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Transnational Dynamics: The Social Activism of Korean Immigrants and Their Descendants in Germany

- Arbeitsverhalten und Widerstand in den kollektiven Erzählungen südkoreanischer Bergarbeiter in Westdeutschland
- Transnational Aspirations and the May 18 Spirit: The Legacy and Social Remittance of Korean Immigrants in Germany
- Contested Transnational Memory Space of "Comfort Women": The Korean Diaspora's Civic Engagement in Germany
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Editorial

Transnational Dynamics: The Social Activism of Korean Immigrants and Their Descendants in Germany

Jaok Kwon and Sang-Hui Nam

Basch, Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc coined the term “transnationalism,” defining it as “the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (1994, 6). Recent scholarly perspectives view transnational migration as occurring within dynamic social contexts continually reshaped by those who are simultaneously rooted in more than one society. The spaces they occupy are intricate and diverse, encompassing not only the home and host countries but also various other global locations (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). In this context, studies on transnationalism emphasize how migrants’ life experiences create connections between their homeland and the host country — while extending even further afield potentially (Faist 2000a, 2000b).

Despite growing scholarly attention being paid to the transnational dimensions of migrants’ social movements, conventional theories on the latter have often relied on research engaging citizens who are territorially bound within the borders of the nation-state. Meanwhile, the collective efforts of those occupying socially and politically ambiguous positions, specifically immigrants and refugees, have been largely neglected. These groups have predominately been examined within the realms of Areas Studies as well as race and ethnic research instead (Quinsaat 2013). Little academic focus has been dedicated to migrants’ activism, as mainstream theories on social movements regard these individuals as improbable participants in contentious action. This perspective stems from the perceived legal barriers, limited resources, and restricted political and discursive openings that migrants usually encounter (Steinhilper 2018). With the increasing cross-border mobility of peoples, however, scrutiny of migrants’ transnational social movements has gradually increased (e.g. Koinova 2009; Østergaard-Nielsen 2001; Quinsaat 2013; Sökefeld 2006).

Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) provides two useful categorizations vis-à-vis migrants’ collective activities: “immigrant politics” and “homeland politics.” The first primarily focuses on immigrants’ acquisition of political, social, economic, and legal rights in the host country, with the main goal being to overcome discrimination (Fox

and Rivera-Salgado 2004). In the meantime, the second framework encompasses activities aimed at advocating on, opposing, or improving the political or diplomatic situation faced in the home country. These endeavors seek to strengthen democracy as an institution and to spread related values in those locations (Itzigsohn and Villacrés 2008; Koinova 2009).¹

Jost et al. (2018) explain that transnational political practices stem from either economic (instrumental) or psychological/ideational (symbolic) motives, even though it is difficult to draw a clear line between these two causes of political behavior. The instrumental perspective, based on rational-choice theory, posits that individuals engage after calculating the costs and benefits of pursuing their own interests (Oberschall 1973; Tilly 1978; Useem 1998). Migrants strive to maximize the advantages of a cultivated transnational identity by actively participating in the economic, social, and political affairs of both their host and home countries. They advocate for favorable investment schemes, tax and toll exemptions, pension plans, and child benefits. Additionally, they seek expanded avenues to exert influence on domestic politics in the homeland, including on the basis of involvement in local councils, the right to cast absentee votes, and eligibility to run as electoral candidates (Bauböck 2005; Itzigsohn 2000).

Meanwhile, drawing on the constructivist approach, the symbolic view argues that factors such as grievances, moral obligations as well as outrage, ideology, social identity, aspirations, and agency drive individuals to engage in collective action (Jost et al. 2018). In moving away from the previous notion that emotions and feelings are irrational, theories on collective action have in particular shifted their focus to ones such as sadness, anger, grievance, attachment, solidarity, and loyalty as explanations for such activism as well as the sustenance of participation therein (Goodwin and Jasper 2006; Jasper 1998). Most important here, in the context of transnational activism, is how migrants' emotional attachment to their own roots and home country has been asserted to be the main drivers of their involvement in social movements (Dhesi 2017; Lyons and Mandaville 2010; Sheffer 2003; Sökefeld 2006). Such transnational activism can be both collective (national) and personal (self-interested). Living under continued uncertainty and precarity, migrants are

1 In addition, activities such as “long-distance nationalism” (Anderson 1992, 1998), which refers to a collection of identity assertions and behaviors linking individuals residing in different geographic areas to a particular territory they regard as their ancestral homeland (Cohen 1997; Safran 1991) or ethnic-nationalist movements (Edles 1999; Oliveira and Martins 2005), fall under the category of “homeland politics.” Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) further explains that there are three subsets of “homeland politics”: “emigrant politics,” “diasporic politics,” and “translocal politics.” Even though immigrants live away from their home country, they engage in lobbying, participate in elections, or engage in activities intended to firmly establish their social, legal, economic, and political status in the home country (Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003) — which can be categorized as “emigrant politics.” The endeavors of stateless migrants, usually termed “diaspora politics” (Cohen 1997), also fall under “homeland politics.” “Translocal politics” refers to such initiatives as the promotion of regional development (and therewith empowerment) in the home country (Smith and Guarnizo 1998).

liable to be frequently exposed to injustice in their everyday lives. At the same time, those residing in a host country that strongly values “justice” are prone to form elaborate moral frameworks regarding how best to engage on social issues within the course of their day-to-day interactions (Bauböck 2009).² In addition, not only national identity but also subgroup affiliations such as those of ethnicity, race, religion, class, and indigenous culture can spur such transnational activism (Klandermans 2014).

A number of researchers have by now analyzed transnational activism via the lenses of diverse perspectives within social-movement theories. Quinsaat (2013), for instance, examines home country-oriented migrant mobilization based on the “political-process model,” looking at the dynamic interaction of political opportunities and obstacles in both sending and host countries, the reproduction of resources, and the construction of collective identity. Østergaard-Nielsen (2001) addresses the impact of different political opportunities’ availability on migrant activism in host societies. Sökefeld (2006) suggests an adaptation of various approaches in dissecting diaspora formation, such as political opportunities, mobilizing structures and practices, and issues of framing.

As illustrated above, examining the trajectory of previous research reveals that the discourse has evolved by now beyond merely introducing the specificities of immigrant transnationalism through case studies. Instead, scholars have sought to continuously explore the theoretical implications of such transnational activism. In the Korean context, a limited body of work has illuminated collective migrant activism in Australia, Europe, Japan, and the United States on various sociopolitical issues. These include: democratization (H.-o. Cho 2005; K.-E. Cho 2015; Mikyung Kim 2020); reunification (H.-Y. Kim 2008); human rights (Noh 2021; Shin and Han 2019); ethnic identity and being an ethnic minority (Park and Ito 2020); and, sexual violence (Moon 2018; Song 2013; Yoon 2018). Existing research on Korean immigrants in Germany has also focused on their participation in democratization (G.-o. Kim 2019, Myeon Kim 2013) and reunification-related movements (Myeon Kim 2007a, 2007b). Labor protests by first-generation Korean migrant nurses (Han 2017; Yang 2016; Yi 2005, 2018) have been addressed thus far, too.

This burgeoning body of work has significantly contributed to our understanding of the trajectories and ongoing development of these movements. However, much of the literature has focused on presenting empirical studies without incorporating theoretical analysis (Yi 2005). Moreover, as most existing research has, as noted, predominantly approached these movements on the basis of the nation-state

2 Shin and Han (2019), for instance, examine Korean immigrants in Great Britain who are involved in street protests against the backdrop of the Sewol Ferry Disaster, which led to the deaths of 304 people in 2014; the concept of each individual’s “moral identity” is invoked by the two authors. In their research the latter is deemed different from “national identity,” which is based on strong emotional attachment to one’s home country (M.-J. Kim 1997; Sheffer 2003). Moral identity, contrariwise, is allegedly constructed through migrants’ encounters with social injustice in their everyday lives in the host country.

framework, the importance of adopting a transnational approach here has been emphasized more and more over time (Y. I. Lee 2010; Y. J. Lee 2015; Park 2013; Yang 2016). When it comes to the social movements of Korean immigrants in Germany, You Jae Lee (2015) maintains that this history has not been extensively examined from a transnational viewpoint because the dominant narratives have hitherto largely focused on “economic development” and “democratization,” framed within the confines of the national (the home country). This is particularly true regarding the nurses and mining workers who dispatched to Germany to support their economically disadvantaged homeland (Yi 2018).

Against this backdrop, this *ASIEN* special issue aims to analyze how “transnationalism” has manifested in the social movements of Korean migrants and how it can be specifically defined within the German context, based on four articles each covering a different issue: miner guest workers (Sang-Hui Nam); reunification (Jin-Heon Jung); comfort women (Ah-Hyun Angela Lee); and, the youth generation and newcomers (Sunyoung Park). Focus now turns to briefly identifying the main actors involved in organizing these social movements in Germany. Building on this, the following section then discusses the significance of the transnationalism underpinning migrants’ agency, emphasizing its multilayered nature and the interconnectedness of actors; powerful initiatives from below emerge herewith. These actors’ embeddedness within both home and host societies is also illuminated.

Shedding Light on Transnational Agency

In elaborating on the transnationality of Korean migrants’ activism in the German context, it is crucial to consider which actors are involved and how they have interconnected in initiating, organizing, implementing, and popularizing such social movements. According to existing studies (Y. J. Lee 2015; Yang 2016; Yi 2005; Yoo 1996), the following are among the key protagonists here: dissidents and students; church communities; miner and nurse guest workers; migrant women; and, the descendants of first-generation migrants as well as newcomers. It is noteworthy that organizational consolidation among migrants, however, is attributed to the smaller number of university students and intellectuals who initially supported homeland politics on primarily ideational grounds (Yoo 1996, 55f.).

According to Yoo (1996), some like-minded individuals sought refuge or exile in Germany after the failure of the student movement in Korea. The self-exiled educational elite founded the Forum of Korean Students in West Germany (T’oesuhoe) in 1963, which was strongly connected with regime-critical individuals and protest groups in South Korea. The Association of Korean Residents in Germany (Chaedok haninhoe) emerged out of the Forum in 1964. Since then, the development of political self-organizations in exile can be described as path-dependent. Ones such as the Forum for the Democracy of Korea (Minju sahoe könsöl hyöbühoe, founded 1974), the Council of Korean Nationals for Democracy and National Unification in Europe (Chaeyuröp minjok minju hanin hyöbühoe, founded 1987), and the

Solidarity of Korean People in Europe (Hanminjok yuröb yöndae, founded 2001) have continuously addressed homeland politics. They have also sought to draw the German public's attention to the political situation in South Korea through fundraising campaigns, petitions, and open letters to German authorities.

Since the very beginning, church communities have played a pivotal role in the lives of Korean migrants and their sociopolitical activities (Yoo 1996). The Korean Church, which began its mission in 1964, was initially informally operated by Korean miners who had migrated to Germany through the guest-worker program and later by pastors dispatched from South Korea (Y. J. Lee 2015). Some churches not only fulfilled a religious role but also supported Korean migrants in various other fields, too. These included providing information on insurance systems, tax regulations, and labor laws; offering German language classes for workers and Korean language classes for the second generation; and, addressing topics related to the homeland (Yoo 1996).

The number of Korean churches actively involved in social movements was limited, however (Myeon Kim 2007b). Nevertheless, as part of a global religious institution, they played a distinctive role that transcended national boundaries. They were positioned to provide activists with potential access to transnational networks and, more significantly, had the capacity to overcome ideological divides. In 1979, the Overseas Korean Christian Association for National Unification (Choguk t'ongil haeoe kidokchahoe) was established, a forum bringing together reunification movements based on Christian perspectives. This organization aimed to foster dialogue between Christians from both North and South Korea, actively engaging in discussion while partly embracing socialist ideas rather than simply opposing them outright. Furthermore, in conjunction with the Korean Association for Democracy and National Unification (Minju minjok t'ongil haeoe han'gugin yönhap, founded 1977), they nurtured reunification and democratization movements through international solidarity with progressive forces in Japan and the US (Y. J. Lee 2015). Together they functioned as a new driving force for the reunification movement, forming networks within and between churches and Koreans based in Europe (Myeon Kim 2007b). They established global networks with the Korean diaspora as well, creating personnel, ideological, and organizational connections across countries.

Meanwhile, Korean miner guest workers in Germany, despite their limited right to remain, would increasingly voice their opposition to discrimination and mistreatment by employers and supervisors. When complaints or conflicts arose, the first authority that they turned to was the Korean Embassy. However, as it became evident that government officials tended to prioritize maintaining the status quo over addressing these issues, a form of "activism from below" emerged, bringing attention to problems regarding working conditions in the host society. It aligned with the work of church communities and political activists. The church communities were not only linked to sociopolitical movements but also involved in

miners' religious and daily lives. Their advocacy efforts received moral support and practical assistance from like-minded German students, citizens, and institutions, reflecting the influence of the 1968 student movement (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung et al. 2016). Consequently, student associations, church organizations, and German institutions — including intellectuals and politicians — came together in support of these miners. Through these collective efforts, guest workers, who would become increasingly aware of the political ideas espoused by dissidents and intellectuals, were ultimately drawn into the activities of democracy movements finding momentum among the Korean diaspora. That is not to say, however, that all of these miners shared a common political orientation and participated in such activism.

The miners and nurses dispatched to Germany have often been viewed by the Korean public (as well as in the literature) as a singular group of guest workers. However, their paths diverged significantly concerning protest actions and movements. Collective activism among Korean nurses began with legal efforts aimed at securing the right to remain in Germany in the late 1970s after their permission to stay had eventually expired. At the center of this campaign stood the Korean Women's Group in Germany (Chaedok han'guk yōsōng moim), which split from the Forum for the Democracy of Korea in 1978 shortly before these collective endeavors began. This marked a significant moment given its articulation of nurses' interests, as differing from those of miners. These nurses reached out to the host country's citizens for support regarding their petitions, and thanks to the rise of feminism as a prominent norm in Germany at that time their efforts resonated positively with the wider populace.

Members of the Korean Women's Group in Germany, having achieved the right to stay in 1978, continued to emphasize women's rights thereafter. The Korean Women's Group sought to maintain close connections with civil society both in Germany and in the home country. Through seminars and projects focused on gender equality, they aimed to raise awareness of women's issues and expand their network via collaboration with other migrant organizations. Notably, the Korean Women's Group established commonality with the Japanese Women's Group in Germany by taking the initiative on studying and publicizing the "comfort women" issue in the mid-1990s. In addressing this issue, they distanced themselves from a nationalistic framework based on the historical confrontation between Korea and Japan. Adopted instead was a more universal perspective that framed the issue as one of wartime sexual violence, thereby facilitating support from German and other migrant groups.

The Korea Association (Korea Verband), founded in Germany in 1996 as part of Asia House (Asienhaus)³, has focused on advocating for the rights of Korean

3 Asia House was founded in 1992 under the name "Asia Foundation." Its founder, Dr. Günter Freudenberg, along with several associations working in Asia joined together in Essen to subsequently form Asia House in 1995, relocating its predecessor's headquarters to Cologne. Its aim is to commit to the realization of human rights, the strengthening of social and political participation, as well as to pursue social justice and environmental protection (see: www.asienhaus.de).

migrants as residents and citizens of the European country. Alongside the Korean Women's Group, the Korea Association also addressed the issue of comfort women, launching a project to erect the so-called Statue of Peace — a symbolic monument commemorating these comfort women in a public space in Berlin. This followed similar initiatives in Japan, South Korea, and the US. To achieve this goal, the Association took the lead vis-à-vis exerting political pressure on Berlin's local and municipal governments. Through seminars, projects, demonstrations, and publications, the activists engaged the German public, mobilizing a broad spectrum of civic groups both domestically and internationally. With the support of civic groups, labor unions, and other migrant organizations, they successfully obtained government approval for the statue's installation, marking a significant achievement — albeit one only temporary (2020 to 2024) — as the monument is still considered an art exhibition rather than being officially recognized as a universal memorial against sexual violence. However, this accomplishment not only underscores the recognition of Korean migrants as legitimate residents but also integrates their history into the broader narrative and values of German society at large.

The transition with time from the first to the second generation significantly impacted self-organizations within the Korean migrant community. Rather than reforming existing entities primarily composed of first-generation immigrants, the latter's children foregrounded their identity as “the second generation” based on a shared migrant experience in Germany. A significant factor contributing to this shift would be the establishment of their own online public sphere, characterized by a high proficiency in languages other than Korean. Although the first generation primarily created Internet platforms in the latter, thus forming “ethnic colonies” (Häußermann 2007), new groups now communicate digitally in German and English, enhancing their mobilization and participation.

In 2008, a group of young Korean migrants, primarily from the second generation, founded *Korientation e.V.* This organization quickly evolved into a platform for Asian immigrants more widely, particularly those from Vietnam. Its objective — “to consciously and visibly represent the diverse realities of life in Germany, thereby contributing to the fight against racism”⁴ — reflects *Korientation's* commitment to civil society while distancing itself from “group particularism” (Münch 2002). Within German society, migrants from Asia are often categorized as merely “Asian” rather than by their specific ethnicities, such as Korean or Vietnamese, fostering a sense of solidarity among those concerned. This has led to new activities, such as participation in memorials commemorating the victims of racist violence, including the pogrom in Solingen in the early 1990s (Ha 2021).

In parallel with *Korientation*, the group *#MeTooKorea* emerged in 2019 under the influence of the *#MeToo* movement in the US. Initially focused on ethnic issues, it evolved into *Metoo Asians e.V.*, addressing the broader concerns of Asian

4 See: www.korientation.de.

immigrants. One notable initiative was the boycott movement in 2019 against Hornbach, one of the leading DIY store chains in Germany, triggered by a sexist and discriminatory advertisement featuring an Asian-looking woman. Social media played a crucial role in facilitating both a local on-site demonstration and an international petition. The second generation has creatively forged a hybrid identity also as Asian immigrants in Germany, shaped by their experiencing of discrimination within mainstream society. This shift signifies a form of “residence country-directed transnationalism,” one distancing itself from a “homeland orientation.” *Korientation*’s and *Metoo Asians*’ initiatives are indicative of a “post-migrant alliance” (Schramm 2023) within an emerging “post-migrant society” (Foroutan 2022).

Despite apparent disruption between the self-organization of the first and second generations, however, recent developments suggest a promising collaboration is arising. The Korea Association plays a mediating role here, maintaining continuity while forming alliances with new groups on specific issues. In 2021, the Association signed an open letter against anti-Asian racism, as initiated by *Korientation* and other organizations further to being supported by *Metoo Asians* during their 2019 boycott movement. Collaborative action, such as the erection of the Statue of Peace in 2020, exemplify intergenerational cooperation on advocating for human rights.

Understanding the Transnationalism of Korean Migrants’ Activism in Germany

Having identified the various actors involved, we now turn to the question of how exactly transnationalism manifests in the German context. This discussion will provide important insights for developing theories of transnationalism within the growing corpus of works on Korean migrants’ activism and social movements.

Protagonists

Most significantly, identifying the main actors involved is to highlight how the social movements in which Korean immigrants in Germany have participated are reflective of a “transnationalism from below” (Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Kögneter and Smith (2015) argue that to take a transnationalism perspective is to emphasize the need to transcend nation-state polices and focus on the agency of migrants specifically — namely on the “daily lives, activities, and social relationships of migrants” (Basch, Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc 1994, 5). As illustrated above, the primary actors involved here include students, churches, migrant workers, their descendants, as well as newcomers. Acknowledging these leading figures and their interconnectedness is a valuable first step toward understanding the complex trajectories of Korean immigrants in Germany. Moreover, the role of the state in Korean migration history has disproportionately featured hereto given that earlier waves of labor migration to Germany were largely state-led initiatives; this is a further reason why the examination of particular individuals is a necessary corrective.

Next, introducing such a perspective should serve to enhance our understanding of the multilayered sociopolitical and historical spaces that the transnationalism informing migrants' everyday lives creates (Y. J. Lee 2015). For instance, the political incident (Dongbaeklim incident)⁵ of 1967 illustrates how Koreans abducted in the capital were prosecuted under South Korea's Anti-Communist Law rather than West German criminal law. Furthermore, these individuals operated across Europe and globally; their networks and organizations, transcending ideologies of democracy and socialism, exchanged personnel, information, and resources internationally. Basch, Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc clarify how "transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations — familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political — that span borders. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and express concerns, developing identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously" (1994, 2). Relatedly, analyzing matters from a transnational point of view facilitates our improved understanding of the "complex and manifold interconnections of various actors operating within or between different 'scales': community, local, regional, and global" (Kögneter and Smith 2015, 17). Thus, examining the transnational nature of sociopolitical activism within the Korean community in Germany is to refute a zero-sum-game relationship existing among these individuals' different identities exclusively. Instead, they navigate fluid boundaries while embodying multiple selves.

Situating Agency Between Home and Host Societies

Migrants' political activities are significantly shaped by contextual factors in the host country (Quinsaat 2019; Voicu 2014), while closely corresponding with the situation in the homeland as well. Examining the diffusion and transplantation of the Kurdish separatist movement onto German soil, Lyon and Uçarer (2001) highlight how Germany's liberal democratic institutional structures provided material and ideological resources for mobilization. Similarly, Sökefeld (2006) argues that Germany's multicultural discourse portrayed immigration and the resulting pluralism as positive developments, helping counter increasing racism toward foreigners (Ausländer).

When looking at Germany's influence on Korean migrants' social activism, as discussed earlier, it is noteworthy that civic organizations, politicians, and political parties all supported the latter's collective democracy-promoting efforts as well as women's movements. The political climate, as strongly shaped by the 1968 student movement, was very conducive to this (Yi 2018). When it comes to reunification, Korean migrants have integrated lessons from Germany's own history into their

5 This refers to a significant event involving South Korean nationals in West Germany and West Berlin during the Cold War era. In July 1967, agents from the Korean Central Intelligence Agency abducted several South Korean students and intellectuals who were critical of their native government and had sought a safe place in West Germany.

related endeavors. The firsthand observation of cultural agreements and peacekeeping efforts between East and West Germans during the global détente of the late 1980s, alongside events in Eastern Europe, sparked Korean migrants' own aspirations to steer their homeland's fate, giving significant impetus to reunification attempts (Myeon Kim 2013). At a time when it was divided into East Germany and West Germany, each maintaining diplomatic relations with North Korea and South Korea respectively, the European country was ideologically relatively open, facilitating active engagement by left- and right-wing factions alike and enabling exchange with both Koreas.

The German authorities, by remaining impartial in their interactions with both North Korea and South Korea, provided a regional platform enabling migrant organizations to act as intermediaries between the two. Geographically positioned at the heart of Europe, Germany also played a bridging role connecting reunification movements developed by overseas Korean communities elsewhere — such as in Japan and the US. Furthermore, Germany's local political parties and civil organizations collaborated to promote Korean reunification (Myeon Kim 2007b). At the same time, Gwi-ok Kim (2019) suggests that Germany's physical reunification through the Berlin Wall's fall in 1989 (followed by political reunification a year later) prompted these migrants to view their homeland not as an irreversibly divided Korean Peninsula but as a space where future connections were still conceivable.

However, supportive attitudes on the part of the host society toward such activism were not the only dynamics in play; restrictive policies and exclusionary social norms were also in currency. Østergaard-Nielsen (2001) points out the different immigration policies of Germany and the Netherlands up until the 2000s, noting that in Germany, political opportunities were constrained due to exclusionary migration policies. She critically analyzes how its policies limited immigrants' political activity, contrasting for example with the Netherlands where such social movements have flourished. Conversely, Kaya (1998) demonstrates how Germany's policies and cultural rejection of immigrants paradoxically fostered multiculturalism, creating fertile ground for “minoritized” ethnic Alevis from Turkey to self-organize. In the same vein, given such restrictive migration policies and unjust treatment of the early 2000s, second-generation Korean immigrants have come together to address the issues faced by Asian residents in Germany more broadly, challenging therewith discrimination and advocating for equal rights for all.

Through her oral history of first-generation Korean immigrants to Germany, Yi (2005) argues that their diverse social and political experiences as workers became a sizeable life task each interlocutor had to continuously grapple with. She points out that these encounters were crucial for subsequent social movements' emergence on the scene and for shaping new political orientations in Germany. Each person spoken with recounted their activism in Germany being based on different events in Korea, such as political persecution, class-based discrimination, and deeply entrenched patriarchal norms. They reinterpreted these past experiences in the

context of the host society and brought the insight they gained back home, too. For instance, Korean residents in Germany, benefiting from favorable conditions that allowed them to advance various organizational activities among compatriots overseas related to the issue of reunification, transferred their initiatives back to the Peninsula, even during times when such discussions were impossible within Korea due to ideological constraints. From this perspective, although their visible life worlds transition from the sending to the receiving country, the political activities developed during this process reveal a flowing back to Korea from Germany. Yi (2005) further argues that this phenomenon does not see unilateral dissemination from a politically advanced country to a less advanced one; rather, it is characterized by reflection on and the mediation of the involved actors' accumulated life experiences and insights.

Overall, incorporating transnationalism into the discussion of sociopolitical activism aims to explore the connections emerging between the histories of both home and host countries. This necessitates embracing these actors' embeddedness in a changing historical context. At the same time, what this discussion indicates is that while each protagonist is situated within both the host and the home society, the uniqueness of each setting can act as a catalyst when it comes to shaping motives and organizing social movements in a bidirectional, rather than unidirectional, manner.

Concluding Remarks

In this special issue, the discussion of Korean migrants' social activism in Germany is approached through the lens of "transnationalism" — namely that of "agency" or the interconnected political and historical spaces existing between Korea and Germany. Notably, across the four articles that follow, it is commonly acknowledged that what is required here is to move beyond the previously dominant nation-state framework in embracing transnationalism and all it connotes. Against this backdrop, the following aspects are to be considered of key relevance:

First, it is crucial to understand transnationalism within migrant-driven social activism and to contextualize the environments these individuals inhabit on the basis of it. Focus should go beyond whether such activism transcends national borders. Highlighted, then, is how "social remittances" (Levitt 1998, 2001) — as encompassing social norms, beliefs, and ideologies — do not flow unilaterally from "core" to "periphery" but rather move bi- or multi-directionally, serving as catalysts for related social movements. The special issue underscores that Korean migrants engaged in social activism must overcome any nationalist sentiments and embrace instead the multifaceted and multidimensional nature of life beyond particular borders. This involves recognizing these individuals as social agents and "scattered hegemonies," with dichotomies such as "core-periphery," "global-national," and "national-local" being of reduced relevance (Grewal and Kaplan 1994).

Second, it is vital to contextualize agency within relational, historical, and temporal environments, emphasizing therewith social embeddedness rather than viewing involvement in such movements as something static (Köngeter and Smith 2015). Korean immigrants' social activism has diversified and evolved over time in response to changes in their demographic and sociopolitical conditions, collective consciousness, and the host country's policies. With regard to the shifting contours of identity and feelings of solidarity, third, the question arises as to what extent "Korean" is a valid and useful label to invoke in studies on such migrant activism. Adamson and Demetriou (2007), meanwhile, define "diaspora" as a social collective that transcends national borders and helps maintain a shared national, cultural, and/or religious identity over time through internal cohesion and enduring connections with a tangible or imagined homeland. Diasporas are not homogenous; they include diverse individuals and subgroups spanning multiple migration waves and generations. Not all immigrant groups share the same political and social perspectives (Koinova 2009). Unlike the first generation's strong nationalist inclinations, subsequent ones may not feel part of a diaspora (Bauböck and Faist 2010). Ang (2003) elaborates how the term "diaspora" encapsulates asserting one's distinctiveness and transforming it into symbolic capital. However, this assertion of distinctiveness is paradoxical, given group membership is based on an "imagined community" of those sharing core ethnic characteristics. The same author further demonstrates that "diaspora" serves as a locus for grappling with identity and belonging, embodying support and oppression, emancipation and confinement, solidarity and division.

This special issue examines the various dimensions of transnational agency, focusing on Korean immigrants in Germany and shedding light on their interactions, multilayered identities, and respective historical contexts. In this regard, established are the theoretical foundations for broadening the angle taken from a national to a transnational viewpoint. Although the interconnectedness of protagonists will be discussed, some desiderata still remain. First, further exploration than is possible here of how such interactions have shaped *the* Korean diaspora. Second, the boundaries and the nature of this diaspora. For this, attention should be paid henceforth to how dynamic changes in the composition and migration patterns of the diaspora intersect with the construction of a collective identity. This key aspect needs to be further scrutinized by scholars going forward.

Note

All Korean words have been Romanized using the McCune-Reischauer system.

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Refereed article

Arbeitsverhalten und Widerstand in den kollektiven Erzählungen südkoreanischer Bergarbeiter in Westdeutschland¹

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Abstract

This article examines the working behavior and resistance of South Korean miners sent to West Germany in the 1960s and 1970s as guest workers. Drawing on Alf Lüdtke's scholarship (1989, 1993), the concept of „Eigen-Sinn“ is applied to illustrate the nature of these miners' behavior, examining whether and in what contexts it is linked to resistance. Autobiographical narratives and media reports, among other sources, form the empirical data. To begin with, the selection process for miners sent abroad is cast against the backdrop of the socioeconomic inequalities existing between South Korea and West Germany. Next, the social construction of reality on arrival in Europe is outlined. Basic elements such as prevailing mood and emotional state, experiencing a confined living space, and the meaning of work are presented as key elements. Focus is then directed toward the self-willed behavior of these miners and, furthermore, to its relationship to protest. First, the coping with their daily work challenges is depicted. Second, everyday struggles with coworkers are scrutinized in relation to spontaneous and coordinated activism. In concluding, the insights gained regarding the relationship between Eigen-Sinn and resistance are elaborated on and the overall findings summarized.

Keywords: Guest workers, The history of everyday life, Eigen-Sinn, resistance, narrative, collective memories

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Einleitung

Der Aufsatz untersucht den Arbeitsalltag koreanischer Bergarbeiter anhand ihrer kollektiven Erzählungen und Erinnerungen. In den 1960er- und 1970er-Jahren wurden Arbeitnehmer aus Korea nach Westdeutschland entsandt und arbeiteten dort im Ruhrbergbau. Aufgrund der Notwendigkeit einer Zuwanderung von Arbeitskräften zu Produktionsstätten ist die Entwicklung des Bergbaus eng mit der Arbeitsmigration verbunden. Die Bergwerke des Ruhrgebiets waren bereits seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts durch Zuwanderungswellen geprägt. In der ersten Welle kamen Nahwanderer aus den umliegenden Regionen, gefolgt von polnischsprachigen Zuwanderern aus den preußischen Ostprovinzen. Hinzu kamen Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene sowie Zwangsarbeiter während der beiden Weltkriege (Seidel 2014, 36 f.). Seit den späten 1950er-Jahren wurden im Ruhrbergbau ausländische Arbeitskräfte aus strukturschwachen Ländern angeworben. Diese sollten nach dem sogenannten „Gastarbeitersystem“ nur für eine temporäre Beschäftigung eingestellt werden und gemäß dem Rotationsprinzip nach Beendigung ihres Arbeitsverhältnisses in ihre Herkunftsländer zurückkehren. Anschließend sollten neue Arbeitskräfte sie ersetzen (Pfaffenthaler 2023, 117 f.). Die Beschäftigung von Gastarbeitern im Ruhrbergbau wurde ab Mitte der 1970er-Jahre allmählich reduziert; Ende der 1970er-Jahre wurde die Anwerbung schließlich eingestellt. Da ausländische Arbeitskräfte im Ruhrgebiet in großem Umfang aus bestimmten Ländern angeworben wurden, war ihr langfristiger Verbleib eine wesentliche Grundlage für die Entstehung von Migrantengemeinschaften aus ihren jeweiligen Herkunftsländern (Bade 1996, 2017; Oltmer 2012; Seidel 2014, 39).

Vor diesem Hintergrund wurden koreanische Bergarbeiter, die in Deutschland blieben, zu einem bedeutenden Teil der ersten Generation einer koreanischen Migrantengesellschaft in Deutschland. Die systematische Archivierung und Veröffentlichung ihrer Lebensgeschichten begann Ende der 1990er-Jahre durch die Initiative des Vereins „Glückauf“, der von ehemaligen koreanischen Bergleuten gegründet wurde. Die Ausschreibungen hierfür wurden bei allen ehemaligen Bergleuten, einschließlich Rückwanderern und Weiterwanderern, über die koreanischsprachige Online-Öffentlichkeit bekannt gemacht, woraufhin sie zur Beteiligung an der Initiative aufgerufen wurden. Daraus entstanden Jubiläumspublikationen in periodischen Zeitabständen (Glückauf e.V. 1997, 2009; Han'guk Padok gwangbu ch'ong yŏnhaphoe 2009; Han'guk Padok gwangbu ganhosa ganhojomusa yŏnhaphoe 2017). Diese Aktivitäten können als eine Biografie-Bewegung zur Selbstbehauptung interpretiert werden, um Herkunftsidentität der Betroffenen und ihre Arbeitserfahrungen als Gastarbeiter im historischen Gedächtnis zu verankern. Die Erinnerungsgeschichten und Erzählungen wurden ebenfalls seit der Mitte der 1990er-Jahre überwiegend von koreanischen Doktorandinnen und Doktoranden an deutschen Hochschulen wissenschaftlich erforscht (Hyun 2018; Y.-I. Lee 2011; Weiß 2017; Yoo 1996).

Erst in den letzten beiden Jahrzehnten hat die historische Bedeutung ehemaliger Bergarbeiter die Aufmerksamkeit der koreanischen Öffentlichkeit geweckt. Die „Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Korea“ (im Folgenden: TRCK) prüfte den Beitrag ehemaliger Gastarbeiter auf deren Antrag hin und kam zu einem positiven Schluss (TRCK 2008).² Somit erhielten die autobiographischen Erzählungen aus subjektiver Perspektive verstärkt gesellschaftliche Anerkennung. Hye-Sim Na (2021) wirft jedoch einen kritischen Blick auf nationalistische Tendenzen in diesem Narrativ, da dieses möglicherweise eine positive Verbindung zur „Entwicklungsdiktatur“ Südkoreas in den 1960er- und 1970er-Jahren herstellen könnte. Diesem Narrativ zufolge wird die Arbeit der fügsamen und willigen Gastarbeiter als heroisches Opfer zur wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung des Heimatlandes interpretiert.

Das in Korea etablierte Narrativ steht im Einklang mit dem „Opfer-Plot“ in Deutschland, in dem betont wird, dass Gastarbeiter im Aufnahmeland notgedrungen hart behandelt und ausgenutzt wurden. Der Unterschied liegt allein darin, dass das Selbstnarrativ der Gastarbeiter die Opferrolle *für* das Heimatland betont, während der „Opfer-Plot“ die Erzwungenheit *durch* den Kapitalismus hervorhebt. Richter und Richter (2009) weisen darauf hin, dass der „Opfer-Plot“ unter dem Einfluss der 68er-Bewegung entstand und kritisieren seine normative Sicht. Diese moralische Kategorie stellt die Gastarbeiter lediglich als Opfer des Kapitalismus dar und vernachlässigt dabei, dass sie freiwillig kamen, um eine bessere Lebensperspektive zu suchen. Dieser Grundgedanke lässt sich ebenfalls auf das koreanische Narrativ übertragen, wobei häufig der moralisch-patriotische Unterton der Erzählungen eine analytische Betrachtung verhindert.

In diesem Kontext entstand das wissenschaftliche Interesse, sich analytisch mit der Vielfalt des Arbeitsalltags koreanischer Bergarbeiter auseinanderzusetzen und diese theoretisch einzuordnen. Hier bietet Alf Lüdtke (1989a, 1989b, 1993) einen geeigneten Ansatz, um die verschiedenen Arbeitsverhaltensweisen in den Erzählungen zu erforschen, ohne damit ein moralisches Urteil zu verbinden. Lüdtke stellt die Frage, ob das Fehlen von Widerstand seitens der Arbeiter während des deutschen Faschismus als ein gehorsames Arbeiterverhalten zu verstehen sei. Anstatt eine Entweder-Oder-Antwort zu liefern, zeigt Lüdtke eine „Grauzone“ auf, in der sich die Arbeiter weder als mutige Widerstandskämpfer noch als angepasste Mitläufer verhalten, sondern ein ambivalentes und individuelles Verhalten an den Tag legen. Ihr Ziel ist es, im Arbeitsalltag durchzukommen und zu überleben, wobei sie sich sowohl von ihren Vorgesetzten (z. B. durch Nicht-Zustimmung) als auch von ihren Arbeitskollegen (z. B. durch Verfolgung individueller Interessen) distanzieren. Dieses Element des Arbeiterverhaltens wird als Konzept des „Eigensinns“ (Lüdtke 1989b, 255) bezeichnet und in der „sozialen Praxis“ der Menschen als verankert angesehen (Lüdtke 1989a, 12 f.; Scott 1990).

2 Obschon der Antrag sowohl Bergleute als auch Krankenschwestern betrifft, konzentriere ich mich in meinen Ausführungen ausschließlich auf die Bergarbeiter.

Wie schon die Bezeichnung „Grauzone“ impliziert, kann das eigensinnige Verhalten in *empirischen* Untersuchungen nicht eindeutig vom Widerstand abgegrenzt werden. „Widerstand“ wird als „soziales Handeln gegen eine als illegitim wahrgenommene Herrschaftsordnung“ definiert (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2024). Die Befürworter von Lüttkes Ansatz betonen, dass Eigensinn keinesfalls mit Widerstand identisch ist. In einem Gespräch (2018) stellt Lüttkke fest, dass der Eigensinn „auf keinen Fall ein Synonym für Widerstand“ sei: „Widerständigkeit ist eine Dimension des menschlichen Verhaltens und Handelns, die ihrerseits relativ breit ist und die auch mit dem Eigen-Sinn zu tun haben kann, oder – andersrum – Eigen-Sinn kann mit Widerstand Beziehung haben oder in Relation mit ihm geraten“³ (Lindenberger 2014). Widerstand und Proteste können also aus eigensinnigem Arbeiterverhalten hervorgehen, aber auch parallel und abwechselnd auftreten. Dabei handelt es sich keinesfalls um eine lineare Entwicklung oder zusätzliche Verstärkung, sondern um vielfältige und praktische Handlungsoptionen der Menschen. Es bleibt weiteren Studien überlassen, das Verhältnis zwischen Eigensinn und Widerstand zu untersuchen und zu klären, wann ein individuelles Erlebnis als kollektives wahrgenommen wird und wie dies zu kollektivem Handeln führt. Ebenso ist zu untersuchen, welche Ziele der Widerstand verfolgt und wie diese definiert werden.

Der Aufsatz zielt erstens darauf ab, das Konzept des Eigensinns von Lüttkke auf das hier untersuchte Arbeitsverhalten koreanischer Bergarbeiter anzuwenden (Y. J. Lee 2021, 2022a) und zweitens, den Zusammenhang zwischen eigensinnigem Arbeitsverhalten und Widerstand zu erforschen. Dadurch soll eine Wechselwirkung zwischen empirischen Befunden und theoretischen Ansätzen hergestellt werden. Für die empirischen Daten werden bereits veröffentlichte primäre, sekundäre und historische Quellen herangezogen. Diese umfassen autobiographische Texte, mündliche Erzählinterviews, Medienberichte in Online- und Offline-Zeitungen sowie Erfahrungs- und Erinnerungsschreiben auf Webseiten.

Das folgende Kapitel (Kap. 2) behandelt die Selektionsprozesse koreanischer Bergarbeiter vor dem Hintergrund der sozioökonomischen Ungleichheiten zwischen Südkorea und Westdeutschland in den 1960er- und 1970er-Jahren. Kapitel 3 beleuchtet die gesellschaftliche Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit von Koreanern bei ihrer Ankunft in Deutschland, die ihr Arbeitsverhalten dauerhaft prägte. Es beschreibt die Grundstimmung, die Raumerfahrungen und den Sinn der Arbeit im Detail. Das vierte Kapitel untersucht das eigensinnige Verhalten und das widerständige Protesthandeln der Bergarbeiter. Es legt dar, wie die Arbeiter Strategien für „ein zähes Durchkommen“ (Lüttkke 1989b, 255) entwickelten, und analysiert ihre täglichen Auseinandersetzungen sowie damit verbundene spontane und vernetzte Proteste.

3 Auszug aus „Eigen-Sinn und Alltagsgeschichte. Ein Gespräch von Kornelia Kończal mit Alf Lüttkke und Thomas Lindenberger (2018).“ <https://eigensinn.hypotheses.org/69>. Zugriff am 05.04.2024.

Das abschließende Kapitel reflektiert die Ergebnisse, legt die gewonnenen Erkenntnisse über das Verhältnis von Eigensinn und Widerstand dar und schließt mit Anmerkungen zum Narrativ koreanischer Bergarbeiter ab.

Die Selektionsprozesse in der Herkunftsgesellschaft: Harter Wettbewerb und seine Folgen

Die Entsendung koreanischer Arbeitskräfte nach Westdeutschland wurde durch zwei Vereinbarungen im Jahr 1963 und 1970 über das „Programm zur vorübergehenden Beschäftigung koreanischer Bergarbeiter im Deutschen Steinkohlebergbau“ eingeleitet. Diese Anwerbeabkommen waren das Ergebnis wirtschaftlicher und politischer Interessen beider Länder (Y.-I. Lee 2011; Y. J. Lee 2015; Oltmer 2012), wobei deutlich war, dass Deutschland in der Vereinbarung die dominierende Rolle innehatte (Hyun 2018, 347). In den 1960er-Jahren war Südkorea nach dem Korea-Krieg (1950–53) als eines der ärmsten Länder Asiens auf Entwicklungshilfe angewiesen. Südkorea strebte den Weg aus der Armut hin zum Industrieland an. Die Entsendung von Arbeitskräften sollte der hohen Arbeitslosigkeit in Südkorea entgegenwirken und darüber hinaus zur Stärkung der Devisenreserven beitragen. Zur gleichen Zeit litten deutsche Bergwerke unter einen Fachkräftemangel, der aufgrund der Vollbeschäftigung und des wirtschaftlichen Strukturwandels von einer Industrienation hin zur post-industriellen Ära entstand. Deutschland hatte bereits Anwerbeabkommen mit anderen Ländern geschlossen und ausländische Gastarbeiter in den Bergwerken im Ruhrgebiet beschäftigt. Die zierlichen und beweglichen Koreaner wurden als besonders geeignet für den Untertagebaubetrieb angesehen, ähnlich wie früher die japanischen Bergleute. Dieser Ansicht wurde auch im Artikel 1 des Programms von 1963 Rechnung getragen, der den Einsatzbereich der koreanischen Bergarbeiter explizit als „Untertagebaubetrieb“ festlegte.

Obwohl diese Tätigkeit alles andere als einen Traumjob darstellte, war der Andrang von Bewerbern auf die Stellen enorm hoch. Die Aussicht auf eine feste Anstellung mit einem hohen Gehalt in einem wohlhabenden westlichen Land wirkte als ein starker positiver Anreiz für junge Koreaner, die in ihrem Heimatland kaum Perspektiven hatten. Die Auswahlkriterien, die von deutscher Seite vorgegeben wurden, waren prinzipiell nicht schwer zu erfüllen: Es ging lediglich um körperliche Arbeit, für die keine spezielle Ausbildung oder langjährige Berufserfahrung erforderlich war. Trotz dieser relativ einfachen Auswahlkriterien erwiesen sich die Selektionsprozesse als aufwändig und anspruchsvoll, was eine hohe Anfangsinvestition für eine Bewerbung erforderlich machte (J.-S. Bak 2012).⁴

4 Die persönlichen Daten der ehemaligen koreanischen Bergarbeiter, deren Erzählungen im vorliegenden Aufsatz sekundär verwendet werden, sind wie folgt angegeben: (Name [Entsendungsjahr] Jahr des Interviews). Das Entsendungsjahr in eckigen Klammern wird nur eingefügt, wenn der Inhalt darauf Bezug nimmt.

Die Kandidaten mussten zunächst in der Lage sein, nach Seoul zu reisen und dort eine Weile zu bleiben, was Zeit und Geld in Anspruch nahm, da die für die Auswahl zuständige Behörde, die „Korea Overseas Development Corporation“, ihren Sitz in Seoul hatte. Zu den Prüfungsprozessen gehörten die Beschaffung von amtlichen Dokumenten, eine Gesundheitsuntersuchung sowie unter anderem Tests in den Bereichen Englisch, Allgemeinwissen und Fachwissen. Bewerber, die über ein finanziell besser gestelltes oder hochqualifiziertes Umfeld verfügten und auf Unterstützung durch ihr familiäres Netzwerk zählen konnten, hatten bessere Chancen, die Prüfung zu bestehen. Dies führte jedoch gelegentlich zu problematischen Situationen, da es einigen Bewerbern an den grundlegenden Anforderungen an körperliche Kraft und Berufserfahrung mangelte. Stattdessen verfügten sie über soziales und Bildungskapital, wobei insbesondere das informelle Beziehungsnetzwerk, auf Koreanisch bekannt als „Yónjul“, eine bedeutende Rolle spielte (Ch.-S. Kim 2012).

Diese Situation ermöglichte es einzelnen Bewerbern, sich nicht auf Grund ihrer Eignung für den Beruf, sondern aufgrund von Beziehungen und finanziellen Mitteln gegenüber eigentlich besser geeigneten Bewerbern durchzusetzen. Es kam häufig vor, dass „Broker“ (Privatvermittler) gegen hohe Bezahlung, manchmal sogar auf Kredit, die passenden Dokumente beschafften, wie zum Beispiel gefälschte Berufszeugnisse. Dieses Vorgehen war ein offenes Geheimnis unter den Kandidaten und wurde stillschweigend akzeptiert. Aus der Befürchtung heraus, dass ein hoher Bildungsgrad eine negative Einschätzung der körperlichen Leistungsfähigkeit nach sich ziehen könnte, unterließen es einige Bewerber, ihren Bildungsabschluss in den Bewerbungsunterlagen anzugeben. Fehlende Berufserfahrung wurde dagegen oft sogar von Prüfern in den Hintergrund gedrängt (W.-S. Kim 2012) und durch wochenlange Besuche eines Bergwerks in Korea ersetzt. Auch zuständige Beamte ließen sich auf diese Unregelmäßigkeiten ein. Der Ausgang des Auswahlverfahrens war daher in hohem Maße unvorhersehbar. Viele beschrieben ihr Bestehen als „unverdientes Glück“ oder „etwas Unerwartetes“: „Ich weiß nicht, wie ich es trotz des unpassenden Profils, geschafft habe, durchzukommen.“

Diese Umstände begünstigten nicht unbedingt die Entsendung der am besten geeigneten Bewerber für die Arbeit im Untertagebaubetrieb. In der ersten Phase der Entsendung war sowohl in Korea als auch in Deutschland bekannt, dass nur etwa ein Zehntel der Entsandten Berufserfahrung als Bergleute hatte, während etwa ein Fünftel einen Universitätsabschluss vorweisen konnte (G.-y. Bak 2019, 96). Die Bewerber waren bereit, den niedrigeren Sozialstatus im Zielland im Vergleich zu ihrem höheren Sozialstatus im Herkunftsland in Kauf zu nehmen. Im Hintergrund dieser Lebensentscheidung lag ein starker Wille *individueller* Bewerber, von einem „Ortsbonus“ zu profitieren (Milanović 2016, 143 ff.). Dieser Trend setzte sich zwar abgeschwächt, jedoch beständig bis zum Anwerbestopp fort und manifestierte sich in den Merkmalen der koreanischen Migrantengesellschaft in Deutschland.

Gesellschaftliche Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit bei Ankunft in der Aufnahmegesellschaft

Damaligen Zeitungsberichten zufolge verließen die ausgewählten Koreaner voller Stolz, Ehrgeiz und Hoffnung ihr Heimatland und flogen nach Deutschland. Für diese Chance waren sie Deutschland gegenüber äußerst *dankbar*. Das Dankbarkeitsgefühl verstärkte sich durch die Richtlinie zur Gleichbehandlung mit den „vergleichbaren deutschen Arbeitnehmern des Betriebes“ im Artikel 13 der Vereinbarung. Bei ihrer Ankunft veränderten sich diese positiven Gefühle jedoch in eine andere Richtung. Im Folgenden wird gezeigt, aus welchen Grunderfahrungen die neue Realität konstituiert wurde, in welcher Gefühlswelt sich die Betroffenen bewegten, auf welche Räume sie sich bezogen und welchen Sinn sie der Arbeit zuschrieben.

Grundstimmung und Gefühlslage im Zwiespalt

Die allererste Gruppe koreanischer Bergarbeiter kam Ende des Jahres 1963 in Deutschland an. Dies wurde zunächst feierlich der koreanischen Öffentlichkeit mitgeteilt. Einige Wochen später, am 29. Januar 1964, berichtete jedoch die koreanische Tageszeitung *Kyunghyang Shinmun* ausführlich über einen Vorfall in Deutschland. Dem Bericht zufolge unterzog sich die Gruppe einer Gesundheitsprüfung. Ein großer Anteil, etwa 80% der 250 Personen, wurde als von Wurmerkrankungen befallen identifiziert und zunächst in einem Wald isoliert untergebracht. Gemäß den Anweisungen des Bergwerks mussten diejenigen, die von Parasiten befallen waren, isoliert werden, da sie aufgrund der hohen Ansteckungsgefahr nicht im Untertagebergbau eingesetzt werden durften.

Obwohl ein solches Ereignis nur einmal in einem solchen Ausmaß stattfand, reichte es aus, um die positive und hoffnungsvolle Stimmung der Koreaner ins Wanken zu bringen. Dieser Vorfall erinnerte sie daran, dass sie aus einem unhygienischen und rückständigen Herkunftsland in ein zivilisiertes Aufnahmeland gekommen waren (Jung et al. 2016, 184–186; Neckel 1991). Bei den isolierten Infizierten löste er Schamgefühle und Minderwertigkeitskomplexe aus (K.-Ch. Kim [1963] 2012). Nach diesem ersten Vorfall mussten alle nachfolgenden Gruppen regelmäßig ein Medikament zur Vorbeugung der Infektion einnehmen, was das Gefühl von Scham noch verstärkte. Darüber hinaus löste es bei den Bergarbeitern Angst aus (Y.-Ch. Kim 2006, 67), insbesondere die Sorge, dass sie *kollektiv* bestraft und nach Südkorea zurückgeschickt werden könnten.⁵ Die Koreaner, die im Heimatland um Stellen als Bergarbeiter hart konkurriert hatten, kamen zu der Einsicht, dass sie im Ausland

5 Die Angst vor kollektiven Sanktionen war für Koreaner zur damaligen Zeit durchaus real. Denn Sippenhaft existierte in Südkorea bis 1980, sodass Auslandsreisen und der Berufseinstieg der Familienangehörigen von Straftätern (bei Verurteilung als Nordkorea-freundlich oder kommunistisch) verboten oder stark eingeschränkt waren. Hinzu kommt, dass koreanische Bergarbeiter bei vorzeitiger Entlassung auf eigene Kosten in ihre Heimat zurückfliegen mussten.

aufeinander achten und sich gegenseitig kontrollieren mussten, um gemeinsam zu überleben.

