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Abstract:

Drawing on oral histories of first generation Korean guestworker women who were nurses in Germany, this article provides addresses the little discussed Korean guestworker women and their everyday constructions of belonging. This article addresses how these everyday experiences of embodied belonging act as critical resources to this making of home and to conceptions of home, identity and belonging. By looking at these practices as resources the article aims to highlight these important ways that these Korean women made homes in new places, and offers up a different account of difference and diaspora that challenge integration and assimilation as the only means through which diasporic peoples can live in Germany.

Keywords:

Diaspora, homemaking, translocality, migration, urban multicultural

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Biography:

Dr. Helen Kim is a Lecturer in Media and Communication at the University of Leeds. Her book, *Making Diaspora in a Global City: South Asian Youth Cultures in London* was published by Routledge in 2015. Her research and teaching interests include the areas of race and racialization, diaspora, queer cultures and the urban.

Title: Making homes here and away: Korean German nurses and practices of diasporic belonging

Abstract:

Drawing on oral histories of first generation Korean guestworker women who were nurses in Germany, this article provides addresses the little discussed Korean guestworker women and their everyday constructions of belonging. This article addresses how these everyday constructions of belonging are built through the making of home in new places. The article highlights these constructions as important set of diasporic resources that these Korean women cultivated that helped them find new communities and connections in ways that grounded and sustained them. The article offers up a different account of difference and diaspora that challenge mainstream models of integration and assimilation as the only means through which diasporic peoples navigate belonging in Germany.

Keywords:

Diaspora, homemaking, translocality, migration, urban multicultural

Introduction:

In 1963, the first of the Korean guestworker nurses arrived in Germany. At the time, Germany was suffering a severe labor shortage and thus welcomed the opportunity to receive Korean workers. Over the next few years, often through Christian missionaries, more Korean nurses arrived in Germany. By 1969, an official economic agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of South Korea brought 8000 Korean miners to Germany. In 1970, a similar agreement brought approximately 10,000 more female nurses from Korea. Some of these guestworkers eventually returned to Korea, and many went on to migrate to the USA and Canada. While exact numbers vary, some accounts say that at least about half of the original 18000 settled in Germany.

The majority of these guestworkers were in their twenties. They had left Korea when it was a poor country devastated by the Korean War. Korean nurse migration to Germany was considered the largest voluntary migration in Korean migration history up to that point (Shin, 2011; Lee and Moon, 2013; Won, 2009). According to Lee and

Moon (2013), the nurses sent back over 1 million US dollars in remittances between 1967-1973 to their families in South Korea. Economic remittances sent by these guestworkers continues to be a central feature within a nationalist narrative of the reconstruction of South Korea, in which these guestworkers helped to materially (through their remittances) rebuild post-war South Korea. Indeed, in 2013, the (then) President Park Geun Hye, the daughter of ex-President Park Chang Hee, in her inauguration speech, acknowledged that the Republic of South Korea was built on the ‘blood, toil and sweat of the people’ and officially invited some of these former miners and nurse guestworkers to the inauguration ceremony (Park, 2013).

The article addresses crucial gaps in contemporary European sociological research on migration in three distinct ways. Firstly, the article focuses on the Korean guestworker diaspora, who are less studied and discussed in Germany, despite their continuing presence from the 1970s onward. There have been some excellent studies that have focused on memories of Korean migration (Kim, 2009), or on Korean immigration experiences as a whole (Lee and Moon, 2013), or have even focused on guestworker experiences but primarily for a German-speaking or Korean audience (Ahn, 2014; Berner, and Choi, 2006; Roberts, 2017). While these accounts have drawn upon these Korean women’s experiences, there hasn’t yet been an account of these guestworker experiences in relation to home-making. The focus on these everyday practices enables an exploration of the making of place as process, as a “culture of circulation” that is continually produced through encounters, links and subjectivities (Lee and LiPuma, 2002, p. 192). Indeed, in looking at these new constructions of ‘home’, we see how it is constructed locally, and grounded through diasporic practices of emplacement and belonging. Consequently, the article aims to make a contribution to research on migration by arguing for the continuing importance of diaspora as a framework to understand these women’s experiences in making Berlin a home. I argue that the lived experiences and memories necessitates a diasporic lens through which to understand their lives. Scholars of diaspora stress the ways that home and identity can be multiply located, and that diasporic belonging is rooted in the ‘here’ of the present, and the ‘there’ of the past (Alexander, 2010; Brah, 1996; Hall 1990; Gilroy, 1993; Ellis, 2015).

Therefore, this article aims to re-imagine and re-invigorate concepts of diasporic belonging and on ‘home’ in order to show how important it is to focus on the lived experiences in the everyday. These experiences are especially

prescient and important in light of the backlash against migration—articulated through President Trump’s demands for border walls, Brexit, and in the rise of the far right across Europe and North America. This backlash means that questions over who gets to settle, who gets to belong, and who gets to call a place ‘home’, become central questions within political public debates in the UK, Europe and the US. This article aims to show how these questions of belonging are underpinned by particular assumptions about who can belong and under what conditions.

