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The Turkish-German Bridge: A Unique Socio-Spatial Construction in Kreuzberg

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Abstract

With the migration of Turkish people to Germany came the need to negotiate identity in a different space. Interactions and connections with their origin space and destination space create an opportunity for a new type of hybrid identity and manifestation in the neighborhoods where they live. The Kreuzberg neighborhood in Berlin is a place with ephemeral, unspoken borders, where Turkish-German residents face inclusion and exclusion on both sides. This dual-othering has a deep impact on the social psychology of this group and how socio-spatial practices are negotiated. This article examines how Turkish-Germans in Kreuzberg re-appropriate their identity and its spatial component to produce a unique space of their own.

Keywords

Urban Sociology, Social Construction of Space, Thirdspace, Migration, Hybridity

Introduction

In certain neighborhoods in Berlin, concentrated around Kreuzberg, there is an interesting phenomenon. Turkish migrants and their descendants are in a position where they are not completely of the local space, but they are likewise no longer completely part of the space from which they came. This creates a kind of belonging and not belonging in both their destination and origin and creates a special social circumstance that has an effect on the Turkish-Germans that inhabit this social space, as well as these Turkish-Germans also having an effect on their space. We can understand this as another example of the classic constructivist formulation, the structure influences and constricts the agents that then re-produce and re-constitute that same structure. If this space is understood to be a social construct in itself, the reverberations of this formulation in the production of space becomes apparent. In the context of migrant neighborhoods, it becomes especially pertinent to examine how bordering practices are negotiated, as well as how transnational experiences are then remade in the specificity

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of local encounter to borrow the language of Tsing (2005), and the repercussions this has on the re-constitution of a kind of hybridity. This paper examines how the migration experience has changed the social intersubjectivity of Turkish-German residents in Berlin, and how this new intersubjectivity has, in turn, influenced their social space, producing a new, hybrid, uniquely Turkish-German, transnational space.

Figure 1. A sign in the center of Kreuzberg, reading "Kreuzberg Center" in Turkish rather than German (translated by myself), photo by O. Celebi

Socio-Spatial Constructivism, Thirdspace, and the Bridge

Identity does not depend on separation between groups, but, following Barth (1969), ethnic distinction, or by extension, any kind of distinction based on identity, is based on social interaction. All identities are situational and located in particular environments containing other identities with which they interact. Barth describes "ethnic and other social identities as somewhat fluid, situationally contingent, and the perpetual object of negotiation" (cited in Jenkins, 1996, p. 23). The process of migration changes identity, as identity is constituted in relation to the space in which it is located, as well as in interaction with other identities that are in that space. Ethnic group formation in particular is based on "specific interactional, historical, economic, and political circumstances…" and therefore as time, place, and the outer environment change, so do ethnic groups (Aydıngün, 2002, p. 185). This changed identity can likewise change its own environment. Jenkins (1996) makes the point, "if identity is a necessary prerequisite for social life, the reverse is also true" (p. 20). Identity is based on social conditions and social life is also based on the identity of those inhabiting that particular space.

Barth and Jenkins's general observations are clearer when placed on a foundation of constructivist theory, more specifically structuration theory. Molotch et al. (2000) explain that a social structure, "does not stand distinct from human action… but itself arises through human action… in their structure making actions, humans draw per force, from existing conditions—that is, from structures resulting from their prior actions" (p. 793). This perspective finds its basis in Giddens (1984) who observed,

> The social systems in which structure is recursively implicated… comprise the situated activities of human agents… The constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality. According to the notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize (p. 25).

The structure can represent an abstract, epistemological totality, whereas the localized social ontology is a form of agency. These do not have to negate each other, but rather can be co-constitutive. In Lefebvre's (1991) *Production of Space*, there is a similar, albeit spatial, understanding of constructivism. He states, "…the distance that separates 'ideal space,' which has to do with mental… categories, from 'real' space, which is the space of social practice. In actuality each of these two kinds of space involves, underpins, and presupposes the other" (p. 14). For Lefebvre, the totalizing epistemological formation can be localized and embedded in a particular social ontological basis. They both co-constitute each other through practice.