Ein weiterer Vorfall verdeutlicht die Sensibilität der Koreaner dafür, wie sich individuelles Fehlverhalten auf das Wohl ihres Kollektivs auswirken konnte (Glückauf e.V. 2009, 66 f.). Am 23. Dezember 1971 wurde ein koreanischer Bergmann in Castrop-Rauxel beim Diebstahl einer Kamera ertappt und von der Polizei festgenommen. Andere koreanische Bergarbeiter erfuhren davon und beschlossen auf einer informellen internen Versammlung, den Betroffenen zum Selbstmord aufzufordern, da er ihrer Meinung nach die nationale Ehre verletzt hatte. Etwa 150 Bergleute brachten ihn zum vorgesehenen Ort für den Suizid. Ihre Aktion konnte nur durch das Eingreifen der Polizei gestoppt werden. Als Begründung gaben die Beteiligten an, dass sie eine mögliche kollektive Zwangsausweisung aus Deutschland aufgrund des Diebstahls fürchteten. Schließlich dementierte der damalige Parlamentarische Staatssekretär Alfons Bayerl offiziell ein solches Gerücht. Dieses Beispiel verdeutlicht, dass sich die koreanischen Bergarbeiter als *schicksalsverbunden* betrachteten und sich bewusst waren, dass sie eine Kollektivschuld hätte treffen können.

Erfahrungen in einem begrenzten Lebensraum

Die ersten Erfahrungen koreanischer Bergarbeiter im Zielland waren geprägt durch ihren Aufenthalt in räumlich begrenzten Lebensbereichen. Diese schirmten sie durch die Arbeitsbedingungen und sprachliche Barrieren von der Außenwelt ab, stärkten jedoch gleichzeitig den Zusammenhalt innerhalb der Gruppe. Wie erwartet, reiste keiner der koreanischen Bergarbeiter individuell an. Mit der Gruppe, die zur selben Zeit ausgewählt worden waren, flogen sie gemeinsam innerhalb von zwei Tagen von Südkorea nach Westdeutschland. Bereits diese geteilte Reiseerfahrung schuf ein Gefühl der Zusammengehörigkeit (Pfaffenthaler 2023). Bei der Ankunft am Zielflughafen wurden die koreanischen Arbeiter gruppenweise in Wohnheimen an einem für sie fremden Ort untergebracht und ohne Verzögerung in den Untertagebau eingebunden.

Die Wohnheime der koreanischen Bergarbeiter lagen meist abseits der Wohngebiete der deutschen Bevölkerung. Die Arbeit unter Tage fand in mehreren hundert Metern Tiefe statt, bei Temperaturen von über 30 Grad. Zahlreiche Erzählungen lassen keinen Zweifel daran, dass es sich im Untertagebaubetrieb um eine schwere und gefährliche Arbeit handelte, die *alle* betraf.⁶ Auch für die Bergarbeiter, die bereits Erfahrung in Korea gesammelt hatten, stellte die Arbeit im Untertagebau eine gewisse Herausforderung dar. W.-U Kim (2023), der vor der Entsendung nach Deutschland

6 Der folgende Dokumentarfilm aus einer koreanischen öffentlichen Fernsehsendung zeigt den Arbeitsablauf in einem Untertagebau des Bergwerks Ewald-Hugo zu der damaligen Zeit in Echtzeit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGltJ-7s_zA. Zugriff am 05.04.2024; Ebenfalls entnommen aus http://berlinreport.com/bbs/board.php?bo_table=50Jahre&wr_id=38&page=4. Zugriff am 05.04.2024.

auch in Korea als Bergmann tätig gewesen war, erinnert sich daran, dass die Untertagearbeit in Deutschland zwar technisch etwas fortgeschrittener war, aber dennoch gefährlich blieb.⁷ D.-Ch. Lee (2012), mit vierjähriger Berufserfahrung in Korea, beschreibt die Arbeit in Deutschland sogar als noch härter: „[...] da wir den Abbauhammer benutzten und mit unserer Muskelkraft die Kohle herausbrachen.“ Die Neulinge erlebten den Untertagebau oft als „höllisch“. Sie fühlten sich in der Enge und Dunkelheit des Untertagebergbaus alleine und schutzlos. Nach der Erzählung von W.-U Kim (2023) herrschte eine deprimierte Stimmung unter den Bergarbeitern.⁸ Nachrichten darüber, dass ein koreanischer Arbeiter in einem anderen Bergwerk bei einem Unfall ums Leben gekommen oder schwer verletzt in die Heimat zurückgekehrt war, lösten kollektive Trauer, Depression und Angst aus, denn unter den gegebenen Arbeitsbedingungen konnte eine solche Tragödie jeden treffen.⁹

Trotz der Einschränkungen beim Arbeitsplatzwechsel war es den Koreanern erlaubt, ihre Freizeit in Kneipen zu verbringen, in andere Städte zu reisen, oder ihre Wohnung zu wechseln. Sie suchten zunehmend alternative freie Räume, die ihnen zur Verfügung standen. Diese Erweiterung des Lebensraums erhöhte ihre individuelle Freiheit und ermöglichte es ihnen, gelegentlich aus der Routine auszubrechen und sich vom Gruppenverhalten abzuheben. Eine besondere Bedeutung kam den religiösen Räumen zu (Y. J. Lee 2015), die den Bergarbeitern Schutz und Gemeinschaft boten. In Erzählungen wird oft betont, dass katholische oder protestantische Gemeinden und Kirchen eine Zuflucht und Unterstützung für die koreanischen Bergarbeiter darstellten. Gelegentlich wurden entsandte Koreaner sogar zusammen mit denselben Glaubensgenossen in einer Wohnung untergebracht (K.-Ch. Kim 2012). Darüber hinaus hatten sie die Möglichkeit, in nahegelegenen Kirchen Kontakt zu deutschen Christen aufzunehmen. Mit der Zeit wurden die Kirchengemeinden für die Bergarbeiter zu einem festen Bestandteil ihres Lebens vor Ort, weit entfernt von ihrer Familie und Heimat in Korea. Diese Gemeinschaftserfahrung führte manchmal auch zur Konversion von Koreanern zum Christentum, da sie als Mitglieder einer christlichen Organisation Unterstützung erfuhren (Ch.-Ú. Lee 2013).

Der Sinn der Arbeit

Die Erinnerungen und Erzählungen zeigen zudem, dass koreanische Bergarbeiter ein hohes moralisches Bewusstsein besaßen. Geld war kein Selbstzweck; vielmehr diente ihre Arbeit dem Wohl der Familie (Y. J. Lee 2021, 12). In den 1960er- und 1970er-Jahren galt die Großfamilie als die grundlegende Einheit der koreanische

7 <http://www.ikpnews.net/news/articleView.html?idxno=49665>. Zugriff am 05.04.2024.

8 Ebd.

9 <https://www.ilemonde.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=13731>. Zugriff am 05.04.2024.

Gesellschaft, die für das Wohlergehen und die Bedürfnisse ihrer Mitglieder verantwortlich war.¹⁰ Daher war es selbstverständlich, ihren Verdienst in erster Linie zur Versorgung der Familie in der Heimat zu verwenden. Im Briefwechsel mit ihren Familien ging es hauptsächlich darum, wie das gesendete Geld zum Wohl der Familienmitglieder zu Hause in Korea verwendet wurde, wie zum Beispiel für Schuldentilgung, Schulbesuch, Geschäftseröffnung, Immobilienerwerb, Krankheitskosten usw. (M.-S. Lee 2012). Im Gegenzug beschrieben die Briefe aus Korea Emotionen wie Dankbarkeit, Hoffnung und Freude. Diese schriftliche Kommunikation stärkte das Selbstwertgefühl der koreanischen Arbeiter und verlieh ihrem harten Arbeitsleben einen übergeordneten Sinn.

Neben dem oben genannten Familismus gewann der Nationalismus in Korea als ein übergeordneter Wert rasch an Bedeutung. Er wurde seit den 1950er-Jahren als Bollwerk gegen Nordkorea und den Kommunismus im Kalten Krieg verstanden bzw. zu diesem Bollwerk stilisiert. Dies spiegelt sich in den Erinnerungen der befragten koreanischen Bergarbeiter wider. So erinnerten sie sich beispielsweise daran, dass sie in Korea vor ihrer Abreise nach Deutschland das „Allgemeinbildungsprogramm“ absolvieren mussten. Dieses wies sie zum einen an, in Deutschland jeglichen Kontakt mit Kommunisten, insbesondere mit Nordkoreanern, zu unterlassen. Zum anderen wurde ihnen eingeschärft, keinesfalls durch Fehlverhalten das Ansehen ihrer Heimat zu beschädigen oder ihr Land zu verraten. Darauf wurde zurecht erwidert: „Wir wollen uns nicht beschämend verhalten und keine Handlungen begehen, die das Ansehen unseres Landes schädigen!“ (Ch.-Ú. Lee 2013). In Übereinstimmung mit diesem kollektivistischen Gedankengut verhielten sich koreanische Bergarbeiter „patriotisch“, indem sie die gegebene Situation akzeptierten, hart arbeiteten und so möglicherweise sogar zu Vorbildern für Bergarbeiter aus anderen Ländern wurden.

Des Weiteren gewann das „patriotische“ Arbeitsverhalten an Bedeutung und Substanz, da die koreanische Regierung Belohnungen in Aussicht stellte. Im Dezember 1964, einige Monate nach der Ankunft der ersten Gruppe, besuchte der damalige koreanische Präsident Chung-Hee Park die koreanischen Bergarbeiter im Duisburger Kohlebergwerk Hamborn während seines Staatsbesuchs in Deutschland (Hyun 2018, 32 f.). Dabei betonte er, dass die Entsendung der Bergarbeiter auf die strukturelle Unterlegenheit ihres Heimatlandes zurückzuführen sei. Doch sah er im Leid der Bergarbeiter auch eine Zukunftsperspektive: „Ihre Arbeit wird später im Heimatland belohnt.“ Diese Aussage war unmissverständlich und verdeutlichte, dass das Heimatland, wenn es wirtschaftlich erstarkte, sich um ein besseres Leben für die nach Deutschland gesendeten „Gastarbeiter“ kümmern würde (Anderson 1983). Die weit verbreitete und oft zitierte Rede des Präsidenten verstärkte die Erwartung, dass die

10 In den 1960er-Jahren bestand eine typische koreanische Familie üblicherweise aus 5–6 Kindern. Großfamilien aus drei Generationen und ihren nahestehenden Verwandten waren eine weit verbreitete Lebensform, die für gegenseitige Hilfeleistung sowie emotionale Verbundenheit stand.

Heimatregierung zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt die Verantwortung für die Arbeits- und Lebensqualität der koreanischen Bergarbeiter übernehmen würde.¹¹

Das geforderte patriotische Arbeitsverhalten ließ sich damals seitens der koreanischen Politik ebenfalls mühelos in den bereits beschriebenen Familismus einbetten. Der Wert der Familie und die geforderte Vaterlandsliebe (Nationalismus) waren ohne Probleme miteinander vereinbar. So lautete die unmissverständliche Botschaft: „Koreaner dienen dem Heimatland, indem sie für ihre eigene Familie arbeiten.“ Allerdings zeigen die Befragungen auch Abweichungen von den *kollektiven* Werten der Familienorientierung und Vaterlandsliebe als Motivatoren und Sinnstifter für die Arbeit in Deutschland. So machen die Äußerungen von W.-S. Kim (2012) deutlich, dass er *individuelle* Motive für seine Bewerbung als „Gastarbeiter“ hatte: „Ich habe mir immer wieder überlegt, warum ich nach Deutschland gekommen bin. Es ist für mich, ausschließlich für mich.“ Ebenso geht aus dem Interview mit J.-S. Bak (2012) deutlich hervor, dass auch er während seines Aufenthalts in Deutschland ein individualistisches Verhalten beibehielt:

Man sagt, dass die Koreaner, die in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren als Bergleute und Krankenschwestern nach Deutschland gingen, einen wichtigen Beitrag zu Koreas wirtschaftlicher Entwicklung leisteten. [...] Ich bin der Meinung, dass das falsch ist. Diese Leute kamen damals nicht hierher, um das Wirtschaftswachstum Koreas zu unterstützen. Sie kamen her, weil sie in Korea kaum ihren Lebensunterhalt bestreiten, aber hier genügend Geld verdienen konnten. [...] Allerdings überwies ich nach meiner Ankunft in Deutschland nie auch nur eine einzige Mark nach Korea. [...] Ich habe in Deutschland drei Jahre lang fleißig meine Arbeit verrichtet und während dieser drei Jahre gab ich mein Einkommen aus, ganz wie es mir beliebte. (Y. J. Lee 2021, 105 f.)

Die beschriebenen Unterschiede zeigen deutlich, dass die Erzählungen der koreanischen Bergleute über den Sinn ihrer Arbeit differenziert waren.

Eigensinniges Arbeiterverhalten und Widerstand

Nachdem im vorherigen Kapitel die gesellschaftliche Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit bei Ankunft am Zielort beschrieben wurde, wird im Folgenden darauf eingegangen, wie koreanische Bergarbeiter sich verhielten, um sich im Arbeitsalltag zurechtzufinden und ihre Interessen zu verwirklichen. Zwei Aspekte werden dargestellt: Erstens wird insbesondere auf individuelles, eigensinniges Arbeitsverhalten eingegangen. Zweitens wird der spontane oder organisierte Widerstand vor Ort behandelt, der aus dem Zusammenhalt unter den koreanischen Bergarbeitern und der Zusammenarbeit mit koreanischen Migrantengruppen hervorgeht.

11 Diese Belohnung für das patriotische Arbeitsverhalten der nach Deutschland entsandten Bergarbeiter wurde bei den nachfolgenden Staatsbesuchen der südkoreanischen Präsidenten vor den versammelten ehemaligen Bergarbeitern in Deutschland im Jahr 2014 und 2017 erneut in Aussicht gestellt.

„Damals haben wir alle dasselbe mitgemacht!“

Im neuen Arbeitsalltag hatten koreanische Bergarbeiter zwei Hauptanliegen: eine Steigerung ihres Einkommens sowie die Wahrung ihrer physischen Unversehrtheit. Es lag grundsätzlich in ihrer eigenen Verantwortung, eine Balance zwischen Arbeit und Erholung zu finden. Unter den gegebenen Vertragsbedingungen strebten sie jedoch eher nach einem höheren Einkommen als nach dem Wohlergehen von Körper und Geist. Da sie auf die neuen Arbeitsbedingungen kaum vorbereitet und von fremden Arbeitskollegen umgeben waren, ist es nicht überraschend, dass besonders in den Anfangsjahren viele Opfer durch Tod, Unfälle und Krankheiten zu verzeichnen waren. Allmählich entwickelten sich Routinen, die in vermeintlich individuellen Schicksalsschlägen Orientierung boten.

Die Bergarbeiter wurden Gruppen zugeordnet, an denen sie sich während der Arbeit orientieren konnten. Die Hierarchie zwischen einheimischen und ausländischen Arbeitern war dabei sehr deutlich. Zur ersten Gruppe gehörten deutsche Aufsichtspersonen wie Meister oder Steiger, die für die Arbeitszuweisung zuständig waren. Sie hatten auch die Befugnis, ausländische Arbeitskräfte zu entlassen, wenn diese arbeitsunfähig waren, unerlaubt der Arbeit fernblieben oder anderweitiges Fehlverhalten zeigten (J.-O. Choi 2012). Die zweite Gruppe bestand aus Gastarbeitern aus Italien, der Türkei, Marokko, Südkorea, Portugal, Tunesien und Jugoslawien. Beginnend mit der „Gastarbeiteranwerbung“ aus dem nahegelegenen Italien im Jahr 1955 wurden bis zum Anwerbestopp 1973 „Gastarbeiter“ aus verschiedenen Ländern rekrutiert. Sie wurden in der Regel als homogene nationale Gruppe gebündelt und einer Zeche zugeteilt, was gruppenspezifisches Arbeitsverhalten sowohl beobachtbar als auch voraussagbar machte. „Gastarbeiter“ europäischer Herkunft galten eher als zivilisiert, während Türken aufgrund ihrer Religion eher negativ wahrgenommen und diskriminiert wurden (Hunn 2005; Seidel 2014). Den ausländischen Arbeitnehmern wurden jedoch generell die niedrigsten Arbeiten zugeteilt, die die Einheimischen nicht übernehmen wollten (Hyun 2015, 24). Deutsche Arbeitgeber und Vorgesetzte hatten die „Aktionsmacht“, den eingereisten Koreanern „etwas anzutun“ (Popitz 1992, 43). Da die Koreaner vertraglich für an- oder ungelernete Arbeit im Untertagebaubetrieb angeworben worden waren, wurde dieses hierarchische Arbeitsverhältnis nicht grundsätzlich in Frage gestellt. Was den koreanischen Bergarbeitern jedoch belastend und negativ erschien, war der Umgang mit Deutschen und ausländischen Kollegen im Arbeitsalltag:

Die Deutschen diskriminieren grundsätzlich keine Ausländer oder Asiaten. Jedoch kann es während der Zusammenarbeit frustrierend sein, wenn jemand kein Deutsch spricht, und in solchen Momenten können abwertende Bemerkungen fallen. Wenn jemand die Worte nicht versteht, könnte er manchmal als ‚Schwein‘ (was ‚Ausländer‘ bedeutet) bezeichnet werden, jedoch ist dies eigentlich eher ein Scherz. Schimpfwörter sind in Korea und Deutschland gleich. Manchmal werden beleidigende Begriffe verwendet, die die Eltern betreffen oder sexuelle Anspie-

lungen machen, und das finde ich bedauerlich. (lacht) Deutsche tun so etwas normalerweise nicht, aber manchmal gibt es türkische Vorarbeiter, die wirklich rücksichtslos sind. Sie greifen manchmal sogar zu Gewalt.¹²

Diese Äußerung deutet darauf hin, dass negative Gefühle gegenüber den deutschen Kollegen relativ gut unter Kontrolle gebracht wurden, während die Konflikte mit ausländischen Bergarbeitern jederzeit eskalieren konnten. Um auf Beleidigungen oder vulgäre Ausdrücke im Bergwerk nicht impulsiv zu reagieren, benötigten die Arbeiter zunächst viel Selbstbeherrschung.

Im Bergwerk funktionierte das Akkordlohnsystem nach dem Motto: „Je härter die Arbeit ist, desto besser werden wir bezahlt“ (M.-S. Lee 2012). Der Anreiz zur Arbeit erhöhte sich dementsprechend noch weiter. Die koreanischen Bergarbeiter strebten unter diesem System nach besser bezahlten Arbeitsmöglichkeiten. Waren die Arbeitsgelegenheiten im Bergwerk begrenzt, so entstand ein Konkurrenzkampf unter den einzelnen Bergarbeitern. *Persönliche* Beziehungen zu einflussreichen Personen spielten eine wichtige Rolle, um individuelle Vorteile zu erhalten. Die Bergarbeiter versuchten „einen guten Eindruck auf den Vorsteher oder den Dolmetscher zu machen [...] und wurden dann an eine bessere Stelle versetzt“ (D.-Ch. Lee 2012). Ein solches Verhalten der Arbeiter war keineswegs konfrontativ gegenüber ihren Vorgesetzten, trug allerdings kaum zur Solidarität unter den Kollegen bei.

Koreanische Bergarbeiter strebten sowohl bei ihren Vorgesetzten als auch bei besser gestellten Landsleuten, wie beispielsweise Dolmetschern, nach individuellen Vorteilen. Deutsche Arbeitgeber wählten bei Bedarf einige der koreanischen Bergarbeiter als Dolmetscher aus, um die Kommunikation zu verbessern. Obwohl sie oft gute Deutschkenntnisse hatten, fehlte ihnen in der Regel eine berufliche Qualifikation.¹³ Erzählungen koreanischer Bergleute zufolge erlangten die Dolmetscher allmählich einflussreiche Positionen (B.-Ch. Na 2012). Es kam jedoch zu einem Konflikt, wenn der Eindruck entstand, dass der Dolmetscher – sei es beabsichtigt oder unbewusst – den Gesprächsverlauf zwischen deutschen Arbeitgebern und koreanischen Arbeitnehmern beeinflusste. Es ist anzunehmen, dass sich koreanische Dolmetscher aufgrund ihrer privilegierten Position gelegentlich in heiklen Situationen befanden, was auch durch Interviews bestätigt wird (K.-Ch. Kim 2012; Y. J. Lee 2021, 21 f., 48 f.). Ähnliche Phänomene wurden auch bei Dolmetschern für andere Migrantengruppen, wie etwa Türken, beobachtet (Hunn 2005).

12 H.-G. Lee (2020) aus <https://www.newspost.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=90680>. Zugriff am 05.04.2024.

13 Es ist leider nicht nachweisbar, ob und inwiefern das Bildungsniveau in Korea bei der Auswahl der Dolmetscher eine Rolle spielte. Es bleibt offen, ob der Übergang vom einfachen Bergmann zum Dolmetscher mit dem bereits erworbenen Bildungskapital in Korea zusammenhing und welchen Einfluss dies auf weitere Lebensverläufe ausübte. In diesem Zusammenhang ist anzumerken, dass Glückauf e.V., der einen bedeutenden Beitrag zur Aufbewahrung historischer Gedächtnisse über ehemalige koreanische Bergarbeiter geleistet hat, größtenteils von ehemaligen Dolmetschern initiiert wurde.

Das an sich hochmotivierte Arbeitsverhalten koreanischer Bergarbeiter wirkte jedoch *unsolidarisch* auf deutsche Bergarbeiter, die im Gegensatz zu ausländischen Arbeitskräften eine längere Perspektive auf ihre Beschäftigung und gewerkschaftliche Anbindung hatten (Seidel 2014). Sie beklagten sich darüber, dass die Koreaner im Übereifer die Mindestmenge des Untertagebergbaus im Akkordlohnsystem steigerten, was gegen die Interessen *aller* Bergarbeiter verstieße. Unter diesen Umständen war eine Solidarität zwischen Koreanern, Deutschen sowie anderen ausländischen Bergarbeitern kaum zu erwarten (Ch.-S. Kim 2012). Trotz der gemeinsamen Arbeits- und Wohnsituation gab es kein Miteinander, sondern lediglich ein Nebeneinander. Diese Situation wurde zudem durch Unterschiede in Herkunft, Sprache und Arbeitsfähigkeiten verstärkt. Darüber hinaus kam es sehr häufig zu Beschimpfungen, Beleidigungen oder Streitereien im Untertagebergbau (K.-Ch. Kim 2012; Ch.-S. Kim 2012). Den Erzählungen zufolge waren Krawalle oder Schlägereien mit (türkischen) Gastarbeitern keine Seltenheit. Das Konkurrenz- und Konfliktverhältnis mit ausländischen Bergarbeitern zeigte sich nicht nur im Untertagebau, sondern auch in Wohnheimen und Kneipen.

Vor diesem Hintergrund rückten die Koreaner, die im selben Bergwerk tätig waren oder im selben Wohnheim lebten, enger zusammen und bildeten eine neue Gruppenstruktur. Die zeitliche Reihenfolge der Entsendung diente als Grundlage für die Gruppenbildung, während übliche Unterscheidungsmerkmale wie Alter, Bildungsniveau, Berufsausbildung oder regionale Herkunft kaum relevant waren. Insbesondere die zuerst entsandte Gruppe verstand sich als verantwortlich für das Fortbestehen der Beschäftigung koreanischer Bergarbeiter. Die zuvor eingetroffene Gruppe nahm jeweils eine führende Rolle gegenüber den nachfolgenden Gruppen ein. In den Erzählungen wurden daher oft die Rangnummern der Entsendung als Gruppenidentifikation genannt. Die hohe Akzeptanz dieser Gruppenordnung lässt sich auf die strenge Militärerfahrung der koreanischen Bergarbeiter zurückführen, ähnlich wie bei den türkischen Bergarbeitern, die ebenfalls durch ihre Militärzeit eine vergleichbare Disziplin und Hierarchie verinnerlicht haben (Richter 2015). Auch im Militär richtet sich das Rangabzeichen nach dem Eintrittsdatum. Da alle entsandten koreanischen Männer gerade ihren Militärdienst abgeschlossen hatten, waren sie mit der Gruppenhierarchie vertraut, wobei die höher gestellten Mitglieder uneingeschränkte Autorität über die kollektive Einheit besaßen. M.-S. Lee (2012) erzählt, dass sie „viel Druck verspürten und Ähnliches“, fügt jedoch hinzu: „Es war eine interessante Zeit für uns damals.“ Die Vorgängergruppen übten disziplinarische Autorität über die Nachfolgergruppen aus, um abweichendes Verhalten zu unterbinden oder selbst zu bestrafen (Ch.-G. Choe 2013–2014). Es ist anzunehmen, dass das Vorhandensein einer internen Rangordnung einerseits als Schutzmechanismus nach außen und andererseits als disziplinarische Macht nach innen diene.

Zur Steigerung des Einkommens wurde unter den koreanischen Bergarbeitern häufig über eine weitere Einkommensquelle außerhalb der Arbeitsleistung gesprochen: Sozialleistungen in Deutschland, insbesondere das Familiengeld und das Kindergeld.

Da Sozialleistungen zu dieser Zeit in Korea völlig unbekannt waren, wurden sie in verschiedenen Erzählungen oder vielen Berichten auf Koreanisch schlicht als „Chedo“ bezeichnet, was im allgemeinen Sinne „System“ oder „Institution“ bedeutet. Als dieses „Chedo“ erstmals bekannt wurde, stieß es zunächst auf offensichtliches Unverständnis oder sogar Ungläubigkeit, sodass Koreaner die Information eher als *Gerücht* abtaten:

Nach dem Bestehen des Bergmannstests gab es ein *Gerücht* in Korea, dass es sich mehr lohnt, verheiratet zu sein. Man verdient als verheirateter Arbeiter mehr. In Korea wurde empfohlen, keine Kinder zu bekommen, hingegen wird in diesem Land eine Kindergeldleistung gezahlt, die sich erhöht, wenn man mehr Kinder hat. (Ch.-G. Choe 2013–2014)

Daraus lässt sich schließen, dass wohlfahrtsstaatliche Institutionen zur damaligen Zeit für Koreaner fremd wirkten. Einige stimmten jedoch vor der Ausreise einer schnellen Eheschließung zu und beantragten diese kurzfristig. Die koreanischen Arbeitnehmer trafen trotz der unsicheren Zukunftsaussichten die Entscheidung, sich weniger auf rationales Kalkül zu verlassen, sondern vielmehr auf die Hoffnung zu setzen, das Beste aus der gegebenen Situation zu machen.

Als koreanische Bergarbeiter vor Ort sahen, dass sich das „Chedo“ bewährte, gab es kaum mehr Zurückhaltung oder Skepsis (J.-S. Bak [1970] 2012). Einige präsentierten ihre Heiratsurkunde nachträglich ohne wesentliche Vorbehalte, da die Gründung einer eigenen Familie und die Versorgung der Großfamilie in Korea als Pflicht angesehen wurde. Da die Bergarbeiter meist im selben Wohnheim untergebracht waren, machte solches praktisches Wissen rasch die Runde, was viele zur Nachahmung veranlasste. Teilweise fälschten sie sogar ihre Heiratsdokumente, um einen finanziellen Vorteil zu erlangen. Koreanische Kollegen beschreiben diese Situation ambivalent, einerseits als traurig, andererseits als humorvoll (M.-S. Lee [1965] 2012). Dies verdeutlicht, dass es sich damals um eine Art undurchsichtige Situation handelte, in der vermutlich alle Mittel ausprobiert wurden, die riskant, ergebnisoffen und sogar illegal waren. Es entwickelte sich ein Handeln, das die Grenzen eines fremden Systems nicht nur berührte, sondern möglicherweise auch überschritt.

Im Vergleich zum Familien- oder Kinderzuschlag waren Sozialleistungen wie „bezahlter Urlaub“ und „bezahlte Krankheitstage“ ständige Begleitthemen im Arbeitsalltag der koreanischen Bergarbeiter. Über Urlaubserfahrungen wurde gelegentlich und eher nebenher berichtet. Koreanische Bergarbeiter nutzten ihren Urlaub, um europäische Großstädte kennenzulernen und sich mit koreanischen Bekannten oder Krankenschwestern zu treffen. Einige nahmen während ihrer Urlaubstage auch andere Arbeitsmöglichkeiten außerhalb des Bergwerks an, um zusätzliches Geld zu verdienen. Da „bezahlte Krankheitstage“ für Koreaner ebenfalls neu waren, zögerten sie zunächst, sich krankschreiben zu lassen. Sie hatten die Befürchtung, dass sich die Inanspruchnahme negativ auf die Bewertung ihrer Arbeitsleistung auswirken könnte. Erst nachdem einige Kollegen den Anspruch auf bezahlte Krankheitstage

wahrgenommen und positive Erfahrungen gesammelt hatten, begannen weitere Koreaner das „Chedo“ zu nutzen. Die Arbeitskollegen in den Wohnheimen berieten sich gegenseitig, wie diese Gelegenheit am besten wahrzunehmen sei. Ch.-G. Choe (2013–2014) berichtet, dass er sich von seinen Vorgängern überzeugen ließ, die eigene Gesundheit durch eine Krankschreibung zu *schonen*. Diese gegenseitigen Empfehlungen zur Krankschreibung beruhten auf ihrer geteilten Arbeitsmoral, die besagte, Krankheiten, Erschöpfung und Unfälle bei der Arbeit in Kauf zu nehmen, um das Einkommen zu steigern. Die Krankschreibung wurde allmählich zur bevorzugten Praxis, um sich präventiv vor körperlicher Anstrengung zu schützen, ohne dabei finanzielle Einbußen hinnehmen zu müssen.

In manchen Erzählungen sind daher die Gründe für die Krankschreibungen ein zentrales Thema. Eine wichtige Rolle spielt hierbei der „Gefallen“ des Arztes (W.-S. Kim 2012). So wird ein guter Arzt als eine Person beschrieben, der großzügig Krankschreibungen ausstellt. Ein „böser“ Arzt hingegen wird als jemand beschrieben, der als Krankheitsgrund „Heimweh“ angab und somit die Entlassung des Patienten veranlasst. Einige gestanden, dass sie, wenn es sein musste, Krankheiten vortäuschten. Dabei wurden diese Anekdoten mit einer Mischung aus Lachen und Selbstironie erzählt, wie es schon die *spielerische* Formulierung „Krank feiern!“ widerspiegelt. In einem Bericht im *Spiegel* im Jahr 1980 heißt es: „keiner ist so oft krank wie die Koreaner. [...], dass sich die Koreaner umso anfälliger zeigen, je länger sie in der Bundesrepublik sind.“¹⁴ Es liegt nahe, dass das Krankschreiben im Laufe der Zeit unter den Bergarbeitern als Tipp weitergegeben und häufiger praktiziert wurde.

Grundsätzlich fühlten sich die Bergleute im Recht und entlasteten sich selbst durch Aussagen wie: „Damals haben wir alle dasselbe mitgemacht“ (M.-S. Lee 2012). Es liegt nahe, dass die gemeinsame Einstellung und die Praxis der Krankschreibung dem Einzelnen ein Gefühl von Sicherheit und Schutz bot. Obwohl ein starkes Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl die gegenseitige Einflussnahme förderte, blieb die Praxis der Krankschreibung dennoch auf individuelle Handlungen beschränkt. Kranksein blieb somit eine persönliche Angelegenheit. Aus diesem Grund konnte sich die Krankschreibung nicht so einfach zu einer kollektiven Arbeitsverweigerung oder einer ähnlichen Konfrontation mit den Vorgesetzten entwickeln. Diese passive Strategie erwies sich als besonders effektiv, da sie den Arbeitern eine eigene Grauzone schuf, die über die bloße Akzeptanz der Herrschaft und den Widerstand hinausging (Lüdtke 1993).

Widerstand aus politischen Gelegenheitsstrukturen

Die koreanischen Bergarbeiter zeigten in einigen Passagen der Erzählungen und Berichte nicht nur eigensinniges, sondern auch widerständiges Verhalten gegenüber der lokalen Autorität. Der Antrieb zum Widerstand wurde maßgeblich durch ihre sozia-

¹⁴ Der Spiegel, „Angst vor dem Korb“, 07. April 1980.

len und räumlichen Bedingungen begünstigt. Sie lebten in enger sozialer Nähe, größtenteils in Wohngemeinschaften, kannten sich persönlich, hatten ähnliche Arbeits- sowie Lebensverhältnisse, unternahmen gemeinsame Aktivitäten und teilten verschiedene Informationen miteinander. Dieses „intime“ Wissen übereinander führte zu einem ständigen gegenseitigen Vergleich untereinander, der Neidgefühle verstärkte und den Gerechtigkeitsanspruch erhöhte (Neckel 1999, 150). Unter diesen Umständen kam es vor, dass die koreanischen Bergarbeiter bei wiederkehrenden Konflikten die Arbeit niederlegten und ihre Stimme erhoben.

Ein kollektives Ereignis unter koreanischen Bergarbeitern im April 1965 in der Zeche Klöckner in Castrop-Rauxel bietet einen Einblick in ein *typisches* Verlaufsmuster des Widerstandes. Bei einer Schlägerei zwischen einem koreanischen Bergarbeiter und einem *deutschen* Kollegen wurde dem Koreaner die Nase zertrümmert. Dies führte zu einem kollektiven Protest der koreanischen Bergarbeiter gegenüber ihren deutschen Kollegen. Als Reaktion legten etwa 70% (186 von 264 Koreanern) der Bergarbeiter in der Zeche Klöckner ihre Arbeit unter Tage für drei Tage nieder. Diese Entwicklung des kollektiven Verhaltens lässt sich wie folgt darstellen: Zum einen bestand bereits ein ethnisch-nationaler Zusammenhalt unter den Koreanern, zum anderen wurde der Vorfall nicht als isolierte Auseinandersetzung wahrgenommen, sondern als Verletzung der zuvor vereinbarten Gleichbehandlungsklausel, die als zusichert galt. Einfach ausgedrückt waren die Bergarbeiter leicht mobilisierbar, da sie in denselben oder in benachbarten Räumen arbeiteten und wohnten. Sie formulierten daher klare Forderungen bezüglich der Gleichbehandlung.¹⁵

Es fehlte ihnen jedoch häufig an den politischen Gelegenheitsstrukturen, um kollektives Handeln zu organisieren, in die Öffentlichkeit zu bringen und auf Dauer durchzuführen. Im Fall der Zeche Klöckner wurden die südkoreanische Botschaft und der koreanische „Botschafter für Arbeitsangelegenheiten“ als Vermittler hinzugezogen. Die koreanische Botschaft in Bonn diente als institutionelle Verbindungsstelle zwischen den koreanischen Bergarbeitern und den deutschen Arbeitgebern. Für die Bergarbeiter, die keine Unterstützung von Arbeiterorganisationen wie lokalen Gewerkschaften oder der Internationalen Arbeitsorganisation (ILO) erhielten, war die koreanische Botschaft oft die einzige Anlaufstelle, um Hilfe bei Problemen zu erhalten. Die Erwartungen an die Heimatregierung wurden jedoch oft nicht erfüllt (W.-S. Kim 2012).¹⁶

15 Die von den Koreanern gestellten Forderungen lauteten wie folgt: „Behandelt uns Ausländer nicht abfällig! Zahlt uns dasselbe Gehalt wie den Deutschen! Zahlt die Familienhilfe rückwirkend aus! Gebt uns passende Arbeitsplätze! Entlasst den Dolmetscher, der ausschließlich für das Bergbauunternehmen arbeitet! Der Assistenzdolmetscher sollte gemeinsam mit uns in das Bergwerk einfahren!“ http://berlinreport.com/bbs/board.php?bo_table=50Jahre&wr_id=65&page=4. Zugriff am 05.04. 2024.

16 Die anfänglichen Vorschläge der koreanischen Bergarbeiter, die während des Besuchs des koreanischen Präsidenten in Hamborn im Jahr 1964 vorgebracht wurden, stießen bei der koreanischen Regierung auf keine Resonanz (Hyun 2018).

Die Botschaft ging in ihrer Vermittlerrolle weniger auf die gestellten Probleme und Forderungen der Bergarbeiter ein, sondern verlagerte diese nur auf eine andere Ebene. Sie betonte die negativen Konsequenzen des kollektiven Protestverhaltens auf die Aufenthaltsgenehmigung der koreanischen Bergarbeiter und das Ansehen der Heimatnation. Dadurch sollten die besorgten und verärgerten Koreaner beschwichtigt werden. Der Widerstand in der Zeche Klöckner wurde beendet, ohne dass seitens der Arbeitgeber Zugeständnisse gemacht wurden. Ebenso gab es keine negativen Konsequenzen für die protestierenden Bergarbeiter (Ch.-G. Choe 2013–2014; Hildebrandt 1986, 195). Daraus ergab sich eine Art Stillstand, der Konflikte in sich barg.

Es waren die politische Gelegenheitsstrukturen, die dem Widerstand der koreanischen Bergarbeiter neuen Schwung gaben: Erstens hatte sich die Bewegungsfreiheit der Bergarbeiter erhöht. Seit dem Jahr 1968 war es möglich, die Aufenthalts- und Arbeitserlaubnis zu verlängern, wenn koreanische Bergarbeiter außerhalb des Bergbaus arbeiten wollten. Im Jahr 1972 wurde beschlossen, basierend auf drei Kriterien (Studium, Besuch einer Fachschule oder Ausbildung) eine Aufenthaltserlaubnis zum Zweck der beruflichen Fortbildung zu erteilen (Hyun 2018, 233). Die koreanischen Bergarbeiter nutzten diese Möglichkeiten, um eine bessere Lebensperspektive aufzubauen oder sich auf eine langfristige Existenzgründung in Deutschland vorzubereiten. Zudem führte dies dazu, dass die Bergarbeiter ihre Kontakte über das Bergwerk hinaus ausweiteten und vermehrt mit anderen koreanischen Gruppen und Organisationen in Berührung kamen, insbesondere mit koreanischen Intellektuellen und Dissidenten, die nach dem Scheitern der Studentenbewegung in Korea (1960) vorübergehend in Deutschland einen Zufluchts- bzw. Exilort fanden (Yoo 1996, 55 f.). Diese Gruppen von Koreanern hatten sich bereits in Südkorea für soziale Belange engagiert und wurden in Deutschland unter dem Einfluss des Zeitgeistes der 1968er Studentenbewegung auf die prekären Arbeitsbedingungen der koreanischen Bergleute aufmerksam (Hildebrandt 1986: 191–195).

Das Zusammentreffen aufstiegsorientierter und bildungseifriger Bergarbeiter einerseits sowie bildungsstarker und engagierter Koreaner andererseits stieß auf positive Resonanz. Insbesondere fanden Erstere organisatorische Unterstützung durch Letztere, die untereinander und mit anderen Gruppen stark vernetzt waren. Hinzu kamen die kirchlichen Verbände, die eng miteinander verflochten waren (Y. J. Lee 2015, 33) und sich für Gemeinschaftsleben und „soziale Fragen“ einsetzten (Y. J. Lee 2021, 34 f.). In Bochum wurde eine Abteilung für soziale Mission sowie eine Beratungsstelle für koreanische Arbeiter (1974 bis 1977) eingerichtet. Die Kirchen organisierten informelle „Studienzirkel“, in denen die Arbeitsbedingungen der koreanischen Gastarbeiter gemeinsam diskutiert wurden. Zur Unterstützung der koreanischen Bergarbeiter engagierten sich Studentenvereinigungen, wie beispielsweise an der Universität Essen, Kirchenorganisationen wie der „National Council of Churches in Korea“ (NCCC) und deutsche Institutionen wie das Arbeitsgericht oder Rechtsanwälte. Das Engagement von deutschen Organisationen darf jedoch nicht

mit dem von koreanischen Gruppen gleichgesetzt werden, da erstere in den Protestprozess involviert waren, um die Probleme durch juristische Verfahren im Zielland zu lösen.

Dank der Wahrnehmung und Nutzung neuer Möglichkeiten konnte sich das Widerstandsverhalten der koreanischen Bergarbeiter verändern. Sie fühlten sich nicht mehr unter starkem Druck, zu schweigen, da sich ihre Zukunftsaussichten in Deutschland etwas verbessert hatten. Außerdem wurden ihre Forderungen im Dialog mit intellektuellen Koreanern stärker unter dem Thema Menschenrechte subsumiert (Honneth 1992). Ihre Forderungen richteten sich demnach nicht nur an Koreaner, sondern gingen auch über Nationalitäten und Sektoren hinweg (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung et al. 2016). Vor diesem Hintergrund nahm das Protesthandeln in späteren Jahren einen neuen Verlauf (Glückauf e.V. 2009, 62–64).

Der erste „wilde Streik“ (Huwer 2013; Seidel 2014) koreanischer Bergarbeiter fand im September 1970 auf der Zeche Emil-Mayrisch in Aachen statt. Der Protest begann ähnlich wie im bereits erwähnten Fall in der Zeche Klöckner. Koreanische Bergleute wurden von deutschen Vorarbeitern beleidigt und körperlich angegriffen. Daraufhin stellten zwölf koreanische Bergarbeiter aus derselben Schicht Forderungen bezüglich der ungerechten Behandlungen am Arbeitsplatz.¹⁷ Nachdem eine Woche lang keine Antwort von der Arbeitsgeberseite eingegangen war, entschieden sich die Bergleute, nicht mehr in den Untertagebau einzufahren und stattdessen in ihr Wohnheim zurückzukehren.

Besondere Aufmerksamkeit soll hierbei dem örtlichen Betriebsrat als Interessenvertretung der Bergarbeiter geschenkt werden, der einen anderen Verlauf des Streiks als in der Zeche Klöckner ermöglichte. Der Betriebsrat der Bergarbeiter, bestehend aus 73 Personen in der Zeche, hielt eine gemeinsame Sitzung mit allen koreanischen Streikenden ab und beschloss, gemeinsam zu protestieren. Daraufhin wurde der koreanische Botschafter für Arbeitsangelegenheiten eingeschaltet, der bereits bekannte Argumente gegen den Protest vorbrachte. Die koreanischen Bergarbeiter in der Zeche Emil-Mayrisch ließen sich weder durch Warnungen vor einer möglichen Zwangsausweisung noch durch patriotische Appelle beirren. Entschlossen handelten die Streikenden gemeinsam und konnten so ihre Forderungen erfolgreich durchsetzen (Ch.-G. Choe [1974] 2013–2014).¹⁸

In einem anderen Fall wurde die Gleichbehandlung der Koreaner explizit als im Rahmen der Menschenrechte verankert erklärt (Y.-I. Lee 2011; Y. J. Lee 2022b). Im Jahr 1975 verfasste der koreanische Bergarbeiter Mu-ue Kang (entsandt 1974) auf-

17 Die von den Koreanern gestellten Forderungen lauten wie folgt: Zahlung zusätzlicher Vergütungen für ungerechtfertigt zu niedrig angesetzte Löhne! Neuorganisation der Arbeitsplätze entsprechend den Fähigkeiten und Eignungen der Bergarbeiter! Das Ende von beleidigenden Äußerungen und Gewaltanwendungen!

18 http://berlinreport.com/bbs/board.php?bo_table=50Jahre&wr_id=65&page=4.
Zugriff am 05.04.2024.

grund der zuvor schon bekannten bedrückenden Lage in der Duisburger Schachtanlage Walsum einen offenen Brief an den Personaldirektor (Hyun 2018, 301). Kang forderte darin „die Gewährleistung der fundamentalen Freiheiten des Menschen, wie sie im Grundgesetz der Bundesrepublik verankert ist. [...] Wir appellieren weiterhin an alle demokratischen Bürger in Deutschland und Korea“ (Hyun 2018, 304). Der offene Brief macht deutlich, dass die bisherigen Protestthemen der koreanischen Bergarbeiter nun unter einem neuen Masterframe wie den Grundrechten der Menschen und der Demokratie *für alle* zusammengefasst wurden (Snow et al. 1986).

Diese neue organisatorische und inhaltliche Ausrichtung wurde deutlich, als die koreanischen Bergarbeiter aufgrund des Anwerbestopps zur Rückkehr aufgefordert wurden und in der Folge eine Unterschriftensammlung für die Verlängerung der Aufenthaltserlaubnis starteten. Ihre Bewegung stützte sich inhaltlich auf die Auffassung, dass das Dasein als Gastarbeiter „gegen die Menschenrechte verstieß, weil ihnen keine freie Berufs- und Wohnortwahl garantiert werde und die Aufenthaltsdauer nicht verlängerbar sei.“¹⁹ Im Zentrum der Bewegungsorganisationen standen koreanische Selbstorganisationen sowie koreanische katholische und protestantische Kirchengemeinden, einschließlich der Evangelischen Studentenvereinigung der Universität Essen, der Christlichen Arbeiterjugend und der Katholischen Arbeitnehmer-Bewegung (KAB). Diese umfassende Allianz war möglich, weil es um Menschenrechte und Menschenwürde ging, die eng mit dem „Kampf um Anerkennung“ (Honneth 1992) verknüpft waren.

Als klar wurde, dass sie nach Beendigung ihrer Anwerbeverträge kein Bleiberecht mehr haben würden, trafen einzelne koreanische Bergarbeiter individuelle Zukunftsentscheidungen: Rückkehr in ihre Heimat, Weiterwanderung in Drittländer oder Verbleib in Deutschland (Bartmann et al. 2012; Hirschman 1970). Viele derjenigen, die in Deutschland bleiben wollten, nutzten die Gelegenheit, ihr Aufenthaltsrecht durch Heirat mit koreanischen Krankenschwestern zu sichern. Die aktiv engagierten Bergarbeiter blieben weiterhin mit den koreanischen Migrantenorganisationen verbunden, mit denen sie schon zuvor enge Kontakte hatten. Die Widerstandsgeschichte der Bergarbeiter wurde daraufhin als Teil der Agenda dieser koreanischen Bewegungsorganisationen betrachtet, die sich hauptsächlich auf die Demokratisierung bzw. Wiedervereinigung des Heimatlandes konzentrieren. Dies führte dazu, dass der Widerstand weniger einen Platz in der eigenen Lebensgeschichte der Bergarbeiter einnahm, sondern vielmehr in die Geschichte der Demokratiebewegung der Koreaner in Deutschland einging (Han'guk Minjujuŭi Yŏn'guso 2005).

19 Auszug aus „Glückauf der Kyopos – 50 Jahre koreanische Arbeitsmigration in Deutschland“ von You Jae Lee (2014). <https://heimatkunde.boell.de/de/2014/01/29/glueckauf-der-kyopos-50-jahre-koreanische-arbeitsmigration-deutschland>. Zugriff am 05.04.2024.

Fazit und Ausblick

Die hier vorliegende Analyse der autobiographischen Erzählungen koreanischer Bergarbeiter konzentriert sich insbesondere auf das Arbeitsverhalten der koreanischen Bergarbeiter in Deutschland. Unter der Annahme, dass kollektive Erinnerungen stets einem Selektions- und Rekonstruktionsprozess unterliegen (Halbwachs 1985, 55), wurden in diesem Beitrag erzählte Erinnerungen weniger als festgelegt, sondern vielmehr als „kontinuierliche Denkströmungen“ betrachtet. In Anlehnung an Lüdtkes Konzept des Eigensinns zeigt sich, dass sich in den Erzählungen eigensinniges und widerständiges Verhalten erkennen lässt, wobei beide Verhaltensweisen parallel verlaufen und sich gegenseitig beeinflussen.

Die Koreaner, die als Bergarbeiter nach Deutschland kamen, waren aufstiegsorientierte junge Männer aus verschiedenen Lebensbereichen. Durch eigene Mittel und eigensinnige Praktiken steigerten sie im Arbeitsalltag ihre Leistung und bezogen Sozialleistungen. Streitigkeiten waren ebenfalls Teil ihres Arbeitsalltags. Der Unfrieden unter Koreanern wurde durch Selbst- und Gruppenkontrolle reguliert. Während Auseinandersetzungen zwischen den ausländischen Arbeitskräften auf der gleichen hierarchischen Ebene stattfanden, wurden Konflikte mit deutschen Vorgesetzten oder Kollegen oft als Diskriminierung und Misshandlung gegenüber Koreanern empfunden und führten unter Umständen zu Widerstand seitens der koreanischen Bergarbeiter. Dieser Widerstand beruhte zunächst auf der Verletzung der Gleichbehandlung, die gemäß dem Gastarbeitervertrag ursprünglich als selbstverständlich galt. Als sich neue soziale und räumliche Gelegenheiten boten, änderte sich ihr Widerstand sowohl im organisatorischen als auch im ideologischen Sinne. Es wurden Proteste organisiert, die von koreanischen Selbstorganisationen und Kirchenverbänden unterstützt wurden. Gleichzeitig trug das gesellschaftliche Klima in Deutschland in den 1960er- und 1970er-Jahren dazu bei, dass die Ziele der Bewegungen auf soziale Gerechtigkeit und Menschenrechte ausgerichtet wurden (Y. J. Lee 2022b).

Abschließend wird auf das eingangs erwähnte nationalistische Narrativ zurückgegriffen, um zu verdeutlichen, welche Aspekte der Lebensgeschichte der koreanischen Bergarbeiter dabei selektiert und rekonstruiert wurden. Der Ausgangspunkt dieser Narrativbildung liegt in der quasi-faktenbasierten Feststellung, dass die Entsendung der Gastarbeiter fiskalisch mit staatlichen Krediten bzw. Darlehen verknüpft war (TRCK 2008). Konkret bedeutet dies, dass Geldüberweisungen an die eigene Familie in Korea gleichzeitig der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung im Heimatland zugutekamen. Diese quasi-Tatsache sollte ihre Forderung nach Kompensation auf staatlicher Ebene rechtfertigen. Dieses Narrativ scheint bei ehemaligen Bergarbeitern auf große Resonanz gestoßen zu sein. Im Hintergrund stand auch ihre frustrierende Situation nach dem Ende ihrer Bergarbeiterkarriere. Insbesondere zu Hause in Korea bot ihre Vergangenheit im Bergbau weder im sozialen noch im familiären Umfeld Anlass zum Stolz, sondern eher zum Stillschweigen.

Das neue Narrativ wirkt dieser trostlosen Situation entgegen und rückt ihre frühere Beschäftigung im Untertagebau der deutschen Bergwerke in ein positives Licht.

Vor diesem Hintergrund wird einerseits das selbstlose und konforme Arbeitsverhalten der Koreaner unter den harten Arbeitsbedingungen hervorgehoben. Andererseits werden die Äußerungen des damaligen Staatspräsidenten oder der koreanischen Botschaft wiederholt, die den Patriotismus der koreanischen Bergarbeiter betonen. Zusammenfassend wird das Leiden, die Schmerzen, die Geduld und die Entbehrungen des einzelnen Bergarbeiters als heroische Opfer für sein Heimatland interpretiert, wobei die Rolle als Versorger für die Familien etwas in den Hintergrund tritt. Was bei der Selektion und Rekonstruktion der Erzählungen weniger stark betont wird, sind die Alltagsgeschichten der Bergarbeiter und ihr Widerstand. Es sind nur Fragmente persönlicher Erinnerungen geblieben, die davon berichten, wie die Bergarbeiter als eigenständige Personen in ihrem Arbeitsalltag agierten und standhaft blieben. Ebenfalls werden abweichende Erzählungen, die nicht in dieses Narrativ passen, oft als individuelles Verhalten betrachtet oder als nebensächliche Episoden abgetan. Ihre Proteste zur Verbesserung der Arbeitsverhältnisse werden zwar erwähnt, jedoch nur am Rande des Narrativs behandelt, um die extrem schlechten Arbeitsbedingungen hervorzuheben. Ansonsten werden sie in die Demokratiebewegung *ausgelagert* und somit vom Arbeitsalltag der koreanischen Bergarbeiter abgekoppelt.

