



Hyun Gwi Park

The Displacement of Borders among Russian Koreans in Northeast Asia





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To my parents



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* All the photos in this book were taken by the author, unless otherwise specified



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Note on transliteration, translation, and names

Transliteration

In transliterating from Russian to English, I have followed the US Library of Congress system with some exceptions of proper personal names such as Anya, not Ania. In transliterating from Korean to English, I have followed the McCune-Reischauer system. Russian Koreans' spoken Korean language, which does not have an official spelling system, I have tried to transliterate as closely as possible to the sounds I heard.

Translation

All of the translations from Russian and Korean to English are mine, unless otherwise specified.

Names

Throughout this book, I have used pseudonyms except for the names of regions, counties, and cities. In cases where the context could reveal the identity of people concerned despite my use of pseudonyms, I have changed the context slightly insofar as it does not change the argument. However, names of some well-known public figures such as politicians in Primorskii Krai are real. Concerning the order of first and family names for Koreans, I have followed the convention of the name holder. Thus, for example, South Koreans' names were stated with family and then first name, but for Russian Koreans I have followed their convention in which the family name comes after the first name.

I did not convert Russian administrative units to English and did not italicize them throughout this book. Thus, a brief note on their usage in the hierarchical structure of the Russian government is required. The Russian Federation is composed of republics, *krai* (provinces), *oblast'*, and *raion*; while republics and *oblast'* are designated by a special autonomous status assigned because of a minority people or particularity of territoriality, *krais* are a more general administrative unit encompassing *raions* (counties) and cities.

Map 1 Russian Far East 1884-1917



Map 2 Russian Far East circa 1937



Map 3 Contemporary Russian Far East



Preface

Clearing the ground

Two contrasting images have come constantly to my mind while conducting my fieldwork and writing this book about the history and contemporary lives of Koreans in the Russian Far East. One is the image of a huge rock embedded in the landscape, and the other is of reeds swaying in the wind. I have often wondered about the significance of these mental images, as they are not merely a product of my imagination but have been inspired by the people and the landscape I have encountered over the course of my work. In this Preface, I would like to elaborate on these images, as they indicate the direction taken by my research in this book.

There is a saying among Koreans in the former Soviet Union that they would survive even if a rock were to fall upon them. Here, the rock can be interpreted as a symbol of state violence and oppression, and more specifically, the forcible deportation of all Koreans from the Russian Far East to Central Asia in 1937, during Stalin's Great Terror. The saying itself bears witness to the remarkable resilience of Koreans in the face of such hardship.

The photograph on the cover of this book shows the reeds that can be seen everywhere in the marshlands and alongside rivers and ditches in the Russian Far East and also in the vast steppes of Central Asia. I took this particular photograph in 2010 during my fieldwork in a village where many Koreans were involved in agricultural work. It shows a bed of reeds beside a canal, which was probably constructed to enable rice cultivation by the Korean farmers who had migrated to the Russian Far East from the Korean Peninsula (though this would require historical investigation). Such reeds were often mentioned by Koreans as they told me their life stories, particularly in relation to the development of virgin land. Elderly Russian Koreans would describe how they had to clear large areas of reeds with their bare hands following their deportation to Central Asia; this was something I had not expected to hear when asking about their experience of Stalinist totalitarianism.

In contrast with a rock, which is heavy and immovable, reeds are constantly in motion as they sway in the wind. Yet, as I contemplated this image it too appeared to represent suffering and hardship for my interlocutors – not only following the 1937 deportation, but also after their repatriation to the Far East in the 1990s. One elderly woman described how 'we had to clear the reeds with our bare hands in Central Asia'; a

middle-aged man in a village in the Russian Far East told me how 'before cultivating this field, it was filled with reeds which we had to remove'. In this way, for Koreans reeds have come to symbolize their experience of displacement and the hard labor involved in developing new tracts of wasteland. They also act as a reminder of the status of Koreans as landless peasants who lack any sovereignty over their land or labor: at any time, they could be displaced and the fields they had cultivated would return to wasteland covered in reeds.

I believe these two images are also helpful in considering the scholarly landscape of works addressing the subject of Koreans in the former Soviet Union. Given the scale of its impact on Koreans and their relationship with the Russian Far East, academic research has inevitably focused on 'the rock' of their 1937 deportation and its pre-history, either as the historical background of Koreans in Central Asia as part of Korean studies (Kho, 1987; Kim and King, 2001) or as an example of a Stalinist purge by means of forcible relocation as part of Russian studies (Gelb, 1995; Martin, 2001; Pohl, 1999).

In contrast to the prevailing tendency of the existing literature to view Koreans in the Russian Far East as historical figures who disappeared from the region with the deportation, the aim of this work is to shed light on the contemporary presence of Koreans in the Russian Far East against the background of their three consecutive displacements from the Korean Peninsula, the Russian Far East, and Central Asia. Yet, as an anthropological engagement with Koreans in the Russian Far East, this work is not merely a reflection of the reality resulting from being 'there' through my fieldwork, but also involves the construction of reality in collaboration with the people with whom I talked and socialized. This process necessarily entails a certain change in perspective from the 'rock-focused' landscape of the existing literature to a more 'reeds-focused' approach that explores the daily lives and social relationships of Koreans in the former Soviet Union.

While hoping that this book will be viewed as a valuable ethnographic contribution to the existing anthropological work on minority peoples in Russia, my research also aims to augment the historical research that focuses on nationality questions in the former Soviet Union. In doing so, this work discusses a region (the Russian Far East) and a people (Russian Koreans) that have been neglected by international scholarship in the anthropology of post-socialist studies and the historical study of the Soviet nationality question. I believe that such neglect is a result of a certain framework that has defined and limited previous academic research on minority peoples in the former Soviet Union. Since the establishment of the Soviet Union,

the Soviet nationality policy has systematically promoted 'the national consciousness of ethnic minorities' and has provided ethnic minorities with an institutionalized base similar in form to small nation-states (Martin, 2001, p. 1). Therefore, the most prominent feature of the Soviet Union's nationality policy since the 1920s has been the provision of territorial and administrative autonomy for minorities at various levels, from republics to districts. Reflecting this territory-based policy, anthropological research on minorities in Russia has concentrated on those ethnic groups that were granted their own territorial administration, demarcated by a clear boundary of designated residency, and much ethnographic work has been carried out with the *malochislennye narody* ('small peoples') in Siberia, the northern Arctic, and the Russian Far East.¹ With a couple of exceptions, studies on ethnic minorities in Asiatic Russia highlight the impact of the Soviet state's modernist projects, which often resulted in the loss of traditional ways of life without bringing the benefits envisioned by the socialist planners. Ethnographies of indigenous peoples in Siberia and the Russian Far East bear graphic testimony to the destructive force of Soviet state policy on those regarded as underdeveloped and primitive due to their Asiatic lineage.

The influence of Soviet nationality policy on research topics has resulted in a gap in the study of diasporas and also a disruption in the study of East Asian peoples after the Stalinist purge: the deportation of East Asian populations was accompanied by the repression of researchers in this field, as marked by the closing of the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok. Research on Russian Koreans was adversely affected on both these counts. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent opening of the door to foreign researchers produced work that aimed to fill these gaps, with Alaina Lemon (2000), Sascha L. Goluboff (2002), and Greta Lynn Uehling (2004) conducting studies on diasporas in the post-Soviet context. Lemon and Goluboff focused mainly on 'classic' diasporas (the Jews and Romani) in Russia; these groups were affected by state terror during the Stalinist period, but were not subject to 'ethnic deportation'. In this sense, Uehling's (2004) work is more comparable with the case of Koreans in the former Soviet Union, as it discusses memory and the politics of place among Crimean Tatars, who were accused of spying for the Germans and deported from the Crimean Peninsula to Central Asia and the Urals at the end of World War II. Uehling's work has a clear focus on memories of the deportation, as

1 See Piers Vitebsky and Anatoly Alekseyev (2015) for a list of ethnographic research in Siberia including the Russian Far East; this list particularly focuses on research on reindeer-herding and indigenous peoples.

she travelled not only to Crimea but also to Central Asia to listen to their stories of past atrocities and hardship. With a similar focus on memory that connects distant places, the historian Kate Brown (2005, p. 16), who became an 'ethnographer-journalist', recorded stories of 'no-place' people in a world of territorialized nation-states. While conducting research on Poles deported from the borderland known as the *kresy* (lit. the corridor) where Ukraine and Poland meet, Brown (2005) wrote about the life stories and experiences of displacement that have been excluded from the texts and documents that comprise the usual historical records.

My work, however, does not adopt the same approach as Uehling, Brown, or other researchers on diasporas in the Soviet Union, who quite understandably followed the routes of displacement and tried to reconstitute the memory of displacement in the past. The reason for my different approach is simple: the people whom I encountered in the course of my fieldwork showed little interest in the past; instead, they constantly emphasized the importance of adopting a vigorous and positive attitude towards the present and the future as they had put the hardship and suffering of the past behind them. As a result, I decided at an early stage of my project to abandon any discussion about deportation from my research agenda, not only because it did not appear relevant to people's everyday lives, but also because it was a topic that was difficult to introduce naturally in the course of conversation.

Consequently, this work deliberately avoids focusing on the 'rock', the image that symbolizes the deportation and memories of it, and instead turns our attention towards 'the reeds and the wind', the image that similarly alludes to the hardship of displacement but also depicts the mobility and resilience of Russian Koreans that has accrued over generations and across different locations. Russian Koreans have quietly moved around the Soviet Union like the wind, becoming part of the landscape at particular times and in particular places and then disappearing and re-appearing somewhere else again. In the same way as the wind is present but invisible, the Koreans present us with a challenge as to how we view them; we need to articulate the conditions that render them visible or invisible, and also the social and economic factors that lead to their appearance at certain times.

In my metaphorical use of rock and reeds, the rock might be interpreted as such a huge obstacle that it could blind us to understanding the contemporary social life of Russian Koreans with its historical weight. Or the imagery of the rock might be tightly linked with a haunting hegemonic power that makes the Russian Far East a space for only the past of the Koreans – implicating that at present the Russian Far East is a space for only ethnic Russians, as the Stalinist purge intended. I am hoping that my

ethnographic provision for the story of Russian Koreans will enable us to see the landscape of this borderland, bypassing the rock. What I am trying to do in this book is something similar to how Russian Koreans cleared of the ground before beginning new cultivation – and the continuation of their lives – after displacement.



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Introduction: the obscure presence of Russian Koreans in Northeast Asia

I first met Katia Kim in the early spring of 2003 when I was conducting fieldwork with Russian Koreans in a village called Novoselovo in Primorskii Krai (see Map 3). She had been born in 1928 in Pos'et, a coastal fishing settlement near the border between Russia and North Korea. During the Stalinist purge of Koreans in the Russian Far East¹ (hereafter the RFE) in autumn 1937, she and her parents were forcibly relocated to Ushtobe, Kazakhstan. She married in Kazakhstan and lived on the rice-cultivation collective farm where her husband worked until 1993, when she returned to the RFE with her family following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Her experiences of displacement were the direct result of great political upheaval. She described how Koreans in the former Soviet Union were forcibly relocated and how they endured backbreaking labor because they did not have 'their own land'. This sense of displacement pervades the perceptions of the majority of elderly Russian Koreans, especially those who are old enough to have personally experienced the events of 1937. Yet this acute awareness of being a displaced people without any territory of their own appeared to be somewhat at odds with the vigorous and tenacious vitality that characterized their lives. This led me to wonder whether their view of the past and their lack of 'their own land' were more of a nostalgic lament than a fundamental issue in their day-to-day lives. At the level

¹ The Russian Far East is hard to define; as John J. Stephan (1994) rightly points out, its 'elasticity' whereby it sometimes encompasses Eastern Siberia, i.e., the eastern part of the Ural Mountains, and at other times 'the entire Far East vanishes into Siberia's capacious embrace', is partly due to historical administrative changes. At present, *Dal'nii Vostok* ('the Far East') is an administrative economic zone that includes the Republic of Sakha, Chukotka National Oblast', Koryak National Oblast', Kamchatka Oblast', Magadan Oblast', Amur Oblast', the Republic of Buryatia, Chita Oblast', Khabarovskii Krai, Primorskii Krai, and Sakhalin Oblast' (see Map 3). Although my fieldwork did not extend beyond Primorskii Krai, I use 'the RFE' to mean the area of my fieldwork in this work. This reflects the historical circumstances of the merging of Khabarovskii Krai and Primorskii Krai between 1926 and 1938, when they were collectively known as *Dal'nevostochnyi Krai* ('Far Eastern Krai'). As this was the administrative situation at the time of the 1937 deportation, many elderly Koreans still use this term without regard to the subsequent division of Far Eastern Krai into Khabarovskii and Primorskii Krai in 1938. While many people in this region, such as the Nivkhs on Sakhalin Island (Grant, 1995), consider themselves to be residents of Siberia, the residents of Primorskii Krai make a distinction between Siberia and the Far East. Local residents and the media often also use the term '*Primore*' instead of Primorskii Krai.

of the nation-state, Kim's summing up of the Russian Koreans' context was consistent with social scientific studies about their migration and displacement. However, my ethnographic observation of her daily social transactions – and those of many other Russian Koreans in the RFE – led me to question the very meaning of this displacement. This book is a result of that questioning: it attempts to address the issue of displacement at the level of the nation-state from an ethnographic perspective based on long-term fieldwork.

It is hard to define Russian Koreans in the RFE as single community, since they lack clear boundaries like areas of concentrated residence, a traditional religion, or their own native language – all lost in the process of 'Russification' that they underwent during the Soviet socialist period. Despite this, Koreans in the RFE still maintain a certain sense of themselves as 'Koreans'. In addressing this sense of identity, this book adopts a situational and relational approach to their scattered communities, focusing on how they maintain their way of life through kinship-centered sociality, which places great emphasis on being *sredi svoikh* ('among our own people'). This is not a static condition that requires fixed geographical boundaries; rather, it relates to contextualized behaviors and customs rooted in core family relationships, such as those between parents, children, and siblings.

So, for example, even if a person is born from a mixed marriage (*jagube* in the vernacular used by Russian Koreans), he or she may be viewed as and consider him- or herself to be 'Korean' if he or she engages with other Koreans more frequently and intensively than with non-Koreans and if his or her way of life and behavior conforms to certain conventional cultural norms, such as showing respect for one's elders, working hard, showing hospitality, and caring for family members. Conversely, it is quite possible for someone whose parents are both Korean to be brought up to 'live like a Russian'.² In fact, many Russian Koreans are highly educated professionals and would rarely be found in the marketplaces and agricultural fields that

2 Ivan Peshkov (2015) points out that 'in the Soviet world' ethnic minorities were usually perceived as inferior to Russian 'cosmopolitans'. This is still the case in Russia today, even after the collapse of Soviet socialism. When meeting for the first time, the question, 'Who are you?' is usually understood as seeking information about one's nationality when addressed to ethnic minorities, but about one's profession when addressed to Russians and other Slavic people. During the Soviet period, Koreans aspired for their children to move up the social scale to the same position as Russians and the other elite ethnic minorities who were dispatched to marginal areas of the Soviet Union as colonizers; consequently, many who were part of the younger generation during the period of late Soviet socialism are seen as the product of 'Russification' which is indistinguishable from Sovietization.

I discuss in this book; such people are viewed as Korean merely by virtue of their birth and their nationality as stated in their passport according to the Russian (or former Soviet) 'national order of things'.³ In other words, the state of 'being Korean' is contextual and can change and adapt depending on the social situation and interactions with other social actors. Hence, my interlocutors often emphasized that 'ethnic identity' for so-called Russian Koreans is defined above all through *povedenie* ('behavior') and *vospitanie* ('upbringing'), rather than by more intrinsic factors. It would, however, be misleading and somewhat tautological to say that Koreans spend time among their 'own people' for the sake of maintaining their Korean identity. On the contrary, I would argue that Korean sociality is the product of their political transformation during the post-Soviet transition. This book therefore explores Korean sociality not only as an end in itself, but also as a response to state violence, the socialist modernization project, and questions of nationality in both the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia.