Lefebvre develops ideas on the production of space further into what Soja (1996) terms *Thirdspace*. When Soja references Thirdspace, he directly references Lefebvre's understanding of *trialectics*. As explained by Soja (1996), by emphasizing *tria*lectics, Lefebvre introduces a new view of dialectical reasoning that focuses more deeply on the third term that is not to remain separate from the original two. Soja uses the musical metaphor of the polyphonic fugue in his reading of the *Production of Space*. He sees the concepts of Lefebvre as "heuristic 'approximations' never as permanent dogma to be defended" and therefore "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis are thus made to appear simultaneously, together in every chapter in both contrapuntal harmonies as well as disruptive dissonances" (Soja, 1996, p. 9). Lefebvre, in the eyes of Soja, was continuously focusing on openness. Lefebvre's work was "just another approximation, incomplete, merely a re-elaboration of his earlier approximations as well as those of Marx, Hegel, Nietzsche and others… For him, there are no 'conclusions that are not also openings' " (Soja, 1996, p. 9). Underneath this contrapuntal complexity lies a larger voice, a meta philosophy, and that is what Soja describes as thirding-as-Othering or trialectics. To be more concrete, Soja describes a "mode of dialectical reasoning that is more inherently spatial than the conventionally temporally-defined dialectics

of Hegel or Marx" (Soja, 1996, p. 10). The thematic plan of Lefebvre's fugue, his trialectics of space, is three inter-weaving kinds of spaces. These are identified particularly by Soja as: "the perceived space of materialized Spatial Practice; the conceived space he defined as Representations of space; and the lived Spaces of Representation" (Soja, 1996, p. 10).

Here we can further investigate what exactly is referred to with the introduction of this third as an Other term. The idea of thirding "partakes of the original pairing but is not just a simple combination or an 'in between' position along some all-inclusive continuum… [it is] the first and most important step in transforming the … closed logic of either/or to the dialectically open logic of both/and also…" (Soja, 1996, p. 60). This is something more than "a dialectical synthesis a la Hegel or Marx, which is too predicated on the completeness and temporal sequencing" it is rather not simply, "an additive combination of its binary antecedents but rather from a disordering, deconstruction, and tentative reconstruction… producing an open alternative that is both similar and strikingly different" (Soja, 1996, p. 61). Soja then puts it in a different way, that thirding, "begins an expanding chain of heuristic disruptions, strengthening defenses against totalizing closure and all 'permanent constructions.' Each thirding and each trialectic is thus an 'approximation' that builds cumulatively on earlier approximations… the critique is not meant to stop at three … but to build further" (Soja, 1996, p. 61). Then, in terms of space, what Lefebvre is doing is to "fuse (objective) physical and (subjective) mental space into social space… social space… serves both as a separable field, distinguishable from physical and mental space, and/also as an approximation for an all-encompassing mode of spatial thinking" (Soja, 1996, p. 62). A larger conceptualization of Thirdspace can then be both distinguishable from other spaces as well as "a transcending composite" (Soja, 1996, p. 62).

A more specific manifestation of the idea of Thirdspace in the field of cultural studies is found in Homi Bhabha's work on this same topic. In fact, Soja turns later in his work to examine Bhabha's perspective as well. Bhabha discusses what is at the limits, and in that sense he positions himself "in that position of liminality, in that productive space of the construction of culture as difference, in the spirit of alterity or otherness" (Bhabha, 1990a, cited in Soja, 1996, p. 139). In a way Bhabha's hybridity can be seen as another type of thirding-as-Othering or trialectics. Bhabha explains, "…for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which a third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge… The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable…" (1990a cited in Soja, 1996, p. 140). He further explains this third space to be at the margins: "it is from the affective position of social marginality that we must conceive a political strategy of empowerment and articulation" (1992, cited in Soja, 1996, p. 141).

Tsing (2005) brings all of these contrapuntal but related perspectives into a larger voice of her own in her metaphor of the bridge, in which she states:

> …we walk across that bridge and we find ourselves, not everywhere, but somewhere in particular. Even if our bridge aims toward the most lofty universal truths… we find ourselves hemmed in by the specificity of rules and practices, with their petty prejudices, unreasonable hierarchies, and cruel exclusions… The bridge we stepped off is not the bridge we stepped upon… It is only in maintaining the friction between the two subjectively experienced bridges, the friction between aspiration and practical achievement, that a critical analysis of global connection is possible (p. 85).

This is a clearly processual understanding to better elaborate Thirdspace in the guise of general constructivist theory. Where Tsing sees universal truths, Giddens sees social systems and Lefebvre sees totality or ideal space. There is no one universal, but many different universals based on many different localizations, as a big idea cannot be unaltered by the "sticky materiality of local encounters" (Tsing, 2005, p. 1). Therefore, the constant thirding is totally open and constantly re-constitutes new examples. The process of localizing can be understood by Tsing's idea of friction, in that in the tension of bringing the global into the local encounter, both are changed. She explains this in the guise of the road: "roads create pathways that make motion easier and more efficient, but in doing so they limit where we go" (Tsing, 2005, p. 6). Inevitably, something new is formed through localization. Following Soja and Bhabha, it is important to remember that this hybridity then contains aspects of the original two moments but is also beyond them, liminal, and something else at the same time. This messy trialectic is one that depends on tension, on displacement, and on replacement.

