

Title	Media, place, and identity of the Korean diaspora in Nordic cities : from the perspective of media geography and cross-cultural adjustment
Sub Title	
Author	李, 光鎬(Lee, Kwangho) 李, 津娥(Lee, Jinah)
Publisher	Institute for Journalism, Media & Communication Studies, Keio University
Publication year	2025
Jtitle	Keio communication review No.47 (2025. 3) ,p.5- 31
JaLC DOI	
Abstract	This study investigates the role of homeland media in shaping the experiences of the Korean diaspora in Nordic cities, focusing on media geography and cross-cultural adjustment. Interviews with members of the Korean diaspora in Helsinki and Oslo reveal the dual function of homeland media as both a bridge for preserving cultural identity and a potential barrier to integration into the host society. Media consumption offers psychological comfort, alleviates homesickness, and fosters emotional and cultural ties to Korea, transforming geographically remote locations into spaces of continuity and synchronization. Technological advances, such as real-time access to Korean media content, enhance these connections and contribute to cultural insularity, complicating full engagement with Nordic societies. Synchronization with Korean political and cultural rhythms, facilitated by platforms like social media, underscores the global influence of Korean media while highlighting the inherent tension between maintaining cultural identity and adapting to the host society. Despite challenges, participants actively construct hybrid identities by incorporating Nordic cultural practices and participating in local communities while maintaining strong ties to their cultural roots. This study emphasizes the dynamic interplay between homeland media, cultural preservation, and cross-cultural adjustment, providing key insights into diasporic experiences. Future research should explore the longitudinal evolution of these dynamics and consider comparative studies to deepen the understanding of media's role in diverse diasporic contexts.
Notes	Articles
Genre	Journal Article
URL	<a href="https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AA00266091-20250300-0005">https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AA00266091-20250300-0005</a>

慶應義塾大学学術情報リポジトリ(KOARA)に掲載されているコンテンツの著作権は、それぞれの著作者、学会または出版社/発行者に帰属し、その権利は著作権法によって保護されています。引用にあたっては、著作権法を遵守してご利用ください。

The copyrights of content available on the KeiO Associated Repository of Academic resources (KOARA) belong to the respective authors, academic societies, or publishers/issuers, and these rights are protected by the Japanese Copyright Act. When quoting the content, please follow the Japanese copyright act.

# Media, Place, and Identity of the Korean Diaspora in Nordic Cities: From the Perspective of Media Geography and Cross-Cultural Adjustment

LEE Kwangho\* and LEE Jinah\*\*

## Abstract

This study investigates the role of homeland media in shaping the experiences of the Korean diaspora in Nordic cities, focusing on media geography and cross-cultural adjustment. Interviews with members of the Korean diaspora in Helsinki and Oslo reveal the dual function of homeland media as both a bridge for preserving cultural identity and a potential barrier to integration into the host society. Media consumption offers psychological comfort, alleviates homesickness, and fosters emotional and cultural ties to Korea, transforming geographically remote locations into spaces of continuity and synchronization. Technological advances, such as real-time access to Korean media content, enhance these connections and contribute to cultural insularity, complicating full engagement with Nordic societies. Synchronization with Korean political and cultural rhythms, facilitated by platforms like social media, underscores the global influence of Korean media while highlighting the inherent tension between maintaining cultural identity and adapting to the host society. Despite challenges, participants actively construct hybrid identities by incorporating Nordic cultural practices and participating in local communities while maintaining strong ties to their cultural roots. This study emphasizes the dynamic interplay between homeland media, cultural preservation, and cross-cultural adjustment, providing key insights into diasporic experiences. Future research should explore the longitudinal evolution of these dynamics and consider comparative studies to deepen the understanding of media's role in diverse diasporic contexts.

**Keywords:** Korean diaspora, homeland media, diasporic identity, host society, Koreanness

\* Professor at the Faculty of Letters, Keio University, Japan

\*\* Professor at the Institute for Journalism, Media & Communication Studies, Keio University, Japan

## Introduction

This study explores how the Korean diaspora in Nordic cities engages with media and its implications for their diasporic experiences, emphasizing the perspective from media geography and cross-cultural adjustment. In an increasingly interconnected world, the size of the diaspora has significantly increased. Individuals now traverse transnational spaces, frequently moving between their home and host societies, both physically and symbolically. This development is influenced by the expansion of air transportation and the growth of transnational digital media, significantly impacting diasporic individuals' sense of identity and belonging. A complex interplay of various factors, including geographical, social, and cultural characteristics within the host country, influences the diasporic experience. Specifically, factors such as the geographic distance and temporal disparities from the homeland, the size and composition of the diasporic community, and the degree of cultural proximity significantly influence how the diaspora interacts with their homeland and the host society, thereby shaping their diasporic experiences and identity formation.

The primary aim of this study is to examine how the Korean diaspora in Nordic cities, including Helsinki and Oslo, use homeland media and how it impacts their diasporic experiences, sense of belonging, and adaptation to the host society, with a particular focus on media geography and cross-cultural adjustment. Although Nordic cities are not major destinations for Koreans seeking to live abroad, their unique welfare systems and policies create a distinct context that influences how the Korean diaspora imagines these places, negotiates their identities, and adjusts to the host society. By examining the geographic environment, their use of digital homeland media, and the diasporic experiences of the Korean diaspora in Nordic cities, this study provides valuable insights into homeland media use and its multifaceted impacts on diasporic lives, contributing significantly to the broader discourse on media's role in diasporic communities in a globalized world.

## Literature Review

### *The Interplay Between Media and Place: A Perspective of Media Geography*

Media consumption is contingent on place (Adams, 2009; Fornäs, 2007). First, media types physically and normatively accessible vary from place to place. The value assigned to media can also shift depending on place. When considering the context of diaspora, before the widespread adoption of the Internet, many diaspora communities lacked physical access to homeland media. Even when access was available, it was often delayed or limited to pirated copies. Yet, ironically, this scarcity made such media all the more valuable and cherished, far beyond the imagination of people in the home country. It is therefore expected that the

experiences of homeland media use, as well as the gratifications and effects derived from such use, will differ for each diasporic community. The farther away one is from one's homeland, coupled with limited transportation options for returning and a small diaspora community, the stronger the desire for and greater the utility of consuming homeland media.

The Nordic cities in our study, though now more accessible thanks to direct flights, are still often perceived as remote and sparsely populated areas on the northern periphery. With Korean populations of only 6,670 in Norway and 935 in Finland (Overseas Korean Agency, 2023), diasporas in these locations can be isolated unless one integrates into the local community. We hypothesized that for Korean diasporas in such places, media offering Korean content and connections with people back home would be significantly more valuable and enthusiastically used than in other regions.

Just as the nature of a place dictates how media is consumed, its usage, in turn, shapes the nature of a place. Scannell (2013), through a phenomenological analysis of television, points out that television is doubling a place by introducing another place into the place where one watches the television. With television, two places can coexist simultaneously. Similarly, Massey (1994) argues that places are not bounded and closed off by borders but are connected to other places through various objects and entities within them, and these connections to other places constitute a place's specificity and uniqueness. Media, perhaps more than any other factor, connects places, making them porous.