Methodology

In this article, I focus on the stories of four Korean guestworker women, as told to me in the interviews, and shown in the photographs they shared with me, and imbued in the beloved objects they collected and displayed in their homes. The article drew from a larger oral history project where I interviewed, in total, 25 Korean Germans (first and second-generation diaspora members) living in Germany. While interviews were also done with the second-generation Koreans within the larger oral history project, I only focus on the interviews with the first generation Koreans in this article. I conducted these interviews in Korean, and had them translated into English. Twelve interviews were conducted in Berlin and fifteen interviews were conducted in other parts of Germany, primarily in the Nordrhein Westphalen region of Germany. A purposive sample was used with gatekeepers and where I used existing networks of family friends and associates.

As a Korean American researcher whose own parents had gone to Germany as guestworkers, I had felt a special connection to this first generation of interviewees, who reminded me so much of my own parents. I had assumed that this would be reciprocated, but this was often not the case. In fact, it was really important to be connected to the community through crucial gate-keepers. One such important gatekeeper was Nina, who connected me with these three women whose stories are included in this paper. Nina was doing her master’s dissertation with Korean women who had married German men. She also worked with a Berlin-based grassroots advocacy organization for Korean issues, and that was where she had gotten to know and befriend these politically active women. Nina put

me in touch with four women, Ms. Park, Ms. Kim, and Ms. Ree, and Ms. Nah, who all invited me to their homes in Berlin to be interviewed.

For this article, alongside interviews, photo elicitation was a key approach that I used to access these women's memories, emotions, and experiences. However, in particular, these stories came alive in the homes of these women, in the staging of these photographs, and in the telling of these stories and memories that are captured in the photos. Out of the interviews, four of the interviews were conducted at the homes of these women, and therefore I use these women's stories, memories told to me while in their homes to highlight homemaking and belonging. While I interviewed others in their homes elsewhere in Germany, these were the only interviews I had done at the homes of women in Berlin.

We spent long afternoons together in their homes, chatting over coffee and cake, and eventually dragging out and opening up leather and cloth-bound photo albums that were so recognizable from my own childhood growing up in a Korean home. Under those plastic protective sheets were photos of loved ones, of family and friends, of adventures and carefully selected and arranged photos of younger selves posing in front of famous monuments throughout Europe. Using photo-elicitation as an interview tool afforded these interviews a different, richly textured narrative structure that was absent in other interviews. As a method, it enabled these women to locate particular memories through the textures of the everyday, "spinning out their respective worlds of meaning" (Harper, 2002: 22). They opened up ways of thinking about memory, of identity and of belonging, as "intimate dimensions of the social" (Clark-Ibanez, 2004). The use of photographs to facilitate a particular mode of knowing through these memories are made possible in part through the photographs themselves.

Equally significant was the more collaborative process that these interviews underwent through the incorporation of photos. All of these women had been interviewed in the past by researchers and in one case, by a documentary filmmaker who focused on Korean nurses who had migrated to Germany. According to these women, these previous interviews, conducted in Korean, involved a more formal process of questioning and answering. In my case, I wanted to try and make it as informal and non-hierarchical as possible. Asking my participants to narrate

these photographs allowed for these women to use photographs as a particular tool of communication that shifted the balance between us as researcher and participant. Our mutual interest and delight in the photographs and the accompanying narratives also provided a space to access new or forgotten memories and meanings of experiences that would not have otherwise come up within the verbal interviews. It also challenged/redistributed the power balance between us. For example, rather than just answering my questions, the photographs of their past created a genuine dialogue and conversations where my participants asked me many questions about my life, about my parents' lives and experiences as guestworkers themselves.

The interviews themselves were open-ended, with lots of room to engage in spontaneous questions and conversations. With all of my interviews, when we first would sit down to talk, I was asked what kind of questions would be asked of them. I would let them know that this would be more of a conversation and a chance to hear what I'd referred to as their 'yaetnal iyagi', or also known as their stories of the past. By calling them stories, I wanted to convey to my interviewees that these were less like being interviewed, and more about listening to what they wanted to tell me. Having said that, it was also important to give the interviews a structure and to make the women feel more comfortable, so the first hour would begin with asking some standard questions. I asked them their age, place of birth, number of siblings, the town where they grew up, etc. I'd arranged the questions in a chronological order, asking questions about their recollections of their youth spent in Korea. Then I'd move on to questions about Germany and when they migrated, and asked them about their memories of their first years in Germany. For four of the five women, I also asked them questions about their husbands, and their children as well. Eventually we would get to the present day where, with all of the women, we would discuss their continuing relationship to Korea, and how often they would visit Korea. For all of the women interviewed, we all had extensive discussions on whether they would move back to Korea. As all of the women were retired, this was a topic or a question that was commonly asked. As we became more comfortable with each other, the interviews began to resemble and take on a more open-ended, dialogical form.

