collected from 115 nail salon owners in New York City from January 3 to 31, 2021. The purpose of the survey collection was to investigate the overall socio-demographic composition of the salon owners in the city and to measure the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on them. The survey form was distributed in five different languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Spanish. The descriptive analysis of this survey shows how the respondents vary in gender, age, educational level, prior entrepreneurial experience, size of seed money, employment size, and co-ethnicity with workers and customers. Moreover, the analysis reports on the severity of the pandemic's effects by using two measurements: rent overdue and revenue change. Specifically, this section demonstrates that over 60% of respondents were unable to pay rent on time and around 70% of respondents reported a greater than 50% decline in revenue in December 2020, compared to that of the previous year.

#### *Survey design and collection*

The survey consisted of 29 questions, including 6 questions on respondent information (e.g., age, gender, education, country of origin), 8 questions on business information (e.g., zip code, seed money to start the business, number of workers, country of origin of workers, a language most commonly used when communicating with workers), and 15 questions that ask about their perceived impact of the coronavirus pandemic on salon businesses and their coping strategies. In particular, the last section of the survey – the perceived impact – comprises questions on financial support from family and friends, rent payments overdue since the reopening of nail salons, and the percentage change of revenue between December 2019 and December 2020.

This survey was based on a non-random sampling method and was collected from five different boroughs: Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and the Bronx. Compared to the locations of nail salons reported by owners in the ReferenceUSA data, Brooklyn respondents were overestimated by 5.1%, while Queens responses were underestimated by 4.6% in the survey collected (See Table 5-1). This bias may imply the underrepresentation of Hispanic populations in the survey result if the geospatial analysis of the Hispanic salons in the Reference USA records – the finding that the Hispanic-owned nail salons are concentrated in Queens – holds true. Less represented than Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese counterparts, Hispanic nail salons are more concentrated in Queens (7.2% owned by Hispanics per Reference USA) than in other counties (3.6% in Brooklyn, 4.5% in Manhattan, 0% in Staten Island), with the Bronx being a notable exception (20.1%). On the other hand, the Chinese subgroup may be overrepresented in this survey data since Brooklyn was estimated to have the largest proportion of Chinese nail salons in the Reference USA records (68.4% versus 53.1% in Queens, 42.7% in Manhattan, 16.1% in the Bronx, 54.8% in Staten Island).

Table 5-1. Geographical distribution of nail salons between ReferenceUSA (n = 5,252) and fieldwork datasets (n = 111)

	ReferenceUSA	Fieldwork Dataset
Manhattan	1,344 (25.6%)	25 (23.8%)
Brooklyn	1,333 (25.4%)	32 (30.5%)
Queens	1,594 (30.3%)	27 (25.7%)
Bronx	670 (12.8%)	14 (13.3%)
Staten Island	311 (5.9%)	7 (6.7%)
Total	5,252 (100%)	111 (100%)

Source: fieldwork survey (January 2020)

#### *Demographic information on survey participants*

In terms of the overall demographic distribution of the survey sample, the prototypical respondent is a woman, from China, in her 30's, with high school education. 84.7% of the participants identified as women, indicating that the proportion of women in the survey group is overestimated when compared to the estimate from the ReferenceUSA records in Chapter 3

(63.0% women, 37.0% men). It was reported that the most prevalent age group was people ages 30 to 39 (31.5%), followed by 40 to 49 (28.8%), 50 to 59 (22.5%), 20 to 29 (10.8%), and 60 or over (6.4%). In the survey sample, the most predominant country of origin was China (43 out of 110, 39.1%), followed by Korea (26, 23.6%), USA (9, 8.2%), and Vietnam (7, 6.4%).<sup>23</sup> 22.2% of total participants (24 out of 108) reported previous entrepreneurial experience of any type in their home country. While estimating the number of native-born populations by using the ethnic surname list method has its methodological limitations, this survey shows that only 8.2% (9 out of 110) reported being born in the United States.

Figure 5-1 further segments each demographic indicator by the respondent's self-reported country of origin. This result shows that each ethnic group has a distinctiveness that differentiates itself from other communities. For instance, Hispanic nail salons are largely female-dominated compared to other groups. Out of 15 respondents from Hispanic countries,<sup>24</sup> 15 identified themselves as women. Additionally, Hispanic communities were more likely to have prior entrepreneurship experience in their homeland (6 out of 15, 40.0%) relative to other groups (other Asian countries, 2 out of 8, 25.0%; Korea, 6 out of 26, 23.1%; China, 8 out of 43, 18.6%; Vietnam, 1 out of 7, 14.3%). The high likelihood of the entrepreneurial experience of Hispanic communities may attribute to the employment structure of Latin American countries where urban employment is heavily dependent on formal or informal self-employment (Fields, 2009; Bennett & Rablen, 2015). Korean respondents, on the other hand, are the oldest group. While ages 50 to 59 and 60 or over make up 22.7% and 6.4% respectively of all nail salons on average, 46.2% of Korean participants were ages 50 and 59 and 26.9%, 60 or over. This aligns with the finding from Chapters 2 and 3 that demonstrates that Korean immigrants are a pioneer group who entered into the market prior to other ethnic groups during the 1980s and 1990s.

Native-born respondents, who identified their country of origin as the USA, turned out to be the youngest and have the highest educational background of all groups. Specifically, over half of the USA-born respondents (5 out of 9) indicated that they are in their 20s, while, on average, respondents in their 20s make up only 10.9% (12 out of 110) of total nail salon respondents. In

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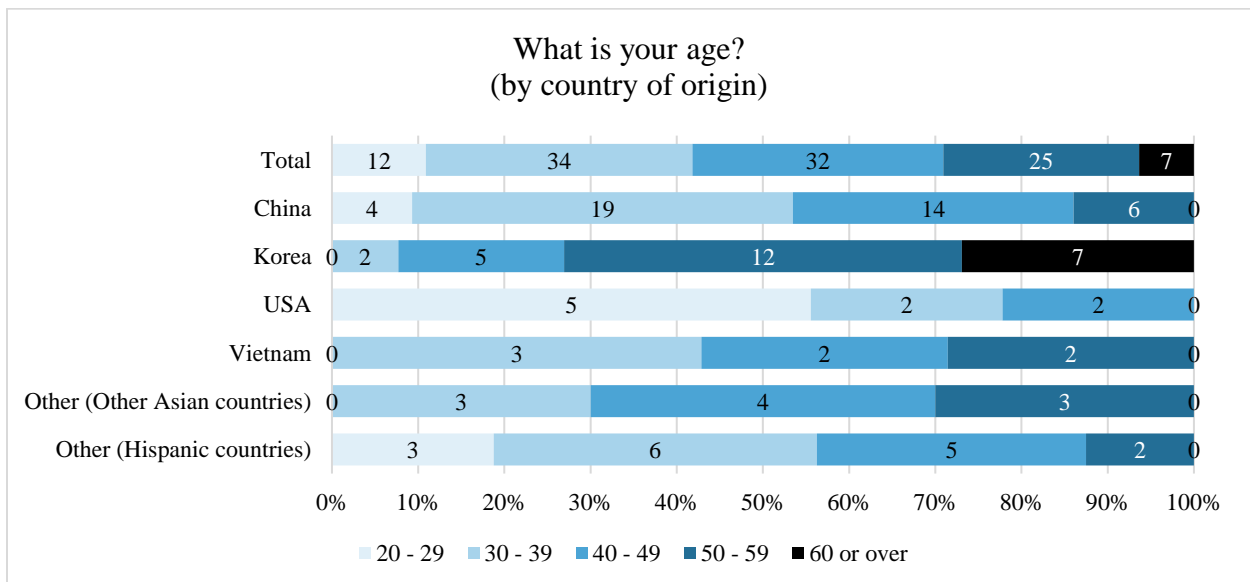
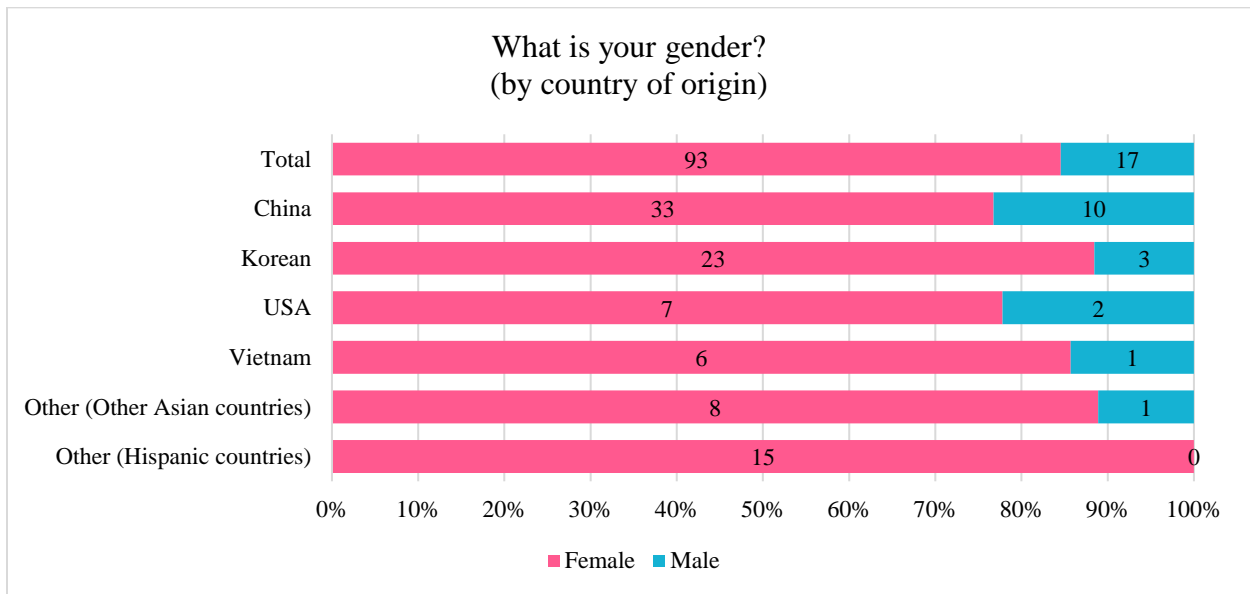
<sup>23</sup> While the ethnic composition of nail salon owners reported in chapter 2 was presumptively estimated based on the presumptive surname method, in this chapter, survey participants were allowed to self-report their country of origin.

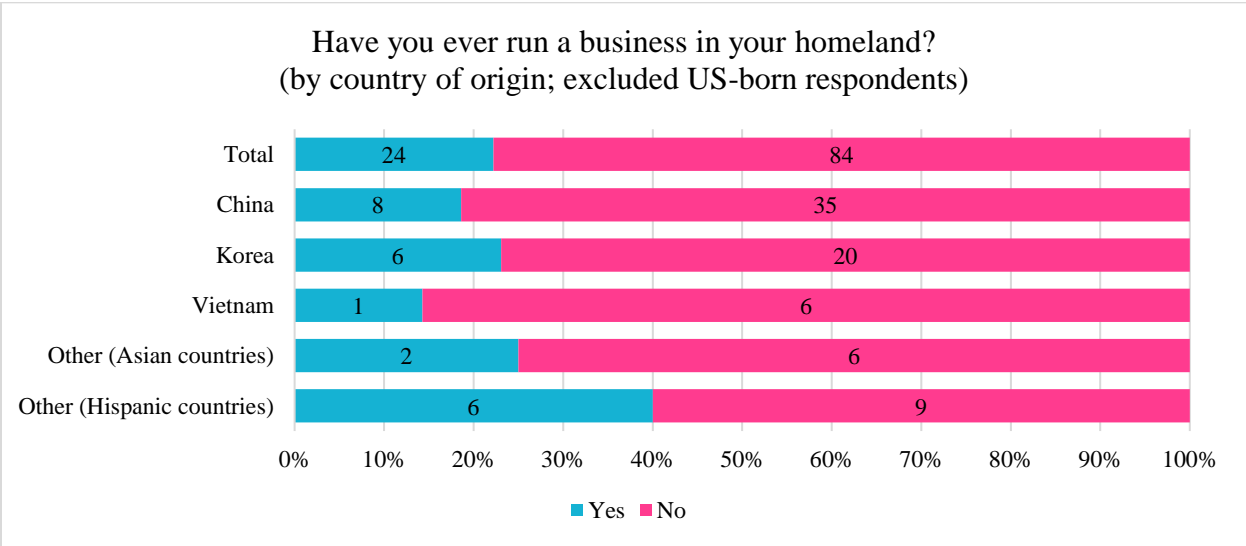
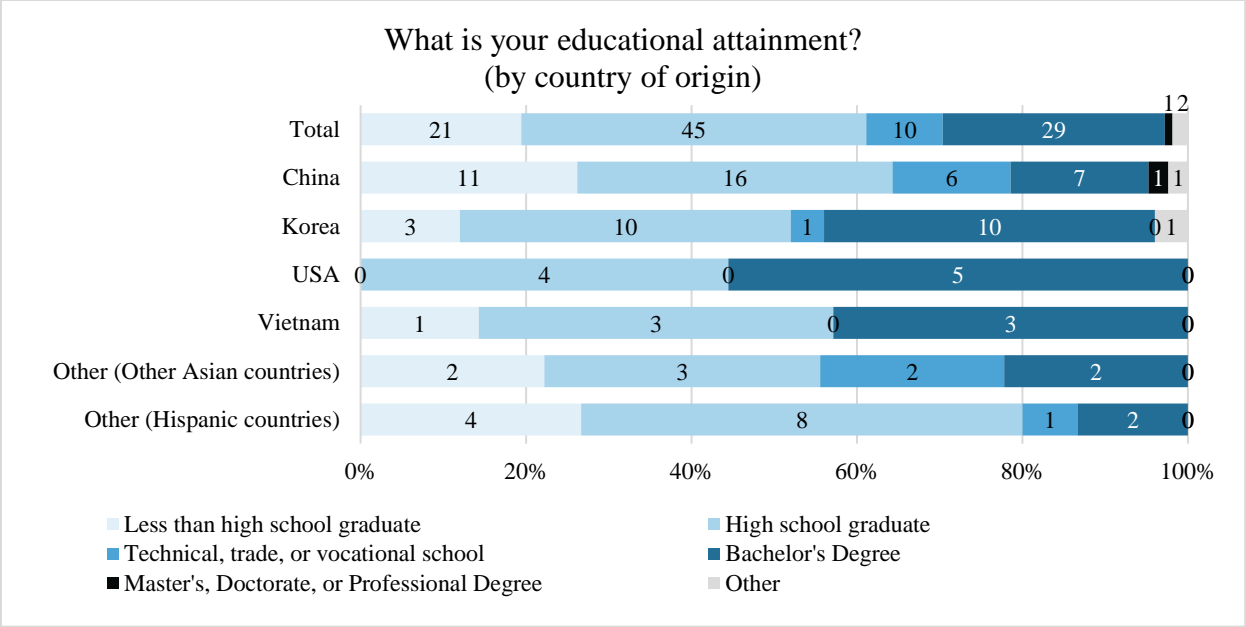
<sup>24</sup> Self-reported countries of origin of respondents in the "Hispanic countries" group includes Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Mexico, Ecuador, and El Salvador.



terms of their educational achievement, more than half of the native-born survey participants (5 out of 9) responded that they received a bachelor’s degree. This is a noticeable difference from Hispanic respondents, of whom only 13.3% have a bachelor’s degree as their highest educational attainment. During interviews it was found that all participants were 1.5- or second-generation immigrants whose parents migrated from China, Korea, and the former Soviet Union, (e.g., Poland, Russia) and used to run nail salons in New York City. Their early exposure to the nail salon business and learning opportunities since they were very young influenced them in opening their own nail salons as young entrepreneurs.

Figure 5-1. Distribution of the survey participants by country of origin





Note 1: “Other (Asian countries)” group includes participants from Taiwan, Malaysia, Cambodia, and Tibet.  
 Note 2: “Other (Hispanic countries)” group includes participants from Dominican Republic, Mexico, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.

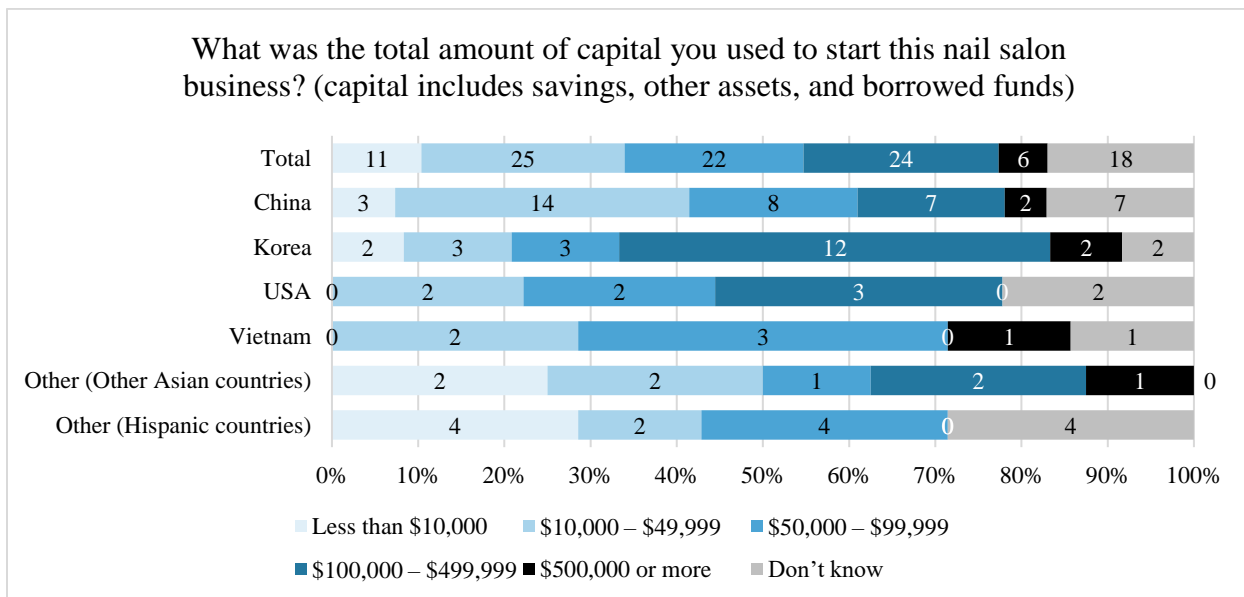
Source: fieldwork survey (January 2021)

Figure 5-2 displays that Korean-owned salons have greater initial investment for their business establishment and have larger employment sizes, relative to other groups. While survey participants who spent more than \$100,000 for the initial investment ranging from 0% (Hispanic)

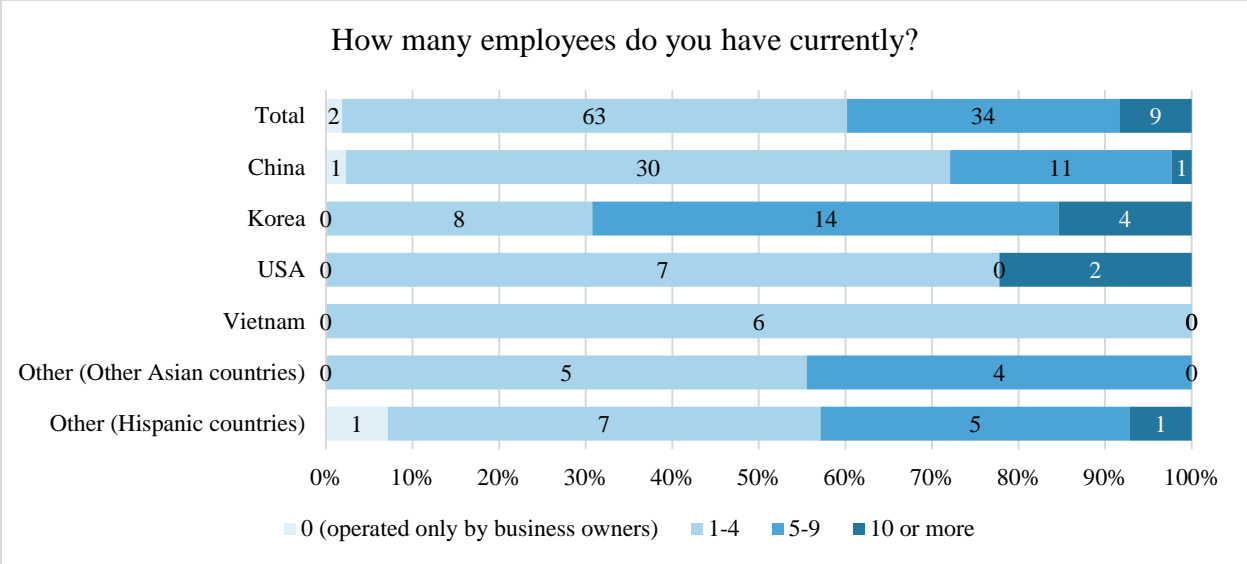
to 42.9% (native-born),<sup>25</sup> 63.6% of Korean respondents (14 out of 22) indicated that they invested more than \$100,000. According to the follow-up interview, this investment cost included rent, interior design, purchase of manicuring desks, chairs, and tools, and legal consultancy services. Moreover, 69.2% of Korean respondents (18 out of 26) hired more than four workers for their establishments, while only 39.8% of total respondents (43 out of 108) reported that they employed more than four workers. High rent prices and fierce competition for up-market strategy in Manhattan, where a high proportion of Korean nail salons are located, may have contributed to raising the overall investment cost needed to initiate businesses. In addition to that, their previous success in nail salon businesses in other locations and their reverse remittance –money bring from their homeland – may have enabled their large-scale investment.

In contrast, none of the Hispanic respondents invested in their salon establishment over \$100,000 and many of them invested less than \$10,000 (40.0%, 4 out of 10). This may be the result of both supply and demand-related mechanisms, in which their businesses are established mostly in low-maintenance neighborhoods, such as Jackson Heights and the Bronx, and the available reverse remittances are limited due to family finances or the home countries’ economic conditions.

Figure 5-2. Size of seed money and employment grouped by owner’s country of origin



<sup>25</sup> This excludes the respondents who checked “Don’t know” for the survey question.

