Socioeconomic Circumstances and Identity Formation:

A Triptych on the Korean Diasporas in Germany, China and Japan

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(1) de Valk, Victor. "A Short History of the *Zainichi*: Labour Emancipation and the Evolution of Identity." MA Essay, Leiden University, 2020.

(2) de Valk, Victor. "*Chosŏnjok* Identity and Socioeconomic Change: A Comparative Analysis Between the *Chosŏnjok* and *Zainichi* Communities." MA Essay, Leiden University, 2020.

(3) de Valk, Victor. "Crafting a Post-Marxist Theory of Identity: A Cumulative Case Study on the Korean Diasporas in Germany, China and Japan." MA Essay, Leiden University, 2021.

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§1 · A Short History of the *Zainichi*:

Labour Emancipation and the Evolution of Identity

§1.1 · Push and pull

With the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century rise of Japan came the assertion of Japanese power over Korea, the latter being no match for its rapidly modernising neighbour. One could argue this era commenced with the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1876, or Ganghwa Treaty,[1,2] and culminated in the Japanese colonisation of Korea from 1910 until 1945. The colonial era saw the beginning of contemporary Korean migration to Japan,[3] eventually giving birth to the concept of the *zainichi* (在日): the conventional Japanese term for Koreans who migrated to Japan during the colonial era and who have remained there since.[4]

The colonial ties allowed for Korean migration to the metropole and other newly colonised areas.[5] Although some academics posit that the ensuing migration was largely voluntary,[6] others argue that this migration was forced upon the Korean population through Japanese government intervention, by for instance confiscating Korean farmland and thus impoverishing the Korean peninsula.[7] As such, the Japanese manufacturing boom of the 1910s provided one of the only ways to escape the destitute conditions created under colonial rule.[8] Moreover, 1939 saw the Japanese conscription Korean men and women, initiating another wave of (involuntary) migration.[9]

Once in Japan, the Koreans were exploited as contingent labour,[10] resulting in very poor working conditions and ambiguous contracts.[11] Besides the precarious labour circumstances, the eventual Japanese loss of the Korean peninsula meant that the *zainichi*'s legal status would soon be in limbo as well.

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[1] Krištofová, "Japan and Korea," 48-49.
[2] 김종학, "1876년 조일수호조규 체결과정," 206.
[3] Shen, "Historical and Contemporary Korean Emigration," 33.
[4] Lie, "The End of the Road?", 169.
[5] Shen, "Historical and Contemporary Korean Emigration," 33.
[6] Lie, "The End of the Road?", 175-176.
[7] Shen, "Historical and Contemporary Korean Emigration," 41.
[8] Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble*, 26-27.
[9] Ropers, *Voices of the Korean Minority*, 33.
[10] Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble*, 12.
[11] Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble*, 45.

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§1.2 · Internalised othering

Although the more-than-half-a-million remaining Korean migrants[12] were colonial subjects and thus Japanese citizens, they lost said status and the corresponding rights in 1952,[13] without the ability to reclaim full citizenship.[14] This loss of rights was compounded by police intimidation and surveillance.[15] The Japanese government also institutionalised barriers for the *zainichi* to engage in the public system by withholding the right to vote and barring them from public employment.[16] Moreover, societal discrimination limited the *zainichi*'s opportunities for employment in the private sector.[17]

The perceived coercive migration history, the Japanese (and occupational) government's policies[18] and the societal distrust vis-à-vis ethnic[19] Korean residents[20] caused the Korean minority to construct an insular identity by distancing themselves from the Japanese natives.[21,22,23] This strong sense of identity allowed the *zainichi* labourers to mobilise under one banner and protest against the aforementioned perceived injustices.[24] Although these protests procured several small victories, they did not achieve structural improvements in labour conditions or judicial equality.[25] A more substantial emancipation of the *zainichi* would only occur later.

§1.3 · The rising tide

The flourishing of the Japanese economy in the 1950s and onwards would eventually trickle down to the *zainichi* as well.[26] Unlike the supply of contingent labour in the 1910s, the late 1960s saw a serious labour

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[12] Kim, "Bringing Class Back In," 876.
[13] Chung, "The Politics of Contingent Citizenship," 154.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Kim, "Bringing Class Back In," 876.
[17] Kim, "Bringing Class Back In," 876-877.
[18] Chung, "The Politics of Contingent Citizenship," 153-155.
[19] For all three essays contained within this compilation, the term "ethnic" is used to refer to "those who share biological, or imagined, descent and a certain degree of culture," see: Kim, "Bringing Class Back In," 894.
[20] Kim, "Bringing Class Back In," 876-877.
[21] Ropers, *Voices of the Korean Minority*, 40-42.
[22] Chung, "The Politics of Contingent Citizenship," 165.
[23] Chapman, "The Third Way and Beyond," 34-35.
[24] Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble*, 91-92.
[25] Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble*, 215.
[26] Kim, "Bringing Class Back In," 880.

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shortage.[27] This resulted in Japanese companies hiring local ethnic Koreans, largely letting go of previous prejudices. The growth of economic opportunities and the globalisation of the Japanese market led to a drastic increase in *zainichi* employed as white collar professionals; combined with the removal of legal and institutional barriers, the *zainichi* achieved effective socioeconomic parity with their ethnically Japanese counterparts.[28,29] Nowadays, the intermarriage rate between *zainichi* Koreans and ethnic Japanese exceeds eighty percent, a sign of the decline in anti-*zainichi* discrimination.[30,31] However, it is perhaps also a sign of the decline in the idiosyncratic ethnic awareness the *zainichi* previously displayed.

§1.4 · A post-*zainichi* identity?

Following the socioeconomic equalisation, two developments are to be observed:

(1) The nigh-monolith of the *zainichi*'s identity as distinctly *not Japanese* has crumbled and given way to a trifurcation, adding both complete assimilation[32] as well as a "third way" unconstrained by Korean and Japanese essentialism.[33,34] This "third way" is characterised by a much more fluid expression of identity, a negotiation between the Korean and Japanese identity.[35]

(2) For the contemporary *zainichi*, the centre of gravity has shifted from the promotion of Korean identity assertion towards a willingness to (partially) internalise a Japanese identity.[36]

When assessing these developments, one could take a critical approach and argue for the emergence of a post-*zainichi* generation:[37] as the socioeconomic opportunities virtually equalised, notions of a distinct Korean identity became less important. This is much akin to the Marxist idea that equal material circumstances will eventually result in a shared identity.[38]

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Kim, "Bringing Class Back In," 882.
[29] Of course, there was still inequality. "Socioeconomic parity" therefore signifies that the inequality *amongst and between* the ethnic Koreans and Japanese approached convergence.
[30] Lie, "The End of the Road?", 175.
[31] Kim, "Bringing Class Back In," 888.
[32] Whether those who decide to completely assimilate are to be considered *zainichi* is a debate highlighted by "The Fourth Choice", see: Chapman, "The Third Way and Beyond," 41.
[33] Lie, "The End of the Road?", 169-170.
[34] Lie, *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan)*, 95-96.
[35] Chapman, "The Third Way and Beyond," 38-39.
[36] Lie, *Zainichi (Koreans in Japan)*, 166.
[37] Lie, "The End of the Road?", 176-178.
[38] Schwarzmantel, "Nationalism and socialist internationalism."