Reflecting on these interviews allowed me to understand that throughout this process of touring, of talking and of poring over photographs together, my positionality as an interviewer did not remain fixed. How I was perceived by

my participants throughout the interview, based on what I revealed about myself, my life in the US, and my parents' stories about Germany, encouraged them to see both aspects of commonality and difference and thus enabled me to be multiply positioned throughout the interview process (Song and Parker, 1995). Once my participants would inquire about my parents, they would consider me as someone like them. Moreover, my Korean, while not fluent, was much better than most second-generation Korean Germans. However, there were points when my participants would sometimes use a German word, and because my German was rudimentary, at best, this would remind them that I was American rather than German. Therefore, the various commonalities and differences positioned me in different ways to my participants that then constrained and opened up the interview process.

Germany's Problems with Integration and Difference

From the post-war period up until 1973, West Germany had two parallel programs to respond to a labor shortage. Ethnic Germans, called 'Aussiedler' from Poland, Russia, Romania and other Eastern European countries emigrated to Germany. From the 1960s, Germany also recruited guestworkers or 'gastarbeiter' primarily from Turkey, Yugoslavia, and Italy as well as other countries including South Korea. While the Aussiedler were given the right to immigrate to the Federal Republic, and access to full citizenship rights, the 'gastarbeiter, also known as the 'Auslander' were only granted temporary visas and were not automatically given access to citizenship (Koopmans, 1999). When the guestworker program ended in 1973, (a move that was highly supported by the German public), the intention was that these guestworkers would return to their countries of origin. However, over the past fifty years, (West) Germany had almost 30 million immigrants, many of whom settled in the country (Green, 2004). Therefore, while the intention was never to have these 'gastarbeiter' stay in Germany over a long period, almost three million of those recruited during these years settled there with their families (Green, 2004).

Despite significant levels of immigration, Germany had claimed that it was 'not a country of immigration' (Green, 2004; Brubaker, 1992; Koopmans, 1999). Many scholars argue that this refusal is also reflected in Germany's lack of an explicit immigration policy.

Moreover, in contrast to other countries with high immigrant populations, such as the US, UK and France where citizenship is based on *jus soli* (citizenship based on the country of birth), Germany's citizenship laws are descent-based, or *jus sanguinis*. Germany's 'Foreigner Law' in 1965, revised in 1990, outlines categories of legal residence and naturalization (Senders, 1996) and has since been amended in 2005 to be called the Residence Act. Germany's process of naturalization was amended in 1993, so as to ease some restrictions around naturalization. However, naturalization rates were very low, because Germany's immigration was tied to the vision and intention of only recruiting short-term labour migrants and having them return (Zick et al, 2001; Esses et al, 2006). Green (2004) has argued that these policies of immigration are typically those of exclusion rather than inclusion and is more prevalent in Germany than in other countries with similar immigration rates.

Germany's immigration policies that were formed to discourage naturalization have fundamentally shaped how immigrants are constructed and positioned in German society. High rates of xenophobia and racism highlight how difficult it is for immigrants to navigate the contradictions of Germany's immigration policy. In fact, an impossible bind is placed upon immigrants. Germany's disavowal in being a country of immigration reflects the inability to accept immigrants as part of the German nation, such that guestworkers will always be seen and treated as temporary workers expected to return to their respective countries. Thus, Germans will never accept these immigrants into the fold in becoming 'real' Germans. They will always remain 'Auslander' or 'foreign'.

At the same time, there is an explicit expectation placed on immigrants to integrate or assimilate into German society (Nandi and Spickard, 2014) However, this is often an impossible thing to achieve for most migrants in Germany, as it is not about integrating but often a way of punishing migrants for their cultural differences (White, 1997; Ehrkamp, 2005). Fluency in the German language becomes the primary means through which migrants are expected to demonstrate their successful integration. In fact, a German MP named Friedrich Merz stated a similar expectation in 2000 when he said that 'foreigners' should learn German, as well as 'accept our conventions, customs and habits' (Ehrkamp, 2006: 1673).