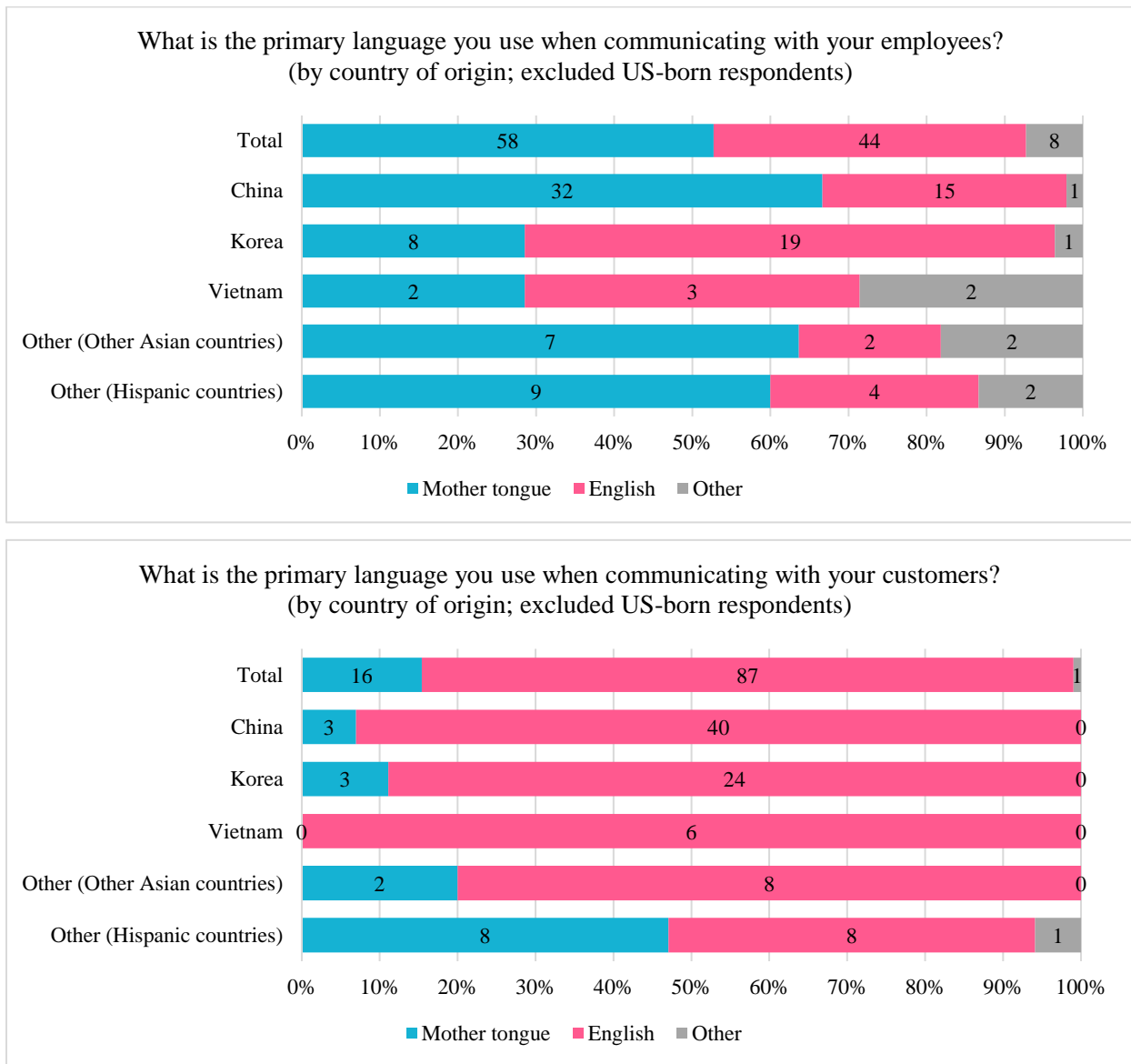


Source: fieldwork survey (January 2021)

Figure 5-3 summarizes the owner’s ethnic match with employees and customers.<sup>26</sup> Most importantly, the result reveals that more than half of Chinese-owned nail salons (32 out of 48, 66.7%) and Hispanic-owned nail salons (9 out of 15, 60.0%) were categorized as co-ethnic businesses where owners and workers share cultural similarities, while Korean-owned salons (8 out of 28, 28.6%) and Vietnamese-owned salons (2 out of 9, 22.2%) were less likely to be co-ethnic enterprises. This implies that both Chinese and Hispanic communities in New York City have had a reliable supply of co-ethnic workers from their home countries who are willing to work for low-wage jobs in nail salons. Hispanic-owned nail salons were also more likely to serve co-ethnic customers who speak Spanish (8 out of 17, 47.1%) than other groups (China, 3 out of 43, 7.0%; Korea, 3 out of 27, 11.1%; Vietnam, 0 out of 6, 0.0%; Other Asian countries, 2 out of 10, 20.0%). However, this survey result indicates that a substantial portion of nail salons hire non-coethnic workers and serve non-coethnic customers, indicating that this previously homogeneous co-ethnic business ecosystem is increasingly diversified and heterogeneous.

<sup>26</sup> To operationalize and identify the co-ethnicity of the business, this survey uses the owner’s most frequently used language with their employees and customers at work as a proxy, which is motivated by previous studies on the enclave economy (Li & Dong, 2007; Li & Li, 2016). More specifically, this research defines that employers and employees are in a co-ethnic relationship if they communicate with each other in their mother tongue and otherwise are categorized as non-coethnic.

Figure 5-3. Co-ethnicity of businesses grouped by owner's country of origin



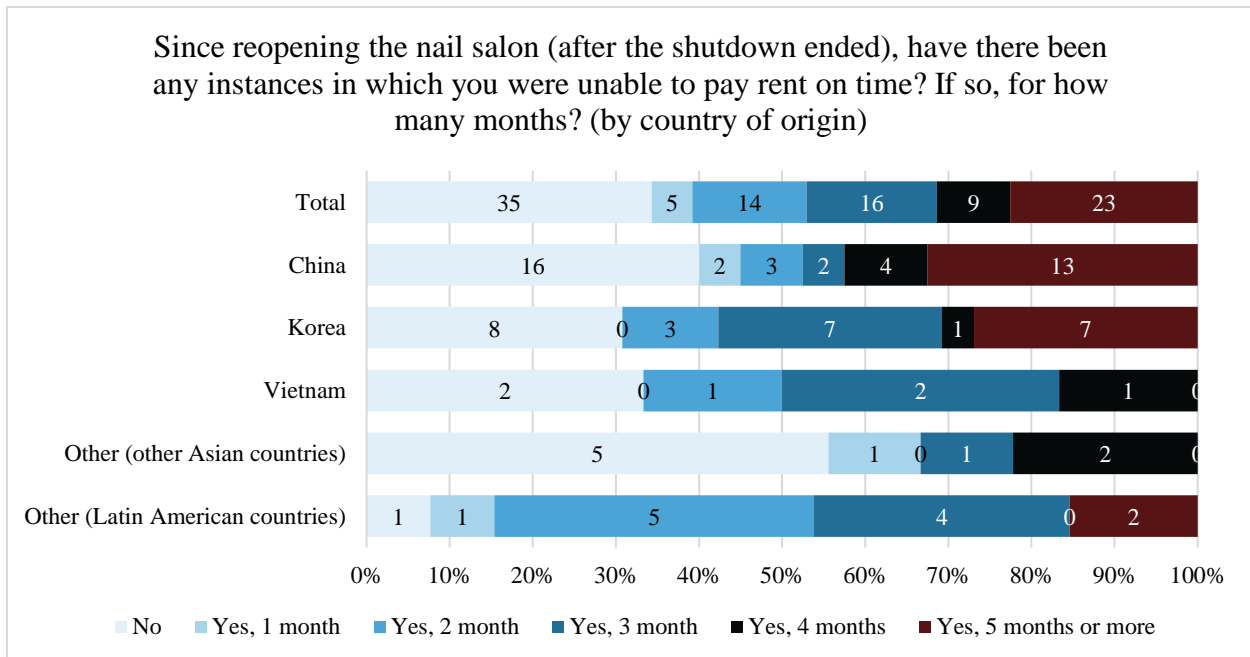
Source: fieldwork survey (January 2021)

*Measuring the impact of the pandemic in two ways: rent overdue and revenue change*

Two indicators were recorded in the survey to measure the economic disruption induced by the pandemic: rent overdue and revenue change. Generally, 65.7% of the survey participants (67 out of 102) responded that they were unable to pay rent on time since reopening their nail salons (See Figure 5-4). In detail, 22.5% (23 out of 102) had rent overdue for five months or more, 8.8% (9 out of 102) for four months, 15.7% (16 out of 102) for three months, 13.7% (14 out of 102) for two months, and 4.9% (5 out of 102) for one month, at the time the survey was

conducted from January 12 to 31, 2021. There was some variability across ethnic groups. Most distinctively, more than half of the respondents from other Asian countries (55.6%, 5 out of 9), excluding China, Korea, and Vietnam, indicated that they were able to pay rent on time since reopening, which may imply higher economic resilience to the economic shock. In contrast, only 7.7% of people from Latin American countries (1 out of 13) responded that they were able to pay rent without delay. However, it is noteworthy that both the other Asian countries group and Hispanic countries group have a small sample size, 9 and 13 respectively, so this result may have a significant level of bias and variability.

Figure 5-4. Rent overdue since reopening across ethnic groups

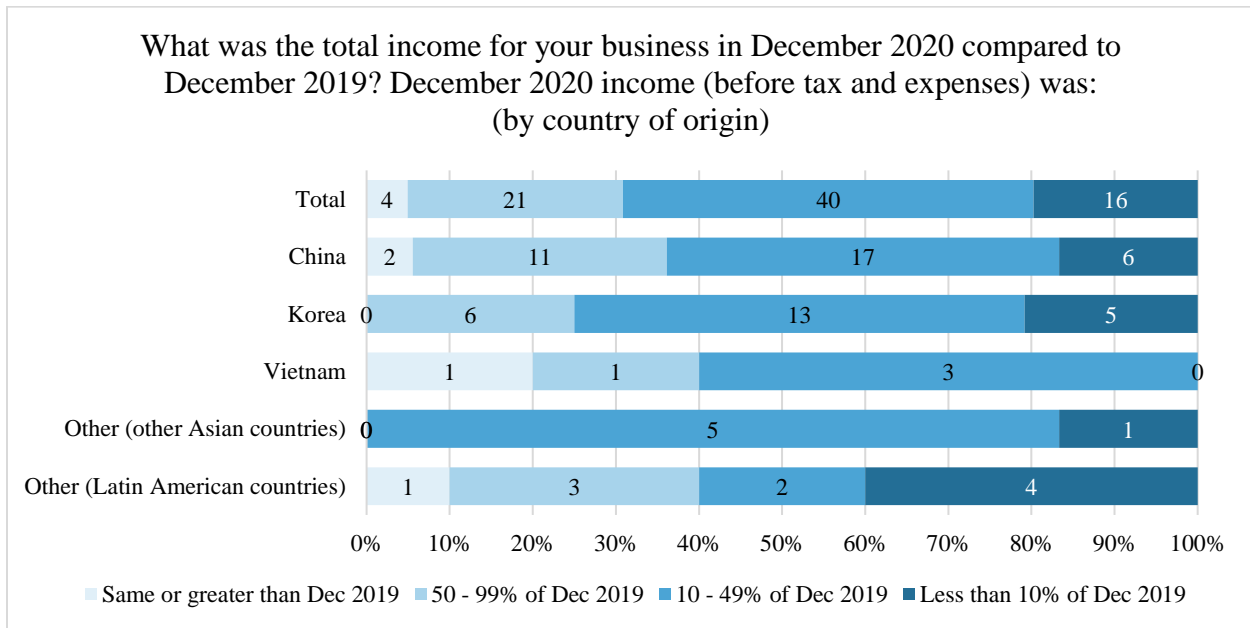


Source: fieldwork survey (January 2021)

The second indicator measured by the survey was revenue change before and after the coronavirus outbreak in New York (See Figure 5-5). Specifically, participants were asked to provide percentage information on the total income for their business in December 2020 relative to December 2019. Overall, 69.1% of total respondents (56 out of 81) reported that their income in December 2020 was less than 50% of that of December 2019. Moreover, 19.8% of the participants (16 out of 81) responded that their revenue loss was even greater and their income in December 2020 was less than 10% of that of December 2019. Some of the interviewees remarked that this significant revenue drop was caused by the coronavirus pandemic coupled

with the winter off-season. Traditionally, winter is an off-season for many nail salons since the demand for both pedicures and manicures decreases as people wear gloves and closed-toe shoes as the weather gets cold. They noted that there was a sales uptick from June to August 2021, when the shutdown was lifted and people sought nail services to prepare for summer. However, their revenue plummeted as coronavirus cases increased in the winter and their traditional off-season started again.

Figure 5-5. Total revenue change for nail salons from December 2019 to December 2020



Source: fieldwork survey (January 2021)

*Summary*

Descriptive analysis of the 115 survey respondents informs us that New York City nail salons are likely to have significant ethnic diversity, as it relates to the owner’s gender, educational attainment, age, prior entrepreneurial experience, business size, and the degree of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. This shows that there is a substantial hierarchical gap between upper-market groups – native-born and Korean – and lower-market groups – Hispanic respondents. Also, this result presents that the impact of the pandemic-induced disruption was pervasive. However, it remains unclear which societal factors are most closely associated with the magnitude of the economic disruption. If gender matters, did woman-owned nail salons receive a

greater adverse impact from the pandemic than their male counterparts? If co-ethnicity among workers and business owners plays a role, were co-ethnic nail salons less affected by the pandemic disruptions, relative to non-coethnic ones? While it appears that Hispanic groups were most affected by the pandemic, is that a statistically significant difference? The following section examines under what conditions New York City nail salons received greater economic disruptions from the coronavirus epidemic and demonstrates which sub-groups were disproportionately devastated by the economic crisis. By doing so, the next section focuses on how the enclave effect interacts with the economic side effects of the pandemic and ultimately influences the performance of immigrant businesses in distress.

## 5.2. Divided enclave effect: the unequal impact of the pandemic on nail salons

### *Introduction*

This section discusses the role of co-ethnicity and other socio-demographic factors (e.g., gender, educational attainment) in determining the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus pandemic in the transclave economy. Enclave economy theory traditionally interprets the immigrant-dominant sector as a static place. Instead, I argue that their function of protecting immigrant workers and business owners changes over time, as immigrant economies dynamically interact with different external and internal influences. Indeed, results from my January 2020 – 2021 fieldwork reveal that a nail salon was more impacted by the coronavirus pandemic if (1) the owner is female, (2) the owner is from a Hispanic country, and (3) the nail salon serves co-ethnic customers. The analysis found that there is no significant difference in the degree of the economic impact between co-ethnic and non-coethnic workplaces. However, when limiting the sample to Chinese-speaking respondents, the analysis did reveal a greater adverse impact on workplaces with non-coethnic workers, relative to co-ethnic workplaces.

### *Selection of dependent and independent variables*

In deciding between rent overdue and revenue change as the primary dependent variable and disruption measure, rent overdue was selected as the proxy for economic resilience in the context of the pandemic. There are two reasons behind this choice. First, several studies have already



demonstrated that the ability of private businesses to pay rent on time serves as an important indicator of the success of a business (Grow & Epstein, 2007; Pleasence & Balmer, 2013; Jaccarini et al., 2021). Second, the variable of revenue change has limitations as an economic performance indicator in this study because of its small sample size ( $n = 81$ ) and low statistical power. It is important to note, however, that rent arrear is not free from selection bias; this survey did not record responses from business owners who permanently closed their nail salons during the pandemic, and therefore, it does not take into account the most severely affected populations.

The study uses the nail salon owner's characteristics and the business' characteristics as the independent variable. The owner-related variables include gender, highest educational attainment, prior entrepreneurial experience, and Hispanic origin. The list of business-related variables includes employer-employee co-ethnicity, owner-customer co-ethnicity, and business size. The rationale for selecting these variables is based on previous literature demonstrating that the magnitude of the pandemic-induced economic impact differs across gender (Czymara et al., 2021; Reichelt et al., 2021), racial and ethnic groups (Katikireddi et al., 2021; Solomos, 2021), educational level and work experience (Shibata, 2020), and business size (Bloom et al., 2021). Also, co-ethnicity variables were factored into the statistical analysis to test the enclave economy hypothesis that proposes immigrant-owned businesses in the enclave economy are more likely to outperform those outside of the enclave economy (Olzak & Nagel, 1986; Portes, 1998).

In defining the co-ethnicity between people, I used the language that owners frequently use in communicating with their workers and clients as a proxy (Li & Li, 2016; Li & Dong, 2007). If a survey participant responds that they use their mother tongue with the majority of their workers, this analysis identified them as a workplace with a majority of co-ethnic workers. On the other hand, if a participant indicates that they use their mother tongue with the majority of their clients, this study tagged them as a workplace with a majority of co-ethnic customers. While the enclave economy literature did not clearly separate the effects of co-ethnic customers from those of co-ethnic workers, this writing aims to distinguish these two effects to further elucidate the complex nature of immigrant economies. However, it is noteworthy that this research limits its interpretation to the survey sample *per se*, rather than extrapolating the interpretation to the whole population of New York City nail salon owners, due to the nature of non-random sampling.

*Lower performance: female-owned, Hispanic-owned, or salons for co-ethnic clients*

Table 5-2 summarizes the differing impact of the pandemic-induced disruption on nail salons based on owner and business characteristics. Additionally, a chi-squared test was conducted to examine the relation between the variables and the primary outcome rent overdue. When it comes to the owner's characteristics, most notably, the relationship between gender and rent overdue was significant,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.32, p < .05$ . Female business salon owners experienced significant rent arrears (70.0% rent overdue) since reopening, compared to their male counterparts (27.5% rent overdue). There was also an association between the proportion of the respondents who experienced rent arrears and Hispanic background, at  $\chi^2(1) = 2.28, p > .05$ . Specifically, owners who indicated in the survey that they were born in a Hispanic country, had a higher rate of rent overdue (92.3%) compared to non-Hispanic owners (61.8%). However, the proportion of subjects who failed to pay rent on time was not significantly associated with educational attainment ( $\chi^2(1) = 2.28, p > .05$ ) or entrepreneurial experience ( $\chi^2(1) = 0.13, p < .05$ ).

In terms of business characteristics, the impact of the enclave effect during the pandemic turned out to differ between cases of owner-worker co-ethnicity and owner-customer coethnicity. The proportion of subjects with rent overdue was significantly affected by the co-ethnicity of customers,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.22, p < .05$ . On average, businesses that had co-ethnic customers as their main base experienced significantly more rent arrears (88.2%) compared to businesses with non-coethnic customers (62.6%). Interestingly, however, there was no significant relationship between co-ethnicity of workers and rent arrears,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.99, p > .05$ . These two findings challenge the traditional hypothesis of the enclave economy. First, the influence of workers' co-ethnicity on the economic performance of nail salons during the crisis was minimal, and this undermines the conventional belief that co-ethnic economies provide immigrant business owners with better benefits and protections than those of non-coethnic economies. Second, this result suggests that the function of co-ethnicity of workers and that of clients should be analyzed separately, and that co-ethnicity of clients is associated with the worse rental performance of salon businesses. Additionally, the size of the business had no significant association with rent overdue,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.82, p > .05$ .

Table 5-2. Rent overdue differences across nail salon characteristics

	No rent overdue	Rent overdue	Chi-square test
<b>Owner's characteristic</b>			
<b>Female</b>	<b>26 (30.0%)</b>	<b>61 (70.0%)</b>	$\chi^2 (1) = 6.3231$ $p = 0.0119^*$
Male	10 (62.5%)	6 (27.5%)	
Total	36 (35.0%)	67 (65.0%)	
High school or less	25 (40.3%)	37 (59.7%)	$\chi^2 (1) = 2.2788$ $p = 0.1312$
More than high school	10 (25.6%)	29 (74.7%)	
Total	35 (34.7%)	66 (65.3%)	
Entrepreneurial experience	7 (31.8%)	15 (68.2%)	$\chi^2 (1) = 0.12552$ $p = 0.7231$
No entrepreneurial experience	28 (35.9%)	50 (64.1%)	
Total	35 (35.0%)	65 (65.0%)	
<b>Hispanic owner</b>	<b>1 (7.7%)</b>	<b>12 (92.3%)</b>	$\chi^2 (1) = 4.6846$ $p = 0.03043^*$
Non-Hispanic owner	34 (38.2%)	55 (61.8%)	
Total	34 (33.7%)	67 (66.3%)	
<b>Business characteristic</b>			
Co-ethnic workers	22 (37.3%)	37 (62.7%)	$\chi^2 (1) = 0.98666$ $p = 0.3206$
Non-coethnic workers	16 (28.6%)	40 (71.4%)	
Total	38 (33.0%)	77 (67.0%)	
<b>Co-ethnic customers</b>	<b>2 (11.8%)</b>	<b>15 (88.2%)</b>	$\chi^2 (1) = 4.2237$ $p = 0.0399^*$
Non-coethnic customers	34 (37.4%)	57 (62.6%)	
Total	36 (33.3%)	72 (67.6%)	
Micro business (less than 10)	32 (34.0%)	62 (66.0%)	$\chi^2 (1) = 0.82205$ $p = 0.3646$
Small business (10 or more)	4 (50.0%)	4(50.0%)	
Total	36 (35.3%)	66 (64.7%)	

\*  $p < 0.05$

Note 1: "Hispanic owner" indicates an owner who was born in any Hispanic country.

Source: fieldwork survey (2021)

*Female and male salon owners: childcare obligations as a disabling factor*

While many interpretations are possible, the underperformance of female-owned nail salons can perhaps be better understood as a result of gender-disparate balancing struggles between

work and home during the pandemic. While a large proportion of salon owners continued to provide nail services for clients by themselves to cut hiring costs, some female owners reported that they had to skip some workdays to take care of their children at home. The pandemic and school lockdowns exacerbated the childcare crisis among these immigrant women who have relatively weak support systems when compared to native-born residents in New York City. For instance, a Chinese salon owner in Brooklyn, Miranda, noted that she was only available to service her clients two days a week since she had to take care of her children during the week, whereas she had used to work six days per week prior to the pandemic. She remarked that her shortened working hours lead to a significant loss of potential net profit each week. When asked whether she had parents or relatives to take care of her children, she noted that all of her family members, including her parents, resided in China and therefore, the main caregiver was Miranda herself. In contrast, male salon owners reported a much lighter childcare burden, with more family members available to assist compared to female owners.

Samantha's narrative shows one example of how immigrant women in the industry responded to the increased burden on childcare and mothering. She remarked that an increasing number of Chinese nail salon owners and workers started to take on a freelancing role and provide nail services to clients in their home, as a strategy to help juggle work and childcare in a host society. She noted:

Some people have clients in their house. They ask clients to come to their homes. You can find them on Instagram if you want to. [...] We have no options. We should work but we have kids. If you leave kids home alone, it is illegal in America. It is really difficult now because of coronavirus. There is no place where we can send kids and pick them up later in the evening. All closed. [...] My friend's friend sold her salon because she has young kids to take care of. She now has clients in her home. It is illegal but, well, she is doing the best she can do for kids.

(Samantha, Chinese nail salon owner, Flushing)

Contrary to the female salon owners who try to balance two obligations, the majority of male salon owners tended to devote their time to increasing business performance and trying new experiments to maximize profits in this challenging time. When asked about their future plan for the next year, there were noticeable differences across gender. Many woman interviewees put an emphasis on maintaining the present state and cutting expenses on everyday practices. While the strategies of laying off workers and raising prices were commonly repeated for both men and

women, women salon owners often talked about passive strategies, such as “terminating the insurance” and “selling the salon and making retirement earlier.” Male salon owners, however, had a higher tendency of performing more aggressive, risk-taking strategies, such as “importing cosmetic products to make additional profits,” “writing a petition for a landlord to receive an additional discount,” and “buying a closed salon in suburbs at a cheaper rate.”

Furthermore, male interviewees had a tendency of viewing their work as a central part of their identities as an entrepreneur and focusing on profit-making even if that means that they have to sacrifice their time with their family. Female interviewees, however, tended to make managerial choices to sacrifice working hours to spend more time with their families. Adding to that, during the fieldwork interview, male salon owners commonly brought up grand words and discursive topics, such as “future of the industry,” “future of the New York City economies,” and “post-pandemic business philosophy,” while female salon owners did not show the same pattern. This gendered work attitude provides supporting evidence for other scholarly works written by Martin (1996) and Collinson and Hearn (1994), which demonstrate that woman business owners are likely to perceive their business as a means to balance work and family, while the economic success of businesses is a crucial source for masculinity and social status for male business owners. This gendered pattern is further supported by the fact that the current leaders (at the time of fieldwork in January 2021) of both Chinese and Korean nail salon owner associations are men. Indeed, men have largely occupied these leadership positions since their nascency, even though women are far more prevalent the market workforce.

In many cases, male respondents started off from a better economic foundation than female owners, as they often took over their wife’s already successful salon, which had a long record of business success and good standing in the neighborhood. This is in contrast to the majority of immigrant women’s cases, in which they started their business at the bottom in a host society as a survival entrepreneur. These husband owners had often worked in other occupations, as a carpenter, cashier, taxi driver, or fish market manager, and they obtained ownership of their wife’s salon at a point at which the salon was mature enough to have a consistent, high profit making. This difference may have allowed male salon owners to accumulate greater wealth and a larger base of loyal, regular customers during the pre-pandemic period, thereby generating

greater economic resilience and a gender-based rental overdue inequality during the economic downturn.

One example of this narrative is Sam—a male nail salon owner who used to run his salon in Flushing and recently opened up a nail salon in Fort Lee, New Jersey:

Ever since coming to the United States, I used to work as a carpenter, laundromat, grocery cashier, and other not so fancy jobs. When I was unemployed for a while, I used to give a ride every day to my wife who worked as a nail salon technician at Flushing. (...) Her business got so successful and she bought three nail salons. She gave me her biggest nail salon for me, so I started to manage my own salon. [...] The start was smooth for me. It was not so rocky. When I took over it, it already had regular clients. My wife already had hired workers with good attitudes.