Die Selbstbehauptung des aktuellen nationalistischen Opfernarrativs bezieht sich im Kern auf die Entschädigungsbewegung gegenüber der Heimatnation. Die koreanische Botschaft war als Vertretung der koreanischen Regierung stark in Angelegenheiten wie Aufenthaltserlaubnis und Arbeitsbedingungen der koreanischen Bergarbeiter involviert. Bei der Vermittlung in Konflikten zwischen den koreanischen Bergarbeitern und ihren deutschen Vorgesetzten wies sie unter anderem darauf hin, dass das Ansehen des Heimatlandes bewahrt werden solle, indem die Arbeiter mit dem Arbeitgeber kooperieren. Das Vaterland forderte von seinen Staatsangehörigen die Einhaltung der Staatsziele und eine patriotische Haltung, während es auf eine entsprechende Gegenleistung hinwies. Wenn diese ausblieb, entpuppt sich der Staat als „gierige Institution“ (Coser 2015). In diesem Sinne kann der Antrag bei TRCK als Aufruf zur Gegenleistung interpretiert werden: eine symbolische Gegenleistung für die ehemaligen Bergarbeiter in Form gesellschaftlicher Anerkennung, die möglicherweise auch materielle Kompensation einschließt.

Aus heutiger Sicht fallen in den kollektiven Erzählungen ehemaliger koreanischer Bergarbeiter folgende Besonderheiten auf: Arbeitsverhalten und Widerstand waren im Wesentlichen von ethnisch-nationalistischen Motiven geprägt. Der Diskurs über die nach Deutschland entsandten Bergarbeiter beruht weitgehend auf dem Konsens, dass sie im eigentlichen Sinne keine klassischen Bergarbeiter waren. Sie bezeichnen sich selbst als „P’adok Gwangbu“, ein koreanischer Begriff, der sich aus „P’adok“ (Entsendung nach Deutschland) und „Gwangbu“ (Bergarbeiter) zusammensetzt. Durch das Präfix „P’adok“ unterscheiden sie sich von herkömmlichen Bergarbeitern. Bei genauerer Betrachtung liegt ihr Schwerpunkt auf diesem Präfix. Obwohl

sie in Deutschland für einige Jahre die Arbeit von Bergarbeitern verrichteten, gehörten sie nicht der industriellen Arbeiterklasse an. Aus ihrer Perspektive scheinen neuerliche Diskussionen über transnationale Solidaritätsbewegungen und die soziale Integration ausländischer Arbeitskräfte in die Aufnahmegesellschaft kaum relevant zu sein. Es gab kaum Anzeichen für eine Kooperation mit anderen ausländischen Bergarbeitern, und ihre Bindung an Arbeitsorganisationen wie Gewerkschaften in Deutschland war gering. Diese Dynamik setzte sich fort, als viele von ihnen nach dem Ende des Gastarbeitersystems hauptsächlich in koreanischen Migrantengemeinschaften unter sich blieben. Wenn sie ihre Kontakte erweiterten, richteten sie sich vor allem an ehemalige Arbeitskollegen im Heimatland oder in der koreanischen Diaspora, nachdem sie in Drittländer weitergewandert waren.

Die oben genannten Merkmale koreanischer Bergarbeiter gelten natürlich nicht zwangsläufig für andere ausländische „Gastarbeiter“, die sich im gleichen Zeitraum wie die Koreaner in Deutschland aufhielten. Allerdings ist es an dieser Stelle aus Platzgründen nicht möglich, auf Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede zwischen diesen ausländischen Arbeitskräften einzugehen. Es besteht jedoch ein Bedarf an weiteren Vergleichsstudien zu Arbeitsmigranten aus verschiedenen Ländern und Kulturen, insbesondere im Hinblick auf eigensinniges Verhalten und Widerstand.

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Refereed article

Transnational Aspirations and the May 18 Spirit: The Legacy and Social Remittance of Korean Immigrants in Germany

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Abstract

This paper examines the transnational impact of the May 18 Democratic Movement on Korean immigrants in Germany, focusing on concepts of “transformation,” “social remittance,” and “aspiration.” Through extensive ethnographic research, including participant observation and in-depth interviews, explored is how the spirit of May 18 has gone beyond its origins in 1980s Gwangju to influence the lives and identities of Korean migrants in the decades since, too. These individuals, having undergone significant transformations to their identity, continue to engage in transnational activism, driven by aspirations of democracy, human rights, and reunification. It is argued that the intangible social remittances these migrants transmit — as embodied in their emotional connections, cultural practices, and shared values — play a crucial role in sustaining and expanding the spirit of May 18’s legacy across borders. By situating these narratives within the broader context of global civil society, the study highlights the ongoing relevance of the May 18 Democratic Movement in shaping contemporary aspirations and fostering transnational solidarity.

Keywords: May 18 Democratic Movement, Korean immigrants in Germany, social remittance, diasporic aspirations, structures of feeling

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Introduction

The May 18 Democratic Movement,¹ which erupted in Gwangju, South Korea, in 1980, represents a pivotal moment in the country's struggle for democracy. This movement, which was brutally suppressed by the military regime, quickly became a symbol of resistance against authoritarianism and a rallying point for human rights activists and democracy promoters. Despite attempts to silence it, the May 18 Democratic Movement's ripple effects transcended national borders, deeply affecting Korean immigrants in Germany who were exposed to these winds of change through the media reports emerging at the time.² The images of a brutal crackdown being broadcast on German television sparked a wave of solidarity among Korean students, migrant workers, and their European allies, leading to widespread protests in Berlin and other cities.³

For more than four decades, Korean immigrants in Germany have commemorated these events and the movement they spurred through the annual holding of a May Festival in Europe as well as other forms of activism. These individuals, many of whom had arrived in Germany as miners and nurses during the 1960s and 1970s, have become key figures in the transnational networks advocating for democracy, human rights, and reunification. The persistence of these endeavors raises several key questions: What has motivated these individuals to uphold the spirit of May 18 over so many years? How have their identities and aspirations been shaped by their experiences in both Korea and Germany? And, how do their transnational activities contribute to the ongoing legacy of the May 18 Democratic Movement?

This paper builds on the growing body of literature examining the relationship between Korean migrants and the May 18 Democratic Movement. Myōn Kim (2013),⁴ for example, focuses on the role the May Festival held yearly in Europe plays as a "public sphere" (Habermas, 1989). On this occasion, South Korean

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- 1 In this paper the main historical event under discussion, which is known by various names, will be referred to as the "May 18 Democratic Movement," following the terminology established by the government and laws of the Republic of Korea. However, when directly quoting oral sources, the term "May 18 Uprising" will be used, respecting interlocutors' choice of framing. Depending on one's political perspective or historical viewpoint, this event is also referred to by different nomenclatures: the "May 18 Gwangju Uprising," "the May 18 Uprising," or the "May 18 Minjung Uprising," for instance. Conservatives, meanwhile, sometimes disparagingly call it the "Gwangju Incident." For further discussion of the May 18 Democratic Movement's naming, see Choi (2015).
 - 2 It is widely known that Jürgen Hinzpeter (1937–2016), a German journalist who then worked for ARD in Tokyo, snuck into Gwangju to photograph and film the brutalities, sending the material back to his native country (see: <http://maygwangju.kr/en/project/ju%CC%88rgen-hinzpeter/>). For further discussion of the relationship between Hinzpeter and the memorialization of the May 18 Democratic Movement, see Jackson (2020).
 - 3 Differing testimonies have been provided regarding the exact date of the Berlin protest. May 29, 1980 (as noted on the May 18 Foundation's blog: <https://blog.naver.com/themay18/220661987392>) is one claim; others state, meanwhile, it took place on May 30, 1980 (as reported by *Ohmynews*: <http://bit.ly/ZQnt17>).
 - 4 The McCune-Reischauer system is used here to Romanize Korean words and phrases, with exceptions made for those that have official English names or translations.

migrants engage in discussions and activities concerning peace, human rights, and the home country's democratization. Myŏn Kim (2013) argues that while the Korean diaspora in Europe is relatively small compared to those in Japan or the United States, its efforts at promoting democratization have been notably lively and impactful. The May Festival in Europe, in particular, has played a crucial role in sustaining these initiatives by serving as a central forum for the Korean community to address and respond to the democratic crisis back home.

Furthermore, Gwi-Ok Kim (2019) explores the broader transnational impact of the May 18 People's Uprising and the June Democratic Uprising of 1987 on both South Korean society and the Korean diaspora in Germany. She details how these uprisings were instrumental to fostering a sense of unity as well as interpersonal communication among various Korean diaspora groups in Germany and Europe, ultimately leading to the establishment in 1987 of the Vereinigung für Demokratie in Korea (Association for Democracy in Korea; in Korean, Minhyŏp). Although ultimately active for only a brief period (1987–1992), Minhyŏp's existence symbolized the significant role that the Korean diaspora played in promoting democratization and reunification efforts, linking South Korea, North Korea, and Germany during a time of high geopolitical tension.

Meanwhile, Mi-gyŏng Kim (2020) discusses how the Korean-American community, particularly through figures such as Han-bong Yoon (1948–2007),⁵ transitioned from collective action to broader social movements following their exposure to the May 18 Democratic Movement. Although her focus is on the US, the author's analysis provides valuable insight into how the spirit of May 18 has influenced Korean diaspora communities more broadly, including those in Germany. Drawing on these earlier perspectives, despite their tendency to focus on the cessation of activism or specific communities, the following highlights Korean migrants' ongoing aspirations, with a particular focus on the emotional dimensions and the enduring transnational impact of their activism.

The study uses ethnographic research, including participant observation of the May Festival in Europe — which I have attended annually ever since 2014. My consistent presence at the festival between 2014 and 2019 allowed me to build long-term, trustful relationships with key figures within the Korean Solidarity in Europe community. In 2020, during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, I conducted a combination of in-person and online interviews with these individuals. While health concerns and restrictions on social gatherings and travel limited face-to-face meetings, I made efforts to visit them in-person whenever it was feasible and safe to

5 A prominent South Korean democracy activist, Yoon was involved in the May 18 Gwangju Democratic Movement and would become the last fugitive sought for their participation. After fleeing to the US in 1981, he continued his activism, forming organizations such as the Minjok School and the Young Koreans United to support the movement. He returned to Korea in 1993, thereafter founding the May 18 Memorial Foundation. He dedicated his life to promoting democracy, being posthumously awarded the Order of Civil Merit in 2007. See: Kim (2020); <https://www.grandculture.net/gwangju/donggu/toc/GC60005408>.

do so. However, with a number of interlocutors, especially those located farther away or during periods of stricter lockdowns, I conducted interviews online.

Despite these challenges, the rapport I had established through years of prior in-person engagement allowed for a continuity of trustful and open communication. Given the circumstances, the study primarily relies on these intensive interviews. Specifically, I employed oral history as a key qualitative research method, collecting and preserving firsthand testimonies from individuals about their personal experiences and memories. This method is particularly valuable for capturing the voices of those who have lived through significant historical events, providing insights that are often absent from written records. By engaging with these narratives, I was able to better understand the subjective and emotional aspects of history, as well as the social and cultural contexts that shape individual and collective identities alike (Portelli, 1991; Thompson, 2000).

The May 18 Democratic Movement carries implications extending beyond just its local significance, resonating also with the frameworks of global civil society.⁶ The latter refers to the transnational networks of individuals, organizations, and movements advocating across national borders for the upholding of common values such as democracy, human rights, and social justice (Kaldor, 2003; Keane, 2003). In modern states, where varying degrees of authoritarianism often prevail, the power of citizens' movements such as the May 18 one becomes crucial for upholding these core principles.⁷ Accordingly the May 18 Democratic Movement should be seen not merely as a one-time historical event but as a harbinger of the future, an ongoing process that continues to inspire and nurture solidarity and democratic aspirations around the globe.

In exploring the enduring nature of the spirit of May 18, emphasized is the importance of said transnational networks to the promotion of universal values within a global "human ecosystem," understood as an interconnected web of relationships, communities, and movements that transcend national borders and influence one another (Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 1996). By examining how Korean immigrants in Germany have perpetuated and expanded on the spirit of May 18, revealed is the unique role this diaspora community has played in helping preserve and transmit democracy and human rights across borders.

6 Among the scholarship on the Gwangju Democratization Movement's overcoming of regionality, Geun-Ha Jung (2017) reveals that the movement's meaning remains regionally confined due to the concentration of researchers and experts in Jeolla Province and Seoul, actor-centric perspectives, and polarized evaluations influenced by regional biases. These factors, combined with the uneven geographic distribution of scholarship, hinder the nationwide unification of the uprising's significance and perpetuate its confinement within Honam, despite its recognition as a UNESCO Memory of the World in 2011.

7 See Scott (2020).

Transformation and “Structures of Feeling”

The May 18 Democratic Movement’s emergence and continued sustenance raises questions about the nature of the transformations occurring in this context, as encompassing both individual changes and broader societal shifts. These forms of evolution are deeply interconnected, as individual changes can catalyze societal transformations while history has demonstrated that macro-level societal shifts inevitably reshape individual lives. The Social Sciences have long explored this interplay, identifying general trends or the specific historical contexts to such social developments (Berriane et al., 2021).

To delve into the micro-level transformations occurring among Korean immigrants in Germany, I apply Williams’ (1977) concept of “structures of feeling.” What he emphasizes herewith is the importance of the emotional thoughts and responses emerging from one’s daily interactions, as shaped more broadly by the dominant, residual, and emergent cultural elements of a particular era. These feelings not only reflect cultural shifts but also drive the transformation of both individuals and society at large. In the context of Korean immigrants in Germany, their experiences and evolving consciousness — influenced by indirect encounters with the spirit of May 18 — underscore the transformative power of these structures of feeling.

Individual-level shifts, as driven by heartfelt responses to events such as May 18, collectively contribute to broader social change. This dynamic is evident in the way that ordinary citizens in Gwangju, who were not activists but everyday people, underwent profound revisions to their identity that, in turn, catalyzed shifts in Korean society at large. Similarly, Korean immigrants in Germany saw a hybrid identity form due to their transnational experiences, internalizing new values of human rights and democracy while at the same time retaining their Koreanness. This transformation was significantly influenced by their indirect encounter with the spirit of May 18, spurring them to advocate for democratization and, later, reunification.

“Social remittances,” as articulated by Levitt (1998), play a crucial role here. This term refers to the flow of ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital from migrants back to their home communities, as exemplified by the Korean individuals in question. Their transfer of values such as democracy, human and workers’ rights, as well as aspirations for reunification across borders demonstrates the bidirectional transmittance of cultural and emotional resources impacting both Korea and Germany.

Appadurai’s (2004, 2013) work on “aspiration,” which frames the latter as a cultural capacity deeply connected to social practice and the experience of migration, is also of key relevance to our context. Aspiration, as a form of social remittance, is evident in the way that Korean immigrants in Germany have themselves kept alive the spirit of May 18, using it to fuel the ongoing struggles for democratization and reunification. These aspirations, nurtured in the context of their everyday experiences in Germany, continue to influence and revitalize the spirit of May 18 in

the homeland. By recognizing my interlocutors' lived realities as valuable political and social capital, underscored is the enduring significance of the spirit of May 18 for future social integration and instances of solidarity — both within the Korean diaspora and beyond.

The May 18 Democratic Movement Through Oral History

Explored now are interlocutors' own narratives, as indicative of how they encountered and responded to the spirit of May 18 and interpreted the exact meaning of such lived experiences. As transnational migrants who have navigated across geographical and cultural boundaries, these individuals have inevitably experienced transformations in their identity, encountering unfamiliar values, worldviews, languages, and ways of being in Germany and Europe. Those relocating elsewhere often seek solace in familiar cultural elements from the homeland, such as religion and food, which they may recreate or modify as their new circumstances demand. At the same time, they tend to conform with local norms regarding public and private etiquette and interpersonal relationships.

This blending and merging of identities can be understood through the lens of "hybridity" Bhabha (1994). This refers to the process by which individuals combine elements of their original culture with those of the new one(s) they now inhabit, resulting in a transformed and multifaceted identity. This frame helps stress the dynamic and fluid nature of identity formation in postcolonial and transnational contexts, whereby the intersection of different cultures creates new, hybrid identities that resist easy categorization.

In the context of Korean immigrants in Germany, gender plays a significant role in shaping these transnational experiences and identity transformations. Many of those in question were women who had worked as nurses, a profession heavily influenced by traditional gender roles. In the patriarchal Korean society of the time, the sociocultural achievements of these young women were often marginalized. Consequently, a considerable number left their homeland with dreams of experiencing a more advanced Western European lifestyle. They embarked on their respective journeys to Germany with aspirations of learning a foreign language, accumulating cultural and social capital, and living cosmopolitan lives on a par with men, as described by Bourdieu (1983). These women not only had to navigate the expectations coming with a career in the German healthcare system but also to deal with the pressures of maintaining one's own identity in a foreign land. The gendered nature of such work often reinforced their role as caregivers, both in their professional lives and within their families, yet the experience also offered opportunities for empowerment and a redefinition of the status quo.

Male migrants, particularly those who worked as miners, faced a different set of challenges meanwhile. Steeped in Confucian ideals of male dominance and authority as established tradition, these men encountered new values vis-à-vis workers' rights and gender equality in Germany. This exposure often led to a reevaluation of their

roles both within the household and the larger community, contributing to a broader transformation of prevailing norms among the Korean diaspora.

When it comes to gender issues, hybridity underscores how these migrants negotiated their identities in ways deeply influenced by both their cultural heritage and new social dynamics first encountered in Germany. The transformation of transnational migrants' mindset in the process of navigating unfamiliar cultures, languages, and gender expectations has been extensively examined in Migration Studies. In the case of Korean immigrants in Germany, however, such identity shifts not only ensued from the new cultural and gender values they were exposed to in Europe but also from the radical change of perspective prompted by the dire political situation in the homeland.

Awakening of a “Girl Breadwinner”

When considering the historical significance of the Korean nurses dispatched to Germany, the concept of the “girl breadwinner” offers valuable insight into the sacrifices made by these young women on behalf of their families in the 1960s and 1970s.⁸ They used their hard-earned money in a foreign country, Germany, to rescue their loved ones back home from poverty, challenging the traditional son-favoring culture of Korean society. The fact that these nurses were highly regarded in West Germany and received salaries four to five times greater than they would have made in Korea saw immigration to Germany take on significant appeal, being a source of strong competition among that era's youth. To meet demand, short-term nursing assistant training programs were established, and teenage girls who had completed middle school often went into debt in pursuing certification, took exams, and then embarked on their journey to Germany.

Hyönok Jeong (born 1952, arrived 1969) exemplifies this generation of young women. Reflecting on her experiences, Jeong says:

I am the eldest of seven siblings, and due to my mother's illness, I couldn't even attend middle school. [...] I came to Germany to repay my family's debts and earn money. I didn't even know where Germany was or where Berlin was; I just came here to settle my family's debts. For a long time I didn't speak a word of German, but after two years I quickly learned the language. There were no Koreans in my ward; I was the only Korean, so I faced considerable challenges.

8 There is a precious book, *Chaedok'an'gukyösongmoim* (2014), about the lives of female Korean migrants in Germany; herein, members of the so-called Korean Women's Group (for Self-Help) narrate their individual life trajectories in the context of transnational migration. In 1974, a group of Korean nurses in Berlin had founded said group to address the common challenges faced by their female compatriots in Germany, including issues related to restrictive labor agreements, immigration laws tying residency to employment, and difficulties in transitioning from working in nursing homes to in hospitals. The group also helped women navigate life in a foreign land, particularly in terms of the language and cultural barriers encountered. See: <https://koreanische-frauengruppe.tistory.com/5> (in Korean).

In the late 1960s, Hyŏnok, then a young girl who had recently completed middle school, enrolled in a short-term nursing assistant program at a private institution and secured a job instead of pursuing further education in South Korea. Her commitment to her family was unwavering — she diligently repaid what they owed, sent money home to support her younger siblings, and kept only a minimal amount for her own living expenses. Her contributions allowed her parents to clear their debts, send the remaining children to school, and acquire farmland. She eventually met and married a German husband, started a family, and continued to embody the traditional Confucian gender roles and sacrificial spirit that she had been raised with. These ascriptions emphasized the importance of duty and self-sacrifice, which often saw the needs of the family and community placed above personal aspirations, a common expectation regarding women of her time.⁹

However, the events of May 18, 1980, in Gwangju marked a turning point in Hyŏnok's life. Watching the tragedy unfold on German TV had a profound impact on her, awakening what Williams (1977) describes as an “emergent feeling” — a new awareness and sense of moral duty that compelled her to act. This emergent feeling pushed Hyŏnok beyond her established roles as family breadwinner and caretaker. She joined the Korean Women's Group in Berlin and participated in street protests in Kurfürstendamm, which began as a pastime but quickly transformed into a deep and enduring commitment to social justice and activism.

The May 18 events catalyzed a shift in Hyŏnok's priorities and sense of self. No longer just the traditional breadwinner, she became an active participant in the struggle for democracy and human rights, carrying the spirit of May 18 into her ongoing work and activism. This transformation illustrates how Gwangju not only reshaped the political landscape in Korea but also had far-reaching effects on individuals living beyond the country's borders like Hyŏnok, who found themselves compelled to act — even from afar.

Overcoming the “Red Complex”

Korean nurses in West Germany also engaged in reading groups alongside similarly aged students at the Free University of Berlin (FU Berlin).¹⁰ While basic human rights were being violated in South Korea under the military regime, West Germany was itself in a more open and liberal-democratic moment. Following the 1968

9 These expectations often led to women's placement in roles reinforcing traditional gender norms, even as they navigated new environments abroad — a phenomenon well-documented in studies of Korean women in transnational contexts (Abelmann, 2003; Constable, 2005).

10 In addition to the nurses, there were also Korean students in Germany who would play a pivotal role in laying the groundwork for miner and nurse social activism in the decades to come. The former organized study groups and established pioneer organizations like Minkŏn (the Council for the Construction of Democratic Society). However, most of the students — with the exception of a few exiles compelled to remain in Germany — eventually returned to Korea. For a more detailed account of the students and elite professionals who led overseas social movements for Korea, see Lee (2015 and 2016).

Movement in West Germany,¹¹ the ideological spectrum broadened and became enriched by its embracing of alternative values, including universal human rights, equality, environmentalism, and a turning away from authoritarianism. However, the dispatched Korean workers found it challenging in time to shed a particular mentality deeply ingrained in them: namely a “red complex” whereby expressing dissent against the government was often perceived to be the act of “communists.” Though they could now engage more freely in studying and discussing history and society away from the surveillance of the Korean state, they struggled to align themselves with the paradigms then gaining traction in West Germany. At the same time, the May 18 Democratic Movement would serve as a pivotal moment for some Koreans to realize that democracy could be achieved through popular participation rather than them needing to be cowed by the fear of state power. As Yöngsook Choi (born 1945, arrived 1966) recalls:

(But then) May 18 happened, and it was reported on ARD on May 22, 1980. The following day, we discussed the possibility of joining forces with students studying in Germany and contemplated our next steps. As we did so, the ‘red complex’ that had been entrenched in my mind began to wane. I realized what I needed to do, that I had a role to play, and the significance of the May Uprising started to shape my values. Consequently, all the activities I have been involved in since that time can be attributed to the May 18 Uprising, as it served as a driving force for me and solidified my values to a certain extent [...]. For me, it was a significant moment because it dispelled [what had previously] held me back. The ‘red complex’ was frightening. [Even when I wanted to do something] I was haunted by thoughts like, ‘Isn’t this what communists do?’ I had a phobia, but once it disappeared I felt liberated to take action. In that sense, the May 18 Uprising, to some extent, provided me with the values that define my existence as a human being.

In South Korea, the “red complex” is more than just anti-communist sentiment or disdain for North Korea; it can also encompass a deep-seated fear of totalitarianism per se. The division of East and West Germany was a consequence of the Second World War, whereas the Korean Peninsula — and not Japan, the defeated aggressor — was the entity split hereby, as later leading to the Korean War. Within this context, breaking free from binary thinking proved exceptionally challenging.

The “red complex,” rooted in fear of an Other, thus lingered as a residual feeling. Yet the May 18 episode and its aftermath helped individuals like Yöngsook shed this complex and emerge instead as individuals upholding the “values that a human being should live by.” In this regard, the spirit of May 18 takes on a universality going beyond regional boundaries. It has prompted some overseas Koreans, namely those who have experienced international migration, to reconsider their perspectives and values in Europe. This exemplifies how Gwangju’s historical experience has

11 For an overview of the 1968 Revolution, see: <https://www.dw.com/en/1968-the-year-of-cultural-revolution-in-postwar-germany/a-43643818>.

fostered transnational solidarity, connecting grassroots movements advocating for democracy and human rights across different parts of the world.

Power Amid the Ordinary

While economic factors undoubtedly played a role in the migration of Korean nurses to Germany, various sociocultural considerations were also involved herein. In the European context, such aspirations represented those to a rather “ordinary” life. It was the kind of journey not necessarily requiring a high degree of political or historical awareness; instead, one was being offered the opportunity to experience the liberated lifestyle of Western women, fall in love, get married, and eventually settle down in another country.

While Hyōnok was one of the last nurses to arrive in 1970s Berlin, doing so to support her family back in Korea, Jinhyang Kim (born 1943, arrived 1966) was among the first to seek a dream life in Germany’s now capital. As she narrates:

I consider myself fortunate that I did not come from a financially disadvantaged family or anything of the sort. So, I arrived here with dreams of self-funded overseas travel, imagining visiting Rome and Paris. I had initially planned to stay for three years and then return. I aimed to learn English and other skills during that time. Two years after my arrival here, I met my husband, and here I am. [...] At that time, I did not possess any political consciousness, as I was living comfortably in South Korea under Park Chung Hee’s dictatorship. [...] I had not personally witnessed the events related to Chun Doo-Hwan’s. However, my husband gradually instilled in me a political consciousness.

Female Koreans who settled in Germany while working and starting families, such as Jinhyang, often found themselves exposed to progressive values that were taboo in Korean society during that era. These included gender equality, individual freedom, and human rights, ones that they primarily encountered through their interactions with their German husbands and same-age friends in the 1970s. West Berlin boasted a higher degree of freedom than the rest of West Germany. Situated at the forefront of the Cold War in Europe and surrounded by socialist East Germany, it was a place where individuals could traverse the Iron Curtain under the terms of the 1971 Four Power Agreements on Berlin. This enabled them to witness both regimes and to experience the crossing of borders to East Berlin or DDR. Similar to numerous young Berliners of that time, Jinhyang’s husband Klaus belonged to the 1968 generation and was actively involved with the country’s Social Democratic Party (further to, more uniquely, being a pioneer in the computer business). His progressive politics influenced Jinhyang and played a pivotal role in shaping her worldview.

The “1968 generation” refers to those who were radicalized by the cultural watershed known as the “1968 Revolution” in Germany. The movement emerging out of it, led by young people, sought to confront the country’s Nazi past, promote alternative values, and break away from the conventions of previous generations.

The 1968 Revolution, ignited by opposition to the Vietnam War, was part of a transnational and cross-generational movement simultaneously stirring in the US, Europe, and Japan.

In the German context, vigorously advocated by those involved was not only anti-war sentiment but also de-Nazification, the rejection of authoritarian culture, the pursuit of gender equality, expanded individual freedoms, democracy, environmentalism, and communitarianism. These values marked a significant divergence from the beliefs the previous generation had upheld. During this era of social transformation, and amid a growing rejection of racist tropes and thought, young Germans entered into romantic relationships and marriage with the nurses who had immigrated from a small Asian country, Korea, creating space for the exchange of progressive ideas.

The values embraced by the 1968 generation, such as democracy, human rights, and the rejection of authoritarianism, resonated strongly with the spirit of the May 18 Democratic Movement in Korea. Both movements were driven by a desire to challenge oppressive regimes and promote a more just and equitable society. The exchange of values between Germany's 1968 generation and Korea's migrant workers, particularly in the course of romantic relationships like Jinhyang and Klaus's, helped to further reinforce and globalize the spirit of May 18, fostering a shared commitment to democratic principles and social justice across national borders.

Although Jinhyang was leading a seemingly ordinary life in Berlin, witnessing a news report on TV about the events in Gwangju had a profound impact on her. She conveyed her ominous and fearful emotions to other Korean-German couples who held social gatherings from time to time in Berlin. Subsequently, together with her husband, friends, and young children, she organized and participated in protests on Kurfürstendamm. She describes her experiences as follows:

On May 30, 1980, after watching the Gwangju incident on TV, I went out to Ku'damm [Kurfürstendamm]. Together with my friends, we all participated in a demonstration for the first time, and it was then that I began to open my eyes to political matters. I learned through Gwangju what democratization truly means, and it became the foundation that has allowed me to continue working for the peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula, until now. The citizens of Gwangju are truly remarkable. Yes, we will continue to keep an eye on this, and together with my comrades, we will continue to wish for reunification [...] and we will keep supporting the Gwangju movement in the future.

To this day, Jinhyang remains one of the longest-standing Korean immigrants in Germany actively engaged in various endeavors related to upholding and furthering the spirit of May 18, including issues such as the ones of "comfort women" and reunification.

A Sense of Historical Debt

Even now, it pains me deeply when I think of May 18 in Gwangju. I agreed to do this interview because May 18 was a turning point in my life. (Soonim Kim, born 1944, arrived 1966)

Soonim Kim first arrived in Frankfurt in 1966, and four years later she moved to West Berlin to work as a nurse in a new hospital. Her hometown is Janghŭng, about 70 kilometers south of Gwangju, and she attended a nursing high school in the latter. Before the events of May 18, she had deliberately avoided contact with other Korean immigrants, stating that she had “nearly been denied a passport due to guilt by association with her family background.” She is referring here to an erstwhile South Korean law that punished individuals for their relatives’ political activities, as causing widespread fear and self-isolation. Additionally, in light of the East Berlin Spy Ring Incident, she perceived Berlin as a “spy-infested” city.¹² This attitude reflected the paranoia of the Cold War years and accompanying concerns about government surveillance. While Yŏngsook from Daegu in Gyeongsangbuk-do was trapped in the educated person’s “red complex,” Soonim kept her distance from any “Korean organizations out of fear that her parents and siblings in South Korea might be harmed” — aware that her family in South Korea could be affected under the harsh authoritarian regime of the time if she were involved in any political activities while in West Berlin. However, when she first heard about Gwangju through German media, she was startled:

In May of that year [1980], ARD was reporting on the situation in Gwangju. I felt like I was struck by a thunderbolt and plunged into pitch-black darkness. I couldn’t think straight because it was Gwangju. I couldn’t sleep, I didn’t know what to do. But since I didn’t have any interaction with Koreans, I didn’t have anyone to talk to. My daughter was nine months old then, and I just went to FU Berlin carrying her on my back. When I saw someone who looked Korean, I asked them, “What is happening in Gwangju right now?”

Soonim had worked as a nurse during her first eight years in Germany, passed the college entrance exam, and then enrolled at FU Berlin. While studying in the Department of Economics she met a British student who she eventually married. When she heard of the Gwangju incident, Soonim went to campus, hoping to meet with someone Korean she could ask for more details. While wandering around, she was told by a passerby that the Department of East Asian Studies might be able to offer some insights.

12 A significant Cold War-era event, A significant Cold War-era event, this 1967 incident involved South Koreans accused of espionage for North Korea after visiting East Berlin, where the North Korean embassy was located. South Korean secret agents forcibly deported them to South Korea, where they were tortured and imprisoned. In response, the West German government and civilians campaigned vigorously for their return to Germany. Although they were released a few years later, the city name of Berlin came to evoke fear among ordinary South Koreans. For a more detailed discussion hereof, particularly in relation to its gender dynamics, see Yi (2019).

She finally reached the building, opened the door, and amidst the crowd inside, noticed a woman mimeographing with an infant on her back. That woman was Ŭiok Seo (born 1953, arrived 1974), who remains one of Soonim's best friends to this day. The latter accompanied them to the protests in Kurfürstendamm. Furthermore, with the assistance of her British husband and his friends, she composed a letter in English to the White House in Washington, D.C. It was a heartfelt plea to save the people of Gwangju. They suggested this idea because they understood her deep concern and believed that something had to be done. While she did not anticipate receiving a response, she felt compelled to take action to alleviate her feelings of guilt and indebtedness vis-à-vis the victims. Surprisingly, the White House did answer about half a year later — stating that the US government could not take immediate action as it would be equivalent to interfering in Korea's internal affairs.

Although not the words Soonim would have hoped for, she was determined not to turn a blind eye to the issues in her home country. She eventually joined the aforementioned Korean Women's Group, under whose auspices compatriot nurses and students of around the same age read books together, discussed sociopolitical problems, and socialized. She felt a sense of universal humanity and selfless solidarity with group members who brought their newborns to work while striving to address the situation in Gwangju. Citizen-driven democracy and a commitment to human rights, founded on the dignity of the individual, were the prevailing sentiments among young West German intellectuals of the day, including Soonim and her husband. Although divided into East and West, the Cold War hostilities between the two had already begun to wane following the implementation of the 1969 "Eastern policy"; a new era was gradually dawning.

As illustrated in the examples provided, the life stories of Koreans immigrants in Germany illustrate how May 18's significance subsequently expanded across time and space. These individuals were exposed to the prevailing mores of West German society while seeking to forge a transnational identity. This led to a hybridization of the Korean immigrant worldview and new values being internalized. In doing so, they underwent a qualitative transformation — as first triggered by news of May 18 — catalyzing the explosion of fresh thinking in their minds. This awakening from within empowered them to become agents of history, those driving social change.

Such transformation in one's identity and values at the individual level had a number of implications. First, as relates to the debate surrounding the nationalization and internationalization of the spirit of May 18 given the importance of overcoming regionalism. For Korean migrants who sought to preserve the spirit of May 18, one's hometown — whether Gwangju, Chōlla Province, or elsewhere — was of no relevance. For example, Yōngsook, Jinhyang, and Ŭiok, all of whom came from Gyeongsangbuk-do, shared a deep emotional connection to Gwangju. This bond stemmed not from geography but also from the belief that the latter's people stood for human dignity and for democracy, which inspired them to embrace these

values and awaken politically.¹³ In the same vein, one can argue that, for migrants, “hometown” often goes beyond one’s personal ties to encompass the cherished image of one’s native country at large. Moreover, this manifestation of solidarity was not limited to Koreans alone: while those from different places in the home country got along and worked together, their families and friends of German or other European backgrounds also supported democratization and reunification on the Peninsula, sharing a wider commitment to human rights and justice. This support from both Korean and non-Korean allies in Europe helped to broaden the scope of the May 18 spirit, fostering a transnational solidarity transcending national and cultural borders.

Second, the events of May 18 and their aftermath spurred endeavors paying no attention to these migrants’ different backgrounds and current situations alike. Regardless of whether they hailed from impoverished or more affluent families, whether they had previously engaged with Korean communities like the Korean Women’s Group, Haninhoe (Korean Association), churches, and similar or had chosen to remain isolated from other Koreans, and regardless of their level of social consciousness, the images that they saw broadcast from afar motivated them to act in solidarity. The pathways to such transnational activism hence began to take shape shortly after May 1980, ones not remaining limited to their original ties to a single event but continuing to evolve in the decades to come. This endurance, the memory of May 18, and the perpetuation of its spirit became integral to the communal rituals of the May Festival in Europe, being embodied in them indeed.

The May Festival in Europe

An annual event, the eponymous festival has become a significant site for commemorating the May 18 Democratic Movement and fostering transnational solidarity, primarily among Korean immigrants and their invited German and European friends. Having been held for over 40 years now, it is marked by the participation of individuals from various backgrounds, including immigrants of different generations, local German families, and guests visiting from Korea. It is not just a remembrance of the past but also a practice that renews the meaning of the spirit of May 18 through communal activities and shared memories.

Unsöp Yoon (born 1948, arrived 1971), a former miner and then factory worker in Germany, is one of its long-standing participants. He reflected on the importance of the festival as follows:

I think it’s really incredible that the May Festival in Europe is 40 years old. Some years we’ve fed 300 people with homemade food. We invited domestic

13 The regional tensions between Gyeongsang and Chōlla Provinces date back to historical political, economic, and social divides. Under South Korea’s authoritarian regimes, the ruling elites — mainly from Gyeongsang Province — marginalized the Chōlla region, leading to unequal development and political bias. This has contributed to a long-standing rivalry between the two regions surviving to this day (Shin and Lee, 2014).

progressive figures to the festival, and we arranged meetings with German politicians, labor unions, and people from the Third World for the globalization of May 18. We made our efforts to ensure that the death of May 18 victims is meaningful and to inherit the spirit of May 18. I have been a member of the German Green Party since 1989, and I sent Green Party members to commemorative events on May 18 in Gwangju. In any case, I am proud to have played a role in the globalization of the spirit of May 18.

Unsöp's expression of pride here encapsulates the festival's identity as a site of transnational solidarity, where the historical debt associated with the May 18 Democratic Movement is actively remembered and honored. His sentiment goes beyond the mere expression of self-satisfaction; it represents the collective will of those participating, breathing life into the historical event of May 18 and fostering a spirit of community among the May Festival in Europe's participants. This yearly gathering serves as a cultural space or, as noted earlier, a "public sphere" — one where Korean immigrants from different hometowns come together, forge connections, and build solidarity. Additionally, their families and friends, including those of German or other European backgrounds, show support for the democratization of Korea, further expanding the reach and significance of the spirit of May 18 across borders.

Jonghyŏn Lee (born 1936, arrived 1965), a former miner and a living witness to the history of Korean immigrants in Germany, sees "empathy" and "solidarity" as key aspects of the May 18 Democratic Movement's significance:

As time passed, after a year or two after the May 18 Uprising, [I realized] that it gave us something. The division of Korea caused the suffering of our nation, and I felt that a lot. I think that's what the May 18 Uprising is about, how we can be independent of foreign powers and talk among ourselves. But more importantly it affected us directly, because here in Germany we had each organization that was active during that time, right? The Korea Committee,¹⁴ which I mentioned earlier; there was [also] the Council for the Construction of Democratic Society, there was the Korean Labor Federation, there was the Women's Group, and there was another one called the Overseas Christians for the Unification of the Homeland. These organizations were working in different directions, but through the May 18 Uprising they were able to come together and have this one commonality of what we need to do for the Korean Peninsula. I think that's what had a huge impact on me, the May 18 Uprising.

Jonghyŏn's reflections highlight how the movement first served as a unifying force for a number of smaller organizations existing within the Korean community in

14 A solidarity group founded in 1970s West Germany to support South Korean democracy and human rights movements during times of authoritarian repression. The committee worked to raise awareness about the Asian country's political struggles, helped organize protests, and collaborated with other international organizations. It focused on highlighting the suppression of democratic movements, such as the May 18 Gwangju Uprising, and advocated for Korean reunification, human rights, and peace. Over time, the group's activities contributed to the development of the broader Korea Verband. For more information, see <https://koreaverband.de/geschichte/>.

Germany, ones initially “working in different directions.” Over the past 40 years, some have naturally dissolved as key members returned home or were disbanded (Lee 2016),¹⁵ while others evolved into key supporters. The May Festival in Europe, with its enthusiasm, sincerity, and “genuine heart” continues to embody the spirit of the May 18 Democratic Movement. The event is organized with the goal of fostering solidarity not only among Koreans but also with their European allies too, illustrating the outward expansion of the spirit of May 18 as a form of social remittance that transcends borders.

The Spirit of May 18: Aspirations and Generational Dynamics

The concept of “aspiration” is crucial for understanding how the May 18 Democratic Movement continues to inspire future-oriented goals among Koreans, particularly those within the diaspora. These ambitions are deeply rooted in the legacy of the events of May 18, embodying hopes for democracy, peace, and, notably, reunification. They are, however, not static; these aspirations evolve as they are reinterpreted and renewed by each generation, influenced by their unique sociopolitical contexts and experiences.

Aspirations to Reunification: A symbolic Act of Unity

For the first generation of Korean immigrants in Germany, the aspiration to have been one of the most enduring legacies of the events of May 18, 1980. This desired outcome would be profoundly influenced by these individuals’ migration from a divided Korea to a divided Germany, where they would in time witness firsthand the fall of the Berlin Wall and the European country’s subsequent reunification.¹⁶ This historical moment was not merely an external event but a deeply personal experience that resonated with their own hopes for the Korean Peninsula.

Yŏngsook’s account of the 1990 Pan-Korean Rally (Pŏmminjok Taehoe) in Pyongyang, North Korea, exemplifies this aspiration.¹⁷ Participants from the diaspora, including Yŏngsook, brought with them jars of soil from the May 18

15 Lee (2016), a distinguished scholar and Christian leader, documented the history of the democratic movement primarily led by Korean immigrant intellectuals in Germany during the 1970s and 1980s, with a central focus on Minkŏn. Some of the movement’s leaders faced accusations of sympathizing with North Korea, leading to charges of violating South Korean national-security laws and subsequent restrictions, preventing their return home for a period.

16 See: <https://www.news1.kr/articles/3030144>.

17 This groundbreaking event took place to promote the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. While representatives from the North Korean government and those from both Koreas living abroad participated, South Korean officials were absent due to ongoing political tensions. Around 50 Koreans from Europe, primarily from Germany, took part in the rally. The event emphasized solidarity among Koreans across the world, focusing on unity and dialogue in seeking to overcome the Peninsula’s continued division. See: https://nkinfo.unikorea.go.kr/nkp/KNWldg/view/relKNWldg.do;jsessionid=gquiWHGOZrJeT8VjntsY6Zoj0AtrEaOMtxV7XCd.ins22?menuId=KNWLDG_DICARY&KNWldgNo=383.

National Cemetery in Gwangju and the Martyrs' Cemetery in the host city. During a solemn ritual, they merged these soils together and then later planted a tree in the demilitarized zone, symbolizing their deep yearning for the reunification of North and South Korea. This was not just a symbolic gesture but also a powerful expression of their belief that the struggles for democracy and justice, as represented by the May 18 Uprising, are inextricably linked with a unified Korea.

Yŏngsook reflects on this experience with a mixture of reverence and humor:

We planned to have a ritual merging the soils on the first day of the event at Panmunjom and [they asked] what we needed for it. So, I said, we need a pig's head, a mat, and rice cakes. They asked why we needed a pig's head and whether we wanted a dead pig or a live one. So, I told them it should be a boiled pig head [...]. So, they boiled five pig heads and chose the most smiling pig head to put on the ritual service table when we went.

Her description, while light-hearted in tone, underscores the deep cultural significance of the ritual, where even the smallest details were handled with the utmost care to honor the aspirations behind the ceremony.

The ritual of merging soils from Gwangju and Pyongyang, coupled with traditional practices, illustrates how the spirit of May 18 transcends regional boundaries and political ideologies. It unites the aspirations of Koreans across the world, linking the fates of North and South Korea in the collective memory and hopes of those seeking to bridge this divide. For Yŏngsook and her peers, this act was a reaffirmation of their belief that the values of democracy and human rights, which so many sacrificed their lives for during the May 18 Uprising, must also guide the path toward reunification.

Generational Dynamics and the Evolving Spirit of May 18

While the aspiration for reunification remains a powerful force among first-generation Korean migrants, their offspring bring their own perspectives and priorities into the fold as well. These differences in outlook reflect the evolving nature of the spirit of May 18, as each new generation interprets and applies its lessons to their unique circumstances. Ŭiok Seo, one of Soonim's lifelong friends and someone well-regarded for her ability to connect with youth, observes the changing dynamics of activism thus:

The younger generation, the activities around the Sewol Ferry tragedy,¹⁸ and people like that, I was like: 'Oh, the younger generation's way of activism is different.' We had a center and were driven by organizations [...]. But the younger generation does not have this kind of a control tower [...]. The older generation should be quicker to recognize that the younger generation has changed and adapt

18 On April 16, 2014, the ferry MV *Sewol* sank off the coast of Jindo, South Korea, resulting in the loss of 304 lives, primarily high-school students.

[accordingly], so that the [latter] can do something [...]. The older generation needs to move away from always being the boss or role model.

Uiok's reflections highlight the importance of intergenerational empathy and open communication to sustaining the spirit of May 18. The older generation, who were shaped by the collective, organization-driven movements of the past, are encouraged to recognize and support the younger generation's more decentralized, digital forms of activism. These newer forms of endeavor, while different in method, continue to embody the core values of earlier advocacy: justice,¹⁹ human rights, and democratic engagement. By adapting to these changes, the older generation can ensure that their successors' aspirations remain relevant and resonant across time.

Moreover, the intergenerational dynamics at play within the Korean diaspora in Germany underscore more broadly how historical events are reinterpreted over time. The spirit of May 18, with its continuity and change, serves as a bridge between the past and the future, connecting the experiences of those who lived through the original events with the aspirations of those now shaping the years to come. The evolving interpretation of this key rallying event ensures that it remains a living, dynamic force rather than a static historical relic.

Expanding Aspirations: From Reunification to Global Solidarity

The spirit of May 18 has also expanded to encompass broader issues of global justice and solidarity, particularly through the efforts of second-generation Koreans in Germany. These younger activists have embraced causes such as the "comfort women" issue, framing it within a global human rights context that resonates with other migrant and women's communities in Europe. Junghwa Han (born 1962, arrived 1978), who originally came to Germany to study before becoming a key figure in these ongoing endeavors, explains:

"People from South America, people from Iran, people from Turkey, people from Kurdistan, they have much more similar experiences of dictatorship [...]. What I've noticed a lot lately is that there's a very strong movement of women who have recently immigrated to Berlin. The younger generation speaks English well, as do Korean women. Solidarity is much easier because they have a common language [...]."

The pursuit of universal justice that began with the May 18 Democratic Movement extends to the issue of Korean "comfort women," a continuing source of controversy often framed as a nationalist conflict between Korea and Japan. However, in the German and European contexts, this issue has taken on broader dimensions, connecting to themes of peace and the experiences of women in times of war. The involvement of Korean migrants in transnational movements for justice illustrates

19 Rawls (1999) defines "justice" as fairness achieved on the basis of two core principles: 1) equal basic liberties for all; 2) social and economic structures benefiting the least advantaged (see also, Hwang 2018).

how the spirit of May 18, while rooted in the specific historical context of Gwangju, has expanded to address global human rights issues. For instance, younger Koreans in Germany have engaged deeply with the “comfort women” issue, drawing parallels between this historical injustice and the ongoing struggles faced by women and marginalized groups worldwide.

This transnational engagement highlights how the spirit of May 18 has grown beyond Korea’s borders to encompass universal values of justice and human rights. By connecting the historical trauma of the “comfort women” to broader global struggles, Korean migrants and their descendants reaffirm the enduring relevance of the values inspired by May 18. These values continue to guide their activism, providing a foundation for aspirations that transcend national boundaries and unite diverse communities in the shared pursuit of justice.

The spirit of May 18, despite its evolution over time, still inspires a range of aspirations among Koreans in Germany, from the deeply personal hope for reunification to broader wishes for global justice and solidarity. These aspirations, which are rooted in the legacy of the May 18 Democratic Movement, have expanded beyond the home country, resonating with compatriots worldwide. For Koreans abroad, particularly in Germany, this spirit embodies a collective struggle against oppression, injustice, and authoritarianism. By reinterpreting and renewing these values, each generation ensures that the spirit of May 18 remains a living force, guiding their personal and collective transformation and fostering a shared commitment to human rights, peace, and unity across transnational communities.

Conclusion

This paper has delved into the transnational impact of certain intangible assets — or “social remittances,” involving the transfer of social norms, practices, and identities across borders —, as illuminated through the life experiences of Koreans resident in Germany, with a specific emphasis on their involvement in the May Festival in Europe. The study has investigated specifically how individual identities were transformed by exposure to the May 18 Democratic Movement and, by extension, the spirit of May 18. Unlike tangible assets such as the money sent via postal order, the effects of social remittances prove more challenging to quantify despite their great importance.

Through comprehensive fieldwork and oral history, with a particular focus on the organizers of the May Festival in Europe, I was able to grasp the ways in which Korean immigrant activists in Germany produce and disseminate social remittances as an extension of their continued endeavors to uphold the spirit of May 18. These remittances are conveyed through the implied expression of *Maŭm* or “heart,” embodying the wisdom, passion, and empathetic appeal that surpass mere theoretical or intellectual forms of exchange. The potency of these narratives lies in their ability to transcend linguistic boundaries, reaching individuals on a profoundly emotional level.

To understand how these social remittances function, the concept of “structures of feeling” introduced by Williams (1977) has proved useful to this end. These structures of feeling represent the lived experiences and emotional currents within a society, ones often inarticulate yet deeply influential. In the context of Korean immigrants in Germany, the structures of feeling shaped by the spirit of May 18 have become a key component of their social remittances. These are not just historical remnants; they are active and evolving, fueling aspirations for democracy, human rights, and reunification among the diaspora. As these structures of feeling are shared and transmitted, they contribute to the transformation of both individual identities and broader social dynamics, creating a continuous loop of mutual influence between the host and home countries.

The transformative impact of these social remittances extends beyond cultural exchange to encompass identity reconfigurations shaped by transnational experiences. The blending of cultural and social values can be understood through the lens of “hybridity” (Bhabha, 1994), which highlights how migrants merge elements of their homeland with new cultural norms to form multifaceted identities. Gender plays a significant role in these processes: Korean immigrant women, primarily nurses, navigated patriarchal constraints while aspiring to cosmopolitan lifestyles and empowerment, whereas male miners reevaluated traditional Confucian ideals in light of European values like gender equality. These transformative experiences are further amplified by the political turmoil in Korea, which shaped their evolving perspectives on democracy and unification. Such narratives demonstrate how identity transformations, fueled by exposure to unfamiliar cultures, align deeply with the spirit of May 18 and contribute to broader societal aspirations.

The notion of “transformation” is crucial here, as it encapsulates the changes occurring when these individuals internalize and reinterpret the spirit of May 18. This represents not merely a change in perspective but also a profound reconfiguration of identity that influences subsequent aspirations. For example, the aspiration to reunification among first-generation immigrants is deeply tied to their personal experiences in a once-divided Germany, where the fall of the Berlin Wall served as both a metaphor and a catalyst for their hopes regarding the Korean Peninsula. These aspirations, informed by the structures of feeling surrounding the events of May 18, are then transmitted back to Korea, influencing the ongoing discourse around democracy and reunification there.

Social remittance in this context does not stand for the passive transmission of culture or ideas; it is an active, dynamic process that involves the reinterpretation and reintegration of core values across borders. As these migrants engage in transnational activities, such as organizing the May Festival in Europe, they continuously renew and reshape their advocacy, making it relevant to the next generation and new contexts. This renewal is driven by these immigrants’ contemporary aspirations, as informed by both historical experiences and current realities. Whether concerning democracy, human rights, or reunification, related

goals are continuously redefined and pursued through the diaspora's collective actions and prevailing narratives.

As such, these intangible assets are not just about preserving the past but also actively constructing a future informed by its key lessons. The narratives and stories that emerge from these communities are imbued with the emotional weight of lived experience, making them powerful tools for fostering empathy and solidarity across borders. In a world increasingly characterized by our digital interaction, the importance of these emotionally resonant stories cannot be overstated. They serve as a counterbalance to the often impersonal nature of online communication, reminding us of the enduring significance of human connection and the shared aspirations that unite us.

As humanity undergoes the transition from an analog to a digital world (Heitner 2020) against the backdrop of continued globalization, the significance of these narratives is only heightened. In this evolving landscape, the potency of storytelling and the emotional resonance that it generates become critical for fostering connection across highly diverse realms. Despite the advent of digitalization helping us to increasingly transcend traditional boundaries of time and space, global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic challenges, and geopolitical conflicts have underscored the enduring importance of physical borders, intensifying uncertainty.

Emphasizing the value of the narratives emerging from diaspora communities, notably Koreans resident in Germany, this paper has positioned transnational life stories as invaluable sociocultural assets. Infused as they are with aspirations shaped by the structures of feeling surrounding the spirit of May 18, these stories serve as human libraries. They nourish subjective selves, cultivating emotional solidarity and communal sensitivity across borders. Ultimately, these accounts contribute to a shared global narrative that transcends the limitations of the analog, embodying the transformative power of social remittances in an increasingly interconnected world.