Coinciding with the claim that Germany was not a country of immigration, in 2010, Angela Merkel famously declared that multiculturalism had failed in Germany and was 'dead'. This declaration of the 'death' of multiculturalism occurred in spite of the fact that few state multiculturalism policies were in fact, in existence. Instead, this declaration signaled an increasing anxiety around immigration and a greater push towards integration. In effect, it blamed immigrants in Germany for failing to integrate into a (seemingly) cohesive and singular national culture. The failure to integrate has long been an accusation for Germans, with certain communities who have been long-standing targets of such blame, such as the Turkish, who are often labeled 'problematic'. This view of Turkish residents in Germany is often justified by the claim/belief that they refuse to assimilate into German society and instead that the Turkish self-segregate and thus create 'parallel societies' (Gruner, 2010). Similar to the UK, in Germany, discourses around integration and immigration often link immigration with spatial segregation, namely that they associate immigrants with problematic neighborhoods. Problematic neighborhoods are associated with high levels of crime and violence and are often highly segregated neighborhoods. These forms of segregation and 'ghettoization' are often blamed on immigrants, who are seen as 'antisocial' and deliberate unwilling to live amongst white Germans (Gruner, 2010).

Terms such as 'Auslander' (foreigner) are used to refer to those who are perceived as being 'Other' and this can include Eastern Europeans, Turkish and Asians. Similarly, someone who is visibly nonwhite is often referred to as a person with a 'migration background' (Nandi and Spickard, 2014). While the concept of race tends to be avoided in Germany as it is associated with the country's Nazi past, whiteness is key to how Germans define themselves as belonging to the German nation. Thus, those who are considered foreigners or descendants of migrants are often considered to be non-German. There is often a reluctance to recognize non-whites as Germans.

As is the case in all multicultural nations, racialized hierarchies position minority groups differently. Moreover, integrationist discourses are prevalent and central to how immigration, 'race' and otherness are framed. Immigrants in Germany (and elsewhere) are often accused of failing to integrate into white, mainstream German society, however, certain immigrant groups are targeted more than others. East Asians in Germany are often perceived to be the 'model minority' and have generally been considered to have integrated successfully into German society.

Similar to the US, Asians are often constructed as ‘industrious’, ‘hard-working’, ‘quiet’ and ‘law-abiding’. In particular, the second-generation diaspora is often seen as being very successful and fully integrated members of German society, with high levels of economic and educational achievement. This positive stereotyping reinforces the view that East Asians are a homogenous and monolithic racial group and it obscures the fact that structural and individual forms of racism continue to shape East Asian experiences in Germany. At the same time, it is important to draw attention to the existence of the model minority stereotype because it reflects how racialized hierarchies position groups differently and how it confers privilege to certain groups based on the notion that ‘they’ are more or less like ‘us’.

In looking at these Korean guestworker women and their constructions of belonging, this article directly challenges these discourses of integration or assimilation that still persist in Germany. Drawing upon a distinctly diasporic framework offers a way of conceptualizing and narrating the Korean guestworkers’ experiences beyond that of ‘integration’, or assimilation that persist within German discourses around migration and ethnic minority communities settled in Germany. One of the most important contributions that diasporic literature has made has been in pushing back and de-centring the nation state in questions of identity and belonging. Moreover, diasporic constructions of home challenge this narrow model of ‘successful integration’ because it reveals how forms of belonging are constructed along multiple axes, and through various networks and ties. Belonging does not have to be centered on being settled, or on any adherence to a monolithic set of cultural practices.

In the next section, I include a brief literature review on the continued importance of diaspora and ideas of homing that emerge from diaspora studies that center my own research on the Korean guestworker diaspora and home.

Literature on diaspora and transnational belonging

Diaspora scholars have long insisted on the importance of paying attention to diasporic connections and spaces towards understanding migration and stasis. While earlier conceptions of diaspora might have been more about its use as a typological tool to point out grounded facts, this has given way to thinking about diaspora as a social

process (Anthias, 1998; Alexander, 2010; Kalra, Kaur and Hutnyk, 2005) that offers a more critical theoretical engagement with difference (Alexander, 2010). Stuart Hall's groundbreaking work on diaspora, culture and identity, especially through the lens of cultural practices and production, was deeply influential in shifting the focus of diaspora studies to look at identity and diaspora as fluid and shifting processes that were constantly being remade. Hall's work inspired a generation of scholars to look at identity through the pivotal lens of diaspora, that is, to see identity as something "not in the past to be found, but in the future to be created" (1995: 14). Similarly, Brah's concept of 'diaspora space' emphasized the making and re-making of identity formations in the here and now. In particular, Brah (1996) emphasized how diasporic spaces offered the ability to make friendships and affinities with people who are not ethnically 'the same', and her work highlighted how the boundaries that exist between 'natives' who belong and 'diasporeans' was challenged by the ability to create and be in these diasporic spaces. This understanding of diaspora is about rejecting this concept as a given category but as an active, self-fashioning and political 'stance', through arguing that identity is about 'becoming'. In particular, it is important to apply this framing of diaspora to understand it as something beyond a theoretical concept. This view of diaspora, as a positioning that actively fashioned, and strategic, is highlighted within this article. The work of Brah and others are used to inform how participants create and fashion diasporic affiliations and develop practices of belonging.