(Sam, Korean nail salon owner, Fort Lee)

However, it was observed during the fieldwork that some male respondents face a variety of challenges to their sense of masculinity in the nail salon industry, which has been traditionally undertaken by immigrant women. To maintain their masculinity, some of them tended to build strategies to reconcile two identities: their gender identity and occupational identity. For example, when asked about any difficulties in doing a business in the woman-dominant industry, Sam, a Korean nail salon owner, drew a clear line with other female owners and identified himself as a frontline “doctor.” He explained how like a doctor, his job involved improving people’s hygiene and taking care of their physical health. Sam explained that in the near future he hopes to build an all-in-one health care salon, where people come to his salon to work out, receive massages and get their manicures and pedicures done in one day. Similar to Sam’s case, male salon owners often tried to redefine their jobs to look less feminine and sound more gender-neutral.

#### *Hispanic and non-Hispanic owners: Hispanics’ weak negotiation power over rent discounts*

In terms of the disproportionate impact of the economic disruption on Hispanic owners, one plausible explanation lies in their low seniority level in the industry. Their short presence in the market created two vulnerabilities. First, they are likely to have had little time to accumulate enough wealth from the salon business operation before the pandemic to prepare for the economic downturn. This issue may have been coupled with their continuing transnational obligation to send remittances and limited transnational capability to transfer their homeland

connection to business resources, thereby widening a financial gap with other non-Hispanic groups. As discussed in section 3.3. and 4.3., Hispanic respondents tended to have heavier responsibility to send remittances to family back in their homeland, as well as more limited available resources (e.g., sanitary items, reverse remittances) due to their economic base, compared to other ethnic groups. This combination may have suppressed their cash flow and wealth growth, ultimately making them less prepared for an unpredicted economic disruption.

Second, most importantly, because of their low level of seniority in the market, they lacked strong trust relationship with landlords compared to earlier entrant groups such as Korean and Chinese owners, leaving little room to negotiate rent discounts. Table 5-3 displays the ethnic difference in rent discounts since reopening their salons in 2020. While 47.7% of non-Hispanic salon owners received rent discounts from their landlords (41 out of 89), 0 out of 13 Hispanic salon owners responded that they received a discount since reopening. Contrary to the Hispanic group, 45.2% of Chinese respondents (19 out of 42) and 48.0% of Korean respondents (12 out of 25) received rent discounts from their landlord. The Hispanic group’s low cash holdings and weak bargaining power over the rent discount as a new market player may have put them in a disadvantaged position in paying their rent on time.

Table 5-3. Rent discount since reopening by ethnicity

	<b>Yes, I received.</b>	<b>No, I haven’t received</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>13 (100.0%)</b>	<b>13 (100.0%)</b>
Non-Hispanic	41 (47.7%)	45 (52.3%)	89 (100.0%)
China	19 (45.2%)	23 (54.8%)	42 (100.0%)
Korea	12 (48.0%)	13 (52.0%)	25 (100.0%)

Source: fieldwork survey (2021)

Angela, a Korean nail salon owner, provided a narrative that supports this hypothesis on the relationship among seniority level, relationship with landlord, and rent discount. She remarked:

I’ve been working here for 12 years, so I have “credit” from my landlord. I’ve never fell behind with my rent before the pandemic. She trusts me and she knows I never lie to her. If I say it’s really a hard situation, she trusts me. She said I can pay 30% of the rent. There were some times that I fell behind with the rent but she never pushed me.  
(Angela, Korean nail salon owner, Upper East Side)

*Co-ethnic and non-coethnic customers: continuing loyalty of Black consumers*

The lighter impact of the pandemic-induced disruptions on nail salons that serve non-coethnic clients could have resulted from the consumption pattern difference between African Americans and other groups. Overall, respondents commonly noted that African American nail clients had a strong tendency to visit their salons and use high-margin services, such as acrylic tips, during the pandemic, compared to their co-ethnic groups. In contrast, a large portion of co-ethnic clients, such as Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese, stopped visiting their businesses as the pandemic started. The continuing loyalty and support for nail salons of African American women during the economic disruption may be due to the combination of the following factors: their overrepresentation in in-person essential occupations, strong preference for nail extension services, and racialized beauty norms.

The labor market concentration of African Americans in frontline essential occupations, such as healthcare service, postal service, drug stores, and food supply, has been documented by multiple scholars (Wilson & Kassa, 2020; Lowe et al., 2022). Nail salon owners remarked that the disproportionate proportion of their African American clients was still required to work outside the home and had greater exposure to people, such as their co-workers and customers at workplaces. According to the salon owner respondents, their African American clients had continuing demand for beauty services, such as hair and nails because of their persistent interaction with people in their workplaces. Selena, a Chinese woman who runs her salon in a Black-dominant neighborhood in Brooklyn, remarked as follows, when asked about her day-to-day interaction with her clients during the pandemic:

I like working in the Black neighborhood because they never give me hard time. They are not picky and easygoing. Many of them still go to work and people see your nails every day. So, they still come to get nails done every two to three weeks. I heard Manhattan is pretty bad because people work from home and they don't care about their nails anymore.  
(Selena, Chinese nail salon owner, Crown Heights)

Several respondents attributed the continuing visits of a number of African American clients to the special position that aesthetic nails have in their socially-constructed beauty standards and their preference for high-margin services, such as nail extensions. It was reported multiple times that many Asian clients considered nail grooming as a low priority for their beauty routine, and that when their household budget was affected by the pandemic, they first cut their spending on



nail services compared to hair grooming and clothes. On the other hand, people remarked that nail grooming had a higher priority within the African American community, with many considering it an integral part of their racialized beauty standards. Therefore, nail salons which targeted African American women or which were located in Black-dominant neighborhoods in New York City were more likely to have softened the impact of the coronavirus epidemic. Manicure preference was also closely interconnected with racial differences. Acrylic nail extensions have gained strong popularity among Black celebrities and consumers. The nail extensions are not only more costly than regular manicure services, but also an average customer revisit is more frequent as they require professional skills and tools to be removed. These anecdotes from the fieldwork interviewees align with Miliann Kang's discovery that long, sculptured nails took root in a Black community as a symbol of femininity and social class (Kang, 2003, 2010).

Narratives from two Asian salon owners, Gemma and Martin, show how the continuing service consumption of an African American community has contributed to the business vibrancy of some New York City nail salons. She remarked:

We don't make a lot of money from Chinese people. Old people? They are too busy to work. Young people? They usually like cheap nails, like manicure and pedicure. They don't do fake nails. If you want to make money, you should do fake nails, like acrylic and nail extensions. They are more expensive services and customers pay more tips. [...] Black people do expensive nails. They still come to salons during corona because fake nails you can't do it in your home. It needs techniques.  
(Gemma, Chinese nail salon owner, Homecrest)

Vietnamese people don't do nails. [...] For Black people, it [getting nail services] is essential. It's because of their culture, and the nail is like the thing that completes the look.  
(Martin, Vietnamese nail salon owner, Flatbush)

*Enclave effect revisited: co-ethnic solidarity as a contextual concept*

As such, there was a negative relationship between the co-ethnicity of customers and the rent overdue, a proxy for a salon's economic performance; however, there was no significant difference between the rent overdue rate between salons with co-ethnic workers and non-coethnic workers. This finding undermines the traditional enclave economy theory in two ways. First, it contradicts one of the most foundational presumptions of the enclave economy hypothesis, that co-ethnic workers and employers build a reciprocal relationship, thereby

allowing an immigrant business to perform better than those without worker-employer co-ethnicity (Portes & Bach, 1985; Kim, 1999; Portes & Manning, 2005). This analysis result demonstrates that the function of the enclave economy is rather a fluid concept and the cooperative relationship between workers and employers is conditional to surrounding situations.

Second, this suggests that the co-ethnicity factor should be understood as a collection of heterogeneous types of co-ethnic relationships among a variety of market actors, such as workers, consumers, and business owners, with each relationship exerting influence over the economic activities of immigrant businesses in potentially different directions. The traditional enclave economy scholarship does not precisely separate these actors and, rather, attempts to demonstrate whether the co-ethnicity of a range of entities as a whole in the enclave economy, such as Cuban-owned stores in Miami and Korean-owned restaurants in Los Angeles, contribute to their economic success or not. However, the current study presents the possibility that the influence of co-ethnic customers and co-ethnic workers on immigrant-owned businesses may be different from one another. More specifically, the results indicate that co-ethnic customers have a negative relationship with the salon owner's ability to pay rent on time while co-ethnic workers may have no significant relationship.

To examine whether the impact of workers' co-ethnicity is insignificant throughout different ethnic groups, this study subdivided 115 respondents into four segments by owner's self-identified ethnicity – Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Hispanic – and tested whether there was a significant discrepancy in the rent arrears across two groups: workplaces with co-ethnic workers and those with non-coethnic workers (See Table 5-4). While there remained no clear association between the proportion of the respondents with rent overdue and the co-ethnicity of workers for Korean, Vietnamese, and Hispanic groups, the Chinese group showed a significant relationship. Namely, the proportion of Chinese participants with rent overdue differed by co-ethnicity of workers,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.32, p < .05$ . On average, the group of Chinese-owned businesses where a majority of their workers were non-coethnic experienced significant rent arrears (88.4%) when compared to coethnic businesses (52.9%).

Table 5-4. Rent overdue differences between co-ethnic and non-coethnic salons (Chinese-speaking respondents only)

	No rent overdue	Rent overdue	Chi-square test
Business characteristic			
Co-ethnic workers	16 (47.1%)	18 (52.9%)	$\chi^2 (1) = 6.3231$ $p = 0.0119^*$
<b>Non-coethnic workers</b>	<b>3 (17.6%)</b>	<b>14 (82.4%)</b>	
Total	19 (37.3%)	32 (62.7%)	

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$

Source: fieldwork survey (2021)

Better economic performance of Chinese nail salons with co-ethnic workers, relative to their non-coethnic counterparts, may perhaps be due to their labor cost-saving strategies based on family and cultural obligations. There were several ways that Chinese salon owners cut their workforce costs by deploying co-ethnic workers in their labor structure. First, some Chinese business owners benefited from co-ethnic family obligations and their willingness to work underpaid or overtime during this challenging time. A number of small business articles point out that family-run businesses have a strong tendency to maintain their successful, cost-effective business model by exploiting the labors of family members (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2006; Goel & Jones, 2016; Vrontis et al., 2019). For the case of family-run Chinese nail salons that I interviewed, it was often observed that the workers emphasized the value of “family” and “surviving together” and voluntarily worked longer hours or provided free labor for the salons.

Claire provided more nuanced information on her motivation to work underpaid for her family business. As an 18-year-old Chinese woman who was hired at her aunt’s nail salon in Flushing, she was currently working 5 hours a day and being paid 9 dollars an hour. While she acknowledged that her paycheck was significantly below the market average, she stressed that she was happy to be a resource for their family in this difficult time and to help her family member. She noted:

Here, it is not busy but no money. Here is no customer. They pay tips of 15 percent. I get paid 9 dollars an hour so it’s like 45 dollars every day from the owner. My salary is fixed. [...] I told my aunt, because we are family, so I told her, if we get clients, I will take the salary. But if not, I will not take the salary. Like we don’t have the clients, I don’t get the

salary. I told her like this. Because she's no money too. It is okay. I know the money is small but I don't need money that much. I am just helping her as a family.  
(Claire, Chinese nail salon worker, Flushing)

The high market competitiveness of family-governed Chinese nail salons was often commonly reported by other competitors in the neighborhood from different ethnic communities. For example, a Korean nail salon owner in Manhattan, Denise, argued that the coping ability of Chinese-owned salons against the pandemic crisis was superior to that of Korean groups in general. According to her, a large number of Chinese nail salons in New York City were run by a family unit, and therefore, they could flexibly change the rate of employment payment without significant obstacles, objections, or backlash. Denise noted:

Chinese people make it [services] cheaper and attract more people. This is possible because they're mostly family-run. If it is a difficult situation, they can cut their paycheck quite easily. Because the salon is theirs. I can't compete because they save a lot of money on salary. It's hard for Koreans to find someone whose interest aligns together within their family.  
(Denise, Korean nail salon owner, Midtown Manhattan)

In addition to that, some Chinese business owners perhaps have benefitted from the cultural obligations that Chinese workers have. Some Chinese workers and business owners who had previously worked as a manicurist mentioned that it was difficult to decline unfair requests from a co-ethnic employer due to an interconnected network and reputation politics within the community. Nicole, a Chinese manicurist employed in a Chinese-owned nail salon in Crown Heights, used the term "small world" in describing how a New York City Chinese nail salon community is built on ethnic obligations. While she couldn't enter into the mainstream job market because of language discrimination, she was able to obtain jobs relatively easily from Chinese-owned small businesses by using her cultural network, such as beauty salons, restaurants, and nail salons. However, this network-based job market came with a cost as she felt an obligation to work extra hours or do unpaid errands such as grocery shopping for the business owners. It was never easy for her to say no to the co-ethnic owner's requests because of fear of causing awkwardness in the relationship, tainting her reputation in the community, or being excluded from the Chinese referral network.

A Chinese nail salon owner in Manhattan, Mina, provided her own account of this cultural network and explained why some Chinese salon owners, like herself, prefer to work with co-

ethnic workers over non-coethnic workers. She pointed out that Chinese workers understand the “Chinese culture” and they are willing to work extra hours, while Hispanic workers are more likely to sue for unfair labor and work conditions because they are not familiar with the idea of “Chinese culture.” She stated:

It is easier to work with Chinese workers. Chinese people understand each other. We have our culture. So, workers understand their bosses when the business is difficult and they get paid less. They don't sue their bosses. But Hispanic people sue their Chinese owners many many times.

(Mina, Chinese nail salon owner, Midtown Manhattan)

### *Summary*

In a nutshell, this chapter illustrates how the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic disproportionately affected sub-groups of nail salons in New York City: (1) woman-owned salons, (2) Hispanic-owned salons, and (3) salons based on co-ethnic relationships between business owners and customers. In doing so, this research challenges the enclave economy scholarship by demonstrating the fluid and context-conditional nature of the enclave effect. That is, the economic disruption in a host society can act as a disabling factor that suppresses the positive function of a co-ethnic relationship, especially in terms of the owner-client co-ethnic ties. Moreover, this study suggests that ethnicity-specific research is needed given the increasing heterogeneity of the transclave economy. Specially, the result shows that the employer-employee enclave effect may continue to function in particular ethnic groups – a Chinese-speaking community – while other ethnic groups had no significant relationship between worker's co-ethnicity and economic performance.

The next section turns its attention from quantifiable patterns to nuanced narratives from 96 interview respondents. Using their narratives based on lived experiences of the pandemic, the section sheds light on the perceived effects of the pandemic and coping strategies of immigrants to navigate the challenging economic situation. By doing so, the next section examines the ways in which nail salon workers and owners proactively construct transnational strategies by mobilizing resources in both host societies and home societies, and who is excluded from these activities.

### 5.3. Pandemic effects and the development of transnational coping strategies

#### *Introduction*

This section explores how transclave economy participants –nail salon employers and employees—developed transnational strategies to cope with the pandemic’s economic disruptions. The effects of the coronavirus pandemic were divergent across geographical localities, such as Manhattan versus residential areas and high-case areas versus low-case areas. To address the unexpected economic hardships, both immigrant workers and business owners began to build transnational strategies from different localities. Nail salon owners transformed the labor market system and started mobilizing available resources in a host society. Both employers and employees drew on transnational resources by leveraging continuing connections with their home societies, such as importing sanitary goods, receiving job referrals, and traveling. However, the availability of the transnational resources varied depending on the economic stability and geopolitical situations of their homeland. The capability to utilize homeland connections for economic survival became a new mode of privilege among nail salon participants in New York City and consequently marginalized certain ethnic groups in the market, particularly Hispanic immigrant communities. In addition to that, there was a growing tendency that the ethnic solidarity between employers and employees diminishes as these small businesses suffer to survive and minimize spending on employment in the midst of the pandemic.

#### *Changes in consumer behaviors: differing pandemic effects by geographical regions*

The crisis induced by the coronavirus pandemic varied depending on where businesses were located. Manhattan’s nail salons were directly affected by four disruptive factors, which are related to the city’s particular niche in the global economy: shrinking tourist industry, working from home policies, the increased portion of student residents, and the dark cityscape in the evening. It was commonly reported by nail salon owners that the visitation of tourists, in particular high-spending tourists, dried up. Statistically, the number of visitors to New York City was estimated to have dropped by 66.5% from 2019 (66.6 million) to 2020 (22.3 million)<sup>27</sup> and,

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<sup>27</sup> NYC&Company Annual Report 2020-2021. Retrieved May 23, 2020, from <https://business.nycgo.com/research/>

for many New York City neighborhoods, tourism has been one of the key components of Manhattan's economies. During the fieldwork project, nail salon owners whose businesses were located in tourist-heavy districts such as Soho commonly reported that they experienced a significant decline in client visits. Also, as many firms located in Manhattan introduced a remote work policy, the majority of nail salons located in areas within office building forests, such as Lower Manhattan and Midtown Manhattan, failed to recover their profits in the months after reopening because of the plunge in appointments made by office workers.

In addition, several interviewees attributed the economic downturn of nail salons in Manhattan to the temporary demographic change in the neighborhood, from wealthy residents to college students. They remarked that the residential succession occurred as economically affluent residents escaped from Manhattan to their second homes outside of New York City, such as on Long Island and in Florida, and rented out the Manhattan real estate at massively discounted prices. Hannah's narrative represents the overall unwelcoming sentiments of salon owner interviewees towards students. Hannah, a Korean nail salon owner in the Upper East Side, noted that her loyal clients used to be comprised of celebrities and affluent residents living nearby. However, they left the town to temporarily stay in safer places, and the vacant rooms started to be occupied by young college students. She was very concerned about this neighborhood change since students tend to have thin wallets, tip little, and prefer simple and affordable services, such as regular manicures and pedicures. She remarked as follows:

We used to have a lot of celeb clients who lived around here. They've moved out to a livable place recently. You think they have only one house? Not at all. They have houses all over the United States. So, they fled to a safer place where the pandemic is way milder. Because of that, the quality of the residents has decreased these days. Honestly, students are unremunerative. Manhattan's landlords are panicking and giving any new residents a three-month rental for free. They're basically telling you that they offer you a house that originally costs 5,000 dollars for 2,000 dollars. Students think that this is their last chance to live in Manhattan so they moved in a lot.

(Hannah, Korean nail salon owner, Upper East Side)

The closure of neighboring businesses and the darkened cityscape made the recession worse in Manhattan. A number of businesses, such as hotels, art galleries, hair salons, and restaurants, permanently shut down for an indefinite period or shortened their operation hours to cope with the decline in customer traffic. Prior to the onset of the pandemic crisis, these businesses used to brighten up the cityscape at night. People were able to enjoy the night culture in Manhattan

without feeling unsafe, and nail salons were able to operate after sunset. However, as these illuminating effects disappeared, the darkened cityscape negatively contributed to the experience of both salon clients and salon owners. Charlotte is a second-generation Chinese American who recently established her nail salon in Soho by using her experience helping with her mom's salon business. Charlotte remarked that a sense of safety and cheeriness quickly vanished as the businesses that used to illuminate the streets closed. This first led to a decline in the client traffic volume since people felt unsafe visiting and walking at night in Manhattan. Second, she shortened her operation hours from 10 pm to 7 pm since she herself felt unsafe accepting clients at night and letting them walk outside in dark areas with no lights. She noted:

In Manhattan, hotels and restaurants used to illuminate the neighborhood late at night, so we would keep the store open until 10 p.m. But now with stores closed from the coronavirus, we close at 7 o'clock. It feels dangerous late at night, so I lock the door around five, and recommend customers call an Uber instead of taking public transportation.  
(Charlotte, American nail salon owner, Soho)

It was a repeated response from both Manhattan salon owners and non-Manhattan salon owners that the Manhattan salons suffered the most from the pandemic, compared to residential areas in New York City, because of the exodus of office workers and wealthy residents. However, less-privileged residential areas were hard hit by a different mechanism: massive layoff of low-wage workers and their weakened purchasing power. For example, an Ecuadorian woman, Vanessa, had worked for ten years under Chinese and Spanish-speaking employers at different nail salons. She bought a nail salon at Jackson Heights from a Venezuelan immigrant woman in February 2020, a month before the emergency execution order was announced by the New York government and all salons were mandated to shut down. She has had near-zero client visits ever since she reopened her business because people lost jobs and have little money for "extras." She remarked that a number of low-wage residents in Jackson Heights lost their jobs as the pandemic started and the return to the workplace has been slow. Her observation aligns well with research findings that pandemic-induced layoffs hit low-wage employees harder than higher-earning workers, and their workplace return tended to be much slower (Gould & Kassa, 2021; Ross, 2021). Vanessa's narrative on the disruptive factors in residential areas was as follows:

There was a rumor that something will happen, but I didn't believe that. [I heard that the pandemic hit Manhattan the hardest] It's actually similar. People in this area don't have



money, but only rent prices keep going up. Rent keeps going up even though it's not a good neighborhood. I don't know why. Manhattan is difficult too, of course. But there's also a difficulty in the residential area too. Residents here, many of them, lost their jobs, like cashiers and restaurant workers, so they don't have money. They are still jobless. It's been so long. They don't have savings too. That's why they don't come.  
(Vanessa, Ecuadorian owner, Jackson Heights)

There were a few cases of temporal mismatch on the lockdown lift in adjacent geographical areas, leading to new tensions among nail salon owners. Starting on December 11, 2020, Governor Cuomo introduced micro-cluster metrics for coronavirus case control and restricted certain business activities depending on the degree of risks in each district. If the virus positivity rate exceeded 3%, mass gatherings were prohibited and only essential businesses were allowed to open.<sup>28</sup> However, many nail salon owners brought up a problem in equality as salons located in a red zone were mandated to close while their clients were “stolen” by nearby salons within a green zone. Betty, a Chinese nail salon owner in Homecrest, complained that her nail salon had to shut down once again since reopening in July 2020 because her district was designated as a red zone during the winter. During the second lockdown, her clients started to use nearby green-zone salons that were still open, and some of them never came back. Also, Sam, a Korean nail salon owner in Fort Lee, New Jersey, mentioned that the lockdown was lifted in New Jersey in June 22, which was about two weeks before the New York City's lockdown lift (July 6). Because of this temporal mismatch and the geographical proximity between Fort Lee and Manhattan, his salon was able to attract some Manhattan customers and some of these clients settled to use their services even after the lockdown in New York City had ceased.

Hope, a Korean nail salon owner in Little Neck, explicitly expressed her annoyance about the temporal-spatial mismatch of lockdown policies across different districts. Little Neck is located in the northeast corner of Queens and it is located right next to Nassau County in Long Island. Since lockdown was lifted two weeks earlier in Long Island than in New York City, several of her regular customers, eagerly looking forward to nail salons reopening during the pandemic, chose to visit competitor salons in the Long Island district, with many of these clients ultimately

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<sup>28</sup> Empire State Development (2022). Retrieved in May 11, 2022, from <https://esd.ny.gov/ny-cluster-action-initiative-guidance>

returning to the Long Island salons even after the New York City restrictions were lifted. Hope's narrative on the lockdown policy mismatch is as follows:

If you cross this block, it's Long Island. Long Island lifted lockdown two weeks earlier than New York City. In fact, some areas there have more coronavirus cases than here. Anyway, government people don't care about that. As soon as the lockdown was released, a lot of customers near this area went there. And some of them became a regular there. That's how nail salons work. Once you get used to a restaurant and become friends, you keep going there. Law is so unreasonable.