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Considering how the diasporic Overton Window expanded to include assimilatory attitudes *only after* material conditions were equalised, I reject the notion that migrant communities automatically develop a fluid sense of identity if given enough time.[39] I posit, according to the Marxist tradition, that this adaptation can only occur if virtual socioeconomic parity is achieved between the migrant community and native population, so that class differences no longer directly correlate to one's ethnic identity.

Additionally, the permanence of this development appears questionable; it has been observed that, amongst the *zainichi*, notions of Koreanness will resurface when exposed to the imagined ancestral nation (in most cases South Korea and its population).[40] This exposure does not necessarily result in the *zainichi* embracing their supposed Koreanness, as a rejection of their Korean ancestry is a common response as well.[41] Regardless, this strong emotional response displays a re-entrenchment into a dichotomous way of thinking about one's own identity.

§1.5 · Conclusion

As the socioeconomic circumstances of the *zainichi* improved, the predominant attitude shifted from asserting one's Korean identity to a more cosmopolitan identity of bargaining between the Korean identity and the Japanese one. As such, the Marxist idea of the formation of a shared identity upon the achievement of equal material conditions appears to have a kernel of truth to it. However, one can already observe the fact that some *zainichi* get re-entrenched in a form of dichotomous identity-based thinking when confronted with the (perceived) ancestral nation. It therefore remains to be seen whether the "third way" will be able to stand the test of time and confrontation.

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[39] Hong, "Exploring literary negotiations of culture and identity," 40.
[40] Lee, *Between Foreign and Family*, 14-15.
[41] Lee, *Between Foreign and Family*, 114-115.

§2 · *Chosŏnjok* Identity and Socioeconomic Change:

A Comparative Analysis Between the *Chosŏnjok* and *Zainichi* Communities

§2.1 · *Act one:* The green, green grass of home

Contemporary Korean migration to China can be traced back to the late 19th century: unfavourable agricultural conditions enticed citizens of then-Joseon to seek greener pastures north of the then Sino-Joseon border.[42] This migration pattern continued during the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula (in part forced by the Japanese government).[43] Although a second wave of (South) Korean migration to China was initiated in the 1990s,[44] it is the prior group which forms the vast majority of the *Chosŏnjok* (조선족), said name being the common[45] term used to refer to Chinese citizens of Korean ethnic descent. However, akin to the *zainichi*, the possible identities developed amongst the *Chosŏnjok* are pluriform and complex.

§2.2 · *Act two:* A fall from grace?

Kim Hyejin points towards three distinct possible identities amongst the *Chosŏnjok*:

- National (Chinese);[46]

- Ethnic (Korean),[47] and;

- Hybrid.[48]

The hybrid identity is characterised as either being (1) diasporic, emphasising an embedded ethnic awareness within a national identity, or (2) cosmopolitan, where neither ethnic nor national identity are explicitly emphasised.[49] The cosmopolitan identity opens up opportunities for a post-*Chosŏnjok* identity,

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[42] 李光奎, *在中韓人*, 17-18.
[43] Kim, *International Ethnic Networks*, 20.
[44] Kim, I*nternational Ethnic Networks*, 21-22.
[45] The naming of Chinese Koreans has been a hairy affair, with different names carrying different connotations. For further explanation, see: Kim, *International Ethnic Networks*, 58.
[46] Kim, "Nostalgia, Anxiety and Hope," 113.
[47] Lee, *Between Foreign and Family*, 97-98.
[48] Kim, *International Ethnic Networks*, 51.
[49] Hong, Song & Park, "Korean, Chinese, or What?," 36.

akin to what can be observed amongst the *zainichi*, where an emergent "third way" appears to circumvent the dichotomy of ethnic and national identity (§1.4). For the *zainichi*, this development seems to have occurred in conjunction with their socioeconomic emancipation.[50] The *Chosŏnjok* have been socioeconomically successful for the greater part of a century,[51,52] and as such have been able to formulate a hybridised identity as well.

However, there is one distinct trend which differentiates the Chinese and Japanese cases: unlike the *zainichi*, a lot of younger *Chosŏnjok* have shifted towards adopting a majority-based, and thus Sinicised, identity.[53] This might appear odd, due to the *Chosŏnjok's* aforementioned socioeconomic success: for the *zainichi*, similar success is the main driving force for the creation of a hybridised or even post-diasporic identity (§1.4). Even though the spoils of the *Chosŏnjok's* previous collective success have not disappeared, said success is no longer quite as impressive within the contemporary Chinese context: with urban China's explosive economic growth of the late 20th and early 21st century, the rural *Chosŏnjok's* socioeconomic position within society has declined sharply in relative terms.[54] Outside of the *Chosŏnjok* ethnic enclave economy,[55] the Korean part of *Chosŏnjok* citizens' identities has little economic value within China, which is the country where the majority *Chosŏnjok* have to seek their fortune. Conversely, a Sinicised identity offers greater prospects in terms of socioeconomic success or even just survival.[56]

§2.3 · *Act three:* Up to the cities and down to the suburbs

Although some *Chosŏnjok* hold onto their hybrid or perhaps Korea-centric identity, which affords them opportunities within the ethnic enclave economy,[57] a large number of *Chosŏnjok* perceive greater opportunities beyond the diasporic community, mostly within China's cities. As a result of this, China's biggest cities have seen a steep increase in the number of *Chosŏnjok* residents in the early 21st century.[58] Interestingly, in the 1980s and early 1990s the opposite occurred: as South Korea was perceived to be a

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[50] Chapman, "The Third Way and Beyond," 41.
[51] Kim, "Nostalgia, Anxiety and Hope," 103.
[52] This process admittedly saw its ups and downs, see: Hong, Song & Park, "Korean, Chinese, or What?," 35.
[53] Kim, *International Ethnic Networks*, 45-46.
[54] Kim, "Nostalgia, Anxiety and Hope," 106.
[55] Kim, "Ethnic Enclave Economy in Urban China," 822-824.
[56] Kim, *International Ethnic Networks*, 45-46.
[57] Kim, "Ethnic Enclave Economy in Urban China," 822-824.
[58] Kim, "Nostalgia, Anxiety and Hope," 103.

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land of opportunity, a large number of *Chosŏnjok* started emphasising their Koreanness in a bid to get a piece of the pie; this did not last beyond the aforementioned timeframe, however.[59,60]

As the *Chosŏnjok* chase these opportunities in China beyond the diasporic enclave, emphasising a Korea-centric identity becomes a disadvantage rather than an asset; in a mirror image of the 1980s and early 1990s, this opens the path to Sinicisation.