Furthermore, Lee and Lee (2021), through the examination of homeland media use among the Korean diaspora in Buenos Aires, point out that homeland media synchronizes the diaspora community with the homeland. This synchronization was observed in various aspects, including political opinions, fashion, music, food, hairstyles, and trending words, which strengthened the diaspora community's identification with the homeland. In this way, media shapes the nature of the place where it is consumed by creating a duality of place, connecting it to other places, introducing elements of those places, and synchronizing it with what occurs in other places.

The synchronization of diaspora communities and their home countries through homeland media resonates with Relph's (1976) concept of "placelessness" and Meyrowitz's (1986) notion of the "no sense of place." The process by which mass media disseminates attitudes and values that homogenize and standardize landscapes and the process by which knowledge and culture, once place-bound, become uniform and leveled through widespread information sharing facilitated by television are also mirrored in the synchronization of diaspora communities with their home country. This synchronization can be viewed as an erosion of the uniqueness and place-specific characteristics of social life in diasporic communities that had been shaped by the geography of the host society.

Given the reciprocal relationship between media and place, as described above, the experiences of diaspora communities are increasingly intertwined with the consumption patterns of various media, including global, homeland, host society, and ethnic media. This interplay not only affects their sense of isolation, cultural identity, and adjustment issues experienced “in” the host society as a place but can also result in more complex and nuanced experiences brought about by the transformation of the host society “itself” as a place. Despite the growing body of research on homeland media consumption within diaspora communities, a significant gap remains in understanding the relationship between media geography and diasporic experiences.

### ***Homeland Media Use in an Unaccustomed Place***

Previous research on media use among the diaspora consistently highlights that homeland media plays a significant role in the lives of diaspora communities, particularly among newer migrants. For instance, a 2016 survey in Australia found that many immigrants actively engage with their home countries through digital platforms, frequently accessing homeland news and entertainment. Moreover, this media consumption pattern may contribute to a “delayed identification” with the host country (Markus, 2016).

Likewise, Kama and Malka (2013) demonstrated the influence of Israeli media on Jewish Israeli migrants in the United States, functioning as a crucial bridge to their homeland. Their interviews revealed that homeland media functions as an “identity prosthesis,” a concept describing how media and cultural content help individuals preserve, build, and strengthen their cultural identity, especially within the context of the diaspora. This media engagement serves two key roles: alleviating homesickness and reinforcing connections to their native identity. By consuming Israeli media, these migrants are able to sustain strong ties to their cultural roots, fostering a sense of continued presence in their homeland despite the geographical distance. This engagement not only helps mitigate the challenges of living abroad but also supports their extended stay in the United States, making their diasporic experience more sustainable and enriching.

Similarly, early research on Chinese residents in the United States reflects a similar pattern, demonstrating how migrants rely on homeland media as a crucial bridge to maintain cultural connections and emotional ties. Shi (2005) suggests that diaspora members often engage with ethnic or homeland media more for leisure than for active content comprehension. As a result, this preference can lead to reduced engagement with host country media, largely due to cultural and linguistic barriers. Moreover, beyond mere entertainment, ethnic and homeland media serve crucial functions in diaspora communities. These functions include the preservation of cultural capital, the provision of ethnic resources for navigating host societies, the fulfillment of diverse community needs, the facilitation of connections with the host

society, and the development of identities influenced by local experiences and geographical location. These findings underline the multifaceted roles that homeland media can play, offering a foundation for exploring its impact in other diasporic contexts.

In addition, Yin's (2013) study on Chinese-language cyberspace in New Zealand further expands on these themes, demonstrating how online media provides Chinese immigrants with a strong sense of national belonging, authenticating their "Chineseness" while also facilitating their assimilation into New Zealand society. This dual role of media highlights its capacity to mediate between maintaining cultural identity and adapting to a new environment. Similarly, Parker & Song's (2006) analysis of British ethnic websites for South Asian and Chinese communities reveals the ongoing redefinition of collective ethnic identity among young diaspora members through online interactions. Their findings emphasize the Internet's role in reducing both physical and psychological distances between diaspora communities and their homelands while also fostering connections among diaspora members within the host society. This research underscores the transformative potential of media in shaping not only individual identities but also collective community dynamics in the diaspora.

Further research on digital platforms, such as Umel's (2022) study of Filipino migrants in Germany, provides additional insight. The study reveals how Facebook enables migrants to explore their diasporic chronotopes, or the interplay of time and space between their homeland and host society. Through focus groups and digital ethnography, the study reveals that Facebook allows migrants to re-enact and challenge past cultural practices, fostering a more meaningful life in their present environment. This research highlights that online media serves as a vital tool for migrants, enhancing their sense of meaning in life. By facilitating dialogues between past and present cultural practices, social media emerges as a crucial instrument for identity construction and community building within diaspora experiences.

Recent studies have revealed complex patterns in how media consumption shapes identity formation among the Korean diaspora across different regions. A survey conducted by Markus (2016) on immigrants to Australia between 2001 and 2015 found that Korean migrants had the highest proportion of low scorers on the Australian Identity Scale, indicating a weaker sense of belonging to Australia among the South Korean diaspora. Although the report did not explicitly investigate homeland media or social media usage by country, it is plausible that the extensive use of homeland media among South Koreans could be linked to this situation.

This connection between homeland media and a sense of belonging is further evidenced in other regions. Our previous study (Lee & Lee, 2021) on the Korean diaspora in Buenos Aires underscores the crucial role of homeland media in sustaining and reshaping the Korean identity of the younger generation. The Korean Wave, or *Hallyu* in South America, has intensified young Korean diaspora members'

engagement with Korean media, reinforcing their sense of identity through shared cultural content. This influence indicates that consuming media from their homeland supports young diaspora members in building a connection with their cultural heritage. Similar patterns emerge in North American contexts. Yoon (2020) examined young Korean Canadians in Vancouver, finding that exposure to Korean media and popular culture at home encouraged these individuals to negotiate their identity by consuming cultural products from their home country, sometimes adopting a critical perspective.

These studies underscore the significant role of homeland media in shaping the lives of diasporic communities. The analyses reveal that diasporic individuals are not merely displaced from their homelands; rather, they actively reconstruct their communities and reassess cultural practices through their engagement with media. We examine how Korean media consumption habits are shaped by the availability of familiar cultural resources in the Nordic host society, offering a unique lens to explore the diasporic experience, building on these insights. By analyzing the interplay between homeland media and the distinct cultural and geographic context of Nordic societies, this study highlights how such media enables Korean migrants to sustain their cultural identity and mitigate the challenges of living abroad. This continuity fosters a deeper sense of connection to their homeland while simultaneously navigating the complexities of adapting to a culturally distinct environment.

### ***Navigating the Diasporic Place Strategically: A Perspective of Cross-cultural Adjustment***

Diaspora individuals encounter various cross-cultural challenges that prompt them to seek familiarity and stability in their new environment. This section focuses on how diaspora individuals strategically use available resources—particularly media, including transnational media—and explores its psychological impact on the adjustment process.

Adjustment refers to the psychological comfort that allows individuals to lead a fulfilling life reflecting aspects of their homeland experiences (Mendenhall & Oddou, 1985). This is distinct from the concept of adaptation, which refers to the process of erasing one's own cultural background as possible and fully adapting to the host society's culture. Successful adjustment also involves recognizing and effectively responding to the host society's social realities (Daulay & Rahmawati, 2016, November). Media use is crucial for diaspora individuals' adjustment, as the emergence of transnational media enhances their ability to access information, engage with their home country, and maintain cultural connections. Platforms such as social media, ethnic media, and global media help diaspora members maintain their cultural identity, offering support and comfort during the adjustment process.