Moreover, important work has been done to highlight the intimate connections between diasporic belonging and home-making, with particular emphasis on the politics of identity and belonging that are often attached to the making of home. Blunt (2006, 2007) echoes this in arguing for a scholarship on home and belonging that emphasize how home is a deeply political space rather than just a private one devoid of such political acts, which allows for everyday experiences and material objects and culture to have political significance. Moreover, the symbolic and material significance of the home also highlights the central role of women's experiences of migration and their negotiation of family ties and relationships and the ways in which migration can unbind and remake these familial relationships (Asis, 2004). In particular, work on diaspora that concentrates on how people display and decorate their homes are useful because they reveal how these displays are both about the development of cultural performances and about building new landscapes of belonging. For example, Tolia-Kelly's focus on the installation of material artefacts within diasporic homes make new landscapes of belonging, inscribing memory

and cultural narratives in and through the ‘syncretized textures’ within these homes (2004: 315). Critically, Avtar Brah (1996) wrote that diasporic conceptions of home need to be distinguished as being in one sense, “the lived experience of locality” and in another sense, “a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination” that is a place of no return, even if one can physically return (192). Indeed, Ahmed (1999) and Fortier (2003) use Brah’s concept of “homing desires” to further emphasize the making, unmaking and constant production of home, rather than fix or essentialize the meaning of home. They argue that making home is about *creating* pasts and futures through the act of dwelling in the present, allowing for home-building to be understood as an active process, made up of both memories and the materialities of rooms and objects and borders.

In the following sections, I show how these larger ideas of diaspora are in dialogue with some of the analytical concepts that I have just mentioned, of these ‘syncretized textures’ of home through pictures, and through the various arrangements on these walls, that show how diaspora is lived and experienced in everyday life. I start by considering my findings on diaspora and the imagination, highlighting how these women imagined what their lives would be like. I move onto discussing moments of arrival and settlement and I end on themes of making connections with others and forging local forms of belonging.

Diasporic imaginings of new ‘homes’

I was ushered into Ms. Park’s sunny living room, and I immediately noticed the dozens of framed photographs of the people who made these spaces home carefully dotting her walls, lining her mantle and placed on her sideboard. Staring out at me are the stoic faces of Ms. Park’s and her husband’s immediate and extended family. Many of the photographs are black and white photos of their families. There is a large striking photograph of a young Ms. Park in a bright red hanbok, (traditional Korean dress), hung on a noticeable place on the wall in her sunny living room. Ms. Park is 72 years old, and came to Berlin as a nurse in 1967. She met her husband in Berlin and they married in 1974. They lived in the same house since they moved out there in 1975. Both she and her husband had retired and were living relatively comfortable lives. They have two children, a daughter and a son.

When I asked Ms. Park about the picture and if she still owned that hanbok, she laughed and sheepishly told me that she donated the hanbok to a museum in Korea which had put it on display in a recent exhibit on Korean Germans. This precipitated a conversation with Ms. Park and the things she took with her to Germany. Amongst other things, she'd recollected that she'd brought along three hanboks with her.

Ms. Park recalled:

I imagined that I'd go to lots of parties and events when I moved to Germany so I thought it would be nice to bring some her. So I went and had them made for me. I didn't even have the money to pay for them so I had to borrow money! But it turned out that I never wore them more than once or twice, so they were just put away for so long. We all did it though! So many of the nurses I came with also brought party dresses and hanbok to wear. We all thought that we would have so many places to go and things to do together.

Prominently displaying that red hanbok symbolizes the importance of this imagined destination for Ms. Park, which she constructed from newspapers, films, and letters. While they did not know much about Germany, these women thought that it was a country that seemingly offered opportunity, comfort and even a chance to have some fun. Likewise, the picture of Ms. Park suggested how she considered her arrival to Germany as an adventure, filled with exciting possibilities of meeting new people and building a new life. They migrated for economic opportunities but also for economic and social independence, which these forms of guestworker migration made possible (Ahn, 2014).

Posing in her red hanbok for a photo suggested just how meaningful this was to Ms. Park. Further, it symbolized her youthful dreams and desires, alongside the reality of being in Germany. Putting this on display in her house, suggests that the home becomes significant in being a visual "sensescape" (Lahiri, 2011, p. 858) of memories that serve as "historical inscriptions" of her younger self, and to her changing identity and sense of belonging in

Germany (Tolia-Kelly, 2004, p. 315). The realities of life in Germany were, at times, starkly different from Ms. Park's dreams and expectations. These expectations, dreams and lived experiences are made material through these photos of a younger Ms. Park and become an integral part of her home-building process.

In stark contrast to Ms. Park's red hanbok-filled dreams, her early days in Berlin were marked by loneliness, boredom and isolation. Tucked away in a brown, leather-bound album, is a picture of a young Ms. Park in a small, plain room sitting on her bed. Looking away from the camera lens and in a book, she looked as if she wasn't aware that the picture was being snapped. Ms. Park insisted that this was not a very interesting picture as it only showed her looking 'bored', which was precisely why the photo was so compelling. Rather than displaying this photo, this moment that captured the boredom and isolation of the time was carefully preserved but kept under wraps in protective plastic and leather.