In the case of Turkish-German residents in Berlin, I would like to position my argument in a similar manner, in the sense that we can see a first moment of Turkey, and second moment of Germany, and a Thirdspace or bridge in the local immigrant neighborhood, in this case Kreuzberg. The role the migrants and their descendants play in constituting their space in Berlin is similar to that of transnational actors described by Tsing (2005) that "carry and spread… the frontier with them" (pp. 33-34). In the end, migrant groups become the bridge that they have crossed, they become the transnationality they have experienced, they end up being the frontier or the thirding-as-Othering, and they then manifest this in their social practice, re-producing their own spatial social structure and thereby having an effect on it.

Identity and Citizenship in Germany

In German politics of nationality, the difference between those with a migrant ba-

ckground and the native population's apparent homogenous nature has been seen to be natural (Sökefeld, 2008, p. 179). This ordering is both inclusive while at the same time it creates boundaries between populations. Likewise, for a significant amount of time in the German imagination, those with a migrant background were to be tolerated, but remain fundamentally foreign. Schiffauer (2004) observes among immigrant communities in the post-Fordist era that there is "less interest in identifying with the nation to which they migrate" and likewise to their origin nation, and that "under the surface of transnational identifications migrants develop strong local ties to their place of residence" (p. 93). This is even more extreme in the Berlin situation, which Schiffauer references directly. He observes in Germany a strong emphasis on culture in the German understanding of citizenship with no symbolic space given to migrants in national discourse (Schiffauer, 2004, p. 93). He notes, "…due to the strong culturalist encoding of citizenship, naturalization became easily viewed by both sides as a kind of conversion…. Because of the comparatively greater difficulties with regard to political integration, the ground for the development of diasporic identities seems to be more fertile in Germany than elsewhere in Western Europe" (Schiffauer, 2004, p. 94).

It has historically been asserted that Germany, "is not a country of immigration," which can in fact, be seen as normative rather than an observation (Sökefeld, 2008, p. 181). Schiffauer also notes a denial on the part of German society as to its status as an immigrant country, and further posits that still the larger society has not come to face the consequences of Germany being a country of immigration, resulting in those with a migrant background still being "associated with rather than integrated into German society" (Schiffauer, 2004, p. 95). In fact, during the 70s, both sides of the political spectrum promised to prevent Germany from becoming an *Einwanderungsland* or country of immigration by promising to both restrict naturalization of foreigners, make family re-unification stricter, and to establish a moratorium on foreign labor recruitment in 1973 (Aktürk, 2011, p. 139). The German nation was conceived of as a "community of blood" and common descent, and, until 1999, the German citizenship law was jus sanguinis (Sökefeld, 2008, p. 181). This general attitude can be summarized as Germanness being something that one simply is, but does not become, whereas citizenship, can *perhaps* be another matter.

Of course, this began to make less sense with the influx of guest workers and their descendants, many of a Turkish origin. Most of them could speak German fluently or as a mother tongue, had studied and/or worked in Germany productively, and had spent most if not all of their lives in the country, and yet they faced significant obstacles to any possible citizenship and/or inclusion (Howard, 2012, p. 43). Schiffauer (2006) observes that into the present day "a patronizing attitude continues to prevail" in that migrants with needs and/or demands are advised "to find some German politician to take up their interests," public discussions involve largely German experts and

"a few hand-picked migrants," and that the Office of Ausländerbauftragten (Commissioners for Foreigners) is to represent the needs of foreigners institutionally (p. 95). Schiffauer (2006) further notes a sentiment that those with a migrant background should not seek to be active subjects, exerting influence of their own, even though this is what they usually strive for, rather the general attitude is that as long as the migrants and their descendants remain objects, they are then "the nice guys" (p. 96). This attitude became harder to rationalize, when, at the same time, there was an influx of ethnic Germans from the former USSR. The question as to how these Soviet Germans could become citizens easily, though they were not fully integrated, and the Turkish-Germans could not, even though they were often much more integrated, became harder to explain. This had a large impact on transforming perspectives in Germany among the political establishment in regard to nationality and belonging. With a new, more open citizenship law passing in the Bundestag on May 7, 1999, Otto Schily of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) made a famous statement that the best course of action regarding the migrants was assimilation (Aktürk, 2011, p. 142). This is in effect forms a different policy that the those with a migrant background should not remain totally separate, but become German. However, what this assimilation entails, or when it is completed is not easily definable.