Diaspora individuals thus engage with multiple media layers, ranging from

local to transnational and from homeland to global sources. Elias & Lemish (2011) studied Russian-speaking immigrant families in Israel and Germany and described this dynamic as ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ integration processes. Inward integration emphasizes family cohesion and cultural preservation, while outward integration involves assimilation into the host society. Chen’s (2010) research on mainland Chinese immigrants in Singapore exemplifies this dynamic, revealing how media usage shapes their adjustment experiences. The study found that as immigrants spent more time in Singapore, their reliance on home country websites decreased, while their engagement with local media increased, suggesting a gradual integration as individuals sought to understand and participate in the local community. Notably, Oh (2012) investigated media consumption among young second-generation Korean Americans, discovering that they strategically used homeland media as a cultural resource. This selective engagement helped them establish boundaries within their ethnic community.

Several studies explore the evolving nature of cross-cultural adjustment over time. In an earlier study, Lee, Sobal, and Frongillo (2003) suggested that acquiring the local language and engaging with local news or television programs in the host society are essential for adapting to life in a new country. However, homeland media remains significant for maintaining ethnic identity. With digital advancements making homeland media increasingly accessible, this dynamic continues to influence how diaspora identity and media engagement evolve. Lee (2020) demonstrated that Korean immigrants in the United States cultivated a sense of “home” in the diaspora by restructuring their media environment through “cord-cutting,” shifting from traditional cable and satellite to online video platforms. This technological shift has implications for how cultural connections are maintained in the digital age.

Among younger generations, the relationship between media consumption and cross-cultural adjustment has undergone significant changes due to evolving media use patterns. Park, Song, and Lee (2014) examined Korean and Chinese college students in U.S. cities with relatively small Korean and Chinese ethnic populations. Their findings showed that students who used Facebook experienced less acculturative stress and greater psychological well-being, while those who used ethnic SNS experienced higher levels of acculturative stress.

Building on this shift toward digital interaction, online communities offer new insights into how diaspora identities are formed today. Lee (2017) examined members of the U.S.-based Korean online community MissyUSA.com to understand how diaspora members explore their cultural identities amid globalization. Although participants primarily consumed Korean media and communicated in Korean, they tended to express a more favorable perception of the U.S. than of Korea. This research highlights the fluid, dual nature of digital diaspora identity, where individuals move between their homeland and host country perspectives, creating a unique sense of belonging within the diasporic community.

Overall, the Korean diaspora's media consumption patterns reveal intricate cultural identity formation and cross-cultural adjustment processes. The strong reliance on homeland media underscores the importance of cultural continuity for immigrants as they seek to preserve their heritage while adjusting to a new society. This media engagement not only strengthens emotional ties to the homeland but also provides a framework for reconciling dual identities within the diaspora. Additionally, a generational divide in media use reflects how identity evolves within this community. Influenced by globalization and digital media, younger members engage with their heritage in increasingly nuanced ways, often blending Korean cultural elements with local contexts to form a flexible, hybrid identity that spans both cultures.

Although the psychological effects of media consumption on diaspora adjustment are not well-studied, engaging with familiar media content can foster a sense of belonging, alleviate homesickness, and reduce isolation. Transnational media can also help bridge the diaspora's past and present, fostering a hybrid identity that facilitates both adjustment and cultural integration. This hybrid identity is crucial in helping diaspora communities build social connections and integrate smoothly into the host society. Blending elements of their homeland and host cultures eases psychological stress and promotes balance and belonging.

Conversely, limited exposure to host society media or minimal local interaction can hinder adjustment for some diaspora members. Factors such as language barriers and unfamiliarity with local customs may contribute to feelings of alienation. Additionally, the effects of media consumption on adjustment can vary widely depending on factors like age, generation, and individual preferences.

In summary, diaspora adjustment is a complex and dynamic process that requires balancing external and internal integration to achieve psychological comfort within the host society. Media use plays a pivotal role by offering diaspora individuals a means to maintain connections to their homeland while exploring cross-cultural adjustment. This research uses media geography and cross-cultural adjustment frameworks to enhance our understanding of the diasporic experience in these unique settings, especially considering the limited research on the Korean diaspora in Nordic cities. This study specifically examines how homeland media consumption shapes the perceptions of Korean diaspora members regarding Nordic cities like Helsinki and Oslo, viewing them both as places of residence and as extensions of their homeland.

## Research Question and Method

### *Research Question and Study Design*

This study investigates the impact of homeland media and geographic context on diasporic identity formation and cross-cultural adjustment among Koreans in

Helsinki and Oslo, building on the insights from the literature review. The central research question guiding this study is as follows:

RQ: How do homeland media usage and geographic context influence the diasporic identity and adjustment to the host society among the Korean diaspora in Helsinki and Oslo?

This study employs a qualitative research design, primarily using in-depth interviews to gather data.

Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling methods. The authors contacted major Korean ethnic communities in these cities to identify potential interviewees, while additional participants were recruited through recommendations. Data collection occurred in August 2018 during the authors' fieldwork in the Nordic countries. Sixteen individuals from the Korean community in Helsinki and Oslo were recruited for these interviews, including temporary migrants such as expatriates and short-term residents.

The in-depth interviews employed a semi-structured format to explore participants' personal narratives regarding their media consumption in both homeland and host societies, their diasporic identity, and their processes of adapting to the host society. Questions focused on how homeland media shaped perceptions of cultural norms, political dynamics, and daily life in both the host society and their homeland, as well as on the impact of geographical context on their media consumption. A thematic analysis approach was used to identify recurring themes and patterns across participants' responses. This method was chosen to effectively capture nuanced insights into the relationships between homeland media usage, geographical context, diasporic identity, and adjustment to host societies.

### ***Ethical Considerations and Demographic Data of Informants***

Prior to each interview, participants received a detailed explanation of the study's objectives, the scope of the data to be collected, and how the data would be used. All identifying information was anonymized to protect privacy. The study adhered to ethical standards and maintained the trust of participants. This study recognizes certain limitations, such as the small sample size and the specific focus on the Korean diaspora residing in Helsinki and Oslo. Thus, any generalizations beyond this sample should be made with caution. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the experiences of this diasporic community within a distinctive geographical and cultural setting.

Table 1 outlines the demographic characteristics of the 17 informants, highlighting the diversity of the sample. Their ages range from 20s to 60s, with lengths of residence in Finland and Norway varying from two months to over 26 years. The table also indicates prior experiences living outside Korea and the Nordic

cities, illustrating their global mobility. By including both long-term residents and short-term expatriates, the data capture a diverse range of diasporic experiences and provide a strong basis for examining the connections between media use, identity formation, and cross-cultural adjustment.