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Refereed article

Contested Transnational Memory Space of “Comfort Women”: The Korean Diaspora’s Civic Engagement in Germany

Ah-Hyun Angela Lee

Abstract

On December 14, 2011, the first P’yŏnghwaŭi Sonyŏsang, also known as the “Statue of a Girl for Peace,” was built in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, South Korea. Since then, replicas have been installed in global cities such as Berlin, New York, Shanghai, Sydney, and Toronto. The bronze memorial represents Korean “comfort women” — a euphemism referring to Japanese military sexual slavery during the Second World War — and serves as a mnemonic platform. In Germany, the “comfort women” memorial was erected and exhibited in multiple cities, primarily due to the Korean diaspora through its activities earning the solidarity of local communities on this issue. Seeking to install these memorials has led diverse actors to collaborate both locally and transnationally, meanwhile meeting with resistance from the Japanese government. Based on interviews with the individuals who established the memorials as well as German and Korean newspaper sources, I investigate how the Korean diaspora worked together with the German local community to shift the “comfort women” issue into a global memory space. I argue that this solidarity was based on universal and particular identifications with the memorial in question, highlighting the potential for transnational memory to be shared beyond ethnic and national boundaries and contributing to the extraterritorial quality of cosmopolitan memory.

Keywords: Comfort women; Sonyŏsang; Statue of a Girl for Peace; transnational memory; cosmopolitan memory

Ah-Hyun Angela Lee is a PhD candidate in Korean Studies at Goethe University of Frankfurt, Germany. She received a BA in History of Art and Korean Studies and an MA in Modern East Asian Studies from the same university. In her PhD research, she primarily examines the transcultural memory practices and narratives established via the P’yŏnghwaŭi Sonyŏsang using the examples of Berlin, Kyoto, and Seoul. For this, she conducted fieldwork as a visiting research fellow at Waseda University in Japan and Sungkonghoe University in South Korea. Her research interests include but are not limited to contested memories, the Korean diaspora, and public history.

Introduction

On December 14, 2011, the P'yŏnghwaŭi Sonyŏsang (hereafter Sonyŏsang), also known as the “Statue of a Girl for Peace,” was erected in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, South Korea. Since then, replicas have been installed in global cities such as Berlin, New York, Shanghai, Sydney, and Toronto. The bronze memorial, featuring a girl dressed in a *hanbok* (Korean traditional clothes), represents Korean “comfort women”¹ — a euphemistic term referring to the numerous women and girls, mostly from colonial Korea but also other countries in the Asia-Pacific region as well as the Netherlands, whom the Japanese military forced into sexual slavery during the Second World War (Ahn 2020, 9; Kwon 2019, 7; Min 2003, 938; Yoshimi 2003, 106–114).

The Sonyŏsang’s installation marked the occasion of the 1,000th rally in the series of Wednesday Demonstrations that have been held since 1992 by the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (hereafter the Korean Council), the leading nongovernmental organization in South Korea addressing the “comfort women” issue. The state-driven sexual violence inflicted on these “comfort women” became known in the 1990s thanks to victim-survivors’ courageous testimonies and NGO efforts in South Korea, Japan, and Asia-Pacific more broadly (Ahn 2015, 43; Min 2003, 939). Their strategies to exert pressure on the Japanese government involved seeking international recognition of this historical crime, culminating in the United Nations’ (1996) definition of the “comfort system” as “a clear case of sexual slavery” — one that the Japanese government should acknowledge and take legal responsibility for.

Nonetheless, the “comfort women” issue remains a source of great controversy. The main point of contention here has centered on the coercive nature of the “comfort system,” particularly regarding questions of legal and political accountability vis-à-vis the Japanese state and military (Yoshimi 2003, 98). The Japanese government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2021) has officially refuted its and the military’s involvement in forcibly mobilizing the victims, overturning the position the Kono Statement established in 1993 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1993). The latter had acknowledged the Japanese military’s direct involvement in establishing the “comfort system” and its forced mobilization of women into sexual slavery herewith. Such regression in historical consciousness is linked to Japan’s political shift to neo-nationalism after Shinzo Abe (2012–2020) from the conservative Liberal Democratic Party became prime minister (P.-J. Kim 2017, 301–302).

The recent article “Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War,” by J. Mark Ramseyer, Mitsubishi Professor of Japanese Legal Studies at Harvard University, engendered substantial controversy in academic circles. He (Ramseyer 2021, 2) essentially supported the claims of Japanese denialists (Ahn 2008, 34–35), positing that these

1 Quotation marks are consciously used with the term throughout to indicate its euphemistic nature.

women, motivated by the potential earnings, voluntarily entered into contractual agreements for sex work. Ramseyer's argument was highly criticized and countered by experts in "comfort women" research and the redress movement in Japan, South Korea, and the United States. Types of criticism levied here included, among other things, the misuse of official documents, of victim-survivors' testimonies, as well as concerns related to questionable research ethics (Kang 2022; Min 2022; Yamaguchi 2022; Yoshiaki 2022).

In the face of persistent denial and the distortion of the historical narrative surrounding "comfort women," activists and scholars have sought to institutionalize their past on a global scale. Notably, "comfort women" documents being included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Program were among such aspirations. However, these efforts have encountered numerous obstacles, primarily stemming from the Japanese government's intervention and the highly controversial 2015 Comfort Women Agreement, concluded between Japan and its South Korea counterparts (H. Shin 2021, 1), which sought to settle the "comfort women" issue "finally and irreversibly" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea 2015). The bilateral agreement — encompassing also the establishment of the Foundation for Reconciliation and Healing to offer financial support to the victims and the removal of the Sonyōsang located in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul — elicited considerable pushback from advocates for the victims, especially for not including them in this negotiation process. This dissatisfaction with the handling of the matter spurred a proliferation of "comfort women" memorials both nationwide and globally (Kwon 2019, 11–12). Since then, more than 100 replicas of the Sonyōsang have been erected nationwide while at least 17 stand outside South Korea (Korean Council 2021).

Sonyōsang as Cosmopolitan Memory: The Case of Germany

Despite Germany being home to the third-most replicas after South Korea and the US, the level of scholarly attention paid to this phenomenon has been limited. Focus primarily has been given to the "comfort women" memorial built in Berlin (Mladenova 2022). This study is intended to fill this research gap by investigating the related initiatives of the Korean diaspora and German local communities as well as the contestation surrounding the four replicas erected since 2017 in Wiesent, Frankfurt, Berlin and Kassel respectively. Additionally, the exhibitions in Dresden, Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Wolfsburg are briefly addressed as well.

Beyond its Germany-centric focus, this paper contributes to the literature by adopting a theoretical lens grounded in "cosmopolitan memory." Per this conceptual framework, the potential for collective memories in the global era to transcend national boundaries and be shared across diverse ethnic and national communities has been illustrated, for instance, in the case of the Holocaust (Levy and Sznajder 2002, 2007). Previous research in our context has concentrated on the transnational dissemination of the "comfort women" memorial, emphasizing the Korean diaspora

being carrier and scrutinizing its strategies for the universalization of collective memory on this historical episode (Hasunuma and McCarthy 2019; McCarthy and Hasunuma 2018; Schumacher 2021; Son 2018; J. Yoon 2019; R. Yoon 2018). These studies — in line with extant work on transnational memory (e.g. Assmann 2014; Erll 2011; Wüstenberg 2020) — elucidate how collective memory extends beyond national confines through immigrants’ agency, being transformed hereby into universally recognized norms. Adding to these findings, the theoretical framework of cosmopolitan memory applied in this study facilitates the identification of the connections that German local communities have come to forge with the “comfort women” memorial. Cosmopolitan memory is assumed to be constructed through a dynamic process involving the de-territorialization of collective memory from the constraints of the nation-state, followed by its subsequent reterritorialization in frameworks that embrace both universal and specific local contexts (Levy and Sznajder 2002, 92).

Alongside its theoretical contributions, this study is also intended to position the “comfort women” issue within a cosmopolitan perspective, as the 2015 Comfort Women Agreement illustrated the limitations of government-led solutions here (K. Y. Shin 2016; Lee 2017; Park 2022). In addition to the Agreement, the nation-centric approach reflected in works seeking to settle this matter (e.g. Ko 2016; Li and Rui 2019; W. Shin 2019) not only perpetuates the dichotomies of victims versus perpetrators and South Korea versus Japan (Park 2022, 89; K. Y. Shin 2016, 233–234) but also overlooks the intersectional nature of the “comfort system” (Min 2003). Also, it diminishes victim-survivors’ contributions and the global civil society movement engaged in this episode (Lee 2017, 97).

In contrast, the cosmopolitan approach presents the “comfort women” issue as one of global concern, thereby nurturing transnational solidarity and instilling a shared sense of responsibility (Levy and Sznajder 2002, 92–93). Also, it underscores how transnational actors can transcend political boundaries, which may bring us closer to a victim-centered solution and a perspective that extends beyond the national(-ist) discourses surrounding this history seen thus far (Park 2022, 72). Grounded in the posited cosmopolitan-memory framework, the following questions will be tackled: What universal and particular identifications were drawn regarding the “comfort women” memorial, as leading to solidarity between the Korean diaspora and local communities in Germany? How did opponents perceive said memorials on their erection?

Methods

A qualitative research approach is taken, namely by conducting semi-structured interviews with five key individuals to gather and analyze pertinent data. Although the number of interviewees was limited, those spoken with had significant involvement in the establishment of the “comfort women” memorials (see Table 1

below). This was facilitated by the researcher's position as a member of the Korean diaspora in Germany.

Table 1: Interview Partners

No.	Name/Pseudonym	Gender	Affiliation	Involved in	Activities
1	Young-mi	Female	Engaged individually	Wiesent	Co-organized the installation, sponsored activities, participated in the unveiling ceremony
2	Sung-han	Male	Won-Buddhistischer Tempel Regensburg		Convinced the owners of the Nepal Himalaya Park about installing the memorial in the park
3	Minyǒng Kang	Male	Koreanische Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Rhein-Main	Frankfurt	Co-organized the installation and related events
4	Nataly Jung-Hwa Han	Female	Korea Verband	Berlin	Initiated the installation in Berlin and supported the University of Kassel
5	Markus	Male	University of Kassel	Kassel	Initiated the installation

The interview guide was designed to cover key topics based on previous studies, including the reasons for organizing the installation of the “comfort women” memorial and conflicts with the Japanese government. It also sought to allow participants to introduce additional relevant information as applicable. Nevertheless, the central question was how exactly these respective interlocutors had managed to win German local communities’ support regarding each memorial’s erection.

The interviews were conducted in German and Korean, either in person or via Zoom, between September 2022 and June 2023. Audio was recorded with the participants’ verbal and/or written consent, and they each chose whether to use their real name or a pseudonym. All interviews were transcribed to ensure accuracy and provide a textual basis for analysis. The qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews underwent focused analysis by use of the MAXQDA software (Rädiker and Kuckartz 2020). The data were first coded according to the interview guide, with appropriate categories being developed; the second coding round then followed.

In addition, German and Korean newspapers were consulted to capture the positions of supporters and opponents alike. Relevant newspaper articles were identified primarily by the use of Google’s search engine, in employing specific keywords such

as Friedensstatue (Peace Statue) and Trostfrauenstatue (“Comfort Women” Statue) in German and Sonyōsang in Korean plus the relevant location. The author translated quotes from the interview data and newspaper articles used in this paper from German and Korean into English.

The Korean Diaspora’s Civic Engagement in Germany over the “Comfort Women” Memorial

Wiesent

On International Women’s Day, March 8, 2017, the first “comfort women” memorial — also referred to as the Peace Statue in Germany by its initiators — was successfully erected at Nepal Himalaya Park in Wiesent, a village in the district of Regensburg, Bavaria. The installation was initiated by the Korean diaspora, a result of the unsuccessful attempt of the local governments in South Korea and Germany to build a memorial in Freiburg, a city in the southwest of Germany. In 2016, Korean media reported that the mayors of Freiburg and its partner city in South Korea, Suwon, had agreed to install the “comfort women” memorial in the former’s city center (*Hankyoreh* 2016). This solidarity between Suwon and Freiburg was founded on universal perspectives encompassing human and women’s rights as well as peace principles. Additionally, their alliance was strengthened by identifying the memorial’s place in Germany’s own particular historical context as well as coming against the backdrop of continuing sexual violence against women in current times.

The mayor of Suwon, T’ae’yōng Yōm, a former environmental activist, emphasized that he “wish[ed] for the restoration of the human rights and honor of the ‘comfort women’ victims and peace in the international community” and wanted to “contribute to realizing the universal values of mankind” (*Hankyoreh* 2016). Yōm’s purpose corresponded to that of Freiburg’s mayor, Dieter Salomon, a member of the left-liberal party Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Alliance 90/The Greens). Salomon interpreted the memorial as a universal symbol, prompting him to draw connections between it and instances of sexual violence perpetrated by soldiers of the German Wehrmacht as well as contemporary cases thereof involving the Islamic State (Siebold 2016). In this context, the unveiling ceremony was originally planned to occur on Human Rights Day, December 10, 2016. However, this outcome was thwarted due to opposition from the Japanese government. According to one German newspaper, the Japanese Consul General visited Freiburg and argued that erecting the “comfort women” memorial would “damage relations between Germany and Japan” (Siebold 2016). Also, Freiburg’s partner city in Japan, Matsuyama, had stated it would terminate official ties if the memorial went up (Siebold 2016). Due to diplomatic pressure, the mayor of Freiburg eventually withdrew from the planned course of action.

Along with the Japanese government’s opposition, a dissenting viewpoint regarding installing the “comfort women” memorial emerged from within Germany as well.

Reinhard Zoellner, a professor specializing in German History and Japanology, expressed his disagreement with constructing such a memorial in Freiburg in an interview given with Deutsche Welle (German Wave), a state-owned international broadcaster. Zoellner cited the 2015 Comfort Women Agreement between South Korea and Japan as the basis for his argument: “If [Salomon] persists in erecting the statue in the current context and [amid] the ongoing reconciliation process between Japan and Korea, he is unilaterally taking sides with South Korea” (Felden 2016). Unlike Freiburg’s then mayor, Zoellner territorialized the “comfort women” episode as something occurring between two nation-states, thus considering the erection of a related memorial in the city irrelevant. He proposed creating an alternative memorial making “explicit reference to the fact that German soldiers have also committed such sexual crimes” (Felden 2016).

Triggered by this failure to see it through, the Korean diaspora in Germany founded the Togil p’yŏnghwaŭi sonyŏsang togil köllipch’ujinwiwŏnhoe (German Committee for Erecting the P’yŏnghwaŭi Sonyŏsang in Germany) and the citizens of Suwon the Togil p’yŏnghwaŭi sonyŏsang suwŏnsimin köllipch’ujinwiwŏnhoe (Suwon Citizens’ Committee for Erecting the P’yŏnghwaŭi Sonyŏsang in Germany) (Ch’ae 2022). Committee members in Germany included Yongnam Ch’u, the pastor of the Koreanisch-Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Bochum (Korean Protestant Church Bochum), and Eunhi Yi, representative of the Frankfurt-based NGO Punggyeong Weltkulturen (Scenery World Cultures).² Numerous individuals, including Young-mi and Sung-han, also participated in the installation eventually taking place in Wiesent.³

Young-mi’s engagement here ranged from sponsoring related activities in Germany, co-organizing the memorial’s installation, to participating in the unveiling ceremony. Her participation was based on the universal idea that the violence once inflicted on these “comfort women” could happen in any war.⁴ Sung-han, who is affiliated with the Won-Buddhistischer Tempel Regensburg (Won Buddhist Temple Regensburg) and has been working at the Nepal Himalaya Park for several years, played a significant role in convincing the latter’s owners to install such a memorial on-site. The solidarity emerging between Sung-han and the park owners was based on their shared understanding that said memorial symbolizes human rights more broadly. According to Sung-han: “The very fact that [the memorial] is being erected is to eliminate war, and then the exploitation of women, including sexual exploitation, human rights exploitation, and all these things that are going on in the war.”⁵ Simultaneously, the memorial was also contextualized to aspects of German soldiers’ respective conduct during the Second World War. Sung-han and the park owners agreed that although Germany and Japan were perpetrating nations, the

2 Nataly Jung-Hwa Han, Zoom, September 17, 2022; Young-mi, Zoom, May 11, 2023.

3 Because both interviewees wished to remain anonymous, they were given pseudonyms.

4 Young-mi, Zoom, May 11, 2023.

5 Sung-han, Zoom, May 30, 2023.

latter’s current attitude toward accepting responsibility was unjustifiable given the former’s efforts to confront its own wartime legacy.⁶

As in the Freiburg case, the memorial’s installation led to conflict with the Japanese government, eventually seeing the removal of the commemorative plaque describing the sexual violence the Japanese Empire had inflicted on these “comfort women.” According to Sung-han, the Japanese general consul in Munich visited Nepal Himalaya Park multiple times to try and persuade the owners to remove the statue.⁷ Like Zoellner, the Japanese government argued that the issue had already been resolved through the 2015 Comfort Women Agreement and offered to bear the costs incurred for removing the memorial. When the statue was not removed, the Japanese government turned to diplomatic channels: It exerted pressure on the mayor of Wiesent via the federal state of Bavaria. Nepal Himalaya Park, a journalist for a local newspaper who had reported on the installation of the memorial, and the Won Buddhist Temple Regensburg all received numerous emails and phone calls from Japanese students in Germany demanding the statue’s removal. Due to continued protests from the Japanese government and Japanese students, the park owners eventually agreed with the Japanese Embassy to preserve the “comfort women” memorial but without the aforementioned plaque.⁸

After these events transpired, Scenery World Cultures subsequently began displaying the “comfort women” memorial with the accompanying plaque as part of exhibitions instead. From August to September 2018, the memorial was presented at the Dorothee Soelle Haus, a center for church communities in Hamburg. Although the exhibition was originally supposed to take place in the Frauenmuseum (Women’s Museum) in Bonn, the location was subsequently changed due to the Japanese Embassy’s intervention. According to one German newspaper, the Japanese vice consul requested that the museum director not exhibit the memorial (Scheerschmidt 2019). Such interference continued with the Hamburg exhibition. The Japanese Consul demanded the Dorothee Soelle Haus remove the memorial, claiming the plaque’s framing was historically untrue (Scheerschmidt 2019). Another replica was also displayed in Frankfurt, first in the foyer of the Haus am Dom (House at the Cathedral) from October 2019 to January 2020 and then in the Gebäude für Sozialwissenschaften und Psychologie (Building for Social Sciences and Psychology) on Goethe University’s Westend Campus from February to July 2020.

6 Sung-han, Zoom, May 30, 2023.

7 Sung-han, Zoom, May 30, 2023.

8 Sung-han, Zoom, May 30, 2023.

Frankfurt

The “comfort women” replica memorial’s unveiling in Frankfurt was celebrated on March 8, 2020, thus once again on International Women’s Day. It was erected on the forecourt of the Koreanische Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Rhein-Main (Korean Evangelical Church Congregation Rhine-Main, hereafter Korean Rhine-Main Church), the alternative location the Korean diaspora had suggested after the installation in Freiburg was canceled.⁹ Founded in the late 1960s by the miners and nurses who had come to Germany as guest workers, the Korean Rhine-Main Church is one of the oldest Korean diasporic churches, currently serving three communities in the Rhine-Main area. Whereas other Korean diasporic churches are independent of the state, the Korean Rhine-Main Church is a member of the German state churches. Since 2001, the Korean Rhein-Main Church has been affiliated with the Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau (Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau), which has historically supported the pro-democracy movement in South Korea and reunification on the Korean Peninsula through its continued partnership and advocacy with the Han’gukkidokkyojangnohoe kwangjunohoe (Gwangju Provost of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea).¹⁰

In this context, the ongoing endeavors to erect the memorial were strongly supported by the local church communities, such as the Evangelische Stadtdekanat Frankfurt und Offenbach (*The Protestant City Deanery of Frankfurt and Offenbach*) and the Evangelische Frauen in Hessen und Nassau (Evangelical Women in Hesse and Nassau) (Knoche 2020). According to Minyŏng Kang, who has served as a pastor at the Korean Rhine-Main Church since 2016, the solidarity between the latter and the German churches over erecting the “comfort women” memorial was based on a mutual understanding that the church has a responsibility to participate in social engagement aimed at promoting peace and advocating for human rights.¹¹ A few years prior to the installation, they had jointly spoken out in favor of organizing a symposium on world peace as a way to commemorate the centennial of the First World War’s end. Subsequently, this event engendered discussion about installing the “comfort women” memorial on the grounds of the Korean Rhine-Main Church.¹² Their collective awareness led to setting up the statue and co-organizing the symposium on wartime sexual violence and peace with das Projekt Friedensstatue (The Peace Statue Project), which was unfortunately canceled due to COVID-19.¹³

Unlike the cases of Freiburg and Wiesent, the statue built at the Korean Rhine-Main Church has not met with opposition from the Japanese government. According to Kang, the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau communicated with the Japanese Consul beforehand, informing them of the Korean Rhine-Main Church’s intention

9 Minyŏng Kang, in-person, June 1, 2023.

10 Minyŏng Kang, in-person, June 1, 2023.

11 Minyŏng Kang, in-person, June 1, 2023.

12 Minyŏng Kang, in-person, June 1, 2023.

13 Minyŏng Kang, in-person, June 1, 2023.

to erect the memorial. The representative in question emphasized that no issues should arise because the installation was to be placed on privately owned church land.¹⁴ Contrasting with the Frankfurt case, the Nepal Himalaya Park in Wiesent, also private property, had butted heads with the Japanese government. This might relate to the fact that the park is a publicly visited place, unlike the Korean Rhine-Main Church — as frequented mainly by congregation members. These instances reflect a pattern observed in the US too, where the Japanese government also opposed the installing of “comfort women” memorials in public spaces. Due to such pressure, a commemorative statue initially intended for placement outside a public library was ultimately erected at the Korean American Cultural Center in Southfield, Michigan, instead (R. Yoon 2018, 77). Returning to Germany, the Japanese government’s opposition to these memorials’ establishment in public spaces has been most apparent in Berlin.

Berlin

A few months after the “comfort women” memorial was erected outside the Korean Rhine-Main Church, another replica was installed in Berlin-Mitte on September 28, 2020 — meaning, for the first time in Germany, in a public space. Behind this was the Korea Verband (Korea Association), a Berlin-based NGO founded in the 1960s to promote relations between the two countries in the fight against the South Korean military government and in support of pro-democracy movements within and beyond South Korea. Since 2008, with Nataly Jung-Hwa Han at the helm, the organization has continued to address the “comfort women” issue in the German capital, initially collaborating with Japanese photographer Yajima Tsukasa. Nataly later founded a subgroup within the Korea Association, the Aktionsgruppe Trostfrauen (Action Group Comfort Women), consisting of activists interested in women’s rights more broadly, having members from Germany, South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.¹⁵ Its activities include running the Museum der Trostfrauen (Museum of Comfort Women), the only one of its kind in Europe.¹⁶ In contrast to the memorials designed for public spaces, a museum intended to cater to those specifically interested in the “comfort women” matter appears to be outside the purview of the Japanese government. This also explains the existence of the Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace in Tokyo despite the state’s refuting of the “comfort women” history. Undeniably, the public sphere serves as the domain in which fierce debates on official interpretations of past events unfold between political and social actors (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003, 1; Sierp and Wüstenberg 2015, 322).

14 Minyǒng Kang, in-person, June 1, 2023.

15 Nataly Jung-Hwa Han, Zoom, September 17, 2022.

16 The Museum of Comfort Women aside, all other iterations are located in Asia — including in South Korea, Japan, China, and Taiwan. For more information on Berlin’s version hereof, see: <https://trostfrauen.museum>.

According to Nataly, her initiative to build “comfort women” memorials in Germany was triggered by the earlier failure to do so in Freiburg.¹⁷ Parallel to installing one in Wiesent, she promoted the erection of another outside a youth hostel near the Mahn-und Gedenkstaette Ravensbrueck (Memorial Museum Ravensbrueck) — a commemoration site for women forced labor under the Nazis. However the youth hostel objected to Nataly’s suggestion, and the plan fell apart. When the Korea Association moved to its current office in 2018, Nataly renewed her efforts to establish the “comfort women” memorial in Berlin nearby, which finally happened, as noted, in autumn 2020. Additionally, the Association cooperated with the Staatliche Kunstsammlung Dresden (State Art Collection Dresden) and the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (Art Museum Wolfsburg) to display the memorial in various exhibitions, with the initiative coming from their side.¹⁸

Since its erection in Berlin’s public space, the memorial — named Ari by its initiators — has become a “site of contestation” between, on the one side, the Association and its supporters who insist on its preservation and, on the other, those seeking its removal, including the Japanese and the Berlin local government. Shortly after installation, the Japanese asked the German Federal Government, Berlin’s district government, and the German Foreign Office to remove the statue according to *Die Tageszeitung* (The Daily Newspaper) (Hansen 2020b). Soon, the Berlin District Office issued an order to remove the statue within a week despite initially having been the one to give the Association permission for its erection (Hansen 2020a, 2020b). The district mayor of Berlin-Mitte, Stephan von Dassel, a member of the Alliance 90/The Greens, justified the announcement by stating that because the statue addresses the “politically and historically charged and complex conflict between two states,” which he argued is not an issue that can be resolved in Germany (Hansen 2020b; Bezirksamt 2020). The Association then filed an urgent application for legal protection with the Berlin Administrative Court and organized a protest that led to a stay of execution until the memorial’s legal validity had been ruled on (Kiefert 2020; Kurianowicz 2020).

Most recently, Berlin-Mitte confirmed the upkeep of the memorial until autumn 2024 at the District Assembly’s request and announced that it was willing to work toward its permanent preservation according to the German media (Mai 2023). This decision is likely to have been the result of the solidarity built between the Association and the local community in Berlin, including politicians, civil organizations, and individuals demanding the memorial remain in spite of the wishes of opponents such as the Japanese government, the district mayor of Berlin-Mitte, and the Christlich Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union) political party (Petersen 2020). South Korean and Japanese right-wingers visited Berlin, too, holding a protest in front of the memorial demanding its removal. Their demonstration was nonetheless met with a counter one by local organizations

17 Nataly Jung-Hwa Han, Zoom, September 17, 2022.

18 Nataly Jung-Hwa Han, Zoom, September 17, 2022.

including the Frauenverband Courage (Women’s Association Courage), Omas gegen Rechts (Grannies against the Right), and the Korea Association (Schleiermacher 2022; Yi 2022). The “comfort women” issue has recently become contested also in South Korea. Some Korean right-wing extremists used to hold counterdemonstrations simultaneous to the earlier-mentioned Wednesday Demonstrations, denying, similar to their Japanese counterparts, the existence of the “comfort system” and the victims’ coercion.

Shortly before Berlin announced the statue’s maintenance, Elisabeth Motschmann, a former federal executive of the Christian Democratic Union, published a counterargument in the local newspaper *Berliner Zeitung* (Berlin Newspaper). Alongside agreeing with the district mayor’s previous decision to demolish the statue, she delimited the memorial’s work to “specifically commemorating the historical chapter of the South Korean comfort women” (Motschmann 2022). Her argument was based on the territorialized idea that a nation-state’s spatiality should be used for commemorating national memories alone.

However, where will we end up if other states want to erect monuments to their disputes in Germany? Has the BVV [Berlin District Council] considered that if the South Koreans are allowed to do so, it would be logical to allow other parties to the conflict to do so as well? Berlin would become the battlefield of countless skirmishes among other countries — a completely unacceptable state of affairs. (Motschmann 2022)

In contrast, the solidarity established between the Korea Association and the local community in Berlin has been primarily based on positioning the “comfort women” memorial within the wider frame of women’s rights at large — specifically sexual violence against women, as Nataly herself highlighted.¹⁹ Political parties such as the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party) and Die Linke (The Left) urged the statue’s retention, emphasizing that it “is an important contribution against sexualized war violence against women” (SPD 2020; Die Linke 2020; Hansen 2020c). Universalizing the “comfort women” episode made it possible to de-territorialize the memorial from the context of Korea and Japan history alone, making it relatable across ethnic/national groups more broadly. For instance Nûrê Alkis, the umbrella organization of the Ezidischer Frauenrat (Yezidi Women’s Council), sympathized with the “comfort women” based on their own experiences of sexual violence inflicted by the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq: “[W]e Yezidi Women Share the Pain of Comfort Women” (Hansen 2020d). They expressed their support for preserving the statue at the Korea Association’s demonstration held on November 25, 2020, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Their advocacy was reinforced by Nivedita Prasad, a professor in methods of action and gender-specific social work at Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin (Alice Salomon University Berlin). She stated “sexual violence is an issue in almost every

19 Nataly Jung-Hwa Han, Zoom, September 17, 2022.

war” (Hansen 2020d), while criticizing Germany’s prevailing memory culture concerning the underrepresentation of women and its sexualized nature. Above all, the Bündnis für die Friedensstatue in Deutschland (Coalition for the Statue of Peace in Germany) was jointly established by the Korea Association and more than 20 local organizations, including multiethnic women’s groups such as Medica Mondiale, Women of Sudan Uprising, Anahita – Afghanisches Frauencafé (Anahita – Afghan Women’s Café), and Women in Exile.²⁰ Prior to approval of the statue’s preservation by Berlin-Mitte’s District Assembly, the Coalition for the Statue of Peace in Germany published an open letter emphasizing that: “It is not about interstate conflicts, [instead] it is about critically addressing sexual violence in military conflict and the legacy of Japanese colonialism and the Pacific War throughout East Asia” (AG “Trostfrauen” 2020).

The letter garnered support from over 3,000 individuals, including academics and activists primarily hailing from Germany. Solidarity also came from transnational communities: At the beginning of the dispute, the Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace advocated for the memorial’s maintenance in an open letter to Berlin-Mitte’s then district mayor Stephan von Dassel (Mladenova 2022, 13–14; Watanabe 2020). The Korean Council also made enormous efforts to preserve the commemorative statue. In July 2022, its president, Yi Nayoung, visited Berlin and delivered a statement demanding the memorial’s permanent installation. This statement — signed by more than 30,000 individuals from Berlin and around the world as well as hundreds of South Korean NGOs — was presented to the newly elected district mayor, Stefanie Remlinger of the Alliance 90/The Greens (Korean Council 2022).

Kassel

The solidarity emerging out of the Berlin memorial’s erection engendered a further replica at Universität Kassel (the University of Kassel) in the federal state of Hesse on July 8, 2022. The Allgemeiner Studierendenausschuss (General Student Committee) initiated the installation with the support of the Korea Association after observing the contestation arising over its Berlin counterpart.²¹ Inspired by civil society’s advocacy around the Berlin statue, Markus,²² the Student Committee president at that time, contacted the Association to help erect a similar memorial at the University of Kassel.²³ Such an alliance relied on the universal and particular identification with what the “comfort women” commemoration stands for more broadly. On the one hand, having a replica on campus was contextualized to local debates on addressing colonial relics and thought still to be found in Kassel. In 2015, the university first began to deal with local colonial continuities by establishing the

20 Nataly Jung-Hwa Han, Zoom, September 17, 2022.

21 Nataly Jung-Hwa Han, Zoom, September 17, 2022.

22 As the interviewee wished to remain anonymous, he was given a pseudonym.

23 Markus, Zoom, May 26, 2023.

student initiative kassel postkolonial (Kassel postcolonial), which has continued its work ever since. On the other hand, the statue in question was, once again, universalized in the context of ongoing sexual violence against women. This transnational frame allowed Markus to connect the memorial with the sexual violence inflicted on Kurdish people by the Islamic State based on his past involvement with their women’s associations and student organizations. Therefore, Kurdish students at the university strongly supported the Student Committee’s engagement.

We have a big debate in Kassel about street names; we have the so-called Afrikaviertel [Africa District]. So, at the same time, I thought, okay, how can we institutionalize this more strongly within the university? The University of Kassel does not have a specific street name that you might have to change. We have the Kolonialschule [Colonial School], and you can also tie in topics there, but not on the main campus where I am. And then it actually turned out that, in 2020, I heard about the Friedensstatue in Berlin. [...] We want to deal with sexualized violence and postcolonial identity and at the same time with the history of Germany and its colonialism, but, of course, with the question of guilt itself.²⁴

Nonetheless, the university demolished the “comfort women” memorial in March 2023, sparking a heated conflict (Rudolph 2023). The Student Committee argues that it had agreed on a permanent installation with the university. In contrast, the latter claims that the memorial was a temporary installation from the beginning, one to be displayed only until September 2022 as part of the art exhibition Documenta held in Kassel every five years; the statue’s presence was later extended with the university’s permission until March 2023 (Rudolph 2023). The Korea Association (2023) saw the university’s unilateral decision hereon as problematic, despite the former’s agreement to remove the memorial as soon as an alternative location for its permanent installation had been settled on. The university also justified the removal by saying, which the Student Committee disputed, that the statue did not have local relevance:

[Artworks can be only permanently installed] if they are continuously accompanied by teaching and scientific projects; they have a content-related connection to the location, and the Senate and Presidium decide on them jointly. (Rudolph 2023)

As an example, the university mentioned the student-led installation *Weg der Erinnerung* (Path of Remembrance), which recalled the Henschel company’s erstwhile location on campus and its involvement in the Third Reich (Rudolph 2023). Since the removal, those demanding the memorial be returned, including German, Korean, and Kurdish students, have organized a weekly protest on Wednesdays at the university, similar to the eponymous ones in South Korea. Here they collect student signatures for the online petition initiated by the Korea Association (2022) demanding the statue’s reinstallation. Although the university

24 Markus, Zoom, May 26, 2023.

has not officially confirmed the Japanese government's involvement in its decision to have the memorial taken down, Markus stated in interview that university management had told him that the Japanese Consulate contacted them and one particular professor immediately after its installation.²⁵ Whether the students can convince the university of their transnational viewpoint — that the statue represents sexualized violence in general and decolonization in the local context — remains to be seen.

Conclusion

This paper has examined how the Korean diaspora in Germany sought support from their local communities in transmitting the collective memory of “comfort women,” as represented by the figure of the Sonyōsang. For this to happen, the Korean diaspora consciously worked together with local bodies and their representatives, such as nongovernmental and religious organizations and politicians; this finding is consistent with previous studies (Hasunuma and McCarthy 2019; McCarthy and Hasunuma 2018; Son 2018). Consequently, the first “comfort women” memorial in Germany was installed in Wiesent (following the earlier failure to do so in Freiburg), followed by other replicas in Frankfurt and Berlin. The contestation over the one in the German capital then inspired the erection of another memorial in Kassel. The Frankfurt replica aside, all others met with resistance from the Japanese government, similar to previous cases in the US and the Philippines (Ushiyama 2021). Often, the latter utilized diplomatic channels to put pressure on the German local and/or federal governments, which led to these “comfort women” memorials being moved or demolished altogether. Such Japanese influence over “comfort women” commemoration in Germany again illustrates the nation-state's enduring power in memory politics.

The pivotal finding from the German case is the significance of solidarity between the Korean diaspora and local communities, rooted in a dual universal and particular identification with the “comfort women” memorial's wider meaning (Levy and Sznajder 2002, 93). Much like in the US (McCarthy and Hasunuma 2018, 412–413), in Germany the statue in question became emblematic of human and women's rights, with an emphasis on addressing sexual violence. This was exemplified in Berlin. This universal framework culminated in the strategic timing of the memorials in Wiesent and Frankfurt each being unveiled on International Women's Day (albeit in different years). Diverging from the US experience, however, the German case distinctly reveals the particular identification of the “comfort women” memorial with local contexts, as evident in Freiburg, Wiesent, Berlin, and Kassel. Here, they not only voiced Japan's responsibility as wartime aggressor (Wiesent) but also engaged with Germany's intrinsic memory culture surrounding the sexual violence perpetrated by its army during the Second World War (Freiburg), the inadequate

25 Markus, Zoom, May 26, 2023.

representation of women in public spaces (Berlin), and the colonial past (Kassel). Drawing from these findings, I argue that the Korean diaspora’s engagement in bringing the collective memory of a nation-state to a transnational scale has contributed to shaping the “extra-territorial quality of cosmopolitan memory” (Levy and Sznajder 2002, 102).

The opposing faction, comprising the Japanese government, local politicians, and academics, viewed the “comfort women” memorial from a limited perspective meanwhile, believing it to be primarily concerned with the bilateral relationship between South Korea and Japan and thus irrelevant to Germany. Such a territorialized perspective sharply contrasts with the cosmopolitan awareness underscoring the memorial’s broader human and women’s rights significance and, precisely, Germany’s memory culture. This polarization reflects the fundamental ideological differences in play, whereby opponents’ narrow focus on territorial and national considerations clashes with the more expansive and globally informed perspective held by proponents of “comfort women” commemoration. At any rate, the ongoing power struggle between these two groups has been one over the authority to select and promote a preferred past (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003, 1).

Beyond the realm of cosmopolitan memory, the emergence of “cross-traumatic affiliation” among diverse actors in the German context, encompassing the Korean diaspora, multiethnic and women’s groups, religious organizations, and university students, constitutes a pivotal development (Craps 2012). An interconnectedness grounded in traumatic histories and experiences sees the “comfort women” historical episode carry the potential to foster “mnemonic solidarity” by linking it to other instances of sexual violence and addressing human and women’s rights at large (Jung 2021, 147; Lim and Rosenhaft 2021, 2). In the German milieu particularly, this history may be connected with ongoing postcolonial/decolonial discourses and help rectify the asymmetry existing between the dominant and subordinate historical narratives informing prevailing memory culture (Schäfer 2021). Despite Germany’s reputation in South Korea as a role model for acknowledging its wartime atrocities against the Jewish people, especially when juxtaposed with Japan’s handling of its own past, collective memory around the sexual violence perpetrated against women during wartime and under colonialism lacks a level of institutionalization comparable to the Holocaust’s treatment (Jung 2021, 129–131). Considering this study’s focus on Germany alone, it is imperative for future research to acknowledge the intersectionality underlined in the discourses surrounding the “comfort women” episode and to link them to other contemporary local and global concerns in order to foster a cosmopolitan historical narrative able to hold currency in the forthcoming post-victim era.

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Refereed article

“Who Are *Us* and *Them* Today?” Dynamics of Korean Migrant Identity Revealed via an Online Social Movement in Germany

Sunyoung Park

Abstract

The nature of Koreans' migration to Germany has become increasingly diverse over the decades, encompassing varying age groups, purposes, socioeconomic statuses, and durations of stay. This process aligns with the concept of “superdiversity” in the landscape of international migration, eliciting the complex sociocultural transformations that lead to dynamic shifts in group identity. The paper aims to present a contemporary overview of Korean migrants' identity in Germany by examining a 2019 online social movement sparked by one German company's discriminatory television advertisement. Focus is on internal contestation over defining who the “us” are in Germany, shedding light on why a clear divide between nationalist and transnationalist identities manifested on two respective social media platforms. Thematic analysis of the online debates occurring among Koreans reveals the complex nature of group-identity formation through the five stages of the movement's lifespan, with members of each community simultaneously navigating historical and sociopolitical issues in Korea, Japan, and Germany alike. Findings resonate with numerous studies on intergroup conflict within migrant communities, particularly over the values respectively upheld by older and younger people of shared origins. Migrant identities are thus multifaceted and context-dependent, being shaped by interaction with various sociocultural groups. Ultimately, the importance of considering “superdiversity” a central framework for grasping the complexities of contemporary migrant experiences and identities is emphasized.

Keywords: Superdiversity, Korean migrants, migrant self-identity, nationalism, transnationalism, ethnic stereotype, online social movement

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Introduction

To speak of a “social movement” is to convey the collective agency of its organizers, allowing us the chance to examine those sharing a certain group identity who take far-reaching actions (Holland, Fox, and Daro 2008; Polletta and Jasper 2001; D. Snow 2001). The paper aims to provide a more thorough understanding of how Korean migrants in Germany think of themselves today, doing so by looking at the case of a recent online social movement. This campaign was initiated against Hornbach, a German DIY chain store, after the company released a television commercial in January 2020 that led to the country’s East Asian migrants feeling stereotyped by one scene consciously included in the sequence. Beginning as an online petition started by a Korean doctoral student in Germany, the campaign quickly proliferated into a diverse array of on- and offline initiatives that garnered the attention of both the German and Korean media. By eventually convincing the Deutsche Werberat (German Advertising Standards Council, GASC) to official ban the commercial, the movement was deemed a success (for more details, see Park and Gerrits 2021, 2–3).

One may inquire as to why, among Germany’s various Asian migrant groups, it was the Korean community that responded proactively to the incident in question and eventually took action. The focus of inquiry here is how Koreans envision themselves and how they have faced contested categorization by others in Germany. Given that all migrants inevitably encounter the categorization of “Others” in the destination society (Grzymala-Kazłowska 2016, 1123–1139), Koreans in Europe have often found themselves termed rather just “Asian,” which sees the different countries and peoples of the region conflated (Bae 2020; Kowner and Demel 2012). However, Korean migrants’ self-understandings do not align with such a reductive labelling. Instead, they often strive to distinguish themselves from other East Asians in the societies they belong to given the both historical and current sociocultural relations existing between the regions’ respective countries — and mostly Korea, China, and Japan.¹ In addition, traditional Korean identity has highlighted its exclusiveness and single-ethnicity-oriented nationalism in general (N. Kim 2014; H. A. Kim 2020; Shin 2013). In such a context, earlier studies on Korean migrants examined their own perceived indigeneity and cultural identity in seeking to shed light on such traits (Hurh and Kim 1984; Min 1992; Yoon 2012). Likewise, when it comes to works on Korean migrant (often called “diaspora”) “social movements in foreign lands,” a dichotomized approach — namely investigating whether their fundamental goals are nationalist ones originating from afar in Korea or whether

1 These three nations’ respective identities often carry a deeply rooted antagonism toward each other given the very different historical and sociopolitical contexts informing them. Latent Korean-Japan hostility is grounded predominantly in the former’s sense of aggrievement at the latter’s not fully addressed colonial rule and then Second World War history, as often concentrating on controversial gender issues like that of the “comfort women” (Seo 2017). Tensions between Korea and China, meanwhile, have recently intensified based on the two countries’ unresolved diplomatic issues and conflicting political ideologies (Lew 2020).

these aspirations pertain more to circumstances in the destination country — has prevailed.

Although emigration from Korea has continued to multiply and diversify over the last few decades, such a nation-oriented identity has been questioned by the younger generations living abroad (H.-S. Lee and Kim 2014; Pyke and Dang 2003). That means the assumed traditional Korean migrant identity may no longer fully apply given how contemporaries now negotiate, cope, and shape their unique sense of belonging and self. The online social movement under study here can thus be said to be rooted in the concept of “superdiversity” (Meissner 2018; Vertovec 2007), which recognizes and celebrates individual uniqueness based on diverse factors such as ethnicity, country of origin, and family background (Vertovec 2019). The movement’s collective identity was formed around the principles of inclusivity, respect, and commonality, as prioritized in the Facebook group that emerged as a key platform for organizing and mobilizing said movement. The analysis that follows will address herewith the internal clashes between a traditional identity mainly cultivated and upheld by earlier/older migrants and the more transnational, nuanced identity of later/younger migrants within the same overall group of Koreans.

The author’s previous study on the Hornbach incident (Park and Gerrits 2021) focused on the different narrative expressions accompanying this controversy. Here, however, scrutiny is on the relationship between online social networks and migrant identity dynamics, as manifesting via specific platforms. Migrants sharing a single national background may still adopt multilayered transnational identities in their chosen online spaces, where they expect to find a like-minded audience. Empirical data were sourced from the posts and replies of group members interacting with each other on three online platforms, as taken to respectively represent three different types of Korean immigrant identity in Germany. Results underline the fluid nature of migrants’ transnational identity formation, which reciprocally and constantly interact with others’ sense of self and thus can challenge their own previously held views, too (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 1–47; Meissner 2018, 215–233).

Building on these foundations, the text data is examined from a new angle: namely that of looking at it as social inferences, with dynamic shifts in identity having potentially occurred. The previous study (Park and Gerrits 2021) provided a comparison of Koreans’ evolving identities through the relevant experiences and ideas they themselves shared online via social media. The present study, rather, pinpoints the dialogue occurring between Koreans migrants in Germany, as elucidating the key facets of their upheld identities today and particularly the continual internal contestation occurring among this group at large.

The most critical voices regarding the protest movement’s questionable legitimacy mostly came from Koreans themselves, giving rise to skepticism about whether their compatriots were the right people to represent those offended by Hornbach’s TV advert. Over the course of the movement’s lifespan (February to May 2020), the

online communities involved heavily debated both the advert and the related online activism itself. Such abundant discourses affect deliberation on a particular identity through the contestation of group members (Abdelal et al. 2006, 700–702). On top of that, two — an exclusive membership-only website and a closed Facebook group that respectively centered on Korean national identity and (East) Asian identity — out of the three online social platforms examined (the third was Twitter) served as key arenas wherein Koreans actively debated their varying understandings of who the “us” are in German society (see also, Park and Gerrits 2021, 7).

Although the movement aimed to raise greater social awareness of subtle discrimination against East Asian migrants in Germany, it encountered opposition predominantly from the aforementioned membership-only website — the most closed and least international type of platform examined here. The crucial question that arises herewith is thus: Why did this membership-only website become the primary platform for critiquing the involvement of Koreans in protests over Hornbach’s commercial? Accordingly, delved into will be the accompanying narratives circulating among these Korean migrants, in seeking to unpack their dynamic self-understandings of who the “us” and “them” are in today’s Germany. The core research question to be answered is: In what ways did Korean migrants in Germany identify a collective “us” and distant “them” in the course of initiating an online social movement against an East Asian-stereotyping advert broadcast in the destination society? Given the dynamic evolution of Korean migrant identity due to the increasing diversity of contemporary outflows of people from the East Asian nation, the aforementioned concept of “superdiversity” serves as the theoretical foundation for interpreting the collective identities emerging here.

The paper is structured as follows: first, it sheds light on the literature on immigrant identity through the lens of “superdiversity” in providing context to why the study particularly concerns itself with the fluid, evolving nature of Koreans in Germany’s sense of self. Second, the online social movement will be examined via the qualitative thematic analysis of the empirical data (Boyatzis 1998). Third and finally, it will conclude by summarizing the implications of this study and making suggestions for further ones on Korea and Korean identities from the perspective of “superdiversity” specifically.

Theoretical Framework

First, it is essential to clarify what is meant here by migrant identity,” as this term can encompass a broad range of meanings. Migrants face numerous challenges in terms of the need to revisit concepts of “us” and “them” in a destination society when undergoing the socioemotional integration process. This encompasses the respective stages of contestation, negotiation, and reconciliation vis-à-vis one’s own sense of self encountered while living through a number of accompanying sociocultural difficulties perpetually (Ross 2007). Engaged with here are individual, relational, and sociostructural dimensions as well as the spatial and temporal circumstances

eventually producing a certain degree of felt belonging (Ryan 2018) — as marking an individual’s positionality within the host society. Here, “positionality” refers to how a newly developed immigrant identity can resonate with own and others’ definitions of who one is (Blommaert and Varis 2011; Grzymala-Kazłowska 2016b). To grasp the diversity of migrant identities emerging via contemporary social practice, it is helpful to understand why the latest academic discussions have centered on “superdiversity.” This new lens through which to understand migrant identity beyond conventional categorizations has been described as the paradigm of “entailed variable combinations [producing] new hierarchical social positions, statuses or stratifications” (Vertovec 2019,126). This calls for scholars henceforth taking innovative approaches to migrants’ sense of self and of belonging compared to in the past, as then mostly using such frames as nationality, ethnicity, or race.

Although discussions on “transnationalism” would emerge in the early years of the new century, as an alternative concept capturing the simultaneous ties between migrants’ home and destination countries (Levitt and Schiller 2004; Waldinger 2015), this framework has since faced criticism for its ambivalent theoretical stance and limited ability to address the issues inherent to more conventional nation-state-based categorizations (Morawska 2014; Waldinger 2015). Transnationalism is deemed to not fully elucidate the diversity of contemporary migrant identities, seemingly often overlooking the need to challenge functional categorizations — such as ethnicity, religion, gender, and country of origin — within destination societies. Furthermore, it has been perceived to play a central role in reproducing images (on top of the existing ones) that reinforce stereotypes and hence fuel conflict between the different members of a given society (Anthias 2001; Azhar et al. 2021; Jamieson 2000).

“Superdiversity,” then, constitutes a more apposite way to capture such overlooked dynamics by encompassing not only homeland-related ideational aspects but also the “multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified [nature of migrants today]” (Vertovec 2007). In other words, a turning to “superdiversity” enables scholars to acknowledge the multitude of significant conditions shaping how and with whom immigrants interact and which locales they aspire to embed their identity in. These conditions may include the aforementioned traditional categorizations as well as further constructivist elements such as own motives, intentions, and social status (McDowell 2013; Meissner 2015). This provides a key to untangling the contested self-understandings prevailing among earlier and more recent migrants sharing the same country of origin. Migrants are comprehended and understood differently by the destination society at varying points in time; distinctive means of identity contestation thus ensue, as playing out via ongoing negotiation regarding others’ beliefs as well as own aspirations vis-à-vis who one is in the new setting. This may see conflicting forms of self-identification among in-group members, holding different understandings of social belonging as a result of each individual’s specific methods of identity contestation.

“Superdiversity” provides an overarching approach to interpretation of the complexity involved here, embracing different aspects like the national, transnational, and/or something beyond those and hence more individual.

As Soehl and Waldinger (2012) propose, intergenerational clashes between migrant families’ respective members are often discussed in the context of time period that is, the move from the age of nationalism to that of transnationalism in recent decades. Understanding Korean nationalism — born of a particular context and being based on (fractious) relations with other East Asian countries and peoples — is, then, a vital first step here. Some studies on Korean migrants’ sense of self and of belonging focusing on the disjuncture with traditional nationalism have provided evidence on how this more exclusive identity is a double standard: it negates the diversity of people’s backgrounds and contradicts the inclusive social norms that the destination society generally seeks to uphold. Even though migrants living in South Korea — mostly refugees from North Korea, labor migrants from China, or marriage partners from Southeast Asia — do have legal citizenship and are not of significantly different ethnicity to the domestic populace, the socioeconomic and sociopsychological disadvantages they face in daily life have become evident in various studies (Ahn 2012; Chung 2020; S. Kim 2012). The attitude of the destination society toward migrants is reflective of current temporal, spatial, and situational dynamics, as encompassing social, political, and international dimensions.

Although major studies have attempted to identify why the Korean state’s multicultural policy and institutions have seemingly fragmented in recent years, Shin rather critically visits the deeply rooted rhetoric of a “purity of blood” and “being proud of one-nation, homogeneous Korean” (2013, 369). He proposes that this norm broadly excludes people with diverse backgrounds from becoming considered “pure Koreans.” Although such nationalist tendencies have faced criticisms over time, Hough (2022) asserts that there still exists a clear anti-migrant sentiment in South Korea today that transcends class-based discrimination against ethnic Koreans and others living in the country. Such an exclusive nationalism cannot be accepted in the same manner abroad, especially when it comes to a “superdiverse” society like Germany’s.