(Hope, Korean nail salon owner, Little Neck)

At an individual level, customers became more sensitive to skill differences across nail salons and more selective about their choices. As a consequence, nail salons that did not have an established reputation in the neighborhood rapidly lost their clients to the salons with word-of-mouth fame and high ratings left by customer reviews on the Internet. Ava, a Taiwanese woman who has ten-year work experience as a nail technician and six-year experience as a salon owner in Manhattan, provided stories about the skill gap during the pandemic. Back in the early 2000s, she was an international student, and when she graduated, she had difficulty obtaining an office job and extending her visa to allow her to stay in the United States for a few more years. One of the most plausible ways to circumvent the immigration law system was, at that time, to register to attend a language center. She started to work at a nail salon to finance her center tuition. She remarked that, since the early 2000s, many immigrant women started to open new nail salons without a clear vision or decent skills since it was one of the easiest ways to avoid language discrimination in the US job market and to be self-employed when they were unemployed and in need of quick money. However, as the pandemic hit the city and people's wallets became thinner, salon clients became pickier about the manicurists' skill level and less adventurous to try salons with uncertain reputations. As a result, numerous nail salons that had mushroomed in the 2000s salon boom ended up closing as they quickly lost their client traffic to salons with good standing in the neighborhood. Ava remarked:

Even if you don't have skills, you make a lot of money in good timing. When the economy is good, people are more generous and not picky. That's why people – who have no idea what manicure is – easily opened up salons everywhere. But now people are very picky because they have no money and no jobs. At this bad timing, salons without skills die. People go to nail salons that have better techniques and better prices. People are really careful about choosing nail salons these days. They compare nail salons very carefully.

(Ava, Taiwanese nail salon owner, East Side Manhattan)

In addition, the volume of client visits decreased as people stopped coming to salons in groups with friends and family. Rosie, a Chinese nail salon owner whose business is located in a young professional neighborhood, argued that the decline in the group client visits was due to people's social distancing practices and their fear of coronavirus transmission. Rosie noted:

People come alone now. Before corona, they came here with their co-workers and friends. Family too. I think it's because people don't go to work and live alone. People don't travel to see family in New York too. I think people are too scared to hang around together. And they don't do their nails unless it's their special occasion. They only come for birthdays and Christmas. Originally, they usually come here once every two weeks, but now they come here every three months.

(Rosie, Chinese nail salon owner, Williamsburg)

Figure 5-6. Closed nail salons in Manhattan (photographed by an author on January 12 (left) and January 13 (right), 2021)



*Coping strategies of salon owners: frugal employment practices and dwindling ethnic solidarity*

The most noticeable change in employers' strategies was in their employment management. Full-time jobs in nail salons quickly dried up as a result of the economic crisis. First, a great portion of full-time jobs was replaced by part-time jobs, putting significant downward pressure

on the total amount of income workers could obtain every week. Table 5-5 summarizes the changes in the number of full-time workers and part-time workers employed by major ethnic nail salons, as reported by survey participants. Out of 115 survey respondents, 66 provided information on the number of full-time and part-time workers before (December 2019) and after the pandemic (December 2020). The result shows that the number of full-time workers in the respondents' nail salons decreased by 48.4 percent during this disruptive time, which is greater than that of part-time workers (17.6% decrease). Overall, the part-time staff was downsized by 0.6 people, while the full-time staff decreased by 3.1 people.

Dividing the sample into ethnic groups reveals variability across different communities in offering jobs to their workers during the pandemic. In particular, the decline in the number of full-time workers was largest among Korean-owned salons (57% decrease), followed by Chinese (38.6% decrease), Vietnamese (36.2% decrease), and Hispanic salons (33.3% decrease). Instead, the number of part-time workers slightly increased by 37.0% for Korean-owned salons, while other ethnic groups experienced a decline in the number of part-time workers. Overall, the part-time staff was downsized by one or more people.

Table 5-5. Changes in the number of part-time and full-time workers by ethnicity

	December 2019	December 2020	Percent change (Absolute change)
Total salons (n = 66)			
Avg. number of part-time workers	3.4	2.8	-17.6% (-0.6)
Avg. number of full-time workers	6.4	3.3	-48.4% (-3.1)
Chinese-owned salons (n = 23)			
Avg. number of part-time workers	4.7	2.7	-42.6% (-2.0)
Avg. number of full-time workers	7.0	4.3	-38.6% (-2.7)
Korean-owned salons (n =19)			
Avg. number of part-time workers	2.7	3.7	+37.0% (+1.0)
Avg. number of full-time workers	7.9	3.4	-57.0% (-4.5)
Vietnamese-owned salons (n = 3)			
Avg. number of part-time workers	1.7	1	-41.2% (-0.7)

Avg. number of full-time workers	4.7	3	-36.2% (-1.7)
Hispanic-owned salons (n = 8)			
Avg. number of part-time workers	3.8	2.4	-71.1% (-1.4)
Avg. number of full-time workers	2.1	1.4	-33.3% (-0.7)

Source: fieldwork survey (January 2021)

This employment disruption occurred through a combination of four factors: changes in government policy, employers’ strategy to cut expenses, negative projections of the future market, and the gendered family obligations of immigrant employees. First, at the beginning of conducted fieldwork in January 2021, a social distancing policy was imposed on New York City nail salons that limited their capacity by 50% and banned waiting rooms.<sup>29</sup> This decreased capacity affected both workers and customers; consequently, the majority of employers decided to lay off a certain number of workers or shorten workers’ hours to maximize customer capacity. Several interviewees remarked that even though the average number of customer visits per week declined, there were still numerous days when they had to decline appointment requests or delay them because of the halved capacity. In addition, manicuring tables and pedicure chairs, which salon owners bought to align with the pre-pandemic capacity conditions (and the maintenance costs), became a nuisance and burden for many salon owners. The changes in the capacity rule became a new factor that limited the number of customers salons could serve at a given time. When asked their opinion on the capacity limit, one of the interviewees, Natasha, noted:

There are times when I have to tell a client that they have to wait an hour. I mean even when the store is empty like right now. They go back because it takes too long. That’s because we have only two workers, so there’s nothing we can do. Originally, we had six people, but because of social distancing, we now have two people. There’s nothing we can do when a lot of clients visit at a time.  
(Natasha, Mexican nail salon worker, Astoria)

Second, as the tip credit was abolished as of December 31, 2020, nail salon owners cut the number of workers and shifted a number of full-time jobs to part-time jobs to decrease expenses. After tip credit elimination, New York City salon employers were mandated to pay workers the

<sup>29</sup> New York State Department of Labor. Retrieved in May 4, 2022, from: [https://dol.ny.gov/nail-salon-industry#:~:text=\\*Beginning%20December%2031%2C%202020%2C,them%20less%20than%20minimum%20wage](https://dol.ny.gov/nail-salon-industry#:~:text=*Beginning%20December%2031%2C%202020%2C,them%20less%20than%20minimum%20wage).

full minimum wage – \$15 per hour for the first 40 hours per week and \$22.5 after 40 hours per week – and were prohibited from taking any tip credit from them.<sup>30</sup> The notice on the elimination of tip credit, the expected increase in wages, and the heightened crackdown on illegal practices combined to become a new financial burden for nail salon owners, as their revenue plummeted since the city-wide coronavirus outbreak. As a result, since the lockdown was lifted on July 6, 2020, a few months before the tip credit was officially abolished, nail salon owners started to increase the portion of part-time jobs to the total employment structure to minimize the labor costs increase and prevent their profit margin from becoming even thinner.

Third, there were numerous cases in which workers voluntarily refused to come back because of new childcare duties. Starting on March 15, 2020, all schools were shut down from time to time by government orders, so some salon workers became full-time caregivers for their children during the lockdown. Some of the interviewees pointed out that, even after salons reopened on July 6, several workers were not able to come back because the school shutdown policy unpredictably changed and the resumption of in-person school instruction kept being delayed. Some respondents, including Rachel, whose narrative is given below, noted that co-ethnic salons, where employees and employers were from the same home country, used to be more tolerant of the presence of the workers' children. Co-ethnic workers often brought their children to the workplace. However, this compassionate, cooperative relationship between co-ethnic workers and employers diminished as the social distancing guidelines strictly regulated the number of people occupying a salon. Rachel, a Chinese nail salon owner in Flushing, where all of the workers are from China, remarked:

Most of them came back. And some did not. They have kids at home and they couldn't come back to the job. Kids don't go to school. They have to stay at home. They have to take care of the kids. So, they couldn't come back. [...] They used to bring their kids to my salon and I was fine with that. But because of the social distancing, we cannot have their kids stay here anymore.

(Rachel, Chinese nail salon owner, Flushing)

In addition to the decrease in the number of full-time jobs, the shrinking job market for pedicurist and manicurist positions exacerbated the financial instability of salon workers,

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<sup>30</sup> New York State, "Information for Nail Salon workers." Retrieved May 20, 2022, from <https://ny.gov/nail-salon-safety-what-you-need-know/information-nail-salon-workers>

especially Hispanic immigrants. As discussed in Chapter 4, the nail salon job market is segmented into three parts: nail technicians (often called “nail techs”), manicurists, and pedicurists. In deciding whom they should continue to hire, nail salon owners tended to keep nail technicians, the most advanced job position, requiring five to eight years of work experience in general. Salon owners tended to lay off the other two occupations, manicurists and pedicurists, which are at the bottom layer of the employment market.

The rationale behind this employment decision is related to the capacity limit and the decline in the number of office worker customer visits. First, because of the 50% capacity limit, the number of workers in salons was highly restricted. To maximize the number of clients who could be in a salon, owners began to build a new strategy to assign all nail services, not only advanced nail extension services but also simple pedicures, to nail technicians. Through this strategy, they could reduce the number of workers in salons and, at the same time, continue to provide all services to their clients. Second, the decline in the salon visits of office workers and young professionals led to the significant layoff of less-skilled manicurists and pedicurists. Office worker clients often prefer to receive simple nail services rather than long acrylic nails because of the nature of their work (e.g., laptop typing), and the professional appearance required in traditional office settings. However, a number of office workers began to work from home. As a consequence, the demand for regular manicure and pedicure services shrank in many nail salons.

The increased portion of part-time positions and the limited availability of entry-level positions (e.g., low-skilled manicurists and pedicurists) widened the economic inequality between documented immigrants and undocumented immigrants in the salon industry. It was becoming an industry norm for nail salon workers to have multiple part-time jobs. At the time of the fieldwork study, the horizontal job mobility of undocumented immigrants to secure jobs in different nail salons or entry-level jobs in other sectors, such as restaurants and grocery markets, was highly restricted because of their legal status. For example, the story of Evelyn is illustrative of the life of an undocumented nail salon worker in the midst of the pandemic. As a single mom from Mexico, Evelyn used the paycheck from her full-time nail salon job to support herself, her son, and their family back in her homeland. However, when she came back to work after the shutdown ceased in July, she was notified that she could work only two days a week. To cope with the situation, she started to work two manicurist jobs; however, it has never been enough to

support both herself and her family financially. When asked if she has a plan to find a third job, she said she is hesitant because, as a person without documentation, it is always risky to get a job in a new workplace and build trust with new people there. The job mobility of immigrant workers was mostly determined by their legal status, and undocumented nail salon workers were often trapped in their current employment.

In a similar vein, the extreme precarity of undocumented immigrants induced by the labor market restructuring, the increase in the volume of part-time contracts, and their limited horizontal job mobility were again illustrated by the narrative from a long-time Korean nail salon owner in Staten Island, Robert. In its heyday, his salon used to have 21 workers and all of them worked full time, five to six days a week. However, upon reopening his salon in the summer of 2020, he hired only 11 workers, and most of them were assigned to work three days per week maximum. During the interview, Robert emphasized that Hispanic workers are the most disadvantaged community in the industry. In particular, he pointed out that undocumented Hispanic workers are driven into a dead end, as part-time jobs are becoming the new normal in nail salons, and they are falling short of a decent number of work hours and amount of pay. He remarked:

In American culture, people usually have two or three jobs. In fact, not many Hispanics can afford to have two or three jobs like Americans. American people get paid for the hours they work. If you work four hours, you get paid four hours. If I need more money, I go to another store and work again. Asians and Koreans are already middle class. But many Hispanics still haven't moved into the middle class. Especially in the nail industry, there are many Hispanics without documents, so they don't have cars and every job is desperately needed for them. It's not easy for them to find multiple jobs at the same time because of their status issue. They can't work for two or three places.  
(Robert, Korean nail salon owner, Staten Island)

Not limited to full-time jobs, the larger job market also froze, and nail salons that muddled through the crisis began to prepare for the potential long-term market shrink that could occur toward the pandemic's end. More specifically, many nail salon owners anticipated that the number of client visits and the demand for professional manicurists would not recover to pre-pandemic levels, mainly because the DIY (Do It Yourself) nail culture began to grow among young generations.



In an interview, Angela (Korean salon owner at Washington Heights, Manhattan) and Miranda (Chinese salon owner at Park Slope, Brooklyn) remarked that people began to do their nails more often as working-from-home office models increased their time spent home and big corporates, such as Dashing Diva, started to aggressively produce and market a range of nail salon alternative products, such as vinyl nail stickers. Angela, a Korean nail salon owner in Washington Heights, argued that as more and more people start to do their own nails, nail salons will return to becoming a luxury good, with its clientele comprised of people with a demand for premium services requiring human expertise. Excerpts from these women's narratives are as follows:

Some people are talking about their plan for relocation. If I were 10 years younger, then maybe! I'm 60 years old now. I'm going to plan my retirement now. Instead, I talk to the staff. Get ready to do something else. Learn another skill. This business is now over. I advise them to prepare for another career. Even if the pandemic ends, we'll never go back to the way we used to. People have learned how to do their nails alone when staying at home. There is a lot of content on YouTube that teaches you how to do your nails, how to avoid nail bubbles, use this color, and so on. They put on nail stickers too. We won't need such a big nail industry in New York anymore. We'll all return to the past when only rich people come to salons to get special care and differentiate themselves from others.  
(Angela, Korean nail salon owner, Washington Heights)

I need to reduce workers anyway because the culture of coming to the nail shop is changing. It's not going to be the best of the old days. And I think office areas are the most dangerous place [to run a business]. My friend said she likes working from home so much because she doesn't need to commute. The company saves money and workers save time. It's a win-win for everyone. I think many companies will continue to do work from home for a while. [...] Some big companies are now selling a lot of vinyl nail stickers and people started to buy them. They try them and if that works for them, they never come again. In the future, only very old people will come I think.  
(Miranda, Chinese nail salon owner, Park Slope)

As the size of the workforce had been reduced throughout the industry, there were very few job openings, and re-entry into the job market after layoffs became practically impossible for those with little work experience. Natasha was a Mexican worker and manager of a Korean-owned nail salon located in Astoria, Queens. She remarked that, prior to the pandemic, there had been a continuing labor shortage in the industry for the last ten years. "Astoria is a growing neighborhood, so we always had to hire new people," Natasha noted when asked about the job market before the coronavirus outbreak. However, in 2020, it was her first time seeing that the number of job seekers exceeded the number of job openings that her salon had. According to her,

even though they fired a number of workers, her salon still continued to have at least one or two surplus workers every month as the business slowed down. She noted that people often walk in to beg for jobs desperately, even though she has no plan to hire new workers. Her narrative was as follows:

Sometimes people walk in and say “I need a job, I have children, I worked in nail salons for 10 years, but I lost my job.” “1-hour, 2-hour a day, that’s okay. I need a job.” I feel so bad, and sad. I am so sorry for them. I say “I am so sorry, I am so sorry. We want to give you a job but we don’t have any positions now.” [...] They are all different. Some of them are from Ecuador, and some are from Honduras. There was Mexico too. I really want to help them but I cannot. Because of the capacity rule, we cannot take more workers. Our business is slow too, so we cannot take them.

(Natasha, Mexican nail salon worker and manager, Astoria)

Seen through the lens of enclave economy theory, Natasha’s story undermines scholars’ presumption that the enclave economy assists the economic success of immigrants (Portes & Bach, 1985; Light et al., 1994; Hum, 2000; Zhou, 2010). Rather, her story reveals that the function of the enclave effect is contingent on the temporal context and its effect could be minimal if there are external shocks in a host society, like the coronavirus pandemic. In the context of the economic downturn, the mutually-beneficial relationship between immigrant workers and business owners, where immigrant employers provide entry-level jobs with minimum requirements and workers provide a loyal labor force, was pushed to the backburner. Instead, to cope with the changes in regulation, revenue, and client base, employers started to make employment cost saving as one of their top operation priorities. Hispanic-owned salons in particular had to fire a number of co-ethnic workers since the majority of the low-skilled manicurists and pedicurists were occupied by Hispanic immigrant women.

The diminishing enclave effect was also well illustrated by Silvia, an Ecuadorian woman who operates a nail salon with a number of Ecuadorian workers in Crown Heights, Queens. She remarked that, while she had helped her Ecuadorian “sisters” by providing jobs and helping them settle in the United States, she had to make business decisions that went against their “sisters,” such as cutting their work hours and wages, to make her business survive during this economically challenging time. Silvia noted:

They come on different days because, you know, I don’t want to say “hey I can’t have you anymore.” I don’t want that because we are friends. We are sisters. So, it’s like, if one comes

in Monday, other one comes on Tuesday. Or Thursday. It is rotation. [You mean they are now hired as a part-time worker?] Well, it is not so much part-time. Because they work for a whole day. [...] We are sisters and we are that close. We help each other whenever someone needs us. But I am not volunteering. They have a family to support but I have a family to support too. I have to take care of my own family. If the business cannot make enough money, I have to do something. Of course, it breaks my heart but what else can I do? It's very difficult to know how long I can do this work. One day to another day, the government says "close everything down." Now we are living day by day. If we don't shut down this winter, maybe we can survive for more years maybe. If shutdown again, I don't know. I don't know if we can survive. Right now, we have to see orders, just wishing not to close. (Silvia, Ecuadorian nail salon owner, Crown Heights)

Aside from employment management, another commonly used strategy of business owners was to raise the price of nail services. At the time of fieldwork in January 2021, 30.2% of the survey participants (26 out of 86) responded that they planned to raise the service prices in the next 6 months. Also, some of the participants noted that they already raised the service prices by 30% to 50% in response to the disruptions induced by the pandemic and the decline in customers. When asked about her strategies to survive this challenging time, Hope remarked:

We originally charged \$7 for a regular manicure service. But we raised the price to \$10 when I first heard that tip credit would be abolished. And after the coronavirus pandemic broke out, I raised it to \$15. Some people don't come because they're surprised by this [a sudden price increase]. Some of them don't come because they are scared of the virus. Some don't come because it's hard to meet the time because we've cut down on the staff. These reasons are all overlapped I think. (Hope, Korean nail salon owner, Little Neck)

From the transnationalism perspective, raising prices, downsizing employment, and replacing full-time jobs with part-time jobs can be understood as immigrants' practices to modify their surroundings in the receiving society. These transformations that nail salon owners created in the bottom-layer labor market in a host society, New York City, pressured both nail workers and consumers to adapt to a new normal. For instance, while it had been an atypical situation for manicurists to have multiple jobs in the pre-pandemic era, working multiple part-time jobs inside and outside the salon industry started to become a new industry standard. Furthermore, this new normal has driven undocumented immigrants into poverty and precarious employment as their mobility across multiple jobs is fettered by their legal status in the host society. As such, the market restructuring efforts of immigrant nail salon owners have affected not only the labor

structure of the salon industry in New York City but also the livelihood of immigrant families who are largely dependent on the income generated from this economic sector.

*Coping strategies of salon owners: capitalizing on homeland resources*

At the same time, some business owners built transnational strategies by leveraging their continuing connection with homeland resources to cope with unexpected disturbances. For example, several interviewees obtained a second job using their co-ethnic networks. Most immigrant nail salon owners that were interviewed during the fieldwork maintained close relations with co-ethnic communities living in their home country and within an ethnic enclave in New York City. Their interaction with the enclave residents occurred through religious activities and regular dinner invitations. They also maintained a solid connection with family and friends left behind in their homeland through video calls, remittances, and gifts. Two interviewees, Jin (Chinese salon owner in Forest Hills) and Nadia (Chinese salon owner in Flushing), noted that to earn extra money they started a second job as a caregiver for the elderly, with the assistance of friends' referrals. For example, even though it had been almost 30 years since migrating to the United States, Nadia still maintained a relationship with her friend group in China, and one of these friends introduced Nadia to the mother of a friend living in Flushing who needed help with grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning. While this second job does not provide a substantial wage, Nadia noted that this second job does help her pay her mortgage and her salon rent in this challenging economic crisis.

Surprisingly, immigrants' capability to take advantage of transnational resources varied depending on their country of origin and that nation's economic base. In particular, the position of their countries in the global production chain determined their capacity to continue to send goods for emigrants — goods that are essential for the salon business in the midst of the pandemic. Notably, there was significant inequality in the uninterrupted supply of sanitary products across homeland countries, which became an essential factor in salon operations. Chinese and Korean respondents were able to bring face masks and sanitizers at a cheap price from China and Korea through sustained personal networks when other salons were facing a shortage in the supply of sanitary items. Often, these ethnic groups organized group purchases to save on shipping costs and lower the price per unit. Some Chinese and Korean salons displayed

these colorful face masks imported from their home countries on the counter tables and sold them to clients for an additional profit.

However, other ethnic groups were excluded from this transnational privilege. For instance, Vanessa, an Ecuadorian salon owner in Jackson Heights, remarked that she and her friends who run nail salons had to raise their service prices by almost 50% because of difficulties in purchasing affordable face masks, gloves, and sanitizers due to the limited supply. This difference reveals the geopolitical nature of transnationalism, in which the economic power of sending societies determines the quantity and quality of transnational resources that are available for their emigrants, thereby creating a new mode of cross-border inequality. Vanessa remarked as follows:

Yeah. We needed to [raise the price]. Because everything, like face masks, alcohol, and gloves – their prices are crazy. Sometimes we have to wear the same masks again and again because we don't have enough. Gloves are two times more expensive than before. There's nothing I can do though because that's what suppliers ask for.  
(Vanessa, Ecuadorian nail salon owner, Jackson Heights)

Previous experience with a similar pandemic event in their homeland appeared to shape nail salon owners' ability to timely modify their business operations to be better prepared against the coronavirus pandemic. East Asian regions, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan, were the viral epicenter of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) from 2002 to 2003, generating around 8,000 cases and 800 deaths.<sup>31</sup> This disaster had a prolonged impact on their economies and heightened their everyday alert against viral respiratory disease among Asian citizens (Lee & McKibbin, 2004; Zhu et al., 2008). When the pandemic hit New York City, Asian nail salon communities who had survived the nationwide epidemic in their homeland tended to have a better understanding of the severity of the situation and were able to prepare for the disaster scenarios earlier. During the fieldwork, a number of Chinese-speaking salon owners reported that they purchased a bulk of face masks and gloves for their business when the first coronavirus case was found in New York City. Also, as face masks were an important part of their life back in a homeland in the middle of the SARS pandemic, they had minimal psychological barriers or reluctance to use masks in the very early stages of the coronavirus epidemic in New York City.

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<sup>31</sup> World Health Organization (2015). Retrieved March 14, 2022, from <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/summary-of-probable-sars-cases-with-onset-of-illness-from-1-november-2002-to-31-july-2003>

In contrast, several Hispanic respondents commonly noted that they did not expect that the coronavirus would develop into a disaster in early 2020 and failed to make agile business decisions to respond to the rapidly-changing circumstances.