Displacement and mobility

Russian Koreans achieve a sense of being among their 'own people' in the space provided by domestic households: in other words, in the 'private' (Siegelbaum, 2006; Gal and Kligman, 2000) and 'informal' spheres (Shlapentokh, 1989). Under the socialist regime and in the post-socialist world, domestic space has not only been a site for 'reproduction and consumption', but has also 'transformed for many into the place where the really intense, productive, and rewarding work of their lives was accomplished' (Gal and Kligman, 2000, p. 50). This sphere of the economy has been described in various terms, such as 'the shadow or black economy' (Jiménez and Willerslev, 2007), 'the informal economy' (Hart, 1973), and 'the second economy' (Verdery, 1991). The 'regional tradition' (Fardon, 1990) of anthropological studies in post-socialist societies, including Russia, is centered on the study of social relations in this informal sphere and how they connect with the institutionalized hierarchy of the state (Humphrey, 1998; Verdery, 1993, 1996; Ssorin-Chaikov, 2003). These studies provided me with a basis for investigating the prevailing social practices among Russian Koreans in their informal domestic spheres, with a focus on their history of repeated displacements.

3 Liisa Malkki (1992, p. 37) proposes using the notion of 'a national order of things' when producing ethnographies of displaced peoples, instead of 'nationalism', which is a 'political ideology'.

During the period of my fieldwork in the early 2000s and until my latest visit in 2013, the majority of Russian Koreans in the RFE worked in marketplaces or were involved in agricultural activities – both of which lay outside the direct influence and protection of the state. During the early stages of my research, when my knowledge of their Soviet past was limited, I assumed that their involvement in the informal economy was due to a lack of local connections following their recent migration from Central Asia and the demise of state institutions following the collapse of the socialist system. Although this was partially true, as I gradually learned more about the life stories of these Russian Koreans from the ‘last Soviet generation’ (Yurchak, 2006, p. 31), who had been ‘born between the 1950s and the 1970s’ and experienced the late period of socialism in the 1970s and 1980s as young adults, I realized that many of the people who were now involved in marketplace trading and vegetable cultivation had previously worked in state institutions in Central Asia in various skilled positions, such as engineers, factory workers, accountants, veterinary doctors, nurses, school teachers, etc.

The members of this ‘last Soviet generation’ are the children of the ‘older generation’ born during the Stalinist period and experienced the hardships of the 1937 deportation and World War II. Many of my older interlocutors had received little education and had been involved in rice production on collective farms before working on contract teams for vegetable cultivation between the 1960s and 1980s (see Chapter 3). The contrast with the younger generation was remarkable. Whereas the ‘last Soviet generation’ is completely fluent in Russian and often incapable of communicating in Korean (considered a sign of their successful ‘Sovietization’ during socialist period, or ‘loss’ of Korean culture after the collapse of the Soviet Union), their parents’ ability to speak Russian was much more limited and varied depending on their level of schooling. Whereas their parents had toiled in the fields, the younger generation with their higher level of education had often been able to obtain professional jobs in state institutions in Central Asia. How can we understand this generational change in relation to the position of Russian Koreans in the former Soviet Union? Why did each generation have to suffer displacement on a massive scale with the making and ‘unmaking of Soviet socialism’ (Humphrey, 2002a)? And what are the implications of the social mobility of the ‘last Soviet generation’ of Russian Koreans during the late Soviet socialist period?

To answer these questions, I draw on research about the Soviet Union’s nationality policy and the subsequent ethnographic studies of post-socialism to understand how Russian Koreans were and are located – not

only in territorial terms in the formation of the Soviet socialist state, but also in the economic sphere. The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in an outbreak of autochthonous nationalism, ethnic conflicts, and a wave of migration between the constituent republics of the former Soviet Union. Accordingly, academic attention turned to the Soviet nationality policy – dating back to the early Soviet period – in an attempt to explain the sudden rise of this ethno-nationalism (Suny, 1993; Suny and Martin, 2001; Tishkov, 1997). In discussing the Soviet nationality policy, researchers pointed out a certain mismatch and incoherence within it. For example, Rogers Brubaker notes that both ‘territorial/political’ and ‘ethno-cultural/personal’ modes were established in the institutionalization of multi-nationality by codifying nationhood and nationality as ‘fundamental social categories’, inevitably resulting in the criss-crossed discrepancies at various levels of administrative units, ethnic groups and individuals (1994, p. 47-49). Similarly, Yuri Slezkine observes that the tension inherent in the Soviet Union’s nationality policy lay in ‘the coexistence of republican statehood and passport nationality’ (1994a, p. 339). In other words, nationality policy operated on two different tracks: on the national level, with the granting of administrative territories, such as republics, oblasts, and okrugs; and on the personal level, with the issuance of internal passports containing a nationality section to every Soviet citizen since 1932. However, this two-track approach produced contradictions rather than coherence, particularly in the case of diaspora communities, who were not granted an autonomous territory but were accused of ‘bourgeois nationalism’ and ‘rootless cosmopolitanism’ (Slezkine 1994a, p. 336).

The research produced in the 1990s that explored the contradictions of simultaneously promoting ethnic particularism and Soviet universalism was predominantly reductionist in approach, and considered the Soviet nationality policy to be a major reason for the eruption of ethnic problems in the post-Soviet period. Subsequent researchers, such as Terry Martin (2000; 2001) and Francine Hirsch (2005), view Soviet nationality policy as a modernization process and attempt to locate these contradictions within a single explanatory framework. Drawing on the work of Ernest Gellner (1983), Martin (2000) argues that the early Soviet nationality policy of the 1920s was motivated by a neo-traditionalist approach. However, he differentiates nationality, as a Soviet social status, from both the Tsarist conception and Gellner’s notion of traditional social status by emphasizing how socialist ideology was the main driving force for the Soviet nationality policy: the Soviet state deployed socialist ideology to attempt to transform the traditional social structure into a nationality-based *soslovie* (‘estate’)

(Martin, 2000, p. 360). In other words, the traditional social categories used to describe minority peoples, such as religion and lineage, were incorporated into a single category of ethnicity by the state's nationality policy, thus creating a wide social basis for socialist transformation. Martin (2001) further argues that this initial instrumental approach changed into primordial nationalism in response to the border insecurities and 'Soviet xenophobia' of the mid-1930s.

In contrast to Martin's focus on how these types of nationalism depended on changes in Soviet socialist policy, Hirsch argues that the Soviet nationality policy must be seen as part of the framework of 'state-sponsored evolutionism', which was 'premised on the belief that "primordial" ethnic groups were the building blocks of nationalities and on the assumption that the state could intervene in the natural process of development and "construct" modern nations' (2005, p. 8). Hirsch maintains that the main aim of the Soviet nationality policy was to 'modernize' and 'transform all the lands and peoples of the former Russian Empire and bring them into the Soviet whole' (2005, p. 13). Despite this difference in focus, both Martin and Hirsch studied the Soviet Union as a whole and examined its nationality policy as part of the process of constructing the modern state: Hirsch (2005) highlights the disciplinary power of the state by focusing on how knowledge about populations was produced by ethnographers and census workers, while Martin (2001) focuses on the geospatial boundaries and territory-based nationality policies driven by socialist ideology and constrained by international situation.

According to Timothy Mitchell (2006), the production of population data by means of censuses and other demographic techniques and the drawing of the boundaries of the state are prerequisites for the invention of the economy as an object of state governance, subsequent to which the population and economy appear to be separate entities on which the state can individually work. Mitchell, however, continues to argue that 'the task of a theory of the state is not to clarify such distinctions but to historicize them' (2006, p. 170). In the building of the Soviet state, the presence of diasporas, including the Korean diaspora, blurred both the drawing of borders and the organization of society in accordance with the socialist ideology of nationality which endeavoured to guarantee autonomous territorial administration for 'colonized peoples'. In contrast to 'affirmative action', a term Martin (2001) uses to describe Soviet ethnic particularism, diaspora nationalities like Koreans became the target of 'negative action' in the Soviet Union. Initially, Koreans as 'enemies of the nation' were displaced while drawing the far eastern boundary of the Soviet state; subsequently,

they were excluded from territory-based administrative autonomy. The deportation of Koreans in 1937 could be understood as trimming and tidying the nation-state's ragged territorial border by relocating them into the mosaic of multinational socialist states deep in the Soviet Union.

However, I argue that the border of the Soviet Union was not established through the 1937 deportation (as intended by the Stalinist regime), but rather through the transformation of the Koreans and other nations into *sovetskii narod* ('Soviet people'). In other words, the border was internalized by those (i.e., the Soviet Koreans in this book) who were accused of blurring the territorial borders. For this reason, we need to understand the 1937 deportation and Koreans' mobility in the late Soviet period not only in relation to the creation of external territorial boundaries, but also as a result of changes in the internalized boundaries of Soviet socialism. Drawing on Alexei Yurchak's (2006) study, I refer to these changes as 'the displacement of the border'.

To explain this further, let us consider that, under socialism, the driver of Soviet society was not capital but 'the labor force' (Ssorin-Chaikov, 2003); in other words, 'wealth' resided 'in the people' (Rogers, 2006). In the Soviet geo-space, 'populations' were created by the state for the purposes of production and were moved (or prevented from moving) according to the demands of economic activity and modernization. As a result, the state sought to force nomadic people such as the Romas to become sedentary (Lemon, 2000), while at the same time mobilizing others to fill gaps in the labor force (Hoffmann, 1994; Slezkine, 2006). The 'allocative power of the state' (Verdery, 1991, p. 75) was central to the working of the Soviet economy and society, rather than 'maximising the resources available for allocation'; therefore, following Verdery (ibid.), the infamous 'economies of shortage' were consequence deliberately maintained by the state, not the malfunctioning of Soviet-type economy. The state exerted power and maintained influence over people by establishing and regulating a hierarchy of social relationships and by assigning varying degrees of access to the available resources. In this way, it was able to categorize and mobilize people to achieve the production targets set by the central government.

While such hierarchical social relationships were most strongly established in official state institutions, the effect of socialist egalitarianism was most often experienced in the social space, where kinship-like communities flourished and where sociality occurred on an intimate level. Yurchak (2006) refers to this kind of social space as a 'de-territorialized social milieu'. By 'de-territorialization', Yurchak (2006) refers to the displacement of Soviet socialism in knowledge production and its symbolic reconstitution

in everyday life beginning in the late 1950s. The reproduction of Soviet socialism as a cultural ideology began to be based on the 'hegemony of forms' through 'performative shift' – that is, the signifiers of authoritative discourse (how socialism was represented) were meticulously reproduced, but its signified (what it represented) became 'relatively unimportant' (Yurchak, 2006, p. 114). Thus, people continued to carry out their discursive roles without negating socialist ideology, but without enthusiastically advocating for it either.

In this context, Soviet socialism became increasingly integrated into everyday life through the ritualization of mundane activities, such as participation in Komsomol (Communist League of Youth) meetings, speeches, elections, and parades, that fulfilled the authoritative, standardized ideological instructions from the central government. The agency in such acts of symbolic reproduction of socialism lay in the endeavour to 'remain an ordinary person' within the close-knit, 'kinship-like' communities that existed alongside the official state apparatus. Yurchak (2006) describes how socialist ideology became increasingly irrelevant and of little concern to ordinary people, since the authoritative system did not allow them to participate in the production of socialist knowledge and any variations or creative input by ordinary people were considered dangerous. Therefore, people's creativity and energies, based on a genuine belief in socialism, found their milieu *vnye* ('outside') of the state institutions in which state socialism resided, in a process that Yurchak refers to as 'internal displacement' and 'de-territorialization'. Lewis H. Siegelbaum (2006) also noted the emergence of the 'border of Soviet socialism' in various realms, such as car ownership, pet keeping, and private plot cultivation, through which people were able to discover their 'true selves' and create their own space in which to live.

The experience of Koreans largely confirms Yurchak's sympathetic and humanizing interpretation of Soviet socialism. Most Russian Koreans were proud of belonging to the Soviet Union, and 'the last Soviet generation' of Koreans truly believed in socialism, as did Yurchak's interlocutors. Yet, as one of the minorities in the Soviet Union, the spatial displacement of Koreans from their homeland (the RFE) to the alien steppe region resulted in a significantly different type of internal displacement. With their forcible deportation and lack of entitlement to any territory-based Soviet administrative structures, Koreans' internal displacement resulted in a highly flexible economic life based on widespread mobile agriculture and collective, kinship-based temporary groups. Somewhat ironically, it might be possible to argue that the political status of a person or group in the Soviet

Union lay in their power to control the distance between the authoritative realm of socialism and their de-territorialized temporal and spatial milieu. In this sense, Korean displacement can be understood as the transference of external territorial boundaries into the internal borders of Soviet socialism in a very particular way.

This becomes clearer if we compare Soviet Koreans with other minorities who were granted the autonomous administration of their own territories. The case of the Buryats, studied by Caroline Humphrey (1998), is illuminating, especially in regard to the relationship between their kinship system and the state. According to Humphrey, the Buryats were able to trace their genealogies to the fifth or sixth generation and possessed a well-developed kinship network that adapted to the Soviet political economy in various ways (Humphrey, 1998, p. 340). In contrast, Russian Koreans are not able to trace their genealogies as far back as the Buryats; they usually end at their grandparents' generation and with those who were their 'consociates' (Schutz, 1967, p. 15-6). These genealogical links tend to be broken at the point of their displacement either from the Korean Peninsula or the RFE, with no memories or records of their ancestors previous to that time. During my fieldwork, it was usually the bilateral grandparents who formed the center of the kinship group, with previous generations on both the paternal and the maternal side being of little concern for most people. Hence, it is hard to say that patrilineage exists among Russian Koreans, although the family name and some aspects of inheritance usually pass from father to son. Instead, it is the horizontal kinship relationships that are most evident and important for Russian Koreans, though amorphous in form. It is hard to determine the rules of their kinship relationships, as their relatedness can appear random and chaotic and is highly dependent upon social contingencies. My interlocutors usually explained their relatedness to me *chez koro* ('via somebody'), rather than based on genealogy.

Humphrey (1998) observes that Buryat kinship groups usually consist of three or four generations' agnatic links, and that they were closely interwoven with the Soviet hierarchy in the workplace. This connection enabled state resources such as agricultural equipment, transport, and construction materials to be used privately for domestic herding, cultivation, and the selling of products in the marketplace. Illustrated with a meticulous diagram of the administrative organization of a Buryats' collective farm, Humphrey (1998) traces the biographies of several prominent figures in local state institutions and their links with the Buryats' extended kinship networks to show how each position is connected to others by kinship in a way that is either hidden or that overlaps with their position in state

institutions. By contrast, the kinship network of Russian Koreans, who did not have their own administrative territory, appears to be disconnected from state institutions, especially since the 1960s and the rapid growth of urbanization. As I describe in Chapters 2 and 3, this does not mean that Koreans were excluded from employment in state enterprises during Soviet times; rather, their voluntary displacement from state institutions and preference for working in mobile groups in the informal economy, although tolerated, resulted in disapproval and condemnation from the state. In other words, while the kinship relations of Buryats and other ethnic groups with autonomous territories were built into the administrative apparatus, this was not the case for Koreans; instead, they accepted mobility to be *sredi svoikh* ('among their own people').

Nowadays, the Russian Korean kinship network cannot be defined by boundaries or external criteria and is only apparent during specific kinds of social interactions. In other words, without a territorial base from which to claim a collective identity or social groups in which to claim membership, Russian Koreans appear to be bound together through a 'de-territorialized' form of kinship; hence, it is no longer possible to talk about a descent group or lineage in which 'blood' and 'territory' are prerequisite components (see Kuper, 1982). The center of the kinship network for Russian Koreans today is the nuclear or extended family, within which most social interactions take place. One crucial aspect of this network is spatiality, with each household forming a point in the network. As Sergei Ushakin (2004) observes, people in Russia often take a spatial approach to 'family ties'. Therefore, relatives act as locations for the enactment of a relationship or the negation of other social relationships. Similarly, the decision by Koreans to move or stay put is usually based on the importance of relationships in their network, as illustrated by the typical comment: 'I wouldn't have moved to the RFE if my sister hadn't been living here.'

Encounters

Before conducting my fieldwork in the RFE, the image I had of Soviet Koreans was from a TV program I used to watch as a child. The picture that had remained in my memory was of women selling *kimchi* in a marketplace in Central Asia; it may have been the juxtaposition of two familiar images (*kimchi* and women) with an unfamiliar background (Central Asia) that created such a strong impression. Whatever the reason, this image remained buried deep in my subconscious until I encountered it in person in a market

in Ussuriisk, Primorskii Krai, when I arrived for my fieldwork in 2002. Such a scene, however, is neither unique to Ussuriisk nor to Central Asia, as Koreans can now be found throughout Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union, with their number reaching nearly half a million. Hence, anyone who has travelled to Russia or Central Asia is likely to have encountered East Asian-looking women in the marketplace selling spicy vegetable pickles and speaking fluent Russian.