Given that migrants inevitably revise their sense of self and of belonging while settling in the destination society (Krzyżanowski and Wodak 2008), Korean arrivals adhering to such nationalist thought might have had to negotiate with other values and position themselves in ways whereby they felt well-grounded. Yoon (2012) details the out-migration of Koreans since the 1960s, with the majority having headed to North America in search of better opportunities. Especially in the context of social belonging, some studies have highlighted that second-generation Korean migrants in Canada or the United States struggle to position themselves within the community they belong to, rather seeking a place within diverse and transnational ones despite their parents’ wish for them to keep Korean traditions and customs alive

(Jo 2017; H. Lee 2021). Regarding Germany, meanwhile, most related studies have focused on the Korean miners and nurses arriving as so-called guest workers in the 1960s. Discussed also here has been (C. Lee 2012) how ambivalence toward the host country and nostalgia for the homeland informed the decision to return in certain cases. Those exceptions aside, the number of Korean migrants living in Germany — approximately fifty thousands in 2019 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea) — has only continued to grow; nevertheless, little attention has been paid thus far to how Korean immigrants in Europe think about themselves.²

Migrants do not necessarily replace their original identity with a newly developed sense of self and of belonging; instead, they expand the existing layers and dimensions thereof, depending on which group of people they wish to engage with exactly at a certain time, in a certain space (Meissner 2018; Sheringham 2010; Tamaki 2011). It is natural for immigrants to actively utilize online social networks to navigate their life worlds, including gathering information about their homeland and to aid their integration in the destination society (Komito 2011; Komito and Bates 2011). Given that they must intensively weave such ties in the latter, online communities play a pivotal role here in offering access to a wider selection of social groups to which these migrants may wish to belong. Online communities not only provide pragmatic information for newcomers but also allow migrants to find and join like-minded people sharing the same interests as themselves.

In this context, the contours of these online communities may reflect the current state of members’ overall in-group identity when collective action takes place and calls for solidarity (Dekker and Engbersen 2014). The Hornbach case was a compelling example of a social inference that nudged a group of Koreans to manifest their collective identity and sense of belonging at scale, as mainly led by a Facebook group made up of Korean immigrants in Germany. The previous study (Park and Gerrits 2021) highlighted the relationship between type of online platform in use and type of group identity emerging, revealing that certain kinds of the former are more effective than others in fostering solidarity and collective identity based on their openness to the public and the internationality of their audiences. In this case, the Facebook group constituted the most appropriate way to initiate a movement advocating for the rights of East Asians in Germany. Conversely, the membership-only website provided a closed and exclusive environment accessible only to those granted entry, shaping a group identity centered on Koreans — as distinct from other East Asians.

2 South Koreans living in Germany are the largest Korean immigrant group in Europe and the third-largest East Asian immigrant one in Germany next to those from China and Vietnam. There are approximately 49,700 South Koreans living in Germany, including 25,000 temporary residents and visiting international students (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2023). Over percent of them are highly educated (including digital literate) and in an age cohort that allows them to actively utilize online social networks in their everyday social lives more than peers (Mayer 2018).

Polletta and Jasper define a “social movement” as “a set of contentious performances, displays, and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others” (2001, 281). They emphasize that social movements involve collective action by ordinary individuals seeking to bring about social or political change through various forms of protest, activism, and mobilization. For a social movement to arise, a certain sociopolitical dissatisfaction must have emerged as a source of constant frustration more broadly if others are to be convinced to eventually join in (Snow and Oliver 1995; cited in Fominaya 2010, 390). It is not uncommon to find a widespread totalizing of “Asians” — particularly as intersecting with gender stereotypes like the exoticization of “Asian women” — in European media and societal practices (Azhar et al. 2021; Uchida 1998). In recent times, alongside the dramatic diffusion of social media usage, various online actions have taken place publicly against the invocation of such images in the media and in the digital world (D’Arco, Marino, and Resciniti 2019; M. Kim and Chung 2005). Those feeling offended by a particular item, likewise, may start sharing their feelings and pursue common agency in seeking to change such issues.

Polletta and Jasper (2001) also outline a comprehensive framework for understanding the formation of collective identity within the context of social movements. Their model delineates four distinct stages here: emergence; recruitment and commitment; tactical choice (decision); and success (outcome). This framework has served as the basis for subsequent research on social movements and collective identity, offering insights into the interplay of emotions and behaviors across various stages of their continued development (Hunt and Benford 2004; Mundt, Ross, and Burnett 2018). According to these two authors, “collective identity” cannot be reduced to the mere aggregation of personal ones but rather involves a temporal and purposive element that may not align with the individual. Nonetheless, they also acknowledge (2001, 285–300) that collective identity may contribute to one’s own sense of self evolving.

Adopting this viewpoint, it becomes evident that the connection between individual and collective identity is more pronounced in the case to hand. Regarding “Asian women in Germany,” the host society initially ascribed this demographic a collective identity, perpetuating a stereotype that those covered hereby aimed to challenge. They sought to combat this prejudice and construct a more positive identity spanning their own understandings and desires of “who we are” in German society instead. Thus, the collective identity ascribed and perpetuated by Hornbach’s commercial acted as a catalyst for the examined social movement (Fominaya 2010). Given that, as noted, earlier, a social movement conveys the actual collective identity that its organizers and participants consider valid, exploring the internal narratives and conflicts of these people hence provides certain clues on how we can better understand their self-identification and sense of belonging within German society (Holland, Fox, and Daro 2008; Polletta and Jasper 2001; D. Snow 2001).

Analysis and Core Findings

Five Stages of the Movement

The analysis was carried out via the software NVivo12 with the dataset sourced, as noted, from two online social networks of Koreans in Germany: an exclusive membership-only website and a closed Facebook group, respectively. Because the existing dataset includes an extensive number of relevant postings, the analysis started with extracting those pertaining to identity conflicts among Koreans.³ Overall, 30 postings (including their replies) were arranged according to the five stages of the movement: (1) issue emerging; (2) recruitment and commitment; (3) decision-making; (4) movement outcome (see Polletta and Jasper 2001); and, (5) aftermath. Likewise, the process of identity contestation among Korean immigrants in Germany was analyzed in the same manner (Abdelal et al. 2006).

The postings were coded via qualitative thematic analysis (Boyatzis 1998; Clarke and Braun 2013; Swain 2018) to justify: (a) where the conflicts between members were ultimately situated; (b) how these conflicts affect respective Korean migrants in Germany and their coming to terms with the movement’s existence and activism; and, (c) how members of these two differing groups coped with such challenges and how they shaped their sense of self within German society. While seeking answers to these questions, analysis showed that at each stage there was resonance with certain key points; it was here from which the noted deviations in opinion first began. Table 1 below thus indicates those raised at each stage, and therewith how the related narratives emerging again highlight the correlation between contestation and the social movement’s development over time.

3 More recent types of social media platforms, such as Instagram and Twitter, were not included in this study as barely any relevant debates have taken place hereon between those identifying as Korean. Furthermore, the few relevant postings that would be included if examined do not even speak to the upholding of any group identity, simply showing users’ personal opinions on given social issues instead. Such tendencies can be understood to be the product of these particular platforms being individual-centered in essence and thus not necessarily relating to the community level (see Park and Gerrits 2021).

Table 1: Results of Qualitative Thematic Analysis

Stages of the movement (February–June 2020)	Critical points		Identity contestation (Abdelal et al. 2006)
	Membership-only website	Closed Facebook group	
Stage 1) Issue emerged (late February)	- The sociocultural context in Germany treated with sarcasm and black humor - The legitimization of “who we are”	- The stereotypical image of Asian women - Significance of the issue: worth challenging?	Driver of contestation
Stage 2) Re-recruitment (early March)	- Heated debates about “who we are” in Germany and why this matters or not	- Provoking solidarity - Planning ongoing actions	Contestation intensified
Stage 3) Decision-making (March–April)	- How Korean nationalism constitutes “who we are”	- Embracing the identity of “Asians”	Resistance or reconciliation
Stage 4) Movement outcome (mid-April)	- Little reaction ensuing from the maintained identity of exclusively Korean	- Collective identity firmly manifested	Identity maintained or changed
Stage 5) Aftermath (late April–June)	- The politicization of the organizers as “far left”	- Keep protecting Asian rights in Germany/Europe	Reassertion of collective identity

1) Issue emerged: Driver of contestation

The following question, written in post in the closed Facebook group on March 26, 2020, led to a conversation with over 50 replies, where members shared their experiences as East Asians or East Asian women living in Germany: “Is it only me who feels offended by this?”⁴ Although, as mentioned earlier, it was an online petition (with around 42,000 signatures as of March 2020) that had originally triggered the examined social movement and gained attention from the media in Germany and Korea alike, dialogues questioning the Hornbach advert’s intentions had already started in said Facebook group shortly after it was broadcast. Early posts aimed to inform community members about the commercial and asked whether they themselves found the message “Smell of Spring” and the stereotypical portrayal of an East Asian woman offensive. Some replied they found the ad relatable and supported the idea that it triggered unpleasant memories. Although there was some disagreement about whether the ad intentionally discriminated against East Asian women, the main idea put forward was that this “microaggression” must be formally countered.

The issue to hand not only encouraged Koreans to share their personal thoughts and feelings but also drove contestation over “who we are” exactly in German society. Although a mood of solidarity developed among the Facebook group, on the exclusive membership-only website most reactions to such questions about feeling offended were rather skeptical. Those replying noted the importance of establishing where precisely the line between black humor and discrimination lies in Germany and Korea alike. Some brought up this company’s previous ads (e.g. the one targeting older German ladies), emphasizing “this is not the only group they sarcastically interacted with in their advertisement series.” This objection entails the assumption that the later and younger migrants still do not have an adequate understanding of the local sociocultural context. Most of those offering such justifications clarified how long they had lived in Germany or how they were familiar with its different cultures. One person, for example, stated: “As a Korean who has lived in Germany for more than 20 years, I can confirm that this is a typical German joke socially accepted.”

Another interesting counterpoint made was the emphasis on Korean identity, particularly as distinguished from being Japanese. It was the latter who were deemed the specific target of the woman in the scene. While depicting “us” as migrants sufficiently well-integrated as to recognize and get German black humor, simultaneously a boundary was drawn whereby the in-group is exclusively Koreans — who thus did not belong in the same category as the Japanese

4 The data collected for this study are all written in Korean and analyzed accordingly. The quotes that follow are thus all the author’s own translations.

2) Recruitment: Contestation intensified

The company's unwavering attitude even in the face of numerous complaints came to dismay even more people besides, with the topic to hand gaining traction across social media platforms. In the Facebook community, members shared news from various outlets (e.g. *Daily Mail* 2019; *Tagesspiegel* 2019) and their own experiences, eventually seeing this online group become the bulletin board for the movement's progress. There were also internal debates between repliers about whether banning the ad could breach the company's rights in the context of the free-market system. As online campaigns grew, from a further petition to the hashtag #ge-Hornbacht (offended by the company) trending across social media, negative reactions to those questioning the commercial's legitimacy slowly dwindled away in the Facebook group. From this point on, the group identity became solidified as "we as Asians face the same discrimination in Germany"; those who disagreed no longer actively engaged with posts.

From early March 2020, group members started moving toward offline action, including one-person protests in front of the company's retail shops and handing out flyers and leaflets to people walking in the vicinity of the latter; such deeds gained increasing attention from the media and reporters (Allen 2019; KBS News 2019; Yonhap News Agency 2019). Those leading the movement officially announced the recruitment of numerous locals wishing to participate in street protests in Berlin and Frankfurt as well as Seoul. From this point on, a separate closed Facebook group was created for official communication between the organizers alone, while regularly keeping the original group's members updated on their progress in the original location. Interestingly, the name chosen was "Metoo Koreanerinnen (Korean Women)," thus still describing themselves as Koreans while striving to protect Asian rights more broadly in this case.

The membership-only website saw intense debate, with the disagreements among repliers became increasingly heated and leading to significant antagonism. Contested here were the perceived overstepping of the mark by some bold posters (e.g. "How can these young, naïve Koreans be so enthusiastic in advocating Japanese rights while overlooking our nation's historical wounds?"), ridiculing those deemed to supported Japanese people while neglecting their own compatriots' suffering at the hands of the latter. Some even blamed the Japanese for creating their reputation for controversial sexual images, stating "what goes around comes around"; others went as far as to label Germany and Japan as the same war criminals for being insensitive to sexual discrimination against women. Such context-specific antagonism originates from historical events, as giving rise to widespread animosity toward Japan and its people that would become deeply rooted in Korean nationalism. This sentiment stems from the era of Japanese colonial rule over Korea between 1885 and 1945, as well as numerous invasions of the Peninsula between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. Ongoing cultural, political, and social tensions between the two countries, such as the "comfort women" issue and the "Dokdo/Takesima" dispute, further contribute to this hostility (for further details,

see Jonsson 2015; Seo 2017; Wiegand and Choi 2017; Iwabuchi 2019). As the tone of these debates grew increasingly aggressive and emotional, some members defended themselves by claiming their sincere concern for minority groups such as Korean migrants in German society who may not have the power to change a large company's stance on such matters as the ad in question. These heated arguments lasted about a week and only cooled off after the respective parties left their final replies, indicating the intention to “agree to disagree.”

3) Decision-making: Resistance or reconciliation

At the decision-making stage, as more active and formal offline protests got underway — such as the aforementioned one-man protests in front of the company's retail stores throughout Germany, group activities via digital media, and demonstrations on the streets of several major cities —, there was a noticeable decrease in the number of relevant postings on both of the examined platforms. Concurrently, related debates were gradually becoming calmer and fewer in number. The Facebook group, however, showed firmer solidarity with continuing the on- and offline campaigns, with members' reactions remaining positive. When organizers shared the official letter they had received from the GASC approving the banning of the commercial, people celebrated the proactive engagement that had led to this outcome and expressed their gratitude toward the movement's organizers: “Proud of your brave and wise action that should pay off soon.”

Hornbach's stereotyping of East Asians that Koreans wanted to combat had finally been officially addressed, resulting in victory for this minority group in speaking up for their rights and aspirations regarding life in the society. In contrast, there was a notable silence about the issue on the membership-only website, with the heated debates from the previous stage coming to a halt in the course of the active protests still ongoing. The final posting on it was a poem titled “The Sonnet for the Naive Facets of Young Koreans,” which succinctly summarized one of the arguments against the movement. It suggested that young Koreans should prioritize and pay more attention to unresolved historical issues with the Japanese instead of expending their energy on supporting the latter's rights in Germany. Unlike the antagonism that had elicited numerous responses at the previous stage, reactions to the poem were relatively muted as the situation approached a positive outcome; further disputes did not arise, either.

4) Movement outcome: Identity maintained or changed

On April 15, 2020, the GASC officially announced in a letter that the TV commercial in question violated the organization's code of behavior, according to whose stipulations there should be no discrimination against a specific group of people in advertising content. As such, it would be pulled. The organizers posted a message with a copy of the letter titled “A small victory” on both of the examined platforms, emphasizing the positive outcome achieved due to their public complaints. Reactions were mixed: that is, support and congratulations were offered by the Facebook community versus very little being said on the membership-only website.

At this stage, people more selectively gathered on the respective platforms where they could find like-minded others.⁵ There have been no relevant postings on the membership-only website ever since this stage, meaning ones either directly or indirectly referencing the movement. It seemed there was no longer a receptive audience there; rather, people expressed their fatigue from the heated debate that had previously played out. Naturally, further postings related to the topic have continuously appeared on the original Facebook group page. Based on the supportive mood abounding, the organizers shared their plans with that community for offline demonstrations, including street protests in front of the advertising agency's building and at the public square in Berlin, as well as some smaller demonstrations in Frankfurt. Having gained significant currency in Germany, the movement subsequently spread to other European countries where the ad continued to air on TV and online. Subsequently, Korean embassies in Europe began sending official letters of concern to the respective government organizations responsible for oversight of potential media discrimination.⁶ As a result, the fervent atmosphere gradually subsided; the case appeared to have been resolved positively.

5) Aftermath: Reassertion of group identity

There were only a few minor relevant discussions on either platform for some weeks, until an organizer then posted another recruitment announcement for the upcoming protest on May 27, 2020 — approximately three months after the movement's initial founding. With appreciation to the Facebook group members who had empowered the off- and online protests, others were now encouraged to join the Europe-wide demonstrations. One of the motivations behind these further protests was the fact that some countries had decided not to ban the ad for the reason of upholding the "freedom of expression." The post in question thus reignited the issue again, albeit in different ways. There were supportive reactions from people sharing their own relevant experiences with the Hornbach commercial in the Facebook community; replies on the membership-only website, meanwhile, clearly demarcated the organizers as "Others," criticizing their overpoliticization of any viral social issue.

At this stage, the identities reasserted on both platforms were distinct: on the membership-only website, group identity was expressed as "Exclusive Korean, distinct from other East Asian nationals (especially Japanese) or orthodox Koreans with no experience in Germany, [and persons] having the desire to be seen as good migrants separate from the politically radical [young] Koreans in Germany." This sense of self resonates with a traditional and nationalist understanding of what it

5 The previous study (Park and Gerrits 2021) revealed that the more closed the platform, the more nationalistic the identities manifested on their pages are.

6 See, for instance, the official letter sent by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Germany (in Korean): https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/deko/brd/m_7200/view.do?seq=1343629&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi_itm_seq=0&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&company_cd=&company_nm=.

means to be Korean for all the reasons previously outlined. On the other hand, “Koreans as part of Asian migrant groups in Germany, aware of ethnic-based prejudice and discrimination, with a desire to realize equal human rights in Germany and Europe” was the prevalent identity manifesting among members of the examined Facebook community. This aligns with both their own perspectives and those of other sympathizers in German society, believing the refuting of the stereotyping of Asians to be extremely necessary to protect their social and human rights while residing in the host country.

The two different group identities emerging on these respective platforms signify how the Korean migrant in Germany experience today is moving toward being definable as “superdiverse.” First, demonstrated here is the fact that the former type of transnationalism — concerning only home and destination countries — cannot fully be said to characterize contemporary migrants’ sense of self in the examined context, despite their shared countries of origin and destination. They manifested a range of individually contextualized understandings of self as regards the Hornbach incident, reflecting both their own and others’ views of “who we are” within German society.

Second, a Korean nationalism-based identity is less embraced (and when so, more defensively) nowadays; however, it continues to exist within some groups as part of the spectrum making up members’ diverse self-understandings. Especially among those who migrated decades ago and consider the destination country a real “second hometown,” upholding such nationalist thought highlights the specific sociopolitical contexts informing both their past and present life worlds. Third and finally, while highly diverse understandings of “who we are” clearly exist among these people, they should not be considered as mutually exclusive or absolute indicators serving to divide the latter into two separate groups. Migrant identity, emerging through interaction with various sociocultural groups, is multilayered, reflecting the high complexity of lived experiences (Blommaert and Varis 2011). The difference between two conflicting group identities in this case signifies the importance of individuals’ own self-understandings amid such intricacy, aligning more closely with their personal aspirations and social values within their own daily environments.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the identity status of Koreans immigrants in Germany by examining their online debates around a social movement seeking to contest the ethnic stereotyping of Asians in a TV commercial. By following the timeline of the movement, illustrated was how diverging group identities formed on two different online platforms, with the witnessed variance being the result of contestation, negotiation, and reconciliation among respective members vis-à-vis their sense of self. The analysis reasserted the previous study’s (Park and Gerrits 2021) finding that different types of social media platform see varying group identities emerge

depending on one's target audience, in our case leading to the formation of two distinctive forms of self-understanding among Korean immigrants in Germany.

This discovery also contributes to "superdiversity" taking on greater weight when it comes to explaining contemporary immigrant identities, particularly concerning how nationalism and transnationalism can be shaped, contested, asserted, or resisted among a same-nation migrant group in their online social spaces. The Hornbach incident catalyzed Koreans resident in Germany sharing their own definitions of "us," resulting in a nationalism-informed identity manifesting in one place and a transnationalism-informed one in another. The membership-only website scrutinized, which used to be a more common type of online platform in the late 1990s and first decade of the new millennium, is still more popular with migrants — mostly those who came to Germany back then. These individuals reflected on the idea of "who we are" in Germany from a more orthodox point of view, parallel to their self-understanding of being exclusively Korean.

Interestingly, this identification does not necessarily conform to traditional notions of Koreanness, as advocates of it drew boundaries between themselves and those still living in the home country. They emphasized their deep empathy with German culture, even though this included overlooking somewhat prejudice against people of a similar background. This exclusive Korean-German identity provides evidence of both assimilation and long-distance nationalism, as often found to hold currency among those who integrate in places that prioritize the local over the transnational (Morawska 2014; Schiller et al. 2005). In other words, when migrants can only be one thing or the other (either loyal to the homeland or to their destination society), they themselves may shape their identity in a more exclusive manner by adopting nationalistic views from both countries.

Due to the limited information available about those posting on the membership-only website, it is not possible to determine their demographics such as exact age, duration of stay in Germany, or gender, among other things. Still, it was significant that those who strongly invoked their nationalistic ideas tended to legitimize their outlook on the basis of their age and long experience of residing in Germany: "I should be around your parents' age"; "According to my 20 years of experience in Germany"; "I am not young enough to put effort into such meaningless actions." With the study having focused on these individuals' self-understandings, the messages they shared during the course of the events playing out between February to June 2020 proved key to grasping the various elements of nationalist identity. Similar patterns of intergenerational cleavages having been noted among Koreans in the US, too (Jo 2017; H. Lee 2021).

The examined Facebook community, comprised of younger Koreans living in Germany, displayed a stronger sense of solidarity and more inclusive identity vis-à-vis other East Asian nationals — meaning those who may face similar prejudice from the host society as that which provoked the social movement this study turned to. While acknowledging themselves to be Korean, members of this community

shared the feeling of “us” with others whose positionality involves similar difficulties in the sociocultural context to hand. This group identity is thus not limited to those sharing the same country of origin but embraces transnationalism as well, making Asians’ rights at large part of their activism. In other words, unlike nationalist thought, in which only the home country plays a role in shaping the collective sense of self, the values central to a more expansive and inclusive immigrant identity are informed by the later and younger generations’ different life circumstances and experiences. In this way, the community in question’s common interests and shared realities helped foster a strong solidarity facilitating collective action like the online movement that was scrutinized here. The nature of the interactions taking place among the Facebook group members implied their overall aspiration to integrate in the destination society but in an equal way that does not look down on certain groups of people due to the deeply rooted prejudice to be found in Germany and elsewhere.

Varying definitions of “us” and “them” thus manifested on each platform. The study found that in the movement’s early stages, the definition of “us” was centered on Korean identity on both platforms, considered to be the core connection between all those coming together online in each place. Over the course of said movement’s progress, however, the definition of “us” on the membership-only website remained rigid and exclusive, including only those perceived to honor Korean history and tradition, empathize with German culture, and see the national context as crucial. Among the Facebook community, on the contrary, that sense of self expanded over time to include both new and existing members of differing national backgrounds, such as second-generation Korean migrants or Germans with Korean partners and relatives. Their collective identity being rendered transnational in nature was facilitated by an openness to those supporting Korean migrants in Germany in the context of the described social movement.

However, such contestation also resulted in the marginalization of those who did not share such an understanding of “who we are.” On the membership-only website, those taking on Hornbach were depicted as not valuing the national context enough, as politicizing social issues for their own benefit, and thus to be excluded from the in-group. On Facebook, ostracized were those who neither comprehended the problem to hand nor acknowledged the ad’s subtle discrimination, regardless of their country of origin.

These findings align with those of other studies that have explored the issue of identity-based conflict among migrant groups from the same country of origin (Godin and Sigona 2022; H.-S. Lee and Kim 2014; Pyke and Dang 2003). Such differences may arise over each’s values, often the case with older and younger groups or first and second-/third-generation migrants, respectively. “Superdiversity” proves a very useful lens through which to examine and fully grasp such points of divergence and dispute between these individuals within a given context. By doing so, scholars will be able to gain a better understanding of the complex nature of

identity formation and how it is influenced by factors such as increasingly diversified and frequent out-migration from Korea alongside the specific sociocultural environments encountered in destination society (Vertovec 2023).

It is important to note that membership of the two online platforms investigated was not mutually exclusive. In fact, many Korean migrants in Germany are registered with both communities and use them to navigate arrival and its immediate aftermath. These platforms were selectively chosen by those who wanted to connect with like-minded people on a specific issue; their sense of self is, as such, fluid, multidimensional, and prone to change depending on time, space, and occasion (Ryan 2018). That explains why the first three stages of the social movement constituted a transition period for a particular group identity to form and why the latter two stages were grounded in that new “us” now established on the respective platforms. In other words, people may choose differently in other instances. Still, it is possible to predict which type of digital platforms tend to yield more transnational and diversity-valued identities.

This study has also contributed to our improved grasping of social movements and collective identity by showing how the formation and transformation of the latter is a dynamic process shaped by the interplay between internal and external factors, including the nature of the online platforms in use, of the issue(s) at hand, and members’ diverse self-understandings. Nonetheless clear limitations to the paper are evident, calling for further research henceforth. Only one social incident was focused on in examining the fluid nature of Korean migrants’ own sense of self; it would be useful, then, to turn to similar occurrences elsewhere — anti-Asian hate during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example. In conclusion, what has been offered herewith is a better understanding of the identity status of Koreans worldwide today in highlighting the intersection of the intergenerational, ideological, and international transformations shaping this dynamic spectrum of self — resonating closely, as such, with the increasingly important notion of “superdiversity.”

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Refereed article

How Laos was Represented in the East German Newspaper *Neues Deutschland*, 1946–1990

Peter Gutter

Abstract

Even though the East German communist party newspaper *Neues Deutschland*, or ND, can be called a controversial propaganda instrument, it may still help provide a fuller picture of Second World–Third World relations during the Cold War. In its pursuit of greater international recognition in the Cold War rivalry with West Germany, the East German government established relations with as many countries as possible. This included Third World countries such as Laos and ND reported on this, usually in an ideologically biased way and sometimes with Orientalist characteristics. Nonetheless, ND can be useful for historical research on Laos as the newspaper had connections that Western media did not have access to. This paper is based on a review of 2,984 articles about Laos published by ND from 1946 to 1990.

Keywords: Laos, East Germany, international relations, Second World–Third World relations, Cold War, representation of an Asian country in media

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Introduction

A lot has been written about relations during the Cold War between Laos and the US, China, Vietnam and the Soviet Union (e.g. Castle 1993; Cesari 2007; Charaby 2006; Dommen 1979; Eliades 1999; Gaiduk 2003; Goscha 2004; Jacobs 2012; Kochavi 2002; Kurlantzick 2016; Langer 1973; Lee 1970; Rust 2012; Shu Quanzhi 2021), but in the last thirty years I have come across very little about relations between Laos and other countries. What interests me is what people in other socialist countries thought about Laos during the Cold War and I think that analyzing media is a good way to get a better understanding of that.

My research for this paper is in line with recent research that has aimed to provide a fuller picture of Second World–Third World relations during the Cold War. Southeast Asia is increasingly developing, which makes a more detailed understanding of its historical and diplomatic background not only interesting but also necessary. Given the current developments in the world, it is not at all inconceivable that the competition between China and the US, for instance, could evolve into a new Cold War. That is why it is so important to study the origins and consequences of the Cold War that lasted from 1947 to 1991 (Li 2020). More insight into this could lead to a better understanding and management of today's international relations. Regarding the wider academic context, this research might be grouped under the role of development in the Cold War rivalry. The choice of East German media automatically means the Cold War era, as the German Democratic Republic (also called GDR or East Germany) only existed during that period.

During the Cold War there were relations between Laos and Soviet satellite states such as Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania. This paper deals with the East German perspective. The GDR interacted with Laos during the Cold War for various reasons, including helping to shape the civil service and the armed forces. The results of this can still be noticed today, which makes it interesting to investigate the relations between Laos and the GDR. Since *Neues Deutschland* was the party newspaper of the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands or Socialist Unity Party of Germany, which ruled East Germany from 1949 to 1990), it may provide valuable information about the ideology and expectations behind GDR–Laos relations. The research question that I will be working with in this paper is: How was Laos represented in the East German newspaper *Neues Deutschland*?

The newspaper *Neues Deutschland* (“New Germany,” from here: ND) has often been regarded as a rather controversial source and later in this paper I will elaborate on that. For this research I made use of online archives and of my own collection of newspaper clippings about Laos. My search eventually yielded 2,984 articles from ND. I have benefited a lot from the online newspaper archives of the Berlin State

Library¹ and the *ND-Archiv* website.² The annual counts of the numbers of articles about Laos are not always correct on the ND website though. The longer articles consist of multiple paragraphs and subsections which are often presented as separate articles in the search results. I also came across double counts. Hence, searching the *Neues Deutschland* website will indicate a larger number of articles on Laos than there actually were. According to Deacon (2007: 17–18), it is not clear why double counts occur in digital archives. It is also possible that there are articles that have not yet been digitized and, as a result, have escaped my attention. For instance, a number of items listed on the ND website appear not to be available in the Berlin State Library. In any case, I realize I have to be careful with quantification of coverage only through searches. The quantification in the tables in this paper is the result of a detailed analysis of the articles I have found so far.

Content Analysis

The purpose of this paper is to provide a general overview of what was published in ND about Laos, which involves a content analysis. Many different definitions of “content analysis” have been formulated over time and there is one that most closely matches my ideas for this project. Laswell et al. (1952) described content analysis as a method that aims to describe with optimal accuracy and objectivity what is generally said about a particular subject (i.e. Laos) in a certain place (i.e. *Neues Deutschland*) at a given time (1946–1990). Because this definition does not specifically take into account the quantitative aspect and the replicability that are important factors for content analysis, I have added these factors as recommended by Riffe et al. (1998).

What types of content were selected for this project? Over the years I have collected several hundred clippings about Laos from various East German newspapers. Of these, about 200 came from ND, and since that was the ruling party’s flagship paper and I wanted to know more about Laos–GDR relations during the Cold War, I thought that was a good starting point. So I decided to look for *everything* that had appeared in ND about Laos, from front page news, diplomatic and political articles, editorials, opinion pieces, official declarations, statements and communiqués, to background articles about history and culture. Of course, it would be impossible to cover all of these items in the scope of this paper, so I have limited myself to providing a brief overview. Naturally, this leaves interesting areas for future research.

To bring order to the vast amount of material and to enable later analysis, I created a coding manual wherein I filled out a coding sheet for each article to highlight the following information: 1) issue date; 2) page number; 3) article word count; 4) headline; 5) author(s); 6) news source(s); 7) coding and sub-coding of the article.

1 Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, online newspaper archive, see <https://zefys.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/>

2 ND-Archiv website, see <https://www.nd-archiv.de/>

Sub-groups coded as number seven from the coding sheet included texts such as communiqués, laws, declarations, official statements, speeches, treaties and reports of meetings, which were usually printed in their entirety in ND. The other sub-groups were activities of the Pathet Lao, influence of Vietnam and China, development, cooperation, socialism, ideological bias and the possible presence of Orientalist influences in ND's reporting about Laos. For each item I wrote a short summary and some additional information, and then put all this information together in chronological order in a catalog, which facilitates further research. I created tables to organize article data for statistical analysis, as described by Lynch and Peer (2002). My statistical analysis used in this content analysis mainly involved counting (of articles, words, pages, front page/diplomatic/foreign news, authors, and news sources). All results can be found in the tables for quick reference.

Content analysis does have its limitations and disadvantages, which may be both procedural and theoretical. Moreover, content analysis is subject to error. I also realize that this project is inherently reductive, because the matter at hand (i.e. the way Laos was represented in ND) is rather complex. Throughout this paper I will often refer to ND articles on Laos. However, as it was not possible to list all 2,984 items within the scope of this paper, I had to make a selection. This is another limitation of the project.

Third World, Second World and Laos

The East German government was interested in building relations with as many countries as possible, to try to give the GDR regime more legitimacy. In this way they also wanted to offer more counterweight to West Germany in the Cold War rivalry (Johnson 1993; Kuhns 1985; Scholtyseck 2003). That said, Laos was not the GDR's most important partner in the Third World. Cuba and Vietnam were more central to the GDR's involvement in development work. Did Laos actually belong to the *Third World* during the Cold War? As this paper is intended to help provide a fuller picture of Second World–Third World relations during the Cold War, I will hereby briefly discuss the term “Third World.” It was coined by the French scientist Alfred Sauvy in 1952 (Palieraki 2023). Nowadays it is often considered a derogatory term to describe the group of ex-colonial, newly independent, economically developing nations that were non-aligned with either NATO or the Warsaw Pact. It is part of a “three worlds” segmentation used to rank the world's economies by economic status *and* political divisions: the United States and their allies represent the “First” World, while the Soviet Union and their allies form the “Second” World. However, there is still no consensus on the definition of the “Third” World and strictly speaking it was more a political than an economic division (Tomlinson 2003). Interestingly, official GDR agreements with Cuba, Laos, Mongolia and Vietnam were listed under “Bilateral treaties between the GDR and socialist states” (German Democratic Republic 1979: 1200–1222). In ND articles, Laos was also often referred to as a “brother country” of the GDR. This raises the question of

whether the GDR leaders really saw Laos as part of the socialist world—in which case Laos would belong to the *Second World*—or whether they overestimated the scope, scale and influence of their development efforts.

The Newspaper *Neues Deutschland*

The newspaper *Neues Deutschland* has been called controversial for a number of reasons. For instance, a former East German journalist who used to work for ND (personal communication, September 28, 2018) told me that ND was “nothing more than propaganda from a dictatorial regime.” ND was indeed the main party organ of the SED, and everything about the newspaper was regulated by the party, from page layout to target readership (Fiedler and Meyen 2011). At a press conference in Berlin in 1950, the then editor-in-chief of ND, Rudolf Herrnstadt, said that his paper’s task was not to entertain people or to make money, but to fight a political battle. According to Herrnstadt, ND was a political institution that had the character of a newspaper because of its effectiveness and not just a newspaper that deals with politics (Herrmann 1963: 39). The character of ND was therefore one of unconditional commitment to the political goals of the SED (Kirstein 2010) and those who wrote for ND had to be SED members. Occasionally articles were written by foreigners, but they had to be members of a communist or socialist party in their own country. The editor-in-chief of the Lao newspaper *Pasason* (“The People”), Sone Khamvanevongsa (1985), also wrote an article about Laos. As far as I know he is the only Laotian ever to have written an article for ND.

ND staff were taught that their task was to reproduce and disseminate the propaganda of the SED, thus fulfilling an important social function in the GDR (Fiedler and Meyen 2011). Newspapers from the GDR regularly featured deception, falsification, generalization and clichés. For example, East German newspapers kept emphasizing how good everything was in communist areas and how terribly things were going for people in capitalist countries. This was all justified in the name of the SED regime’s pedagogical intentions and their need to counter Western propaganda (former East German journalist, personal communication, September 28, 2018). So why would it be worth studying articles from ND?

It would be interesting to discover an image of relations between the Second and Third Worlds during the Cold War in general, and between the GDR and Laos in particular. Since ND was the official organ of the leading party in the GDR, studying the news about Laos—however biased that may be—nevertheless creates a picture of what happened between the two countries. In order to understand and analyze the official pronouncements of the SED, it is necessary to examine the content of its newspaper (Blücher 1959). If one reads thousands of articles covering a time span of four decades, then an image emerges of what was considered important, what the emphasis was on. In this way, I view the articles from ND as a distinct level of “reality” in their own right. This is in line with what Atkinson and Coffey (1997) propose, namely, to look at the context in which the articles were produced and the

readership for which they were written. Through this method the articles become important as conveyors of a certain impression or ideology. I combine this with looking at the articles as documents in their historical context. Viewed this way, such documents form a specific discourse, which Atkinson and Coffey (1997) describe as a *documentary reality*. In this view the ND articles, however “official,” do not necessarily have to be transparent or straightforward representations of an underlying social or organizational reality. Instead, they should be regarded as texts written for specific purposes. In this context I had two sub-questions: What examples are found in ND articles of the influence of the GDR’s official Marxist–Leninist state ideology on the East German press and the way it represented the development of Laos? And what are Orientalist influences in ND’s reporting about Laos? This last aspect can be interesting since this research is about the ways a European newspaper reported on Laos.

News in East German media was classified in only two categories, namely *Inland* (domestic) and *Ausland* (foreign). Foreign coverage was mainly about political and economic circumstances in other countries. All other news, including the economy, politics, science and education, sports and culture, was considered domestic. The daily newspaper ND usually comprised 8 pages, sometimes more, and news about Laos could be found on any of them. Page 2 of ND mainly contained diplomatic news. There one could come across reports of meetings between East German and foreign (including Lao) diplomats, news of official visits, telegrams between governments and heads of state, communiqués and treaties, cooperation agreements with other countries, official receptions at embassies, and diplomatic discussions with foreign envoys. Pages 5 and 7 of ND usually contained mixed foreign news, including articles about Laos or articles in which Laos is mentioned. During the Vietnam War (1955–1975), such articles included news about battles, troop movements, aerial bombardments, coups d’état, the growth of the Pathet Lao, American interference, North Vietnamese influence, and so on. After the communist takeover of power in Laos in 1975, the news was often about how the Lao regime was going to manage the socialist construction of the country and about the ways in which the GDR could play a role in this.

Over the years, ND occasionally provided articles about Laos with a map. This was invariably a small line drawing in black and white, prepared by one of ND’s cartographers such as Kloss (during the 1950s), Wegener (from the 1950s through to the 1980s), Gneckow (1960s), Weigelt (1970s and 80s), and Döring (1980s).

The Sources

It is of course also important to find out where ND got the news about Laos from. This is often stated in the articles. Of course, ND used the news agencies and media of other Warsaw Pact countries. More striking, though, was ND’s far greater reliance on the output of Western media and news agencies. The Allgemeine Deutsche Nachrichtendienst, or General German News Service (ADN), is by far the most

frequently mentioned news agency, which is not surprising as it was the GDR state news agency (Fiedler 2014: 110–116; Minholz and Stirnberg 1995).

ND's other sources included major Western news agencies such as United Press International (UPI), Associated Press (AP), Reuters and Agence France-Presse (AFP). East German media also made use of a range of West German sources, one of which was the Deutsche Presse-Agentur (German Press Agency, DPA). This is remarkable because coverage of West Germany in ND was always negative. It is also peculiar that while ND looked down on Western news sources and often dismissed them as "bourgeois," they were nevertheless consistently mentioned. Equally remarkable is that of the 2,984 articles examined, the Soviet news agency TASS was cited as the primary source only 119 times, while *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was cited only 74 times. Given that the GDR had a very close relationship with the USSR, it would have made sense if TASS and *Pravda* had been the primary sources of foreign news in the majority of articles, but that turned out not to be the case. Instead, it became increasingly clear how much ND depended on Western news agencies and other media for its news about Laos. It is likely that VNA (Vietnam News Agency) was another important supplier of information about Laos, as it had representatives in Eastern Europe from 1950. However, ND mentioned VNA as a news source only 68 times. KPL (Khaosan Pathet Lao, or Lao News Agency) was cited in 108 articles.

East German media also published news from primary sources that most Western media did not have access to, such as interviews with Lao government ministers or Pathet Lao officials. Of course we have to keep in mind that ND was a political newspaper, but its access to political and military sources in Laos can nevertheless be interesting from a historical point of view. Prince Souphanouvong, Phoune Sipaseuth or Phoumi Vongvichit, for example, rarely granted interviews to Western media, but there are a few in ND. During his state visit to the GDR in 1977, Lao Prime Minister Kaysone Phomvihane also delivered some long speeches, which were printed in their entirety in ND, thus creating a somewhat broader picture of how he viewed certain matters. In this context it is interesting to mention that ND itself was also seen as a valuable source, for example by the CIA. During the Cold War, the CIA tried to gather information about what was going on in Laos from various quarters, including communist party newspapers from the Warsaw Pact countries. The CIA used ND as one of the sources for its *Daily Report*. For instance, there were English translations of ND articles about Laos (Kauffelt 1966, cited in Central Intelligence Agency 1966). So even though ND may at first glance seem like an unreliable propaganda newspaper, reviewing its information from influential contacts in other (socialist) countries can be worthwhile and may indeed lead to a fuller picture of Second World–Third World relations during the Cold War.

The 1950s

Of the total 2,984 articles analyzed for this project, only one was published in the 1940s: the first ND article mentioning Laos dates from November 23, 1946. Although it appeared on the front page, this was a short news item of only 32 words about the signing of the Washington agreement between France and Thailand six days earlier. The next article in ND about Laos did not appear until January 5, 1950. In the course of the 1950s, ND gradually published more articles (174 in all) in which Laos was mentioned (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Neues Deutschland* articles about Laos, 1946–1990. This table consists of four parts, each covering a decade.

<i>Neues Deutschland</i> articles about Laos, 1946–1959						
Year	Total number of articles about Laos	Front page articles	Diplomatic news articles	Foreign news articles	Average number of words per article	Average number of words, front page articles
1946	1	1	0	0	32	32
1950	5	1	3	1	168	185
1951	3	0	1	2	275	N/A
1952	2	1	1	0	870	608
1953	9	1	7	1	404	332
1954	40	4	2	34	563	197
1955	12	0	1	11	194	N/A
1956	14	0	0	14	187	N/A
1957	6	0	0	6	185	N/A
1958	5	0	0	5	1,038	N/A
1959	78	6	4	68	249	175

<i>Neues Deutschland</i> articles about Laos, 1960–1969						
Year	Total number of articles about Laos	Front page articles	Diplomatic news articles	Foreign news articles	Average number of words per article	Average number of words, front page articles
1960	70	0	6	64	198	N/A
1961	231	29	30	172	249	282
1962	107	12	18	77	227	298
1963	33	0	3	30	200	N/A
1964	48	4	6	38	218	200
1965	33	11	3	19	148	93
1966	47	9	7	31	210	131
1967	14	1	2	11	288	82
1968	46	8	11	27	349	415
1969	30	2	5	23	308	132

<i>Neues Deutschland</i> articles about Laos, 1970–1979						
Year	Total number of articles about Laos	Front page articles	Diplomatic news articles	Foreign news articles	Average number of words per article	Average number of words, front page articles
1970	187	15	21	151	331	187
1971	282	68	29	185	284	214
1972	120	18	13	89	293	283
1973	107	11	12	84	224	159
1974	48	1	6	41	232	195
1975	96	4	17	75	209	193
1976	83	4	16	63	207	225
1977	125	12	32	81	251	367
1978	101	8	32	61	193	223
1979	118	13	28	77	169	134

<i>Neues Deutschland</i> articles about Laos, 1980–1990						
Year	Total number of articles about Laos	Front page articles	Diplomatic news articles	Foreign news articles	Average number of words per article	Average number of words, front page articles
1980	85	12	26	47	150	93
1981	93	6	18	69	226	70
1982	153	25	49	79	264	234
1983	88	6	28	54	232	233
1984	88	4	18	66	169	125
1985	85	9	20	56	196	187
1986	87	12	22	53	204	149
1987	66	6	23	37	201	109
1988	85	10	24	51	223	228
1989	46	5	17	24	191	105
1990	7	0	3	4	360	N/A
N/A = not applicable.						

Mansfield-Richardson (2017: 111) has created a system of rankings of newspaper coverage according to the total number of articles on a subject during the year of the content analysis. If a newspaper publishes 200 or more articles in a year about a particular subject, it can be classified as extremely high volume coverage. From 100 to 199 articles per year is high volume coverage; from 50 to 99 articles per year is medium volume coverage; from 10 to 49 articles is low volume coverage; and extremely low volume coverage from 1 to 9 articles per year. On this scale, ND's coverage of Laos in the 1950s was in the low to very low volume coverage scale, except for 1959, which saw medium volume coverage. As the situation in Laos deteriorated, ND's interest increased. Until 1954, most of the articles dealt with the independence struggle in Vietnam, with Laos appearing only occasionally. The French and Americans were invariably portrayed by ND as colonial overlords, imperialists, hypocrites and aggressors. Throughout the 1950s, ND described the Lao as brave freedom fighters and paid a lot of attention to the achievements of the Lao People's Liberation Army.



Karte von Indochina

Figure 1. Map of French Indochina from ND September 3, 1950, p. 3, by an unknown cartographer. Note the railway lines between Vientiane and Saigon, with a branch to Saravane; between Nong Het and Vinh; and between Saigon and Phnom Penh. These railways never existed. As a matter of fact, in 1950 there were no railways at all in Laos.

Interestingly, in articles from the period 1953–1954, ND referred to the country of Laos as “Pathet Lao.” It is not clear whether there was a misunderstanding here or whether it was meant to be provocative, as it would have made more sense to simply refer to the country as Laos—especially for a German audience. Likewise, I also thought that it would not be logical for Finland to be referred to as “Suomi” (the Finnish name for the country) for a German readership, until I noticed that, from 1954, ND did indeed call Finland “Suomi.” That makes it questionable whether ND used the name “Pathet Lao” to indicate the country of Laos as a provocation against the Royal Lao Government (RLG). That said, ND referred to most other Asian countries by their common names as printed in Western atlases. Pathet Lao literally means “Lao Nation” or “Lao State.” The organization called *Pathet Lao* was a leftist political movement in Laos which included many nationalists and a smaller number of communists. It certainly did not control the whole country in the 1950s (Zasloff 1973), which makes it curious that all of Laos was so called by ND in the period 1953–1954. A map caption in an article from 1954 states that “Pathet Lao is called Laos by the imperialists” (ND May 16, 1954: 5), which may be an indication that Laos was deliberately named “Pathet Lao” by ND (Figure 2). But what also makes it peculiar is that ND itself started calling the country *Laos* from 1955 onwards. Perhaps ND did this to show deference to the Geneva Agreements then endorsed by

the Soviet Union. In any case, ND made no secret from the start that it had a lot of sympathy for the Pathet Lao and for its political wing, the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Haksat). From the 1950s through to the 1970s, ND took a great interest in the growth and activities of the Pathet Lao.



Figure 2. Map of Laos from ND May 16, 1954, p. 5, prepared by an unknown cartographer. The caption states that “Our map shows the situation of the liberation movement in Pathet Lao (called Laos by the imperialists).” The accompanying article does not refer to the French invention of the name Laos.

As soon as Laos gained independence in 1953, ND immediately took a very critical stance towards the RLG. Hence using the term “Pathet Lao” to refer to the country of Laos may have been intended as a provocation to the RLG. But here we encounter a curious ambiguity. Especially in the period from 1946 to 1975, before the communists seized power in Laos, the reporting in ND regularly seemed opportunistic. On the one hand, ND kept emphasizing how much they respected the RLG, but on the other hand ND openly expressed its support for the Lao Patriotic Front, which was against the RLG. There are interesting examples of this in ND. For instance, Kong Le staged a coup against the RLG in 1960 (Stuart-Fox 1997: 112–116), but his later official visit to the GDR was front page news on May 17, 1962, at a time when the RLG was still described by ND as “the rightful government of Laos.” From 1960 to 1971, Prince Souvanna Phouma also continued to be called “Prime Minister of the legitimate government of Laos,” even though he was opposed to the Pathet Lao supported by the GDR. However, from 1971 the reporting in ND became more hostile towards Souvanna Phouma, who was increasingly associated

with “CIA murder gangs” (Steiniger 1971). Nonetheless, from 1954 to 1975, the GDR government continued to send congratulatory telegrams and New Year’s greetings to the Royal Lao Government every year, with ND reporting on it, usually on page 2 among the diplomatic news. ND also reported every time the King of Laos sent back a telegram of thanks and good wishes to the GDR leaders. King Savang Vatthana had fairly amicable relations with the Soviet Union after 1962, so it is possible that this extended to other Eastern Bloc countries. As Kuhns (1985) argues in his dissertation, the East German government seemed desperate to have as many foreign relations as possible, because of the desire to obtain diplomatic recognition for itself, the desire to play a role on the world stage that was actually greater than any small European state could hope for at the time, and because of the desire to provide a counterbalance to West Germany in the Cold War rivalry. The GDR leaders realized that the Royal Lao Government should therefore not be treated too brusquely. But at the same time, in ND articles the GDR leadership kept accusing the RLG of corruption, collaborating with the US and provoking a civil war.

In 1954, ND paid ample attention to the Geneva Conference which met in an attempt to settle the First Indochina War. ND seemed to consider American interference and opposition in Geneva just as important as the Conference itself, and repeatedly emphasized what they perceived as Washington’s underhanded and warlike policy on Indochina. The GDR was part of the Warsaw Pact and therefore it is not surprising that all of the Soviet Union’s proposals during the Conference were described as extremely peaceful, honest and positive by ND. After the Conference, ND regularly pointed out how the US was not adhering to the Geneva Agreements and violated the ceasefire. According to the Geneva Agreements, elections had to be called in Laos, which ND also paid attention to. The resulting First Coalition Government was closely watched: five of the six articles published on Laos in 1957 were about it.

Given ND’s extremely critical stance towards the US, I had expected it to publish something about the forced resignation of the Souvanna Phouma government, brought about by the suspension of US aid in July 1958 (Phraxayavong 2009: 71–78; Stuart-Fox 1997: 103–104). This would certainly have been useful for ND’s ideological purposes and would also have helped support its point of view regarding the “imperialist machinations” of the US in Asia, but I found nothing about it in ND.

The 1960s

During the 1960s, significantly more articles on Laos (659 in all) were published by ND than in the previous decade. In total, Laos was front page news for ND 76 times in the period 1960–1969 (see Table 1). On Mansfield-Richardson’s (2017: 111) scale, ND’s coverage of Laos in the 1960s fluctuated between low volume coverage (in 1967) and extremely high volume coverage (in 1961). Compared to the 1950s, ND’s interest in Laos was clearly growing, which is understandable as the conflict in Indochina was spiraling out of control.



Figure 3. Map of Laos from ND August 10, 1966, p. 7, prepared by Wegener. Note how the map refers to Laos and Cambodia, but says South Vietnam instead of Republic of Vietnam.

Throughout the 1960s, ND's readers were constantly informed about the achievements of the Pathet Lao. In January 1960, ND expressed concern that the new Lao government under Phoui Sananikone wanted ties with the US-led SEATO, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (Zempelburg 1960). The GDR had hoped that Laos would remain neutral and would not get involved with the American bloc. In 1960, ND reported about the escape of Pathet Lao leaders imprisoned in Vientiane (ND May 25, 1960: 5). In August of the same year, Captain Kong Le carried out a successful neutralist coup d'état against the Lao rightwing government (ND August 10, 1960: 5). ND was very interested in Kong Le and when he visited the GDR in 1962—he had become a general in the meantime—it was even front page news (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Kong Le visited the GDR in May 1962, which was front-page news for ND. A couple of years earlier, Kong Le was still an unknown captain in the Royal Lao Army. But now he was in East Berlin as a general, raising a glass with the Chairman of the State Council of East Germany, Walter Ulbricht. “Volle Unterstützung der DDR für das laotische Volk” (“Full support of the GDR for the Lao people”).

The Battle of Vientiane in December 1960 had an important political effect in that Kong Le's forces allied with the Pathet Lao on the Plain of Jars (ND December 11, 1960: 7). In 1963, however, disagreements arose between the neutralists and the Pathet Lao, leading to the eventual failure of the neutralist cause in Laos. The right wing was involved too, as they were linked to the assassination of the foreign minister of the Kingdom of Laos, Quinim Pholsena (ND April 3, 1963: 7). Meanwhile the Plain of Jars had turned into an armed camp (Brown and Zasloff 1986: 76–78; Pommerening 1962). In the period 1962–1968, ND published numerous news items about the formation of a coalition government in Laos. However, the coalition government's work was severely hindered by the US. The role of SEATO was also extensively discussed by ND. SEATO was, in effect, the counterpart of NATO in Asia and, like NATO, was led by the US. Hence it is logical that the leaders of the GDR—which was a Warsaw Pact country—were very suspicious of it. Therefore, throughout the 1960s, ND continuously applauded that the Lao neutralists wanted nothing to do with SEATO. The East German leaders were probably more wary of SEATO than Laotian politicians, who considered it a non-entity when it failed to gain currency soon after its creation. The Geneva

Agreements of July 1962 and the formation of the Second Coalition Government were matters that were extensively described by ND as well.