Gianna's story, for example, illustrates how prior experience with a public health crisis can allow certain groups to have the upper hand in preparing for disruptions. When I visited her salon in Sunset Park, the most distinctive feature of the salon was giant plastic curtains separating all the manicuring tables and pedicure chairs, from ceiling to floor. From the entrance, it almost looked like a white fortress, as the only thing one could see Moreover the plastic was the tips of people's shoes under the curtains. As an immigrant from Hong Kong who regularly travels to her homeland every year, Gianna experienced both SARS and the coronavirus epidemic when she was briefly staying there. After coming back from Hong Kong in January 2020, about two months before the state lockdown order, she widened the spaces between salon tables and installed plastic curtains to protect her salon and clients from future pandemic situations. Her clients were confused and thought Gianna was overreacting to the situation when changes were made in the early 2020s. However, she tried to explain to her confused clients the dangers of viral diseases, like SARS, and showed how serious she and her workers were about the matter. A detailed narrative on Gianna's SARS experience and how that affected her business style is as follows:

I've experienced the pandemic before. Even before the covid here. We had SARS when I shortly visited and stayed in Hong Kong. The United States hasn't ever experienced this kind of pandemic before. I know how to handle it, and I know how to protect everything, including my workers, my customers, myself, and my business. Something similar to this situation. I've been applying every lesson that I learned from Hong Kong SARS to this business. [...] Yes, it's New York. It's modern stuff. But it is different from preparedness. It's hard to prepare for something that you've never experienced. Pre-covid, I was also in Hong Kong. And I heard and saw everything happening near Hong Kong, in China. Last year, December. Back in Asia, people and the government tried to protect everything. Because I knew it, so when I came back in early January, I decided to prepare all the possible things, buying gloves and masks. And I asked my customers to be careful. When there was an outbreak in Asia, it was not as crazy as it is right now, but the protocols were taken already to make sure everything is safe. But here, the American people wanted their freedom. They wanted to do whatever they want to do. [...] When lockdown started, last March, I was scared. It's pandemic. I already knew well people die of the pandemic. But, because it has been a long time, we don't have a choice. We have to live with it.  
(Gianna, Hong Kong nail salon owner, Sunset Park)

Despite the privileges that their homelands offer, Asian-owned salons and their connection with their homelands became a target for racism and hate crimes in New York City. Indeed, racist remarks were often made by clients who refused to follow government hygiene protocols such as wearing masks and receiving a temperature check. However, some respondents remarked that anti-Asian racism is nothing new, but rather the existing racism was exacerbated and made more blatant when the pandemic started and the term “Chinese virus” was publicly used in the political domain. Joseph, a Korean nail salon owner in Staten Island, said that his workers experienced a wide range of racist behavior from their clients including being ridiculed for their Asian accents, and the frequency of these racist remarks significantly increased since the pandemic lockdown started. Julie, a Chinese nail salon worker who worked for a Chinese-owned nail salon in Brownsville for the last five years, provided a detailed anecdote of the most recent incident. When they asked two clients to wear a face mask to follow government guidelines, the clients started a racist rant and said they did not need to wear masks because it was a “Chinese virus.” Since the salon was desperately in need of revenue and every client visit counted, they proceeded to provide the service. Julie commented on that day as follows:

You know, there was a customer in one night. They didn’t want to wear a mask and we had to let them do that. It happened two times this month. They didn’t wear masks and then when we asked them to put a mask on, one of them said, “This virus is from Chinese” and “I am not the one who should put a mask on, you are.” That’s racism, right? When we finished the service for her, we just let her know. “I am sorry but you are not welcomed in our store.” That’s what we did.

(Julie, Chinese nail salon worker, Brownsville)

#### *Coping strategies of salon workers: transnational practices as a new mode of privilege*

From the workers’ side, several workers started to build their own transnational strategies from below by utilizing personal networks of co-ethnic workers to deal with the economic uncertainty. One of the common coping strategies that immigrant workers used was to prepare for a career transfer with the help of co-ethnic workers. For example, Tina was a Tibetan nail salon worker in Rego Park who came to the United States in the mid-2000s. As a mother of two children with a recently unemployed husband, her responsibility to support the family became overwhelming since her working hours as a manicurist were shortened and the job market struggled. At the time I met her in January 2021, she was preparing to get a license as an eyelash extension technician. According to her, getting an eyelash extension technician job is less

competitive than being a nail salon worker, since it is a relatively new service in the beauty industry. More importantly, her career transition preparation was accommodated by her co-ethnic network: she was receiving a range of help from her Tibetan friends, from tips on the license exam to in-person informal training. Tina's story implies that ethnic solidarity among workers continues to offer recruitment opportunities and economic support, while the ethnic solidarity between workers and employers has diminished during the economic crisis.

Some workers chose instead to travel to their home country to spend time together with their family members during the challenging time; however, this transnational journey to home was a privilege of mobility, which is given to those whose countries maintained an open-border policy and who had enough savings to pay for flights in the emergent situation. In particular, the Chinese workers that I interviewed were explicit about the ways in which the strict travel restriction and border closure imposed by the Chinese government kept them stranded in New York City. Dalma, a Chinese manicurist in the Garment District in Manhattan, expressed her anxiety, relaying that she spent hours of unproductive time in her empty nail salon with no client visits and worried about her parents in her home country. "My parents are old and weak, so I really want to go to China to be with them," she noted. In contrast, Korean owners expressed concerns about a large exodus of Korean workers out of New York back to their homeland. For instance, Marsha, a Korean nail salon owner in West Village, noted that she had to hire new Chinese workers because the lack of available Korean workers recently. She remarked that two of her young Korean workers went back to Korea to stay in a safer place from the pandemic because of the fear surrounding the skyrocketing number of coronavirus cases in New York City at the time.

The unequal access to transnational resources and experience, such as traveling, essential products, social networks, and previous epidemic experience, undermines the traditionally celebratory view of transnationalism scholarship (Cook, 2011; Andits, 2015; Green, 2019). This study reveals that transnational strategies are a new mode of privilege for both immigrant business owners and workers that only a limited number of immigrants are allowed to utilize to proactively change their circumstances and improve their immigration lives in a host society. Also, Julie's story about her being a racist target and the usage of the term "Chinese virus" suggests that transnational identity and connectedness with their homeland could not only be a



source of negative stigma toward immigrants, but also actually exacerbate xenophobic racism when the host society's economy is severely disrupted and people try to find a scapegoat to shift blame onto foreign-born populations.

### *Summary*

In summary, this section suggests three major findings. First, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic varied across different geographical areas, depending on its function within an urban hierarchy, the number of coronavirus cases, and policy interventions through additional lockdowns. Second, ethnic solidarity between nail salon employees and employers has shrunk in response to increased economic unpredictability, which demonstrates the fluid, time-dependent nature of the enclave economy and its effects. Third, immigrant business owners and workers develop transnational coping strategies by restructuring the host society's labor market, reaching out to co-ethnic networks, and drawing on homeland resources beyond borders. Third, transnational strategies are not freely accessible to all members, but rather a privilege inequitably distributed to immigrants from certain countries with different geopolitical power dynamics.

While this section focused on individual efforts in adapting to crisis situations by designing a transnational mode of life, questions regarding immigrants' collective efforts as a group remain unanswered. Considering that a number of immigrant salon owners in New York City, especially Chinese and Korean communities, are politically proactive and had already established their co-ethnic employer associations prior to the pandemic, one can hypothesize that some ethnic communities benefitted not only from individual efforts but also from active political engagement through these groups during the pandemic. One may ask: in what ways did the co-ethnic associations aid their members in the midst of the pandemic? How did these organizations' roles and their relationship with the government change as a response to the pandemic? Were there any efforts between two different ethnic associations to build an alliance together to further develop their political power? Which groups are isolated from these collective actions? These questions will be further explored in the next section.

## 5.4. Transnational alliances for recovery

## *Introduction*

With a special focus on employer associations, this section explores how the transnational alliance of nail salon owners mobilized co-ethnic resources to cope with the coronavirus pandemic. In addition to that, in contrast to weakening ethnic solidarity between employees and employers as discussed in the previous section, solidarity among co-ethnic business owners has grown as they have muddled through the economic crisis and devised managerial strategies together. This section particularly focuses on the politics and power relations of three transnational organizations: Korean American Nail Salon Association of New York (KANSA), the Nail Industry Federation of New York (NIFNY), and the Chinese Nail Salon Association. The relationship among these associations was dynamic over the course of the pandemic, shifting between cooperation and confrontation, due to political stance, cultural identity, and stigma. Moreover, this study illustrates that other minority groups, such as those from Nepal and the Hispanic community were largely excluded from political participation. Their voices remained unheard due to their small population size and the absence of powerful co-ethnic organizations, which the Chinese and Korean communities have had strong roots for decades.

### *An increasing importance of ethnic solidarity among immigrant employers*

Before the pandemic hit, the mobilization of co-ethnic resources and political participation in the Korean salon community had been facilitated by the Korean American Nail Salon Association of New York (KANSA). This organization was originally established for the purpose of initiating mass protests against the New York state government's plan to require all workers in nail salons to be licensed in the 1980s. Barbara, a Korean salon owner in Soho, witnessed the establishment of the association as one of the earliest market entrants and a former chair of KANSA. She remarked that before the association was formed, several Korean owners held regular meetings to brainstorm how to resist the government intervention. A few weeks later, they established the association in the late 1980s to effectively gather group members and publicly respond to the government's actions. As a result, they obtained their first victory by pushing the government to offer a temporary grace period and enable unlicensed salon workers to continue to work in their workplaces.

The history of New York City nail salons exemplifies the process in which informal immigrant businesses became incorporated into the formal economic system in the receiving

society. When asked about the establishment history of KANSA, Barbara remarked that it was a coping strategy of Korean nail salon owners to attempt to buck the trend of their ethnic businesses coming under the radar of government regulators and being a subject of control. While a number of Korean salon owners complained that New York's political leaders favor workers and discriminate against business owners, Barbara pointed out that their "good old days" when business owners had extensive freedom in business management without any legal restrictions were exceptional circumstances in history. She noted that the New York government officers overlooked their illegal-like activities in the late 1990s, such as wage theft and contaminated workplaces, simply because the industry size remained small. As nail salons became more visible and eventually developed into one of the biggest employment sources for lesser-privileged immigrants in New York, government officials and newspaper reporters started to pay sharper attention to their business activities and misconducts. Barbara remarked:

Now nail shops are in the legal system, and it's getting harder for us. That's why we need some form of an organization like KANSA. I think the US government turned a blind eye to what salon owners did at that time because we [nail salon populations] were small. The government gave us a lot of slack in the past. But since we're getting bigger, the *New York Times* is watching us. The government is watching us too.  
(Barbara, Korean nail salon owner, Soho)

Another important figure of the organization was Ashley who had served in leadership roles as one of the executive members and as a chairperson until when she resigned due to the NIFNY (Nail Industry Federation of New York) scandal in 2020. For her, an increasing threat from mushrooming franchise-based nail salons throughout New York City motivated her to join the group as an active member. She originally started her business in Long Island where she inherited a nail salon from a previous Korean boss. However, as soon as her business entered a stable stage, a franchise nail salon based on the strategy of small profits and quick returns was established nearby and aggressively advertised their buy-one-get-one nail services to attract customers. To protect their businesses, Ashley created a small informal group with other Korean salon owners to collectively take action to normalize their service prices. Recognizing the limits of the informal group in putting pressure on big franchises, she joined KANSA to obtain additional help from the official organization and this was the beginning of her new social identity as a community leader in a foreign country. Recalling her first day serving for KANSA, Ashley noted:

About 20 years ago, a lot of salons started to spring up everywhere. They made their salon bigger and more luxurious. Old stores couldn't even compete. I thought, 'Oh, this isn't right.' And then one problematic franchise came in. They killed all the shops nearby. They opened the salon with the concept of giving near-free manicures and pedicures for their customers to steal regular ones from other stores. They expanded their territory in this here and there. I can't say the name of the store, but every local salon owner still remembers them. That one big franchise. Their business model was like, if you receive pedicure service, you will get manicure for free. I gathered 40 Korean women in my neighborhood. They asked me to be the leader of that community. As a group, we visited the franchise and made a complaint together. I thought that our group wasn't big enough to give some pressure on them so I contacted KANSA to get some help. That connection led me to work for the association for the last 20 years.  
(Ashely, Korean nail salon owner, Midtown Manhattan)

During the pandemic, KANSA provided both material and non-material benefits for their co-ethnic members, thereby mitigating the adverse impact of the coronavirus pandemic. When it comes to the non-material benefits, a number of Korean nail salon owners responded that the organization's role as an information channel was most helpful in navigating through the economically challenging time. According to these respondents, KANSA offered seminars that keep Korean business owners updated on the changes in government policies, such as social distancing and financial support, and suggested management strategies to help protect businesses from the pandemic. specially for those with limited English proficiency, such as elderly interviewees, the co-ethnic association acted as a bridge connecting these isolated populations to the information flow of the host society. In terms of the material benefits, respondents remarked that the association helped them save on costs for essential pandemic items by organizing a group purchase of face masks and plastic partitions and providing them at a cheaper rate for Korean members.

Figure 5-7. Office of the Korean American Nail Salon Association of New York (KANSA) (photographed by an author on January 16, 2020)



There was a strengthening co-ethnic solidarity among employers and a growing class consciousness within the Korean community. When asked what makes their pandemic experience bearable, a number of Korean nail salon owners answered that it was family and other Korean nail salon owners who were going through similar challenges. Before the coronavirus outbreak, during January 2020 fieldwork, nail salon owners often reported that the biggest challenge they faced was an exploding number of salons and the consequent cut-throat competition with co-ethnic and non-coethnic salon owners. Except for those who engaged in co-ethnic association work, people had little interaction with other neighboring salon owners and usually perceived them as competitors. However, the external shock induced by the epidemic shifted this dynamic from a competitive to cooperative relationship, and Korean salon owners

started to realize the importance of building strong employer networks. The growing co-ethnic solidarity among employers is contrary to the phenomenon that co-ethnic solidarity between workers and employers has weakened since the pandemic started, which we discussed in the previous section.

Nara, a Korean nail salon owner in Williamsburg, offers a clear example of employers' solidarity and the power of co-ethnic business owner organizations. Nara noted that, before the pandemic, she had been stressed about a mushrooming nail salon community and the resulting competition for a limited number of clients in her neighborhood. However, she remarked that the existence of co-ethnic employers has never been this precious and reliable for the last 34 years of her nail career in New York City. Her day-to-day interactions with other Korean owners were made through the messenger group chat room that KANSA created for all business owners in New York City. While they had used to work individually, since the coronavirus outbreak, they united on neighborhood and city levels to exchange information on policy updates and financial support programs to tread through the economic disruption together. Nara remarked:

Korean business owners unite more now. Running a business in a foreign country is never easy and our cooperation is more precious than ever before. It is a hard time for everyone, so everyone is cheering up together rather than competing. [...] KANSA's updates on policy is really helpful. Every day I get messages something like 'apply to this support program,' and 'this is the new policy that you should take a look at.' We have group chat rooms for different regions. We have Brooklyn, Manhattan, Long Island, and so on. We also do have an integrated room that all members are welcome to join, regardless of their location.  
(Nara, Korean nail salon owner, Williamsburg)

*Intra-ethnic tension: continuing influence of the political culture in Korea*

However, conflict did develop between pro-governmental members and anti-governmental members within the co-ethnic employer's association in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. Some Korean immigrants within the network started to feel frustrated by the chairperson's pro-government and pro-worker philosophy. A particularly divisive incident happened during the city-wide lockdown in New York City from March to July 2020. Several anti-government members claimed that the strife among Korean business owners was in part caused by a political blunder made by Ashely, the KANSA chair during the pandemic, decrying a lack of political action and failure to block the tip credit elimination. They further claimed that Ashley began to

cooperate with the New York state government as her political power grew in the region and she befriended mainstream politicians outside of the Korean immigrant community. In an act of resistance against the purported pro-government agenda of the leadership team, some members suggested the group hold an extraordinary general meeting and call on a vote of organizing protest and filing a lawsuit against the government before the scheduled tip credit law amendment. However, the chair rejected their idea, and consequently, the Korean nail salon owners' society became divided into two political groups.

Denise was one of the Korean nail salon owners who had a growing antipathy toward the KANSA's pro-government stance and became one of the founding members of a new Korean nail salon association, called Nail Industry Federation of New York (NIFNY). While she had put up with the KANSA's shift towards pro-government policy, as the pandemic hit and the revenue dramatically dropped, she started to voice her concerns and asked KANSA to restore its old philosophy of fighting against the government. As her efforts to invoke change did not come to fruition, Denise called people together and co-established NIFNY to take lead in organizing anti-government political actions. Notably, Denise also talks about NIFNY's decision to create a pan-inclusive organization that does not limit its membership to the Korean population. Their decision to embrace all races and ethnicities was influenced in part by the shrinking Korean salon owner population in New York City and its desire to garner political power in numbers to compete with KANSA. She remarked as follows:

The Bureau of Labor is supposed to be an organization that supports workers. But this isn't really for the workers. They issue stupid bills that do not care anything about workers' welfare. People work only when there's an enterprise. If all the businesses are closed, where would they go to work? [...] We recently established NIFNY. We chose this name because the size of the Korean community in the New York nail salon industry will reduce in the future and we wanted to create an association that can encompass all races in the long run. [...] Tip credit was the starting point. We asked for a lawsuit against Tip Credit, but the chairman Park of KANSA opposed it. We asked the chairman Ashley Park to create an extraordinary general meeting and to take on the role of signing on her end. We wanted to have an executive system where agendas are decided by a majority vote. I said to her, "We'll protest and file a lawsuit on behalf of all Koreans, so you just sign it." She said that we should talk about this at the regular meeting, rather than newly organizing the extraordinary general meeting. The ridiculous thing is that the regular general meeting was in December 2020 at that time, and the tip credit was in January 2021. She rejected it. So, I filed a lawsuit against the government under my personal name. That was the starting point for me. People who had the same ideas as I had established NIFNY together. [...] I bet KANSA will

disappear soon. Chairman Park stepped down because she was asked to take full responsibility for creating conflict and contributing to the creation of NIFNY. The temporary chairman of KANSA is an old man in his 80s, so what's the point? Chairman Park said that the government had said to her that Korean salon owners will have nothing to gain if they act against the tip credit reform. What a lie.  
(Denise, Korean nail salon owner, Midtown Manhattan)

Gathering support for resisting the New York government and their pro-worker policies, NIFNY organized a variety of programs and campaigns to elevate nail salon owners' rights and interests. Their political activities included several conference calls with their lobbyists, distributing business disruption surveys to appeal their difficulties to government actors, managing a YouTube channel, and building a partnership with local magazines to advertise their campaigns, such as BK Reader (<https://bkreader.com>) and Staten Island Advance (<https://www.silive.com>). Through these activities, they were aiming to exert their influence over two major legislations at the time of the interview: first, they had a goal of demanding the New York government cancel or postpone their plan for the elimination of tip credit. Second, they had a goal of imposing political pressure on the government to abandon their plan for implementing new nail salon ventilation policies. In addition to their political advocates, NIFNY issued the Seal of Salon Excellence for their group members who satisfy two criteria: taking an organization-made exam that tests the owner's covid-specific hygiene knowledge and sending five pictures of their workplace that highlights their compliance with social distancing guidelines (e.g., workers wearing masks and uniforms, measuring clients' temperature, and 6-foot-distanced manicuring tables). The NIFNY executive team members noted that more than a hundred seals had been issued for their members so far.



Figure 5-8. NIFNY's Seal of Salon Excellence (NIFNY, 2020)



In contrast to the anti-government agenda of NIFNY, KANSA's current chairperson, Robert, articulated his philosophy on leading the association to maintain a balance between business owners' interests and public goods. He remarked that it is important to acknowledge the relative privilege that salon owners have, to cooperate with the government, and to make an effort to understand workers' sufferings induced by the coronavirus pandemic. He remarked:

I understand where their thoughts are coming from. Like what they did in the past, they fight against the government for their rights. They hold rallies until the government listens to your voice. But the ironic thing is that their motivation is quite self-centered. They aren't fighting for a better world or something good for society. [...] I am not trying to say that they are wrong. But some of my colleagues and I have a different point of view. Now you [nail salon owners] are the ones who are privileged and your workers are not. Your workers are the ones who suffer the most from the pandemic. We should change. We should choose the socially-right path to survive together, cooperating with the government and workers. They are not your enemies.

(Robert, Korean nail salon owner, Staten Island)

Ashley, a resigned chairperson after the NIFNY incident, also provided me with her own insights on the recent divides and intra-ethnic conflict within the Korean nail salon community. More specifically, she referred to NIFNY's political strategies of demonstrating against government actions as being "old-fashioned." Her narrative was:

One day, the government contacted me personally. The New York government has a network of contacts on nail associations of each ethnic group. If there's anything important, they contact them separately. Anyway, the state government asked me what Korean nail salons are planning to do. So, I wrote and sent the guidelines about how we are going to install shielding, check the temperature, and so on. The government received my guideline, revised it a little bit, and published it officially. So that everyone can read it. I think that's why they allowed us to open our salons. They were generous because we promised that we'd keep our promise. But after that, I heard swear words that I have never heard in my life. I heard all the nasty words I'd hear for the rest of my life. Because uneducated people are trapped in old-fashioned ideas. They said I went asking for trouble by cooperating with the government to write a guideline. They were like "why are you cooperating with the government? You should fight and protest against the government. Some people even called me 'the US government's pet.'" Eventually, they formed a separate association called NIFNY [Nail Industry Federation of New York]. [...] Your heart beats if someone stirs up and asks to fight together for the common interest. But we need to be mature, too. We are not living in 1980s Korea. It's been several decades since we built this Korean immigrant society in the United States and we should get out of the old mindset. I've been working as a leader for a long time, and I know a lot of politicians. Sometimes you have to fight, but sometimes you have to compromise and listen to what the government and the civic society say. That's what negotiation and politics are.

(Ashley, Korean nail salon owner, Midtown Manhattan)

In referring to her opponents, Ashley repeatedly used the term "1980s Korea," which is often used to describe South Korea's pro-democracy and anti-military movement period from 1979 to 1980 (Fowler, 1999; In-Sook, 2005; Strnad, 2011). She added that NIFNY's strategy of protesting against the government until their requirements are fully fulfilled is outdated, aggressive, and therefore, should be modified to deal with the contemporary political dynamics. This connotation between the NIFNY's agenda and the homeland's political landscape was made by other several respondents, such as Patricia. They claimed that many of these Korean nail salon owners participated in "Demo-munhwa" (protest culture) prior to migration, influencing their views on government action in the United States. Some Korean interviewees noted that many Korean nail salon owners migrated in the 1980s and early 1990s and they had a strong tendency to preserve the 80s political mindset that they had brought from their homeland. From a transnationalism perspective, the overrepresentation of the democratization movement

generation and their experience with political engagement are still affecting their perceptions and beliefs on what government engagement ought to look like.

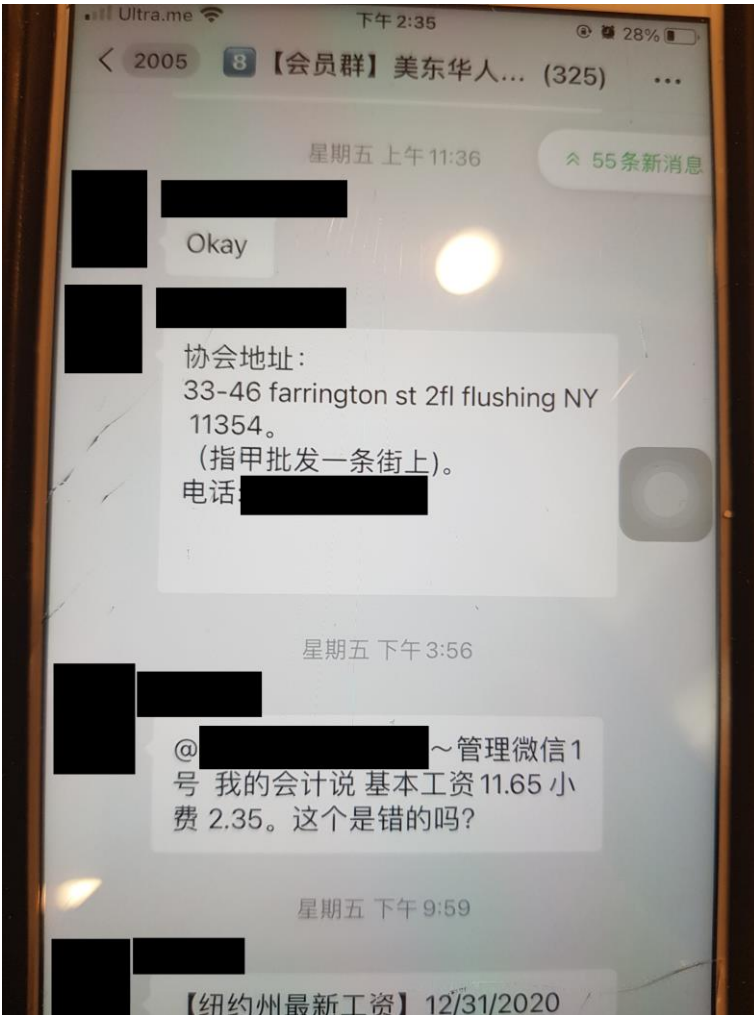
*Inter-ethnic collaboration and conflicts: “capitalist” Koreans and “communicst” Chinese*

Located in Flushing, the Chinese Nail Salon Association was established in 2015, approximately 30 years after the Korean nail salon association was formed in 1987. While multiple requests for an interview with executive members of the Chinese Nail Salon Association ultimately failed,<sup>32</sup> one of the Chinese interview respondents in Manhattan, Sally, was willing to share her experience interacting with the organization as a group member. She remarked that the communication is predominantly made through WeChat, one of the most popular messaging apps used by Chinese populations worldwide. Chinese salon owners were invited to one of the group chat rooms, including a Manhattan room and a New Jersey room, depending on the geographical location of their business. In the Manhattan chat room, she had access to a range of information from general business tips to covid-specific information. From these group chat rooms, she would receive advice on how to apply for government support programs such as Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), how to visit the association, what is the up-to-date guidelines on the minimum wage, as well as information on which businesses had closed. For instance, Figure 5-7, a screenshot of Sally’s group chat for the Chinese association, is illustrative of how the information exchange during the pandemic is facilitated remotely with the help of the technology.