Nevertheless, whenever one encounters Koreans in the countries of the former Soviet Union, particularly in places such as Central Asia or Saratov, in southern Russia, which are very remote from the Korean Peninsula, the question arises of how these people came to be living there. Unravelling the puzzle leads one back to the original place they settled when they first left the Korean Peninsula, namely the RFE. Hence, it seemed to be a justifiable choice to go to the RFE when I first decided to carry out research on Koreans in the former Soviet Union. My original intention was to investigate what it was like to have experienced 'real' Soviet socialism, rather than socialism as a utopian ideal – or as a vilified and dangerous regime, as presented in South Korea during the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union not only shattered this bipolar image of socialism but also provided people with the opportunity to go and see its ruined remains with their own eyes.

The repatriation of Korean refugees to the RFE also raised public awareness of the tragic history of their 1937 deportation to Central Asia during the Stalinist purge. The prominent South Korean anthropologist, Lee Kwang-kyu, played a leading role in making the situation in Primorskii Krai known to the general public in South Korea, appealing for humanitarian aid for those who had been displaced (Lee, 1998). In the RFE, the sudden inflow of Koreans from Central Asia resulted in media discussions of the history of the region in the late 1930s, which had remained hidden and forgotten for decades. It was this public discourse and the publication of some studies on Koreans in the former Soviet Union that fuelled my interest in the subject and motivated me to set out for Ussuriisk.

My first impression on arriving in Ussuriisk was the total absence of Koreans in the central areas of the city, such as the wide avenues and the plaza where the municipal administration and a statue of war heroes were located; instead, they were to be found in the marginal spaces of the city. As Brown notes in her work on the Polish-Ukrainian-Russian borderland: 'the problem with writing a history of people who slip from one margin to another lies in the invisibility of the periphery' (2005, p. 15). Such urban scenes in Ussuriisk illustrate the 'plasticity of landscape' (Sturgeon, 2005, p. 9-10). In a study of two Akha settlements on the border of Thailand and

southern China, Janet C. Sturgeon notes that the landscape is flexible and fluid in its response to changes in policy by the nation-states. This is evident in the lives of the Akha people, especially in their use of the forest and their cultivation practices; her notion of 'plastic landscapes' in the borderland effectively captures the 'intersection of Akha practice and state plans' of both the Chinese and Thai states.

Similarly, in the 'plastic landscape' of Ussuriisk, it was almost impossible to encounter Koreans in certain places and at certain times, such as on festive occasions in the city center, but at other places and other times, they were much more visible. Korean traders dominated the scene in the daytime markets and could be seen working alongside the Chinese in the Chinese market; groups of elderly Koreans were a familiar sight, chatting together in the streets of poor residential areas on the outskirts of the city; and early in the morning in front of the police station many Koreans could be found, along with people of other nationalities, in the queue for *propiska* ('residency registration') and applications for permanent residency and citizenship. A city map is not sufficient to understand the urban landscape; people move around the city in particular ways, creating a landscape and becoming part of it themselves (de Certeau, 1984, p. 91-93; cf. Bourdieu, 1977, p. 2).

'Wounded attachment'

A public holiday in Ussuriisk led me to think about the marginal position of Koreans in this region in terms of the political landscape. Victory Day, held on May 9 every year, is the biggest national holiday in Russia and celebrates the victory of the Soviet Union over Nazi Germany in the Second World War. It is celebrated on an impressive scale in Ussuriisk and whole sections of local newspapers are filled with the testimonies of veterans and older people. In the midst of this mood of celebration, I pondered the position of Koreans in relation to the commemoration of the war, given that they were excluded from joining the army in defence of 'our great Fatherland' against the Nazis and were labelled as an 'enemy nation' and 'collaborators and spies for the Japanese imperialists' – and that such accusations formed the grounds for their forcible relocation to Central Asia.

A page from a Korean newspaper published in Ussuriisk, featuring a dedication to a Korean hero of the Second World War, grabbed my attention. His name was Aleksandr Pavlovich Min and he died in battle in 1941 (*Koryŏ Sinmun*, 9 May 2004, p. 2). The article sought to highlight the existence of this Korean war hero, and implied that many Koreans would have joined

the Russian army to fight against the Germans if they had been given the opportunity. A similar narrative often appears in the writings of Koreans (for example, Kim, 1994; Li, 2000), who assert their loyalty to Russia or the Soviet Union based on their willingness and desire to participate in the war against Germany. It is interesting to note that these claims are made in relation to Germany rather than Japan, despite the fact that many of their forefathers were anti-Japanese socialist partisans.

From these attempts to prove their loyalty, it was obvious that Russian Koreans did not see themselves as opposed to the state – whether the Soviet Union or the Russian Federation – or as the victims of state violence. Reflecting on the past, one woman who was born in 1918 stated her opinion about the position of Koreans succinctly as follows:

There was an entire system that prevented Koreans from moving outside the area in which they were confined. We had a black stamp in our passports. It is difficult for young people nowadays to imagine being unable to move out of one's *raion* [county], city or village without the permission of a commander who was in charge of keeping the deportees under surveillance. Thank God, my grandchildren do not experience people calling them 'Japanese spies', 'hopeless elements', 'ungrateful' and other upsetting things. We thought of ourselves as second class – no, not even second class, rather the lowest class. Young people need to value the current freedom they enjoy with their right to an education, free movement and equal rights. But I tell you that never, even during the hardest years, were Koreans opposed to the state. (Chen, 2003, p. 38-39)

While members of the Korean intelligentsia make efforts to document the loyalty of Koreans, ordinary Koreans often exhibit a more ambiguous attitude toward the state. They do not oppose the state, but they do adopt a certain indifferent and non-demanding attitude towards it, keeping themselves at a distance from its influence. One of my acquaintances, a woman in her fifties whom I met in the Chinese market in Ussuriisk in 2003, summarized this attitude as follows:

Tatars know how to unite and demand their rights [she had divorced her Tatar husband]. But Koreans earn money, live well and give their children an education – that's all. Making demands is not in our blood. (*Koreitsy zarabatyvaiut, zhivut khorosho, doiut detiam obrozovanie-eto vsio. V krovi, koreitsy ne khotiat trebovat'ia*).

However, this pragmatic stance has its downsides. A series of affirmative legal measures concerning the status of Koreans as 'repatriates' or 'refugees' to the RFE were introduced in the 1990s, and made many Koreans eligible for benefits from state rehabilitation programs. However, most Koreans were indifferent toward these measures and failed to apply. As one interlocutor commented: 'Koreans are not friendly towards the law.' Despite this tendency to distance themselves from the state, most of the Russian Koreans that I met did not consider themselves to be detached or separate from it. Strictly speaking, they wished to distance themselves from *Russian bureaucracy*, while still retaining their sense of attachment to the *Russian state*. This sense of belonging was based on how their fragmented history of displacement had been interwoven with their cultural and historical experience of Soviet socialism.

It is helpful here to consider the term 'wounded attachment', which was coined by Wendy Brown (1995) to describe a person's sense of belonging to a state despite experiences of state-induced suffering in the past. Brown drew on the work of the Jamaican-born cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1997) concerning the post-colonial subjects of the British Empire who came to Britain in the post-war period. Hall describes how he, himself, came to Britain with a great affection and sense of affinity for the former colonial power. Some similarities can be seen with the movement of many Soviet Koreans to Russia following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Although one reason for this movement was to escape the violent conflicts in Central Asia, it can also be seen as an affirmation of their cultural affinity with Russia, which had been forged during the Soviet period. Of course, this cultural affinity was partly the product of Soviet education and reflected the dominant position of the Russian nation in the Soviet Union, but it was also influenced by the concept of 'friendship among nations' that was emphasized in Soviet socialism. I suggest that Russian Koreans' scars or wounds are not to be seen mere evidence of state violence; rather, it must worth noting that Russian Koreans implicitly consider them to be a marker of their belonging to the Soviet Union (and later to Russia): their tenacious residence indicates their strong alliance with Russia despite having received such a wound scar. This becomes more evident when comparisons are made between Koreans and other East Asian peoples, especially the Chinese who were deported to China around the time of the Koreans' forcible displacement in 1937 (see Chapter 1).

The fieldwork on which this work is based was conducted during 2002-2004 (with follow-up research taking place later), at a time when Russian citizenship was a topic of hot debate. With the influx of people from the

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the 1990s, the newly founded Russian Federation had to grapple with the question of what it meant to be 'Russian' and whether citizenship should be granted only to *russkie* ('ethnic Russians') or to non-Russian people as well among the migrants from republics of the former Soviet Union. Against this background of a growing Russian nationalism, Russian Koreans, by refusing to claim victimhood and criticize the state, continued to assert their affinity with ethnic Russians and other peoples within the Soviet Union and how much their hard work had contributed to Soviet socialism (see Chapter 3).

The Sovietization of Russian Koreans during their time in Central Asia can be clearly seen in their strong desire to distinguish themselves from the later waves of Korean migrants arriving in the RFE in the post-Soviet period. In the early 1990s, border controls in the RFE were dramatically changed, from a state of hermetic closure to one of complete openness without any visa regulations. Although this visa-free border regime was soon revoked, it resulted in a dramatic influx of Chinese traders to the RFE, including Chinese Koreans. Adventurous entrepreneurs, NGO workers, language students, and missionaries also flew into the RFE from South Korea. In this context, Russian Koreans performed a dual role regarding the social control of the border: on the one hand, they provided the incoming Koreans from China and South Korea with mediating points in the RFE, thus helping to keep the border open; and on the other, they were instrumental in keeping the internal and ideological border guarded by asserting their sense of belonging to the former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, not only by referring back to their shared memory of Soviet socialism but also by differentiating themselves from other groups of Koreans (see Chapter 2). It is this latter role that reveals their deep-seated fear of being labelled *chuzhoi* ('aliens') in the RFE.

Russian Koreans and Soviet disengagement from the Asia-Pacific frontier

The geopolitical question posed by the presence of Koreans on the Russian border in Northeast Asia is not the main topic of this book, but is still crucial for background understanding. One of the intriguing aspects of Koreans' position during their long period of residence in the RFE before their deportation in 1937 was the dilemma of being situated between two empires: the Soviet Union and Japan. Koreans in the RFE were widely identified to have a link with Japanese imperialism under the rubric of race

and civilization, despite their resistance against the Japanese and their pro-Bolshevik partisan activities during the Russian civil war. Stalin's decision to deport the Koreans in 1937 was designed and executed as an attempt to strengthen the Soviet border and minimize Japanese infiltration into the RFE (Martin, 1998). As I discuss in Chapter 1, the threat of a Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union increased after the Manchurian Incident of 1931 and the subsequent establishment of Manchukuo; this meant that, in its infancy, the Soviet Union had to face the challenge of wars on both its European and East Asian frontiers. Viewed retrospectively, the deportation of Koreans from the RFE left a lasting impact on this borderland and presaged the upcoming Cold War; the uneven impact of the Soviet socialist revolution on Eastern Europe and East Asia is an important research question that deserves attention, but which unfortunately cannot be fully dealt with in this book.

Kimie Hara claims that 'the Cold War differed in its nature between the Atlantic and Pacific sides of the continent' and argues that a post-colonial perspective must be applied not only to understanding the creation of the Cold War system, but also its dismantling (2007, p. 3). Thus she contends that, although the Cold War on the Euro-Atlantic frontier has ended, it still continues on the Asia-Pacific front – as evidenced by the division of the Korean Peninsula and Russia's ongoing territorial disputes with Japan over islands in the Pacific Ocean. To understand this disparity, we must consider not only the peace-making process at the end of World War II, but also how the Asian countries in the Asia-Pacific region became 'surrogate battlefields' for the Soviet Union and the USA in the post-war period, with 'hot wars' resulting in divisions of territory in Korea, Vietnam, and China. Her discussion focuses on the origins of current territorial disputes in Northeast Asia, which result from America's decision not to clearly define Japan's borders and its desire to protect its strategic interests in the region following Japan's defeat.

However, I would like to add that Soviet disengagement from the Asia-Pacific frontier has also been an important factor in the creation of the current post-Cold War situation in Northeast Asia; this can be seen as dating back to Russia's defeat in the war against Japan in 1904-5, sometimes referred to as World War Zero because it precipitated both World War I and the Russian Revolution (Steinberg et al., 2005; Steinberg and Wolff, 2007).⁴

4 These two volumes on the Russo-Japanese War adopted the term 'World War Zero', highlighting the global scale of the war in commemoration of its centennial. The global scale in these works was drawn as an opposition between Europe and Asia, and consequently not only

International conflicts on a global scale have not only divided land, but have also divided people, scattering large numbers of refugees in various directions. In Northeast Asia, from the beginning of Japan's expansion of its empire until the end of World War II, Koreans were dispersed into several groups, such as Koreans on the peninsula, Koreans in China, Koreans in Japan, Koreans on Sakhalin Islands, and Koreans in the RFE (cf. Schmid, 2002). Of these, the Russian Koreans and the Chinese Koreans were the earliest to migrate out of the Korean Peninsula, from the late nineteenth century onwards. What distinguishes Russian Koreans from the other Korean diasporas in Northeast Asia is their 'presumed absence' in contemporary academic research, a notion that has been reinforced by the relative lack of research focused on them compared with other Korean diasporas and by the Russian central government's policy of maintaining the RFE as a stronghold throughout the Cold War. Therefore, while the majority of the (somewhat sparse) research on Koreans in the former Soviet Union focuses on their history in the RFE and their deportation, research on the RFE in general tends to concentrate on geopolitical aspects, often with the keywords of 'security' and 'strategic importance'.

The deportation of Koreans from the RFE to Central Asia was one of the means by which the Soviet Union sought to disengage from East Asia and minimize its involvement in conflicts arising from Japanese imperialism. As Zhanna G. Son (2012) argues, Koreans were held 'hostage' between the Soviet Union and the Japanese empire in the early twentieth century, and were used by both sides as pawns in the conflict (also see Huttenbach, 1993). Japan used the excuse of needing to pacify anti-Japanese Korean partisans in the RFE to justify its incursions into Russian territory in East Asia, and in return Russia aimed to invalidate such excuses and secure its borders by removing all residents of East Asian origin from the RFE. The idea that an administrative territory could be sealed and secured by forcibly relocating more than 170,000 Korean residents in the late 1930s was at the extreme end of the general stance taken by Moscow and such measure is pertinent to Russian President Vladimir Putin's current approach to the RFE, which pursues the development of the region in accordance with Russia's so-called *povorot na vostok* ('pivot to the East'). This utilitarian approach of using the region to serve the grand designs of the state does not always fit with local conditions and the needs of its residents; thus, it

neglected Japan's imperial expansion in East Asia but also presented the war as if the clash was between civilizations, although it was the result of a clash between two empires wishing to colonize northeast China and Korea.

tends to produce contradictions between the state's policy and residents' interests in this marginal borderland. In what Alexander Etkind (2011) refers to as 'internal colonialism', the people of Siberia and the RFE are viewed as chess pieces, to be removed or (re)settled according to the wishes of the central government. Early observers, such as Owen Lattimore (1932) and Walter Kolarz (1954), adopted an extremely pessimistic view of the prospects for the region: they compared its internal colonialism with European colonialism in Africa and concluded that, while the problem of African colonialism would eventually be solved, there was no prospect of finding a solution to the problems of the RFE.

Throughout the century and a half of Russia's occupation of the RFE, the region has played an important role in Russia's dream of transcendent prosperity. This 'imperial vision', inspired by the successful exploration and settlement of the American West (Bassin, 1999), was the driving force behind the eastward expansion of the Russian empire in the nineteenth century. The fantasy of the Amur River as the Siberian equivalent of the Mississippi in the American gold rush of the nineteenth century has now been replaced by the dream of a new 'Silicon Valley', with free international commercial ports on the Asian Pacific and the transformation of Vladivostok into a new Hong Kong or San Francisco. The Far Eastern frontier thus experiences an ongoing state of tension between the state's geopolitical aspirations to bring development to the region and its insular views about neighboring countries in East Asia. I argue that the history and contemporary social structure of Russian Koreans epitomizes these acute problems and intrinsic characteristics of the RFE. My aim in this book is to shed light from an anthropological perspective on how the lives of Russian Koreans are entwined with other local residents in this borderland of Northeast Asia. Thus, it is important to describe their ongoing contemporary relationship with the RFE as a 'dwelling place' (Ingold, 2000), rather than as the geopolitical object of state projects to transform the human environment.