Table. Demographic Overview of Informants

Informant <sup>a</sup>	Gender	Age	Approximate Length of Residence in Finland and Norway	Mentioning Experience of residing in countries other than Finland and Norway <sup>b</sup>
A	F	50s	18 years	
B	M	40s	2 months	Asia and America
C	F	20s	14 years	
D	M	40s	3 years	Another Nordic Country
E	F	40s	4 years	Asia and Europe
F	M	50s	14 years	Asia and Europe
G	F	40s	14 years	Another Nordic Country
H	M	40s	10 years	Asia, America, and Oceania
I	M	20s	6 years	Asia
J	F	50s	17 years	
K	F	30s	7 years	
L	M	60s	25 years	Oceania
M	M	20s	13 years	
N	M	40s	3 years	
O	F	40s	20 years	Asia and Europe
P	F	60s	26 years	Oceania
Q	F	20s	4 years	

Note: <sup>a</sup> Informant A to K: Residing in Helsinki; Informants L to Q: Residing in Oslo.

<sup>b</sup> Given the small size of the Korean community in this region, the name of the continent was used in place of the specific country name to ensure anonymity.

## Findings

This study identifies four key themes from the diaspora’s experiences. First, the study reveals how technological advances, particularly the Internet, have reduced both the geographical and emotional distance between diaspora communities and their homeland. Second, it illustrates how digital platforms and cultural content help synchronize individuals’ connections to their homeland with their everyday lives in the host society. The third theme explores the global spread of the Korean Wave and its impact on strengthening the diaspora’s “Koreanness.” Finally, the study examines how the pursuit of personal growth, economic opportunities, and a better quality of life influences migration patterns and shapes the experiences of diaspora individuals.

### *Homeland Media and the Erosion of Physical Distance: Creating Connectivity with the Homeland*

*Shifting Experiences of Early Migrants*

Over time, advances in technology have dramatically improved access to Korean content, easing disconnection and isolation for many in the diaspora. Several early migrants noted significant changes in their ability to access information about Korea over the years. For example, Informant A, who arrived in Finland 14 years ago, shared her experiences. After living in Finland for four years before that, she returned to Korea due to feelings of loneliness and disconnection from her homeland. At that time, the absence of Internet access and a local Korean deepened her isolation. However, with advances in technology, she now finds it much easier to stay connected with Korea. The consumption of Korean television, particularly dramas, has profoundly influenced her emotional well-being.

“I returned to Finland and opened a Korean restaurant...If I had easy access to Korean media back then, I might have chosen to live here. Nowadays, there are numerous opportunities to stay connected with Korea. I’ve developed a habit of watching Korean television after work. Although watching dramas takes up a significant amount of time, life wouldn’t be as enjoyable without them.”

Informant P’s account also highlights the transformative impact of Internet access on the diaspora experience. Previously, limited access to Korean news led to a sense of disconnection. She recalled reading outdated newspapers and magazines “multiple times” to feel closer to home, illustrating the emotional gap Korean diaspora members once faced. She mentioned that without Korean TV, she felt “cut off” from her roots, and the distance between Korea and Norway felt vast, as if she were “trapped in a lonely fortress.” She now feels constantly connected to Korea, describing it as if Korea had “opened up” and come nearer. She acknowledges that she has “forgotten how hard things used to be.” Informant G recalled her initial experiences arriving in Finland during the early 2000s. She vividly remembers feeling a profound loneliness, as if she were alone in the vast universe. Determined to adapt and thrive in her new environment, she tried to set out to find a way to lead a fulfilling life in Finland.

“When I came to Finland in the early 2000s, it was hard feeling that I was alone in the whole universe. I thought I had to find a way to live well here.”

According to Informant G, during those early days, Internet connectivity was limited, and she struggled with slow Internet modems that made even uploading a single picture a time-consuming task. However, the introduction of wifi improved Internet speed, making it easier for her to stay connected. In the meantime, she kept

herself occupied by reading numerous Korean books that she had brought with her from Korea or received through the mail.

Informant L, who has lived in Norway for 25 years, in areas far from major cities, remembered that there were places where only a small number of Koreans resided, and the first generation felt isolated and faced many challenges in settling down. The church, where Koreans gathered, provided comfort and support. They would meet once a month to socialize with Koreans and enjoy Korean food, and this gathering greatly assisted them in adjusting to life in Norway. However, with the advancement of the Internet, reliance on the church has lessened.

### *The Role of Technology in Real-Time Connectivity*

For many participants, homeland media is now crucial for maintaining a sense of connection with Korea, offering cultural enjoyment, news, and a way to preserve their heritage. Most engage with it daily, highlighting the media's role in bridging emotional and cultural gaps. Informant B, for example, mentioned the current situation as follows:

“Direct flights and the Internet have reduced the distance between Korea and Finland... Regular video calls with family and friends on various platforms make it feel like living in the same time zone as Korea.”

Informant B mentioned that if something urgent arises, he can easily go to Korea. The Internet has reduced the sense of distance, as his wife frequently video calls her family in Seoul via KakaoTalk. Social media makes it feel like he is living in the same time zone as their homeland, and his parents are not upset about their living abroad.

Interestingly, Informant E shared that when using Twitter, she sometimes wonders, “Where am I?” She feels no sense of distance from Korea to the point where she does not even miss it. Informant G, who works for a foreign company in Helsinki, also commented:

“It feels like living in Korea and working for a foreign company there, perhaps because of the influence of the smartphone.”

She can access information about Korea through her smartphone and stay connected in her Kakao Talk family room. She added, “I can communicate in real-time, and it feels like I'm right there. Before direct flights, it took twice as long to travel to Korea, but now it feels like I can come and go easily.”

Technological advancements, especially the Internet and smartphones, have facilitated real-time connectivity, making Korea feel geographically closer to these migrants.

### *Media as a Source of Comfort and Cultural Belonging*

For many participants, homeland media has become a comforting part of their daily routine. Informant D, who struggles with Finland's long winters, uses Korean entertainment shows as a way to cope with loneliness. To find comfort, he seeks companionship with Koreans and relies on Korean media, particularly entertainment programs, to maintain a sense of connection with his homeland. As a foreigner, he feels that adapting to Finnish society is quite challenging, as it appears to value individual family units and keep a certain distance. Regarding his feelings of loneliness, he mentioned that although his faith is not deeply rooted, he resides near the church and actively engages with the Korean community there. He values the opportunity to converse in his native language and connect with Koreans. Turning to Korean media becomes a way for him to relish aspects of his home country that he misses. He admits that he rarely watched entertainment programs in Korea, but now he spends significant time watching them in Finland, even creating a schedule for it. He also enjoys watching funny clips of Korea. The cultural disparity also affects his media use in the host society, as he finds the Finnish and Western-style humor unfamiliar and difficult to relate to. He emphasizes the importance of the Internet and its accessibility to Korea by mentioning:

“If you don't have the Internet and can't access Korea, life will be difficult... Despite living in several European countries for some years, I don't see a difference between them because I can always use the Internet.”

This illustrates how digital connectivity transcends physical borders, enabling individuals to preserve their cultural identity and routines while minimizing the influence of local cultural and social differences. By grounding their daily lives in online spaces that reflect elements of their homeland, diasporic individuals reshape the concept of “place” in today's digitally globalized world. The migration experience is no longer defined solely by physical surroundings in the host society but by the availability of cultural continuity through media, transforming “home” into a portable and flexible construct.