The process of *Chosŏnjok* Sinicisation, in light of the Koreanisation of the 1980s and early 1990s, illustrates the fluidity of identity and its relative desirability. To elucidate the point, one may observe the *Chosŏnjok* in contemporary South Korea: if the *Chosŏnjok* immigrant feels[61] socioeconomically unsuccessful and alienated from the native majority population,[62] said individual might formulate an idiosyncratic Sino-Korean "counter-identity" which emphasises the ways in which they differ from the local majority population.[63,64] On the other hand, if they consider themselves socioeconomically successful in South Korea, especially when compared to their previous life in China, they are more likely to internalise a Korean identity instead.[65,66]

§2.4 · Q: Are we not Korean?

Just like amongst the *zainichi*, socioeconomic success brought about the creation of a chimeric *Chosŏnjok* identity. Said fortunes have not been reversed, but the economic development in China has created a boom in urban opportunities greater than those afforded to the *Chosŏnjok* by their own diasporic community. Therefore, as opposed to Japanese Koreans, Chinese Koreans are currently more likely to forgo parts of their Korean identity in favour of their national identity in order to pursue the aforementioned opportunities. Nevertheless, most of those who choose to Sinicise their identity still

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[59] Hong, Song & Park, "Korean, Chinese, or What?," 35.
[60] Lee, "Heartstrings to the Homeland," 101-102.
[61] The word "feels" was chosen as this is a subjective experience. For more information, see: Andersson, "An Odd Ladder to Climb," 622-624.
[62] Alienation could be due to e.g. discrimination or lack of socioeconomic success, which also reinforce each other.
[63] Lee, *Between Foreign and Family*, 109-112.
[64] Hong, Song & Park, "Korean, Chinese, or What?," 37-38.
[65] Hong, Song & Park, "Korean, Chinese, or What?," 36.
[66] Kim, *International Ethnic Networks*, 47-48.

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maintain trace elements of their Koreanness and therefore continue to have a "dual-identity,"[67] of which the Chinese identity now primarily dictates the public persona.

§2.5 · Conclusion

The current developments in *Chosŏnjok* identity formation, considering the previous trend of Koreanisation in the 1980s and early 1990s, show how the *Chosŏnjok* actively consider the socioeconomic consequences of their identity. In a way, this means that the *Chosŏnjok* truly "negotiate" their identity by way of commodifying it. Although the identity shifts in the *Chosŏnjok* are in part *a result of* socioeconomic transformation and circumstances, the *Chosŏnjok* adoption of Sinicised identities intends to also *actively bring about* socioeconomic change (on an individual level). In retrospect, a similarly active identificatory ownership for the sake of socioeconomic advancement can be argued to apply to the *zainichi* as well. Much like the first *Chosŏnjok* settlers,[68] the contemporary *Chosŏnjok* continue seeking socioeconomic betterment, and their identity is one of the tools available to achieve it.

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[67] Kim, *International Ethnic Networks*, 51.
[68] Kim, "Nostalgia, Anxiety and Hope," 98.

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§3 · Crafting a Post-Marxist Theory of Identity:

A Cumulative Case Study on the Korean Diasporas in Germany, China and Japan

§3.1 · Introduction

The late nineteenth throughout the twentieth century was an era of political and economic turbulence for the population of the Korean peninsula[69]. The macropolitical circumstances of the time encouraged outward migration amongst the Korean population, with destinations such as:

(1) Japan[70], to avoid destitute conditions on the Korean peninsula as colonial periphery;[71]

(2) China[72], in order to pursue an agricultural way of life which was becoming ponderous on the Korean peninsula, and;[73]

(3) West Germany[74], in the case of South Korea[75], where Korean "guest labourers" (*gastarbeiter*) worked as nurses and miners.[76,77]

For all of these groups, the migration was not initiated with the goal of permanent residency in the migratory destination in mind. However, many migrants ended up settling in said destination and therefore did not return to the Korean peninsula. This adoption of a new home country has serious implications for an individual's identity: does one insist on their ethnic identity, is one able to incorporate elements of the host country's majority population identity, or does one decide to wholly transform their identity within the context of their new environment?

The preceding essays on this topic have pointed towards the importance of socioeconomic circumstances and opportunities in identity formation. This essay aims to create a cohesive (post-Marxist) theory for said identity transformation on the basis of socioeconomic circumstances, using a synthesis of Marxist,

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[69] Here the "Korean peninsula" refers to (1) the Joseon dynasty, (2) the Korean territory of the Japanese empire, and (3) North and South Korea post-occupation (officially the "Democratic People's Republic of Korea" and the "Republic of Korea" respectively), each of which when chronistically applicable.

[70] At the time of migration, the Korean peninsula was technically a part of the Empire of Japan. Here, "Japan" is used to refer to the Japanese archipelago, the metropole of the Japanese empire.

[71] Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble*, 26-27.

[72] The bulk of Korean migration to the country contemporarily referred to as "China" (officially the "People's Republic of China") occurred during (1) the Qing dynasty and (2) the Japanese empire's occupation of Manchuria. See: Kim, *International Ethnic Networks*, 19-20.

[73] 李光奎, *在中韓人*, 17-18.

[74] The "Federal Republic of Germany," which also became the official name of Germany post-reunification.

[75] Meanwhile, a number of North Koreans were residing in East Germany, officially the "German Democratic Republic." However, since the North Korean migrants were only able to stay temporarily, they are not up for analysis in this paper. See: Green, "An Anti-Reform Marriage of Convenience."

[76] Na, "Diplomatische Tauschgeschäfte?," 677.

[77] 노명환, "총론," 10.

Nietzschean and Foucauldian identity theory, and subsequently put this theory to the test by applying it to the Korean diaspora in Japan (the *zainichi*), China (the *Chosŏnjok*) and Germany (henceforth the *Chaedok*[78] [재독/在獨]).

Of the aforementioned groups, the *zainichi* and *Chosŏnjok* have been discussed extensively in the essays leading up to this work; the *Chaedok*, on the other, have as of yet not been discussed. As such, following a section on identity theory and its applicability to Korean diasporic communities in Japan and China, there will be section which serves to introduce and analyse the *Chaedok* community. Afterwards, the findings will be compared to those on the *zainichi* and *Chosŏnjok* in light of the previously constructed theory on identity. Finally, a conclusion will be drawn from this comparison and analysis.

§3.2 · Theory: Marx, Nietzsche and Foucault on identity

The previous essays have touched upon theories of Marxist[79] class[80] consciousness and identity, and the same school of thought will provide the base theoretical framework for the analysis in this paper. As such, it is only appropriate to elaborate on said theory while also addressing which aspects of the theory require reform in order to facilitate more accurate analyses.