Unity and diversity

Although I use the term 'Russian Koreans' in this book, there is in fact considerable diversity among the Koreans in the RFE, largely deriving from the temporal and politico-geographical background of their migration from the Korean Peninsula. According to Kim German (2008) and others, Koreans in the former Soviet Union can roughly be divided into three categories:

'Soviet Koreans', including those deported from the RFE in 1937, when they numbered 171,000; 'Sakhalin Koreans', the residents of Sakhalin Island who were drafted as laborers by the Japanese government in the early 1940s during World War II, but were unable to obtain permission for repatriation to Korea after the war (approx. 23,000 in the late 1940s); and 'North Koreans', who came from North Korea with labor contracts to work in the Soviet Union (approx. 40,000 in the late 1940s).

Although this broad categorization is helpful, the passage of time has blurred the distinctions between these three groups as people have moved around during Soviet times and successive generations have evolved. For example, many men from the third category went to Central Asia after completing their period of contract work in Russia and ended up marrying women belonging to the first category. For those born from such marriages, the distinction between the original groups has little significance.

While the old groupings became mixed in the process of marriage and generational succession, political changes also brought about a new type of differentiation amongst Koreans. It goes without saying that the term 'Soviet Koreans' lost its meaning with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, but this dissolution was accompanied by the emergence of many regional or micro-regional groups, such as Uzbekistani, Kazakhstani, and Kyrgyzstani Koreans. For example, the 'Primorskii Koreans' who returned to the RFE following the death of Stalin in 1953, occupy a different social position in the RFE today than those who migrated from Central Asia beginning in the early 1990s. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the following surge in migration, Koreans in the former Soviet Union and their offspring are trying to cope with these changes by strengthening their ties to the countries and local areas in which they now dwell.

However, despite the diversity that has emerged since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union is still a meaningful reference by which Russian Koreans define and perceive their world, as many post-socialist changes are rooted in the socialist past (although now the Russian language is taking this role). With this in mind, this book mainly focuses on the experiences of the first category of Koreans; however, it does not exclude those from different historical backgrounds, and the question of how these different groups interact and perceive each other is explored in terms of the date of their migration (see Chapter 2).

In addition to the geopolitical changes brought about by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the ending of the Cold War resulted in an increasing transnational dimension to the representation of Koreans in the former Soviet Union. In this context, the medium of different languages and their

political connotations became an important factor in Koreans' naming and categorization. This work is concerned with three languages: Russian, English, and Korean. In Russian, Russian Koreans usually refer to themselves simply as *koreitsy* ('Koreans') without any supplementary adjective, as their use of the Russian language itself indicates their long historical presence in and sense of belonging to Russia. Other Koreans, including those such as myself from South Korea, ethnic Korean traders from China, refugees and migrant laborers from North Korea, and Christian missionaries from America, are referred to using the respective adjectives for 'South', 'Chinese', 'North', and 'American' before *koreitsy* (see Chapter 2 for more details).

However, when the language switches to vernacular Korean (which is different from the Korean currently spoken in South Korea), Russian Koreans refer to themselves using the endonym *Koryŏ saram* ('people of Koryŏ'). Koryŏ was a medieval kingdom on the Korean Peninsula from the tenth to fourteenth century, from which both the English exonym 'Korea' and the Russian exonym *Koreia* originate. People who leave their homeland usually adopt the exonym for their country as used in their host country; in other words, the exonym becomes their endonym, which is more easily acknowledged and understood in the new host society and is also resistant to the historical changes that later occur in their country of origin. Although these diasporas were forced to leave their home country due to radical historical changes, their ethnonym was frozen and preserved from the time of their migration, without being influenced by subsequent changes in the endonym of their home country. In Northeast Asia, this has been the case for both Russian and Chinese Koreans due to their severance from South Korea during the Cold War. However, the end of the Cold War brought about a new transnational movement of Russian Koreans to South Korea and resulted in a complex situation that is reflected in the various terms used to describe them, depending on the language and place in which the term is used.

In South Korea, Koreans in the former Soviet Union are referred to with various terms, each with varying connotations about the degree of inclusiveness or distinction felt between South Koreans and the diaspora. In the 1990s, they were usually referred to as *soryŏn saram* ('Soviet people') in the context of their role as migrant workers. Around this same time, as research on Koreans in the Soviet Union began to emerge, *jaeso hanin* ('Koreans in the Soviet Union') became the normative term of reference, especially in historical research about their anti-Japanese activities in the RFE. A new term, *koryŏin* ('koryŏ people'), also emerged in both popular discourse and academic research, which adopted a cultural relativist stance

towards them. However, my Russian Korean interlocutors often asked me in a somewhat offended tone, ‘What on earth is a *koryōin*?’ – indicating a certain sense of alienation from this newly created term. Naming in Russian and Korean requires a separate investigation, with a focus on the political implications of the production of knowledge about Russian Koreans. In this book, I have chosen to use the relatively neutral English term ‘Russian Koreans’, which has the pragmatic advantage of enabling me to maintain a certain distance from the politically charged contexts of their relationships with Russia and South Korea.

Fieldwork and outline of chapters

My fieldwork was mainly based in three locations, all connected via the Korean network. The arrangement of the chapters in my book reflects these three different places, although I draw on the common issues and practices that connect people across the three sites. The three locations for my research were the Korean House and Chinese market in Ussuriisk and a village (referred to in my research as Novoselovo) in Spasskii Raion, roughly at the midpoint between Vladivostok and Khabarovsk (see Map 3). I went to Ussuriisk in June 2002 and studied Russian for the first six months of my stay, before embarking on my fieldwork. It was crucial to be able to communicate with my interlocutors in Russian, as it is widely spoken among them; their Korean language is a northern dialect of Korean that I could not understand fully, and is also a somewhat ‘domestic’ language (Humphrey, 1989), spoken mainly by elderly people at home. As a result, conducting fieldwork research in Korean would have limited the scope of my research and the range of people with whom I could interact. My second visit was not until 2010; the time lapse between the two visits provided me with a valuable sense of change and continuity in the lives of Koreans in the RFE.

In addition to my fieldwork, I carried out historical research in two state archives and collected written materials from the library of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East (IHAE DVO RAN). I draw on this research in Chapters 1 and 3 to examine the shared historical experience of Russian Koreans in the RFE as a discursive condition of their contemporary lives. In Chapter 1, I examine the formation of the ‘Korean question’, starting from the initial migration of Koreans to the RFE from the Korean Peninsula during the expansion of the Russian Empire. I view the presence of Koreans as central to the colonization of this region and as a defining factor for constituting the periphery and borderland

of the empire. I argue that the 'Korean question' was formed, changed, and has been attempted to be resolved in accordance with the very idea of this region, and that Koreans came to embody the borderland nature of the region.

While my fieldwork in the village was conducted during a relatively short but intensive period, I spent a longer time in Ussuriisk. There, I visited the homes of my Korean acquaintances for social occasions and to conduct interviews, attended family ceremonies, accompanied local Koreans to churches opened by South Korean missionaries, observed public events held by ethnic political organizations, and spent time in the Chinese and central markets talking with Korean traders. During interviews and informal conversations, I asked people about their migration stories. It is these stories that provide the basis for Chapter 2, in which I examine how the temporality of migration affected the different status of Koreans in response to social changes during the 1990s and early 2000s in the RFE. In particular, I discuss how links with the Soviet past are used as a basis for distancing themselves from other Korean groups, and especially from the Chinese Korean traders who have significantly increased in number since the opening of the border with China.

In Chapter 3, I explore the Koreans' transformation as a result of building and sustaining Soviet socialism in Central Asia following their deportation in 1937, focusing on their work ethic and their experience of migrating cultivation. By looking at the change from traditional rice farming in institutionalized state enterprises to migrating vegetable cultivation in the informal economic sphere, I examine their work ethic and creation of mobility in the context of the political economy of the Soviet Union. I argue that their ethic of hard work is the basis for the transformation of their status from 'enemy of the nation' to participants in Soviet socialism, and from objects of state violence to subjects of their own social world.

Given the scattered nature of Koreans residing in urban areas, I tried to find a village in which a significant number of Koreans were living in close proximity when I finished my language learning and looked for a field site. After visiting several villages, I decided on Novoselovo, where there were around 60 Korean households mainly engaged in commercial vegetable-growing using greenhouses. In Chapter 4, I discuss how these rural Koreans maintain the 'independence' derived from their domestic economic and social activities, and particularly focus on their family and kinship relations in gender terms. I consider their emphasis on *samostoiatel'nost'* ('independence') from the market and the state as an 'illusion', but one that is connected to economic reality. In describing the specific labor process of

growing vegetables in greenhouses, I draw on Claude Lévi-Strauss's notion of the 'house society' (1987, and also see Carsten and Hugh-Jones, 1995) as 'a moral person'. In tandem with an analysis of the male moral person as objectified in the greenhouse, I focus on the changing status of women within the household to explore how the Korean household extends across generations and carries out transactions beyond its boundaries through the activities of women and food consumption on both quotidian and festive occasions.

The last Chapter focuses on a building called *Koreiskii Dom* ('Korean House'). The Korean House was located near the pedagogical institute where I studied Russian and was the home of the Koreans' ethnic organization and of a couple of South Korean NGOs. I did not intend to conduct fieldwork there, but practical reasons, such as Internet access and eating in the Korean restaurant in the building, resulted in occasional visits. Initially, I was reluctant to spend too much time there, as I regarded those who gathered at the Korean House as 'well-known Koreans', rather than the 'ordinary' Koreans who were the focus of my interest. However, I later discovered that the building was not only a gathering space for ethnic politicians but also for Koreans from many walks of life. In Chapter 5, I analyse the data collected through my observations of the activities of Koreans in this building and discuss the meaning of public space for them in relation to local politics. Furthermore, my discussion in Chapter 5 brings back insights and arguments presented in earlier chapters to the exploration of hotly debated political issues in the 1990s and early 2000s, and shows that the root of Russian Koreans lies in domestic sphere.



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1 The history of ‘the Korean question’ and border-making in the Russian Far East

I prefer a Russian desert to a Korean-made paradise.
Governor-General of Priamur, P.F. Unterberger, in the early 1900s
(cited in Lee, 1998; Saveliev, 2010)

Koreans *obespechli* (‘enriched’) the Russian Far East with an abundance of fish and vegetables. Now see what has happened here since they forced the Koreans out. Following their deportation, fish and vegetables became in short supply.
(T.A. Kim, from my field notes in August 2004)¹

From the economic point of view the anti-Korean measures [forcible relocation] resulted in a clear disadvantage for the Soviet Far East, though not for the USSR as a whole.
(Kolarz, 1954, p. 40)

With the Peking Treaty of 1860, Russia expanded its territory into East Asia and consequently gained a border with both China and Korea (see Map 1). Since then, the disparity between the region’s remoteness from the Russian center of government and its proximity to East Asian countries has been a central issue in the colonisation of the RFE and the treatment of its residents who were originally from neighboring China and Korea. Whereas there has been a persistent and obvious negativity towards China and the Chinese – often phrased as the *ugroza* (‘threat’) or *zheltaia opasnost’* (‘yellow peril’) – the representation of Korea and Koreans in the RFE has been characterised by greater ambiguity and complexity, and has come to be referred to by the simple but popular phrase, *koreiskii vopros* (‘the Korean question’).

1 According to Stephan, the RFE in 1939 ‘had met none of its Five-Year Plan targets. Production indexes for industry, fisheries, and forestry were below 1935 levels [...] Far Eastern agriculture suffered irreparable losses: repression of rural leaders and specialists, compounded by the havoc wrought by forced collectivisation and the expulsion of Chinese and Koreans, deprived the Far East of its most productive farmers’ (Stephan, 1994, p. 219-220). Although there is no information available with which to verify the correlation between these low production levels and the mass deportation of Koreans to Central Asia, it is equally hard to deny the latter’s detrimental effect on the primary industries of the RFE.

The Korean question has been a complex aspect of the colonization of the RFE both during the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union; in this chapter, I argue that it is rooted in the regional problems, both domestic and international, with which Russian colonisers have struggled since their acquisition of the region. On the one hand, rather than being viewed simply as a threatening presence in the RFE, Koreans were seen as *polezny* ('useful') for colonizing a territory that was so remote from Moscow,² especially for the development of arable land and the production of food, which was the main mode of colonisation in the Far East. On the other hand, the Korean Peninsula, from which Koreans originated, and Manchuria, from which many migrated, were continually at the center of international power conflicts that, due to their geographical proximity, inevitably affected the RFE. Following the acquisition of the RFE by Imperial Russia, a series of conflicts arose in the vicinity, including the Qing-Japan War (also known as the First Sino-Japan War, 1894-5), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5), the Civil War (also known as Japanese Intervention, 1918-22), the Manchurian Incident of 1931, and, finally, World War II (1939-45). Despite these conflicts, Russia's main international policy focused on maintaining the status quo in the RFE following its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, a stance that the Soviet Union also continued (see Pak, 2004).

Although internal colonisation and international conflicts are not identical problems and require different solutions, the Russian authorities gave greater weight to the western (European) frontier in both matters, as it was both more developed and considered to be more strategically important. Kolarz, the mid-20th century observer of the Soviet Far East who focused on the question of colonialism and socialism, rightly argues that 'the dividing line in the Far East does not run between various groups of European colonists [such as Ukrainians, ethnic Russians, Poles, Moldovans, etc.] but between Europeans and Asiatics' (1954, p. 13). However, the collaboration with certain Asian groups during the colonisation of the RFE crossed or blurred this dividing line, and the position of those who collaborated, such as naturalised Koreans, was affected by problems related to Russia's internal colonialism. This is an important aspect of Russian imperialism that distinguishes it from other forms of imperialism. While other Western imperial powers maintained a clear dividing line between the colonisers and colonised – helped in many cases by great maritime distances, such as between Great Britain and India and between European empires and their African colonies – the colonisers

2 The expansive nature of Russian territory is often represented in geographical phrases, such as 'from Nakhodka [a harbour city in the RFE] to Kaliningrad [on the Baltic Sea]'.

and colonised in Siberia and the RFE were one and the same (cf. Kolarz, 1954, p. 180-181; Etkind, 2011). The majority of Russians who migrated to the RFE were poor peasants looking for arable land following the abolition of serfdom in 1861. Their motivation was not very different from the Korean peasants who migrated to the RFE, but as one group came from the West and the other from the East, the Koreans in the RFE were placed at the intersection between Russia's international relations with East Asia and its internal colonialism. For this reason, I argue that understanding the Korean question goes beyond a simple ethnic problem pertaining exclusively to the Koreans, and that it can provide the key for understanding the complex nature of the RFE.

This chapter therefore examines the history of Koreans in the RFE from the time of their migration from the Korean peninsula in the 1860s to their removal and relocation to Central Asia in 1937, focusing on the emergence, submergence, and re-appearance of the Korean question in order to examine key issues in the RFE – particularly its role as the frontier to East Asia. In so doing, I take 'the Korean question' in the RFE as a trope, rather than as an actual problem *per se*, not only to facilitate the exploration of various aspects pertaining to the presence of Koreans in relation to the colonisation of the region, but also to tease out a repetitive pattern in this trope's invocation. Through this trope, the influx of Koreans throughout the history of the Imperial Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet Far East has been closely interlinked with the loosening of the border regime in the region, raising time and again the trope of the Korean question, which is 'replicated, but not quite the same' (Green, 2005).

The border regime in the RFE also illustrates the ambiguity of Russia's position in eastern frontier which is starkly different from the western frontier: situated between East and West, the more the regime consider itself ambiguous in geopolitical terms, the harder the regime seems to endeavour to fix itself into a certain category with clearly defined borders. On the one hand, the borderland of Primorskii Krai sharply represents a part of Russia, just like any other borderland or frontier; but is also nested in Russia's ambiguity.³ Thus, with the assistance of oral histories collected during my fieldwork, my historical overview of the Korean question in the RFE draws on the condition of the Koreans over time, as it embodies the tension of the endeavour to 'fix things' in this region.

3 Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov (2003) discusses such a 'nested Orientalism' in the study of the Evenki, a small ethnic group in sub-arctic Siberia. While the Evenki were represented as connected with nature through the use of the term *inorodtsy* ('aliens'), Koreans were mainly represented as *inostrantsy* ('foreigners').