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<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, the author’s multiple attempts to obtain approval for an interview with the Chinese Nail Salon Association failed due to heightened caution against mass media attention since the publication of the articles in *The New York Times* and the tension between South Korean and Chinese communities. Therefore, the discussion about the Chinese and Korean Nail Salon Associations is not free from selection bias owing to limited access to holistic information from both sides.

Figure 5-9. Use of social media by the Chinese Nail Salon Association (photographed by an author with permission on January 13, 2021)



Translation

A: Okay

B: The address is: 33-46 Farrington street 2fl Flushing NY 11345 (On the street that sells nails by bulk) Phone is: [highlighted black for privacy protection]

A: @ [highlighted black for privacy protection] My accountant said that the base salary is \$11.56 and the tip is \$2.35. Am I understanding it correctly?

B: (the most updated salary guidance in NY state) 12/31/2020

There has been a continuing attempt to build a cross-cultural coalition between the Korean association, KANSA, and the Chinese Nail Salon Association to increase negotiating power in the political landscape; however, this effort generated a great deal of inter-ethnic friction and ultimately failed. While the reason of the failure was unclear, Joanna, one of the active members of KANSA, tried to give her own interpretation. She attributed their failure to build a Chinese-Korean coalition to the different social systems that “capitalist Korea” and “communist China” have. Specifically, Joanna speculated that the two countries have different political ideologies, which continue to influence immigrant salon owners’ mindsets in approaching government-related issues in a foreign society. Based on her experience working with Chinese nail salon owners as a Korean group member, Joanna claimed that Chinese salon owners were more

“obedient” and willing to follow the government guidelines, rather than raising objections based on policies, because they had been used to the powerful Chinese government and political leaders in their home country. She noted:

We’ve collaborated with the Chinese association to ask for better government support, but it didn’t work well at the end of the day. I think they have a different culture. This is just my guess but it seems like Chinese people are pretty cooperative with the government. The communist government in China is very strong, right? I think that’s why they are quite obedient.

(Joanna, Korean nail salon owner, Chelsea)

Ashley’s narrative on “1980s Korea” and Joanna’s on the “communist government in China” illustrate how the transnational mode of life that immigrant nail salon owners maintain influences the way they behave and interpret social interactions in a foreign society. The case of “1980s Korea,” for instance, is evidence that the culture that people learn through interactions with homeland actors (e.g., nation-state government) persists and determines the way that they build political relationships in a host society after migration. Notably, Joanna’s connection with the relatively pro-government attitude of the Chinese salon organization, compared to KANSA, could be interpreted in two ways. First, similar to the narratives about “1980s Korea,” it may imply that the relationship that Chinese immigrants made with their homeland nation-state prior to migration as largely obedient citizens continues to influence their political attitudes and strategies in the United States. Second, this connection perhaps was wrongly made because of the entrenched transnational stigma that Korean nail salon owners have toward Chinese immigrants. Namely, Korean salon owners may view their Chinese counterparts in a stereotypical manner by drawing a dichotomous line between capitalist and communist societies and interpreting the actions of Chinese salon owners in favor of the New York state government as simply an extension of their communist pattern of behaviors.

#### *Non-participants of co-ethnic associations: politics of belonging and un-belonging*

In general, there was a growing engagement of Korean and Chinese nail salon owners in co-ethnic associations and collective actions as a response to the unprecedented economic crisis. However, these organizations failed to convert some immigrant business owners into active participants. One of the factors that led to nonparticipation was the divergence of their motivations for entrepreneurship. During the fieldwork interview, there was a difference in the

level of engagement between those who prioritized making profits and supporting families and those who run businesses for a personal lifestyle. For example, the case of Amelia fell under the latter. When asked whether she has ever participated in the Chinese association, Amelia replied:

I don't want to get involved with the government or anything like that. I'm doing this to enjoy it, so I don't want to do it in a bad mood. This is my hobby. I do it for fun. And for my health. [...] I've worked really hard the last few decades. I have a decent fortune now and I have a house in New York. My son graduated, too. I don't want anything more. I'm going to stay and survive.

(Amelia, Chinese nail salon owner, West Village)

Amelia had worked as a manicurist and helped her husband's restaurant business in Manhattan during a break for the first few years upon migrating to the United States. As soon as Amelia and her husband made enough money, she opened her own nail salons in Upper Manhattan and in West Village. When the pandemic broke out and the lockdown started, she suffered, not because she couldn't make money, but because she was bored staying at home all day. In describing the meaning of a nail salon business in her life, she repeatedly used the keywords "hobby" and "for fun." Amelia remarked that the Chinese people who actively engaged in the association's activities since its reopening were those who were desperately in need of money to support their families. Comparing herself to these active members, she noted that she had already achieved many accomplishments as a successful immigrant, such as buying a house and paying for her son's college tuition, and she wanted to simply focus on her "hobby" without getting involved in political turmoil. Her story suggests that the purpose of running a business – whether it is for survival or for leisure – may affect immigrants' participation in collective actions led by ethnic organizations.

Another factor that contributed to non-participation in ethnic associations was a weak sense of belonging to their co-ethnic, language-sharing community. Detachment from the co-ethnic community was particularly often observed in respondents from Hong Kong and Taiwan. For example, when asked if she had ever been involved in the community of the Chinese Nail Salon Association, Gianna, a nail salon owner in Sunset Park who migrated from Hong Kong, emphasized that she did not belong to that group even though she knew how to speak both Cantonese and Mandarin. Therefore, she didn't reach out to the organization for any help even though she was aware of the existence of the group and some of her Chinese salon owner fellows worked as members there. Rather, she maintained a strong identity as a Hong Kong person, and

she was making an individual effort to build a small support network with other immigrants from Hong Kong who run small businesses in Brooklyn during the pandemic. She remarked:

10 years ago, I actually worked for a Korean nail salon. I learned a lot and I experienced a lot. I loved the way they build their own community. I remember they were really close and they loved to share information. I loved that idea. It was great. The way that they function, the way that they make their system laid out, and politically taking an action together – I liked it a lot. For the Chinese specifically, no. I don't. We don't have an official association yet. But, at least, we are starting to be aware of that. We value the owner community. But for me, personally, I do that a little bit. I share information with friends from Hong Kong who own nail salons. I personally want to make an association for that, but I can't force people to join.

(Gianna, Hong Kong nail salon owner, Sunset Park)

This finding undermines the simplistic point of view of previous enclave economy scholars, who believed people from the same ethnic background share socio-cultural norms and have a strong sense of connectedness (Portes, 1987; Portes & Manning, 2005; Lee, 2019). Their heavy reliance on a methodology that sets ethnicity as a unit of analysis and assumes that co-ethnic immigrants have a similar mode of life is oversimplified. In reality, co-ethnic groups are often comprised of heterogeneous groups of populations who have cultivated separate cultural identities depending on their historical experience and their locations. For example, ethnic Koreans can identify as South Korean, North Korean, Korean Chinese, etc., and ethnic Chinese can identify with mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, etc., all influenced by combinations of colonial history, diaspora, and shifting geopolitics. As a result, co-ethnicity does not necessarily generate the automatic co-ethnic solidarity and enclave effects among immigrants. This study reveals that co-ethnic immigrants are comprised of a diverse set of populations with different transnational identities and their participation in co-ethnic organizations is largely influenced by politics of belonging and un-belonging.

#### *Inequality in transnational alliances: marginalized ethnic groups*

Other ethnic groups whose size was too small to develop a noticeable political presence in the nail salon industry were using family resources or non-coethnic business owners whom they had built trust relationships with over a long period of time. Nepalis nail salon owner, Isabella, runs a small nail salon in Astoria, Queens, with three of her Nepali workers, all of whom are cousins and sisters. Isabella used to work for her aunt's nail salon and later took over the salon at a cheap

price when her aunt decided to retire. She noted that, while her revenue is only 30% of what it used to be, her PPP loan was only enough to cover one month's rent since PPP loans are calculated based on the average monthly cost of the wages of their employees and she had a small number of registered workers. When asked whether she received assistance from any co-ethnic nail salon associations in New York, she remarked that Nepalis have no salon owners association because the history of Nepalis women entering the entrepreneurial class is relatively short. Instead, she had a heavy reliance on her family resources to ride out the present situation. Specifically, her bilingual son used his knowledge of American culture and English to interpret news materials on policy changes for her and to communicate with landlords to receive rent discounts. Isabella noted:

Cuomo has a new policy. I heard that there is a new program that connects small business lawyers who help negotiate with landlords. Rent is my biggest concern these days. [...] By this time, my son has helped me. My son interpreted news articles and government policies. My son wrote a letter to a landlord by e-mail. He's working really hard for me. Without my son, it would have been very difficult to keep up with the changing policy.  
(Isabella, Nepalis nail salon owner, Astoria)

Similarly, Mila's story demonstrates how immigrant business owners who are ethnic minorities in the sector built a collaboration with other groups beyond ethnic boundaries to cope with major disruptions. Migrating from Poland, Mila has worked as a manicurist for 30 years and opened her first nail salon in Manhattan and the second one in Williamsburg a few years before the pandemic hit. As one of the early pioneers of the nail salon industry in New York, she has been exposed to a number of interpersonal contacts with Korean nail salon owners and workers in her career and befriended them. Such long-time cross-ethnic interactions granted her access to transnational resources that had been exclusively shared within the Korean immigrant community. When the pandemic began and her business was struggling, her Korean friend recommended including facial care services in her salon and adding additional revenue sources to offset revenue losses. In collaboration with New York and Los Angeles Korean communities, she began to import facial products from Korea and provide premium facial care services for their customers. As Mila explained:

I naturally became close to Koreans because I worked in this business [nail salon] for a long time. It was my Korean friend who recommended me to do a face service together. She said that people take care of their faces, rather than their nails. Because people wear a mask all day long, it damages their skin. So, I'm getting facial care products from New York and Los



Angeles Koreans and offering facial massage services together. They [the products] are made in Korea.

(Mila, Polish nail salon owner, Williamsburg)

However, when it comes to the ethnic coalition and political power, this study reveals that one of the most noticeably disadvantaged groups was Hispanics. There were several factors that contributed to their weak ethnic alliance. First, the Hispanic community occupied a relatively small portion of the total nail salon population in New York City, compared to Korean and Chinese communities. As a result, there was comparatively little chance for them to mobilize a sizable number of members who were willing to actively organize and participate in political actions during the pandemic. Second, their short presence in the nail salon history as an entrepreneurial group led to their inexperience in political engagement as a group in a host society. Third, the Hispanic community comprised of a range of sub-groups with heterogeneous cultural heritages and historical identities, such as Ecuadorian, Mexican, and El Salvadorian, and, as a consequence, their political cohesion was weaker than Chinese and Korean, each of whom has a strong sense of nationalism and shared memories (Xu, 2000; Ahn, 2004; J. Lee et al., 2017). For example, one of the Ecuadorian interviewees complained about the absence of ethnic associations and the lack of community support:

Asians are good at working together. They survive together. We don't really. First, there are not many Ecuadorians. We have a little bit of Ecuadorian, a little bit of Mexican, a little bit of El Salvadorian, and a little bit of Venezuelan. We are like, "you do this, you do this. I do this, so I do this." We do not really work together. We compete. If someone makes an association, I want to join. I really need it. I'm holding out on my own and my partner helps me. [If you go back to the past, will you open a nail shop?] No, never. I think I'd just work as a nail tech or look for other businesses, like a beauty supplier. Or wait a little bit.

(Vanessa, Ecuadorian nail salon owner, Jackson Heights)

The pandemic further aggravated the inequality inherent in the nail salon industry by blocking a number of Hispanic manicurists from moving on to the entrepreneurial class and climbing up the social ladder in the host society. As a latecomer to the nail salon sector, Hispanic communities had long remained in the middle-to-bottom layer of the labor market, while the upper positions, such as managers and business owners were dominated by Asian communities. When the first fieldwork was undertaken in January 2020 before the coronavirus outbreak, some manicurist interviewees of Hispanic origin, such as Karina (Venezuelan) and Stella (Puerto Rican), mentioned they were saving money for starting a nail salon and becoming a boss in the

near future. However, the pandemic outbreak put significant downward pressure on their upward economic mobility; many Hispanic manicurists became trapped in their current employment roles as the salon market froze and the market unpredictability increased for the next several years. While the coronavirus pandemic has increased multiple forms of inequality, ranging from health outcomes (Bambra et al., 2020; Gravlee, 2020; Mishra et al., 2021) and human capital development (Jæger & Blaabæk, 2020; Doyle, 2020; Blundell et al., 2022), this fieldwork revealed that inequalities in entrepreneurial opportunity also grew as the pandemic-induced market disruption blocked particular groups from entering the entrepreneurial class.

One example was the story of Natasha, a nail salon manager from Mexico, who effusively explained her discouraged dream of opening her salon due to the economic disturbances caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Since 2018, she had worked for a Korean boss as a nail salon manager to learn managerial skills and to prepare for her business operation. She had minimized spending on dining, traveling, and shopping to collect the seed money for her business. Her business plan, however, encountered a significant obstacle as the epidemic event in New York City dampened consumer confidence and the government started to impose stricter hygiene guidelines to operate salon businesses. When asked whether she planned to pivot her career, she responded that a manicuring skill is not transferrable to other occupations and she should stay in this industry regardless of the economic situation. Natasha remarked that she “took a break” from her career goal, waiting for the economy to recover. She stated:

I worked as a nail technician for 18 years. Actually, I was going to open my nail salon last summer in 2020. I wanted to be prepared for it, so I started to work as a manager under a Korean boss here to learn from her how to manage a salon. For the last two years, I bought fewer clothes, didn't dine out, didn't travel, and saved a lot of money to open my salon. I wanted to open my own shop. But the covid started. It's not good timing. I'm going to continue to work as a manager and watch the situation. I don't have a future plan. My first job was as a manicurist in New York, so I don't have any other skills. Only this. This skill is useless outside. My dream is to just hang in there and open my nail salon when things get better.

(Natasha, Mexican nail salon worker, Astoria)

### *Summary*

In short, using the case of New York City nail salons, this section looked into the evolving process of a transnational alliance of immigrants in the middle of major business disruptions.

The shock of the coronavirus pandemic and rapidly changing government policies have contributed to driving numerous immigrants to communicate and collaborate closely with other nail salon owners. Whereas owners used to treat their neighboring owners as competitors and were reluctant to interact before the pandemic, they began to build strong ethnic solidarity based on class consciousness as entrepreneurs, and the importance of co-ethnic organization has grown as a result. While some co-ethnic associations attempted to create cross-cultural collaboration together, the persistent cultural norms that they brought from their homelands and stigma acted as disabling factors that blocked cooperation and prevented them from increasing political power. Furthermore, this study highlights the inequality in transnational alliances by demonstrating that ethnic minority groups in an entrepreneurial class, such as Nepalis and people from Latin American countries, were largely isolated from collective political engagements and instead heavily relied on individual efforts.

## 5.5. Conclusion

This chapter investigates the mechanisms that generate the disproportionate impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on New York City nail salons. The findings demonstrate the following features of the transclave economy in the context of recent major economic disruptions. First, the magnitude of the pandemic's impact differs depending on the business owner's gender, ethnicity, and relationship with his or her clients. Second, no significant evidence was found that employer–employee co-ethnicity predicted a better economic performance for nail salons in the midst of the pandemic, which contradicts the hypothesis of the enclave effect optimists (Portes & Bach, 1985; Olzak & Nagel, 1986; Masurel et al., 2002; Sequeira & Rasheed, 2006). However, when controlling for an owner's ethnicity, the results demonstrate that Chinese employers whose workers were mostly from the same ethnic background tended to have a better performance than their Chinese counterparts in a non-co-ethnic setting. Third, ethnic solidarity between co-ethnic workers and employers diminished as the business operation became unstable, while class consciousness and cooperation increased among co-ethnic employers. Fourth, nail salon owners and employees developed transnational strategies to cope with the economic crisis; however, such transnational resources were not extensive and were not accessible to certain ethnic groups,

such as Hispanics, thereby generating a new mode of inequality and privilege. Fifth the economic disruptions put significant pressure on ethnic associations to change, resulting in conflicts, divisions, and cross-cultural cooperation.

There are two major theoretical contributions. First, this chapter criticizes the dichotomous approach of earlier enclave economy scholarship that, for the last several decades, has debated whether the enclave effect – a beneficial relationship based on co-ethnicity – actually exists (Bailey & Waldinger, 1991; Sanders & Nee, 1992; Girard & Grenier, 2008; Bi et al., 2019). This paper argues, instead, that the enclave effect should be understood as a conditional capability that can function or underfunction depending on the time and context in which the enclave economy participants are positioned. In the context of the coronavirus pandemic, nail salon owners made a range of managerial decisions in order to save their businesses, such as layoffs of entry-level employees that resulted in negatively affecting their co-ethnic workers. By contrast, co-ethnic solidarity among employers intensified due to the necessity of exchanging pandemic-related information and practicing collective actions. Such divergent changes in the relationships between employer and employee and between employers demonstrate that the function of the enclave effect is fluid and contextual, and that it exists as a possibility that functions certain conditions are met. This persistent debate about the enclave economy between its optimists and pessimists could be resolved if the enclave effect as a mode of possibility were considered in their conceptual frameworks.

The second theoretical contribution of this chapter is derived from the criticism of the prevailing celebratory account of transnationalism scholarship. An increasing number of recent scholarly studies, especially those in the field of transnational elite studies, began to criticize the overly optimistic viewpoint of orthodox transnationalism scholarship that transnational practices are neither always empowering nor equally enjoyed by all immigrants (Cook, 2011; Andits, 2015; A. Sharma, 2018; Green, 2019). The results of this study support these pessimists' argument; it reveals that the transnational engagement of nail salon owners and workers was far from being emancipatory, extensive, and unfettered by structural oppressions. Rather, the individual freedom to perform transnational practices and utilize homeland resources to cope with the economic crisis was largely determined by where their country of origin is located in global geopolitical power relations and the global production chain. For instance, Korean and

Chinese salon owners have benefitted from a range of transferrable transnational resources, such as an uninterrupted supply of essential business items (e.g., face masks), while Hispanic and other ethnic minorities in the market were largely excluded from transnational privilege.

Empirically, this study provides implications for policymakers regarding how to accommodate the reopening plan and crisis adaptation of small businesses. Unfortunately, many small businesses in the United States entered the pandemic with already-slim margins and low financial capability (Dua et al., 2020; Kalogiannidis, 2020). Since the pandemic started in early 2020, multiple waves of coronavirus disease and shelter-in-place recommendations have led to a massive number of layoffs and permanent closures of micro- and small-sized enterprises across the nation (Sharma et al., 2018; Bartik et al., 2020; Herrera et al., 2020; Dua et al., 2020). In this chapter, the lessons drawn from the disproportionate impact of the pandemic in accordance with social contexts, such as gender and ethnicity, will help us better identify the most-vulnerable subgroups of this immigrant-dominant industry who are in need of urgent assistance from the public sector. This study will ultimately provide policy recommendations for helping small-business owners acclimate to changing market conditions and build long-term resilience against future crises.

## Appendix A List of interviewees

	Pseudonym	Occupation	Homeland	Location
1	Lia	Owner	Korea	Bayside
2	Jane	Owner	Korea	Midtown Manhattan
3	Isabella	Owner	Nepal	Astoria
4	Richard	Owner	Korea	Jackson Heights
5	Eleanor	Owner	China	Manhattan Chinatown
6	Judy	Owner	China	Flushing
7	Megan	Owner	Korea	Bayside
8	Joseph	Owner	Korea	Staten Island
9	Olivia	Worker	Ecuador	South Bronx
10	Stephanie	Owner	China	Flushing
11	Carolyn	Worker	Ecuadorian	Jackson Heights
12	Helena	Owner	China	Parkchester
13	Elizabeth	Owner	Vietnam	Corona
14	Bella	Owner	El Salvador	Jackson Heights
15	Laurel	Owner	Honduras	Jackson Heights
16	Patricia	Owner	Korea	Midtown Manhattan
17	Jenny	Owner	China	Astoria
18	Emily	Owner	Korea	Soho
19	Hope	Owner	Korea	Little Neck
20	Martin	Owner	Vietnam	Flatbush
21	Peter	Owner	Vietnam	South Bronx
22	James	Owner	Vietnam	Flatbush
23	Avery	Owner	Korea	Upper East Side
24	Crystal	Owner	Korea	Soho
25	Sarah	Owner	China	Midtown East
26	Sunny	Worker	Korea	Midtown Manhattan
27	Erin	Owner	China	Bay Ridge
28	Nora	Owner	China	Upper East Side
29	Nara	Owner	Korea	Williamsburg
30	Heather	Owner	Korea	Upper West Side
31	Camila	Owner	Nicaragua	South Bronx
32	Lily	Owner	Vietnam	South Bronx
33	Stella	Worker	Puerto Rico	South Bronx
34	Karina	Worker	Venezuela	Jackson Heights
35	Addison	Owner	Korea	Chelsea

36	Ava	Owner	Taiwan	East Side Manhattan
37	Hannah	Owner	Korea	Upper East Side
38	Charlotte	Owner	USA	Soho
39	Vanessa	Owner	Ecuador	Jackson Heights
40	Robert	Owner	Korea	Staten Island
41	Natasha	Worker	Mexico	Astoria
42	Tina	Worker	Tibet	Rego Park
43	Silvia	Owner	Ecuador	Crown Heights
44	Rosie	Owner	China	Williamsburg
45	Jin	Owner	China	Forest Hills
46	Gianna	Owner	Hong Kong	Sunset Park
47	Julie	Worker	China	Brownsville
48	Rachel	Owner	China	Flushing
49	Sam	Owner	Korea	Fort Lee
50	George	Owner	China	Homecrest
51	Gemma	Owner	China	Homecrest
52	Samantha	Owner	China	Flushing
53	Selena	Owner	China	Crown Heights
54	Claire	Worker	China	Flushing
55	Mina	Owner	China	Midtown Manhattan
56	Amelia	Owner	China	West Village
57	Joanna	Owner	Korea	Chelsea
58	Nicole	Worker	China	Crown Heights
59	Henry	Owner	Korea	Upper East Side
60	Andrew	Owner	China	Morris Heights
61	Tracy	Owner	Ukraine	Bensonhurst
62	Donna	Worker	Taiwan	Flushing
63	Teresa	Owner	Vietnam	Brighton Beach
64	Brenda	Owner	Korea	Upper East Side
65	Vickie	Worker	China	Bensonhurst
66	Harry	Owner	China	Bath Beach
67	Angela	Owner	Korea	Washington Heights
68	Valentina	Worker	China	Flushing
69	Whitney	Owner	Korea	Upper East Side
70	Skyla	Owner	Korea	Upper East Side
71	Phoebe	Owner	Korea	West Village
72	Robyn	Owner	Vietnam	Wakefield
73	Kaitlyn	Worker	USA	Staten Island

74	Eunice	Owner	Korea	Throggs Neck
75	Leona	Owner	China	Midtown Manhattan
76	Lynn	Owner	Nepal	Jackson Heights
77	Barbara	Owner	Korea	Soho
78	Betty	Owner	China	Homecrest
79	Alexa	Worker	China	Upper West Side
80	Sofia	Worker	Korea	Fort Lee
81	Dalma	Worker	China	Garment District
82	Marsha	Owner	Korea	West Village
83	Susan	Owner	China	Bay Ridge
84	Kate	Worker	China	Park Slope
85	Grace	Worker	Korea	Midtown Manhattan
86	Kelly	Owner	Korea	Downtown Brooklyn
87	Jennifer	Owner	China	Bensonhurst
88	Lynda	Owner	Korea	Garment District
89	Francisca	Worker	Ecuador	Flatbush
90	Sandy	Owner	Korea	Upper West Side
91	Denise	Owner	Korea	Midtown Manhattan
92	Ashley	Owner	Korea	Midtown Manhattan
93	Miranda	Owner	China	Park Slope
94	Sally	Worker	China	Midtown Manhattan
95	Mila	Owner	Poland	Williamsburg
96	Evelyn	Worker	Mexico	Upper East Side



## Appendix B Interview protocol

### Interview questions (Employers)

#### Business history:

- How long have you been the owner of this nail salon?
- Did you open the nail salon, or did you buy the business from a previous owner?
- How old is your nail salon?