Of course, when one discusses Marxist identity theory, one can hardly avoid the influence of societal classes on said identity, particularly with regards to the proletariat[81]. Karl Marx described the proletariat as a nation[82.1,82.2] in its own right, one which transcends state borders. As he was wont to do, he expressed this view in a rather colourful way:

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[78] "*Chaedok*" is shorthand for the standard Korean term "*Chaedok Hanin*" (재독 한인/在獨 韓人), meaning "(South) Korean(s) residing in Germany."
It is common usage in academia to refer to the ethnic Koreans in Germany simply as "Koreans in Germany," e.g. "*Chaedok Hanin*" or "*Koreaner in Deutschland.*" However, in order to be able to treat this group as a unique entity with its own identificatory nuances, it is helpful to refer to them using a proper noun, distinguishing them from other ethnic Korean communities, as is done with the *zainichi* and *Chosŏnjok*.
To fulfil this purpose, in line with the naming conventions established with the aforementioned ethnic Korean communities, the term "*Chaedok*" was selected to allow for a more poignant discussion on diasporic identity formation amongst ethnic Koreans in Germany.
[79] This essay merely employs *analytical* Marxist theory; this paper is not a normative exercise.
[80] Marxist "classes" are societal groups defined by their shared socioeconomic circumstances. More specifically, these circumstances are how a person relates (1) the means of production, (2) exploitation and (3) endowment-generated (market) behaviour. See: Elster, *An Introduction to Karl Marx*, 126-127.
[81] The "proletariat" is understood to be the collective working class, those who do not own the means of production and must survive by selling their labour.
[82.1] A "nation" is generally understood as an organised collective of people with a common culture, language, ethnicity and historical continuity. See: Ingram, "Nation-state."
[82.2] *Continuation of 82.1:* As opposed to the aforementioned common definition of "nation," here its usage signifies a group of people with a collective and structural identity. Nevertheless, the usage of the word "nation" is a deliberate choice, as Marxist internationalism downplays the need for a common language or ethnicity, and instead focuses on the commonalities of classes beyond state borders. See: Schwarzmantel, "Nationalism and socialist internationalism."

> "The nationality of the worker is neither French, nor English, nor German, it is *labour, free slavery, self-huckstering*. His government is neither French, nor English, nor German, it is *capital*[83]. His native air is neither French, nor German, nor English, it is *factory air*."[84]

While the reader might construe this description as an oversimplification of Marx's own argument,[85] it strikes at the core of his theory regarding identity: one's socioeconomic circumstances define what or whom one is able to associate with, and thus the potential identities available to the individual. The awareness of one's socioeconomic circumstances and their shared, communal nature is defined as "class consciousness."[86] According to Marxist theory, said consciousness allows for the individuals who constitute a collective class to adopt an active role in defending their (class) interests.[87,88] Through the development of this contextual awareness, its internalisation and the active effort to improve these circumstances, the class in question is no longer merely the object of history, but also the subject of history: although the group's socioeconomic circumstances have befallen them, an awareness of said circumstances allows for the groups' members to collectively improve their socioeconomic conditions. According to Marx, this would lead to the realisation and broadening of the aforementioned universal identity for the proletariat.[89]

As classes are (in part) identified through their relation to capital, the commodities produced by labour express that same relationship. Since the monetary value[90] of goods and labour is the guiding principle for social conduct in a capitalist society, the relationship between people becomes obfuscated by the relationship between objects.[91] Marx described this as "alienation" (*Entfremdung*),[92] which is a key part of the Marxist theory on commodity fetishism; the supposed capitalist perception of interpersonal relations not as ones between *people*, as social relations between *objects*.[93] Through this process, the labourer – much like the products (s)he produces – becomes a commodity as well.[94] This gives a second meaning to the "object" of history: a commodified proletariat alienated from their humanity.[95] As mentioned previously, it is an awareness of these circumstances – a class consciousness – which would allow the labouring classes

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[83] "Capital" is understood to be any asset which may generate income; Marxist theory emphasises the relations surrounding the process of income generation. See: Wyatt, "Capital, Marxist," 84.

[84] Marx, "Draft of an Article on Friedrich List's book *Das Nationale System der Politischen Oekonomie*," 280.

[85] Karl Marx has referred to more than a dozen different classes in his works, despite the citation's apparently dichotomous polemics. See: Elster, *An Introduction to Karl Marx*, 124.

[86] Elster, *An Introduction to Karl Marx*, 129.

[87] Ibid.

[88] The mechanisms of class consciousness and the advancement of group interests is not limited to the proletariat, but also extends to classes which do not rely on selling their labour. The active pursuit of contradicting class interests is the foundation of the Marxist "class struggle."

[89] Cocks, *Passion and Paradox,* 36-38

[90] Referred to as "exchange value" (*Tauschwert*) by Marx, as opposed to "use-value" (*Gebrauchswert*), see: Ollman, *Alienation*, 196 & Marx, *Das Kapital*, 46-47.

[91] Ollman, *Alienation*, 195-196.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Marx, *Das Kapital*, 46-47.

[94] Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 173.

[95] Ollman, *Alienation*, 150.

to move beyond merely existing as an unconscious object of history, and to actively pursue their best interests as a subject of history.[96]

However, it is important to note both the (1) contextuality and the (2) fluidity of identity. As illustrated through Friedrich Nietzsche's "genealogy," ideas and identities are not pristine upon conception, are defined by societal contradictions and tension,[97] and are continually transformed through the subject's relative position in society.[98] Michel Foucault built upon Nietzsche's theory of genealogy and identity, and concurred with the transformative potential of identity, but particularly emphasised the individual's active ownership of their identity and therefore the ability to transform one's own identity.[99,100] Nevertheless, identities are constrained: there needs to be a context within which an identity can come into existence, where relationships (amicable or antagonistic) function as the foundation for identificatory conception and transformation.[101]

To make a return to Marxist theory, the individual's relationship with capital and thus one's socioeconomic status is a deciding factor in this identificatory transformation.[102] Nevertheless, the Marxist theory primarily addresses group identities, and thus fails to address the nuances of identity formation in individuals. However, it is these types of individual manifestations which serve as the yardstick for any type of research on identity, which is why it is important (in a methodological sense) to emphasise the personal element in identity formation.

In the Marxist perspective, people develop an awareness of their socioeconomic position and will struggle to maintain or improve[103] their circumstances. Through this type of class-based association, Marxist universalism argues that groups of people can develop a shared, post-national and post-ethnic identity on the basis of their socioeconomic circumstances. However, it is to be noted that these socioeconomic classes still consist of individuals, and that the individual possesses the ability to transform their own identity within the context of the society they inhabit. The self-aware subject of history is therefore not the *group*, but the *individual*.