Regardless of this perception on the elite level, and throughout large parts of the population, public opinion remained predominately against liberalization (Howard, 2012, p. 45). For example, opinion polls throughout the 1980s in *Der Spiegel* showed that the majority of the German populace maintained a negative feeling towards migrants (Howard, 2012, p. 45). Moreover, the larger German society continues to see the "beliefs, concerns and practices" of migrants to be alien to their own culture, and such aspects of migrants were thought to promote "extreme submission to religion" which would be directly against the secular enlightenment values of the majority (Özyürek, 2009, p. 234). The process of assimilation can be seen as not clearly defined and never ending. One must continually improve their integration into Germany, without a clear definition of when this process may be complete. This has led to the Turkish-Germans being seen as not "true Germans," while simultaneously being pressured to improve their "Germanness" in a game that is impossible to balance. This kind of situation, being both pushed to assimilate and to stay separate at the same time, has lead Turkish-Germans to produce their own identity. Moreover, belonging and legal membership (citizenship) are different things. In practice, people with a migrant background are still marginalized by much of the larger German society, and much of that society remains latently xenophobic. In fact, "grounds on which they remain are precarious… they live with the possibility they could be deported suddenly, at any time, and have already had to endure the trauma of rejection," which creates a situation in which they only "remain '*geduldet*' (tolerated) in Germany" (Ludewig, 2017, p. 278).

Turkish-German Identity and In-betweenness

Among Turkish-Germans, many, if not most, have come to identify more closely with the local space they occupy, rather than either German or Turkish national space. Schiffauer (2004) observes that immigrants, especially of the second generation living in Berlin, have a stronger association with their city on the local level rather than their national identities "under the surface of transnational identifications" (p. 93). This can become even more specific in that the neighborhood can begin to represent their identity, and shape them just as much as they, likewise, shape their neighborhood (Hinze, 2013). Hinze (2013) explains that their immigrant identity, "represents a hybrid third identity in between, one that is neither purely German nor purely Turkish… it represents the way in which immigrants make themselves at home by establishing an identity that is neither here (Germany) nor there (Turkey)… the neighborhood they live in represents who they are" (p. 76). This can be seen as a kind of glocalization in that the national level of identification is rejected in preference for identifying with the local environment itself in conjunction with quite transnationalized lives. In this sense, migrants and their descendants manifest their hybridity in their experiences in the neighborhood space, which can be a location for a Thirdspace, bridging the two moments of origin and destination, but at the same time being beyond it.

Although many of the Turkish-German residents in Kreuzberg feel sentiment for their homeland, this should not be taken to mean that they are still oriented to their homeland over their migrant identity. Those with a migrant background do, in fact, maintain a kind of nostalgia for their original home in Turkey, but this homeland is not the actual modern, concrete place of Turkey. It is rather, a kind of symbolic home, located in the memories of the older generation that actually came from Turkey to Germany and related their experience with Turkey to the younger generation through stories. It is Turkey as it was when they came to Germany. Hinze explains that they are attached to a version of Turkey that has never been actually experienced in the everyday, that strictly exists in the memories of the older generations, perhaps in some isolated summer vacations to "the *heimatland*" or homeland, and remains "a mythical place of home" (Hinze, 2013, p. 88). It is something that is not Turkey as it is now, but as it has been transformed by memory, and is relevant in the German context. This is important as not only are they not truly accepted in German society, but they also are no longer a part of their homeland as it exists now.

To better prove the point of this double non-belonging, we can examine some comments made by second generation immigrant women from Kreuzberg and Neukölln in Hinze's study:

> We feel home neither here [in Germany] nor in Turkey. We are stateless, so to say (*laughs*). They have [in Turkey] a different way of dressing, and they speak

> differently too. They can hear by the way we speak that we are from Germany. But here [in Germany] we are not accepted either (Ayşegül).
>
> My Mother says you are at home where you eat. I think that is true. Because otherwise we would not really be at home anywhere. Neither here in Germany, nor at home in Turkey, where we are being looked at in this way—'look at those Germans' (Senem).
>
> We are in the middle—when we go to Turkey it is boring for us after four weeks and we don't want to be there anymore… (*laughs*) But when we come here we are foreigners too. Despite the fact that our children were born here, and my husband was born here too and they [husband, children] don't want to go back to Turkey… (Binnaz).
>
> To be honest, I feel in the middle. Why? Let me tell you. For example, when we are in Turkey, they [the Turks in Turkey] often say, 'yeah, those are Germans, well, German Turks who live in Germany'—well, like tourists, so to say. When we come here [to Germany], we are foreigners… So, where are we supposed to live, this is our state—for example, I am a German citizen. But still I am a foreigner because my name is different and my family, and Islam [my religion], everything. So even when I say I am a Berliner, that's not true. When I travel to Turkey and say I am Turkish, that's not true either—I was born in Berlin. And went to school here. And I can speak German… So, because of all this I have no idea where we [German-Turks] belong (Ceyda) (Hinze, 2013, p. 89).