#### Lockdown:

- Were you able to pay for your food and housing during the pandemic? What was the biggest financial difficulty you faced during the pandemic?
- Did you support your family and friends during the pandemic? If so, what worked and what did not work?
- Did you start any part-time jobs since the beginning of the pandemic? If so, please share your experiences so far.

#### Immigration:

- Were you born in the US?
- If not, when did you come to the US? Who made the decision to move? How old were you when you moved?
- What did you do for a living before working in nail salons? Please share what you like most about this job.
- Where are your employees from? Where are your customers from?

#### Rent:

- How much do you pay in rent?
- Do you have any overdue rent payments?
- Did your landlord give you a discount? Please describe your relationship with your landlord.

#### Network:

- Do you talk to other nail salon owners/family/friends often?
- Who helped you the most in the pandemic? In what ways did they help you?
- Do you receive support from a Chinese (Korean, etc.) nail salon association? If so, how helpful are they? How have they helped you?

#### Customers:

- Currently, how many customers do you have per week? Before the pandemic, how many customers did you have per week?
- Did you increase the cost of nail care services for customers? Why or why not?
- Who are your main customers? Did your main customers change after the pandemic? How?
- Have you experienced racism from your customers? If so, please share your experience.

Business size:

- Currently, how many employees do you have?
- Before the pandemic, how many employees did you have?
- Who returned to work after the lockdown was lifted? Who did not?
- How did you decide whom to keep and whom to lay off? (Skills? Languages?)

Employees:

- Did you have to pay your employees during the lockdown?
- What was the proportion of part-time and full-time employees before the pandemic?  
What is the proportion now?
- Currently, how much do you pay your employees?

## Appendix C Business disruption survey forms

### C.1. English version

#### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY**

Study on the Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the Nail Salon Industry (For Salon Owners and Employers)

Principal Investigator: Soyoung Park

Institution: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.)

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Soyoung Park from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.). The purpose of the study is to investigate what kind of difficulties nail salon employees and employers experienced during and after the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). Ultimately, I am planning to examine how the pandemic affected the nail salon industry in the United States. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

1. This survey is voluntary. You may decline to answer any or all questions and may decline further participation, at any time, without adverse consequences. The survey will last about 10 minutes.
2. You will not be compensated for this survey. However, if you would like to enter the lottery for an Amazon gift cards (\$50 for one respondent, \$10 for three respondents), please enter your email address at the end of the survey.
3. Confidentiality and/or anonymity are assured. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified as connected with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. In addition, your information may be reviewed by authorized MIT representatives to ensure compliance with MIT policies and procedures.
4. This project will be completed by August 31, 2022. All interview recordings will be stored in a secure work space until (1 year) after that date. The data will then be removed.

If you have any, please contact Soyoung Park (soypark@mit.edu) with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your time in this matter.

**I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study:**

- Yes, I agree
- No, I do not agree

#### **Part 1: Respondent information**

1.1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

1.2. What is your age?

- Under 20
- 20–29
- 30–39
- 40–49
- 50–59
- 60 or over

1.3. What is your educational attainment?

- Less than high school graduate
- High school graduate
- Technical, trade, or vocational school
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's, Doctorate, or Professional Degree
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

1.4. What is your country of origin?

- USA
- China
- India
- Korea
- Nepal
- Philippines
- Vietnam
- Bolivia
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Puerto Rico
- Venezuela
- Other (please write below): \_\_\_\_\_

1.5. In what year did you come to the United States? (for example: 2014)

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1.6. Have you ever run a business in your homeland?

- Yes
- No

## Part 2: Basic business information

2.1. What is the zip code of your nail salon? (for example: 10013)

---

2.2. Do you own or rent this building?

- Own (including purchasing it with a mortgage)
- Rent
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

2.3. In what year did you start this nail salon business? (for example: 2014)

---

2.4. What was the total amount of capital you used to start this nail salon business? (capital includes savings, other assets, and borrowed funds)

- Less than \$5,000
- \$5,000 – \$9,999
- \$10,000 – \$24,999
- \$25,000 – \$49,999
- \$50,000 – \$74,999
- \$75,000 – \$99,999
- \$100,000 – \$199,999
- \$200,000 – \$299,999
- \$300,000 – \$499,999
- \$500,000 – \$999,999
- \$1,000,000 or more
- Don't know

2.5. Are the majority of your employees from the same country as you?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

2.6. What is the primary language you use when communicating with your employees?

- Mother tongue
- English
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

2.7. What is the primary language you use when communicating with your customers?

- Mother tongue
- English
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

2.8. How many employees do you have currently?

- 0 (operated only by business owners)

- 1-4
- 5-9
- 10-14
- 15-19
- 20 or more

### **Part 3: Coronavirus Impact on Business**

3.1. What is the current status of your business operation?

- Currently open
- Temporarily closed
- Permanently closed

3.2. If you answered “currently open” above, when did you re-open your business after a government lockdown expired? (for example: August 18, 2020)

---

3.3. Since March 13, 2020, has this business received financial assistance from any of following programs from the Federal government? Choose all that apply.

- SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- SBA Loan Forgiveness
- Main Street Lending Program
- Deferral of Federal Employment Tax Deposits and Payments
- Federal Sick and Family Leave Tax Credits
- Federal Employee Retention Tax Credit
- Other Federal programs
- None of the above

3.4. Since March 13, 2020, has this business received financial assistance from any of the following New York state government programs? Choose all that apply.

- New York Forward Loan Fund (NYFLF)
- NYC Employee Retention Grant Program
- NYC Small Business Continuity Fund
- Property Tax and Interest Deferral Program (PT AID)
- Other New York programs
- None of the above

3.5. Since March 13, 2020, have you received any financial assistance from family for your business?

- Yes
- No

3.6. Since March 13, 2020, have you received any financial assistance from friend(s) for your business?

- Yes

No

3.7. Since reopening the nail salon (after the shutdown ended), have there been any instances in which you were unable to pay rent on time? If so, for how many months? (Leave this blank if you own this building)

- No, I have been able to pay the rent on time every month
- Yes, 1 month
- Yes, 2 months
- Yes, 3 months
- Yes, 4 months
- Yes, 5 months or more

3.8. Have you ever received a rent discount from your landlord, since reopening the nail salon (after the shutdown ended)? (Leave this blank if you own this building)

- Yes
- No

3.9. How much debt does your business have?

- Less than \$5,000
- \$5,000 – \$9,999
- \$10,000 – \$24,999
- \$25,000 – \$49,999
- \$50,000 – \$74,999
- \$75,000 – \$99,999
- \$100,000 – \$199,999
- \$200,000 – \$299,999
- \$300,000 – \$499,999
- \$500,000 – \$999,999
- \$1,000,000 or more
- Don't know

3.10. What was the total income for your business in December 2020 compared to December 2019?

- December 2020 income (before tax and expenses) was:
- Greater than December 2019
- Same as December 2019
- 70 – 99% of December 2019
- 50 – 69% of December 2019
- 30 – 49% of December 2019
- 20 – 29% of December 2019
- 10 – 19% of December 2019
- Less than 10% of December 2019

3.11. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the response to the Coronavirus pandemic by the government? (e.g., business lockdown, financial assistance programs)

- Very satisfied

- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

3.12. In the next 6 months, do you plan to take any of the following actions for your business? Choose all that apply.

- Apply for government assistance programs
- Discuss updated COVID-related regulations with other nail salon owners
- Ask for financial assistance from family
- Ask for financial assistance from friend(s)
- Reduce the number of employees
- Raise the price of services
- None of the above

3.13. Did this business have a change in the number of employees after the Coronavirus pandemic (March 13, 2020) ?

- Yes, increased
- Yes, decreased
- No change

3.14. Number of part-time workers and full-time workers

	2019 December (before the Coronavirus outbreak)	2020 December (after the Coronavirus outbreak)
Number of part-time workers (work less than 34 hours per week)		
Number of full-time workers (work 35 hours or more per week)		

## C.2. Chinese version

### 同意参加调查

冠状病毒大流行对美甲沙龙行业的影响研究（针对沙龙所有者和雇主）

首席研究员：朴昭怜 (Soyoung Park)

院校：麻省理工学院

您被要求参加麻省理工学院（MIT）城市研究与规划系进行的研究。这项研究的目的是调查在新型冠状病毒大流行（COVID19）之后，美甲沙龙的雇员和雇主遇到什么样的困难。最终，我计划研究这种流行病如何影响美国的美甲沙龙行业。在决定是否参加之前，请阅读以下信息，并提出任何您不了解的问题。

1.

本调查是自愿的。您可以拒绝回答任何或所有问题，并且可以随时拒绝进一步参与，而不会产生



不利后果。调查将持续约 10 分钟。

2.

您将不会为此调查获得任何补偿。但是，您可以参与抽取亚马逊礼品卡（一位受访者获得 50 美元，三位受访者获得 10 美元），请在调查结束时输入您的电子邮件地址。

3.

本次调查将确保机密性和/匿名性。与本研究相关的任何可被识别的信息将被保密，并且仅在您许可或法律要求的情况下才予以披露。此外，麻省理工学院的授权代表可能会对您的信息进行审核，以确保符合麻省理工学院的政策和程序。

4.

该项目将于 2022 年 8 月 31 日完成。所有采访记录将存储在安全的工作空间中，直到该日期之后（一年）被完全删除。

如果您有任何疑问，请与 Soyoung Park (soypark@mit.edu) 联系。谢谢您在此事上的投入。

**我了解上述程序。我的问题已经得到满意的回答，我同意参加这项研究：**

- 是的，我同意
- 不，我不同意

### **第 1 部分：受访者信息**

1.1. 你的性别是什么？

- 男
- 女
- 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

1.2. 你几岁？

- 20 岁以下
- 20–29
- 30–39
- 40–49
- 50–59
- 60 岁以上

1.3. 你的学历是什么？

- 少于高中毕业生
- 高中毕业生
- 技术，贸易或职业学校
- 学士学位
- 硕士，博士学位或专业学位
- 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

1.4. 你的出生地在哪里？

- 美国
- 中国
- 印度

- 韩国
- 尼泊尔
- 菲律宾
- 越南
- 玻利维亚
- 哥伦比亚
- 哥斯达黎加
- 多明尼加共和国
- 厄瓜多尔
- 萨尔瓦多
- 危地马拉
- 洪都拉斯
- 波多黎各
- 委内瑞拉
- 其他（请在下面填写） \_\_\_\_\_

1.5. 您是哪一年来美国的？（例如：2014 年）

---

1.6. 您曾经在自己的祖国经营过企业吗？

- 是
- 没有

## 第 2 部分：基本业务信息

2.1. 您的美甲沙龙的邮政编码是多少 (zip code)？（例如: 10013）

---

2.2. 这间店铺是您自己的还是租来的？

- 我自己的（包括以按揭的形式购买）
- 租来的
- 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

2.3. 您从哪一年开始从事美甲沙龙业务？（例如：2014 年）

---

2.4. 您用于开展美甲沙龙业务的资本总额是多少？  
（资本包括储蓄，其他资产和所有者的借贷资金）

- 少于\$ 5,000
- \$ 5,000 – \$ 9,999
- \$ 10,000 – \$ 24,999
- \$ 25,000 – \$ 49,999
- \$ 50,000 – \$ 74,999

- \$ 75,000 – \$ 99,999
- \$ 100,000 – \$ 199,999
- \$ 200,000 – \$ 299,999
- \$ 300,000 – \$ 499,999
- \$ 500,000 – \$ 999,999
- \$ 1,000,000 或以上
- 不知道

2.5. 您的大多数员工都和您来自同一国家吗?

- 是
- 没有
- 不知道

2.6. 与员工沟通时的主要语言是什么?

- 母语
- 英语
- 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

2.7. 与客户沟通时的主要语言是什么?

- 母语
- 英语
- 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

2.8. 您目前有多少名员工?

- 0 (仅由企业主操作)
- 1-4
- 5-9
- 10-14
- 15-19
- 20 以上

### 第 3 部分：冠状病毒对业务的影响

3.1. 企业经营现状如何?

- 目前开放
- 暂时关闭
- 永久关闭

3.2. 如果您回答“目前营业”，(那么在政府封锁期满后) 您什么时候重新营业的?  
(例如：2020 年 8 月 18 日)

---

3.3. 自 2020 年 3 月 13 日起，该企业是否已从联邦政府的以下任何计划中获得财政资助?

选择所有适用的。

- SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- SBA Loan Forgiveness
- Main Street Lending Program
- Deferral of Federal Employment Tax Deposits and Payments
- Federal Sick and Family Leave Tax Credits
- Federal Employee Retention Tax Credit
- 其他联邦计划
- 没有

3.4. 自 2020 年 3 月 13 日起，该企业是否已从纽约州政府的以下任何计划中获得财务资助？  
选择所有适用的。

- New York Forward Loan Fund (NYFLF)
- NYC Employee Retention Grant Program
- NYC Small Business Continuity Fund
- Property Tax and Interest Deferral Program (PT AID)
- 其他纽约计划
- 没有

3.5. 自 2020 年 3 月 13 日起，您是否收到家庭的经济资助？

- 是
- 没有

3.6. 自 2020 年 3 月 13 日起，您是否收到朋友的生意资助？

- 是
- 没有

3.7.

自美甲店重新开张（那么在政府封锁期满后）以来，您有没有遇到过不能按时交房租的情况？  
如果有的话，有几个月？（如果您拥有该建筑物，请将此留空。）

- 没有，我每个月都能按时交房租
- 有，1 个月
- 有，2 个月
- 有，3 个月
- 有，4 个月
- 有，5 个月或更多

3.8.

自美甲店重新开张（那么在政府封锁期满后）以来，房东给您的房租打过折吗？（如果您拥有该建筑物，请将此留空。）

- 有
- 没有

3.9. 您的企业有多少债务 (debt) ?

- 少于\$ 5,000
- \$ 5,000 – \$ 9,999
- \$ 10,000 – \$ 24,999
- \$ 25,000 – \$ 49,999
- \$ 50,000 – \$ 74,999
- \$ 75,000 – \$ 99,999
- \$ 100,000 – \$ 199,999
- \$ 200,000 – \$ 299,999
- \$ 300,000 – \$ 499,999
- \$ 500,000 – \$ 999,999
- \$ 1,000,000 或以上
- 不知道

3.10. 与 2019 年 12 月相比，您的企业在 2020 年 12 月的总收入是多少？  
2020 年 12 月的收入（税费前）为：

- 大于 2019 年 12 月
- 与 2019 年 12 月相同
- 2019 年 12 月的 70-99%
- 2019 年 12 月的 50-69%
- 2019 年 12 月的 30-49%
- 2019 年 12 月的 20-29%
- 2019 年 12 月的 10-19%
- 不到 2019 年 12 月的 10%

3.11. 您对政府对新型冠状病毒大流行的反应有多满意或不满意？（例如：封锁政策，  
财务援助计划）

- 非常满意
- 还算满意
- 既不满意也不不满
- 有点不满意
- 非常不满意
- 不知道

3.12. 在未来 6 个月内，您是否计划为推动生意采取以下行动？选择所有适用的。

- 申请政府援助计划
- 与其他美甲沙龙老板讨论 COVID 相关的最新法规
- 向家人寻求经济援助
- 向朋友寻求经济援助
- 减少员工人数
- 提高服务价格
- 以上都不是

3.13. 新型冠状病毒大流行（2020年3月13日）之后，您的企业的员工人数是否发生了变化？

- 是的，增加了
- 是的，减少了
- 没变化

3.14. 兼职和全职员工数

	2019年12月（冠状病毒爆发前）	2020年12月（冠状病毒爆发后）
兼职员工数量（每周工作少于34小时）		
全职员工数量（每周工作35小时或以上）		

### C.3. Korean version

#### 설문 조사 참여 동의

코로나 바이러스가 네일 살롱 산업에 미치는 영향에 관한 연구 (살롱 소유자 및 고용주 용)

책임 연구원 : 박소영 기관 : MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

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3. 기밀성 및 익명성이 보장됩니다. 이 연구와 관련하여 식별 가능한 모든 정보는 기밀로 유지되며 귀하의 허가 또는 법에서 요구하는 경우에만 공개됩니다. 또한 MIT 정책 및 절차를 준수하는지 확인하기 위해 검증된 MIT 담당자가 정보를 검토할 수 있습니다.

4. 이 프로젝트는 2022년 8월 31일까지 완료 될 예정입니다. 모든 인터뷰 녹음 내용은 해당 날짜 이후 (1년) 까지 안전한 작업 공간에 보관됩니다. 이후 데이터는 삭제됩니다.

궁금한 점이 있으시면 박소영 (soypark@mit.edu) 으로 연락 주시기 바랍니다. 귀중한 시간을

할애해 주셔서 감사합니다.

위에 설명된 절차를 이해합니다. 궁금한 점이 해결되었으며 연구 참여에 동의합니다.

- 네 동의합니다
- 아니오 동의하지 않습니다

**파트 1 : 응답자 정보**

1.1. 귀하의 성별은 무엇입니까?

- 남성
- 여성
- 기타 \_\_\_\_\_

1.2. 귀하의 나이는 무엇입니까?

- 20 세 미만
- 20-29 세
- 30-39 세
- 40-49 세
- 50-59 세
- 60 세 이상

1.3. 당신의 학력은 무엇입니까?

- 고등학교 졸업 미만
- 고등학교 졸업
- 기술, 무역 또는 직업 학교
- 학사 학위
- 석사, 박사, 또는 전문 학위
- 기타 \_\_\_\_\_

1.4. 출신 국가는 무엇입니까?

- 미국
- 중국
- 인도
- 대한민국
- 네팔
- 필리핀 제도
- 베트남
- 볼리비아
- 콜롬비아
- 코스타리카

- 도미니카 공화국
- 에콰도르
- 엘살바도르
- 과테말라
- 온두라스
- 푸에르토 리코
- 베네수엘라
- 기타 (아래에 적어 주세요) \_\_\_\_\_

1.5. 어느 해에 미국에 왔습니까? (예 : 2014)

---

1.6. 고국에서 사업을 한 적이 있습니까?

- 예
- 아니오

**2 부 : 기본 비즈니스 정보**

2.1. 네일 살롱의 우편번호 (zip code) 는 무엇입니까? (예 : 10013)

---

2.2. 이 건물을 소유하거나 임대합니까?

- 소유 (모기지 구매 포함)
- 임대
- 기타 \_\_\_\_\_

2.3. 이 네일 살롱 사업을 시작한 해는 언제입니까? (예 : 2014)

---

2.4. 이 네일 살롱 사업을 시작하는 데 사용한 총 자본 금액은 얼마입니까? (자본에는 저축, 기타 자산 및 소유주의 차입 자금이 포함됩니다)

- \$ 5,000 미만
- \$ 5,000 – \$ 9,999
- \$ 10,000 – \$ 24,999
- \$ 25,000 – \$ 49,999
- \$ 50,000 – \$ 74,999
- \$ 75,000 – \$ 99,999
- \$ 100,000 – \$ 199,999
- \$ 200,000 – \$ 299,999
- \$ 300,000 – \$ 499,999
- \$ 500,000 – \$ 999,999
- \$ 1,000,000 이상
- 모름

2.5. 대부분의 직원이 귀하와 같은 국가 출신입니까?

- 예



아니오

모름

2.6. 직원과 의사 소통 할 때 기본 언어는 무엇입니까?

모국어

영어

기타 \_\_\_\_\_

2.7. 고객과 의사 소통 할 때 기본 언어는 무엇입니까?

모국어

영어

기타 \_\_\_\_\_

2.8. 현재 직원이 몇 명입니까?

0 명 (사업주 만 운영)

1-4 명

5-9 명

10-14 명

15-19 명

20 명 이상

### 3 부 : 코로나 바이러스가 비즈니스에 끼친 영향

3.1. 사업 운영 현황은 어떻습니까?

현재 오픈

임시 폐쇄

영구 폐쇄

3.2. 위의 질문에서 "현재 오픈"이라고 답한 경우, 정부 폐쇄가 끝난 뒤 언제 비즈니스를 다시  
오픈했습니까? (예 : 2020 년 8 월 18 일)

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3.3. 2020 년 3 월 13 일 이후, 연방 정부로부터 어떤 프로그램의 재정 지원을 받았습니까?

해당하는 항목을 모두 선택하십시오.

SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)

SBA Loan Forgiveness

Main Street Lending Program

Deferral of Federal Employment Tax Deposits and Payments

Federal Sick and Family Leave Tax Credits

Federal Employee Retention Tax Credit

기타 연방 프로그램

해당 사항 없음

3.4. 2020 년 3 월 13 일 이후 뉴욕 주 정부로부터 어떤 프로그램의 재정 지원을 받았습니까?

해당하는 항목을 모두 선택하십시오.

- New York Forward Loan Fund (NYFLF)
- NYC Employee Retention Grant Program
- NYC Small Business Continuity Fund
- Property Tax and Interest Deferral Program (PT AID)
- 기타 뉴욕 프로그램
- 해당 사항 없음

3.5. 2020 년 3 월 13 일 이후로 네일 살롱 운영을 위해 가족으로부터 재정 지원을 받은 적이 있습니까?

- 예
- 아니오

3.6. 2020 년 3 월 13 일 이후로 네일 살롱 운영을 위해 친구로부터 재정 지원을 받은 적이 있습니까?

- 예
- 아니오

3.7. 네일 살롱을 재개 한 후 (shutdown 종료 이후) 제 시간에 임대료를 내지 못한 적이 있습니까? 그렇다면 몇 달 동안입니까? (해당 빌딩을 소유하고 있다면 이 항목을 비워 두십시오)

- 아니요, 매월 제 시간에 임대료를 낼 수 있었습니다
- 예, 1 개월
- 예, 2 개월
- 예, 3 개월
- 예, 4 개월
- 예, 5 개월 이상

3.8. 네일 살롱을 재개 한 후 (shutdown 종료 후) 집주인으로부터 임대료 할인을 받은 적이 있습니까? (해당 빌딩을 소유하고 있다면 이 항목을 비워 두십시오)

- 예
- 아니오

3.9. 귀하의 사업에 어느 정도의 부채 (debt) 가 있습니까?