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[96] Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 175.
[97] The identificatory contradiction most prevalent in Nietzsche's work is that of the "master-slave morality." See: Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral,* 15-16.
[98] Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral,* 2-5.
[99] Foucault, "The subject and power," 212.
[100] It needs to be said that this interpretation of "identity" is a fairly radical departure from the traditional interpretations, where identities are considered inherent and significantly more fixed. See: Oksala, "Cyberfeminists and women: Foucault's notion of identity," 40.
[101] Weir, "Who are we?," 540.
[102] Destin, Rheinschmidt-Same & Richeson, "Status-based identity," 271-272.
[103] Whether one chooses to improve or maintain their status depends on their position within the socioeconomic hierarchy; the higher up an individual finds themselves in said hierarchy, the more likely it is that their efforts are aimed at maintaining said hierarchical position. See: Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 71-72.

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§3.3 · Theory applied: identity formation amongst the *zainichi* and *Chosŏnjok*

In the previous two essays on identity in Korean diaspora, the migrant groups' members' socioeconomic status and perceived opportunities came up as being a key factor in determining how they formulate their own identity. However, in both cases studied thus far (the *zainichi* and the *Chosŏnjok*), this has manifested itself differently in accordance with idiosyncratic historical developments and the socioeconomic opportunities available to the individuals within the Korean ethnic group.

§3.3.1 · Major identificatory developments: the zainichi

The *zainichi*, on the one hand, displayed a strong class consciousness during the first half of the twentieth century, which coincided with their experience of structural discrimination and severely limited opportunities on the labour market when compared to those available to the majority population.[104] However, as soon as socioeconomic opportunities were equalised between the Japanese natives and the ethnic Korean minority,[105] there was a significant increase in the amount of *zainichi* who displayed ambivalence towards the previously ubiquitous Korean essentialism, which also coincided with an increase in the incorporation of Japanese identificatory elements.[106] While it was hard for many to completely shake their "Koreanness," the dissipation of the socioeconomic importance of their Korean identity led many to develop a hybrid identity unconstrained by the previously prominent Japanese-Korean dichotomy (§1.4).

§3.3.2 · Major identificatory developments: the Chosŏnjok

Amongst the *Chosŏnjok*, on the other hand, one can also observe significant identificatory fluidity on the basis of socioeconomic conditions and opportunities, but the way in which this fluidity manifests itself differs considerably from that of the *zainichi*. For those who perceive considerable socioeconomic opportunities within the Korean ethnic enclave economy, a diasporic Sino-Korean hybrid identity presents itself as an asset, which is then thus the identity which gets adopted by the individual.[107] Conversely, for those who perceive socioeconomic opportunities in South Korea, it is common to adopt a predominantly Korean identity.[108] However, for a large number of *Chosŏnjok*, participating in China's booming urban economy offers the greatest potential for socioeconomic advancement and as such, one can observe a large number of young *Chosŏnjok* moving to China's megalopolises and adopt Sinicised identities.[109]

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[104] Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble*, 91-92.
[105] Kim, "Bringing Class Back In," 882-884.
[106] Chapman, "The Third Way and Beyond," 41.
[107] Kim, "Ethnic Enclave Economy in Urban China," 822-824.
[108] Hong, Song & Park, "Korean, Chinese, or What?," 35.
[109] Kim, *International Ethnic Networks*, 45-46.

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Nevertheless, the opposite can also happen: if one perceives an identity to be a liability, they will shun said identity and emphasise a different potential identity, usually in a dichotomous manner. For instance, one might imagine a *Chosŏnjok* individual moving to South Korea to pursue a career, but this person is faced with greater socioeconomic hardships than they would expect to face in their country of birth, China. In such a case, the person is likely to reject their Korean identity and embrace a Chinese one, even if they continue to reside in South Korea.[110] This is another common way in which socioeconomic opportunity (in relative terms) defines the identity adopted by the individual (§2.3).

Both the *zainichi* and *Chosŏnjok* currently possess the possibility of identifying with the ethnic majority population and present themselves as an inherent part of the collectively imagined nation. For both of these groups this ability represents a socioeconomic asset. However, for the *zainichi*, the arrival of this opportunity also transformed the way in which their previous identity manifested itself. Although identifying as Korean was suddenly no longer a liability, this development came with one caveat: this only applies if one also internalises (aspects of) a Japanese identity, without which the stigma surrounding a diasporic Korean identity in Japan remains. Therefore, the socioeconomic equalisation has promoted the development of a non-essentialist, chimeric identity; a uniquely *zainichi* identity, divorced from Korean essentialism, which might even give rise to a post-*zainichi* identity (§1.4).

For the *Chosŏnjok*, the Korean side of their identity was up until recently considered to be (at least) equal to that of the majority population in socioeconomic terms, if not more desirable.[111] This socioeconomic equality (or success) allowed many *Chosŏnjok* to develop a hybrid Sino-Korean identity. Nowadays, however, many young *Chosŏnjok* still choose to adopt a Sinicised identity (§3.3.2). This phenomenon can be explained by the recent *relative* decline in the desirability of a Korean-based *Chosŏnjok* identity due to the aforementioned increase of socioeconomic opportunities available to China's majority population. The rise in between-group socioeconomic inequality has reintroduced the perceived importance of identity for socioeconomic advancement amongst many *Chosŏnjok*. However, instead of re-entrenching into a Korean-based identity, these *Chosŏnjok* fully embrace the national[112] identity at the cost of a publicly perceivable ethnic[113] identity, in accordance with perceived socioeconomic opportunities.

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[110] Hong, Song & Park, "Korean, Chinese, or What?," 36.

[111] In fact, the *Chosŏnjok* have been considered to be a model minority for quite a while. Although this status can actually be rather problematic, the nuances will not be discussed in this paper. For more information, see: Gao, "What It Means to Be a 'Model Minority'," 64-66.

[112] Kim, "Nostalgia, Anxiety and Hope," 113.

[113] Lee, *Between Foreign and Family*, 97-98.

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For both the *zainichi* and *Chosŏnjok*, the act of adopting a new identity becomes instrumental in defining the identity itself. For many *zainichi*, their identities suddenly became characterised by the active *incorporation* of Japanese identificatory elements instead of being defined by a *rejection* of Japanese influence, as was previously the case. For a number of *Chosŏnjok*, adopting a Chinese identity is instrumental towards thriving as an individual, even if this means forgoing large parts of their original Korean-based, or hybrid Sino-Korean identity. In both cases an internalisation of the struggle to survive and thrive socioeconomically becomes a significant part of the identity itself. Indeed, both the *zainichi* and *Chosŏnjok* can be said to "negotiate" their identity for the maximisation of socioeconomic opportunities, with this negotiation becoming a key part of what defines their identity and its fluidity on an individual level.

As these cases show, the Marxist theory is right insofar it posits that one's socioeconomic circumstances define one's identity. Moreover, the realisation of one's socioeconomic circumstances encourage one, as the subject of history, to attempt to achieve socioeconomic advancement. However, there are several points on which Marxist identity theory seemingly falters.