Drawing on sources from the state archive and public media, my research highlights that Koreans in the RFE were represented as a problem in both the pre-1937 and post-Soviet periods. This contrasts with the mid-1950s, when thousands of Koreans voluntarily repatriated to this region after the death of Stalin. I did not come across any historical material about the Korean question in relation to either this migration or the socialist period when Primorskii Krai was closed to the outside world, even though 6,000-8,000 Koreans resided there during this time and were later joined by many more in the 1990s.⁴ In other words, public awareness of the Korean presence as a 'question' or problem appears to only emerge when the border is open to the outside world. If Vladivostok is seen as a window between the RFE and the outside world, then the Korean question might be viewed as a floating marker of this borderland that comes to the surface when the border is open, but sinks out of sight when the border is closed.

An early crossing: the flight from hunger

The RFE was chronologically the last region and geographically the most eastern territory to be conquered as part of the expansion of the Russian Empire: it was acquired even later than the far-northern arctic lands of Chukotka and Alaska.⁵ When, the Russian Empire obtained the RFE – encompassing the land beyond the Amur River and the territory between the Ussuri River and the Pacific Ocean – through the Peking Treaty in 1860, the region was sparsely populated: only the Russian colonizing army and a small number of indigenous peoples resided in this vast area (see Map 1). Figures for the population of Primor'e Oblast⁶ in 1861 range between 15,600 and 35,100,⁷ but these are merely estimates since the first census of the region was not conducted until 1897. Before the arrival of the Russians, Chinese

4 In the next chapter I discuss different groups of Koreans according to the time of their migration to the RFE.

5 For a detailed and excellent discussion on the change of the direction of Imperial Russia's expansion from the North Pacific to the Ussuri River, see Mark Bassin (1999, Chapter 7).

6 There have been several changes in territorial administration in the RFE. In 1860, when the Peking Treaty was agreed, the present Primor'e was called Ussuriisk and South-Ussuriisk Krai. This formed the southern part of Primor'e Oblast', which included the former Kamchatka Oblast' on the lower Amur until 1856 and also Okhotskii Okrug from 1858. For an outline of the changes in the territorial and administrative structure of the RFE, see Stephan (1994) in English and A.S. Vaschuk et al. (2002, p. 10) in Russian.

7 Assimilating various sources, Vaschuk et al. (2002, p. 10) estimates that the population at this time reached 35,100, while Slezkine (1994b, p. 95) provides the lower figure of 15,600.

and Koreans were forbidden to enter this region, as it was considered to be the sacred place of origin of the Manchu Qing dynasty.

This lack of population was the most acute problem faced by the Russian imperialists in their desire to exploit the region's natural resources and colonise the region. They took various measures to ensure that their subjects settled in the region and thus the expansion of Imperial Russia into the RFE was critically aligned with population movement (Vashchuk et al. 2002; Rybakovskii 1990). Migration from Russia's other regions was encouraged by conferring certain *vygody* ('advantages') and *l'goty* ('benefits') on the settlers. Chronologically, the acquisition of the RFE coincided with the abolition of peasant serfdom in 1861; this historical coincidence acted as an impetus for the migration of landless peasants from the more densely populated parts of western Russia to this newly acquired colony of the Russian Empire.⁸ In addition, on 27 April 1861, the enactment of a law concerning the 'Rights for the settlers of Russians and foreigners in Amur and Primor'e Oblast' of Eastern Siberia' provided the basis for a colonizing process marked by significant benefits for settlers (Kuzin, 2001, p. 16-17). The benefits comprised an allotment of 100 *desiatin*⁹ of land *po muzhskoi dush* ('for each male person'), exemption from army service for 10 years, and exemption from tax for 20 years¹⁰ (Kuzin, 2001, p. 17; Petrov, 2000, p. 96).

8 For a comparative historical study on the colonization of Russia's peripheries by means of population relocation, see Nicholas B. Breyfogle, Abby M. Schrader, and Willard Sunderland (2007).

9 One *desiatin* is equivalent to 1.09 hectares (2.7 acres).

10 This benefit was reduced to 15 *desiatin* (16.39 hectares) *po muzhskoi dushi* ('for each male person') in 1901; prior to that, the grant of 100 *desiatin* to foreigners had already been cancelled in 1881 (Petrov, 2001, p. 97; Li, 2000, p. 16). Until then, the settlers had been called *starozhilstodesiatinniki* ('old resident-100 *desiatinnians*') (Li, 2000, p. 16). Aleksandr I. Petrov (2001) points out that Koreans were admitted to the RFE with the *soslovie* ('social status') of 'peasants' until the Chosun Kingdom and Tsarist Russia established diplomatic relations in 1884 and drew up a treaty in 1888 dealing with the status of migrants. However, although the law stated that not only Russian subjects but also foreign settlers should be granted 100 *desiatin* of land, this ruling did not seem to be applied equally to all Korean migrants. It could be said that the modern notion of *grazhdanstvo* ('citizenship') was not established at that time; instead, *poddanstvo* ('subject-hood') was assigned to some Koreans, with the acceptance of Russian Orthodox Christianity as the central criterion. In the late 19th century, although many Korean settlers in the RFE converted to Russian Orthodox Christianity and received *poddanstvo*, this did not guarantee the receipt of 100 *desiatin*: the only clear example of a grant of 100 *desiatin* was to the Koreans relocated from Pos'et to Priamur, who were refugees from the great famine of 1869. In 1871, they were relocated to near Blagoveshchensk in Amur Oblast', forming a village called Blagoslovenie, where they received 100 *desiatin* for each household and were treated equally as Russian subjects. In this historical context, the movement within the Russian Empire served as the basis for the assimilation of *inostrantsy* ('people from another country') into *inorodtsy*

However, despite these incentives, Russian settlers preferred the Priamur Oblast' to Primor'e Oblast', due to its better living conditions and food supplies. This created a favorable situation for Koreans to move across the Tumen River (the border between the Russian Empire and the Chosun Kingdom in the Korean Peninsula), despite the fact that they risked severe punishment from the Chosun Kingdom's authorities if discovered while making the border crossing.¹¹ Although there is controversy surrounding the date when Koreans first began to settle in this region, the earliest 'official' date for their arrival is recognized as January 1864, when thirteen families were granted the right to live in the Pos'et area on the border of Korea. According to an army officer of the border guard in November 1863, these first settler families were allowed to stay on the Russian territory as they wished (Lee, 1994; Petrov, 2000; Pak, 2004).¹² The number of Korean settlers subsequently increased year by year, while Russian settlement was delayed until the opening of the Trans-Baikal Railroad in 1900 and the Chinese Eastern Railroad in 1902 (Ban, 1996, p. 17).¹³

In the summer of 2004, I had the opportunity to visit the place where the Koreans' first settlement, Tizinkhe, had been located. The area was wild, covered with weeds, and it was impossible to find any remains of the village; it felt like a place of lost memories rather than the historical origin of Koreans in Russia. A beekeeper was there collecting honey during the summer season; he was setting up his camp and had hung the Russian national flag above his tent. I joked to the elderly Korean man who accompanied me, 'It looks like we will need an archaeological excavation to uncover evidence of the Korean settlement here!' In fact, archaeological objects have been found in the current Khasanskii Raion, images of which are displayed on

('people of different origin'), the former term emphasizing the 'foreign nature' of the migrants and the latter recognizing their sense of belonging to their adopted country. In a similar vein, the deportation of 1937, in a sense, formed the basis for their integration into the Soviet Union, although it produced great suffering and death for many Koreans.

11 According to Isabella L. Bird Bishop (1985, p. 10), 'the whole of the Russo-Korean frontier, 11 miles in length, and a broad river full of sandbanks, passing through a desert of sand hills to the steely blue ocean, lay crimson in the sunset.'

12 Nikolai Mikhailovich Przheval'ski (1947, p. 97), who recorded his travels in the RFE (then Southern Ussuriisk Krai), noted that 12 Korean families crossed to Russia in 1863, but that the number had increased to 1,800 across three villages by the time he travelled to the border of the Tumen River in late 1867. See Przheval'ski (1947, p. 299) for statistics on the number of Russian and Korean settlers in the three villages at the time of his travels.

13 Before the opening of the Trans-Siberian Railway, peasants migrated to this region by sea from the port of Odessa to Vladivostok; the journey took two months. Until 1897, more than half of the settlers were from the Ukraine (Vaschuk et al., 2002, p. 11), leading some Ukrainian nationalists to refer to Primorskii Krai as the *zelenyi klin* ('green wedge') (Kolarz, 1954, p. 13).

Figure 1.1 A memorial stone for the first Korean settlement in Khasanskii Raion

the local authority's website; such an archaeological research has led to the publication of a journal article on the topic (Zhushchikhovskaya, Niktin, and Teleyuev, 2013).

My interlocutors also told me how they often came across objects while ploughing their land that appeared to have been used by former Korean settlers. This was not a complete coincidence, as many of my interlocutors worked on land that had also been cultivated by their forefathers. Commonly found objects included *maettol* ('hand stone mills'), rice and soup bowls, and farming implements, all in traditional Korean styles.

These 'archaeological remains', abandoned and long buried, contrast starkly with the prosperity enjoyed by Korean villages near this site in the past, as observed for example by an English woman traveller, Isabella L. Bird Bishop, in 1897.¹⁴ These archaeological objects are not only the debris that

14 Bishop (1985, p. 16-17) provides a detailed description of a Korean household she visited: Most of the dwellings have four, five, and even six rooms, with papered walls and ceilings, fretwork doors and windows, "glazed" with white translucent paper, finely matted floors, and an amount of furnishings rarely found even in a mandarin's house in Korea. Cabinets, bureaus, and rice chests of ornamental wood with handsome brass decorations, low tables, stools, cushions, brass samovars, dressers displaying brass

Figure 1.2 The governor of Primorskii Krai in excursion to the border in Khasanskii Raion



the Koreans could not take with them when they were forcibly relocated to Central Asia; their burial can also be seen as a means of silencing the past. According to Ann Laura Stoler (2008, p. 201), 'ruins are not just found, they are made'. This means that ruins are not simply things in the past, but are constituted in the present as a refusal of alternative futures or an evocation of 'irretrievability'. She also observes that some ruins are not acknowledged at all and, in this sense, these vanished Korean settlements are similar to the Palestinian villages that were 'razed, bulldozed, and

dinner service, brass bowls, china, tea-glasses, brass candlesticks, brass kerosene lamps, and a host of other things, illustrate the capacity to secure comfort. Pictures of the Tsar and Tsaritz, of the Christ, and of Greek saints, and framed cards of twelve Christian prayers, replace the coarse daubs of the family daemons in very many houses. Out of doors full granaries, ponies, mares with foals, black pigs of an improved breed, draught oxen, and fat oxen for the Vladivostok market, with ox-carts and agricultural implements, attest solid material prosperity. It would be impossible for a traveller to meet with more cordial hospitality and more cleanly and comfortable accommodation than I did in these Korean homes.

Figure 1.3 A memorial statue for war heroes in Khasanskii Raion



This memorial statue is to commemorate the soldiers who died in the Khasan Conflict with the Japanese army in 1938.

buried by the state-endorsed Israeli Afforestation Project, an intensive planning campaign that has literally obliterated the very presence of Palestinian villages and farmsteads on Jerusalem's periphery for over 50 years' (Stoler, 2008, p. 201). In a sense, my discussion of the Koreans' history in the RFE resembles the discovery of these archaeological objects in their former settlements: as the excavated objects tell us in a fragmentary way of the past, so may my discussion of topics that are strongly related to the present appear somewhat fragmentary, but I believe that both the past and the present are necessary to obtain a better understanding of the intertwined history of Koreans and the RFE.

Writing the history of Koreans in the RFE could be likened to treading over uneven land and avoiding certain traps and stumbling blocks, such as considering their history in purely ethnic terms, which would result in reducing complex problems to one simple explanatory framework. One example of such a stumbling block relates to the date when Koreans

first came to the region. There is an overall consensus, both among the migrant Koreans themselves and in texts written by Russian travellers, that poor conditions in their native country were the main 'push factor' for Koreans making the border crossing to Russia (Przheval'ski, 1947; Kuzin, 2001; Petrov, 2000). However, the date of their first migration has remained controversial, and it is unknown whether Koreans were living in this area before the Russian Empire acquired the region. Russian Korean historians Svetlana G. Nam (1998) and Boris D. Pak (1993) state that the first Korean settlers in this region can be dated to 1849 (Nam, 1998, p. 26) or 1857 (Pak, 1993, p. 18), thus preceding the Peking Treaty of 1860. However, Petrov (2000, p. 54-60) and Anatolii T. Kuzin (2001) strongly criticize Nam and Pak's respective studies on the grounds of insufficient evidence. Kuzin somewhat pedantically maintains that, even if the Koreans did cross the Tumen River before 1860, it is nevertheless largely agreed that 1863 or 1864 was the first year of Korean settlement in the '*Russian territory*' (Kuzin, 2001, p. 14, original emphasis).

Rather than becoming entrenched in this controversy, my approach adopts the 'parochial' position and focuses on the responses of my interlocutors concerning this question. Most conveyed either indifference or a sense that it was 'outside of their concern'. In 2004, the official 140th anniversary of the migration of Koreans to the RFE was marked with commemorative events initiated by the central government of the Russian Federation and encouraged via diplomatic channels between South Korea and Russia. One of my interlocutors who worked for a local ethnic political organization told me that even though 'they know Koreans were living here before the Russians came, [...] it doesn't matter'. For the majority of my interlocutors, the most important aspect of the 'origin' of their lives in Russia does not lie in the question of *when* their ancestors first arrived, but rather in the strong sense of aspiration and initiative that led them to risk the danger of crossing the border to escape the deteriorating social and economic conditions in the northern part of the Chosun Kingdom. During the initial period of my fieldwork in the early 2000s, tales of the great famine suffered by North Koreans in the second half of the 1990s were still rife. Consequently, my interlocutors extended their historical imaginations from the migration of their forefathers in the past to events in the present, identifying with the North Koreans' suffering as an experience that could hypothetically have been their own if their ancestors had not bravely crossed the border.

It is worth highlighting that most of the Koreans who entered the RFE had been poor peasant tenants in Korea and continued their work of

cultivation after crossing the border, in contrast with the Chinese migrants who sojourned there on a seasonal basis to conduct trade and find paid employment as laborers. This agricultural aspect of the Koreans' migration meant that they could be readily incorporated and accepted into Russian life and that they were initially viewed in a positive light and considered 'useful' (these agricultural characteristics continue to be attached to Koreans in the present day, as I discuss in Chapter 4). However, sentiments began to change as their numbers increased and as the number of Russian agricultural settlers from western regions also grew. The serious famine in northern Korea in autumn 1869 (the *Gimi* Famine) marked not only a sudden increase in Korean migration into the RFE, but also the rise of a more cautious attitude on the part of the Russian authorities.

Following this mass influx of Korean migrants in 1869, the Russian authorities had to face the question of 'to what extent' they would accept further Korean migration. This marked the beginning of the Korean question, whereby the authorities perceived the growing presence of Koreans as a problem that needed to be controlled and regulated. A related issue concerned the legal status of the Korean incomers: until international diplomatic relations were established between Russia and the Chosun Kingdom in 1884, there was no judicial basis for their status in Russia (Petrov, 2001, p. 97).

Despite this absence of legal status, the Koreans were accepted as a community and formed villages near the Tumen River.¹⁵ They were treated as part of *krestianskoe obshchestvo* ('peasant society'), a particular social group, and from 1871 were issued with *Russkii bilet*, identity documents that conferred the right to reside on Russian soil (Petrov, 2001, p. 98). However, this early stage of Korean migration changed from a purely economic matter to one with political aspects following the start of diplomatic relations between Chosun and Russia in 1884 and the influx of political exiles after Japan's attempt to colonize Chosun. Consequently, the Korean question was no longer confined to the usefulness of Koreans in the colonization of the RFE, but expanded to include the nature of Russia's sovereignty over Korean nationals fleeing from Japan's threat to the crumbling Chosun Kingdom.

15 Pak (2004) notes that the colonial policy taken towards the indigenous peoples in Siberia was also employed in the administration of Korean migrants; this policy largely imparted autonomy to the traditional communities of colonized peoples, allowing the community leaders to mediate between the state authorities and the residents.