In essence, their personal experiences of dual rejection have pushed them in-between cultures and societies. One of the interviewees notes that even though she is a German citizen she is still a foreigner because of her name, family, and religion. Another observes that they are at home neither in Germany nor in Turkey. A general consensus seems to be that they are in the middle, and that where they enjoy their meals is their home. These words above demonstrate a dual non-belonging to either Germany or Turkey and a greater emphasis on the local and the in-between.

In an article by Rittersberger-Tılıç (1998), this is taken to its most extreme point, in that the alienation they feel is not only in the migration context, but that even when Turkish-Germans return to Turkey for the long term, this alienation follows them. Many Turkish workers coming back from working in Germany, and still with family in Germany, began to develop a "migrant identity" (Rittersberger-Tılıç, 1998, p. 70). When they returned to Turkey, they become known as *almancı* (loosely meaning "German-like"), and their new identity comprised, "aspects of 'otherness', which to a large part included aspects of 'cultural pollution' so much so that they were sometimes seen as 'culturally polluted Turks'" (Rittersberger-Tılıç, 1998, p. 70). Through their ex-

perience of migration and the subsequent adoption of some German traits, they lost aspects of their Turkishness and developed what we could term as a transnational existence. The majority of these Turkish-Germans returned to Turkey based on the 1983 return promotion law of the German state (Rittersberger-Tılıç, 1998, p. 72). Nevertheless, those returning from Germany had, for the most part, children who remained in Germany, payments coming from Germany, and remained in a "spatially as well as socially segregated life" in Turkey living with others who also had a German experience (Rittersberger-Tılıç, 1998, p. 73). They experienced social borders inside their supposed *heimatland*. Rittersberger-Tılıç (1998) states that "cultural pollution formed the key concept for their 'otherness' in Germany and again it is used as a legitimization for a social distancing upon return" (p. 74). This shows that the true *heimat* is not, in fact, the *heimat* as it exists, but as it is manifested in Germany through memory. It is a version of Turkey that did not face the changes the real Turkey did, and that adapted to the new environment of Germany.

If their home is neither Turkey, nor Germany, to where do they belong, to what identity do they subscribe, and how has it transformed their environment? Transnationality can be seen a phenomenon when aspects of culture in both the origin and destination countries become part of the culture of a migrant population (Faist cited in Atasü Topçuoğlu & Akbaş, 2011, p. 77). In a sense, they become what Tsing (2004) is referring to in her metaphor of the bridge. At the same time, they have become something beyond the two original cultures. In the course of their experience, the migrants from Germany to Turkey and vice versa, have shifted their discourse, as well as their identities. Social and communication networks between migrants who have returned to Turkey and those still in Germany, have resulted in a bridging process "reinforcing migration as well as re-migration" (Rittersberger-Tılıç, 1998, p. 70). The migrants' membership in either context is not completely denied or accepted which has resulted in migrant identities (Rittersberger-Tılıç, 1998). This mirrors Faist's conclusion, "that migration and re-migration may not be definite, irrevocable and irreversible decisions—transnational lives in themselves may become a strategy..." (Faist, 1998, p. 217). This has reverberations for identity and space, as well as in the practice of everyday life, which turns into a socio-spatial practice. These new interaction patterns are likewise the basis of a new identity based on this socio-spatial structure.

Perhaps a new transnational space, a socio-spatial manifestation of the bridge, or Thirdspace is possible, and perhaps this could explain the possibility of a new kind of identity. Hinze (2013) makes the argument that, "the immigrant neighborhood space provides a place where immigrant women experience a less conflicted sense of their personal identity. An exploration of the neighborhood, with its spatial arrangements, thus results in a better understanding of the contradictions that necessarily define the social and personal identity" (p. 95). The friction they feel in taking their transnational

experience, as well as their Turkish identity, and applying it to the new German local environment, specifically in Kreuzberg, has produced a new version of that identity for that specific environment. The unspoken social borders in between being Turkish and Kreuzberger, as well as German, have only emphasized the possibility of being something special: *Kreuzbergli*" (Kreuzberger directly translated into Turkish). The bordering this Turkish-German population feels is constitutive of a new identity and that identity becomes itself constitutive of a new space. In both German and Turkish societies, beyond their neighborhoods, Turkish-Germans feel their hybridity and Otherness in how much they represent "something else." Whereas, in the immigrant neighborhood they are able to fit in and feel a cultural belonging that is stronger than either their Turkish or German identities alone (Hinze, 2013, p. 95). This is their socio-spatial practice. Their true *heimat* is then the immigrant neighborhood. This is the intersection of German and Turkish space, but in some ways it is not. The bordering experience the Turkish-Germans of Kreuzberg feel, makes it something new, and beyond their origin and destination. This is something uniquely *Kreuzbergli*.