§3.3.5 • Class dismissed

For one, the class struggles described by Marxist theory have not manifested themselves to the degree said theory would lead one to believe. Although the *zainichi* were particularly politically active during the first half of the 20th century, the goal of these activities seems not to have been overthrowing the system which oppressed them, but reforming it so they may participate on an equal footing with the native population. When these demands were met as a result of a labour shortage on the market, the distinct *zainichi* class consciousness dissipated, as did the actual class (§1.4). This is because the equalisation of socioeconomic opportunities saw the rise of socioeconomic stratification amongst the *zainichi* population, akin to the stratification already present amongst the Japanese natives,[114] jettisoning socioeconomic unity on an ethnic basis.

The same is true of the *Chosŏnjok*: their socioeconomic parity with the majority population means that there is a significant amount of socioeconomic stratification within the Korean diaspora, undermining a cohesive ethnic identity. Due to these socioeconomic inequalities and the perceived subject's ability to transform these circumstances on an individual level, the *Chosŏnjok* continue to adopt a variety of identities in order to match their personal circumstances and aspirations.

It therefore appears that the diversification of available economic opportunities and circumstances leads to a diversification of available identities as well; more importantly, it leads to the individualisation of

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[114] Kim, "Bringing Class Back In," 884.

identities. Unlike Marx's prediction, unequal opportunities do not have to lead to class solidarity and struggle, as long as the inequalities are perceived not to be structural or insurmountable.

§3.3.6 • Little people: the historical subject's individualised consciousness

As fluid socioeconomic stratification allows for the diversification of identities while simultaneously enabling the dissipation of class solidarity, it appears that the development of a universal Marxist identity is not contingent on inequality per se, but specifically on inequality within which individuals believe that they are unable to advance socioeconomically. The Marxist notion of identities forming around socioeconomic circumstances still rings true, but it appears much more fluid than Marxist theory suggests.

Moreover, one could say Marxist theory underestimates the degree to which labour supposedly gets commodified and estranged from its essence: if one believes they can advance within a system characterised by socioeconomic inequality, the perception of opportunity leads subjects to commodify their own identity in order to make an attempt at materialising the perceived opportunities. Therefore, *if* the individual is presented with (a believable mirage of) the possibility of socioeconomic advancement:

(1) Alienation *is not* a condition inflicted upon the *collective of labour*, and *neither* is it to be *overcome* through the labourers' collective transformation into the subject of history;

(2) Instead, the act of alienation gets embraced by the *individual labourer*, and *intensified* through the labourer's own attempts at improving their socioeconomic circumstances as the subject of history.

The class consciousness does not lead to a united revolt against the supposedly oppressive classes and the capitalist system, but instead to atomised identity commodification; rather than fighting the capitalist system and its aforementioned mechanisms, alienation is embraced when perceived to allow for socioeconomic improvements on the individual level. This individualistic and contingent nature of a subject's identity is exactly in line with both Foucault's and Nietzsche's previously mentioned theories on identity (§3.2), and illustrates the greatest flaw of Marxist identity theory. One could say that to maximise one's chances for socioeconomic prosperity and thus survival, the preservation of the self, the subject is willing to change one's identity: therefore, the subject transforms the self in order to preserve said self. This is the same contradiction described by Spinoza's ethical egoism and Nietzsche's "will to power,"[115] and shows how identities are characterised (and perhaps defined) by tension through contradictions in the Nietzschean and Foucauldian sense. Drawing upon Georg Hegel's dialectic philosophy: an identity is neither static nor is it imposed, but it is the very act of being, not-being, and the negotiation between the two which manifests itself in transformation.[116] In this way, the resulting identity is a manifestation of both the subject and object of history.[117]

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[115] Spencer, "Spinoza and Nietzsche," 73-75.
[116] Trisokkas, "Hegelian Identity," 108-111.
[117] Yi, "Probleme der Integration und Identität," 55.

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§3.4 · The *Chaedok*: history, socioeconomic circumstances and identity

§3.4.1 · *Introduction: there and back again?*

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, West Germany saw a period of tremendous economic growth. A key characteristic of this growth was its unique bottleneck: not capital formation, but the ability to rapidly expand the scope of employment.[118] To resolve the pressing labour shortages, the West German government sought to bring in foreign labourers, a matter in which the South Korean government was eager to assist.[119] Whereas South Korean women started working in West Germany as nurses as early as 1959,[120,121] South Korean migration to West Germany accelerated following the 1962 Korea Immigration Law.[122] A year later, in 1963, Korean men started being recruited to work as miners in West Germany.[123] Most workers' (extendable but finite) three-year contracts and visas, combined with the cessation of government-led recruitment of Korean miners and nurses (in 1973[124] and 1976[125] respectively) meant that there was a definitive expiration date on the Koreans' sojourn in West Germany.[126] However, the return to South Korea turned out not to be as much of an inevitability as was initially assumed: about half of the Korean labourers stationed in West Germany did not humour the notion of going back to the old country.[127] Some of these labourers decided to migrate to a third country (a phenomenon known as "triangle migration"[128]),[129,130] whereas others chose to remain in West Germany. Those who have remained form the foundation of the Korean diaspora in contemporary Germany, a community which currently boasts roughly 30.000 members.[131.1,131.2,132]

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[118] Vonyó, *The Economic Consequences of the War*, 87.
[119] Roberts, "Writing Zuhause," 28.
[120] Na, "Diplomatische Tauschgeschäfte?," 689.
[121] 유정숙, *독일 속의 한국계 이민자들*, 51.
[122] Garz, "Going away. Going home!," 163.
[123] Na, "Diplomatische Tauschgeschäfte?," 677.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Jung, "Beyond the Bifurcated Myth," 232.
[126] Roberts, "Writing Zuhause," 28.
[127] Kim, "Making homes here and away," 251.
[128] Bartmann, Garz & Lee, "Rückwanderer und Weiterwanderer," 118.
[129] Kim, "Being 'Other' in Berlin," 63-64.
[130] Na, "Diplomatische Tauschgeschäfte?," 677.
[131.1] This group includes later waves of Korean migrants as well. See: Weiß, *Migrantengemeinden im Wandel*, 33.
[131.2] *Continuation of 131.1:* The difference in one's duration of stay or whether one was born in Germany to one or more parents of Korean ethnicity has a significant impact on identity formation. Although this paper attempts to treat this distinction with utmost care, since the initial wave of Korean immigrants and their offspring constitute the majority of the ethnic Korean diaspora in present-day Germany, these groups will be the primary focus of analysis.
[132] Hary, "Kyopo (Korean-German) Daughters in Germany," 2.