The formation of a border and the beginning of regulation (1884-1904)

The border between the Chosun Kingdom and Russia was not created by the diplomatic treaty between the two countries, but was the result of the Peking Treaty, which stipulated that the Qing Empire should cede the territory along the Ussuri River to Russia. Following this treaty, the mouth of the Tumen River came to act as the border between Russia and the Chosun Kingdom since new borders were only demarcated over land, while rivers and maritime areas were considered to be shared by neighboring countries; in other words, rivers and sea were considered to be 'natural borders' that delineated the boundary of the concerned countries without requiring any juridical demarcation. Therefore, a short distance of fifteen kilometres at the mouth of the Tumen River 'naturally' became the border between the Chosun Kingdom and Russia, with the remainder of the 521-kilometre length of the Tumen River acting as the Sino-Korean border. Yet, this physical, geographical border was not effective in regulating the flow of Koreans. Despite the erection of wooden posts to indicate the border and the presence of guards, early Korean migrants discovered other routes to Russia or crossed the border at night. There were many routes for this crossing (Lee, 1994, p. 23), mainly via Manchuria and ships from Korea's ports. Many Koreans in the northern provinces of the Korean Peninsula migrated to Russia via Jiantao, which is now the Yanbian Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin Province, China. Thus, since the late 19th century there was a transnational route for migration connecting Chosun, Qing China, and Tsarist Russia.

Because of the ineffectual nature of the geographical border, governing the population became a more crucial aspect of border control in the area. This aspect of border making requires us to critically re-examine our notion of space and its relationship with the body of the subject in a broader sense, since the notions of the border and the moving body of migrants are not completely separated. Anthropologist Nancy D. Munn (1996) proposes the notion of 'somatic space' to counter the tendency to think of space as an abstract concept that exists in isolation from human bodies. In her study of prohibited space among an indigenous people in Australia, she argues that the exclusionary power that prohibits entrance into a sacred place does not lie in the sacred place itself, but is enacted in 'space-time as a symbolic nexus of relations produced out of interactions between bodily actors and terrestrial spaces' (Munn, 1996, p. 449). Similarly, although the physical border between the Chosun Kingdom and Russia was located along the

Tumen River and was indicated by guard posts, the locus of the border's power was actually created through the introduction of regulations on the movement of Koreans themselves.

In this newly acquired territory, boundary making was not only a territorial and physical problem, but also one that required the control and regulation of the settlement patterns of those who moved into this land. As John Torpey argues, 'nation-states are both territorial and membership organizations, they must erect and sustain boundaries between nationals and non-nationals both at their physical borders and among the people within those borders'(2000, p. 1). The Seoul Treaty of 1884 and the subsequent treaty, 'Rules on Border Transactions and Trade on the Tumen River' of 1888, marked diplomatic cooperation between the Chosun Kingdom and Russia through an attempt to control the movement of Korean migrants between the two countries. These treaties also saw the introduction of passports for the control of each other's nationals.

Based on these earlier agreements, in 1889 the regional government of Imperial Russia categorized Koreans into three groups according to the date of their migration to Russian territory. The first group of Koreans comprised those who came to the RFE before the treaty was signed on 25 June 1884. This group was granted the right to apply to become Russian subjects and to receive fifteen *desiatins* of land, on which they were required to pay tax. The second group were those Koreans who came after 1884 but wished to settle in Russia permanently. They were given two years' suspended time for the renewal of their Russian visa. The third group comprised temporary settlers (Lee, 1994, p. 72; Pak, 1993, p. 63-65; Unterberger, 1912, p. 71-72). After this granting of state land to the first group, no further allocations were made to Koreans until the introduction of Soviet socialism in the 1920s, when 'land allocation' became a crucial topic for Korean peasants.

This newly implemented policy created inequalities in access to land and led to significant economic differences amongst the Koreans. Those from the first group, who were accepted as subjects of the Russian Empire, were in a better position than those from the other two groups and could more easily improve their economic situation. Amongst this first group, many converted to the Russian Orthodox religion, which was the condition decreed for the transformation of *inorodtsy* ('people of different origin') into subjects of Imperial Russia (Slocum, 1998; Ssorin-Chaikov, 2003).¹⁶ Thus, the period between 1895 and 1901 witnessed an increase in the naturalization

16 According to a report by the Japanese imperial authorities, the proportion of Russian Orthodox converts amongst Koreans in Russia was 23 per cent (Lee, 1994, p. 157). However,

of Koreans, each of whom was granted a plot of fifteen *desiatins* of land (Ban, 1996, p. 67). During this period, they enjoyed equal rights with Russian peasants, leading to the creation of wealthy Koreans, who were called *wonhoin* ('settler Koreans/Koreans with Russian subject-hood') in Korean and *starozhil* in Russian.¹⁷ This group allowed their children to pursue Russian education; such Russian-speaking Koreans could increase their wealth as *podriadchiki* ('contractors') supplying beef and construction materials to the Russian army (Ban, 1996, p. 67-68; Pak, 1993, p. 121 citing Pesotskii, 1913). Although naturalization was a comparatively easy process until the 1880s, the subsequent enforcement of restrictions on migration meant that naturalization became increasingly difficult and newcomer Koreans were disadvantaged by their lack of legal status. These latecomers, called *yeohoin* in Korean and *novosel* in Russian,¹⁸ were forced to become *batraki* ('farmhands') or tenant farmers for Russian or naturalized Korean peasants.

The lack of any significant objection by Koreans in the RFE to religious conversion as a requirement for naturalization contrasts starkly with the stubborn resistance exhibited by Koreans in Manchuria, where 'Manchurian clothes and pig-tail hair style' were the prerequisites for naturalization. According to Hyun Ok Park (2005a) and Ban (1996), protests against haircutting stemmed from Confucian customs, which considered hair to be a part of the body that is inherited from one's ancestors. At this time, Confucianism was the dominant ideology amongst Koreans, but with its inseparable notions of 'filial piety' and ancestor worship, it more closely resembled a set of customs than a religion. This helps explain the ease with which Koreans adopted Russian Orthodoxy, as it could be seen as compatible with Confucian customs insofar as ancestor worship ceremonies were not prohibited by their conversion.

Prospects for improvements in the livelihoods of latecomer Korean migrants became increasingly remote after the Russian authorities cancelled the grant of state land to immigrant Koreans in 1898 and Governor-General Pavel F. Unterberger began to pursue an anti-Korean policy to prevent a further influx of Koreans, whom he dubbed *zheltyi ras* ('the yellow race') along with Chinese migrants (Unterberger, 1912). Despite these developments, the number of Korean migrants continued to increase each year, even though those who came later could not become Russian subjects. In

this conversion was not considered to be 'sincere', but simply a means of gaining access to land allocation.

17 Byung Yool Ban (1996) translates this term as 'old immigrants'.

18 Ban (1996) translates this as 'new immigrants'.

1910 the Korean population in Primor'e Oblast' reached 51,052, of which 33,932 did not have citizenship (Pak, 1993, p. 92-93).¹⁹ Such stateless people filled the lowest economic strata of the RFE; their lives of extreme poverty were in stark opposition to the bourgeois lifestyle so elegantly recorded in the personal diaries and letters of Eleanor Pray, a wife of an American merchant who lived in Vladivostok from 1890 to 1926 (Pray, 2013).²⁰

The narratives of the migration and agricultural cultivation of Koreans in the RFE provide us with an interesting perspective on Russian peasants' experiences of settling in this alien environment. The Koreans were productive and efficient in cultivation due to the region's environment and climate, which were almost identical to the northern Korean Peninsula. In contrast, Russian settlers struggled to adapt to conditions in the RFE. The Russian historian Solov'ev even referred to Asiatic Russia as an 'evil stepmother' (Bassin, 1993, p. 499), who brought great suffering upon the Russians who moved there from European civilization. The Russian image of the Far East, initially couched in terms of a 'gold rush' and the 'Siberian Mississippi', was quickly shattered when the settlers faced the harsh realities of an alien terrain; the RFE then came to be viewed as 'a sickly child' neglected by its stepmother, Russia (Bassin, 1999, p. 247). For Koreans, however, the RFE was a 'biological' mother, being an extension of the northern part of Korea from whence they had originated. As a result, Korean migrants in the RFE were more successful in agriculture than the Russian settlers and formed 'natural economic territories' (Scalapino, 1992) via kinship ties with other groups of Koreans in northern Korea and northeast China. However, as I discuss later, the subsequent history of Koreans in the RFE was marred by the state's attempt to sever this natural connection between Korean peasants and the land, denying them ownership and the right to cultivate on a permanent basis due to their social status as migrants.

The Korean question, defined by the unexpected increase in migration figures and the introduction of naturalization laws to control this influx, began to take on a new dimension in the light of radical changes in the international situation in the early 20th century. The question of the 'nationality' of Koreans became ambiguous when Korea was annexed by the Japanese government in 1910. This followed the loss of the Chosun Kingdom's

19 In 1907, the number of Koreans in the RFE who were naturalized Russian subjects was 14,000, and those who were foreign subjects was 26,000 (Unterberger, 1912, p. 73).

20 The class division amongst settlers in the RFE is highlighted in Syn Khva Kim's historiography (1965). Given the political atmosphere in the Soviet Union at the time of writing, focusing on class was seen as one means of addressing the history of migrant Koreans while remaining true to socialist ideology.

diplomatic sovereignty in 1905 by Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty as a consequence of Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. It is far beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the Russo-Japanese War in detail, but its impact on the region and on the Koreans in the RFE must be noted.²¹ The most significant impact of Russia's defeat was the change of the Russian central authority's stance towards the Far East from expansive to passive, to the extent that the question of 'whether it is necessary to hold the Far East or it would be more profitable to give it up' was considered (Unterberger, 1912, p. i). However, the ambiguous nature of the nationality of the Koreans, the new influx of political refugees from Korea, and permanent settlement of tens and thousands of Koreans in the RFE did not allow Russia to adopt a simplistic stance to walk away from the situation.

From 1905, those Koreans in the RFE whose legal status was regulated by international law became subjects of the Japanese Empire. However, the reality for Koreans without Russian citizenship was that they became *de facto* stateless people, as most Koreans in the RFE refused to recognize their position as 'subjects of Japan' and, when answering a census question, described themselves as either *poddannymi korei* or *koreiskimi poddannymi* (both 'subjects of Korea') or *net* ('non-subjects')(Petrov, 2001, p. 285). This affected Russia's aim of controlling the movement of Korean migrants by means of issuing passports, and also marked the beginning of a state of limbo in Russia's dealings with the stateless Koreans in the RFE. The discrepancy in the *de jure* and *de facto* status of the Koreans was not merely rhetorical, but entailed a meta-political question concerning the definition of the state and its citizens and the meaning of the political (Mouffe, 2005; Badiou, 2005). It also brought about the end of the Russian imperialist system of conferring subject-hood on aliens by granting land in exchange for religious conversion. During their policy of expansion into the Far East before the Russo-Japanese War, accepting Koreans had fit well with Russia's intention to increase its influence in Korea. However, after the annexation of the Chosun Kingdom by Japan in 1910, the stateless Koreans and political refugees who carried out anti-Japanese activities provided Japan with an excuse to encroach into Russian territory. In this new world order, Russia's main concern was preventing Japanese incursions on its soil: all plans for expansion into East Asia were abandoned.

21 See John Steinburg et al. (2005); John W. Steinburg and David Wolff (2007); Petrov (2001, p. 285); and Kowner (2007) for extensive discussion of the Russo-Japanese war.

The Korean question and the 'yellow peril'

Following its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, the fear of 'yellow people' became increasingly apparent in Russia (Kwon, 2006; Vaschuk et al., 2002, p. 39-41; Grave, 1912; Stephan, 1994). However, this racial alarm highlighted differences in the Russians' perceptions of Chinese and Koreans, and was also influenced by the 'personal' opinion of the incumbent Governor-General of the Primor'e Oblast' (Kwon, 2006; Grave, 1912).²² In local context, the *zheltaia opasnost'* ('yellow peril') can be seen as a by-product of the colonization of this region. As Hee Young Kwon (2006) states, the development of the region required a 'yellow' work force, given the delayed settlement by Russian laborers. Thus, from the 1870s Chinese laborers were introduced for road, railway, and harbour construction, and from the late 1880s large numbers of Chinese and Koreans worked in the gold mines (Grave, 1912, cited in Kwon, 2006, p. 346). Although the concept of a 'yellow peril' arose globally in the context of the direct encounter between East Asia and Western imperial power in the 19th century, this chapter focuses on the relationship between the 'Korean question' and the 'yellow peril' in the regional context of the RFE.

According to Vaschuk et al. (2002, p. 39), there were four main 'problems' with 'yellow immigrants'; it is interesting to see how these have re-emerged in the RFE during the post-Soviet period. First, there was the question of officially controlling their movement. It is impossible to ascertain exactly how many Chinese and Koreans lived in the region, partly because many did not possess passports and did not register for *Russkii bilet* ('identity documents') to avoid the associated fees. More significantly, in the case of Koreans, movement was often based on kinship relations. Typically, once a family settled in the RFE, one member would travel to their home village in northern Korea or Manchuria and bring the remaining relatives back to Russia (Lee, 1994). As I discuss in the next chapter, this pattern of movement can still be seen between Central Asia and the RFE today, and the difficulties involved in accurately counting the number of Koreans is perceived to be an ongoing problem.

22 Many studies agree that fluctuations in regional authorities' policies toward Koreans were influenced by the 'personal disposition' of the Governor-General. However, it would be more accurate to see the tension between the desire to seek expansion through trade and the need to restrict access to foreign influences and migration personified in the agency of the Governor.

Second, the availability of ‘cheap yellow labor’ created concerns about its detrimental effects on the morals of Russian settlers. According to V.D. Pesotskii (1913), Russian landowners employed Koreans as *batraki* (‘farm-hands’), and Russian settlers were more likely to indulge in alcohol. Pesotskii attributed the moral decay of Cossack and Russian landowners, which was of significant concern for the local authorities, to their Korean and Chinese tenants – even referring to the Koreans as ‘Jews’.

Third, in urban areas the presence of cheaper and more resilient Chinese and Korean workers created competition with Russian laborers, and by 1910, 70 per cent of workers in urban areas were Chinese (Pesotskii, 1913, p. 40). In an attempt to improve the position of Russian workers, Governor-General Unterberger prohibited the hiring of Koreans in gold mines in 1908, but this legislation was rendered ineffective by the outbreak of the First World War, when Russian laborers were called to the front, leading to shortages in the RFE’s labor force.

Finally, the ‘yellow peril’ became linked to problems of hygiene and criminality: ‘Practically, in every city of the southern Far East, there was a Chinese district where criminal bases and the anti-sanitary flourished’, including the infamous ‘Millionka’ in the center of Vladivostok. The Chinese were thought to pose a more serious problem than the Koreans, since they were not only perceived to be ‘more dirty’ but also to engage in criminal activities and drug dealing (Chernolutskaia, 2011, p. 237). Even in the present day, my fieldwork identified perceptions that ‘the dirty Chinese’ were causing *besporiadok* (‘disorder’) in the region.²³

When, in pre-Revolutionary times, the government considered the problems created by these *vostochniki* (‘easterners’), relocation was mentioned as a possible solution. It was often suggested that the Koreans should be dispersed and moved to more central parts of Russia, rather than allowing them to live in concentrated numbers near the border: this is, in effect, a ‘pre-history’ of the deportation that eventually occurred in 1937 (Chernolutskaia, 2011).²⁴

23 On the concept of ‘disorder’ connected with the Chinese traders in post-Soviet Russian provinces, see Humphrey (1999).

24 Such a proposition had already been made by a Russian traveller, Przheval’ski, who visited the first four Korean villages near the border in 1867–9 (Kolarz, 1954, p. 33).

Internal diversification of Korean settlers and the anti-Japanese movement

While the earlier settlers mainly came from the northern provinces of the Korean Peninsula and were poor peasants,²⁵ the influx of anti-Japanese nationalist activists since Japan made its ambition explicit to annex Korea from the 1890s expanded their geographical origin to the whole of the Chosun Kingdom (see Pak, 1993, p. 74, 91). These political exiles were conscientious intellectuals of a high social status, who were eager to preserve Korea's sovereignty by carrying out guerrilla-style raids against the Japanese army (Pak, 1993, p. 140-215; Kho, 1987, p. 21). Their participation in the flow of migration to the RFE encouraged the organization of political activities for the liberation of Korea and the publishing of newspapers and journals by intellectuals based on a new enlightenment movement (Kho, 1987, p. 20).