### *The Difficulty of Balancing Adjustment*

While homeland media provides comfort and a sense of connection, the relationship is not without challenges. Informant P, for example, expressed a preference for Korean media over Norwegian content, yet she also noted a desire for “freedom” from the allure of Korean dramas. This complex dynamic illustrates the tension many diaspora individuals experience as they balance the dual challenge of maintaining connections to their homeland while adapting to their host society.

“Now, there’s nothing we miss about news from Korea. I don’t watch Norwegian media. When my son, who lives abroad, calls after reading Norwegian news, I often don’t even know about it... At one point, I watched Korean dramas... they’re made to keep you watching. Sometimes, I feel like I want to be ‘free from them.’ In the past, we’d rent videotapes and watch them all night long.”

For Informant I, who is internationally married, watching Korean programs at home gives her a sense of comfort and familiarity. She explains, “I watch Korean shows easily at home, so my house feels like Korea. I don’t think I could live without it. I think it’s amazing that people have immigrated much earlier in the past.” Interestingly, she also enjoys watching the daily lives of other Koreans living in various countries on the Internet as she relates to their experiences as part of the same diaspora. However, she acknowledges the need to assimilate into Finnish society and feels conflicted about her attachment to Korean media.

Overall, the findings highlight the essential role of media in helping Korean migrants bridge the emotional and physical distances between their homeland and their new lives in the Nordic countries. Through media consumption, they can stay connected to the homeland, supporting their cultural adjustment in the host society and fostering a sense of belonging in both contexts. The Internet and media have thus created a more fluid migration experience, enabling simultaneous attachment to the homeland and the host society. However, this seamless connectivity also complicates their adjustment, as they must manage the delicate balance between maintaining strong ties to their homeland and adapting to the demands of life in the host society.

### ***Diasporic Community Synchronizing with Homeland Society***

#### *Following the Political Situation of Homeland*

The study focuses on two aspects of synchronization with the homeland: the political situation and culinary practices. Regarding the political situation and news from Korea, Informant E actively follows political figures directly on Twitter. She emphasizes the importance of reading various news articles and making her own assessments, driven by a deep interest in South Korean politics. “It’s my country, so I care about it. To critique it properly, I must know it well,” she explains. Her daily routine reflects this commitment. She wakes up early to dedicate an hour to reading Twitter updates and news articles and spends another hour at night before bed. This active engagement goes beyond passive media consumption; she critically analyzes the information she encounters. Moreover, Informant E participates in political forums and actively engages in discussions. She reflects on the role of media in

shaping perspectives. Without platforms like Twitter, she fears she might have been restricted to biased reporting. “Physically, I’m here, but my mind is engaged with my home country. Media is my weapon,” she asserts. According to Informant E, candlelight protests were held in Helsinki, demonstrating a tangible commitment to political causes and political synchronization. She adds:

“I regularly interact with people on Twitter. I don’t share my location, so discussions happen as if I’m based in the same country. They have no idea that I’m here in Finland. Distance doesn’t matter. Even the time difference doesn’t feel inconvenient. We just tweet back and forth.”

Likewise, Informant B has been closely following Korean news and actively engaging in discussions with colleagues at work, sharing information on politics. Having recently moved from an Asian country to Finland, he also mentioned the political climate of the diaspora community in the country, where tens of thousands of Koreans reside, but interactions with them are not always met with enthusiasm. While political discussions do occur in community settings like workplace meetings and church gatherings, there is a tendency to be cautious and avoid revealing political conservative or progressive stances as openly as in Korea, perhaps to steer clear of potential confrontations.

In contrast, Informant D prefers to access news from international sites rather than relying on Korean sources. Expressing skepticism toward Korean news, he chooses Internet articles from foreign platforms and reads diverse viewpoints, including both conservative and progressive opinions.

“I don’t believe in Korean news, so I read Internet articles and prefer foreign sources. *Nate* makes it easy to access Korean articles. When the impeachment occurred, I watched *JTBC* for information. I don’t follow Korean public broadcasting much. Instead, I watch various YouTube videos and the comments. On Facebook, I try to read opinions from both conservative and progressive perspectives.”

Informant G identifies as politically progressive and demonstrates her political engagement through media consumption. She regularly watches “Kim Eo-Jun’s News Factory,” a popular program among progressive Koreans, while preparing for work or commuting. While preparing dinner, she also listens to *JTBC* on YouTube, a progressive Korean TV channel. She uses Finnish at work and makes it a rule to watch Yle, Finnish public broadcasting at home. Finnish colleagues want to know about Korea, especially inter-Korean relations, and she informs them about Korean news, which also contributes to her continued interest in Korean politics and news. The candlelight rally held in Helsinki further fosters Informant G’s growing interest

in politics. This rally, organized through social media, led her to become politically engaged despite not voting in Korea previously.

Some informants noted that staying constantly informed about Korean political news could create challenges for life and adjustment in the host society. Initially, staying connected to Korean news and media gave diaspora members a sense of stability and familiarity in a foreign environment. However, over time, excessive engagement led to challenges, such as disrupted routines and emotional strain caused by time differences and the intensity of news cycles. As a result, some individuals began to scale back their consumption, recognizing the need to adapt more fully to life in the host society, as shown in Informant O's account.

“The dynamic nature of Korean news was interesting at first, but over time, it became exhausting. Getting too absorbed meant wasting a lot of time on constant updates, and the time difference made it even worse—I'd stay up late watching the news, only to regret it the next morning. I'd wonder, 'Why did I stay up? The world will change again tomorrow.' Living in Norway, I often felt like I was being pulled back to Korea. I needed to get comfortable with Norwegian culture, but if I only watched Korean news, I'd lose touch with life in Norway... Recently, I've decided to cut back on Korean media, both for my own balance and to spend more quality time with my children.”

Similarly, Informant M shared:

“As a student, I used to watch only Korean TV on weekends...I felt guilty, thinking I shouldn't rely on it so much. During tough times, it offered me comfort...I'd sometimes even watch important news live in the middle of the night despite the time difference, losing sleep over it. While it's possible to feel isolated here, focusing solely on Korea isn't ideal—it requires self-discipline...”

This shows that “political synchronization” with the homeland involves staying updated on and engaged with political and social developments in one's country of origin, even while living abroad. This phenomenon is often facilitated by social media, online news platforms, and messaging apps, which provide real-time access to political information and discussions.

Many informants, like Informant E, stay connected to political developments in the homeland by consuming news and participating in discussions. However, constant engagement with homeland news can sometimes interfere with their daily routines, disrupt sleep schedules, and create mental fatigue due to time differences. This can lead to a sense of being “stuck” between two worlds, as the emotional

investment in homeland politics may come at the expense of fully engaging with the host society.

This indicates the delicate balance necessary to sustain a connection with the homeland while integrating into the host society. Achieving this balance is crucial, as it allows individuals to preserve their cultural and political ties without hindering their adjustment to a new environment. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of self-discipline in managing media consumption and finding meaningful ways to engage with both contexts.

### *Incorporating What People Are Currently Eating in Home Country*

In addition to political synchronization as an influence of homeland media consumption, culinary practice is another key aspect of synchronization with the homeland. Many informants adapt traditional Korean cooking methods and ingredients, often featured in Korean media, into their daily lives in the host society. This reflects a desire to maintain cultural ties through food, as the difficulty of changing eating habits leads to efforts to recreate homeland dishes using locally available ingredients. Watching programs not only triggers cravings but also keeps them informed about trending recipes, further reinforcing a sense of “Koreanness” while adapting to life in the new environment.