Kreuzberg as a Bridge

The Kreuzberg and Neukölln neighborhoods in Berlin have been transformed by Turkish-German identity. Over the course of the Second World War, a large part of Berlin's boroughs were destroyed. Prior to the war, Kreuzberg had been a relatively central area. However, once Berlin was separated into east and west, the location of Kreuzberg was largely different. What was once a relatively central district, was now confined to the borders of urban space. Hochmuth (2017) points out:

> Kreuzberg was cut off… West Berlin's isolation caused firms all over the city to relocate to West Germany proper… most major companies left the borough… the remaining industries, being stripped of their workforce from East Berlin, started to employ thousands of migrant laborers from the South of Europe and from Turkey. When the so called 'guest workers' moved out of company owned dormitories… many of them moved to Kreuzberg regardless of where in West Berlin their workplaces were located. This had a long-term impact on the social structure of Kreuzberg. (p. 471).

This urban divide was made more pronounced by the West Berlin senate's *Stadterneuerungsprogramm* (Urban Renewal Program) in 1963. This program intended to improve impoverished districts, especially Kreuzberg. However instead the program caused wealthier people to flee the district, leaving behind the marginalized. This is because the government stopped investing in maintenance of the old urban structure, as the local *Mietskasernen* (rental barracks) were supposed to be demolished (Hochmuth, 2017, p. 471). Among these marginalized people that remained

were primarily, the elderly who either refused to leave or couldn't, the former guest workers who did not make enough money from their manual labor to migrate to other parts of West Berlin, and students who did not have large budgets for their housing (Hochmuth, 2017, p. 471). Following the drop in housing prices associated with neglect, more Turkish migrants settled in the district. Güney et al. (2017) observe that countless Turkish guest workers began to move to Kreuzberg, along with other marginalized minorities. In the end, Kreuzberg transitioned from being one of the central districts in Berlin, to being at its margins in terms of its population, economics, and physical geography due to the Berlin Wall, the desire to rejuvenate Berlin through the destruction of older workers' flats, the economic crisis corresponding to the new division of Berlin, and the influx of numerous guest workers into the district.

Another district with significant Turkish population is that of Neukölln. Ludewig (2017) observes that "Neukölln is an inner-city district in Berlin that accommodates 150,000 residents coming from more than 190 different countries… the percentage of migrants and 'new' Germans is set to rise dramatically… in districts such as Neukölln and neighboring Kreuzberg, ethnic minorities actually form the majority" (2017 p. 278). Neukölln and Kreuzberg are divided by an official border imposed by the government, but this often does not reflect the social reality of these two deeply interconnected boroughs. It is possible, however, to see Neukölln as more of an extension of Kreuzberg, as it shares a common history, composition, cultural make up, and identity. As the two districts are attached, one could possibly walk from Kreuzberg into Neukölln without realizing the difference.

Gutierrez et al. point out that "hybridity and diversity serve as the building blocks of Third Spaces" (cited in Hinze, 2013, p. 77). What this means more specifically is that,

> Turkey… is the mythical home of their [Turkish-Germans] family and their ancestors. Their German home is the location where they have grown up, even though they lack a complete sense of belonging. The Thirdspace of the immigrant neighborhood provides a hybrid home zone that these second-generation immigrants identify with more strongly and personally than with either Turkey of Germany but rather, like its inhabitants, a place that symbolizes a new third identity that combines elements of German and Turkish identity (Hinze, 2013, p. 77).

The immigrants (as well as their descendants) themselves don't just live in a place, but they are the space inasmuch as it is constituted by them. It is produced in their social practice of the everyday. It is within the neighborhood of Kreuzberg extended (including Neukölln), that the neighborhood becomes a lived space. The lives of the

Turkish-Germans themselves within the neighborhood connect that space with their transnational immigrant identity (Hinze, 2013).

Kreuzberg has become a unique space and a bridge between cultures in several ways. Atasü Topçuoğlu and Akbaş (2011) acknowledge "the symbolic reference to Turkey, especially in cafes, pubs and restaurants… Kreuzberg was shaped symbolically as a space which directly refers to Turkey. In the end, it began to be called '*Klein Istanbul*' (Small Istanbul)" (2011 p. 76). Even despite the fall of the Berlin wall, and despite Turkish-Germans no longer working in specific places for specific factories, they continue to live primarily in the western Berlin districts, where they settled as guest workers. The Turkish diaspora population also especially avoided the former East Berlin. The most common move these workers and their descendants made is to areas close to their current settlement in Kreuzberg's bordering Neukölln, or to the city center itself. Together, Kreuzberg and Neukölln constitute a larger immigrant space. Hinze claims that the fragmented nature of Turkish-German experiences with identity cause immigrants and their descendants to have a hybrid understanding of identity "and its embeddedness in alternative integration practices that are constituted by and inextricably tied to space itself—the neighborhood space" (Hinze, 2013, p. 87). Atasü Topçuoğlu and Akbaş (2011) take this understanding further in that residents with Turkish decent dominate Kreuzberg in their symbolic practices, thereby shaping it into their own special space.