This movement was considered a 'state within a state' by some Russian authorities, as it also functioned as an infrastructure for Korean society.²⁶ According to Petrov (1998, p. 14), between 1906 and 1911, 23,624 anti-Japanese Korean partisans were killed or arrested, of which 75 per cent were killed in Manchuria or the RFE by the Japanese army. This nationalist and socialist activism created problems not only for the Russian authorities but also for the Korean migrants living in the RFE. The Japanese authorities continuously complained about the activities of anti-Japanese factions on Russian soil and asked the Russian authorities to take action to suppress them.²⁷ This led, for example, to Russia and Japan's secret agreement in 1907 to search for anti-Japanese emigrants, which culminated in the arrest of fifteen Korean patriots in Pos'et (Petrov, 2001, p. 274). The authorities were aware that such activists enjoyed the widespread support of and financial backing from Koreans who had already settled in Russia. Petrov (2001, p. 272) describes this political activity as being unified to defend 'the fate of their homeland'.

25 One of my acquaintances, who came from Pyŏngyang and taught Korean national dance to teenage girls in Ussuriisk, happened one day to mention 'Russian Koreans' in terms of their locality in North Korea – an aspect that I had not previously considered. She evaluated the character of Russian Korean women as being very strong, associating this with their 'origin' in Hamgyŏng Province in North Korea.

26 In South Korea, historical studies on nationalist movements in this region have been very well researched and discussed: see Ban (1996) and Hwan Park (1995).

27 This pressure was exerted at various levels. For example, good personal relationships between Japanese diplomats and the leaders of the local and central Russian authorities were effectively manipulated for such ends (Petrov, 2001, p. 303).

However, after the Russo-Japanese War some Koreans were influenced by radical socialist ideas, resulting in ideological divisions within the nationalist movement about the best way to liberate 'their homeland' from Japan (see Ban, 1996). This division was further aggravated by the differing interests of those who 'were living permanently' in Russia, and those who were in exile and planning to return to their 'liberated homeland'.²⁸ Such divisions later caused the Bolshevik authorities to question the loyalty of Korean partisans during civil war period and the sincerity of their belief in socialism, since their adoption of socialist ideology could be perceived as a way to liberate Korea, rather than as an end in itself (Kolarz, 1954).²⁹

Building Soviet socialism and cleansing the Soviet Far East

After the October Revolution of 1917, it took several years for a socialist regime to become firmly established in the RFE. There was civil war between 1918 and 1920, and then the establishment of the short-lived Far Eastern Republic, which only lasted from 1920 to 1922.³⁰ During the civil

28 Ban (1996) discusses the factionalism within the Korean anti-Japanese nationalist movement in the period 1905-1921, focusing on the nationalists' transnational network across Manchuria, Shanghai, the RFE, and America. He argues that the factionalism between socialist and liberal nationalists around the establishment of an interim Korean government in exile in Shanghai reflects divisions between American-allied nationalists and Manchurian and RFE socialists. He also observes that differences within the socialist camp reflected the wide political spectrum of the settlers in Russia, influenced by the different interests of *wonhoin* ('Russian subjects') and *yeohoin* ('non-subjects') (in Russian, *poddannye* and *bez-poddannye*).

29 A similar suspicion about the sincerity of Koreans was made concerning their conversion to Orthodox Christianity as part of the process of becoming Russian subjects:

I am not clear in my own mind as to the cause of the success which has attended the 'missionary effort' at Yatchihe [a Korean settlement village; its correct name is Yanchikhe] and elsewhere. The statements I received on the subject differed widely, and in most cases were made hesitatingly, as if my interlocutors were not sure of their ground. My impression is that while Russia is tolerant of devil-worship, or any other worship which is not subversive of the externals of morality, 'conformity' is required to obtain for the Korean alien those blessings which belong to naturalisation as a Russian subject. (Bishop, 1985, p. 7)

30 For the overall situation in the RFE during the civil war, see Stephan (1994, p. 117-140), and for special reference to migration politics, see Vaschuk et al. (2002, p. 59-61). Although the Far Eastern Republic was a short-lived socialist state recognized by the Bolsheviks, its symbolic meaning is currently being revived to assert regional autonomy and criticize the central government of the Russian Federation. For example, when the government recently tried to ban the use of right-hand-drive cars imported from Japan, some protesters said, 'You will see the creation of the Far Eastern Republic, if Japanese second-hand cars are banned in Russia!' (Avchenko, 2012).

war, Korean socialist partisans fought alongside the Bolsheviks against an alliance of foreign interventionist armies composed of Japanese, Czech, American, British, Canadian, French, Polish, and Italian soldiers. Of these, the Japanese military contribution was the largest, numbering 175,000 men in 1920 (Vaschuk et al., 2002, p. 59).

The eventual establishment of an effective Soviet administration in 1923 exposed the difficulty of implementing socialist ideals in the RFE, especially in relation to the Korean population. The presence of a large number of poor tenant farmers among the Koreans was cited as the result of Tsarist exploitation in previous decades and *vopros zemleustroistva* ('the question of land distribution') became a central issue (Kim, 1926). Socialist ideals formed the basis of proposals for allocating land to poor Korean peasants, and special committees were organized to consider this question (Kim, 1926, p. 201).³¹ While the Chinese population decreased starting in the mid-1920s due to socialist policies aimed at discouraging their commercial activities, more Koreans were attracted to the region by the Soviet land policy that seemed to offer advantages for poor peasants (Vaschuk et al., 2002, p. 58). In the early 1920s, 88.5 per cent of the Korean population were peasants, with the majority (over 70 per cent) classified as *bedniaki* ('poor peasants') (Vaschuk et al., 2002, p. 73). 67 per cent of Koreans without citizenship belonged to this category of poor peasants (Chernolutskaya, 2011, p. 212).³² With this class-based policy of the early Soviet administration and the *korenizatsiia* ('nativization') policy in the mid-1920s,³³ this period was remarkable because, for the first time, the Koreans in the RFE had a voice

31 In addition to the question of land distribution, the *koreiskii otdel* ('Korean Department') under the Primorskii governing committee of the All-Soviet Communist Party of Bolsheviks (VKP (b)) was also created to support Korean socialist revolutionaries in Korea and Manchuria at this time (Vaschuk et al., 2002, p. 74).

32 According to Kim's article, land ownership in 1923 for Korean and Russian households was as follows (1926, p. 202):

Area of land owned (<i>desiatin</i>)	Percentage of Korean households	Area of land owned (<i>desiatin</i>)	Percentage of Russian households
None (<i>bez poseva</i>)	11.5	None (<i>bez poseva</i>)	12.5
Less than 1	36.0	Less than 1	13.3
1-2	26.0	2-4	24.9
2-4	18.9	5-7	31.4
5-7	5.5	More than 7	17.1
More than 7	1.5		

33 For nativization policy in the RFE, see Bruce Grant (1995).

in the political administration with the formation of native communist cohorts who actively mediated with the Soviet administrative power on behalf of ordinary people.

However, it was not long before the complexity of the Korean question became apparent in the implementation of socialist policy. First, as illustrated in Man Gem Kim's (1926) article and also in articles from the *Sŏnbong* ('Vanguards') newspaper (published in Korean in the 1920s with a distribution of more than 10,000 copies), the question of land distribution began to be linked with the question of nationality. In the first conference of the Primorskii government, the following resolution was passed: 'This Conference (*S'ezd*) recognizes the unconditional necessity of the fulfilment of land distribution based on the land codex, making efforts first of all to enable small land owners and landless cultivators to make use of free state funds and spare public land.'³⁴ However, the government was forced to retreat from this position of radical social and economic reform, because middle-class peasants were against policy of collectivization and the liquidation of land owning around 1925, which caused an even fiercer reaction from the mostly Russian landowners (Stephan, 1994, p. 190; Kolarz, 1954, p. 36-37). For example, in 1929 protesters 'burned grain, destroyed livestock', and physically attacked and killed party activists as a way to resist land liquidation (Stephan, 1994, p. 190; Lee, 2000).

During my fieldwork, an elderly woman called Klava Ten (born in 1916) shared her personal memories of the collectivization in a village in the RFE, which reached its culmination in the late 1920s. Her father, a traditional intellectual who had studied classical Confucian literature for 14 years, became the chairman of the *sel'soviet* once collectivization had been completed. Klava Ten had herself been a member of a young pioneer group that held secret meetings to decide which households should be liquidated, and she remembered how badly the Russian *kulaki* (wealthy land-owning peasants) reacted to such decisions. Her aunt was also designated a *kulak*, as she owned a *tijilbanga* ('pedal-operated mill') that was considered a 'means of production'. In addition, she cultivated opium (*yak-dam-bae* in Korean, lit. 'medicinal tobacco'), which was widely produced by Chinese and Korean peasants at that time for their own personal use, as discussed in the local newspapers (see for example *Krasnoe Znamia*, 22 March 1923). Following this designation as a *kulak*, her aunt decided to move to Manchuria. As indicated by Klava Ten's testimony, there were some Koreans who left

34 'Resolution on the land question agreed at the first government conference on 13 March, 1923', GAPK, f1506, o 1. d 6. 11.

the RFE during the collectivization period. However, the latter half of the 1920s saw rapid growth in the overall number of Korean immigrants, with Koreans composing about a quarter of the total population of the RFE (Chernolutskaya, 2011, p. 212) and new immigration occurring mainly in districts where Koreans already formed a majority, such as Pos'etskii Raion and along the Ussuri River bordering Manchuria.

The situation in the mid-1920s reflected the mixture of hope and frustration produced by the newly introduced socialist reforms. While many Koreans moved to the Soviet Far East in the hope of a better life under the new system, it is also true that a significant number of Korean peasants moved back to Manchuria after collectivization (Wada, 1987). Although the number is too small to draw generalizations, I heard from a few of my interlocutors that many small and medium-sized landowning Korean peasants adopted a compliant and cooperative stance towards collectivization, in contrast to the resistance displayed by wealthy older settlers. Many poor Korean peasants who crossed the border to Manchuria at this time were not protesting against collectivization, but simply looking for plots of land to rent to ensure their means of livelihood in the midst of a rapidly changing political situation. According to an article in a local newspaper in Russian:

Russian landowners (the majority owning 100 *desiatins* of land), who have exploited poor Korean cultivators for several decades by renting land to them with high rents, did not rent land to their old tenants this year from fear that the introduction of land reforms would mean they had to give land to their tenant Koreans. (Nagi,³⁵ 11 December 1923, *Krasnoe Znamia*)

Despite this, the movement of Koreans across the border was widely interpreted as evidence of their disloyalty; any economic reasons for their migration were not featured in the public presentation of the Korean response to collectivization.

In the wider context, the land distribution question raises the issue of the social basis of the socialist revolution. In the RFE, as in other parts of Russia, the new classes on which the revolution was based were created from scratch, so the question of class hinged on people's *soslovnost'* ('belonging to estate/social status') in pre-revolutionary times. The peculiar aspect of this

35 The author seems to have used a pseudonym, reflecting the sensitivity of this topic, not only because this name is unusual either for a Korean or a Russian name, but also I could not find any relevant information about this writer.

in the RFE was that the relationship between social status and the nationality of a certain group of people became entangled. This interweaving of the tropes of nationality and revolutionary ideas was not considered desirable by the Soviet authorities, since the continuity of Koreans' economic status before and after the revolution could be read as a negation of the revolution. From the late 1920s, the 'Great Transformation' of the old society into a new socialist regime demanded that everyone be reborn from their old status to become a new Soviet citizen: 'everybody should present what she/he has been before 1917 and what she/he should become after that' (Ssorin-Chaikov, 2000). In other words, the Soviet Union needed to identify a 'proletariat class' and some 'enemies of people', even though there was no 'obvious proletariat' (Humphrey, 1994, p. 24). So when the First Five-Year Plan, *dekulakization* [dissolution of landowning class], and collectivization aimed to 'widen the potential base of social support for the Communist party' (Hoffmann, 1994, p. 2) by transforming society itself, the boundaries of society became an issue in this borderland.

On the one hand, 'the ascribed class' (Soviet *soslovnost'*) was invented as 'a combination of Marxist theory and the underdeveloped nature of Russian society in terms of their relationship to *the state* rather than in terms of their relationship to each other' (Fitzpatrick, 2000, p. 38-39, my emphasis). The conflict between Russian and Korean farmers during collectivization was transformed in the late 1930s into a question of loyalty to the state. On the other hand, the massive migration of peasants to cities as a consequence of collectivization and industrialization created a large proletariat on which the socialist ideology could be based (Hoffmann, 1994, p. 2, 10). To sum up, a regime rooted in Marxism 'found' the proletariat among the *soslovnost'* ('belonging to estate')³⁶ in Imperial Russia, and 'invented' urban workers through migration alongside collectivization and industrialization (Humphrey, 1994; Kotkin, 1995).

The other important factor to consider in the interwoven questions of socialist ideology and the social basis of the regime derives from the unique geopolitical nature of the Soviet Far East. In the Soviet Union, domestic nationality policies were closely linked to international relations, especially when a diaspora's home country was outside of the Soviet Union. While the Soviet Union did not intend to be a nation (Brubaker, 1994; Martin,

36 The meaning of this word in dictionary is 'estate', but translating it into 'social status' fits well in many contexts. In pre-Revolutionary time, peasants and *inorodtsy* were also *soslovie*. Therefore, before the birth of passport-based citizenship, Koreans were admitted into *soslovie* of peasants when they migrated to the RFE in the late 19th century (Petrov 2000).

1998; Slezkine, 1994a), strong ideological propaganda hinted that the Soviet Union could be vulnerable to other nation-states outside of the Soviet Union – especially the growing nationalist movements in Ukraine and Poland near its border. According to Martin (1998, p. 829-835), the two Bolshevik concepts of 'Soviet xenophobia and the Piedmont principle', formed an incipient Soviet administrative territory in the border regions. According to Martin's definition, 'Soviet xenophobia refers to the exaggerated Soviet fear of foreign influence and foreign contamination' in ideological terms rather than ethnic ones, whereas the 'Piedmont principle' refers to 'the Soviet attempt to exploit cross-border ethnic ties to project political influence into neighboring states' (Martin, 2001, p. 313). These two principles were particularly influential in the policies aimed at diasporas with ties across the borders of the Soviet Union, such as Polish in Ukraine and Koreans in the Far East. On the one hand, Soviet xenophobia meant that the Soviet authorities feared contamination of the revolution, which was still regarded as susceptible to the influence of foreign governments; in this respect, Korean immigrants were regarded as easy cover for Japanese espionage.³⁷ On the other hand, the Piedmont principle was based on the perception that the influx of immigrants was evidence of the Soviet Union's attractiveness to cross-border populations and that this created the potential for socialism to spill over into neighboring countries. When the Soviet Union leaned more towards the Piedmont principle, local Soviet authorities accepted more Koreans and their mass immigration was seen as a demonstration of the superiority of the Soviet Union compared to the colonized Korean Peninsula under Japanese imperialism. Until collectivization, these two policies appeared to be held in balance despite their inherent tension.

In his argument about the breakdown of Bolshevik ideals in the border region, Martin (1998) contends that it was the emigration of diaspora nationalities out of the Soviet Union as a response to collectivization that led to the abandonment of the Piedmont principle. When collectivization was undertaken across the Soviet Union, it encountered strong resistance, especially in the western border areas (see Brown, 2005), where violent uprisings on the Polish-Ukrainian border resulted in massive emigration of Germans and Poles to their home countries in 1930 (Martin, 1998,

37 The position Koreans in the RFE is similar to that of 'interstitial persons' in social structure discussed by Mary Douglas; the accusation of 'Japanese espionage' is based on the similar logic in the accusation of 'witchcraft' in some societies which usually targets at those who mediate or stand in between two power groups. Hence, 'the kind of powers attributed to them symbolise their ambiguous, articulate status' (Douglas, 1966, p. 102).

p. 838). Although upheavals in the RFE during collectivization were not as serious (or well-known) as those on the western border, rising violence and anti-trading slogans aimed at the Chinese led to a massive outflow of Chinese migrant workers. Haruki Wada reports that approximately 50,000 Koreans fled to Korea or Manchuria after collectivization (Wada, 1987, p. 40).³⁸ In addition to the failure of the Piedmont principle, the Soviet authorities were concerned by the links between the expansion of Japanese imperialism and the demand for Korean autonomy in the Pos'et area (the current Khasanskii Raion), where Koreans formed nearly 90 per cent of the population. Elena N. Chernolutsкая (2011, p. 211-213) considers these suspicions to have originated as early as 1914, when the Russian authorities became aware that Japan was planting spies to agitate for autonomy in the Pos'et area so that they could take it over. In Northeast Asia in the early 20th century, Japan used Korean immigrants in both Manchuria and the RFE as 'agents' for expanding their colonial influence within the framework of 'pan-Asian' prosperity, in a process that Park describes as 'territorial osmosis' (2000). Similar to the strategy used in Manchuria, Japan not only claimed Koreans in the RFE as its subjects, but also demanded that the Soviet authorities pacify anti-Japanese Koreans in the region. Additionally, during the civil war in the RFE, the Japanese military worked in the villages where Koreans were the majority to create antagonism between Korean

38 Stephan (1994) and Martin (1998) both cite Wada (1987) in arguing that the emigration of Koreans was the basis for the Soviet administration's view that the entire population of Koreans was unreliable, but Wada did not provide any accurate source for his figure of 50,000 – it seems to have been based on Japanese official data at that time. Nevertheless, Wada's figure seems to be right. As regards to this figure of 50,000 Koreans, Jonathan Bone (n.d.) has done some brilliant 'math'. According to him, despite the slight evidence, 50,000 Koreans' emigration seems to 'be about right':

Roughly one hundred seventy five thousand Koreans were on hand to be repressed in 1937. If fifty thousand ran away in 1930-32, there must have been somewhere around two hundred fifteen thousand on hand going into mass collectivisation. The 1929 special census of the Vladivostok district, where perhaps 70 per cent of the Far East's Koreans lived, turned up 150,795. This in fact is roughly 70 per cent of 215,000. Note that the most reliable number of Koreans was on the deportation which was fixed number and others are variables.