Informant A, a Korean restaurant owner in Finland, avidly watches popular Korean cooking programs, such as “Sumine Side Dishes” and Jong-won Baek’s cooking shows. While she uses these programs as a reference to adapt to changing food preferences, she is also dedicated to keeping up with the latest trends and creatively incorporating new styles of Korean cuisine into her restaurant’s menu. This reflects her desire to infuse a sense of “Koreanness” into the host society and maintain a deep connection with her cultural roots through culinary endeavors.

Informant E also uses Korean websites for recipes and lifestyle information to make Korean food. She believes that access to homeland media has expanded her culinary skills:

“I don’t feel any sense of distance from Korea or homesickness. Sometimes, while tweeting, I pause and think, ‘Where am I right now?’ For cooking, I make traditional Korean sauces and look up recipes and lifestyle tips on Naver, double-checking a few different sources. I sometimes post my dishes on Instagram... Without access to this media, I couldn’t keep up with these traditions.”

When she first arrived in Finland, she sought out a church, similar to many people abroad who feel isolated. Her involvement was driven by the desire to connect with the Korean community and build relationships. Other than a few long-term families, many attendees tend to come and go, creating a dynamic but changing

community. Special occasions, like *Chuseok* or Korean Thanksgiving, bring in larger groups of people with traditional food for the celebration.

Interestingly, Informant I often prepare Korean food by referring to recipes and cuisines from Koreans living abroad, not in Korea. She is interested in short YouTube entertainment videos and enjoys watching YouTubers share their stories and experiences of daily life abroad. She feels connected with YouTubers from places like Japan, Germany, the U.S., and Korea.

To summarize, Korean cooking shows and online resources offer individuals valuable opportunities to develop their culinary skills in Korean cuisine. These platforms enable them to recreate traditional dishes while also experimenting with innovative styles that blend elements of their cultural heritage and local influences. This integration allows individuals to stay connected with contemporary culinary trends in Korea while reinforcing a lasting connection to their homeland. In doing so, food becomes not only a means of sustenance but also a tool for synchronizing with Korean culture while adapting to the sociocultural environment of the host society.

### ***Global Resonance of the Korean Wave and Rediscovering of the Value of “Koreanness”***

The Korean Wave has had a profound global resonance, exerting a significant influence on cultural perceptions while profoundly shaping the sociocultural experiences and identities of Korean diasporic communities worldwide. In Nordic cities, this cultural phenomenon has sparked an increased interest in various aspects of Korean culture, including its entertainment, fashion, beauty standards, and lifestyle. Such heightened visibility has not only elevated Korea’s national prestige within the region but also strengthened the cultural ties of Koreans living abroad to their heritage. The widespread popularity of K-pop, Korean dramas, and fashion trends has created a platform through which individuals in Nordic countries can meaningfully engage with and embrace Korean culture, fostering connections that were previously less accessible or unfamiliar.

For instance, Informant A noted that the growing popularity of the Korean Wave, especially through events like K-pop dance contests, has directly contributed to an increase in customers at her restaurant. Finnish people, who were once unfamiliar with Korea, now have a stronger recognition of the country, thanks to the media and cultural events that have helped elevate Korea’s global image. This shift not only enhances Korea’s reputation in Nordic cities but also underscores the expanding global influence of Korean culture.

Informant C’s experiences further reflect the global impact of the Korean Wave. She moved to Finland at a young age with her family and is well-adjusted to the host society. She started watching Korean TV in middle school, as Finnish TV seemed boring to her. Now that she understands Finnish, she still finds Korean TV more

enjoyable. Her viewing ratio between Korean and Finnish TV is about 9:1. For music, she follows Finnish artists, but for fashion, makeup, Instagram, KakaoTalk, and Facebook, she primarily focuses on Korean content. After completing an internship in Korea, she appreciates Finland's work culture but finds herself missing certain aspects of Korean life, including cosmetics, fashion, and hairdressing services.

“I travel to Korea annually to visit friends and shop for cosmetics, clothes, and hair services from Korean hairdressers who offer the styles I prefer, which I often see on Korean TV. The opening of Korean hair salons in Helsinki has been eagerly anticipated by many Koreans.”

This example highlights how the global appeal of Korean beauty, fashion, and lifestyle has extended beyond the borders of Korea, allowing the diaspora to remain connected to the current styles in Korea while wishing to adopt them in their everyday lives.

Similarly, Informant I's engagement with Korean beauty channels on YouTube and her visits to Korean beauty salons in Helsinki illustrate the ways in which the Korean Wave affects cultural practices, even in a foreign context. Her attention to Korean fashion trends also shows how the cultural influence of Korea extends into the personal identities of individuals who consume Korean media, highlighting the ongoing significance of Koreanness in shaping personal and social expressions.

In addition to food, beauty, fashion, and lifestyle, language is also an important aspect of maintaining cultural ties. Informant H, who is married to a Finnish woman, is fluent in Finnish and has easy access to local information. However, he remains deeply connected to Korean culture by watching Korean news and TV shows, cooking Korean dishes, and staying in touch with family and friends via KakaoTalk. His children attend a Korean language school in Finland, and he is committed to preserving their Korean identity and heritage.

Similarly, Informant B explains how the use of homeland media has strengthened his children's connection to Korea:

“My children, whose first language was English, improved their Korean after watching Korean YouTube programs for kids. They watch not only Korean TV but also Korean YouTubers who explain toys, travel, and science. My child searches for videos and shares information with friends. There's a saying that surfing on Naver helps improve Korean more than Google surfing. While they enjoy content in English, they find Korean-language videos much more entertaining.”

For many participants, the rise of the Korean Wave has prompted a re-

evaluation of Korea, fostering a stronger sense of pride in their identity as Koreans and encouraging a more positive and proactive attitude toward maintaining connections with their homeland. This growing engagement has seamlessly integrated Korean cultural elements into their daily lives, influencing their choices in fashion, beauty, language, and lifestyle.

### ***The Pursuit of a Better Life and Ideal Lifestyle***

The study also investigated the experiences and perspectives of the Korean diaspora living in Nordic cities and how their desire for a better quality of life and an ideal lifestyle influenced their decision to live there. Informants shared their unique journeys, providing insights into life in Finland and Norway compared with Korea and other countries they have lived in.

For instance, Informant K noted that, due to their nature, some people who come to Nordic countries wish to escape the pressures of life in Korea. As a result, there are fewer gatherings among the Korean community, and it seems that many prefer to live quietly in their new environment. This desire for a more peaceful lifestyle resonates with Informant A, who reflects on Korea's high-pressure and competitive culture. In Korea, managing numerous responsibilities, including family obligations, was the norm. However, after moving to Finland, she experienced a sense of ease and mental relaxation. This shift allowed her to focus more on her personal growth and well-being. She found comfort and health in Finland's more relaxed atmosphere.

Additionally, Informant B, who had lived and worked in an Asian country, was offered job opportunities in various countries but ultimately chose Finland due to its superior education system for his children and the appealing quality of life. Comparing life in Korea before immigrating to Finland, he appreciates the country's natural beauty. He often shares his daily experiences, such as blueberry picking in Finnish forests, on social media.

