

EMIGRATED HERITAGE. THE DIFFICULT HERITAGE OF COMFORT WOMEN IN KOREAN DIASPORA

In the world of post-colonial studies, the history of violence is constantly being re-evaluated, highlighting the importance of exploring issues related to war and violence. Additionally, the concept of heritage is changing rapidly, seen as a flexible, global discourse. This means there's a need for studies that go beyond local perspectives and embrace the dynamic nature of heritage. Therefore, my research aims to take an interdisciplinary approach, aiming to understand how heritage, with all its contradictions, is passed down and shared within diaspora communities.

Navigating between their homeland's culture and the culture of their new country, diaspora members engage in ongoing negotiations about which aspects of their heritage to preserve and transmit. My research, focusing on the case of Korean diaspora and the heritage of comfort women, the victims of sexual slavery in the beginning of XX century, aims to show that the understanding of the contribution of migration to the construction of national and cultural identity is crucial for the preservation, interpretation and transmission of the heritage.

Using a combination of innovative research methods, I aim to uncover the processes through which the Korean diaspora communities maintain and transform their heritage. My approach aims to understand the power dynamics and narrative strategies used in discussing and representing the heritage of comfort women. I seek to conduct a multi-sited ethnography by studying three different diasporic communities, examining how the heritage of comfort women with the Statue of Peace, a dedicated monument, influences cultural dynamics and the formation of national and cultural identity. Through biographical interviews and participatory research, I will engage directly with Korean diaspora members, collecting personal stories and facilitating participatory activities to gain deep insights into their experiences and perspectives.

This research is driven by the need to address contemporary issues such as women's rights, sexual violence, and the impacts of war. Understanding how migration shapes cultural and national identities can provide valuable insights into the preservation and transmission of heritage.

I anticipate that this research will highlight the fluid and dynamic nature of heritage revealing the multifaceted processes through which it is negotiated, reinterpreted, and integrated in new cultural contexts. By challenging traditional views of heritage as static, I aim to emphasize its evolving and interactive nature. My work seek to contribute to broader discussions on migration, mobility, heritage, and memory by bridging these fields with innovative approach.

Ultimately, my findings aim not only to contribute to the advancement of academic knowledge but also engage with real-world issues, fostering a deeper understanding of the Korean diaspora's experience and the enduring impact of the comfort women's heritage. By reaching both academic and non-academic audiences, I hope to inspire meaningful dialogue and action on heritage preservation and identity formation in the context of migration.