In 1961, the US started its “secret war” against areas under Pathet Lao control (Stuart-Fox et al. 2023: 430), with the Hmong being armed and trained by American military advisers. Along with them, Thai and South Vietnamese units and “Chiang Kai-shek gangs” (which is what Kuomintang remnants in the Golden Triangle were called by ND) were also involved in this war. Over the years, all troops and advisers associated with the US in Laos were variously described by ND using a range of epithets, for example as pirates, aggressors, sky killers and barbarians, traitors, gangsters and bandits, murderers and their henchmen, butchers and accomplices, coup plotters, reactionaries, hypocrites, and also as puppets and lackeys of the US. On the other hand, ND kept describing the actions of the Pathet Lao as heroic, patriotic, self-sacrificing, steadfast, democratic, honest and brave. As the US could not beat the Lao patriotic forces, the infamous American air war was unleashed on them in 1964. This would last until 1973 and was also extensively covered by ND.

The 1970s

When looking at ND’s coverage of Laos, the 1970s are an interesting decade in various ways. The 1970s were an exceptionally turbulent time for Laos. During that decade, ND published no less than 1,267 articles about Laos or in which Laos appeared, which is substantially more than in the decades before and after. Based on the criteria described by Mansfield-Richardson (2017: 111), ND’s coverage of Laos in the 1970s fluctuated between low volume coverage (in 1974) and extremely high volume coverage (in 1971), see Table 1. The year 1975 marked a turning point for the countries of Indochina. Taking advantage of the immense chaos that resulted from the Vietnam War, communist movements seized power in Vietnam and Cambodia, and in December 1975 the same thing happened in Laos (Goldston 2009). We can observe an interesting shift in the way Laos was described by ND during the 1970s. While the first half of that decade was dominated by the war in Laos and the role of the US in it, this changed when the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party (LPRP) came to power in 1975 (Punya 2019: 36–41). ND reported differently about Laos after the communist takeover in 1975, with a noticeable shift from ideology to an emphasis on development.

The first series of postage stamps issued by the newly proclaimed Lao People’s Democratic Republic were printed in East Germany in 1976. The stamps showed Lao PDR’s new national emblem and thus served as a promotion of Laos’ new national image. ND proudly stated that the symbolic first series of stamps was ceremoniously handed over to Mrs. Khampheng Bouppha, the Lao Minister of Post and Telecommunications, by the East German ambassador to Laos, Dietrich Jarck (ND December 1, 1976: 2). Symbolically, this was an important step in relations between Laos and the GDR. Laos had become a member of the Universal Postal Union in 1952, which meant that its stamps were recognized internationally. A

postage stamp is of public interest, it represents the identity and affirms the territorial sovereignty of a country. One of the first things a new country's government wants to do to show they are in charge of their territory is to set up their own postal service—and have new stamps printed. The fact that Laos entrusted this task to the GDR suggests that relations between the two countries were cordial. That was confirmed by Kaysone Phomvihane's state visit to the GDR in May 1977, which was front-page news for ND for four days in a row (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Kaysone's state visit to the GDR in May 1977 was front-page news for ND. It was not often that Laos was reported in great detail on ND's front page for four days in a row: this only happened during Kaysone's visits to East Germany in 1977, 1982 and 1988. Of course, Laos often made the front page of ND in the 1960s and 1970s because of the war, but these were usually short articles that were also not illustrated.

In 1977, East Germany faced a “coffee crisis.” Because the coffee harvest in Brazil had failed, coffee was difficult to obtain from the usual suppliers on the world market, so the East German industry developed an “Ersatz” mix consisting of coffee, chicory, rye, and sugar beet. This concoction was not exactly tasty and led to so many complaints that the GDR leaders feared social unrest (Wunderlich 2003). As a result, the GDR started looking for other sources in the Third World and trade agreements were signed with countries such as Vietnam, Ethiopia, Angola, and Laos. This also led to the GDR seeing the concept of development aid in an entirely different context.

In the 1950s and 1960s, everything ND published about development aid was negative. For instance, in 1960 ND was of the opinion that development aid was

nothing more than a colonial policy by the imperialist powers, who in this way controlled the less developed countries. From the East German point of view, Western countries only pumped money into poor countries to prevent them from becoming communist, hence this kind of development aid was described by ND as “costly anti-communism” perpetrated by neo-colonialists. This is an example of the influence of the GDR’s official Marxist–Leninist state ideology on the East German press and the way it represented the development of Laos. In this context, the role of USAID (United States Agency for International Development) in Laos was also seen as questionable by ND (Feldbauer 1969). The USAID office was described as “a secret command center for America’s war in Laos” (ND April 15, 1970: 7), which it actually was (Phraxayavong 2009: 74–75, 251–252). USAID was seen by ND as an organization aimed at secretly furthering American imperialism (Kauffelt 1970). The role of USAID in Laos was fragmenting and undermining the already fragile bureaucratic and political structures of the Lao state, and under the guise of development aid, many relief goods were in fact channeled to military activities (Stuart-Fox 1997: 154–155). Moreover, the massive flow of money from the US to the royal government in Vientiane led to inflation and encouraged corruption and graft (Chomsky 2005: 156). All this confirmed ND’s negative view of development cooperation by Western countries. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the government of the GDR was more interested in providing scientific aid (Helbing 1963) and deemed cooperation with less developed countries possible if this were in the service of development towards socialism.

Yet the cooperation that was established with coffee suppliers such as Laos in the 1970s made the GDR leaders realize that the process of development can work two ways and that development aid can indeed be mutually beneficial from the perspective of trade. It is striking how during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, ND’s reporting on the topic of development aid became more positive. According to ND, an effective way to help countries with their development was to train people from those countries to become skilled workers and to send trucks, tractors and FDJ “friendship brigades” (ND April 30, 1983: 3). FDJ was the *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, or Free German Youth, an East German youth movement. Their friendship brigades were teams of development workers who helped with training and setting up projects. That sounds very peaceful of course, but what ND did not mention was that the East German trade agreements with countries like Ethiopia and Angola meant that the GDR supplied small arms in exchange for coffee (Dietrich 2015; Döring 1999). The GDR nevertheless tried to uphold an image abroad of a peace-loving state that offered an alternative to the Western capitalist forms of trade and development aid, and attempted to match its coffee deals with Laos with the image of East German socialist solidarity with developing countries (Kapfenberger 1980). Still, the eventual trade agreement between the GDR and Laos worked out favorably for both countries. After the long war, the Laotian economy was in a bad state and its communist leaders were looking for ways to improve it. Laos had a predominantly agricultural economy in which the cultivation of coffee fitted

perfectly. At the same time, Laos was also in need of foreign investment. The GDR was prepared to invest in the Lao coffee sector and helped with mechanization, transportation, education and quality improvement. GDR investments in Lao coffee cultivation eventually turned out to be beneficial for the development of the economy of Laos in general (Kloiber 2017) and of Champassak Province in particular, with glowing reports in ND (e.g. Pries 1987). The advantage for the GDR was that the supply of coffee was secured again and that relations with Laos were strengthened.

In 1978, collectivization of agriculture was implemented in Laos, although ND initially did not use the word collectivization. Instead, ND first described it as an “agricultural revolution” and a “development of the entire economy” (Hagen 1978). By the time ND started using the term “agricultural cooperatives,” the LPRP had already suspended the program. And even though the LPRP itself frankly admitted that agricultural collectivization had failed (Evans 1990: 51–54; Pholsena and Banomyong 2006: 157–159), ND continued to describe it in terms that made it seem like it had been a success (e.g. Kapfenberger 1981). While it is possible that there was a lack of knowledge on the part of ND about the situation in Laos, it is more likely that the failure of agricultural collectivization in Laos was covered up. There were also collective farms in the GDR, but the East German socialist collectivization experience had been ambiguous. The main reasons for agricultural collectivization in the GDR had been political rather than economic. It was part of a communist agenda for transforming the country’s society and economy (Schöne 2005). Although at first collectivization in East Germany had seemed promising (Francisco 1979), it later turned out to be less successful because of decreasing productivity (Last 2009: 191–194; Schöne 2014), which was something the SED tried to hide from the public. Economic data were generally treated as a state secret in the GDR (Bryson 1984: 62) and this is noticeable in the articles in ND. As a tightly controlled instrument of the SED for influencing public opinion, ND invariably published one-sided positive news about East German agricultural projects and therefore never mentioned the failed collectivization attempt in its socialist “brother country” Laos. If they had, it would have been unfavorable publicity for similar projects in East Germany. This is another example of the influence of the GDR’s official Marxist–Leninist state ideology on the East German press and the way it represented the development of socialism in Laos.

The 1980s

With the Vietnam War finally over and the LPRP firmly in power in Laos, the 1980s saw more room in ND for discussion of the development of Laos. As socialism’s role in this was a key issue, it was regularly discussed in ND. Based on the criteria described by Mansfield-Richardson (2017: 111), ND’s coverage of Laos in the 1980s fluctuated between low volume coverage (in 1989) and high volume coverage (in 1982), see Table 1. Throughout the 1980s, we can see in ND how Laos was

actively drawn into the socialist network. Many conferences were held in Warsaw Pact countries, where ministers from the socialist countries met. On such occasions matters of socialist cooperation were discussed, ranging from education and public health to justice and culture. ND invariably listed the countries participating, wherein Laos was typically regularly mentioned.

Also during the 1980s, ND regularly paid attention to education programs for Laotians, both in the GDR and in Laos. This mainly concerned training for medical, technical, agricultural and forestry personnel. On such occasions, Laos was often even referred to as a “brother country” of the GDR. I did not find any coverage in ND about the training of the Lao army, police force and fire services by East German instructors in the 1980s though. I had expected to find at least something about this in ND, because in the period 1998–2000, I regularly spoke with Laotians in Vientiane, Savannakhet, Paksane and Thakhek who had become firefighters in the 1980s. They had all been trained by East German instructors at the time and were without exception very positive about East German efforts to train firefighters in Laos. There had even been plans in the mid-1980s to set up an East German firefighting school near Vientiane (Gutter 2013), but these plans never materialized for unclear reasons.

It is possible that ND did not write about these projects because the East German Stasi was involved. Stasi is an acronym for *Staatssicherheit*, or State Security. This was the secret police of East Germany. Still, East Germany trained Lao police forces quite openly, so much so that the Lao secret police were even called “Stasi” by the Lao population (McCauley 2017: 174).

Obtaining information about the fire service through Lao newspapers is also difficult as they hardly published anything about them. In Laos, the fire service is part of the police force and as such is considered a public security organization. Ever since 1975, anything pertaining to public safety has been kept secret by the Lao authorities, which may be another reason why ND did not report on this. Only two articles were published by ND in the 1980s about cooperation between Laos and the GDR in the fields of justice and public safety (ND December 11, 1980: 2; ND January 30, 1986: 2).

As in 1977, Kaysone Phomvihane's state visit to the GDR in 1982 was front-page news in ND for several days in a row (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Kaysone Phomvihane's second state visit to the GDR in September 1982 was again front-page news: articles include his reception by Erich Honecker, Chairman of the State Council of East Germany, talks with SED officials, and signing of the friendship treaty between the two countries.

A year later, a Lao military delegation visited the GDR. The GDR had previously been rather secretive about its military cooperation with developing countries, but Khamtay Siphandone's visit was described in quite some detail. This was indeed one of those rare moments when Khamtay was in the news. Although he was one of the most powerful men in the Lao government, he kept a very low profile. Stuart-Fox (1997: 171) mentions Khamtay Siphandone as one of the more shadowy figures from the army who had led the guerrilla struggle during the war, while Johnson (1992) describes Khamtay as a reclusive person who had almost no contact with non-communists. These are not favorable qualities for a head of government who would have to communicate with Western countries about investments and development assistance. Hence news items like this, even though they may be biased, make a source like ND interesting for additional information about relations between the Second and Third Worlds during the Cold War.



Figure 7. An interesting aspect of a news source like ND is that it featured influential yet low-profile figures from socialist countries, such as Khamtay Siphandone. Pictured here on the front page of ND, July 2, 1983.

During the 1980s, ND apparently did its best to become somewhat more accessible to households, rather than just disseminating political news. Therefore, it occasionally included a fun page for the whole family with riddles, jokes and puzzles. Still, I was surprised to find a recipe for a Lao fried beef curry on one of these pages in ND (April 27, 1985: 16).



Figure 8. The last time Laos was extensively covered on ND's front page for several days in a row was during Kaysone's state visit in September 1988. Kaysone had clearly aged a lot. Erich Honecker received the highest Lao medal of honor from Kaysone.

The Year 1990

Finally, there were seven articles about Laos in the year 1990, the last year ND existed. Based on the criteria described by Mansfield-Richardson (2017: 111), ND's reporting on Laos in the 1990s can be categorized as extremely low volume coverage (see Table 1). Laos did not make the front page that year. Five of the seven articles were about the development of Laos, one article was about drug addiction and another was about a border agreement that Laos had signed with China (ND August 24, 1990: 4). The last article I found in ND about Laos dates from September 14, 1990 and is about *Chintanakan mai* or "New thinking," which, according to author Klaus Behling (1990), was the key to opening the Lao treasure chest. Still, *Chintanakan mai* was not as important as Behling makes it out to be. It was not even a formal policy for reform, but just a temporary slogan promoting economic reform in Laos (Yamada 2018).

Spelling Issues Relating to Lao Names in ND

When analyzing the newspaper articles about Laos, I encountered a large number of names of people and places. In general, Lao personal names were transcribed in ND in an understandable way. Because this paper provides an overview of how ND represented Laos, the way in which the spelling of Lao names was handled is also relevant. The average East German newspaper reader probably would not have bothered about spelling mistakes in Lao names, but for those who are interested in the Lao language, I will briefly discuss some interesting spelling variations and errors that I discovered during this study.

During the Cold War, many articles were written about Laos by ND correspondents stationed in Hanoi, who were likely not familiar with the Lao language. They were, however, quite consistent in their spelling of Lao names. I came across some interesting misspellings during my research, of which Prince Souphanouvong's name is the most common example. His name occurred often in ND reports, but it was also misspelled as Souphannouvong, Souvanouvong, Souvanouphong or as Souvannavong. The name should be written as Souphanouvong though, not to be confused with his opponent's name, Souvanna Phouma. The *ph* in the name Souphanouvong is pronounced as an aspirated *p* in Lao, not as an *f* or *v*. This can easily lead to misunderstanding or confusion among speakers of European languages such as German. Moreover, the fact that Souphanouvong and Souvanna Phouma were both princes and related to each other (they were half-brothers), probably contributed to the spelling errors in their names.

Lao news sources may have had unusual names for ND staff as well and this repeatedly led to spelling errors. ND also regularly made errors in the spelling of Lao geographical names. Unfortunately, there is no universally accepted or acceptable system for transcribing Lao names and words into Roman script. The French phonetic transcriptions, developed in colonial times, are also not always consistent, so there is quite a bit of variation possible in the spelling of Lao names. That variation is indeed reflected in the way ND reported on Laos. The name Xieng Khuang for instance, lends itself to a variety of spellings, including Xieng Kouang, Xieng Khouang, Xieng Khoang, Xieng Khuang, Xien Khoang, Sieng Kuang, Sieng Kwang, and even Xieng Quang, which can all be found in ND. Common names such as Vientiane and Luang Prabang did not pose a problem for ND, but some lesser known ones did. Yet I have the impression that despite the variation of spellings in ND, it usually remained clear what or who was meant by them.

Orientalist Influences in ND's Coverage of Laos

In ND's descriptions of Laos and Lao people I also came across Orientalist traits. Orientalism is a concept established by Edward Said in 1978. He saw it as a method of cultural and practical discrimination against non-European peoples and societies, as a contemptuous portrayal of The East or "The Orient". This includes

generalization, ethnocentrism, racism and sexism (Said 1995). Orientalism contains a subtle Eurocentric prejudice against Asian peoples and their cultures. It also involves a certain created or constructed human image. Hence Orientalism is about the exaggeration of difference (e.g. exoticism), the use of stereotypical analytical models for looking at “the Oriental world” and the presumption of the superiority of the West. For instance, when the East is represented as exotic, primitive or irrational, it defines and reflects how the West sees itself as rational, sophisticated and powerful.

ND’s coverage generally portrayed the Lao population as friendly and gentle, to which the Orientalist clichés of peaceful, relaxed Buddhists were added. However, such stereotypes ignore Laos’ cultural diversity. ND used stereotyping for propaganda purposes, indicating that certain knowledge about Laos disseminated by ND was not generated through actual facts but through imagined constructs. In this context, aspects of Orientalism served the spreading of ND’s socialist propaganda.

An example of Orientalist influences can be found in an ND article (Lorf 1961) about the Geneva Conference of 1961. The article contains interesting elements of Orientalism in the passage about a Laotian princess who had made an appearance in the conference room and the prejudice against her. She was considered quite exotic by the people in the conference room. The journalists at the conference were also amazed at the princess’ good French language skills, which is curious because, after all, Laos had been part of the French colony of Indochina for six decades. Although the country had been independent since 1953, French was still the official second language of the Lao government. The princess is portrayed as mysterious and alluring, which is, however, an exoticized and gendered construction:

The princess, a graceful young lady in a gold brocade skirt and with an extremely likeable and interesting profile, amazed the journalists not only with her excellent and sophisticated French, but also with her absolute confidence in answering the most difficult questions—there were even outright provocations from some Western correspondents. Her dignity and her purposeful manner soon resulted in a verdict that was later passed on unanimously by some correspondents who were known to be rough during the exchange of news: “A charming lady” – eine charmante Dame (Lorf 1961).

Such a description is a gendered Orientalist narrative (Khalid 2011). Probably without realizing it, Lorf puts the princess down as the “Other” (Burney 2012; Miri 2013; Said 1995: 19–24), something one would not expect from an experienced diplomat such as Lorf (Fritzlar 1996: 492). The Lao princess was considered so exotic that a couple of days later, ND published a photo of her and even called her a “sensation in Geneva” (ND May 26, 1961: 7). By describing the Lao princess this way, she was labeled as different due to characteristics that distinguish her from a perceived norm. Her long dark overcoat, her shoes and her handbag, which are all visible in the photo, are of a European style, however, so the only thing that sets her apart from white Europeans is her Asian face. Hence calling her a “sensation” is an action of *othering* Asian people.

Many articles in ND are about the needy Laos that will not be able to save itself without GDR assistance. This reinforces another common Western thought, that developing countries such as Laos cannot take care of themselves and need Western help and guidance. This establishes a narrative wherein Laos appears to be “saved” by the continuous support of countries like the GDR.

In an article from 1961, Artur Mannbar describes his visit to a market in Laos and the products he finds there. To his surprise, he sees goods that “do not fit into the landscape” as far as he is concerned (Mannbar 1961). Between the baskets of fruits and vegetables and “primitive household items”, Mannbar discovers expensive French perfumes, electric shavers and fashionable items from the West. The word *primitive* is a glaring example of Orientalist terminology. Mannbar does not want Laos to be part of global consumer capitalism, but by rejecting the presence of modern Western goods at a local Lao market because he thinks that they “do not fit into the landscape,” he also rejects the sameness these goods bring. Hence Mannbar reinforces the Otherness which is a crucial aspect of Orientalism.

Conclusions

During the Cold War, relations between East Germany and Laos developed steadily. *Neues Deutschland*, or ND, was the party newspaper of the ruling SED, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. ND provides information from an Eastern European perspective about the ideology and expectations behind GDR–Laos relations. Until 1954, most of the articles dealt with the independence struggle in Vietnam, with Laos appearing only occasionally. Throughout the 1950s, ND paid a lot of attention to the achievements of the Lao People’s Liberation Army. During the 1960s, ND’s readers were constantly informed about the achievements of the communist Pathet Lao. We can see an interesting shift in the way Laos was described by ND in the 1970s: while the first half of that decade was dominated by the war in Laos and the role of the US in it, this changed when the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party came to power in 1975. ND reported differently about Laos after the communist takeover, with a noticeable shift from communist ideology to an emphasis on development. East Germany’s “coffee crisis” in 1977 led to ND seeing the concept of development aid in an entirely different context. It is striking how during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, ND’s reporting on the topic of development aid became more positive. Moreover, to some extent, ND used stereotyping for propaganda purposes, indicating that certain knowledge about Laos disseminated by ND was not generated through actual facts but through imagined constructs. In this context, aspects of Orientalism served the spread of ND’s socialist propaganda.

Even though ND has often been regarded as a controversial source, it can nonetheless be useful for learning more about Second World–Third World relations during the Cold War. ND was a political instrument, a propaganda tool of the SED. But at the same time, East German media also published news from primary sources that most Western media did not have access to, such as interviews with Lao

government ministers or Pathet Lao officials. So although ND may at first glance seem like an unreliable propaganda newspaper, its information from influential contacts in other (socialist) countries can be of value and may indeed lead to a fuller picture of Second World–Third World relations during the Cold War.

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Stimmen aus Asien

Zur Geschichte des Druck- und Verlagswesens in Taiwan

Aus dem taiwanischen Mandarin übersetzt von Thilo Diefenbach.

Vorwort

Die hier übersetzten Aufsätze stammen aus dem Buch *Die verlegte Insel. Eine Geschichte des Verlagswesens in Taiwan* (出版島讀。臺灣人文出版的百年江湖), herausgegeben von Chang Li-hsüan (張俐璇), einer jungen Professorin an der Nationalen Universität von Taiwan (國立台灣大學). Der reich illustrierte Band erschien im Januar 2023 beim Kulturverlag der *Aktuellen Zeitung* (時報文化出版社). Ich danke der Herausgeberin, den Autoren und dem Verlag für die Genehmigung, ausgewählte Texte aus dem Buch zu übersetzen, die im Original die folgenden Titel tragen:

1. Ts'ai Yi-ch'eng 蔡易澄: „Eine andere Schrift für die erste Zeitung Taiwans. Die *Taiwanische Kirchenzeitung* 識另一種字, 印第一份報。《台灣府城教會報》“. Kapitel 2 des Buches, S. 33–43.
2. Yang Chia-hsien 楊佳嫻: „Fuß fassen auf der Insel nach dem ungünstigen Ausgang des Bürgerkriegs: Unfreiwilliges Zusammengehen in Zeiten der Angst. Shanghai Verlage nach der Übersiedelung. 國共逆勢下落島生根, 風聲鶴唳中無辜牽連。上海出版社來臺之後“. Kapitel 5 des Buches, S. 77–86.
3. Li Shu-chün 李淑君: „Wie man Verbote umgeht: Zensur vor und nach dem *Formosa-Zwischenfall* 禁忌與逃逸。美麗島事件前後的禁書故事“. Kapitel 10 des Buches, S. 143–152.

1. Die erste Zeitung Taiwans – in einer „neuen“ Schrift

Der Beginn des modernen Druckwesens

Im Jahre 1884 kehrte der presbyterianische Priester Dr. Thomas Barclay (1849–1935) aus seinem Urlaub, den er in Großbritannien verbracht hatte, nach Taiwan zurück. In einer leeren Wohnung nördlich des Hsin-lou-Krankenhauses (新樓醫院) in Tainan begann er bald darauf, den Inhalt von elf Kisten auszupacken und zu ordnen, die zuvor hinter der Kirche in Têng-á-kah (亭仔腳禮拜堂) gelagert worden waren.¹ Der Absender dieser Kisten war der presbyterianische Arzt James Maxwell (1836–1921), der sie aus Großbritannien mit dem Ziel nach Taiwan geschickt hatte, das Druckereiwesen Formosas zu fördern.

Schon vier Jahre zuvor hatte Maxwell angeregt, vor Ort in Taiwan Bücher und Zeitschriften für die Missionierung zu drucken, um nicht mehr von der christlichen Druckerei in Hsiamen (廈門) abhängig zu sein, deren Produkte erst über den Seeweg herbeitransportiert werden mussten. Erst dann, so argumentierte er, würde sich die Mission in Taiwan richtig entfalten können. Allerdings verfügte die Kirche damals auf der Insel über zu wenig Personal, sodass der ursprüngliche Plan, einen Mitarbeiter aufs Festland zu schicken, um ihn dort das Druckhandwerk erlernen zu lassen, aufgegeben wurde. Das Projekt „eigene Druckerei“ war damit vorerst zurückgestellt, und die von Maxwell versandten Einzelteile wurden eingelagert.

Die Druckerpresse war bereits im Mai 1881 eingetroffen. Mr. Barclay missfiel jedoch, dass niemand diese Maschine benutzen konnte, und so entschloss er sich, seinen Urlaub zu nutzen, um das Druckhandwerk zu erlernen. In seiner Heimat Glasgow suchte er den Druckereibetrieb Arid & Coghill auf, der auf kleinformatige Broschüren und exquisit illustrierte Kataloge spezialisiert war. Nachdem die Besitzer von den missionarischen Absichten Barclays erfahren hatten, stellten sie ihm einen technischen Experten zur Seite, der ihm alles über Schriftsetzen und Drucken beibrachte.

Beim traditionellen Drucken mit beweglichen Lettern wählt der Schriftsetzer zunächst die für die Reproduktion der handschriftlichen Vorlage erforderlichen Blei-lettern aus und ordnet sie in den Setzkasten ein. Da die Vorlage spiegelverkehrt eingesetzt wird, muss der Drucker sorgfältig darauf achten, das „p“ nicht mit dem „q“ und das „b“ nicht mit dem „d“ zu verwechseln, wenn er die Zeilen von rechts nach links setzt. Jede Seite wird zunächst zur Probe gedruckt, damit eventuelle Fehler

1 Dabei handelt es sich um die Vorgängerin der heute noch existenten presbyterianischen Maxwell-Gedächtniskirche (太平境馬雅各紀念教會) in Tainan. – Alle Fußnoten stammen vom Übersetzer.

noch ausgebessert werden können. Anschließend wird die Vorlage zu einem Bleiklischee umgegossen, das für den endgültigen Druck benutzt wird.

Die Druckerpresse, die Mr. Maxwell nach Taiwan geschickt hatte, war eine aus Eisen gegossene *Albion Press*. Dieses Modell nutzte Hebelgesetze und Achswellen, um den Druckprozess zu vereinfachen: Man musste nur eine Kippstange umlegen, und schon wurde das Blatt Papier mit großer Kraft auf das mit Tinte bestrichenen Klischee gepresst.

Da die *Albion Press* nur ein geringes Gewicht hatte und darüber hinaus einfach auseinanderzubauen und zusammenzusetzen war, kannte man sie in der ganzen Welt. In vielen vom britischen Reich beherrschten Gebieten war sie die erste Druckerpresse überhaupt. Rein äußerlich ist sie ganz vom Stil der viktorianischen Zeit geprägt – das Kopfstück ist aufwändig mit hübschen Blättern verziert, und das Vorderende des Gestells, auf dem die Maschine ruhte, schmückte ein Löwenkopf. In der Mitte befand sich das von Löwen und Einhörnern umgebene Staatssiegel Britanniens – ein Symbol für die Macht dieses Landes im 19. Jahrhundert.

Am 24. Mai 1884 konnte die Druckerpresse, die jahrelang in Kisten verschlossen gewesen war, endlich in Betrieb genommen werden. Mr. Barclay betätigte den Hebel, so dass ein Blatt Papier auf den Bleisatz gepresst wurde, und zog das fertige Endprodukt vorsichtig heraus. Darauf war in englischer Sprache zu lesen: „Möge sich die Königin noch lange einer guten Gesundheit erfreuen!“ An diesem Tag feierte Victoria nämlich ihren 65. Geburtstag.

Dieser Glückwunsch war die erste Seite, die jemals in Taiwan mithilfe einer modernen Druckerpresse entstand.

Missionieren in der Landessprache

Drehen wir die Zeit noch ein wenig weiter zurück.

Das 19. Jahrhundert gilt als eine wichtige Phase der christlichen Missionierung in Übersee. Aufgrund der Entdeckung der Dampfmaschine konnten die Missionare nun auch sehr weit entfernte Gegenden viel schneller erreichen und den dortigen Völkern das Evangelium verkünden. Der uralte, geheimnisvolle Ferne Osten, dessen Bewohner immer noch gefährlichen Irrlehren anhängen, zog die Aufmerksamkeit der Prediger ganz besonders auf sich. Die Abschottungspolitik und das Missionierungsverbot der Ch'ing-Dynastie sorgten dafür, dass die Mission ihre Aufmerksamkeit zunächst dem Südpazifik zuwandte. Erst nach dem Ende des Opiumkriegs, als der kaiserliche Hof den Vertrag von Nanking unterschrieben und damit fünf Häfen für den internationalen Handel geöffnet hatte, durften die Missionare offiziell in die chinesischen Kernlande einreisen.

England hatte den Krieg begonnen, aber die englischen Missionare waren der Ansicht, dass ihr Land der Welt nicht nur Krieg und Opium zu geben habe, sondern die notleidenden Untertanen der Ch'ing-Dynastie mithilfe des Evangeliums retten solle. So gründeten sie vor Ort in Windeseile Gemeinden, in denen sich bald zahlreiche Missionare engagierten. Der Weg der Prediger war jedoch steinig – oft hatten sie unter den Anfeindungen der örtlichen Bevölkerung zu leiden, was sowohl an der langen missionsfeindlichen Tradition des Reiches lag als auch daran, dass die erzwungene Annahme der Ungleichen Verträge durch die chinesische Regierung als Schande empfunden wurde. Und wenn die Missionare dann versuchten, dem Volk die Glaubensgrundsätze ihrer Religion zu erklären, mussten sie feststellen, dass die allermeisten von ihnen illiterat waren und die Bibel überhaupt nicht lesen konnten.

Das von den protestantischen Missionaren vertretene Prinzip *sola fide* (因信稱義) beruht darauf, dass jeder Gläubige die Bibel selbständig lesen und somit die Erlösung erlangen kann, ohne dafür auf päpstliche Auslegung angewiesen zu sein. Aus diesem Grund übersetzten die Missionare jedes Mal, nachdem sie ein neues Gebiet erreicht hatten, die Bibel in die dortige Sprache, denn nur auf diese Weise würde der neue Glaube vor Ort Wurzeln schlagen können. Als die ersten Missionare nach China gelangten, übersetzten sie die Bibel folgerichtig ins Chinesische, und zwar im Stil der klassischen Schriftsprache (文言文). Bald merkten sie allerdings, dass damit nicht viel gewonnen war, denn erstens konnten die meisten Chinesen die Schriftzeichen gar nicht lesen, und zweitens war der klassische Stil sehr schwierig zu verstehen und weit entfernt von der alltäglichen Umgangssprache – wie sollte man so die Herzen der Menschen gewinnen? Dazu kam noch, dass es Worte gab, die zwar in Alltagsgesprächen häufig gebraucht wurden, für die es aber kein Schriftzeichen gab; es war so gut wie unmöglich, so zu schreiben, wie man sprach. Und so suchten die Missionare nach neuen Übersetzungsmethoden.

Die Lösung ihres Problems bestand darin, dass sie die jeweils ortsübliche Sprache mithilfe lateinischer Buchstaben transkribierten. In Europa wurde dieses System ja schon lange angewandt. Auf diese Weise wären nicht nur die Missionare imstande, die Ortssprache schnell zu erlernen, sondern auch die örtliche Bevölkerung könnte schnell lesen und schreiben lernen; beide Seiten könnten also gleichermaßen profitieren.

Als die Missionare in der gerade für den Handel geöffneten Hafenstadt Hsiamen ankamen, wurde ihnen bewusst, dass sie für die komplizierte Sprache Süd-Fukiens (Min-nan 閩南話)² ein ganz eigenes Umschriftsystem entwickeln mussten. Verschiedene Kirchen taten sich zusammen, um gemeinsam ein Wörterbuch und ein

2 Die in Taiwan gesprochene Variante des Süd-Fukienesischen bezeichne ich als „Taiwanesisch“.

Lehrbuch des Min-nan sowie religiöse Schriften in dieser Sprache zu verfassen. Anschließend brachten sie einigen Stadtbewohnern die lateinischen Buchstaben bei und lehrten sie, die Bibel zu lesen. Nach dem Vertrag von Nanking waren mittlerweile zwei Häfen in Taiwan geöffnet, nämlich Tamsui (淡水) im Norden und An-p'ing (安平) im Süden, und so begaben sich einige Missionare auch dorthin. Vor allem die presbyterianische Kirche Großbritanniens, die in Hsiamen bereits sehr aktiv war, wandte sich „Formosa“ zu.

Hsiamen und Taiwan waren zwar durch eine Meeresstraße voneinander getrennt, aber gleichermaßen wichtig für den regionalen Handel; daher zogen beide viele Zuwanderer aus der Umgebung an. Das führte zu der besonderen Situation, dass an beiden Orten die Dialekte der Städte Changchou (漳州) und Ch'üanchou (泉州) gleichermaßen gesprochen wurden. Aus diesem Grund lernten die meisten Missionare, die nach Taiwan geschickt werden sollten, erst einmal in Hsiamen die dortige Sprache und setzten anschließend auf die Insel über. In der Frühphase der Missionierung auf Taiwan, als dort noch keine entsprechenden Strukturen etabliert waren, wurden Aufgaben wie die Vermittlung theologischen Wissens und selbst die Durchführung von Taufzeremonien von der Gemeindeverwaltung in Hsiamen erledigt. Die wichtigste Aufgabe der taiwanischen Mission bestand also darin, eine eigenständige Gemeinde aufzubauen.

Bemerkenswert ist, dass es den Missionaren in Taiwan innerhalb von nur etwa zehn Jahren gelang, über tausend Gläubige um sich zu scharen – die Gemeinde wuchs also viel schneller als jene in Hsiamen. Das lag vor allem daran, dass Maxwell hauptsächlich den Siraya (西拉雅) predigte (einem indigenen Volksstamm, der schon damals weitgehend sinisiert war). Diese traten meist kollektiv, also als ganze Familie, dem neuen Glauben bei. Bei dieser Gelegenheit bemerkten die Missionare auch, dass die Siraya immer noch eine aus lateinischen Buchstaben bestehende Verschriftung ihrer Sprache benutzten, die vor über zwei Jahrhunderten von niederländischen Kolonisten entwickelt worden war, um ihnen die Verständigung und die Missionierung zu erleichtern. Was den zweiten Punkt angeht, waren die Holländer nicht besonders erfolgreich gewesen, nur das Schriftsystem hatte sich noch erhalten. Dies bewies den Presbyterianern, dass es durchaus sinnvoll war, lateinische Buchstaben zu benutzen; gleichzeitig drängte sich ihnen aber auch die Frage auf, wie man verhindern könne, dass das Bewusstsein für die Lehren des Evangeliums wieder verlorengehe. Mr. Barclay war der Ansicht, dass die christliche Religion wieder verschwunden war, weil die Niederländer es nicht vermocht hatten, die Bibel dauerhaft in Taiwan zu hinterlassen, weshalb die Gläubigen ihre Orientierung verloren hätten. Den jahrelangen Nachforschungen William Campbells (1841–1921) zufolge hatten die Holländer die Bibel zwar durchaus übersetzt, gedruckt wurde sie jedoch in den Niederlanden –

und noch bevor sie losgeschickt werden konnte, hatte die Mission zusammen mit der Kolonialregierung Taiwan schon wieder verlassen müssen.

Die Lehre aus all dem musste lauten: Die Mission in Taiwan kann sich nur dann erfolgreich entwickeln, wenn man vor Ort einen Druckbetrieb einrichtet.

Gerade in der taiwanischen Gemeinde, die bei schnellem Wachstum nur wenige ausgebildete Priester zählte, konnten nicht alle Gläubigen in ausreichendem Maße unterrichtet werden, sodass die Gefahr bestand, dass manche wieder von ihrer neuen Religion abfallen könnten. Mit der von Maxwell übersandten Druckerpresse konnte man nun alle für den Unterricht erforderlichen Materialien drucken und einige der neugewonnenen Gläubigen zu Missionaren ausbilden. Außerdem druckte man auch kleine Bändchen mit Erläuterungen der christlichen Doktrinen, um den Gläubigen das Selbststudium zu ermöglichen. Und man hatte natürlich endlich die Möglichkeit, eine übersetzte Bibel herzustellen – geplant war eine direkt aus der Originalsprache übersetzte Fassung, die die Version im klassischen Chinesisch ersetzen sollte, welche aus einer dritten Sprache übertragen worden war. Geplant war, die Übersetzung zu gleichen Teilen auf verschiedene Missionare innerhalb Taiwans zu verteilen. Wer seinen Teil fertiggestellt hatte, sollte diesen in Druck geben; Abzüge davon sollten dann zur Durchsicht und Korrektur an alle anderen beteiligten Übersetzer gehen.³ Die problemlose Verfügbarkeit der Drucktechnik ermöglichte es, die bisher gültigen räumlichen und zeitlichen Begrenzungen zu überwinden, und um die einzelnen Missionsstationen noch besser und schneller miteinander kommunizieren zu lassen, wurde die Gründung der ersten Zeitung in Taiwan vorangetrieben.

Die erste Zeitung Taiwans

Vor der Einführung des Drucks mit beweglichen Lettern war in Taiwan der Blockdruck üblich. Hierbei wurde der Text Zeichen für Zeichen in eine Holzplatte geritzt, die dann als Druckform diente. In Tainan beispielsweise gab es die Druckerei Siông-hûn-hian (松雲軒), die auf buddhistische Sutren und Erbauungsliteratur spezialisiert war. Da jedoch der Herstellungsprozess überaus kompliziert und langwierig war, druckte man in der Regel immer nur solche Schriften, die als ‚klassisch‘ betrachtet wurden. Der Druck mit beweglichen Lettern war dagegen so viel billiger als das herkömmliche Verfahren, dass man nun auch Zeitungen drucken konnte, um Nachrichten und Neuigkeiten schnell zu verbreiten.

Im Juli 1885 – bzw. im sechsten Monat des 11. Jahres der Regierungsdevise Kuang-hsü (光緒) – wurde die erste Ausgabe der monatlich erscheinenden *Taiwanischen*

3 Dieses Vorhaben konnte nicht umgesetzt werden. Stattdessen übersetzte Barclay das *Neue Testament* alleine und druckte seine Fassung 1916.

Kirchenzeitung (*Tâi-oân hú-siâⁿ Kàu-hōe-pò*) veröffentlicht.⁴ Ursprünglich diente sie nur dazu, den einzelnen Gemeinden innerhalb Taiwans einen Austausch über die neuesten Entwicklungen in ihren Sprengeln zu ermöglichen. Die Zeitung war recht prägnant gestaltet, die Zeilen mit den lateinischen Buchstaben verliefen über die ganze Seite von links nach rechts, ganz so wie in einem Buch. Sie bestand aber lediglich aus vier Seiten. In der ersten Ausgabe der Zeitung fand man nicht nur Neuigkeiten über die christlichen Gemeinden Taiwans, sondern auch zwei Artikel, die die Vorteile der Einrichtung von weiterführenden Schulen und des Erlernens von latinisiertem Taiwanesisch (*Pêh-ōe-jī* / 白話字) erläutern. Die Verfasser ermunterten alle Gläubigen dazu, gemeinsam diese Schrift zu erlernen, um die von der Kirche herausgegebenen Zeitungen und Bücher lesen zu können – und um sich modernes Wissen anzueignen, etwa geographische oder astronomische Kenntnisse.

Überhaupt propagierte die *Taiwanische Kirchenzeitung* in ihrer Frühphase unablässig das latinisierte Taiwanesisch, dessen Vorteile auf der Hand lagen: ein paar Buchstaben und Tonzeichen zu beherrschen reichte aus, um alles aufschreiben zu können, was man wollte. Dies stand in deutlichem Kontrast zu den chinesischen Schriftzeichen, deren enorme Anzahl einen langwierigen Lernprozess erforderte. Darüber hinaus sind die chinesischen Schriftzeichen oft vieldeutig – doch gleichzeitig gib es für manche Worte der Alltagssprache gar kein passendes Schriftzeichen. Außerdem hatten damals die Bemühungen um ein an der Umgangssprache orientiertes Schriftchinesisch noch gar nicht begonnen; wer also mit Schriftzeichen schreiben wollte, musste den schwer verständlichen klassischen Stil verwenden. Wer dagegen das latinisierte Taiwanesisch lernen wollte, musste dafür keine großen Summen für eine traditionelle Schule oder einen Privatlehrer aufwenden, schneller ging es außerdem, und vor allem stand es allen offen: armen Leuten ebenso wie Bauern, Arbeitern und Frauen. Fast könnte man sagen: Diese Schrift passte ganz hervorragend zum Konzept der proletarischen Massenkultur.

Während der Ch'ing-Dynastie publizierte die *Taiwanische Kirchenzeitung* nicht nur Neuigkeiten aus den Gemeinden und Erläuterungen der Doktrinen, sondern auch wichtige politische Nachrichten. Dazu zählten Berichte über die Regentschaft während der Regierungsperiode Kuang-hsü, die Hochstufung Taiwans zu einer Provinz (1887), den Krieg zwischen dem Ch'ing-Reich und Japan (1894/95) sowie über den Vertrag von Shimonoseki. Die Leser waren somit immer auf dem neuesten Stand über die Umwälzungen, die die taiwanische Gesellschaft durchlief. Manchmal druckte die *Kirchenzeitung* auch illustrierte Beiträge, etwa zur Herstellung von Papier oder zur Verarbeitung von Zuckerrohr. Dadurch wurden die Beschreibungen

4 Die wörtliche Übersetzung des Titels lautet *Kirchzeitung der Hauptstadt der Präfektur Taiwan* (auf Mandarin: 台灣府城教會報), womit Tainan gemeint war.

natürlich noch anschaulicher, und man konnte einen ersten Eindruck von dem jeweiligen Gewerbe gewinnen, ohne jemals einen solchen Betrieb betreten haben zu müssen.

Interessant ist auch, dass die Zeitung manchmal Bilder von Tieren druckte, die man in Taiwan noch nie gesehen hatte – Zebras (hoe-pan-bé), Seehunde (hái-káu), Strauße (tê-tsiáu) usw. Die Idee dahinter war, dass die taiwanischen Gläubigen eine Vorstellung von diesen Tieren haben sollten, falls sie in der Bibel oder in den Schriften westlicher Christen davon lesen sollten, denn erst dann könnten sie den Sinn dieser Texte wirklich verstehen. Manche der Bilder wurden ausführlich erklärt – dem Löwen (sai) etwa, im Westen als König der Tiere bekannt und in Großbritannien Teil des Staatswappens, widmete die Zeitung ganze drei Seiten. Natürlich hat der Löwe auch in der chinesischen Kultur eine bestimmte Symbolik, zum Beispiel in Form der „Wächter“ vor Tempeln. Deren Erscheinungsbild unterscheidet sich jedoch sehr stark von den „Originalen“. In einer Zeit ohne Zoos und – für die allermeisten Taiwaner – ohne jede Möglichkeit, die Insel auch nur einmal im Leben zu verlassen, dürften die Leser überrascht gewesen sein, durch die Zeitung zu erfahren, wie groß der Unterschied zwischen ihrer Vorstellung und der Wirklichkeit war.

Zusammenfassend kann man sagen, dass die *Taiwanische Kirchenzeitung* sehr stark religiös geprägt war; über die Hälfte der Beiträge setzte sich mit der christlichen Lehre auseinander. Sie unterschied sich aber deutlich von *Alle Länder dieser Erde* (萬國公報; 1868-1907), einer anderen, ebenfalls von Missionaren gegründeten Zeitung der späten Ch'ing-Zeit, denn die *Taiwanische Kirchenzeitung* richtete sich nicht ausschließlich an Intellektuelle, veröffentlichte viele aktuelle politische Beiträge und war komplett in lateinischen Buchstaben gehalten. Hier in Taiwan, am Rande des großen Reiches, wollten die Missionare vor allem das Leben der unteren Schichten verbessern, zum Beispiel indem sie Kranke heilten, Frauen vom Einbinden der Füße abrieten, Blindenschulen eröffneten und den Menschen bei der Suche nach Seelenfrieden und Freiheit halfen.

Die *Taiwanische Kirchenzeitung* änderte später mehrfach ihren Namen, heute heißt sie *Allgemeine taiwanische Kirchenzeitung* (台灣教會公報). Mit einer Geschichte von über hundert Jahren ist sie die langlebigste Zeitung Taiwans. Während des Pazifischen Krieges musste sie ihr Erscheinen zeitweise einstellen. Nach dem Krieg setzte die Kuomintang (國民黨) rigoros die „Landessprache 國語“ Chinesisch (Mandarin) als einzige im öffentlichen Raum zugelassene Sprache durch. Als die Regierung dann auch noch den Gebrauch des latinisierten Taiwanesisch untersagte, konnte die *Kirchenzeitung* (im Jahr 1969) einige Monate lange nicht erscheinen. Danach musste sie, um den Betrieb wieder aufnehmen zu können, ausschließlich auf Mandarin erscheinen.

Weil das latinisierte Taiwanesisch so leicht zu lernen und zu lesen ist, versuchten einige Intellektuelle es für eine größere Eigenständigkeit Taiwans einzusetzen. In den 1920er Jahren etwa trat Ts'ai P'ei-huo (蔡培火; 1889-1983), ein Mitglied der Taiwanischen Kulturvereinigung (台灣文化協會), für das latinisierte Taiwanesisch als alleiniges Schriftsystem ein. Die *Kirchenzeitung*, die ab Ende 1969 auf Mandarin erschien, publizierte später noch drei wichtige Artikel: „Eine Verlautbarung zu den derzeit wichtigen nationalen Fragen“ (國是聲明) (1971), „Unser Appell“ (我們的呼籲) (1975) und „Die Erklärung der Menschenrechte“ (人權宣言) (1977). Außerdem setzte sie sich später (ab ca. 1990) wieder für den Gebrauch des latinisierten Taiwanesisch ein und spielte eine wichtige Rolle bei der Demokratisierung Taiwans. Sie ermöglichte es den Taiwanern erstmals, ihre eigene Stimme zu erheben.

2. Shanghaier Verlage nach dem Kriegsende in Taiwan

Im Jahr 2014 ließ eine Nachricht aus der Verlagswelt viele Buchliebhaber seufzen: Der „Taiwanische Handelsverlag“ (台灣商務印書館), der seit über 60 Jahren an der Kreuzung der Südlichen Ch’ung-ch’ing-Straße (重慶南路) (auch als „Büchermeile“ bekannt) und der Han-k’ou-Straße (漢口街) residierte, musste aus dem vierstöckigen Yün-wu-Haus (雲五大樓) ausziehen, weil an dessen Stelle ein Hotel errichtet werden sollte. Der Name des Hochhauses ging auf den ehemaligen Vorstandsvorsitzenden des Handelsverlags, Wang Yün-wu (王雲五), zurück. Ursprünglich war es lediglich eine dreistöckige Holzkonstruktion gewesen, an deren Stelle 1968 ein vierstöckiger Stahlbau getreten war. Obwohl das Gebäude nicht besonders hoch war, wurde es doch zu einem Symbol der „Büchermeile“ von Taipeh und zu einem Anblick, der Generationen von Lesern überaus vertraut war.

Neben dem taiwanischen gab es auch noch den Peking- und den Hongkonger Handelsverlag. Ihr gemeinsamer Vorläufer war der 1897 in Shanghai gegründete Handelsverlag, im englischen Sprachraum bekannt als „The Commercial Press“. Der Bürgerkrieg zwischen den Kommunisten und der Kuomintang führte dazu, dass heute in China, Hongkong und Taiwan jeweils eigenständige Nachfolger dieses Verlags existieren, die ganz unabhängig voneinander wirtschaften. Im Jahre 1947 begab sich Yeh Yu-mei (葉有棣), der Vizeleiter der Niederlassung des Verlags in Fuchou, nach Taiwan, um dort ein Versandlager einzurichten, und noch im selben Jahr wurde Chao Shu-ch’eng (趙叔誠) zum Leiter der noch zu gründenden Zweigstelle in Taiwan ernannt und ein Standort für diese Filiale ausgewählt. Am 15. Januar 1948 nahm der Handelsverlag in Taiwan offiziell seine Arbeit auf. 1950, ein Jahr nachdem die Regierung der Republik China ihren Sitz nach Taiwan verlagert hatte, wurde die dortige Zweigstelle des Handelsverlags offiziell zu dessen Hauptsitz ernannt. Von nun arbeitete sie eigenständig.

Die Veränderungen, die mit dem Abbruch der Kontakte zwischen Taiwan und dem Festland einhergingen, wirkte sich überaus nachteilig auf die zuvor florierende Verlagslandschaft Shanghais aus. Von den Wellen der aktuellen Entwicklungen mitgerissen, musste sich nicht nur der Handelsverlag völlig umstellen und neu etablieren.

Die wichtigsten Shanghaier Verlage ziehen nach Taiwan um

In der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts verfügte Shanghai über das aktivste und schillerndste Kulturleben ganz Chinas – und auch über die größte Verlagslandschaft. Ursächlich dafür war in erster Linie seine günstige Lage zwischen der Meeresküste und dem dicht besiedelten Gebiet entlang des Yangtze; außerdem brachten die für

den Welthandel geöffneten Häfen sowie die verschiedenen internationalen Pachtgebiete gewisse Freiheiten und Anregungen von außerhalb mit sich. So konnten hier einige der wichtigsten Verlage der chinesischen Frühmoderne entstehen. Vor allem nach der Abschaffung der kaiserlichen Beamtenprüfungen im Jahre 1905 suchten viele Literati (文人) in der neuen, aufstrebenden Branche nach Möglichkeiten, sich ihren Lebensunterhalt zu verdienen. Alle Verlage waren eng verknüpft mit literarischen Zirkeln und dem Bildungssektor sowie Zeitungen, Radiostationen und anderen Medien. Deshalb spielten sie auch eine überaus wichtige Rolle bei der Reform des Bildungswesens, beim Fremdsprachenerwerb, bei der Verbreitung der schriftlichen Umgangssprache, bei der Entwicklung der modernen Literatur, bei der Schaffung einer nationalen Gemeinschaft, bei der Durchsetzung moderner Technik usw. Der älteste und einflussreichste unter den Shanghaier Verlagen war der Handelsverlag; zu seiner Blütezeit gingen 48 Prozent aller Publikationen in China auf sein Konto.

Später gegründet, aber immer noch sehr einflussreich waren das „Chinesische Verlagshaus“ (中華書局), der „Weltverlag“ (世界書局) und der Verlag „Die Aufklärung“ (開明書局). Alle drei standen in enger Beziehung zum Handelsverlag; zusammen nannte man sie „die Großen Vier der Republikzeit“. Der frühere Chef der Verlagsabteilung im Handelsverlag, Lu Fei-k'uei (陸費逵), gründete 1912 zusammen mit einigen Mitarbeitern das Chinesische Verlagshaus, und der frühere Vizechef dieses Betriebs, Shen Chih-fang (沈知方), rief wiederum 1917 den Weltverlag ins Leben. Und 1926 dann verließ Chang Hsi-ch'en (張錫琛), der Chefredakteur der „Zeitschrift für Frauen“ (婦女雜誌), die vom Handelsverlag herausgegeben wurde, seinen Posten und gründete „Die Aufklärung“.

Nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges verlor Japan seine Kolonien, Taiwan wurde Teil der „Republik China“, und alle großen Shanghaier Verlage ließen sich nach und nach auf der Insel nieder, um ihren Geschäftsbereich zu erweitern. Durch die „glorreiche Rückholung“ (光復) wurde die bisherige offizielle „Landessprache“ (國語) Taiwans, nämlich Japanisch, durch das Mandarin ersetzt. Dadurch entstand eine große Nachfrage nach entsprechenden Lehrbüchern, und die neuen in Taiwan ansässigen Verlage hatten natürlich ihre Beziehungen zum Unterrichtswesen. Das Chinesische Verlagshaus eröffnete 1945 eine erste Vertriebsniederlassung in Taiwan und siedelte 1949 ganz dorthin über, im gleichen Jahr wie der Weltverlag; die Aufklärung hatte 1946 dort eine erste Zweigstelle gegründet. Dazu kamen noch: der 1932 etablierte Shanghaier „Ch'un-ming-Verlag“ (上海春明書局) und der 1936 von Shen Chih-ming (沈志明), dem Sohn von Shen Chih-fang (沈知方), aus dem Weltverlag gegründete „Shanghaier Abendstern-Verlag“ (上海啟明書局). Auch der

aus Nanking stammende „Cheng-chung-Verlag“ (正中書局), eine Gründung des KMT-Altvorderen Ch'en Li-fu (陳立夫), kam 1949 zusammen mit der Nationalregierung nach Taiwan. Alle ursprünglich in Shanghai ansässigen Verlage konnten sich später anhand der vom Parlament erlassenen „Verfahrensweisen zur Umwidmung der Filialen von Industrie- und Handelsbetrieben, die ihren Hauptsitz in den jetzt vom Feind besetzten Gebieten hatten, zum Hauptsitz dieser Betriebe“ zu eigenständigen Firmen erklären lassen.

Allerdings fanden viele der Bücher, die die Shanghaier Verlage noch vor dem Umzug der Nationalregierung nach Taiwan verschickten, nicht ihren Weg zu den taiwanischen Lesern – verantwortlich dafür waren die galoppierende Inflation, die ungünstigen Wechselkurse und die noch fehlenden Richtlinien für den Buchhandel. Der Wechselkurs zwischen der festländischen und der taiwanischen Währung war völlig unrealistisch festgesetzt worden und sehr nachteilig für die Taiwaner. Die Buchpreise konnten außerdem nach Belieben erhöht werden, wodurch die festländischen Bücher auf Taiwan meist extrem überteuert waren. Ab 1946 stiegen überdies auch noch die Preise insgesamt rasant an, der Reis wurde knapp, die Arbeitslosigkeit nahm stark zu, die ganze gesellschaftliche Situation veränderte sich deutlich zum Schlechteren. All dies beeinträchtigte den Absatz festländischer Bücher in Taiwan enorm.

Neuauflagen alter Bücher als Lückenfüller

Wang Jung-wen (王榮文), der Gründer des „Yüan-liu-Verlags“ (遠流出版社), hat einmal festgestellt: „Der taiwanische Buchmarkt wurde in den 1950er Jahren hauptsächlich von den ehemals auf dem Festland ansässigen Großverlagen versorgt, und zwar mit solchen Werken, die bereits vor 1945 in China erschienen waren.“ Die Möglichkeiten für Werbung seien sehr begrenzt gewesen, „wer eine Buchankündigung in der Zeitung *Das Zentrum* 中央日報 platzieren konnte (etwa der Handelsverlag, Cheng-chung, das Chinesische Verlagshaus), zählte zu den aktivsten Verlegern.“ Und P'eng Ch'eng-huang (彭誠晃), der Leiter des „Wasserbüffel-Verlags“ (水牛出版社), erinnert sich: „1966, als wir anfangen, gab es noch so gut wie gar keine Verlage, die erst nach dem Krieg gegründet worden waren; bei den meisten handelte es sich um die altbekannten Häuser vom Festland.“

All diese Verlage, die aus Shanghai und den umliegenden Gebieten nach Taiwan gekommen waren und sich dort ‚selbständig‘ gemacht hatten, verfolgten zunächst die Strategie, alte Bücher neu herauszubringen. Für die neue Regierung war die Sprache ein wichtiges Machtinstrument, und um die neue Landessprache wirkungsvoller durchsetzen zu können, untersagte sie am 25. Oktober 1946 den Gebrauch des Japanischen in Zeitungen und Zeitschriften sowie in Grund- und Mittelschulen. Am

25. Juni 1947 dekretierte die Provinzregierung außerdem, dass keine japanischsprachigen Bücher mehr verlegt werden durften, die Japan priesen oder China schmähten. Welche Formulierungen allerdings den Tatbestand des „Preisens“ und des „Schmähens“ erfüllen sollten, blieb weitgehend im Unklaren – die Regierung war überzeugt, dass sie im Notfall noch rechtzeitig würde eingreifen können. Es war ganz natürlich, dass sie es den Taiwanern verbieten wollte, im öffentlichen Raum Japanisch zu lesen oder zu sprechen. Gebürtige taiwanische Autoren, die es gewohnt waren, auf Japanisch zu schreiben, fanden nun faktisch keine Publikationsmöglichkeiten mehr, während sich die auswärtigen Schriftsteller noch in einer Entwicklungs- und Experimentalphase befanden. Unter diesen Umständen konnte sich keine neue Autorengeneration bilden. Die vom Festland stammenden Verlage konnten aber die Gelegenheit nutzen, die sich mit der nationalen Umorientierung in Taiwan bot, und legten alte Bücher aus ihrem Sortiment neu auf, die aus Sicht der Regierung unkritisch waren; in anderen Fällen brachten sie Werke erst nach einer eingehenden Überarbeitung heraus – eine ebenso rationelle wie sichere Methode, die überdies nicht nur zu einer gewissen Belebung des Buchmarktes führte, sondern auch noch eine Atmosphäre schuf, die man als ‚kulturelle Renaissance des Freien China‘ empfinden konnte.

Alle Bücher, die beispielsweise der Handelsverlag während der Frühphase seiner Geschäftstätigkeit in Taiwan verkaufte, waren aus Shanghai herbeigebracht worden. Im Mai 1949 stoppte die Zentrale jedoch alle Auslieferungen nach Taiwan. Als die dortige Filiale in Eigenregie zu arbeiten begann, waren ihre Bücherlager bei weitem nicht in ausreichendem Maße gefüllt, und so entschloss man sich, die Produktion auf die ganz aktuellen Bedürfnisse abzustellen, etwa mit der „Neuen Buchreihe für Grundschulen (新小學文庫)“, der „Neuen Buchreihe für Mittelschulen (新中學文庫)“, Wörterbüchern und landeskundlichen Werken. Andere der zuvor erwähnten Verlage, etwa Ch'un-ming und Abendstern, druckten einfach Bücher nach, die sie bereits in Shanghai herausgegeben hatten. Und dann gab es da noch die übersetzten Werke, die vor 1949 in China erschienen waren – aber sofern die betreffenden Übersetzer nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg nicht nach Taiwan übergesiedelt waren, war es sicherer, einfach einen anderen Namen anzugeben, um ein Eingreifen der Zensur zu verhindern; danach konnte man das Buch unbeschwert drucken und verkaufen. Diese Vorgehensweise wandten nicht nur Verlage an, die festländische Vorläufer beerbt hatten (also wie etwa der Shanghaier Abendstern-Verlag, der zum taiwanischen Abendstern-Verlag wurde) – während der strikten Trennung von Festland und Taiwan zu Zeiten des Kriegsrechts, als es noch keine Urheberrechtsverordnung gab, war das Nachdrucken älterer Werke (auch in veränderter Form) eine typische Besonderheit, um nicht zu sagen Abnormität der taiwanischen Verlagswelt.

Ein obskures Kapitel der Kriegsrechtsphase

Zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts erschienen mehrere Bücher, die sich mit dem Buchwesen während des Kriegsrechts befassten. Ein relativ frühes Beispiel dafür ist Li Chih-mings (李志銘) *Fünzig Jahre Antiquar* (半世紀舊書回味) von 2005; aber erst in jüngerer Zeit wurde das Thema eingehender behandelt – zum Beispiel durch Liao Wei-min (廖為民), der sich schon seit vielen Jahren mit dem Verlags- und Vertriebswesen beschäftigt und gleich mehrere Bücher dazu veröffentlicht hat: *Die Geschichten verbotener Bücher in Taiwan* (台灣禁書的故事), *Bücherverbote nach dem Formosa-Zwischenfall* (美麗島後的禁書),⁵ *Bücherverbote vor der Aufhebung des Kriegsrechts* (解嚴之前的禁書) und *Die Bücherverbote der Kuomintang* (國民黨禁書始末). Daneben gab es auch noch das Buch *Das Detektivbüro für Übersetzungen* (翻譯偵探事務所), in dem Prof. Lai Tz'u-yün (賴慈芸) all jenen übersetzten Büchern nachspürt, die aus politischen Gründen unter falschen Titeln und mit verfälschten Inhalten erscheinen mussten, wobei er auch die wechselhaften Schicksale von Übersetzern in ungewöhnlichen Zeiten darlegt.

Der „Weiße Terror“ beeinträchtigte das Verlagswesen Taiwan ganz erheblich;⁶ auch die aus Shanghai übergesiedelten Verlage bekamen die engen Verhältnisse jener Zeit zu spüren und mussten bei jeder Publikation überaus vorsichtig sein. Zwei Beispiele müssen dafür genannt werden: Der Leiter des Ch'un-ming-Verlags, Ch'en Kuan-ying (陳冠英), geriet völlig schuldlos unter Verdacht und wurde letztlich zum Tode verurteilt; zudem wurde seine gesamte persönliche Habe beschlagnahmt. Und Shen Chih-ming vom Abendstern-Verlag kam, weil er für einen kurzen Moment unachtsam war, wegen eines von ihm verlegten Buches vor Gericht, wurde aber glücklicherweise freigesprochen. Auch diese beiden Verlage waren übrigens auf der Büchermeile, also der Südlichen Ch'ung-ch'ing-Straße, ansässig.

Ch'en Kuan-ying siedelte im August 1948 nach Taiwan über, um die hiesige Filiale seines Verlags voranzubringen. Den Hauptsitz ließ er in der Obhut seiner Mitarbeiter, und dort erschien schon im September 1949 das von Hu Jitao (胡濟濤) und Tao Pingtian (陶萍天) herausgegebene *Wörterbuch neuer Termini* (新名詞辭典), in dem zum einen neue Begriffe erklärt wurden, die erst nach der „Befreiung“ aufgekomen waren, und zum anderen einige bereits früher gebräuchliche Worte mit

5 Zum Formosa-Zwischenfall von 1979 vgl. *ASIEN* (Juli/Oktober 2019) Nr. 152-153, S. 127-141.

6 Zum Weißen Terror vgl. *ASIEN* Nr. 145 (Oktober 2017), S. 78-99.

neuen Erläuterungen versehen waren.⁷ Das Buch enthielt überdies zahlreiche Zeichnungen, Grafiken und Tabellen. Es entsprach exakt den damals aktuellen Bedürfnissen und verkaufte sich daher ganz hervorragend: Bis 1954 erschienen sechs Auflagen, wobei jede Auflage verändert und erweitert wurde, immer im Einklang mit den neuesten politischen Vorgaben und Entwicklungen.

Auf Netzseiten, die auf die Versteigerung antiquarischer Bücher spezialisiert sind, kann man das Impressum verschiedener Ausgaben dieses Wörterbuchs einsehen und so zum Beispiel erfahren, dass die im Juni 1950 erschienene zweite Auflage ganze 14-mal nachgedruckt wurde. Lai Tz'u-yün ist der Ansicht, dass das *Wörterbuch neuer Termini* im Laufe seiner kontinuierlichen redaktionellen Bearbeitung immer mehr zum Sprachrohr der Kommunistischen Partei wurde. In der Ausgabe von 1949 wurde Hu Shih (胡適) noch als „einer der Initiatoren der Bewegung für eine moderne Literatur“ bezeichnet, aber in der Ausgabe von 1950 – also nach dem Umzug der Nationalregierung nach Taiwan – mutierte Hu zu einem „schamlosen, pseudo-liberalistischen Literaten“. 1951 wurde Anzeige gegen Ch'en Kuan-ying erstattet, weil er beabsichtigt habe, das *Wörterbuch neuer Termini* auf den taiwanischen Markt zu bringen – also Propaganda für die Kommunisten zu betreiben. Dabei hatte Ch'en schon vor geraumer Zeit Taiwan verlassen und mit dem Buch überhaupt nichts zu tun. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt befand er sich gerade in Hongkong, aber da er sich keiner Schuld bewusst war, kehrte er schnell nach Taiwan zurück, um sich dort zu erklären – mit dem Ergebnis, dass er sofort verhaftet wurde. Aus den heute einsehbaren Militärgerichtsakten geht hervor, dass man den Vorgang als Verratsfall einstufte. Die Anklage ging sogar so weit, Ch'en zu unterstellen, dass er „beabsichtigte, mit illegalen Methoden einen Sturz der Regierung herbeizuführen, und bereits erste Maßnahmen dafür in die Wege geleitet hatte“. Der Staatsanwalt forderte die Todesstrafe und die Beschlagnahmung des gesamten Besitzes von Ch'en Kuan-ying. Als das Urteil vollstreckt wurde, war Ch'en gerade einmal 35 Jahre alt.

Auch der Abendstern-Verlag brachte nach seinem Umzug zahlreiche Bücher heraus, die er zuvor bereits in Shanghai veröffentlicht hatte. Als sich die gesellschaftliche Atmosphäre aufgrund des Kriegsrechts spürbar verdüsterte, ersetzte der Verlag bei all diesen Büchern die Namen der Übersetzer durch die Angabe „Kompilierungs- und Übersetzungsabteilung des Abendstern-Verlags“ (啟明編譯所).⁸ 1958 publizierte man eine Neuauflage des zuerst 1932 von dem Ehepaar Lu K'an-ju (陸侃如)

7 Die kommunistische Armee marschierte Ende Mai 1949 in Shanghai ein. Dieser Vorgang – wie überhaupt die gewaltsame Machtübernahme der Kommunistischen Partei im ganzen Land – muss in China bis heute als „Befreiung“ bezeichnet werden.

8 Der Grund dafür war, dass viele der Übersetzer entweder ohnehin schon als linksgerichtet bekannt waren oder nach 1949 auf dem Festland geblieben waren, was sie aus Sicht der Kuomintang automatisch zu kommunistischen Sympathisanten machte.

und Feng Yüan-chün (馮沅君) verfassten Buches *Abriss der chinesischen Literaturgeschichte* (中國文學史簡編). Im zwölften Kapitel dieses Buches – Thema: „Literatur und Revolution“ – wurden die Liga Linker Schriftsteller (左翼作家聯盟) und die Bewegung für proletarische Literatur sowie einschlägige Zeitschriften erwähnt, die laut den Verfassern „das ganze Land in seinen Grundfesten erschüttert“ und „an vielen Tabus der Regierung gerührt“ hätten. Mit der „Regierung“ war natürlich die Kuomintang gemeint, die jetzt in Taiwan immer noch die Regierung stellte. Im Buch hieß es weiter, man könne bezüglich der Zukunft der schon damals unterdrückten linken Literatur „überaus optimistisch“ sein, ihr stehe eine „glänzende Zukunft“ bevor. Von den 50er Jahren aus gesehen, erwiesen sich diese Vorhersagen in gewissem Sinne als nicht ganz verfehlt,⁹ allerdings konnte man zwischen den Zeilen sehr deutlich das Mitgefühl für die unterdrückten Literaten herauszulesen. Ende Februar 1959 wurden Shen Chih-ming und seine Frau verhaftet – wegen Verherrlichung kommunistischer Literatur, was den Tatbestand der Anstiftung zur Rebellion erfüllte. Da Shen Chih-ming und seine Frau in Bezug auf die Übersetzer überaus vorsichtig gewesen waren, ist nicht anzunehmen, dass sie mit dem neuen Buch absichtlich unerschwinglich „regierungs“-kritische Botschaften verbreiten wollten – wahrscheinlich sind die inkriminierten Stellen einfach trotz aller Vorsicht ihrer Aufmerksamkeit entgangen. Glücklicherweise ließ Shens Schwiegersohn Huang K'o-sun (黃克孫), damals Professor am Technischen Institut von Massachusetts (MIT), seine zahlreichen Beziehungen spielen, so dass beide zunächst auf Kautions entlassen und im Juni für unschuldig befunden wurden. Allerdings erschien es ihnen danach wohl zu riskant, weiterhin in Taiwan zu bleiben, und so emigrierten sie in die USA.

Epilog

Auch wenn der Weiße Terror zu einigen Zwischenfällen in der taiwanischen Verlagswelt führte, so trauten sich die Verlage doch weiterhin, ältere Bücher aus ‚festländischen Zeiten‘ neu aufzulegen. Auch hier gilt die alte Weisheit: Die Regierung erlässt Regeln – und das Volk macht sich seine eigenen. Und so wurden weiter fleißig die Namen von Übersetzern geändert und übersetzte Texte redigiert oder neu zusammengesetzt... Aber meist waren die Zensoren nicht gelehrt genug, um alles bis ins letzte Detail zu verstehen. Der Dichter Ya Hsien (痲弦) scherzte einmal in einer Rede, die Zensoren der Kriegsrechtsphase seien „nicht besonders helle“ gewesen – nicht einmal die Stoßrichtung zweier Zeilen aus seinem Gedicht „Der Abgrund

9 Auf dem Festland wurde zu diesem Zeitpunkt auf Geheiß der kommunistischen Regierung der „sozialistische Realismus“ im vollen Umfang durchgesetzt, und zwar.

(深淵)“ (1959) hätten sie kapiert: „Arbeiten, spaziergehn, bösen Menschen huldigen, lächeln, unvergessen bleiben. / Sie halten strikt an ihren Losungen fest! “ (工作，散步，向壞人致敬，微笑和不朽。 / 他們是握緊格言的人！)

Die vier großen Shanghaier Verlage aus der Frühzeit der Republik entwickelten sich unter Führung der Kommunistischen Partei und der Kuomintang in sehr unterschiedliche Richtungen. In Taiwan war die politische Stimmung sehr angespannt; die Nationalregierung hatte den Krieg verloren und war geflohen, also wollte sie alles tun, um ihre Herrschaft über Taiwan zu stabilisieren. Im Gegensatz zum „Neuen China“, das erstmal alles zerstören und dann wieder aufbauen wollte, legte die Kuomintang besonderen Wert auf die Tradition und die Fortführung der überlieferten Kultur. Dementsprechend publizierten auch die vier großen aus Shanghai stammenden Verlage hauptsächlich Abhandlungen zur traditionellen Kultur und landeskundliche Bücher. Auf der anderen Seite der Taiwan-Straße wurde der Handelsverlag zunächst dem Verlag Neues China angegliedert, dann musste er auch noch seinen Namen ändern und nach Peking umziehen. Später aber gewann er seine Unabhängigkeit zurück. Das Chinesische Verlagshaus wurde verstaatlicht und nach Peking umgesiedelt; dort spezialisierte es sich auf die Bearbeitung klassischer Texte. Die staatlichen Anteile des Weltverlags wurden beschlagnahmt, 1950 verkündete er seine Auflösung. Der Verlag Die Aufklärung wurde zusammen mit einem anderen Verlag zum „Chinesischen Jugendverlag“ fusioniert und zog ebenfalls nach Peking um.

3. Zensur vor und nach dem *Formosa*-Zwischenfall

Der politische Kampf um die Verlage

Glücklicherweise war ich selber einmal in der Redaktion der Zeitschrift *Ch'ing-hsi* 清溪 tätig gewesen, die vom Verlag des Garnisonskommandos 警備總部 herausgegeben wurde. Mein früherer Vorgesetzter von damals, Lin Shih-hsiung 林世雄, hatte vollstes Vertrauen in meine Loyalität. Einmal erteilte er mir telefonisch den Auftrag, sofort rauszugehen und aus allen Exemplaren der neuesten Ausgabe einer bestimmten Zeitschrift die Besprechung des neuen Buches von Yü Li-hua 於梨華 herauszureißen. Daraufhin lief ich zusammen mit einem jungen Verlagsangestellten zu sämtlichen Zeitungsständen auf der ‚Büchermeile‘, stellte mich dort als Herausgeber von *Rezensionen und Bibliographien* 書評書目 vor und erklärte, in der aktuellen Ausgabe gäbe es ein Problem mit einem bestimmten Artikel, und den müsse ich daher unbedingt herausreißen, sonst könne sie nicht verkauft werden. [...] Ach ja, so waren die 70er in Taiwan!

(Yin Ti (隱地): Jahre des drastischen Wandels (翻轉的年代), 1993)

Der hier erwähnte ‚problematische Artikel‘, der im Februar 1977 in *Rezensionen und Bibliographien* erschienen war, stammte aus Hongkong: „Zum neuen Buch von Yü Li-hua (於梨華的新書)“ von Ch'ing Huai (清淮). In den 1960er Jahren hatte Yü mit Romanen wie *Rückkehr im Traum* (夢回青河) oder *Wiedersehen mit den Palmen* (又見棕櫚, 又見棕櫚) die literarische Szene im Sturm erobert. 1975, als die Kulturrevolution langsam auslief, fuhr Yü nach China, um dort ihre Verwandten zu besuchen.¹⁰ Ihre Reiseerlebnisse fasste sie in dem Band *Die Frauen im Neuen China und andere Beobachtungen* (新中國的女性及其他) zusammen, der im Jahr darauf in Hongkong erschien. Da Yü in diesem Buch Autorinnen des ‚Neuen China‘ wie z.B. Bing Xin (冰心) sehr positiv besprach, wurde die Verfasserin von der Kuomintang als ‚Überläuferin‘ eingestuft, und ihr Buch wurde ‚eingefroren‘. Aus diesem Grund galten selbst Besprechungen ihres Werkes als ‚problematisch‘.

Viele Bücherverbote vor und nach dem *Formosa*-Zwischenfall hatten mit der Haltung gegenüber dem ‚Neuen China‘ und der gesellschaftlichen ‚Harmonie‘ in Taiwan zu tun. Im September 1977 erschien beim Yüan-liu-Verlag (遠流出版社) die Mandarin-Fassung der ursprünglich auf Japanisch verfassten Erzählung *Potsdamer Abteilungsleiter* (波茨坦科長) von Wu Cho-liu (吳濁流), das als „inhaltlich unangebracht (內容不妥)“ verboten wurde, weil es die persönliche Bereicherung von Kuomintang-Beamten nach dem Kriegsende und die inselweiten Unruhen vom März

10 Dies war ihr nur möglich, weil sie damals in den USA lebte. Während des Kriegsrechts waren Reisen von Taiwan nach China strikt verboten.

1947 (bekannt unter der Bezeichnung „228 二二八“) thematisierte. 1978 veröffentlichte Sung Tse-lai (宋澤萊) in der von Wu Cho-liu gegründeten und von Chung Chao-cheng (鍾肇政) geleiteten Zeitschrift *Taiwanische Künste* (台灣文藝) die Erzählung „Eine Dorflegende (打牛湳村: 笙仔與貴仔的傳奇)“, der die Behörden vorwarfen, sie zeichne ein übertrieben schmutziges Bild der taiwanischen Gesellschaft und störe den gesellschaftlichen Frieden. Als dann später ein Geschichtenband desselben Titels erschien, wurde er – gemeinsam mit *Taiwanische Künste* – auf die Liste der Druckerzeugnisse gesetzt, die nicht von Armee-Angehörigen gelesen werden durften. 1983 steuerte Sung Tse-lai den 23 Seiten langen Aufsatz „Wallfahrt zur Literatur der Menschenrechte – Eine versuchsweise Vorstellung des Autors Shih Ming-cheng (人權文學巡禮 – 並試介臺灣作家施明正)“ als Vorwort zu Shihs Geschichtenband *Liebe und Tod auf der Insel* (島上愛與死) bei. Weil er in diesem Text die taiwanische Gesellschaft mit einem Gefängnis verglich und auch auf die Umerziehung (教化) in taiwanischen Gefängnissen zu sprechen kam, kritisierte das Garnisonskommando das Buch – es verletze „die Gefühle der Regierung und des Volkes“ und irritiere „in hohem Maße die öffentliche Meinung“. Letztlich wurde das Buch verboten.

Die Frauenbewegung wurde im Taiwan der 70er Jahre von der Regierung als ähnlich gefährlich betrachtet. 1976 brachte der gerade neu gegründete „Pionierverglag“ (拓荒者出版社) eine ins Mandarin übersetzte Fassung des US-amerikanischen Erfolgsbuches *Against our will* (性+暴力=?) heraus, in dem Frauen ihre Erfahrungen mit häuslicher Gewalt beschrieben. Kaum erschienen, wurde das Buch auch schon verboten. Lü Hsiu-lien (呂秀蓮), die eine Zeitlang den Begriff „Pionier“ als Pseudonym für ihre Veröffentlichungen benutzte, äußerte einmal: „Ein Engagement für die Frauenbewegung war damals genauso riskant wie eine Beteiligung an der politischen Opposition“. Der Feminismus wurde als etwas betrachtet, das „die Gesellschaft in Unruhe versetze und vor allem eine Spaltung zwischen den Männern und Frauen der herrschenden Schicht, also innerhalb der Kuomintang, herbeiführen wollte, was wiederum der taiwanischen Unabhängigkeitsbewegung genutzt hätte.“

Der häufigste Begriff, der im Zusammenhang mit verbotenen Büchern mit Bezug zur Sexualität verwendet wurde, lautete: „die guten Sitten (善良風俗)“. 1984 brachte die *Volkszeitung* 民眾日報 Li Ch'iaos Roman „Der Frühling der Lan Ts'ai-hsia“ (藍彩霞的春天) in Fortsetzungen. Es geht um eine junge Frau, deren Körper zur Ware degradiert wird. Sie erfährt viel Leid und ergibt sich zeitweise in ihr Schicksal, begehrt aber letztlich gegen ihre Peiniger auf. Es ist die Geschichte der Unterdrückung einer Frau, die gleichzeitig aber auch die Unterdrückung Taiwans widerspiegelt. Nachdem das Buch beim Verlag „Fünftausend Jahre“ (五千年出版

社) erschienen war, wurde es von den Behörden verboten, weil es gegen die „guten Sitten“ verstoße. Als der Kulturverlag der *Aktuellen Zeitung* (時報文化出版社) 1986 eine Reihe mit den Werken Kuo Liang-huis (郭良蕙作品集) veröffentlichten wollte, befand sich darunter auch ihr Buch *Das verschlossene Herz* (心鎖), das 1963 verboten worden war – und nun wurde die Neuauflage des Romans erneut verboten, also zum zweiten Mal „weggeschlossen“. Erst 1988 wurde dieses Verbot vom Presseamt der Provinzregierung aufgehoben.

Die Gegenstrategien der Zeitschriften: Unermüdliche Neugründungen

1975, in dem Jahr, als Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) starb, erschien die erste Ausgabe der Zeitschrift *Politische Kommentare* (台灣政論). Auch wenn die politische Situation in Taiwan bis zur Aufhebung des Kriegsrechts im Jahr 1987 angespannt blieb, so blühten und gediehen doch die oppositionellen Zeitschriften (黨外雜誌):¹¹ *Unsere Epoche* (這一代), *Formosa* (美麗島), *Frühlingswind* (春風), *Sommerflut* (夏潮), *Trommelklang* (鼓聲), *Die 80er* (八十年代), *Fürsorge* (關懷), *Der Pflug* (深耕), *Die Wurzel* (生根), *Glocken- und Trommelturm* (鐘鼓樓), *Die Inseln der Unsterblichen* (蓬萊島), *Vorwärts* (前進), *Zeit der Freiheit* (自由時代) usw. Zeitgleich ereigneten sich viele Vorfälle von politischer Brisanz – die Unruhen in Chungli (中壢事件), der Vorfall in Ch'iao-t'ou (橋頭事件), der *Formosa*-Zwischenfall (美麗島事件), die Morde im Hause Lin (林宅血案), der Mordfall Ch'en Wen-ch'eng (陳文成命案) usw. Keines der damaligen Druckerzeugnisse, die sich politischen Themen widmeten, konnte es der Regierung rechtmachen. Die damalige politische Atmosphäre wurde von der Opposition mit folgendem Bild beschrieben: Man sei wie eine Fliege in einer verschlossenen Flasche – die ganze Welt liegt offen vor einem, aber man findet den Ausgang nicht; alles scheint möglich, und doch ist man zutiefst bedrückt. Den oppositionellen Zeitschriften gelang es, den stark befestigten Belagerungsring zu durchbrechen, indem sie sich nach jedem Verbot einfach wieder neu gründeten.

Das 1977 gegründete Journal *Unsere Epoche* erhielt, nachdem es den Leitartikel „Privilegien sind eine Provokation unserer Gesetze“ (特權向法律挑戰) veröffentlicht hatte, ein einjähriges Publikationsverbot; und 1979 wurde *Die 80er* ganz ver-

11 Mit „Opposition“, auf Mandarin wörtlich „außerhalb der Partei“ (tang-wai 黨外), sind alle politischen Kräfte gemeint, die ab Mitte der 70er die diktatorisch regierende Kuomintang offen kritisierten und herausforderten. Da keine neuen Parteien gegründet werden durften, organisierten sich die Oppositionellen anderweitig und versuchten sich über Zeitschriften zu vernetzen.

boten, weil sie gleich mehrere sensible Themen angesprochen hatte – Bücherverbote, Redefreiheit, die Zukunft Taiwans, die Krise der demokratischen Erziehung usw. Im gleichen Jahr wurde das Magazin *Formosa* gegründet, das sich selbst als den Beginn einer neuen politischen Bewegung betrachtete; es brachte so oft Ankündigungen oppositioneller Kundgebungen sowie oppositionelle Kommentare, dass es nach nur vier Nummern ganz schnell wieder verboten wurde. Die von Ch'en Kuying (陳鼓應) gegründete Zeitschrift *Trommelklang* publizierte in ihrer ersten Ausgabe gleich mehrere legendäre Artikel, etwa die Reportage „Die Mauer der Demokratie und die Mauer des Patriotismus“ (民主牆與愛國牆) und Hsü Ta-jans (許達然) Aufsatz „Jetzt sollten die Bauern einmal zu Wort kommen“ (該是農民說話的時候), in dem die Lage der Bauern, der Agrarwirtschaft und der Dörfer erörtert wurden. Vom gleichen Autor stammte auch der Artikel „Taiwanische Geschichte von Sprichwörtern her betrachtet“ (從諺語看台灣史), der von einer tiefen Kenntnis der lokalen Kultur zeugte. *Trommelklang* wurde schon nach dieser einen Ausgabe umgehend verboten. Die *Sommerflut*, deren Motto „Gesellschaft – Heimat – Künste“ lautete, nahm den Blickwinkel der Dritten Welt ein und schenkte vor allem Themen aus den Bereichen Industrie und Agrarwesen Beachtung. 1979 musste sie ihr Erscheinen einstellen. Auch *Frühlingswind* kümmerte sich vor allem um die Belange der Industriearbeiter und der Bauern, und sie verkündete, „stets kompromisslos für Freiheit und Demokratie einzutreten, unerschütterlich ihren Pflichten gegenüber der Gesellschaft nachzukommen und gemeinsam mit allen anderen mutig in den Kampf zu ziehen.“ Doch schon im März 1980, nach der zweiten Nummer, wurde *Frühlingswind* im Nachgang des *Formosa*-Zwischenfalls verboten. Im Juli 1980 wurde die *Strömung* (暖流) mit einem einjährigen Publikationsverbot belegt, und im September wurden die gerade erst gebundenen Exemplare der ersten Ausgabe von *Glocken- und Trommelturm* noch in der Druckerei beschlagnahmt.

Angesichts dieser ständigen Publikationsverbote und -unterbrechungen entwickelten die oppositionellen Zeitschriften Gegenstrategien. Cheng Nan-jung (鄭南榕) beispielsweise ließ sich Hochschul-Abschlusszeugnisse von Freunden und Verwandten, um diese als Herausgeber mehrerer geplanter Zeitschriften registrieren zu lassen. So gelangte er in den Besitz diverser Zeitschriftenlizenzen, so dass selbst mehrfache Verbote durch das Garnisonskommando nicht verhindern konnten, dass das 1984 gegründete Magazin *Zeit der Freiheit* immer weiter erschien – nur eben unter wechselnden Titeln (etwa *Avantgarde* (先鋒時代週刊), *Neubeginn* (開拓時代週刊), *Die Welt der Demokratie* (民主天地週刊), *Die öffentliche Meinung* (公論時代週刊)), aber mit fortlaufenden Seriennummern versehen und ohne irgendwelche Änderungen der redaktionellen Linie. Vom März 1984 bis November 1989, also

über fünf Jahre und acht Monate hinweg, erschienen ganze 302 Ausgaben. Die Zeitschriften der *Zeit der Freiheit*-Serie wurden vierzigmal mit Publikationsunterbrechungen belegt und über hundertmal verboten, erschienen aber dennoch fortwährend und ohne nennenswerte Unterbrechungen. Bald bedienten sich auch andere Magazine dieser Methode, etwa das von Hsü Jung-shu (許榮淑) übernommene *Der Pflug*, das von K'ang Ning-hsiang (康寧祥) herausgegebene *Die 80er* und *Die neue Flut* (新潮流). Dass die oppositionellen Zeitschriften in einer so schweren Zeit allen Schikanen und Verboten zum Trotz immer weitermachten und durch geschicktes Taktieren zahllose Hindernisse überwinden konnten, beweist letztlich auch, dass man eine starke Strömung nicht eindämmen kann.

In den 1980er Jahren wurden auch Kulturmagazine wie *Taiwanische Künste*, *Taiwanische Kultur* (台灣文化) und *Neue taiwanische Kultur* (台灣新文化) verboten. *Taiwanische Künste* wurde 1964 von Wu Cho-liu gegründet und 1983 von Ch'en Yung-hsing (陳永興) übernommen. 1984 wurde Ausgabe Nr. 91, die dem Dichter Wang Shih-lang (王詩琅) gewidmet war, verboten. Sie enthielt „Die Studentin Chuang Nan-an“ (大學女生莊南安) von Lin Shuang-pu (林雙不), „Erde“ (土地) von Wang Shih-hsün (王世勛) und „Gefängnis-Memoiren“ (獄中回憶) von Ming-che (明哲) – ein Pseudonym von K'o Ch'i-hua (柯旗化).

K'o war 1976 aus dem Gefängnis entlassen worden und hatte in einem Buchladen festgestellt, dass *Taiwanische Künste* zahlreiche politische, sogar regierungskritische Gedichte veröffentlichte. Dies erweckte in ihm den Wunsch, sein Schreibwerkzeug zukünftig als Waffe einzusetzen. Zusätzlich zu seiner schriftstellerischen Tätigkeit gründete er im Juni 1986 auch noch die Vierteljahresschrift *Taiwanische Kultur*, die eng mit der in den USA von Ch'en Fang-ming (陳芳明) herausgegebenen Zeitschrift gleichen Namens zusammenarbeitete. Die erste Ausgabe von K'o's Magazin wurde mit dem hoffnungsvollen Gedicht „Frühling in Formosa“ (美麗島的春天) eröffnet: „Von heute an sind alle Menschen frei / Von heute alle sind alle Menschen gleichberechtigt“. 1987 wurde die vierte Ausgabe der Zeitschrift verboten, weil den Zensoren mehrere Beiträge negativ aufgefallen waren: das Trauergedicht „Mutters sehnlichster Wunsch“ (母親的悲願) und der Leitartikel „Reflexionen über 228“ (二二八事件的反省) bezogen sich auf die März-Massaker von 1947; die Artikel „Parteiorientierte Erziehung und demokratische Erziehung“ (黨化教育與民主教育) und „Wird die KMT ihre Kontrolle über die Universitäten aufgeben?“ (國民黨會放棄校園控制嗎) kritisierten die Bildungspolitik der Regierung.

Während der „Kaohsiunger Verlag Nr. 1“ (第一出版社) die Gründung von *Taiwanische Kultur* vorantrieb, bereitete der Taipeher „Vorhut-Verlag“ (前衛出版社) die

erste Ausgabe der monatlich erscheinenden *Neue taiwanische Kultur* vor. Im Gegensatz zu K'os Zeitschrift, die eher vorsichtig agierte, bevorzugte die Taipeher Redaktion – bestehend aus Lin Wen-ch'in (林文欽), Sung Tse-lai, Li Chin-hsiang (利錦祥), Lin Shuang-pu, Kao T'ien-sheng (高天生) und Wang Shih-hsün (王世勛) – das offene und direkte Wort. Die ab September 1986 erscheinende Zeitschrift hielt den „taiwanischen Nationalismus“ (台灣民族主義) hoch und setzte sich für eine „Verschriftlichung der taiwanesischen Sprache“ (台語文字化) ein. Außerdem brachte sie Auszüge aus den Romanen *Taiwanischer Flieder* (台灣連翹) von Wu Cho-liu und *Der kriegsentscheidende Freitag* (決戰星期五) von Lin Shuang-pu in Fortsetzungen. Auch Sung Tse-lais auf Taiwanesisch verfasste Erzählung „Die rebellische Stadt Ta-mao“ (抗暴个打貓市) und Lin Yang-mins Geschichte „Ewig lebe unser großer Führer“ (大統領千秋), die vom Tod eines Diktators handelt, wurden hier veröffentlicht. *Neue taiwanische Kultur* stellte einen einsamen Rekord auf: Von 20 Ausgaben wurden 16 verboten.

Taiwanische Künste übte innerhalb des Zeitraums, in dem sie von Wu Cho-liu geleitet wurde (1976-1982), nicht nur auf K'o Ch'i-hua einen großen Einfluss aus, sondern auch auf Lü Yü (呂昱). Noch bevor Lü 1984 aus dem Gefängnis entlassen wurde, hatte er bereits unter dem Pseudonym Hsin-ko (莘歌) die Erzählung „Bildlicher Glückwunsch“ (畫像裡的祝福) in *Taiwanische Künste* publiziert. Im Oktober 1986 gründete er die Zeitschrift *Der Süden* (南方), die in erster Linie den Standpunkt der Dritten Welt und des Globalen Südens vertrat. Darüber hinaus wurde sie auch zu einer Plattform der Studentenbewegung und ließ alle möglichen Stimmen der „Selbstreflexion“ miteinander in einen Dialog treten. Um den Informationsaustausch zwischen den Universitäten weiter zu beschleunigen, druckte *Der Süden* im März und April 1987 mehrere Sonderbeilagen, die kostenlos verteilt wurden. Dies brachte allerdings die Universitätsverwaltungen und die Disziplinar-Aufseher (教官) gegen die Zeitschrift auf, und kurze Zeit später forderte ein offizielles Schreiben des Presesamts der Stadtregierung von Taipeh den *Süden* auf, sein Erscheinen einzustellen.

Kriegsrecht aufgehoben – Bücherverbote auch?

Im Juli 1987 wurde das Kriegsrecht in Taiwan aufgehoben, aber die Phase des Weißen Terrors endete erst 1992, als §100 des Strafgesetzbuches geändert wurde. Der Juli 1987 ist also nicht gleichzusetzen mit sofortiger Pressefreiheit und Demokratie. So wurde etwa die achteilige Romanreihe *Der Frühlingstraum von Nanking* (金陵春夢), herausgegeben von Lü Yü in Chung Chao-chengs „Verlag der taiwanischen Künste“ (台灣文藝出版社), kurz nach ihrem Erscheinen am Nationalfeiertag

(10.10.) 1987 vom Presseamt verboten, weil hierin eine sensationalistische, von der offiziellen Version völlig abweichende Darstellung der Geschichte der Kuomintang sowie der Herrscherfamilie Chiang und ihrem Verlust des Festlandes zu finden war.¹² 1988 musste wiederum *Neue taiwanische Kultur* sechs Monate lang ihr Erscheinen einstellen, weil sie diese zwei Artikel veröffentlicht hatte: „Wir sind alle Kinder der taiwanischen Nation (Erster Teil) – Eine kurze Geschichte der Entwicklung der taiwanischen Nation und des taiwanischen Nationalismus“ (我們都是台灣民族的女兒(上) – 台灣民族與台灣民族主義) von Shih Hsin-yi (史新義) und „Wessen Landessprache? Wessen Geschichte? Eine Analyse der von der Kuomintang durchgeführten Gehirnwäsche anhand von Schulbüchern“ (誰的國文? 誰的歷史? – 從國中、高中課本看國民黨洗腦術) von Lin Wang (林旺). Zur Begründung wurde angeführt, dass die Zeitschrift „spalterische Ansichten verbreitet, für die Unabhängigkeit Taiwans eintritt, zum Aufruhr anstachelt und gegen die Regularien des Publikationsgesetzes verstößt.“

Noch 1988 und 1989 wurden folgende Bücher verboten: *Die Wiedergeburt der taiwanischen Seele* (重塑台灣的心靈) von Hsieh Li-fa (謝里法) im Verlag Zeit der Freiheit (自由時代出版社) und gleich drei von Ch'en Fang-ming herausgegebene Bände, nämlich *Wissenschaftliche Aufsätze zu 228* (二二八事件學術論文集), *Unter der Flagge Formosas: Oppositionelle Bewegungen und das demokratische Taiwan* (在美麗島的旗幟下: 反對運動與民主台灣) sowie *Die wegweisende Entscheidung unserer Epoche: Die Debatte um Vereinigung oder Unabhängigkeit und die Beziehungen zwischen Taiwan und dem Festland* (在時代分合的路口: 統獨論爭與海峽關係); alle erschienen im Vorhut-Verlag. 1988 durften außerdem Ausgaben chinesischer (also „festländischer“) Autoren in der vom Hongkonger „San-lien-Verlag“ (三聯書店) herausgegebene Reihe *Ausgewählte Werke moderner chinesischer Autoren* (中國現代作家選集叢書) zwar auch in Taiwan erscheinen, aber sie mussten mit dem Etikett „Besonderer Lesestoff / Eingeschränkte Nutzung“ (特種資料 / 限制閱覽) versehen werden.

Das Album *Ausgeflippte Lieder* (抓狂歌) der Rockgruppe „Arbeitskreis Schwarze Liste“ (黑名單工作室), das fast komplett auf Taiwanesisch eingesungen war, wurde

12 Autor dieser Romanreihe war – unter dem Pseudonym T'ang-jen 唐人 – der aus Kiangsu stammende Yen Ch'ing-shu 嚴慶樹 (1919–1981). Er war 1949 von seinem Arbeitgeber, der *Allgemeinen Zeitung* (大公報), nach Taiwan geschickt worden und lebte ab 1950 in Hongkong. 1977 ließ er sich zum Mitglied der Konsultativkonferenz des Chinesischen Volkes wählen. Der besagte Roman erschien ab 1976 in Hongkong und ab 1981 in Peking.

1989 verboten, weil das Lied „Ein demokratischer Laie“ (民主阿草) die Zeile „Soldaten und Polizisten säumen alle Straßen“ enthielt und somit als politische Kritik verstanden werden konnte. Im selben Jahr publizierte Cheng Nan-jung den „Entwurf einer neuen Verfassung der Republik Taiwan“ von Hsü Shih-k'ai (許世楷) und wurde unter dem Vorwurf der „mutmaßlichen Verbreitung landesverräterischer Schriften“ gerichtlich vorgeladen. Aus Protest dagegen und um ein Fanal für die Unabdingbarkeit „hundertprozentiger Redefreiheit“ zu setzen, verbrannte sich Cheng am 7. April 1989 selbst; er opferte sein Leben im Kampf gegen politische Repression und Einschränkungen der Meinungsfreiheit.

In den 1990er Jahren gab es ein Genre, das auch noch viele Jahre nach dem Ende des Kriegsrechts immer noch der Zensur anheimfiel, nämlich die sich rasch entwickelnde Literatur über Sexualität, insbesondere Homosexualität. 1995 musste beispielsweise der „Huang-kuan-Verlag“ (皇冠出版社) den Erzählungsband *Böse Frauen* (惡女書) von Ch'en Hsüeh (陳雪) in einen undurchsichtigen Einband einschweißen und mit dem Aufdruck „Für Leser unter 18 Jahren nicht geeignet“ versehen. 1996 wurde das vom Verlag als „erstes wissenschaftliches Buch zur Sexualpsychologie in Taiwan“ angepriesene *Sexuelle Fantasien* (性幻想) vom Presseamt der Stadt Taipeh verboten; im selben Jahr wurde gegen das gerade neugegründete Schwulenmagazin *G&L – Heiße Liebe* (熱愛) Anzeige erstattet. Die in der Verfassung der Republik China garantierte Pressefreiheit wurde erst 1999 mit der Abschaffung des Verlagsgesetzes (出版法) erreicht.

Seit dem *Formosa*-Zwischenfall haben sich die Geschichte des Verlagswesens, des Lesens und der Zensur in Taiwan sehr stark wechselseitig beeinflusst. Besonders faszinierend dabei ist der unablässige Kampf zwischen den Versuchen der Regierung, den Buchmarkt unter Kontrolle zu halten, und den einfallsreichen Gegenmaßnahmen von Verlagen und Herausgebern.

Thilo Diefenbach

Forschung und Lehre

What Does “Critical” Mean in Critical Area/Development Studies?

Timo Duile

In 2021, Martina Padmanaban, Samia Dinkelaker, Maraike Hoffmann, Dimas Laksama, Siti Maimunah, Elena Rudakova, Enid Still, and Friederike Trotier published a “minifesto” on *Principles of Critical Development Studies* in ASIEN 160/161. Unlike a manifesto, which would be based on a grand theory, the minifesto aimed at presenting “a collection of small but significant ideas” (Padmanaban et al. 2021: 210). In their minifesto, the authors invited others to join the discussion that they had started by discussing, writing, and publishing the minifesto. It is a discussion, among other things, of what it means to be critical in area- and development studies.

While I think that the ideas outlined in the minifesto are indeed important and deserve attention, I want to challenge the authors (and others) on some points. My main concern in the following is the very notion of critique and being critical. Calling oneself a critical scholar is commonplace. Therefore, the minifesto performs a meritorious task, as it describes and discusses what this notion means. However, I want to outline here a critique of the critique. Referring to some points in the minifesto, I argue that the critical notion outlined therein is, in a certain sense, not radical (or critical) enough: While it criticizes, for good reasons, Eurocentric approaches, it dispenses with all universalizing approaches and calls for radical pluralization. This pluralization is indeed common in academia and I myself am guilty of it (for instance, Duile et al. 2023). However, I think this critique, which aims at radical pluralization and rejects universalism, ultimately universalizes difference itself, with a potentially problematic political outcome. Therefore, I will argue that critiques we develop in area- or development studies must not only criticize Western or (neo)colonial forms of universalism as problematic universalisms but must at the same time critique the elevation of pluralism and relativism, (that is, difference) to the status of universal. What we need, I claim, is a new form of universalism that takes seriously the emancipatory promises of European universalism — enlightenment, equality, and freedom — as well as its contradictions, but that acknowledges that within our current ideological–economic order (which is also determined by Western universalism in the form of liberalism), these promises cannot be achieved. This is where particular experiences and

particular forms of knowledge from the Global South are crucial. I will argue in favor of particular universalism as the base of critical scholarship and will explain in the following what this means.

Critique as Radical Pluralism

In order to explain my critique here, I will first shortly summarize some points of the minifesto and make some of the inherent philosophical backdrops of this critique explicit. This will be my reading of the minifesto, a reading that addresses only certain points but, hopefully, grasps at least some of its thrust.

The target of the critique voiced in critical development studies, as the authors imagine it, is Western and scientific knowledge that emerges as a form of universalized knowledge, or as the “colonial ways of seeing” which are said to “reduce complex relations to binaries” (Padmanaban et al. 2021: 213). The authors stress the colonial legacy of this knowledge and the embedding of scientific knowledge into ideologies of economic growth (Padmanaban 2021 et al. 2021: 214-215). The question is thus how critical studies should counteract these problems. Here, the minifesto argues in favor of radical pluralism. It does not merely argue that knowledge only empirically exists in the plural but normatively argues in favor of pluralism. The minifesto argues for “commitments to pluralizing knowledge production as an important act within a broader project of decolonizing the university” (Padmanaban et al. 2021: 216).

It is crucial to stress that the minifesto departs from experiences of racism that some students in Passau shared in the department (Padmanaban et al. 2021: 210). The necessity of decolonization and pluralization derives from these experiences of discrimination against particular identities. In other words, what is at stake here is not only the pluralization of knowledge but also the recognition of differences in other fields such as identities (to which other forms of knowledge or, more generally, ways of seeing are linked). This is the aim of critical studies as outlined in the minifesto: to make room for other, neglected, overseen, and oppressed identities with their specific knowledge.

The minifesto builds upon discussions about texts from feminist political ecology, post-development studies, decolonial theory, as well as new area studies. While it would be beyond the scope here to discuss all these fields, I think that there are some general currents in these fields that serve as the basis for what “critical” means in the minifesto. In terms of the philosophical currents which have not only made possible the acknowledgment of difference but have elevated difference and pluralism to a normative category, I think we must mention poststructuralism and postmodernist approaches in general. Deriving from a philosophy of language where all signifiers lack meanings themselves and derive their meanings only in relation and opposition to other signifiers, these approaches provide valuable insights into the ideologies of all sorts of centrism where certain signifiers are ontologically privileged over others. However, while poststructuralism makes the critique

possible, it often offers little for emancipatory projects. Claiming that essentialism can only be applied strategically does not do justice to emancipatory political struggles where people really need to believe in something as the focus point of their struggle, that is, as a universal. When people in Iran, for instance, struggle for freedom under the banner of “Women, Life, Freedom,” it is not possible to claim that the woman does not exist except as a social construct. Rather, they have to challenge the Islamic reactionary conservatism of the regime which defines femaleness in a certain sense with their version of what it means to be a woman, and they cannot but try to universalize their particular notion of the woman and femaleness.

In a very basic sense, critique is always a critique of a tautological overlap, that is, the assumption that something is natural, given a priori, or simply that *it is because it is*. Critique is the critique of commonsense elements, and colonial power relations which continue to be relevant are indeed part of it. The critical element is that it claims that there is no universal. There are only particularities (identities, forms of knowledge, and so on). Whatever emerges as universal is in fact a particular elevated to the status of the universal within a political field of antagonisms. The particular notion of it is to be brought into light by deconstruction. However, the crucial point here is that this critique does not really dispense with the notion of the universal: it rather simply universalizes antagonisms. Postmodernist approaches criticize the idea of the universal and hegemony as a natural state, but elevate the idea of particularization and difference itself to the universal. By doing so, these approaches uphold a Kantian formalism, namely the binary between the absolute (universal) and the particular. The alternative critical notion I suggest here is a Hegelian take on that: the absolute (universal) only exists *within* the particular. It is not a dualism but a dialectical relation between the universal and the particular. They are both part of a totality that is characterized by a crack or rupture, and the particular (particular identities, forms of knowledge, etc.), as well as the universal, are part of that totality which is, philosophically speaking, not identical with itself.

Critical Studies and the Concrete Universal

Even though we might depart from experiences of our own society (like the students’ experiences of racism in Passau), I think we have to assess what the call for radical pluralism of knowledge and identities would mean politically, especially for Southeast Asia. Many Southeast Asian societies can be characterized as “plural societies” anyway and expressing forms of knowledge equally would probably lead to a fragmentation of society. In societies that historically have been plural (and in which this plurality was also fabricated and utilized by colonial powers), the task in nation-building processes was to find forms of what John Furnivall termed “common will” (1967: 447), which was ultimately lacking in the plural societies. In other words, there was always a kind of universalism necessary in decolonial practices, a universalism that was able to unify particular struggles and identities. This is at least

true for what Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò has called the original meaning of decolonization (to which he refers to as “decolonisation1”), namely, a process of transforming a colony into a self-governing, politically independent entity. The urge to pluralize and render whatever comes from the West as neocolonial is what Táíwò called “decolonization”, namely, “forcing an ex-colony to forswear, on pain of being forever under the yoke of colonization, any and every cultural, political, intellectual, social and linguistic artifact, idea, process, institution and practice that retains the slightest whiff of the colonial past” (Táíwò 2022: 3). This would mean, in Southeast Asia at least, finding forms of radical nationalism and particularism against the West, and reactionary forces — from Islamists to traditional authorities — welcome this cultural relativist anti-universalism.