As was apparent with Ms. Park's photo, they brought along their hopes, dreams and fears with them to Germany. The things they carried with them were emotional, as well as material. Alongside their dreams and 'hanboks', almost of all of the women I interviewed here brought certain ingredients with them, particularly, the Korean chili powder so essential to many Korean dishes.

Sitting in her garden, Ms. Ree talked to me about her arrival to Berlin in 1969, when she was just 20 years old. I asked Ms. Ree what she brought with her to Berlin when she first arrived. Laughing, she said:

'I brought chili powder with me! This I definitely remembered to bring. I didn't think Germany had any chili powder or chili paste so I just brought it with me. Also, later, I would get care packages from Korea with kimchi sent to me! But as long as I would be sent chili powder, then I could go and find cabbage and other ingredients to make kimchi. It didn't taste quite the same, but it was good to find these things [here].'

Food has long been associated with diasporic settlement and has often been written about as a central activity within diasporic fiction, where food is often presented as a 'palliative for dislocation' in texts that 'entangle the

language of food, nostalgia and desire' (Mannur, 2007:13). Ms. Ree's recollection of bringing this key ingredient with her to Germany to try and make Korean food reflected a form of diasporic orientation of navigating a new and unfamiliar place in order to make it a 'home'.

Ms. Ree's re-creation of kimchi in her new home shows how she engages in the routine and everyday process of emplacing herself in her new city, whereby a place is made meaningful through everyday practices and routines (Taylor, 2015; Hammond, 2004). The desire to find the ingredients necessary to make the dish meant that she could explore and develop a better understanding of the geography of this new city. Going around the city to find familiar or similar ingredients to make a beloved dish constitutes an embodied practice that charts a new and alternative cultural geography of the city. Rather than taking into account a landscape of monuments and buildings, this cultural geography maps local streets and neighborhoods to create a new landscape of belonging in the city. Shopping for local ingredients allowed Ms. Ree to explore and become more familiar with certain areas of the city, areas with outdoor markets that source 'ethnic' foods and ingredients. In Berlin, as is the case with other multicultural cities, everyday outdoor markets dot the city and are places where residents can find ingredients from 'back home', such as spices, fruits and vegetables. These markets, which often catered to Turkish and other immigrant residents, provided spaces in the city where Ms. Ree could start to feel 'in place'.

Rather than wanting to faithfully replicate this dish, Ms. Ree wanted to re-create it. This desire to make a new dish that combines both the former and the latter ingredients - the old and new- exemplifies the everyday process of carving out a place for herself in the city. Indeed, it could be argued that the very act of making kimchi in her new home was an act of 're-membering' her home and who she was, back in Korea. But emphasis on the 're' in re-membering used here to describe these acts highlight a diasporic sense of 'becoming'. More than just about the day-to-day existence of being, 'becoming', is future-oriented and is always undergoing transformation (Hall, 1990). Re-membering through cooking signalled Ms. Ree's transformation, her identity as a work in progress.

Recounting their first few months of being in Berlin, these women conveyed their hopes, dreams, fears and anxieties that they brought with them from Korea to Germany. These stories revealed that for most of these

women, their lives here were simultaneously exciting and boring, both frightening and wonderful. But while many accounts of these migration journeys have focused on the economic reasons for their migration, for many of these women that I interviewed, their reasons for moving to Germany revealed that while they were seeking economic opportunities, there were other reasons that propelled them to leave their homes. Many of their recollections suggest that they relished an opportunity to see the world outside of the narrow confines of their village, town or city of their birthplace. It would also be the first time that many of them would live on their own, without their families. Their anxieties and fears slowly gave way to excitement and fun at the novelty of being in Berlin, of being alone without their parents and families, of living in dorms, and slowly, they established routines of ordinary life, work, and socializing with colleagues and friends.

Arrival and settlement within new ‘homes’

By 1977, the German economy and need for guest labor had shrunk, and Germany wanted to end guestworker visas (Roberts, 2008, 2010; Wilpert, 1998; Fertig and Schmidt, 2001). It was at this point where Ms. Kim recounted how she became more politically active. She joined a political organization through her friendships with Korean nurses that led her to campaign for guestworkers’ right to remain and work in Germany. This started out with gaining signatures to petition against the visa removal campaigns, in which Germany wanted to end guestworker migration for all jobs lasting more than 90 days. These women not only collected signatures but also marched in the streets, alongside many other guestworkers. Ms. Kim’s photos in her home included a few that showed her marching the streets during protests and demonstrations about guestworkers’ rights. Notably, the German mainstream media in the first few years of guestworker migration, depicted Korean nurses as dark-haired (exotic) ‘angels’ (Ahn, 2014; Roberts, 2008, 2017). This coincided with the view that these women were diminutive, passive and obedient. In contrast, media representations of other forms of guestworker migration such as mining revealed a starkly different (and negative) attitude towards Korean guestworkers even in the earliest days of guestworker migration (Roberts, 2017). While all the Korean guestworkers were expected to be the positive

'face' of the Korean nation, Korean women, in particular, were often those most beholden to this. In light of this, these women defied all expectations by protesting for their rights to stay in Germany.