As mentioned earlier, it was not easy for these Korean labourers to prolong their stay in West Germany (§3.4.1): if anything, the residence in West Germany was designed to be a temporary stint at most.[133] In order to gain the right to remain beyond the initial timeframe, it was primarily the nurses who took to the streets to demand the right to reside indefinitely in West Germany through naturalisation; demands which were eventually met by the West German government in 1977.[134,135] Particularly with regards to the nurses, this political mobilisation subverted the notion of a docile model minority,[136,137] a narrative which was popular in West German media at the time (and still is).[138]

This is comparable to the political mobilisation of the *zainichi*, who perceived themselves to be treated as second class citizens by the government (and society at large). However, the public perception of the two groups varied drastically: unlike the Korean labourers in West Germany, the *zainichi* were not perceived to be a model minority. One could argue this difference reflects the group in question's perceived relative socioeconomic success.

§3.4.3 • Socioeconomic conditions

Akin to the *zainichi*, a lack of rights is what prompted the *Chaedok*-in-becoming to mobilise politically. However, as opposed to the *zainichi*, the Korean labourers in West Germany were not second class citizens in socioeconomic terms or exploited as contingent labour: in fact, the very reason South Korean labourers were even able to come to West Germany was to fulfil a labour shortage. Because of this, they had steady (if temporary) employment and were compensated in a way which they considered more than satisfactory. After all, the choice to go to West Germany to perform labour was (1) voluntary and (2) accompanied with guaranteed socioeconomic advancement; the latter entirely due to the aforementioned voluntary nature of the stay.[139,140] For the Korean labourers in West Germany, a lack of residency rights did not directly harm their socioeconomic status; it only enforced a definitive temporal limit to said status. Therefore, the lack of perpetual residency rights threatened (1) re-uprootment[141] and, perhaps more importantly, (2) an eventual loss of socioeconomic opportunity.

For the *zainichi*, on the other hand, poor socioeconomic circumstances were an immediate reality. Unlike in West Germany, a significant labour shortage did not manifest itself in Japan until over half a century after the first wave of colonial Korean migration to the metropole. As such the *zainichi*'s lack of rights was

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[133] Roberts, "Writing Zuhause," 36.
[134] Roberts, "Writing Zuhause," 28.
[135] Na, "Diplomatische Tauschgeschäfte?," 677.
[136] Roberts, "Writing Zuhause," 45.
[137] Shin, "The Day the 'Gentle Angels' Spoke Up."
[138] Kim, "Being 'Other' in Berlin," 64.
[139] Kim, "Making homes here and away," 251.
[140] 윤용선, "1960-1970 년대 광부·간호사의 서독 취업," 80-82.
[141] Garz, "Going away. Going home!," 166.

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compounded by structurally poor socioeconomic circumstances, which led to an even worse societal image and thus worse opportunities on the labour market.

Whereas the *zainichi* were stuck in a perpetual self-fulfilling prophecy of mutually enforcing conditions which constrained their socioeconomic opportunities, the Korean labourers in West Germany were protesting against the potential future loss of the socioeconomic conditions they already enjoyed. Since the Korean labourers were allowed to stay in West Germany, they were able to maintain a generally favourable position in society which approached socioeconomic parity; a position which most were able to maintain until retirement.

That said, there is a clear difference between the socioeconomic circumstances of the miners and the nurses as they settled permanently in West Germany: the latter received significantly more opportunities to integrate into German society, and subsequently more ways to advance socioeconomically.[142,143] This includes the acquisition of German language skills: whereas nurses were taught the language by necessity, few such resources were made available to the miners, nor did they find themselves in many situations in which the German language proved necessary.[144]

§3.4.4 · Ich bin ein Berliner: contemporary Chaedok identities

The *Chaedok*, as a group, have not seen a decline in their socioeconomic status, and the same applies to the younger *Chaedok*. The socioeconomic parity means that, much like with the *zainichi* and *Chosŏnjok*, one can observe *Chaedok* who exhibit:

(1) An ethnic (Korean) identity;

(2) A national (German) identity, or;

(3) A hybrid of the two aforementioned identities.[145,146]

It has been observed that the one-and-a-half[147] and second generations have by-and-large adopted primarily nationality-based (German) identities, with trace elements of Koreanness.[148,149,150] In fact, even a

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[142] 유정숙, *독일 속의 한국계 이민자들*, 75.

[143] Although one could argue that this is a gendered difference, it is simply more likely that the nurses, who did a job which required a better education, would also be afforded more socioeconomic opportunities. Still, one could argue that the miners, despite their satisfactory socioeconomic status, were in a similar predicament as the *zainichi*: a mutually enforcing contradiction which can only be broken out of through extensive effort or outside influences. This is particularly true with regards to language acquisition.

[144] 유정숙, *독일 속의 한국계 이민자들*, 75.

[145] Yi, "Probleme der Integration und Identität," 61-62.

[146] 윤서옥, "재독한인 2 세대," 286.

[147] The one-and-a-half generation refers to South Korean children who moved to West Germany with their labouring parents at a relatively young age.

[148] 유정숙, *독일 속의 한국계 이민자들*, 66-69.

[149] 이선희, "재독한인들의 한국인으로서의 인식문제," 319.

[150] It has to be noted that this does not mean that the *Chaedok* do not face racism due to their ethnicity, because this is unfortunately still a sporadic yet common phenomenon. One could say this makes it all the more noteworthy that the German identity is still dominant. See: Kern, "Junge Deutsch-Koreaner - Die Bildungsaufsteiger?"

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considerable number of the first-generation female *Chaedok* saw their identity transform by the incorporation of German identificatory elements.[151,152,153] If one considers identity to be negotiated akin to a socioeconomic asset, it would appear that the diasporic Korean identity offers little value when compared to a national, German identity. This is the same phenomenon which could be observed amongst the *Chosŏnjok* who choose to adopt a Sinicised identity (§2.3), bar the dramatic shift in the relative value of one's ethnic identity.

§3.4.5 • Gendered differences in identity formation and possible socioeconomic explanations

In addition to these general developments, there appears to be a gendered differentiation in identity formation: whereas *Chaedok* women are more likely to display a hybrid identity, *Chaedok* men are more likely to adopt a dichotomous identity, this being either ethnic (Korean) or national (German),[154] with the second generation by and large displaying a primarily German identity.[155]

Given the aforementioned socioeconomic differences between the miners and nurses (§3.4.3), one would assume male *Chaedok* are more likely to simply adopt a Korean-centric identity; however, these circumstances cannot explain the increased likelihood of adopting a German identity amongst *Chaedok* men. A possible explanation could be that – if this phenomenon is indeed guided by socioeconomic circumstances – that *Chaedok* men are more likely fall into socioeconomic extremes, as is generally the case for men regardless of ethnicity. In general, men are more likely than women to either:

(1) Work the most lucrative jobs available, or;
(2) Work in the most dangerous, low-paying fields available.[156]

Moreover, the previously described (§3.4.3) socioeconomic inequality between *Chaedok* men and women particularly applies to the first generation of miners and nurses: said inequality is therefore occupation-bound, and does not apply to the one-and-a-half or second generation of *Chaedok*. Amongst the younger *Chaedok*, the gendered wage distribution is more likely to resemble that of the native ethnic majority population, given that their virtual socioeconomic parity. This would grant credence to the previous argument regarding a broader distribution of male occupations, and would be a symptom of the expected socioeconomic stratification which accompanies socioeconomic parity, akin to what could be observed amongst the *zainichi* and *Chosŏnjok* (§3.3.5).