In contrast to the high-pressure Korean education system, Informant E finds comfort in Finland's educational opportunities. Having lived in several foreign countries, she particularly values Finland's focus on customized education and the egalitarian social atmosphere. She believes that the pressures and competition of Korean education can be intense, but Finland's educational model aligns more with her expectations. Other informants, such as J and K, echo similar sentiments, emphasizing their high regard for Finland's education system.

Furthermore, Informant L, who lives in Norway, expresses a sense of pride in living abroad, especially in a country with beautiful scenery and clean air. Many Koreans in Norway take pride in having a stable and comfortable life. He shared the following experiences of Korean diaspora in Norway:

“Many people say that children who go to Korea for school often want to

return to Norway because they find it hard to adjust to the intense Korean study style. Also, husbands who used to work long hours in Korea now enjoy more family time in Norway since they can come home earlier.”

Informant Q, a graduate student in Norway, also appreciates the lifestyle there, including clean air, lack of competition, and the ability to spend more time with family. She enjoys sharing her positive experiences about Norway’s welfare and education system on social media. Compared to Korea, where she feels a strong consumerist and materialistic culture prevails, she sees Norway as a more practical and modest society. Moreover, while she acknowledges that gender discrimination exists in Korea, she highlights how Norway fosters gender equality and provides a safer environment for women.

To summarize, the experiences of the Korean diaspora in Nordic cities illustrate their pursuit of a higher quality of life and an ideal lifestyle. The relaxed social environment, superior education systems, and convenient access to homeland media in the host society significantly influence their positive perceptions of life in Finland and Norway. Korean media, encompassing news, entertainment, and culinary content, plays a pivotal role in helping them maintain cultural ties while adapting to local customs and practices. While creating a sense of comfort by bringing the media environment of their home country into the physically more convenient conditions of the host society, they maintain strong ties to their homeland. Simultaneously, they work to manage these connections carefully, seeking to balance their cultural preservation with active engagement in the local environment.

## Discussion

The experiences of the Korean diaspora in Nordic cities underscore the transformative role of homeland media in shaping diasporic lives. This study highlights the dual function of media: as a bridge for preserving cultural identity and a potential barrier to integration into host societies. By examining the psychological, cultural, and social dimensions of media consumption, the discussion explores how Korean migrants negotiate their identities and adapt to the unique contexts of Helsinki and Oslo.

### *Transforming Remote Spaces: Media’s Impact on Diasporic Geographies*

The Nordic region, despite improved global accessibility through direct flights and technological advancements, remains perceived as geographically isolated. The Korean immigrant population is small, and the absence of ethnic enclaves like Koreatowns exacerbates social isolation. The Korean media plays a crucial role in addressing this isolation by maintaining psychological connections to the homeland. Through media, migrants access their homeland’s culture and information in real-

time, alleviating feelings of disconnection.

As Adams (2009) and Fornäs (2007) suggest, media consumption is inherently tied to place. Engaging with Korean television, news, and social media fosters a sense of continuity with the homeland. Technological advances have significantly reduced emotional and geographical distances between Korea and the Nordic region, offering comfort and a sense of belonging. In Massey's (1994) words, Korean media is like a hole in a Nordic city that connects to Korea, and building on Scannell's (2013) concept of duality, media connects distant places, allowing them to coexist in the minds of diaspora members. For the Korean diaspora, consuming homeland media brings "Korea" into their Nordic living spaces, creating a spatial overlap where individuals reside physically in the host society while remaining mentally rooted in their homeland.

### ***Political and Cultural Synchronization and the Challenges of Cultural Insularity***

This study underscores the role of homeland media as a mechanism for synchronization, allowing diaspora members to live the same reality as the people in the Korean peninsula despite geographical distance and socio-political differences. Platforms such as Twitter and KakaoTalk enable diaspora members to engage politically in synchronization with their homeland in real time. Some informants' active involvement in Korean political discussions, including the candlelight protests in Helsinki, exemplifies this dynamic. Through active engagement with news and opinion, they not only watch and know the homeland's political reality but also participate in and try to change that reality synchronously with the people in Korea.

Homeland media also facilitates the integration of Korean cultural elements into the everyday lives of diaspora members, fostering continuity and a sense of cultural belonging. Some informants illustrate this by incorporating Korean cooking practices, which are informed by online recipes and cooking programs. These practices enable migrants to preserve their cultural identity while adapting to the constraints of local ingredients, reflecting a synchronization that balances "Koreanness" with flexibility in their host environments.

However, this connection is not without complications. The synchronization of political and cultural rhythms through homeland media enables diaspora members to align their daily lives with those in Korea. While fostering connection, this synchronization can also lead to cultural insularity, hindering full engagement with the host society. Overreliance on homeland media may limit opportunities for local cultural engagement, posing challenges to integration. The tension between retaining cultural ties to the homeland and adapting to the host society is a recurring theme among Korean migrants.

The primary challenge of this duality lies in balancing cultural preservation with integration into the host society. While homeland media strengthens cultural ties, it can also reinforce "cultural insularity," limiting opportunities for local

engagement and fostering a “delayed identification” with the host society (Markus, 2016). Excessive consumption of Korean media may result in isolation from the host society, as individuals focus heavily on familiar cultural environments and miss opportunities to engage with local culture.

This dynamic reflects a broader struggle to balance the desire to retain a sense of “Koreanness” with the necessity of adapting to Nordic societal norms. Migrants manage this dual engagement by participating in local activities, learning the host language, and embracing the Nordic values of privacy and individualism while maintaining their cultural roots through media and traditions. This balancing act illustrates the formation of hybrid identities, where elements of both Korean and Nordic cultures coexist. To achieve this successful cultural adjustment, diasporic people continue to shuttle between their mediated homeland and host societies.

### ***Cross-Cultural Adjustment in Remote Diasporic Contexts: Korean Migrants in Nordic Regions***

The Korean diaspora in Nordic regions presents distinctive challenges and opportunities for cross-cultural adjustment due to its unique sociocultural and demographic characteristics. Unlike Korean diaspora communities in North America or Australia, which benefit from larger populations and the presence of ethnic enclaves, Nordic countries have smaller Korean populations and lack a robust Korean cultural infrastructure. This absence of community-centric networks reflects broader societal norms in Nordic countries, which seem to prioritize privacy and quiet lifestyles. These values contrast sharply with the collectivist and hierarchical traditions of Korean society. While many Korean migrants are attracted to Nordic countries by promises of high-quality education, favorable work-life balance, and comprehensive welfare systems, their integration experiences often involve substantial challenges.

A key obstacle in the adjustment process arises from the cultural dissonance between the egalitarian and individualistic values of Nordic societies and the hierarchical, collectivist orientation of Korean culture. This divergence complicates the formation of social connections in the host society and heightens reliance on digital homeland media to sustain cultural identity and emotional ties to Korea. Homeland media serves as a critical psychological anchor, offering solace, alleviating homesickness, and fostering a sense of cultural continuity within geographically and culturally distant environments. Korean news, dramas, and social media play a significant role in maintaining these connections, consistent with Lee’s (2020) findings on the emotional support provided by such media.