As my interviews revealed, not all of these working relationships between Korean and German nurses and doctors were pleasant or even cordial. Korean nurses faced hostility and racism from the start. Notwithstanding such hostility, the significance of such connections stayed with these nurses long after the protests ended and life went back to 'normal'. Crucially, signing petitions and marching together in solidarity with the Korean nurses attest that this guestworker programme created unforeseen opportunities for meaningful mutual connections and friendships, both for the 'natives' and for the Korean nurses.

Ms. Kim's photographs of Berlin are documents to these spaces where diasporic connections and affinities were forged between people. She recounted how these protests led to the meeting of and the building of friendships between themselves and other non-German guestworkers. For example, she recalled her surprise at finding out how much her work as a nurse meant to her patients, and to her German colleagues, many of whom wrote letters of support to the German government and even marched with Korean nurses at planned protests against the government's proposals to end guestworker migration.

Not only do these photos bear witness to the possibilities of inter-cultural connections, but they also show the formation of lasting friendships, developed over time. For example, on the wall of her home, there were a number of pictures of a beaming Ms. Nah and her friend and mentor, Mrs. Gross. She was the head nurse at the tuberculosis center where Ms. Nah was first assigned upon arrival in Berlin. Ms. Nah recounted fondly how Mrs. Gross took her under her wing, and threw her a wedding reception when she and her husband got married in 1970. Over the years, they stayed close, until Mrs. Gross passed away in 2009.

In Germany, there is an expectation that immigrants fully 'integrate' into German national culture, and the lion's share of the burden lies on immigrants to assimilate, especially in terms of language and in terms of other cultural practices, as evidenced by the integration courses in Germany that are often mandatory for many non-European

immigrants (Williams, 2018; Goodman, 2014). These meaningful connections formed a challenge to mainstream assimilationist discourse popular in Germany that assumed and expected only immigrants to be transformed by the migration experience. Relatedly, these forms of solidarity let the nurses know that the bonds they created with patients were not superficial, but that the care that they received was important and cherished. It also let them know that they weren't just nurses or simply migrants whose sole worth was in the caring labor they provided.

This demand for a particular kind of cultural assimilation is based on a Manichean either/or binary understanding of identity and belonging. This binary is most commonly revealed in question of whether an immigrant one identifies as 'German' or as 'Other'. However, despite this, there is the belief and understanding that those who are not ethnically German will never be considered truly German. In Germany (as well as in many other countries), cultural identity is seen as something that is both something that functions like 'race' or ethnicity. These forms of cultural racism are predicated on the notion that identity is fixed and that it works in much of the same ways as 'race', as something that is inherited, or found or rediscovered (Solomos and Back, 1995). However, in my interviews with these women, their narratives of belonging centered on the development of a diasporic consciousness that signaled a more complex and syncretic cultural identity that challenge the simple binary of identity that is often highlighted in German political and everyday discourses.

During my interview with Ms. Kim, I noticed a small painting of a Korean dancer on her living room wall adjacent to where we were seated. During a small break in the conversation, I pointed to the painting and asked her to tell me more about it.

You know, I've always found this interesting. I learned about Korean things very slowly, over many years, while living here. It started out by joining a group of other Korean German nurses where we got together to learn traditional Korean dancing called the 'tal'chum'....Before these things would never have interested me, but I realized that wanted to learn about Korean culture after living [here] for so many years... I also learned about political matters in Korea, like the Gwangju massacre and the comfort women issues, through the organization and the women who were part of the organization...'

These paintings were the cultural artefacts that provided the rich textures of a diasporic life. Ms. Kim's painting of these traditional performances symbolized the 'doing' of these cultural selves, and they worked to display the creation (rather than a discovery) of a located, diasporic 'Korean-ness'. Stuart Hall's distinction of "being" and "becoming" when it came to identity was instructive in how Ms. Kim recognized her own sense of Korean-ness (1995). She recognized that her identity was not something that she had once lost that she then recovered. Ms. Kim understood that there was no given, fixed, or primordial identity tied to her ethnicity and place of birth. Rather, she emphasized how she had to migrate elsewhere in order to desire and construct a Korean identity. Thus, it was her *migration* from Korea, to Berlin, and the ability to make a new life in Berlin that precipitated and made possible the construction of this syncretic identity. In sum, this Koreanness constructed elsewhere illuminated this Koreanness as a distinctly diasporic formation, unbound to a national identity. This is not formed by 'staying put' but activated through the process of migrating and living elsewhere.