Atasü Topçuoğlu and Akbaş (2011) interviewed Turkish-origin residents in Kreuzberg and revealed examples of the unique social spatiality of Kreuzberg.

> In the 1980s, Oranienstrasse was called as Istiklal Street (a famous pedestrian street-mall in Istanbul). Turks dominated the street. There was aesthetics of Turkish shops. Boutique shops of the neighborhood. (Ms. A) (p. 77).
>
> An awkward mosque was built at the corner of Wienerstrasse. For Turks, this means feeling their own existence architecturally, and shows the feeling of striking roots (Mr. A) (p. 79).
>
> Turks began to open restaurants. Germans like Turkish cuisine… Italian and Greek restaurants do not have ethnic symbols in their design, but Turkish restaurants are full of ceramic tiles (*çini*), Turkish lights, etc." (Ms. A) (p. 78).

Not only was this shift noticed by the local Turkish people but also by the larger German public. In articles in *Der Spiegel* from the 1970s, there are examples from this primary period of migration:

> The talk about the 'Turkish Ghetto' became part of the language of local politicians and social workers… the first Harlem symptoms can already be detected

(*Der Spiegel*, 91/1973, cited in Stehle, 2006, p. 53).

> Whole village communities from Anatolia are now living in rear courtyard apartments, without any German neighbors… The concentration of foreigners spoils for the *Einheimischen* [native Germans] their traditional living quarters, but the fact that they are moving away once again makes room for new foreigners. (*Der Spiegel*, 45/1974, cited in Stehle, 2006, p. 53).

These sentiments reflect that the district lies in a mental organization socially, as well as physically separate from the so called *Einheimischen* and their space. This also reflects that the space itself is changing with the influx of migrants, mostly with Turkish backgrounds. These phenomena constitute a new spatial practice, one that belongs neither to the *heimatland* nor to the destination, but rather to the process of both bridging the two, as well as moving beyond them.

From the German public perspective, Kreuzberg and Neukölln were dangerous, separate areas. This perspective did not end in the 80s. A feature by *Der Spiegel* on Neukölln in 1997 described the district as "'an outcast ghetto,' where shootouts have become everyday routine and public housing complexes have turned into slums" (issue 43/1997, cited in Mayer, 2013, p. 98). A report from *Tagesspiegel* in 1998 "turned 'almost all of Kreuzberg into a no-go area,' where especially the Wrangel neighborhood is described as 'rotting away from the inside,' the crime rate in this 'foreigner ghetto is so immense that the German police has given up control'" (cited in Mayer, 2013, p. 98). Both major political parties have repeated similar sentiments. The chair of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) candidates for Berlin's parliament, Landowsky, spoke of "those uncontrollable centers of crime" and said that, "'one should be courageous and blow up' public housing complexes like *Neues Kreuzberger Zentrum*" (cited in Mayer, 2013, p. 98). Such sentiments were likewise shared by the center-left SPD. Mayer (2013) points out that many more voices, including the Berlin Senate's building director, Stimmann, described the housing complexes as damaging to the image of the city and that they should therefore be torn down (p. 98). *Neues Kreuzberger Zentrum* is a housing complex in the heart of the Turkish population in Kreuzberg, centered around the Kottbusser Tor U-Bahn stop, and symbolic of the physical change in the space in Kreuzberg due to Turkish migration. *Neues Kreuzberger Zentrum* is the same as the *Kreuzberg Merkezi* sign at the top of this article. The language on the sign in the very center of Kreuzberg has been changed to Turkish. Nevertheless, on the other side, the original German remains (*Zentrum Kreuzberg*), as can be seen in figure 2, bearing witness to the hybridity of the district.

Figure 2. The other side of the sign from figure 1. The text reads *Zentrum Kreuzberg,* which is German for "Kreuzberg Center." photo by Uli Hermann (https://www.flickr.com/photos/uherrmann/2768644026), the image has been cropped and translated by myself.