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[151] Conversely, the first generation of *Chaedok* men, including a number of first-generation female *Chaedok*, primarily displayed a more ethnicity-based identity. Due to the individual nature of identities, such variety is to be expected. For more information, see: 이선희, "재독한인들의 한국인으로서의 인식문제," 309-310.

[152] As Roberts points out, this incorporation of German elements of identity even occurred in the face of (sporadic) experiences of racism. See: Roberts, "Writing Zuhause," 46-50.

[153] Even amongst those who display a hybrid identity, the first generation of *Chaedok* still commonly and strongly emphasise specific aspects of the Korean side of their identity. For more information, see: 최승은, "독일 한인이주여성," 382.

[154] Yi, "Probleme der Integration und Identität," 61-62.

[155] 이선희, "재독한인들의 한국인으로서의 인식문제," 319.

[156] Browne, "Evolved Sex Differences and Occupational Segregation," 150.

§3.4.6 • A manifesto for passivity

The German government is often criticised for its apparent reluctance to accept the influx of ethnically non-German immigrants and their offspring and insisting that they assimilate into the majority culture by adopting an identity which is national (German) rather than ethnic.[157],[158] Despite these demands, the German government remains relatively passive in facilitating ethnic minority's successful integration, in part due to the government's supposed unwillingness to accept their presence in the first place.[159]

However, the government's passive approach seems to have achieved exactly that which the government appears to desire: the younger, second-generation *Chaedok* have largely adopted German-centric, yet hybrid identities.[160],[161] Equality before the law and socioeconomic parity have, within the span of two generations, made it so that a considerable amount of *Chaedok* have adopted an identity which, publicly[162], is virtually indistinguishable from that of the majority, ethnically German population. Conform to what the German government aimed to achieve, the socioeconomic parity between the *Chaedok* and the native ethnic majority population have made the majority of young *Chaedok* form an identity based on the internalisation of a German *Leitkultur*[163].

§3.4.7 • Discussion of findings and the applicability of Marxist identity theory

The development of a hybridised identity amongst the *Chaedok* is a highly remarkable phenomenon, given the relatively recent arrival of the first Koreans in (West) Germany. What is particularly interesting is that the model minority narrative appears to be both a symptom and predictor of socioeconomic success; the exact opposite could be perceived amongst the *zainichi*, where a poor social standing made socioeconomic advancement nigh-impossible. In both cases, perceived socioeconomic status functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts. This self-fulfilling process also extends to the speed and extent with which the ethnic minority is likely to adopt a nationality-based identity, as the perceived status is concomitant with socioeconomic parity and relative success.

As such, it appears that this development can occur much faster than previous research on the *zainichi* and *Chosŏnjok* had suggested, with the first generation of South Korean immigrants to (West) Germany exhibiting German elements of identity and the creation of a truly hybrid identity amongst the one-and-a-half and second generation of *Chaedok*.

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[157] Hary, "Kyopo (Korean-German) Daughters in Germany," 2.
[158] Kim, "Making homes here and away," 256.
[159] Ibid.
[160] 유정숙, 독일 속의 한국계 이민자들, 66-69.
[161] Yi, "Probleme der Integration und Identität," 80.
[162] The private manifestation of identity, on the other hand, is more complex and characterised by a more nuanced balance between the German and Korean identity. See: Fuhr, "Performing K(yopo)-rock," 120.
[163] "*Leitkultur*" refers to an essentialised culture as supposedly exhibited by the majority ethnic population. For the sake of brevity I shall not discuss the problems with this concept. For more information on the topic, see: Manz, "Constructing a Normative National Identity," 481-482.

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Besides the virtual socioeconomic parity between the Korean arrivals and the general German populace, the creation of a hybrid identity appears to have been sped up by the Korean-based identities' lack of relative socioeconomic value as a result of the first generation's stable employment in the formal, non-diasporic economy. Because of this employment, no *Chaedok* diasporic economy ever came into being in the same way it did for the *Chosŏnjok*, and as such the later generations of *Chaedok* have very little socioeconomic reason to emphasise the Korean side of their identity.

The gendered differences in identity formation are also rather interesting, and it would be interesting to see whether the hypothesis of gendered occupational distribution holds any water, or whether other gendered aspects significantly factor into this.

Can Marxist theory explain the observed process of identity formation in its entirety? Not quite, but it does provide a good theoretical foundation. The commodification of identity, for instance, appears to have a significant impact on identity formation through a relative value comparison of available identities. However, Marx concluded that this type of alienation would lead to mass revolt against the capitalist order. What really happens is quite the opposite: for both the *zainichi* and *Chaedok*, popular disobedience was aimed at allowing the members of the supposedly disadvantaged group to participate in the system rather than overthrow it. The same is true for the commodification of identities, which get actively employed if one perceives the possibility to advance socioeconomically.

This active, personal ownership of identity is also important to note, and appears to be particularly emphasised in a socioeconomically stratified yet fluid society. This is where the greatest amendment to Marxist theory needs to be made through the incorporation of Nietzschean and Foucauldian ideas regarding the contextuality, changeability and individuality of identity, if Marxist theory were to be employed in future research in identity theory. By emphasising (1) the individualised subject of history and (2) their active ownership of a personal commodified identity in (3) a fluid socioeconomic environment, one can move beyond the limitations of traditional Marxist theory and employ what seems to be a more accurate, less normative post-Marxist theory of identity.

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§3.5 · Conclusion

For the *Chaedok*, akin to the *zainichi* and *Chosŏnjok*, socioeconomic circumstances are instrumental in the formation of a personal identity. Even though Marxist theory presents an adequate initial framework for the analysis of identity formation within capitalist societies, several of its conclusions do not align with the observable reality.

For instance, shared socioeconomic identities do not manifest in organised class struggles if the members of the supposed proletariat perceive their socioeconomic status to be changeable through individual action. This leads the members of society to individualise instead of organise, and to actively commodify their own identity, rather than rebel against any such alienation. As such, a contextual, subject-based post-Marxist approach is required to properly analyse these identificatory development.

Moreover, while it appears to be the case that socioeconomic circumstances are a primary factor in identity formation, that does not mean other factors are ineffectual. If a post-Marxist theory of identity were to be properly developed, it would be helpful to expand upon factors such as gender, discrimination and media influence.

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