- \$ 5,000 미만
- \$ 5,000 – \$ 9,999
- \$ 10,000 – \$ 24,999
- \$ 25,000 – \$ 49,999
- \$ 50,000 – \$ 74,999
- \$ 75,000 – \$ 99,999
- \$ 100,000 – \$ 199,999
- \$ 200,000 – \$ 299,999
- \$ 300,000 – \$ 499,999

- \$ 500,000 – \$ 999,999
- \$ 1,000,000 이상
- 모름

3.10. 2019 년 12 월과 비교하여 2020 년 12 월 귀하의 사업 총 수입은 얼마입니까?

2020 년 12 월 소득은 다음과 같습니다 (세금 및 지출 전) :

- 2019 년 12 월 수입 보다 많음
- 2019 년 12 월 수입과 동일
- 2019 년 12 월 수입의 70 ~ 99 %
- 2019 년 12 월 수입의 50 ~ 69 %
- 2019 년 12 월 수입의 30 ~ 49 %
- 2019 년 12 월 수입의 20 ~ 29 %
- 2019 년 12 월 수입의 10 ~ 19 %
- 2019 년 12 월 수입의 10 % 미만

3.11. 정부의 코로나 바이러스 전염병 대응에 얼마나 만족하시나요? (예 : 사업 lockdown, 재정 지원 프로그램)

- 매우 만족
- 다소 만족
- 만족하지도 불만족하지도 않음
- 다소 불만족
- 매우 불만족
- 모름

3.12. 앞으로 6 개월 동안 귀하의 비즈니스를 위해 다음 중 어떤 조치를 취할 계획입니까?

해당하는 항목을 모두 선택하십시오.

- 정부 지원 프로그램 신청
- 다른 네일 살롱 사장들과 업데이트 된 COVID 관련 규정에 대해 논의
- 가족에게 재정 지원 요청
- 친구에게 재정 지원 요청
- 직원 수 줄이기
- 네일 서비스 가격을 인상
- 해당 사항 없음

3.13. 이 사업은 코로나 바이러스 전염병 (2020 년 3 월 13 일) 이후 직원 수에 변화가 있었습니까?

- 예, 증가했습니다
- 예, 감소했습니다

○ 변경 없음

3.14. 시간제 근로자 (part-time workers) 및 정규직 근로자 (full-time workers) 수 (단위: 명)

	2019 년 12 월 (코로나 바이러스 발생 전)	2020 년 12 월 (코로나 바이러스 발생 후)
시간제 근로자 수 (주당 34 시간 미만 근무)		
정규직 근로자 수 (주당 35 시간 이상 근무)		

C.4. Vietnamese version

**ĐỒNG Ý THAM GIA KHẢO SÁT**

Nghiên cứu về Tác động của Đại dịch Virus Corona đối với Ngành Làm móng (Dành cho Chủ Tiệm và Chủ lao động)

Người thực hiện nghiên cứu Chính: Soyoung Park

Tổ chức: Viện Công nghệ Massachusetts (M.I.T.)

Quý vị đã được đề nghị tham gia vào một nghiên cứu được thực hiện bởi Soyoung Park của Khoa Quy hoạch và Nghiên cứu Đô thị thuộc Viện Công nghệ Massachusetts (M.I.T.). Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là để tìm hiểu những khó khăn mà nhân viên và chủ tiệm làm móng đã trải qua trong và sau đại dịch Virus Corona (COVID-19). Cuối cùng, tôi đang lên kế hoạch nghiên cứu xem đại dịch đã ảnh hưởng như thế nào đến ngành làm móng ở Hoa Kỳ. Xin vui lòng đọc thông tin bên dưới và đặt câu hỏi về bất cứ điều gì quý vị chưa hiểu trước khi quyết định có tham gia hay không.

1. Cuộc khảo sát này là tự nguyện. Quý vị có thể từ chối trả lời bất kỳ hoặc tất cả các câu hỏi và có thể từ chối tiếp tục tham gia vào bất kỳ lúc nào mà không có hậu quả bất lợi nào. Khảo sát này sẽ kéo dài khoảng 10 phút.

2. Quý vị sẽ không được trả công khi tham gia khảo sát này. Tuy nhiên, nếu quý vị muốn tham gia rút thăm để nhận thẻ quà tặng Amazon (một người trả lời sẽ nhận được 50\$ và 3 người trả lời sẽ nhận được 10\$), xin vui lòng nhập địa chỉ email của quý vị ở cuối khảo sát.

3. Tính bảo mật và/hoặc ẩn danh được đảm bảo. Mọi thông tin thu được liên quan đến nghiên cứu này và có thể được xác định là có liên quan đến quý vị sẽ được giữ bí mật, đồng thời sẽ chỉ được tiết lộ khi quý vị cho phép hoặc theo yêu cầu của pháp luật. Ngoài ra, thông tin của quý vị có thể được các đại diện được ủy quyền của MIT xem xét để đảm bảo tuân thủ các chính sách và quy trình của MIT.

4. Dự án này sẽ hoàn thành trước ngày 31 tháng 8 năm 2022. Tất cả các bản ghi phỏng vấn sẽ được lưu trữ trong một không gian làm việc an toàn cho đến (1 năm) sau ngày đó. Sau đó, dữ liệu sẽ bị loại bỏ.

Nếu bạn có bất kỳ thắc mắc nào, vui lòng liên hệ với Soyoung Park (đậu nành@mit.edu) với bất kỳ câu hỏi hoặc thắc mắc nào. Cảm ơn bạn đã dành thời gian cho vấn đề này.

**Tôi hiểu các quy trình được mô tả ở trên. Tôi đã được giải đáp một cách hài lòng cho các câu hỏi của mình và tôi đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này:**

- Có, tôi đồng ý
- Không, tôi không đồng ý

### **Phần 1 : Thông tin người trả lời**

1.1. Giới tính của quý vị là gì?

- Nam
- Nữ
- Khác: \_\_\_\_\_

1.2. Quý vị bao nhiêu tuổi?

- Dưới 20 tuổi
- 20–29 tuổi
- 30–39 tuổi
- 40–49 tuổi
- 50–59 tuổi
- 60 tuổi trở lên

1.3. Trình độ học vấn của quý vị là gì?

- Chưa tốt nghiệp trung học phổ thông
- Tốt nghiệp trung học phổ thông
- Trường kỹ thuật, thương mại hoặc dạy nghề
- Bằng Cử nhân
- Bằng Thạc sĩ, Tiến sĩ hoặc Bằng cấp Chuyên nghiệp
- Khác \_\_\_\_\_

1.4. Quốc gia xuất xứ của quý vị là gì?

- Hoa Kỳ
- Trung Quốc
- Ấn Độ
- Hàn Quốc
- Nepal
- Philippines
- Việt Nam
- Bolivia
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Cộng hòa Dominica

- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Puerto Rico
- Venezuela
- Khác (xin vui lòng ghi rõ) \_\_\_\_\_

1.5. Quý vị đến Hoa Kỳ vào năm nào? (ví dụ: 2014)

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1.6. Quý vị đã bao giờ kinh doanh ở quê hương mình chưa?

- Có
- Không

## **Phần 2: Thông tin kinh doanh cơ bản**

2.1. Tiệm làm móng của quý vị có mã zip là gì? (ví dụ: 10013)

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2.2. Quý vị sở hữu hay thuê tòa nhà này?

- Sở hữu (bao gồm cả việc mua bằng cách thế chấp)
- Thuê
- Khác \_\_\_\_\_

2.3. Quý vị bắt đầu kinh doanh tiệm làm móng này vào năm nào? (ví dụ: 2014)

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2.4. Tổng số vốn quý vị đã sử dụng để bắt đầu kinh doanh tiệm làm móng này là bao nhiêu? (vốn bao gồm tiền tiết kiệm, tài sản khác và tiền vay)

- Ít hơn 5.000\$
- 5.000\$ – 9.999\$
- 10.000\$ – 24.999\$
- 25.000\$ – 49.999\$
- 50.000\$ – 74.999\$
- 75.000\$ – 99.999\$
- 100.000\$ – 199.999\$
- 200.000\$ – 299.999\$
- 300.000\$ – 499.999\$
- 500.000\$ – 999.999\$
- 1.000.000\$ trở lên
- Không biết

2.5. Phần lớn nhân viên của quý vị có đến từ cùng quốc gia với quý vị không?

- Có
- Không

Không biết

2.6. Ngôn ngữ chính bạn sử dụng khi giao tiếp với nhân viên của mình là gì?

Bằng tiếng mẹ đẻ

Tiếng Anh

Khác \_\_\_\_\_

2.7. Ngôn ngữ chính quý vị sử dụng khi giao tiếp với nhân viên của mình là gì?

Tiếng mẹ đẻ

Tiếng Anh

Khác \_\_\_\_\_

2.8. Quý vị hiện đang có bao nhiêu nhân viên?

0 (chỉ do chủ cơ sở kinh doanh điều hành)

1-4

5-9

10-14

15-19

20 trở lên

### **Phần 3: Tác động của đại dịch Virus Corona đối với Doanh nghiệp**

3.1. Tình trạng hoạt động kinh doanh hiện tại của quý vị là gì?

Hiện đang mở cửa

Tạm thời đóng cửa

Đóng cửa vĩnh viễn

3.2. Nếu quý vị trả lời "hiện đang mở cửa" ở trên, thì quý vị đã mở cửa lại doanh nghiệp của mình vào lúc nào sau khi lệnh phong tỏa của chính phủ hết hạn? (ví dụ: ngày 18 tháng 8 năm 2020)

3.3. Kể từ ngày 13 tháng 3 năm 2020, doanh nghiệp này có nhận được hỗ trợ tài chính từ bất kỳ chương trình nào sau đây của chính phủ Liên bang không? Chọn tất cả câu trả lời phù hợp.

SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)

SBA Loan Forgiveness

Main Street Lending Program

Deferral of Federal Employment Tax Deposits and Payments

Federal Sick and Family Leave Tax Credits

Federal Employee Retention Tax Credit

Các chương trình Liên bang khác

Không có cái nào ở trên

3.4. Kể từ ngày 13 tháng 3 năm 2020, doanh nghiệp này có nhận được hỗ trợ tài chính từ bất kỳ chương trình nào sau đây của chính quyền tiểu bang New York không? Chọn tất cả các câu trả lời phù hợp.

- New York Forward Loan Fund (NYFLF)
- NYC Employee Retention Grant Program
- NYC Small Business Continuity Fund
- Property Tax and Interest Deferral Program (PT AID)
- Các chương trình khác của New York
- Không có cái nào ở trên

3.5. Kể từ ngày 13 tháng 3 năm 2020, quý vị có nhận được bất kỳ hỗ trợ tài chính nào từ gia đình cho công việc kinh doanh của mình không?

- Có
- Không

3.6. Kể từ ngày 13 tháng 3 năm 2020, quý vị có nhận được bất kỳ hỗ trợ tài chính nào từ (các) quý vị bè cho công việc kinh doanh của mình không?

- Có
- Không

3.7. Kể từ khi mở lại tiệm làm móng (sau khi ngừng hoạt động), có trường hợp nào quý vị không thể trả tiền thuê nhà đúng hạn không? Nếu có thì trong bao nhiêu tháng? (Để trống phần này nếu bạn sở hữu tòa nhà.)

- Không, tôi có thể trả tiền thuê nhà đúng hạn hàng tháng
- Có, 1 tháng
- Có, 2 tháng
- Có, 3 tháng
- Có, 4 tháng
- Có, 5 tháng trở lên

3.8. Kể từ khi mở cửa lại tiệm làm móng (sau khi lệnh đóng cửa kết thúc), quý vị có bao giờ được chủ nhà giảm tiền thuê nhà không? (Để trống phần này nếu bạn sở hữu tòa nhà.)

- Có
- Không

3.9. Doanh nghiệp của quý vị nợ bao nhiêu tiền?

- Ít hơn 5.000\$
- 5.000\$ – 9.999\$
- 10.000\$ – 24.999\$
- 25.000\$ – 49.999\$
- 50.000\$ – 74.999\$
- 75.000\$ – 99.999\$
- 100.000\$ – 199.999\$
- 200.000\$ – 299.999\$
- 300.000\$ – 499.999\$



- 500.000\$ – 999.999\$
- 1.000.000\$ trở lên
- Không biết

3.10. Tổng thu nhập cho việc kinh doanh của quý vị vào tháng 12 năm 2020 so với tháng 12 năm 2019 là bao nhiêu? Thu nhập tháng 12 năm 2020 (trước khi trừ thuế và chi phí) là:

- Nhiều hơn tháng 12 năm 2019
- Giống như tháng 12 năm 2019
- 70 – 99% của tháng 12 năm 2019
- 50 – 69% của tháng 12 năm 2019
- 30 – 49% của tháng 12 năm 2019
- 20 – 29% của tháng 12 năm 2019
- 10 – 19% của tháng 12 năm 2019
- Dưới 10% của tháng 12 năm 2019

3.11. Xin vui lòng cho biết mức độ hài lòng hay bất mãn của quý vị với phản ứng của chính quyền đối với đại dịch Virus Corona? (ví dụ: lệnh đóng cửa doanh nghiệp, các chương trình hỗ trợ tài chính)

- Rất hài lòng
- Hơi hài lòng
- Không hài lòng cũng không bất mãn
- Hơi bất mãn
- Rất bất mãn
- Không biết

3.12. Trong 6 tháng tới, quý vị có dự định thực hiện hành động nào sau đây cho doanh nghiệp của mình không? Chọn tất cả các câu trả lời phù hợp.

- Nộp đơn xin các chương trình hỗ trợ của chính phủ
- Thảo luận về các quy định cập nhật liên quan đến COVID với các chủ tiệm làm móng khác
- Hỏi xin hỗ trợ tài chính từ gia đình
- Hỏi xin hỗ trợ tài chính từ bạn bè
- Giảm số lượng nhân viên
- Tăng giá dịch vụ
- Không có điều nào ở trên

3.13. Doanh nghiệp này có thay đổi số lượng nhân viên sau đại dịch Virus Corona (13/03/2020) không?

- Có, đã tăng
- Có, đã giảm
- Không thay đổi

3.14. Số lượng nhân viên bán thời gian và nhân viên toàn thời gian

	Tháng 12 năm 2019 (trước khi đại dịch Virus Corona bùng phát)	Tháng 12 năm 2020 (sau khi đại dịch Virus Corona bùng phát)

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Số lượng nhân viên bán thời gian (làm việc dưới 34 giờ mỗi tuần)

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Số lượng nhân viên toàn thời gian (làm việc 35 giờ trở lên mỗi tuần)

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## C.5. Spanish version

### **CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN LA ENCUESTA**

Estudio sobre el impacto de la pandemia de coronavirus en la industria de los salones de uñas (para propietarios y empleadores de salones)

Investigador principal: Soyoung Park Institución: Instituto de Tecnología de Massachusetts (MIT)

Se le ha pedido que participe en un estudio de investigación realizado por Soyoung Park del Departamento de Estudios Urbanos y Planificación del Instituto de Tecnología de Massachusetts (MIT). El propósito del estudio es investigar qué tipo de dificultades experimentan los empleados y empleadores de los salones de belleza después de la pandemia del coronavirus (COVID-19). En última instancia, se planea examinar cómo la pandemia afectó a la industria de los salones de belleza en los Estados Unidos. Lea la información a continuación y haga preguntas sobre cualquier cosa que no comprenda antes de decidir si desea participar o no.

1. Esta encuesta es voluntaria. Puede negarse a responder alguna o todas las preguntas y puede negarse a seguir participando, en cualquier momento, sin ninguna consecuencia. La encuesta durará unos 10 minutos.
2. No recibirá ninguna compensación por esta encuesta. Sin embargo, si desea participar en la lotería de las tarjetas de regalo de Amazon (\$ 50 para un encuestado, \$ 10 para tres encuestados), ingrese su dirección de correo electrónico al final de la encuesta.
3. Se asegura la confidencialidad y / o el anonimato. Cualquier información que se obtenga en relación con este estudio y que pueda identificarse con usted permanecerá confidencial y se divulgará solo con su permiso o según lo requiera la ley. Además, su información puede ser revisada por representantes autorizados del MIT para garantizar el cumplimiento de las políticas y procedimientos del MIT.
4. Este proyecto se completará el 31 de agosto de 2022. Todas las grabaciones de las entrevistas se almacenarán en un espacio de trabajo seguro hasta (1 año) después de esa fecha. Entonces se eliminarán los datos.

Si tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud por favor comuníquese con Soyoung Park (soypark@mit.edu). Gracias por su tiempo en este asunto.

Entiendo los procedimientos descritos anteriormente. Mis preguntas han sido respondidas satisfactoriamente y acepto participar en este estudio:

Sí, estoy de acuerdo

No, no estoy de acuerdo

Parte 1 : Información del encuestado

1.1. ¿Cuál es su género?

Masculino

Femenino

Otro \_\_\_\_\_

1.2. ¿Cuál es su edad?

Menos de 20

20-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60 o más

1.3. ¿Cuál es su nivel educativo?

Menos que graduado de secundaria

Graduado de preparatoria

Escuela técnica, comercial o vocacional

Licenciatura

Maestría, Doctorado o Título Profesional

Otro \_\_\_\_\_

1.4. ¿Cual es su país de origen?

Estados Unidos

China

India

Corea

Nepal

Filipinas

Vietnam

Bolivia

Colombia

Costa Rica

República Dominicana

Ecuador

El Salvador

Guatemala

Honduras

Puerto Rico

Venezuela

Otro (escriba a continuación) \_\_\_\_\_

1.5. ¿En qué año vino a Estados Unidos? (por ejemplo: 2014)

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1.6. ¿Ha dirigido alguna vez un negocio en su país de origen?

- Sí
- No

Parte 2: Información empresarial básica

2.1. ¿Cuál es el código postal de su salón de uñas (zip code) ? (por ejemplo: 10013)

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2.2. ¿Es propietario o alquila este edificio?

- Propio (incluida la compra con hipoteca)
- Alquilado
- Otro \_\_\_\_\_

2.3. ¿En qué año comenzó este negocio de salón de uñas? (por ejemplo: 2014)

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2.4. ¿Cuál fue la cantidad total de capital que utilizó para iniciar este negocio de salón de uñas? (el capital incluye ahorros, otros activos y fondos prestados del propietario)

- Menos de \$ 5,000
- \$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999
- \$ 10,000 - \$ 24,999
- \$ 25,000 - \$ 49,999
- \$ 50,000 - \$ 74,999
- \$ 75,000 - \$ 99,999
- \$ 100,000 - \$ 199,999
- \$ 200,000 - \$ 299,999
- \$ 300,000 - \$ 499,999
- \$ 500,000 - \$ 999,999
- \$ 1,000,000 o más
- No sé

2.5. ¿Son la mayoría de sus empleados del mismo país que usted?

- Sí
- No
- No sé

2.6. ¿Cuál es el idioma principal al comunicarse con sus empleados?

- Lengua materna
- Inglés
- Otro \_\_\_\_\_

2.7. ¿Cuál es el idioma principal al comunicarse con sus clientes?

- Lengua materna

- Inglés
- Otro \_\_\_\_\_

2.8. ¿Cuántos empleados tiene actualmente?

- 0 (operado solo por dueños de negocios)
- 1-4
- 5-9
- 10-14
- 15-19
- 20 o más

Parte 3: Impacto del Coronavirus en las empresas

3.1. ¿Cuál es el estado actual de las operaciones comerciales?

- Actualmente abierto
- Cerrado temporalmente
- Cerrado permanentemente

3.2. Si respondió "Actualmente abierto" arriba, ¿cuándo volvió a abrir su empresa después de que expirara un bloqueo gubernamental? (por ejemplo: 18 de agosto de 2020)

---

3.3. Desde el 13 de marzo de 2020, ¿esta empresa ha recibido asistencia financiera de alguno de los siguientes programas del gobierno federal? Elija todas las que correspondan.

- SBA Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- SBA Loan Forgiveness
- Main Street Lending Program
- Deferral of Federal Employment Tax Deposits and Payments
- Federal Sick and Family Leave Tax Credits
- Federal Employee Retention Tax Credit
- Otros programas federales
- Ninguna

3.4. Desde el 13 de marzo de 2020, ¿esta empresa ha recibido asistencia financiera de alguno de los siguientes programas del gobierno del estado de Nueva York? Elija todas las que correspondan.

- New York Forward Loan Fund (NYFLF)
- NYC Employee Retention Grant Program
- NYC Small Business Continuity Fund
- Property Tax and Interest Deferral Program (PT AID)
- Otros programas de Nueva York
- Ninguna

3.5. Desde el 13 de marzo de 2020, ¿ha recibido alguna ayuda económica de su familia para su negocio?

- Sí
- No

3.6. Desde el 13 de marzo de 2020, ¿ha recibido alguna ayuda económica de amigos para su negocio?

- Sí
- No

3.7. Desde que reabrió el salón de uñas (después de que terminó el cierre), ¿ha habido algún caso en el que no pudo pagar el alquiler a tiempo? Si es así, ¿durante cuántos meses? (Deje esto en blanco si es dueño del edificio.)

- No, he podido pagar el alquiler a tiempo todos los meses.
- Sí, 1 mes
- Sí, 2 meses
- Sí, 3 meses
- Sí, 4 meses
- Sí, 5 meses y más

3.8. ¿Ha recibido alguna vez un descuento de alquiler por parte de su arrendador desde que reabrió el salón de manicura (después de que terminó el cierre)? (Deje esto en blanco si es dueño del edificio.)

- Sí
- No

3.9. ¿Cuánta deuda tiene su empresa (debt) ?

- Menos de \$ 5,000
- \$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999
- \$ 10,000 - \$ 24,999
- \$ 25,000 - \$ 49,999
- \$ 50,000 - \$ 74,999
- \$ 75,000 - \$ 99,999
- \$ 100,000 - \$ 199,999
- \$ 200,000 - \$ 299,999
- \$ 300,000 - \$ 499,999
- \$ 500,000 - \$ 999,999
- \$ 1,000,000 o más
- No sé

3.10. ¿Cuáles fueron los ingresos totales de su negocio en diciembre de 2020 en comparación con los de diciembre de 2019?

Los ingresos de diciembre de 2020 (antes de impuestos y gastos) fueron:

- Mayores que en diciembre de 2019
- Iguales que en diciembre de 2019
- Entre 70% y 99% iguales que en diciembre de 2019
- Entre 50% y 69% iguales que en diciembre de 2019

- Entre 30% y 49% iguales que en diciembre de 2019
- Entre 20% y 29% iguales que en diciembre de 2019
- Entre 10% y 19% iguales que en diciembre de 2019
- Inferiores a un 10% de los de diciembre de 2019

3.11. ¿Qué tan satisfecho o insatisfecho está con la respuesta del gobierno a la pandemia de Coronavirus? (por ejemplo: cierre de negocios, programas de asistencia financiera)

- Muy Satisfecho
- De alguna manera satisfecho
- Ni satisfecho ni insatisfecho
- De alguna manera insatisfecho
- Muy insatisfecho
- No sé

3.12. En los próximos 6 meses, ¿tiene previsto llevar a cabo alguna de las siguientes acciones para su negocio? Elija todos los que correspondan.

- Solicitar programas de asistencia del gobierno
- Debatir las regulaciones actualizadas relacionadas con el COVID con otros dueños de salones de uñas
- Pedir ayuda económica a la familia
- Pedir ayuda económica a un amigo(s)
- Reducir el número de empleados
- Aumentar el precio de los servicios
- Ninguna de las anteriores

3.13. ¿Tuvo este negocio un cambio en la cantidad de empleados después de la pandemia de Coronavirus (13 de marzo de 2020)?

- Sí, aumentado
- Sí, disminuido
- Ningún cambio

3.14. Número de trabajadores a tiempo parcial y trabajadores a tiempo completo

	2019 Diciembre (antes del brote de coronavirus)	2020 Diciembre (después del brote de coronavirus)
Número de trabajadores a tiempo parcial (trabajan menos de 34 horas semanales)		
Número de trabajadores a tiempo completo (trabajan 35 horas semanales o más)		

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