Critique, as I suggest it, must not dispense with universalism. However, it needs to aim at concrete universals which have clear political implications. A well-known example in this regard is the BLM movement. Whereas the notion of “black lives matter” takes the concrete experiences of black people as the basis for the universal notion of the recognition of life, the reactionary notion of “all lives matter” is nothing but an empty phrase. The latter notion is an abstract universal notion which renders invisible the concrete lives at stake. Hegel has argued that in abstract universals the content has the form of indifference against its universal (Hegel 1969: 284). Critique must address this indifference, but without jettisoning the very idea of the universal within the concrete.

How can area studies be decolonized and, even more importantly, offer decolonial perspectives that transcend a mere call for pluralization and the universalization of difference? We will have to think about that in more detail, but for the time being my first idea would be to engage with anticolonial intellectuals, especially with those who do not simply oppose the West and its knowledge but engage with Western thought in order to fight colonialism or to make visible different modes of domination within colonial society. We can find numerous of these thinkers in Indonesian history. One would be Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana, for instance, who was ready to fully embrace Western modernization in order to find what it truly means to be Indonesian, that is, to be part of a new society that dispenses with both its own traditions and Western domination (Lubis 1979: xv). Or we could read Soetan Sjahrir (1968) in order to understand colonial violence and how his stance on independence was an attempt to overcome it. Or let us engage with Raden Ajeg Karini (2014), whose insight into the patriarchal structures of colonial order was enabled, among others, by Western education and the egalitarian promises of emancipatory universalism. This is not to engage in a reactionary project and claim that ‘there was something good in colonialism’ and therefore that we should not condemn colonialism. Rather, it means that a critical perspective acknowledges that the sublation of colonialism has come from within it. The ways to overcome capitalism, too, lie in its inherent contradictions, and capitalism and colonial conditions form contradictory social totalities. Knowledge and practices of resistance from, for instance, indigenous communities, are in this sense never knowledge and resistance

from outside but operate from within the social totality of capitalism (or colonialism). And this is precisely the reason that while they can contribute to a critical approach, they can make visible the inherent contradictions of a social totality. A call for pluralization, however, may tend to conceptualize them as independent alternatives from the outside whose only connections to the hegemonic capitalist or colonial forces are their differences.

Conclusion: A Dialectical Critique

What I suggest here is a dialectical critique that recognizes universals, but keeps in mind that all universals are always-already pre-meditated and sublated forms of former universals. The universal can only appear in the particular. Critical, in this sense, neither means cultural relativism and the elevation of difference to the universal, nor simply upholding the universal notions of Western liberalism or even colonialism.

This is not to say that we should not use postmodern approaches. On the contrary, they are necessary as critiques of hegemonic forces. Postmodern approaches and theories are not simply “cynical theories,” as Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay (2020) have called them. Many postmodern scholars are genuinely concerned about crucial issues which are often even matters of life and death for people of excluded identities. Moreover, I think that we cannot simply go back to a liberal universal notion, as Pluckrose and Lindsay suggest when they argue against postmodern theories. There is no radical universalism beyond identity, as Boehm (2023) recently suggested. Every universalism has always been within concrete identities (the clergy, aristocracy, bourgeoisie, colonial European, etc.) and is always an already sublated form of a previous universalism. The contradictions within recent liberal universalism are too obvious and we have to acknowledge that liberal universalism is in deep crisis. The emergence of identity politics, both on the left and the right, is indeed a symptom of the crisis of liberal universalism.

In a certain way, it is a false dichotomy when people put liberal universalism in opposition to postmodern particularism. Instead of simply opting for radical relativism, postmodern forms of critique can help us to determine what is worth saving from liberalism, enlightenment, political achievement, science, and Western knowledge. It can help us to see what kind of new universalism we need. Some post- and decolonial thinkers recognize the need for universals. Recently, my colleague Michaela Douth mentioned a quote by Chandra Mohanty, from a revised version of her famous essay “Under Western Eyes,” which, I believe, puts it well:

[...] differences are never just ‘differences.’ In knowing differences and particularities, we can better see the connections and commonalities because no border or boundary is ever complete or rigidly determining. The challenge is to see how differences allow us to explain the connections and border crossings better and more accurately, how specifying differences allows us to theorize *universal concerns* more fully. It is this intellectual move that allows for my

concern for women of different communities and identities to build coalitions and solidarities across borders. (Mohanty 2003: 151, italicized by T.D.)

And here we arrive at what truly could make critical studies *critical*: the focus on universal concerns, which need universal forms of knowledge deriving from the universal concerns that can bring together particular struggles. Such a form of critical studies is inherently political, simply because it has to critique conditions that are always-already political. But it must bring together different groups instead of perceiving differences as a matter of borders or boundaries.

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Konferenzberichte

“Social Worlds Workshop”

Bad Homburg, January 26–28, 2023

Report by Ryanne Flock

During the last weekend in January 2023, Björn Alpermann (University of Würzburg) and Elena Meyer-Clement (University of Copenhagen) hosted the annual workshop of their ongoing research project “Social Worlds: China’s Cities as Spaces of Worldmaking” at the Forschungskolleg Humanwissenschaften in Bad Homburg. Located at the University of Würzburg, the project is part of “Worldmaking from a Global Perspective: A Dialogue with China”, a collaborative research project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Using the prism of the “social world” allows multiple perspectives on Chinese society, focusing on the knowledge creation, transmission, and agency that emerges in communicative dynamics. To share and discuss the most recent work in progress, the workshop brought together the project members Ryanne Flock (postdoc), Antonie Angerer (predoc), and Birgit Herrmann (coordination); (former) project fellows Bettina Gransow, Gil Hizi, and Mao Jingyu; and colleagues from Sociology and China Studies Isabel Heger-Laube, Michael Malzer, Marius Meinhof, Tian Yueran, Yuan Mingqing, and Francesco Zaratini (in alphabetic order).

The first sessions focused on contextualizing knowledge production in academia to approach the “black box” of Chinese national politics. Björn Alpermann’s paper — written in collaboration with his PhD student Yang Weiyue — analyzed population categorizations in the context of family planning and elderly care (e.g. “families who lost their only child”), deliberating on the respective phenomena behind the academic concepts and definitions. Francesco Zaratini (University of Vienna) focused on ideas of future rural development circulating among the discourse-dominant voices at Chinese universities, pointing to these scholars’ role in policy consultation. Elena Meyer-Clement reflected on her many years of doing fieldwork on rural urbanization, shedding light on the discursive arena wherein the different social worlds of cadres, urban planners, property-management companies, and villagers clash. Her work brought back to mind the varying state interests which can be found across respective administrative levels.

Second, the workshop concentrated on the social worlds of internal migrants in China, dealing with agency (restrictions) in a country characterized by job and welfare insecurity. Tian Yueran (University of Bielefeld) examined factory workers in a third-tier city and their attempts to fill the governmental welfare gap through commercial-insurance products. While some become insurance sales agents themselves, with their work occupying thereby a grey area between wealth management, speculation, and Ponzi scheme, the underlying financial uncertainties remain. Tian's colleague Mao Jingyu (University of Bielefeld) presented their coauthored paper based on the same fieldwork, analyzing the role of the seasonal bonus offered in factories. While many workers prefer this lump sum and thus forego long-term welfare bound to the regular low salary, the factories preserve the flexibility and informality on which China's workbench system is based. In contrast, Bettina Gransow (Free University Berlin) focused on those rural migrants who managed uncertainty through acquiring a college education and thus attempting to climb the social ladder in Guangzhou. However, education hierarchies and devaluation of their training, gender discrimination, as well as strict migration regimes constantly threaten their foothold in this first-tier city. Interestingly, Gransow's interlocutors did not perceive these difficulties as systemic but emphasized instead how “you have to rely on yourself.”

Gil Hizi (University of Cologne) and Michael Malzer (University of Würzburg) embedded this tendency toward individualized struggle in the broader social context, showing that these issues go beyond the social worlds of migrants alone. The former analyzed trends in psychological counselling and self-help in China, which have gained momentum in recent years in response to the socioeconomic changes accompanying the Chinese market's transformation. He explained how psychology allies with the state discourse of “self-reliance,” rendering individual challenges apolitical. In contrast, Michael Malzer elucidated a microcosm of Chinese society: an “English Corner” in a café in Yinchuan, a city in China's northwestern periphery that has found itself increasingly affected by the political tightening taking place in the Xi Jinping era. The English Corner provided room for discussion on various topics, for ideas of self-improvement (going well beyond mere language practice), social advancement, or escaping everyday pressures, but was also subject to more or less explicit forms of regulation and censorship. That English appeared to be a language of possibilities and worldliness made it attractive to participants but to the state potentially threatening.

The sixth session illustrated how Chinese actors create social worlds beyond the mainland. Ryanne Flock (University of Würzburg) and Yuan Mingqing (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg) focused on migrants who moved abroad for longer or shorter periods, more specifically to Malaysia and Kenya respectively. Yuan analyzed the books of Deng Changwu, a businessman who has been involved in various local Chinese associations during his 20 years of experience in the East African country. His works are a mixture of fiction writing and novels, guidebooks, and detective stories; they seek to engage the community of Chinese citizens in Africa on the issue

of remaining safe in foreign lands. In contrast, Ryanne Flock looked at the Malaysian Chinese community near Kuala Lumpur, which has been involved in the state's development for several generations. She offered an overview of her recent exploratory fieldwork and potential research directions on “Chinese New Villages” — once established as residential prison areas under British colonial rule. Ryanne Flock's interest lay in how the local Chinese community's various members have dealt with the New Villages' sociospatial changes in the course of Kuala Lumpur's mega-urbanization.

The “Social Worlds Workshop” was dedicated to the empirical research of different Chinese social worlds and is part of a workshop series continued in 2024.

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YSG Workshop 2024 – DGA Young Scholars Group Theory Workshop 2024 “Nation and Religion”

Freiburg, June 14–16, 2024

Report by Anastasia Kostromina

The biannual DGA Young Scholars Group (YSG) workshop took place in Freiburg from June 14th to 16th. Young academics with backgrounds in Asian Studies gathered to learn about and discuss the application of theories in their research, as well as the differences between theory-driven and data-driven research.

The workshop was opened on Friday evening by the current YSG representatives: Yasmin Koppen, Dan Petersen, Katharina Dressen, Lars Konheiser, and Munkhzul Bat-Erdene. Thereafter, the participants got to know each other. Prof. Dr. Jörg Plassen, Chair of East Asian Religions, Department of East Asian Studies, Ruhr Universität Bochum, gave a keynote lecture on the topic of “Some Remarks on the Concept of Nation in the Study of East Asian Buddhism.”

Professor Plassen's speech began with a discussion of recent criticism directed at Thomas Heberer and Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, specialists in Chinese philology. Kai Vogelsang scrutinized these scholars, arguing that they fail to adequately explain China and suggesting that philology reaches its limits in interpreting contemporary China. Professor Plassen reminded the participants of Germany's 1980s debate on theory-driven and data-driven research methodologies in sinology. He expressed concern that the development of Vogelsang's thought might pose a risk to the field of Asian Studies. By tracing the concept of sinification (中国化) back to Johann Herder and Hegel's ideas, he showcased how philology can construct arguments against contemporary politics in China using philological methods. In the end, he invited participants to reflect on the role of theories in Asian Studies research.

On Saturday morning, Hendrik Johannemann presented his recently defended PhD dissertation on the topic “Opposing Desires — The Contentious Politics of the South Korean Anti-LGBT Movement.” He examined the anti-LGBT movement through the lens of “dynamic continuity” and revealed the four-fold meaning behind the title “Opposing Desires.”

His research uncovered contradictory movement strategies and internal conflicts within the movement. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's theoretical framework of "war of position," Johannemann highlighted the religious and political interplay, arguing that the anti-LGBT movement, largely led by protestant followers, serves political interests and acts as an innovator for conservative politics. Using protest-event and frame analysis, he constructed the first systematic PEA database on anti-LGBT activism. The presentation sparked numerous questions on the societal perception of LGBT issues, the role of American movements in shaping the Korean anti-LGBT movement, and more. Professor Plassen also challenged the view of the anti-LGBT movement purely as a political issue, suggesting it is a reaction to the strengthening of the LGBT movement. Workshop participants were then encouraged to examine citations from interviews with proponents of the anti-LGBT movement and analyze the arguments they present.

The workshop prepared by Dr. Yasmin Koppen, titled "Spatiality of Religion in Historical Settings," focused on the spaces of religion. Participants discussed various types of religious spaces and layers of sites. Young scholars were introduced to criteria for inner, outer, and external hierarchies used to measure changes in these spaces. The workshop compared differences between Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist temples through the prism of hierarchical structures, and also explored aspects of mosques, including conflicts of autonomy and proselytizing, cultural hybridity, and issues related to sacred sites. Then, participants were encouraged to examine a map of a temple with a Buddhist layout but with Confucian inscriptions. Besides, by demonstrating the inconsistency of textual comments on the place, the exercise highlighted the importance of visiting study sites to see them first-hand, so as to understand their appearance.

At the end of the day, the participants had the opportunity to present their own projects and receive feedback from other participants and representatives from the YSG.

Sunday morning began with Prof. em. Dr. Judith Schlehe, former director of the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, presenting on "Religion-State Relations and Alternative Practices in Indonesia." She employed frameworks such as decoloniality, religious syncretism, ontological turn, planetary healing, and power theory to discuss her recent studies on paranormal social group changes observed post-COVID.

Following her presentation, Richard Takhun addressed "Challenges in Research under Authoritarian Regimes." He delved into the history of the Myanmar civil war and shared insights from his field research conducted amidst conflict. Mr. Takhun also tackled ethical considerations in research, emphasizing the principle of "do no harm."

Following these presentations, participants engaged in a discussion on research ethics and voiced concerns related to their own projects. The workshop concluded with reflections from participants on their key takeaways from the three-day event, followed by closing remarks from the current YSG representatives.

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Rezensionen

Kritik und Reflexion verflochtener Geschichten: Neuere Beiträge zu China und dem Westen in transnationaler Perspektive

Joanne Miyang Cho und David M. Crowe (Hgg.): Germany and China. Transnational Encounters since the Eighteenth Century.

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 304 S., US\$ 90,00

Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl und Marco Wyss und Valeria Zanier (Hgg.): Europe and China in the Cold War. Exchanges Beyond the Bloc Logic and the Sino-Soviet Split.

Leiden/ Boston: Brill, 2019. XII + 242 S., EUR 115,00

David Shambaugh (Hg.): China and the World.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. 394 S., US\$ 99,00

Joanne Miyang Cho (Hg.): Sino-German Encounters and Entanglements. Transnational Politics and Culture, 1890-1950.

Cham: Springer International Publishing; Imprint: New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. XVI + 344 S., EUR 149,79

Sammelrezension von Stefan Messingschlager

Ob „Neue Seidenstraße“, die wachsenden Spannungen zwischen China und den USA oder auch der Streit um Taiwan: Das Verhältnis Chinas zur Welt ist heute mehr denn je eines der großen Themen in internationaler Politik und Weltöffentlichkeit.

Auch in den Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften rücken Chinas globale Austausch- und Verflechtungsbeziehungen seit ein paar Jahren wieder verstärkt in den Fokus, nachdem man sich zuvor disziplinenübergreifend vor allem mit der inneren Entwicklung Chinas beschäftigt hatte. Dieser Befund gilt nicht nur für die gegenwartsbezogene sino-politologische Forschung, sondern vor allem auch für die Geschichtswissenschaft, die in den letzten Jahrzehnten – anknüpfend an die Harvard Fairbank-Schule – an einer Vielzahl von Themen herausarbeiten konnte, wie sich China als Staat, Nation und Kultur seit dem 19. Jahrhundert im Wechselverhältnis und in Auseinandersetzung mit der Außenwelt entwickelt hat. Besonders hervorgetreten sind in diesem Zusammenhang die Historiker Jürgen Osterhammel und Odd Arne Westad ebenso wie der Politikwissenschaftler David Shambaugh, die mit ihren Arbeiten das Forschungsfeld einer international, transnational und teils auch global integrierten Perspektive auf China in ihren Disziplinen fest verankerten.

An der kritischen Reflexion ausgewählter Sammelbände möchte der vorliegende Beitrag zeigen, wie Chinas Verhältnis zur Welt in der jüngeren Forschung am empirischen Material herausgearbeitet, konzeptualisiert und theoretisch reflektiert wird. Sammelbände sind in diesem Zusammenhang ein besonders geeignetes Publikationsmedium, da sie meist im Kontext von Workshops entstehen, Beiträge aus unterschiedlichen Disziplinen umfassen und damit einen verlässlichen Einblick in aktuelle Forschungsansätze ermöglichen.

Ein hierfür besonders prägnantes Beispiel sind die Publikationen der US-amerikanischen Historikerin Joanne Miyang Cho, die sich in den letzten Jahren mit einer Vielzahl von Sammelbänden zum deutsch-asiatischen Verhältnis profilieren konnte. In den hier herangezogenen Sammelbänden (Cho/Crowe 2014; Cho 2021) rückt sie das deutsch-chinesische Verhältnis vor allem in seinem transnationalen Charakter in den Vordergrund und stellt ihre Bände damit konzeptionell in die Tradition der Schule um die deutsche Sinologin und Historikerin Mechthild Leutner. Die Beiträge der beiden Sammelbände decken insgesamt ein breites thematisches Spektrum ab und liefern mit ihrer Quellenarbeit teils völlig neue Erkenntnisse; hervorzuheben sind in diesem Zusammenhang unter anderem die Aufsätze von Joanne Miyang Cho zu Albert Schweitzer und China, von Min Zhou zu deutschsprachigen Reise-Reflexionen in den 1970er Jahren oder auch Lydia Gerbers Beitrag zu Kiautschou als kolonialer Kontaktzone. Den transnationalen Charakter des jeweiligen Untersuchungsgegenstandes am empirischen Material auch zu reflektieren, gelingt den Beiträgen in den beiden Sammelbänden jedoch unterschiedlich gut:

So ist der Sammelband *Germany and China. Transnational Encounters since the Eighteenth Century* (Cho/Crowe 2014) inhaltlich zwar überaus instruktiv, er schöpft das vorhandene analytische Potenzial aber nicht aus, weder auf der Ebene der einzelnen Beiträge noch auf Ebene des Bandes selbst. Einleitend reflektieren die Herausgeber:innen zwar die gewählte Rahmenkategorie des Transnationalen (Cho/Crowe 2014: 7/8), die Phrase „Transnational Encounters“ im Titel des Bandes dient in der Folge aber eher als Orientierungsmarker und Klammer zur Subsumierung der Beiträge denn als fruchtbare Heuristik. Auch bleiben einige der Beiträge noch sehr ihrem empirischen Gegenstand verhaftet, statt Mehrwert und Grenzen der konzeptionellen Rahmung an ihrem jeweiligen Thema zu reflektieren. Dabei zeigen Beiträge aus diesem Sammelband sehr wohl den analytischen Mehrwert einer stärker kategorialen Reflexion – so beispielsweise der angesprochene Aufsatz von Lydia Gerber ebenso wie die Aufsätze von Lee M. Roberts zur „Gelben Gefahr“ oder von Shellen Xiao Wu zur intellektuellen Reflexion von Geopolitik im Krieg. Alle drei arbeiten mit Kategorien wie Wahrnehmung, Austausch, Interaktion, Rezeption oder Transfer, womit es ihnen gelingt, ihre Beiträge auch jenseits der konkreten Untersuchungsgegenstände anschlussfähig zu machen.

Ganz anders verhält es sich hingegen mit dem Sammelband *Sino-German Encounters and Entanglements. Transnational Politics and Culture, 1890-1950* (Cho 2021). Hier gelingt das, was im 2014er-Sammelband eher in Ansätzen zu sehen war: Der

Anspruch einer transnationalen Austausch- und Verflechtungsgeschichte wird nicht nur konstatiert (Cho 2021: 1), es werden einleitend auch Kategorien auf einer mittleren Abstraktionsebene identifiziert (Cho 2021: 2), die als analytische Leitkategorien in den durchweg lesenswerten Beiträgen aufgegriffen werden. So werden in vielen der Beiträge Mehrwert und Grenzen des transnationalen Ansatzes zumindest indirekt ausgelotet. Cho und ihren Beiträger:innen ist damit ein Sammelband gelungen, an dem sich künftige Projekte messen lassen müssen.

Was beide Sammelbände gleichermaßen beispielhaft demonstrieren, ist die Bedeutung des inzwischen dominant gewordenen transnationalen Ansatzes im Feld der Beziehungsgeschichte. Die Beiträge liefern nicht mehr nur inhaltlich wichtige neue Erkenntnisse; sie müssen künftig noch stärker als bisher mit Begriffen und Kategorien am empirischen Material arbeiten, damit Großkategorien wie „Transnational Encounters“ nicht mehr nur als Marker dienen, sondern heuristisch fruchtbar gemacht werden können. Gerade Sammelband-Projekte können ihre Beiträge damit stärker ins Gespräch bringen und auf diese Weise auch übergreifende Erkenntnisse zu Mehrwert, Grenzen und Operationalisierbarkeit historischer Großkategorien gewinnen.

Der dritte Sammelband *Europe and China in the Cold War. Exchanges Beyond the Bloc Logic and the Sino-Soviet Split* (Schaufelbuehl/Wyss/Zanier 2019) ist zeitlich und thematisch enger gefasst als die beiden vorangegangenen. Er folgt dem Ansatz der Dezentrierung und rückt die peripheren Staaten West- und Osteuropas in den Fokus. Ziel des Sammelbandes ist es, Formen des Austauschs zwischen der VR China und diesen Staaten im Kontext der Blockkonfrontation der 1950er bis 1970er Jahre herauszuarbeiten.

Die Herausgeber:innen dieses Sammelbandes sind dabei konzeptionell sehr zurückhaltend. Sie sprechen lediglich von „exchanges“ und eröffnen damit ein breites Feld an Austauschbeziehungen, das die Beiträge mit ihren jeweiligen Erkenntnisinteressen und analytischen Perspektiven füllen: Neben Beiträgen zum zivilgesellschaftlichen Austausch mitteleuropäischer Staaten mit China stehen so auch Studien zum Handel zwischen osteuropäischen Staaten und der Volksrepublik. Besonders instruktiv sind die Beiträge von Ariane Knüsel und Margaret K. Gnoinska, die sich mit der Bedeutung der Schweiz als Hub respektive mit Polens Handelspolitik gegenüber China befassen. Dass der Band aus einem Workshop hervorgegangen ist, merkt man in diesem Zusammenhang nicht nur an der Zusammenstellung der Beiträge, sondern vor allem auch daran, dass die Beiträge mit ähnlichen begrifflichen Kategorien arbeiten. Auf diese Weise ist ein Sammelband entstanden, der sich auf beeindruckende Weise der Kohärenz einer Monographie annähert.

Der Wermutstropfen mit Blick auf diesen überaus instruktiven und lesenswerten Sammelband liegt vor diesem Hintergrund auch nicht in den Beiträgen selbst als vielmehr in der Konzeption der Herausgeber:innen. Sie setzen in der Einleitung den Austausch jenseits der Blockkonfrontation als Prämisse fest (Schaufel-

buehl/Wyss/Zanier 2019: 15), statt den Beiträger:innen die Frage mitzugeben, inwieweit das Verhältnis peripherer europäischer Staaten zu China von der Blocklogik geprägt war: So können einige Beiträge wie der von Margaret K. Gnoinskas nachvollziehbar argumentieren, dass sich manches im toten Winkel der Blockkonfrontation vollzog, sodass es beispielsweise Polen gelang, trotz des sino-sowjetischen Zerwürfnisses die Handelsbeziehungen zur VR China aufrechtzuerhalten. Andere Beiträge wie der von Maximilian Graf und Wolfgang Müller zur Anerkennungspolitik Österreichs im Kalten Krieg zeigen wiederum, dass der Handlungsspielraum manch kleiner europäischer Staaten dann doch ganz fundamental von der Logik des Systemkonflikts geprägt war.

Dieser konzeptionelle Kritikpunkt schmälert jedoch in keiner Weise den Erkenntniswert der einzelnen Beiträge oder auch die allgemeine intellektuelle Freude an diesem überaus wertvollen Sammelband. Alle drei vorgestellten Sammelbände zeigen den heuristischen Mehrwert eines dezidiert transnationalen Ansatzes, der Staat und Politik zu einem Akteur unter vielen macht und damit einen vielschichtigeren Blick eröffnet, als es eine klassisch internationale Perspektive zu zeigen vermag.

Diese drei historisch ausgerichteten Sammelbände sollen abschließend mit einem Band kontrastiert werden, der einen gänzlich anderen, einen gegenwartsbezogenen Zugriff verfolgt, aber gleichwohl den Anspruch erhebt, eine Bestandsaufnahme des global integrierten Chinas vorzulegen: Bei *China and the World* (Shambaugh 2020) handelt es sich um einen Sammelband des renommierten Sino-Politologen David Shambaugh, der bereits mit einer Vielzahl von Publikationen zu diesem Feld hervorgetreten ist, mit diesem Band aber erstmals einen wirklich globalen Blick auf China wirft. Ziel des Herausgebers ist es, Chinas Verhältnis zur Welt und seine Rolle in den internationalen Beziehungen in der Breite auszuleuchten, um auf diese Weise einen Überblick zum Stand der globalen Integration und Verflechtung des gegenwärtigen Chinas unter anderem auch mit nicht-westlichen Regionen geben zu können.

Die Beiträge sind durchweg staats- und politikzentriert verfasst, was vor dem Hintergrund der Zielsetzung nachvollziehbar erscheint. Die thematische Breite reicht dabei von einem diachron angelegten Beitrag Odd Arne Westads zur Bedeutung historischer Erfahrungen für Chinas Außenpolitik, über Barry Naughtons Ausführungen zu Chinas globaler ökonomischer Verflechtung, bis hin zu Katherine Mortos Beitrag zu Chinas Global Governance. Intellektuell bereichernd ist an diesen Kapiteln vor allem, dass sie in ihrem Blickpunkt von China ausgehen, während in den skizzierten historischen Sammelbänden stets eine westliche Perspektive auf das Verhältnis zu China dominiert.

In der Einleitung des Sammelbandes kündigt Shambaugh überdies zwar eine Perspektivverschiebung von Außenpolitik auf Außenbeziehungen an (Shambaugh 2020: 3); diesem übergreifenden Anspruch wird dann aber leider nur der Beitrag von Peter Gries gerecht, der sich der Bedeutung von öffentlicher Meinung für die Formulierung von Außenpolitik in China widmet. Mit einer verstärkt transnationalen

Perspektive auf Chinas Außenbeziehungen wie im Beitrag von Gries hätte man letztlich nicht nur ein komplementäres Bild der globalen Integration und Verflechtung Chinas herausarbeiten können; die Analyse von Phänomenen auf der Mesoebene erscheint zudem als ein vielversprechender Ansatzpunkt für eine transdisziplinäre Zusammenarbeit von Politikwissenschaftler:innen, Sinolog:innen und Historiker:innen. Gerade weil sich inzwischen eine Vielzahl von Disziplinen mit dem weiteren Feld einer global integrierten Perspektive auf China in Geschichte und Gegenwart befassen, sind verstärkte Bemühungen in dieser Richtung angezeigt.

Die besprochenen Sammelbände zeigen beispielhaft, dass die Austauschbeziehungen Chinas zur Welt ein virulentes Thema unterschiedlichster Disziplinen geworden sind. Sie sind wichtige Bausteine im transdisziplinären Vorhaben, das Verhältnis Chinas zur Außenwelt aus verschiedenen Perspektiven zu kartieren und zu untersuchen.

Ob das Erkenntnisinteresse nun auf der Mikro-, Meso- oder Makroebene liegt: Die vier Sammelbände zeigen beispielhaft, wie gewinnbringend es sein kann, wenn ergänzend zu leitenden Großkategorien wie Transnationalismus oder Internationalismus Begriffe mittlerer Abstraktionsebene als Analyseinstrumente herausgearbeitet werden. Solche heuristischen Leitkategorien wie beispielsweise Wahrnehmung, Austausch, Interaktion oder auch Transfer können darüber hinaus den interdisziplinären Austausch befördern und bergen vielleicht sogar das Potenzial, die meist noch hermetische Differenzmarkierung zwischen internationaler und transnationaler Analyseebene aufzubrechen.

Letztlich erscheint die kategoriale Reflexion empirischer Erkenntnisse aber auch deshalb so wichtig, weil Forschende damit die Voraussetzung dafür schaffen, dass Beiträge auch losgelöst von ihren Gegenständen und jenseits ihrer disziplinären Verortung analytisch ins Gespräch gebracht werden können – für ein noch besseres Verständnis der Rolle Chinas in der Welt.

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Rezension von Stefan Messingschlager

Mit *Wang Chonghuis bleibendes Erbe* legt Thomas Weyrauch eine gleichermaßen instruktive wie akribisch recherchierte Studie vor, die eine der einflussreichsten Persönlichkeiten der chinesischen Moderne in den Mittelpunkt stellt. Wang Chonghui (1881–1958), Jurist, Diplomat und politischer Visionär, stand im Zentrum zahlreicher Wendepunkte der chinesischen Geschichte – von den Reformbemühungen der späten Qing-Dynastie über die Gründung der Republik China bis hin zur Gestaltung der internationalen Nachkriegsordnung.

Das Werk geht jedoch weit über eine rein biografische Darstellung hinaus. Weyrauch bettet Wangs Lebenswerk überzeugend in die umfassenden politischen, gesellschaftlichen und rechtlichen Transformationsprozesse des 20. Jahrhunderts ein. Dabei porträtiert er Wang als Brückenbauer, der chinesische Tradition und westliche Moderne miteinander verband und Lösungen für Spannungen zwischen nationalen Interessen und universellen Prinzipien suchte. Diese Perspektive macht das Werk nicht nur für die Biografie Wangs, sondern auch für die Erforschung globaler Verflechtungen bedeutsam. Das Buch ist dabei in 50 Kapitel unterteilt, die Wangs Lebensweg sowohl chronologisch als auch thematisch nachzeichnen. Die Kapitel spannen einen Bogen von Wangs akademischen Anfängen an der Beiyang-Universität und der Yale-Universität über seine Tätigkeit als Außenminister der Republik China und Präsident des Justiz-Yuans bis hin zu seiner Mitwirkung an der UN-Charta und seinen späteren Jahren in Taiwan.

Geboren 1881 in eine christliche Familie in Hongkong, verkörpert Wang Chonghuis Lebensweg die Herausforderungen und Möglichkeiten einer Epoche, in der chinesische Tradition und westliche Moderne aufeinandertrafen. Aufgewachsen in einem kulturell und intellektuell hybriden Umfeld, prägten ihn seine Studien an der Beiyang-Universität in Tianjin und der Yale-Universität. Diese vermittelten ihm fundierte Einblicke sowohl in das angelsächsische Common Law als auch in die kontinentaleuropäische Rechtstradition. Ein zentraler Meilenstein seiner frühen Karriere war die Übersetzung des deutschen Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuchs (BGB) ins Englische im Jahr 1907 – ein Projekt, das seine juristische Expertise eindrucksvoll belegte und zugleich den Grundstein für seine späteren Reformvorhaben legte.

Wangs Karriere reflektiert den politischen und gesellschaftlichen Wandel seiner Epoche: Eng verbunden mit der revolutionären Bewegung um Sun Yatsen, unterstützte er dessen Visionen und agierte zugleich im diplomatischen Dienst der Qing-Regierung – eine bemerkenswerte Gratwanderung zwischen gegensätzlichen politischen Lagern. Nach der Gründung der Republik China übernahm er Schlüsselpositionen: Als erster Außenminister und später als Präsident des Justiz-Yuans leitete er

wesentliche Reformen ein. Hierzu zählen die Einführung moderner Gesetzeswerke wie des Zivil- und Strafrechts sowie die Verfassung von 1931, die erstmals Frauen das Wahlrecht gewährte.

Auf internationaler Ebene trug Wang entscheidend zur Integration Chinas in die globale Ordnung bei. Als Delegierter der Kairo-Konferenz 1943 setzte er sich erfolgreich für die Rückgabe Taiwans an China ein. Darüber hinaus war er an der Ausarbeitung der UN-Charta beteiligt, in der er Prinzipien wie Gleichheit und die Ächtung rassistischer Diskriminierung verankerte. Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg zog Wang sich nach Taiwan zurück, wo er seine juristische Arbeit fortführte, und ein Vermächtnis hinterließ, das bis heute nachwirkt.

Die Studie erweist sich auch gerade deshalb als so instruktiv, weil sie über die Biografie Wangs hinausgehende Erkenntnisse bietet. Sie beleuchtet zentrale Aspekte der chinesischen Modernisierung, die Geschichte der Diplomatie sowie die Bedeutung transnational agierender Schlüsselpersonen für die sino-westliche Verflechtungsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Im Folgenden werden fünf Leitmotive herausgearbeitet, die sich wie analytische Schneisen durch das Werk ziehen und tiefergehende Einblicke ermöglichen.

(1) Juristische Modernisierung als Brücke zwischen Tradition und Moderne

Weyrauch porträtiert Wang als Architekten einer juristischen Reform, die darauf abzielte, chinesische Tradition und westliche Rechtsprinzipien miteinander zu verbinden. Seine Übersetzung des deutschen Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuchs (BGB) ins Englische im Jahr 1907 markiert den symbolischen Beginn dieser Vision. Auf dieser transkulturellen Grundlage basierend, führte Wang als Präsident des Justiz-Yuans moderne Gesetzeswerke wie das Zivil- und Strafrecht ein. Besonders die Verfassung von 1931, die Frauen erstmals das Wahlrecht gewährte, unterstreicht seinen Anspruch, ein sozial gerechtes und innovatives Rechtssystem zu schaffen. Weyrauch verdeutlicht eindrucksvoll, wie Wangs Reformen sowohl Chinas rechtliche Souveränität festigten als auch internationale Standards prägten.

(2) Diplomatie als Instrument universeller Prinzipien

Wangs diplomatische Karriere spiegelt seine Fähigkeit wider, nationale Interessen mit globalen Prinzipien zu verbinden. Die Kairo-Konferenz 1943, auf der er erfolgreich die Rückgabe Taiwans an China verhandelte, und seine Mitwirkung an der UN-Charta 1945 werden von Weyrauch als Höhepunkte seines diplomatischen Wirkens hervorgehoben. Hier brachte Wang universelle Werte wie Gleichheit und Gerechtigkeit ein, während er Chinas Souveränitätsansprüche verteidigte. Sein Engagement gegen rassistische Diskriminierung fand Eingang in die UN-Charta und unterstreicht seinen transnationalen Ansatz, der diplomatische Flexibilität mit einer langfristigen politischen Vision verband.

(3) Hybride Identität als Grundlage für kulturelle Vermittlung

Wangs biografische Prägung durch chinesische und westliche Einflüsse ermöglichte ihm eine einzigartige Rolle als kultureller Vermittler. Weyrauch betont, wie Wang

seine juristische Ausbildung an der Beiyang-Universität und Yale mit beruflichen Stationen in Europa und den USA verband, um kulturelle und rechtliche Unterschiede zu überbrücken. Seine hybride Identität befähigte ihn nicht nur dazu, chinesische Anliegen auf internationaler Ebene zu vertreten, sondern auch ein differenziertes Bild Chinas im Westen zu vermitteln. Damit wird Wang zu einer Schlüsselperson in der sino-westlichen Verflechtungsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts.

(4) Kontinuität und Wandel in Wangs Karriere

Trotz der politischen Umbrüche seiner Zeit bewahrte Wang seine Prinzipien und setzte nachhaltige Reformen um. Weyrauch analysiert, wie Wang seine juristischen und diplomatischen Visionen über drei politische Systeme hinweg – von der späten Qing-Dynastie über die Republik China bis zu seiner Tätigkeit in Taiwan – verfolgte. Seine Fähigkeit, pragmatische Anpassung mit langfristigen Reformzielen zu verbinden, wird als entscheidende Stärke dargestellt. Diese Kontinuität machte Wang zu einem Garanten institutioneller Stabilität in turbulenten Zeiten.

(5) Transnationale Dimension von Wangs Vermächtnis

Wangs Vermächtnis entfaltete Wirkung weit über die Grenzen Chinas hinaus und beeinflusste die Entwicklung moderner Rechts- und Verfassungsordnungen auf internationaler Ebene. Seine aktive Mitgestaltung der UN-Charta, insbesondere die Verankerung von Prinzipien wie Gleichheit, Souveränität und die Ächtung rassistischer Diskriminierung, setzte Maßstäbe für eine globale Rechtsordnung nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Darüber hinaus hebt Weyrauch hervor, wie Wangs rechtliche Expertise und sein Engagement in internationalen Institutionen – etwa durch seine Mitwirkung an den Entscheidungen des Ständigen Internationalen Gerichtshofs in Den Haag – dazu beitrugen, universelle Normen mit lokalen rechtlichen Traditionen zu verbinden.

Thomas Weyrauchs *Wang Chonghuis bleibendes Erbe* beeindruckt durch seine akribische Quellenarbeit und die lebendige Darstellung einer der prägendsten Persönlichkeiten der chinesischen Moderne. Auf der Grundlage unveröffentlichter Dokumente und persönlicher Korrespondenz gelingt es dem Autor, Wangs Leben in den größeren historischen Kontext der chinesischen Modernisierung und der internationalen Rechts- und Diplomatiegeschichte einzuordnen. Besonders hervorzuheben ist, wie Weyrauch zentrale Leitmotive konsequent durch das Buch hindurch entwickelt: Wangs juristische Reformen, von der Abschaffung extraterritorialer Rechte bis hin zur Einführung moderner Gesetzeswerke wie der Verfassung von 1931, zeigen eindrucksvoll den Brückenschlag zwischen chinesischer Tradition und westlicher Moderne. Ebenso überzeugend analysiert Weyrauch Wangs diplomatisches Geschick, das sich etwa bei der Kairo-Konferenz 1943 und der UN-Charta 1945 zeigte, wo Wang universelle Prinzipien wie Gleichheit und Gerechtigkeit in globale Strukturen einbrachte. Auch Wangs Rolle als kultureller Vermittler wird differenziert analysiert und präzise in den Kontext hybrider Identitäten und transnationaler Dynamiken eingebettet.

Ein Alleinstellungsmerkmal der Studie ist zudem das umfangreiche Werksverzeichnis, das neben ausländischen Publikationen auch die Entscheidungen des Ständigen Internationalen Gerichtshofs in Den Haag sowie die Urteile des Obersten Gerichtshofs der Republik China aus Nanjing und Taibei umfasst. Damit liegt hier meines Wissens die einzige nicht-chinesische Arbeit vor, die Wangs Leben und Werk in solcher Tiefe und Breite dokumentiert.

Mit dieser umfassenden Perspektive leistet die Studie einen wertvollen Beitrag zur Erforschung sino-westlicher Verflechtungsgeschichten und gibt zugleich wichtige Impulse für die sinologische und (rechts-)historische Forschung. Sie regt dazu an, die Herausforderungen und Chancen einer globalisierten Moderne weiter zu reflektieren. Ein Werk, das für Fachwissenschaftler:innen ebenso lesenswert ist wie für ein breiteres Publikum – und eine klare Leseempfehlung verdient.

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Wang, Dong (Hg.): Tse Tsan Tai (1872-1938): An Australian-Cantonese Opinion Maker in British Hong Kong.

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Rezension von Thomas Weyrauch

In der heutigen Literatur ist der Name Tse Tsan Tai weitgehend in Vergessenheit geraten, was auf mangelnde historische Bedeutung schließen lässt. Doch diese Wahrnehmung täuscht, wie Wang Dongs neuestes Werk zeigt. Die zweifach, in Geschichtswissenschaften und Asienstudien, promovierte und am Bostoner Gordon College lehrende Professorin Wang Dong gilt als Spezialistin für chinesische Geschichte, für die sinoamerikanischen Beziehungen sowie für Geopolitik und Geokultur. Mit Schriften, wie *China's Unequal Treaties* oder *The United States and China* wurde sie bekannt. Ihr neuestes Werk beschäftigt sich mit dem Hongkonger Visionär, Aktivisten und Publizisten Xie Zuantai (謝纘泰), bekannter unter der Schreibweise „Tse Tsan Tai“.

Als Auslandschinese in Australien geboren und christlich erzogen, wuchs Xie Zuantai keinesfalls von China entfremdet auf. So strebte er schon früh ein China an, das frei von Kolonialismus und der Fremdherrschaft der Mandschuren sein sollte:

My father was a leader of the Chinese Independent Party of Australia, and when I was about twelve years of age he told me the story of the cruel conquest of China by the Manchu Tartars, and I promised him that when I grew up, I would return to China and do my best to help in driving the usurping Manchu Tartars out of China (S. 109 f.).

Gerade im Kampf gegen die mandschurische Qing-Dynastie offenbarte Xie seine dunkle Seite des Rassismus, der in dieser Zeit salonfähig war.

Xie Zuantai vermittelt sowohl als Akteur als auch als Zeuge der Jahre nach 1895, die berühmte Reformer wie Kang Youwei und Revolutionäre wie Sun Yatsen hervorbrachten, ein völlig anderes Bild vom Geschehen, als dies durch die ideologischen Erben Suns tradierten. Xie kreierte Sun insbesondere die Sympathien für die Sowjetunion an. Auch warf er Sun vor, er sei der Hintermann eines geplanten Mordanschlages auf den ideologischen Gegner Kang Youwei gewesen. Hauptquelle jener Attacken waren seine historischen Berichte der Arbeit „The Chinese Republic: Secret History of the Revolution“.

Originell, wenn nicht gar phantastisch waren Xies religiöse Vorstellungen, welche biblische Geschichten mit chinesischer Selbstüberschätzung als Ursprung jeglicher Kultur vermengten. So behauptete er, der Garten Eden habe nichts mit dem Nahen Osten/Westasien zu tun. Vielmehr habe er sich im westchinesischen Xinjiang/Osttukestan befunden und führt zum Beweis u. a. das reiche Vorkommen an Jade an, eines Minerals, das von den rabbinischen Autoren des Alten Testaments mangels entsprechender Kenntnisse nicht erwähnt, geschweige denn geschätzt wurde. Er

ging noch weiter: Die biblischen Patriarchen setzte er mit den Urvätern der chinesischen Mythologie gleich, wie den in der biblischen Legende ersten Menschen Adam mit Himmelskaiser Tianhuang (天皇), Adams Sohn und Brudermörder Kain mit Dihuang (地黃), Seth, den nach Abels Tod weiteren Sohn von Adam und Eva, mit Renhuang (人皇), einen weiteren Urkaiser, Kains Sohn Hennoch, mit Urkaiser Fuxi Taihao (復習太好), Noah mit Schöpfergöttin Nüwa (女媧), Sem, den ältesten Sohn Noahs, mit dem Urbauern Shennong Yandi (神農炎帝), Arpachschad, Sems Sohn, mit dem Gelben Kaiser Huangdi (皇帝) und Regu, Ur-Urgroßvater Abrahams, mit Urkaiser Yao (堯). Heute erinnert Xies übertriebener Sinozentrismus nicht nur den Reiseerlebnissen eines Kang Youwei, sondern eher an den patriotischen Brautvater Costas Portokalos in der US-Filmkomödie „My Big Fat Greek Wedding“ (2002), der in allem einen griechischen Ursprung suchte.

Als Gründer und Herausgeber der South China Morning Post – nach damaligen britischen Kolonialrecht zunächst nur als Komprador, einem chinesischen Vermittler des nominellen Eigentümers britischer Herkunft – wurde der Verleger ein erfolgreicher Unternehmer, der sich, seiner Frau und seiner stattlichen Kinderzahl ein Leben in Wohlstand erwirtschaftete. Er nutzte seinen Reichtum nicht nur, um edle Kunstwerke zu sammeln, sondern investierte auch in Eisenbahnprojekte oder in eine Versuchsfarm.

Bei der Vielfalt seiner Identitäten, Ideen und Handlungen bescheinigt Autorin Wang ihrem Forschungsobjekt Xie eine „composite identity“ als Diaspora-Chinese, Christ, Revolutionär, Erfinder, Unternehmer, Gründer der South China Morning Post, Freigeist, aber leider auch als Rassist. Auch hier existiert eine Geistesverwandtschaft zu dem allerdings monarchistisch eingestellten Kang Youwei. Xie steht in seinem Typus, seinen Visionen und Widersprüchen für einen exponierten Intellektuellen des ausgehenden Kaiserreiches und der frühen Republik China.

Besonders anschaulich macht Wang den Duktus, die Motivation und die Zielsetzung Xies durch die Übernahme von Quellen aus seiner Hand. Insgesamt ein weiteres Mosaiksteinchen für diesen wichtigen Abschnitt der Geschichte Chinas präsentierend, ist Wang Dongs Werk empfehlenswert.

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Promovierter Jurist und Autor zahlreicher Bücher zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte wie auch zur Politik und Geschichte Ostasiens.

You, Ziyang: Folk Literati, Contested Tradition, and Heritage in Contemporary China. Incense is Kept Burning.

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020. 276 pp., ISBN 978-0-253-04636-9 (paperback).

Review by Bai Yusheng

You Ziyang's monograph investigates how various actors and institutions engage with efforts to preserve and continue cultural traditions on the ground in northern rural China. Particularly, You focuses on the important role of folk literati, "a group of people who are skilled in classical Chinese, knowledgeable of local traditions, and capable of representing them in writing" (p. 1), in the transmission and reproduction of local traditions, manifested in a vernacular expression "incense is kept burning" ("xianghuo buduan"; p. 61). The case study is around the worship of ancient sage-kings Yao and Shun, as well as Ehuang and Nüying who are Yao's two daughters and wed Shun, situated in Hongtong County of Shanxi Province.

Benefiting from the author's intellectual backgrounds in China and the US, in the introduction section, You skillfully builds her conceptual framework through connecting Chinese and English scholarly debates, and develops a theoretical basis to the ideas and challenges of tradition ("chuantong", "chuitong"), heritage ("yichan"), agency, and literati ("wenren", "shi"). Methodologically, You combines ethnography with history, and puts a synthesis of textual sources (classic books, local gazetteers, stele texts, hand-written manuscripts, etc.), participant observation, casual conversations and formal interviews. The book is based on fieldwork that You conducted in Hongtong County in 2007, 2012 and 2013.

The book includes six content chapters. In the first chapter, You introduces the setting of her case study, namely three places of Yangxie, Lishan and Wan'an in Hongtong County, and situates the beliefs and practices surrounding Ehuang and Nüying in local contexts through gazetteers and annals, temples and stele texts, as well as ritual festivals and opera performances. You also presents the key folk groups shè and its developments during rapid social changes. Chapter 2 investigates the role of folk literati in the transmission and reproduction of local traditions. In particular, the author reconstructs the life narratives of Qiao Guoliang, through interviews with his family members and friends, as well as the literatus' own writings, including his couplet, poem and handwritten manuscript of "Biographies of Ehuang and Nüying". Over the years, Qiao was committed to preserving the cultural knowledge and continuing communal rituals regarding Ehuang and Nüying. You notes the revival of folk beliefs and practices observed by scholars is "a dynamic process of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction" (p. 87), showing folk literati's dedication to carry on the cultural responsibility despite intense social and political changes.

You understands myth as “forged on the ground through a dialectic process of both continuity and contestation”, and “the cultural reproduction of myth is driven not only by different actors but by different motivations among competing agents” (p. 120). In chapter 3, the author investigates contesting constructions of stories of ancient sage-kings Yao and Shun in Hongtong. The folk literati compete to remake local traditions on the ground, and You traces the process of divergence and convergence between two “pen holders” (“bi gan zi”; p. 117), Li Xuezhi from Lishan and Liu Baoshan from Wan’an. The debates between the two aim at contributing to the significant status for their respective hometowns in honoring Shun, though the competing representations of local history and traditions also cause tense relations to local communities.

Chapter 4 uses tradition ecology as a framework to understand the “complex process of balance in cultural continuity and change on the ground” (p. 121). The author shows folk literati, an integral part of tradition ecology, as a dynamic group of individuals with different backgrounds and positions. They debate and negotiate with one another in remaking the conflict legends between Ehuang and Nüying in local communities. It is interesting to note that among the different versions of legend created by folk literati, whereas the far from reality “dowry plot” (p. 129) has to be deleted, the stories around “cooking beans” and “sewing shoe soles” (p. 144) are popular among local people, for local women relate to these experiences in their everyday lives and pass down the basic skills through the generations. You also analyzes how community members receive the viewpoints and roles of folk literati in remaking different legends.

In chapter 5, the author emphasizes though folk literati are active agents in transmitting and reproducing local traditions, they are subject to peer review by other folk literati and judgement from their community fellows, otherwise they result in isolating themselves and losing authority in cultural production. Using disaster legends, You illustrates how ordinary villagers resist cultural and political authority when their accumulated knowledge and practice are disrespected. Furthermore, You highlights folk literati’s relationships with the local shè, temple reconstruction associations, and ritual specialists, and the interactions are important in shaping cultural production and reception by folk literati. In the closing, You draws on the insight of tradition as “transfer of responsibility” and conceptualizes tradition as a dynamic process of “transfer of appreciation”, which makes it possible to protect culture among individuals, groups and communities, and across time and space (p. 183-184).

You locates her case study in China’s projects to preserve cultural heritage in early 21st century. In chapter 6, the author discusses the contentious interactions among different actors in the process of protecting local tradition as intangible cultural heritage (ICH), and closely traces the application process for listing “the custom of visiting sacred relatives in Hongtong” as an ICH element from county-level to national-level. Controversies and conflicts have arisen in local communities due to

heritage listing and designation of representative transmitters. Although folk literati view “their role as builders of bridges between the local and the national” (p. 123) and play a major role in revitalizing tradition and protecting heritage on the ground, most of them are marginalized and “excluded from the designation of representative transmitters in the ICH projects” (p. 207). You critiques that “the heritage-making process has not empowered the key folk institutions and folk literati to protect local traditions with and for local people but instead has disempowered the folk literati and put local communities at the bottom of the power relationship” (p. 185).

You concludes her book by reiterating the main arguments, highlighting the role that folk literati play in cultural transmission and reproduction. “On the ground, it is folk literati and numerous other individuals who keep incense burning and keep local tradition alive. However, their role in the process of heritage making is not fully recognized by intellectuals and the state” (p. 217). It is the author’s intention to acknowledge those important yet neglected actors. You also suggests further directions for future research, connecting with the rising field of critical heritage studies. The author considers it necessary to investigate different genres of ICH and examine the global-local interactions of ICH protection on the ground, comparatively across actors, levels and communities.

It would be more helpful for the readers if You provided a map of the research sites and the procession routes, instead of general maps of China and Shanxi Province (p. 30-31). You coins her definition of folk literati and dialogues it widely with various other relevant terms. It is a pity that the author does not explain further, while concepts like “folklore elites” (“*minsu jingying*”), “village literati” and “local intellectuals” (p. 64), “local elite” (p. 87), “amateur scholars”, “folk folklorists” (p. 217) are elaborated as unsatisfying, why terms like “*shusheng*” (p. 22) or just “*wenren*” (p. 159) are not chosen. Some further aspects inspire thinking, like how the sacrificial festival to ancestors under the old pagoda tree, also a popular tradition turned national heritage (p. 32), is different or similar in heritage making process with the rituals of receiving aunties; why the folk literati are overwhelmingly male though local women form the main participants in two major festivals (p. 54); how folk literati relate and interact with the local literary and art associations.

You Ziying’s work is a timely contribution to the important, yet often underestimated, role of folk literati in keeping the incense burning. It is beautifully written and with great details. Scholars and students in folklore, cultural studies, popular religion and heritage studies will draw insights from the work. It is also readable for the general public interested in Chinese society and culture.

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