Mayer further examines the economic segregation in the area. She observes that neighborhoods in West Berlin, become associated with economic poverty as well as crime. She states:

> …the categories of inner-city old housing stock and the public housing complexes in West Berlin [which are largely concentrated in Wedding, Kreuzberg, and Neukölln] are said to manifest 'alarming socio-spatial polarization,' [according to a study by the Senate for Urban Development in 1997] as they are characterized by high population fluctuation, high immigrant rates, and high out migration of employed, stable income groups. (Mayer, 2013, p. 99).

From both Turkish and German perspectives, Kreuzberg, and by extension Neukölln, became a special "social territory" for the second generation descendants of Turkish guest workers. The main strategy of the second generation was to "secure a self-contained, physical, and social territory: discrete spatial entities where cultural enclaves lived together…" (Güney et al., 2017, p. 44). Güney et al. collected narratives from some Turkish gang members in this area. Their voices echo a feeling of a separate space of their own in Kreuzberg:

> We were not thinking like our parents; we were from here; we weren't thinking of going back to Turkey. Even if they tried to impose this on us, we didn't entertain such thoughts. We had to define the limits of the space where we [actually]

> lived. (F.T. member of Şimşekler).
>
> You don't know where you belong; you have to find your answer on your own. We, at that time, understood that we were from here—that this was our homeland, too. The place we called home was Kreuzberg. This district was like an island for us. (S.O. member of 36'ers) (Güney et al., 2017, p. 46).

Those who went to other districts in the east, noticed a striking difference from their space in Berlin.

> [The east of Berlin] was an eerie place for us. We wouldn't go to that side, if possible. If we had a girlfriend in the East, if you were on a date and wandering around, a group of [your] men would guard your back. It was a strange situation (E.D. member of 36 Boys).
>
> When you came out of one of the stations in the East… it felt like you were entering a different world. Everyone was blond. It wasn't like Kreuzberg. Of course, they were surprised when they saw us, too. A bunch of strange, dark men on the streets (T.Y. member of 36'ers) (Güney et al., 2017, p. 46).

These perspectives demonstrate an unspoken social boundary between the two spaces existing in the practice of everyday life, redefining them as different from one another. Even when Turkish communists fled to Kreuzberg in the 1980s, they noticed a social boundary between themselves and German communists. A Turkish communist who fled to Germany in 1981 reported:

> Dev-Genç[1] sought common ground based on the conviction that the German Communist Party was a brother party, but it didn't happen, because Turks coming out of a more dogmatic movement couldn't adapt to the ideology of German leftists. The Turkish leftists' attitude of blind self-sacrifice collided with Germans' left-liberal mind sets. (H.G.) (Güney et al., 2017, p. 46)

On the German side, a German communist Autonome activist, H.M., expressed a similar sentiment: "what we understood of the revolution did not quite coincide with [their understanding]" (Güney et al., 2017, p. 48). This may seem strange, as, of all ideologies, communism is one of the most committed to universality. Nevertheless, there seems to be two different communisms associated with two different spaces. When universal ideas are put into local practice in friction they express themselves in different ways, even in the same city, because there are different social spaces in Berlin. Ludewig (2017) states, "…tensions and prejudices are still common, and the

[1] Dev-Genç is a radical communist organization that was banned in 1971.

integration of many Germans with a migrant background, even if they were born and raised in Germany or have indeed become German citizens, remains limited" (2017 p. 276). The Turkish-Germans in Berlin, have shifted in their identity, and, at the same time, changed the space itself. This is embodied through their experiences with immigration, interactions with the host population, and daily socio-spatial practices. It is through these manifestations of juxtaposition that their experience has constituted a new space.

Conclusion

As the Turkish-Germans came to Berlin, they were placed into a new environment, and thereby a new set of limitations of possibility and a new set of others with which to interact. This did not totally remove their connection with their place of origin, but warped it through the limitations of distance. At the same time, they were not fully accepted by the larger German society. This phenomenon of dual-othering had a deep impact on the social psychology of this group, as well as their descendants, as they faced inclusion and exclusion on both sides. It made them feel like they were both a part of and outside of wherever they went. This distinctive dual identity had an effect on their intersubjective production of their space in Kreuzberg and related districts. It contributed to a certain thirding of the migrants' and their descendants' identity and space, producing a particular kind of hybridity. Through their own socio-spatial practice, re-appropriation of their identity, and its spatial component, they produced a unique space of their own. This space became, in the end, no longer Germany, and not yet Turkey, with the nature of friction, of becoming, and of in-betweenness. It was and is both in the middle, a part of, and not of its host or its origin, and has the quality of hybridity and radical openness. This space became a manifestation of the experience of Turkish-Germans and a practice of their identity as it became a transient place of borders, of marginality, and a place that did not quite belong. In the end *a bridge* was constructed in Kreuzberg.

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