Ms. Kim's political activism exemplified her diasporicity, because on the one hand, she maintained her links and involvement with Korea and Korean issues, but her involvement also recognized and was predicated on her displacement from Korea. This gave her a voice to speak from a different place. She added:

'In Korea, I wasn't interested in politics and I was pretty uncritical of the government. I never wanted to get involved in Korea with politics. I just minded my own business. But when I moved here, my mind started to slowly change. For me, it was the coverage of the Gwangju massacre by German newspapers that eventually really got me to become more politically aware and I started to see what the Korean government was doing and I started to get involved.'

This political organization, consisting of a tightly knit, grassroots-led group, many of whom were former Korean nurses, is a crucial resource and a vital source of inspiration in redefining these women's identities as critical diasporic political subjects (Kim, 2019). Further, Ms. Kim's activist identity and her involvement in human rights issues on behalf of Korean women show how important and powerful these diasporic resources are, in mobilizing

ordinary people to affect real change. Importantly, the willingness to be so involved in this kind of activism fundamentally changed Ms. Kim's and other women's relationships to their Koreanness, in that it disrupted these women's relationships to their 'homeland'. On the one hand, Ms. Kim still very much felt connected to her 'homeland', thus actively constructing a relationship with Korean communities, both in Berlin, and in Korea. But on the other hand, her sense of identity was premised on an imagined community that was actively fashioned based on solidarities formed out of politics, experiences and meaningful practices. In contrast to the commonly held assumptions in Germany's political discourses, Ms. Kim's cultural identity did not rest solely upon her ethnic and racial identity. So, Ms. Kim's diasporic politics and her use of diasporic resources illustrated an alternative relationship to nation, ethnicity and culture, where these dimensions were unbound from each other. In other words, the political organization created opportunities that enabled Ms. Kim to be willing to challenge the Korean government's stance on important political and human rights issues. This disrupted Ms. Kim's previously uncritical relationship with the nation. Her cultural and political identity, and her increasingly complex political positioning, emerged from this uncoupling of culture and nation. Ms. Kim acknowledged her dual consciousness, in stating how her own position and identity grew ever more complex, ambivalent, shifting.

Conclusion

The article focused on the intersections of diaspora, memory and belonging in and through everyday processes of identity construction, exploring the different ways that my participants made homes in a new place, from finding their sense of place in the cultural and geographical landscape of Berlin, to the activation of diasporic perspectives. By focusing on these everyday ways that belonging was produced, this article offered a glimpse into an alternative narrative of migration and urban identity than is often told of migrants who settle and make Germany a home. The dominant discourses of assimilation and integration in Germany tend to ignore or reduce the complexity of diasporic belonging, confining migrant identity formation to either an ethnic identity or the expectation that migrants will assimilate to a dominant German culture.

In contrast to this identity binary, the experiences of these women who are highlighted in this article express the messier, heterogenous and alternative ways through which belonging is constructed. My interviews revealed the significance of material objects in their homes; how these material objects carried meaningful memories that told narratives of hopes, dreams, struggles and possibilities as they settled in and endeavored to make Berlin a home. Their photographs, paintings and stories revealed how, over the years, they formed friendships and ties that cut across ethnic and racialized divisions, vis a vis shared experiences and the spaces they inhabited that transformed them and, in turn, others.

These narratives of homemaking foregrounded the constructed nature of diasporic identities. The creation of new communities of practice involving political organization affected these women 'here' in Germany and 'there' in Korea and led to the construction of new, syncretic identities that connected the past to their present, lived experiences. Their desire to engage with Korean culture and politics in new ways such as through their involvement with activism signaled the activation of an expressly diasporic consciousness. The fashioning of these identities were made in and through the cultivation of diasporic resources that created a foundation upon which their diasporic identities were based.

Moreover, many of these women's narratives showed that their diasporic identities disrupt a previously more uncritical relationship between national identity, ethnicity and culture that they once had. These more complex and ambivalent relationships to nation, despite the ties that they continue to have, are ones that many diasporic people face when settle and make new lives elsewhere. But this is also the result of a deliberate process of transformation on the part of these women. These more deliberate processes involved a negotiation of memory, politics and a search for community that extended beyond 'ethnicity'. Involvement with political organizations asked these women to construct a more critical stance against some of the Korean government's policies on human rights and democracy. This organization provided opportunities for the formation of new forms of solidarity and identification, based on shared experiences with each other, transcending ethnic, racial and classed boundaries. It also activated certain forms of 'long-distance nationalism' (Kim, 2007), in strengthening ties with the homeland

over political issues. Thus, the process of making diasporic identities involves a radical reconfiguration of relationships to homelands and new 'homes'.

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