For younger diaspora members, media consumption plays a more complex and adaptive role in cross-cultural adjustment. By selectively engaging with both Korean and local media, they construct hybrid identities that incorporate elements of both cultures. Oh (2012) highlights the role of homeland media as a cultural resource,

enabling younger migrants to maintain their heritage while navigating their evolving roles within the host society. This dual engagement helps mitigate the challenges of cultural displacement and equips younger migrants to navigate the intricacies of diasporic lives with greater fluidity. In contrast, older generations often rely heavily on traditional media to sustain their connections to Korea, reinforcing their cultural roots but potentially hindering their integration into the host society (Yoon, 2020). This aligns with Yin's (2013) findings on how younger generations use digital media to negotiate their dual identities, blending cultural elements from both their homeland and host country.

Ultimately, the successful cross-cultural adjustment of Korean migrants in Nordic regions hinges on their ability to balance attachment to their homeland with integration into their host society. This process involves adopting Nordic cultural values such as privacy and individualism while retaining elements of their Korean heritage through media and traditional practices. Strategic media use plays a pivotal role in facilitating this balance, allowing migrants to reconcile their dual cultural affiliations and cultivate a flexible, dynamic diasporic identity.

### ***Limitations and Directions for Future Studies***

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. One significant constraint is the small sample size, which limits the generalizability of the findings. The experiences of the Korean diaspora in Helsinki and Oslo may not fully capture the diverse realities of broader transnational communities, thereby reducing the applicability of these results to other contexts. Second, the internal diversity of the Korean diaspora—including variations in socioeconomic backgrounds, migration motivations, and generational differences—was not thoroughly examined, potentially restricting a more nuanced understanding of their experiences. Third, although several early migrants are included in this study, the primary focus is on current experiences. A long-term approach could yield meaningful insights into how these experiences evolve over time. Adopting a longitudinal perspective would offer a more comprehensive understanding of how diaspora communities adapt and how their media consumption patterns shift in response to these changes.

Future research should aim to address these limitations by increasing the sample size and employing longitudinal methods to examine changes over time. Furthermore, comparative studies across diverse diasporic communities and geographic contexts could enhance our understanding of how digital media influences transnational identities in varied cultural settings. Building on these findings, such studies could offer deeper and more comprehensive insights into the evolving role of media in sustaining and reshaping diasporic lives within an increasingly globalized world.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the dynamics between media

consumption, cultural preservation, and adjustment in the lives of the Korean diaspora in Nordic cities and offer broader implications for other transnational communities navigating similar challenges in today's interconnected world. Homeland media emerges as both a cultural lifeline and a barrier to integration, reflecting the inherent duality of diasporic experiences in a globalized world. As technology continues to transform the diasporic landscape, a deeper understanding of the nuanced roles of media will remain crucial for addressing the challenges and opportunities of transnational migration. Future research could benefit from exploring the longitudinal evolution of these dynamics and comparing the experiences of Korean diasporas in other geographic and cultural contexts to deepen our understanding of media's role in shaping diasporic identities.

## Note

An earlier version of this paper was presented at NordMedia 2023.

## Acknowledgments

The fieldwork was supported by the Keio University Academic Development Funds for Individual Research (LEE Kwangho) and the Institute for Comparative Studies of Culture at Tokyo Woman's Christian University (LEE Jinah). The authors sincerely thank all those who assisted with the study and generously shared their valuable stories.

## References

- Adams, P. C. (2009). *Geographies of Media and Communication*. Wiley Blackwell.
- Chen, W. (2010). Internet-usage patterns of immigrants in the process of intercultural adaptation. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 13(4), 387-399.
- Daulay, D. A., & Rahmawati, A. (2016, November). Social adjustment in adolescents with hearing impairment. In 1st International Conference on Social and Political Development (ICOSOP 2016) (pp. 296-303). Atlantis Press.
- Elias, N., & Lemish, D. (2011). Between three worlds: Host, homeland, and global media in the lives of Russian immigrant families in Israel and Germany. *Journal of Family Issues*, 32(9), 1245-1274.
- Fornäs, J., Ganetz, H., Becker, K., & Bjurström, E. (2007). *Consuming media: Communication, shopping and everyday life*. Berg Publishers.
- Kama, A., & Malka, V. (2013). Identity prosthesis: Roles of homeland media in sustaining native identity. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 24, 370 - 388.

- Lee, C. S. (2020). Making home through cord-cutting: The case of Korean transient migrants' postcable culture in the United States. *Television & New Media*, 21(3), 278-296.
- Lee, H. (2017). What cultural identity do you have? Korean diasporic community and news consumption. *JOMEC Journal*, 144-158.
- Lee, K., & Lee, J. (2021). A media geographic perspective on homeland media use and diasporic life: The case of Koreans in Buenos Aires. *Keio Communication Review*, 43, 5-22.
- Lee, S. K., Sobal, J., & Frongillo, E. A. (2003). Comparison of models of acculturation: The case of Korean Americans. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*, 34(3), 282-296.
- Markus, A. (2016). Australia today: The Australia@2015 Scanlon Foundation Survey. <http://scanlonfoundation.org.au/australians-today/>
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, place and gender*. Polity Press.
- Meyrowitz, J. (1986). *No sense of place: The impact of electronic media on social behavior*. Oxford University Press.
- Oh, D. C. (2012). Mediating the boundaries: Second-generation Korean American adolescents' use of transnational Korean media as markers of social boundaries. *International Communication Gazette*, 74(3), 258-276.
- Overseas Korean Agency (2023). *Jaeoe dongpo hyeonhwang 2023* [Current status of overseas Koreans 2023]. [https://oka.go.kr/cms/getFile.do?file=2024032109075801787.pdf&orgname=%E2%98%852023%20%EC%9E%AC%EC%99%B8%EB%8F%99%ED%8F%AC%ED%98%84%ED%99%A9.pdf&mgmtId=MGMT\\_0000000403&siteId=SITE\\_00003&filePath=oka/common/file/&count=Y](https://oka.go.kr/cms/getFile.do?file=2024032109075801787.pdf&orgname=%E2%98%852023%20%EC%9E%AC%EC%99%B8%EB%8F%99%ED%8F%AC%ED%98%84%ED%99%A9.pdf&mgmtId=MGMT_0000000403&siteId=SITE_00003&filePath=oka/common/file/&count=Y)
- Park, N., Song, H., & Lee, K. M. (2014). Social networking sites and other media use, acculturation stress, and psychological well-being among East Asian college students in the United States. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 36, 138-146.
- Parker, D., & Song, M. (2006). New ethnicities online: Reflexive racialisation and the Internet. *The Sociological Review*, 54(3), 575-594.
- Relph, E. C. (1976). *Place and placelessness*. Pion.
- Scannell, P. (2013). *Television and the meaning of 'live': An enquiry into the human situation*. Polity Press.
- Shi, Y. (2005). Identity construction of the Chinese diaspora, ethnic media use, community formation, and the possibility of social activism. *Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 19(1), 55-72.
- Umel, A. (2022). Filipino migrants in Germany and their diasporic (irony)

chronotopes in Facebook. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 26, 768-784.

Yin, H. (2013). Chinese-language cyberspace, homeland media and ethnic media: A contested space for being Chinese. *New Media Society*, 17(4), 556-572.

Yoon, K. (2020). Diasporic Korean Audiences of Hallyu in Vancouver, Canada. *Korea Journal*, 60, 152-178.