However, Kolarz (1954, p. 35) estimated that there were 300,000 Koreans in the Far Eastern Republic period (1920-22) and it decreased to 170,000 in 1927 'according to official data, but unofficially there were 'at least 250,000'. The difference in the Korean population before and after collectivization was then around 80,000, which is bigger than the 50,000 given by the other researchers above. Without regard to statistical accuracy, it is undeniable that a considerable proportion of poor Korean peasants had to wander across Manchuria and the Soviet Far East in the 1920s and 1930s, looking for liveable place.

and Russian peasants (Anosov, 1928, p. 28 cited in Son, 2013, p. 109), thus appropriating anti-Asian racism for Japan's own ends.

Even though Japanese military forces left the RFE following the establishment of the Soviet socialist government, Japan did not stop attempting to influence the Korean residents of the RFE. The 1925 treaty between Japan and the Soviet Union ('The Soviet-Japanese Basic Convention'), signed in Beijing, established diplomatic relations between the newly-formed Soviet state and Japan and agreed to persecute resistance groups for the mutual benefit of the two countries: Japan agreed not to oppose the Soviet oppression of former White Army Russians who had fled to China, in exchange for the Soviet Union discouraging anti-Japanese movements in its territory – an agreement that mainly targeted anti-colonial activists of Korean origin in the RFE (Son, 2013, p. 2-3).³⁹ As a result, Koreans in the RFE became 'hostages' between the two countries (Son, 2012). Following the dismissal of the Communist International (*Komintern*) in the late 1920s and the USSR's adoption of the principle of 'socialism in one country', Korean communists fighting for emancipation from Japanese imperialism in a cross-border network across the Korean, Chinese, and Russian borders were considered a danger to the security of the Soviet Union. The aim was to strengthen the *border* of socialism by relocating Koreans to a more distant place, as their presence near the physical border was regarded as rendering it porous. With this shift in focus to the border regime, even anti-Japanese communist activities became equated with Japanese espionage: what mattered was not ideology or belief, but whether activities were being carried out across the border that demarcated the boundary of the Soviet state.

Indeed, 'Japanese espionage' was cited as the official reason for the relocation of Koreans in the newspaper *Pravda* in September 1937.⁴⁰ Stigmatized

39 See Park (2000) for an excellent discussion of how Japan utilized Koreans in Manchuria as colonial agents to expand its empire.

40 This aspect has been emphasized by scholars in South Korea when discussing the absurdity of the motivation for the deportation (for example, Kho, 1987; Chun, 2002; Lee and Chun, 1993). These studies strongly refute the charges of espionage, citing as evidence the Korean independence movements against the Japanese government. Thus, the reason for the deportation as published in *Pravda* is incomprehensible when viewed in the context of Korean anti-colonial nationalists; this could be one aspect of the absurdity of Great Terror. Kim German (whose works are available at http://world.lib.ru/k/kim_o_i/), on the other hand, highlights that the deportation was coherent with the Soviet nationality policy, not an abrupt measure. An alternative approach centers on the expansion of rice cultivation to Central Asia (see Kho, 1987), but in my opinion this was one of the *results* of the deportation of Koreans rather than the *cause*. Chai-mun Lee (2000) highlights ethnic conflict between Russians and Koreans after collectivization in explaining the deportation. I would like to augment his explanation by pointing out that the

as an 'enemy nation', all of the Koreans in the Soviet Far East were loaded onto 'cattle trains' and deported to Central Asia as part of Stalin's Great Terror. The collective farms left by Koreans were assigned to Red Army and NKVD (*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*, People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) families, who were believed to be more reliable for ensuring the security of the border. Some of the *Khetagurovites*, young women who volunteered to come to the Soviet Far East on socialist missions in the 1930s, were given the job of visiting Korean households to inform them of their relocation; most Koreans accepted the NKVD's orders without protest (Shulman, 2008, p. 205-206).

Both Martin (2001) and Chernolutskaia (2011) argue that the Stalinist purge by means of forcible relocation was not based on ethnicity, although some ethnic groups such as Koreans, Poles, Germans, Finns, Estonians, Latvians, Kurds, and Iranians were targeted as a whole. According to Chernolutskaia (2013), the *pasportizatsiia* (internal passport system) had already been introduced in Russia, including the RFE, prior to the deportations of the Great Terror and the *otchistka* ('cleansing') of the borderland, and had been functioning to 'filter out' undesirable elements from society. Martin (1998) and Chernolutskaia (2011) both take the deportation of former residents of Harbin (the *Kharbinsky*) as evidence that the deportation was not an 'ethnic cleansing'.

The irony surrounding the Koreans in the RFE is that they became the most powerful agent of the 'Slavicization of the RFE' by becoming victims in the most 'passive' way. Bone (n.d.) describes this irony of the Koreans' position in the RFE during the 1937 events as follows:

The Koreans' role fundamentally was a passive one. As a group they were far less actors than acted upon, by a top-directed state system that for fifteen years struggled to work out who they were, where they belonged, and above all how to fit them into the service-structured society it was attempting to engender. To mark the limits of a workspace for building their vision of socialism in one country, Stalin and his supporters sought to differentiate the Far East from Asia by turning its relatively porous frontiers into well-demarked borders. The tragedy of the Koreans is that they fell victims to that transformation, to an ethnicized population politics ultimately dominated by exclusion.

issue of ethnicity or race is mobilized by Slavic settler nationalists in dealing with drastic changes initiated by the central government and also by Japanese military in Manchuria for its own ends.

Thus, the deportation can be viewed both as an attempt to solve the 'Korean question' that had inherently defied solutions from its very conception and as a means of purifying the region and making the border hermetic as part of the socialist project. The problem does not, therefore, lie with the Koreans but with the question itself, which has lain at the heart of the RFE since the beginning of colonization. Thus the Koreans were variously imagined, depending on the political and economic situation at the time: initially as a useful element, but subsequently as unreliable border violators. The Korean question reflects the marginality of this region and the Russian colonialist project, which has been continuously embodied in the Koreans who could not be fitted into the prescribed form of nation-states (Park, 2005b).

Memory in silence in the present

Since perestroika, the change in political mood has allowed people to talk openly about this deportation, and memories long buried in the official discourse have been excavated and transformed into history in a process that Pierre Nora calls 'the acceleration of history' (Nora, 1989, p. 7-8). The archives have been opened and some private memories have been made public and published as literature, historiographies, and newspaper articles. This outpouring of memories has been a remarkable testament to people's will to remember, and the resulting increase in academic research has deepened our understanding of the Korean experience in the Russian past.

However, despite the increase in information and the sudden freedom to discuss this matter, it is puzzling that the true reason for the deportation has become more shrouded in mystery. For example, Tel'mir Kim, who lost his father at the age of four, was still searching for information concerning the 'true' reason for his father's execution in 1938. Even though his flat was filled with archival material 'snatched during the struggle between old and new powers from the state archive', it did not provide him with a reason for the death of his father, an ardent revolutionary socialist known as the 'Korean Lenin' who served the Korean people in the high party position of mediator (see Chapter 5). He had thought that if he could obtain certain documents concerning the Lyushkov Affair (named for the NKVD Commissar who carried out the purge in the RFE in the late 1930s), they might shed light on how his father's execution came about.⁴¹ However, a greater puzzle than the

41 For the Lyushkov Affair, see Stephan (1994, p. 209-215), and for a detailed monograph on 'repression' in the RFE in Russian, see Aleksandr S. Sutorin (1991). The silence about the

absence of documentation may be the 'silence' and 'indifference' within the Korean community itself.

During the early period of my fieldwork, I often asked people how they remembered the deportation of 1937, or how such memories had been passed down to them by their parents. Although most of my interlocutors knew of the deportation, they would often reply: 'I haven't been particularly interested in that question', as though it was only my questioning that had reminded them of the subject.⁴² One interlocutor told me that she had not been aware that her parents had been born in the RFE until she was 16 years old and saw her mother's passport. Before then, her parents had never talked about the fact that they were from the RFE. There is a gap between the discourse of the Koreans in relation to the deportation and people's everyday experiences. Such a gap is clearly manifest in the negation of the language used in describing the events of 1937. In the Chinese market, I spoke with a woman called Ira Ten (born in 1956) about the deportation as follows:

HP: Did you hear about the deportation in 1937 from your parents?

Ira: Do you mean the *repressiia* ('repression')? My father often talked about it.

HP: Your father didn't use the word 'deportation'?

Ira: No, he just said that they *vygoniali* ('drove out') all the Koreans.

HP: What is the difference between *deportirovats* ('deport') and *pereselits* ('migrate')?

Ira: When we talk about 'migrate', there is a process of preparation, but my father told me that he just got hold of his documents and left everything else behind. When we talk about 'deportation', it means that there must have been some kind of *narushenie* ('violation'), and that people were expelled with a stamp through customs, just like the Chinese are sent back from here to China. Basically, they just *vydvoriali vsekh koreitsev* ('kicked out all the Koreans').

deportation in the RFE contrasts with the outpouring of personal memoirs from Koreans in Central Asia, represented in newspapers and self-publications – although a recent publication by Chernolutskaya (2011) is filling this gap. Also see Son (2013).

42 After realizing that the deportation was not a matter of concern to most people, I did not raise the topic unless they did first. Uehling (2000), who studied the Crimean Tatars' repatriation, said that people spoke passionately about their past, saying 'Your project is our project', thus bestowing on the ethnographer the status of a spokesperson. Koreans, acknowledging their own indifference, often drew a contrast between the Tatars and themselves in terms of a 'collective demand for justice'.

Though this chapter was written with the intention of providing an overview of the history of the 'Korean question' in this region, my aim was neither to seek a definition of the 'Korean question', nor its resolution, nor the real truth of the 'deportation'. Instead, I have tried to show how the 'Korean question' is related to the border and how the movement of Koreans has been intrinsically linked with the colonization of the RFE. However, the spatial factor governing the case of the Koreans placed them in an ambivalent position, and it was only when they became the victims of state power that their presence in the former USSR was legitimized.⁴³

I was struck by the irony that, despite their freedom to talk about the atrocities of the past, Koreans chose to maintain their silence on these issues and instead highlighted their agency through a plethora of narratives not only about their survival strategies but also their contribution to the development of Soviet Central Asia – almost as colonizers – after the deportation. There are some ethnographic studies concerning the ethnic groups that were collectively deported during Stalinism that can provide us with an interesting comparative perspective. Similar to the Koreans, Meskhetian Turks and Kalmyks tried to prove by excessive hard work that they were not 'the enemy of the nation' (Guchinova, 2005; Tomlinson, 2002). They repeatedly emphasized their hard work and how they had contributed to the development of the Soviet socialist economy while burying the injustice of their suffering in silence. Nevertheless, the past, although unspoken, continued to exert a powerful influence on their lives. How can one then describe and understand 'the unspoken'? Is the unspoken located somewhere between memory and history?

I was impressed by Veena Das's (2007) eloquent analysis of the interweaving of violence and ordinary life in her investigation of violence during the

43 This legitimacy through spatial movement provides an interesting contrast with the Buryats studied by Humphrey (1994). According to Humphrey, the Buryats were executors as well as victims of repression, and this became the basis of their participation in the building of the Soviet Union. Because of their dual role, the Buryats adopted an ambivalent stance toward the state during the early 1990s when revision of the past became possible. Koreans, however, could be considered justified in seeing themselves purely as 'victims', given that the deportation was carried out by non-Koreans after the purging of 2,500 Koreans in administrative roles. However, in people's perception, this does not seem to be the case. As in Ira Ten's re-phrasing of 'deportation' to 'repression', the latter, more inclusive term, is often used, since it was widely acknowledged that 'everybody was repressed during the Stalinist purge'. Thus, Koreans seem to address 'deportation' from a dual stance: on the one hand, by denying the language used in talking about the incident, and on the other by locating it within the wider perspective of the 'repression' that was imposed on the ordinary people in the Soviet Union without regard to their specific circumstances.

1947 Partition of India and against the Sikhs after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. She examines the case of a woman called Manjit (Das, 2007, Chapter 5), who was known to have been abducted and raped by Pakistani Muslims at the time of Partition, although this was not subsequently mentioned by anybody and was buried in silence. Instead, her life was characterized by physical violence from her husband and verbal abuse from her mother-in-law. When Das asked her to write about her memory of Partition, she wrote a full page description filled with ‘rumours’ she had heard, with ‘anonymous collective authorship’. She made no mention of her own abduction and rape: only the violence in her day-to-day life alluding to such an experience. Thus, ‘the original event was deflected by other stories that were “say-able” within the kinship universe of Punjabi families’ (Das, 2007, p. 88).

There is a deep moral energy in the refusal to represent some violations of the human body, for these violations are seen as being ‘against nature’, as defining the limits of life itself. [...] Those violations of the body cannot be spoken, for they create the sense in oneself that one is a thing, a beast, or a machine; these stand in contrast to the violations that can be scripted in everyday life when time can be allowed to do its work of reframing or rewriting the memories of violence. (Das, 2007, p. 90)

Thus, moral dignity is claimed by ordinary people through a strong refusal to speak of the non-human condition, and the boundary of culture is drawn around the universe of family and kinship where such violence is deflected through other forms of suffering. By replacing the official word ‘deport’, the verb *vygoniat* (‘drive out’) implicates the non-human condition of this historical experience, as *vygoniat* is usually used when the object of action is a herd of animals such as cows, sheep, or horses (Tomlinson, 2002).

Returning to the context of the Soviet Union, El ‘za-Bair Guchinova (2005; 2007) points out an interesting effect of deportation on the Kalmyks, who were led to negate their traditional culture in various ways by the stigma of deportation.⁴⁴ Many changed their names to Russian ones, declared themselves to be of a different ethnicity, began cooking Russian-style meals, stopped using the Kalmyk language, and simplified their traditional wedding customs. In short, the Kalmyks, like many other ethnic minorities, became partially ‘Russified’ in the course of their efforts to ‘atone for their guilt’. Yet despite this, the deportation also served to consolidate their

44 The Kalmyks reside in Kalmykia, an autonomous republic in the southwestern part of the Russian Federation. They were forcibly deported to Central Asia and Siberia in 1943.

Kalmyk ethnicity. According to Guchinova (2007, p. 220), the Kalmyks had not been a unitary group before their deportation, but consisted of 'multiple identities based on kin or ethno-territorial parameters'. This was transformed by the deportation: 'stigmatized ethnicity and common extreme experience led to the situation in which general ethnic identity prevailed over local forms of consciousness'. Similarly, Koreans were to some extent 'Russified' by their relocation to Central Asia, where they experienced the loss of their traditional way of life and, in many cases, their native language. Whereas for the Kalmyks their Tibetan Buddhist religion could serve as the basis for a consolidated ethnicity, Koreans have no such religion to mark them as a nation. Rather, they find their ethnicity in their domestic family and kinship world. The stigma of deportation excluded them from the hierarchy of nationalities in the Soviet Union, leading them to negate their 'ethnic culture'; yet, ironically, this exclusion reinforced and strengthened their ethnic base by placing it in the realm of family and kinship. In concealing and containing the pain, 'the passivity is transformed into agency' by 'descending to ordinary life' rather than transcending it through a grand narrative (Das, 2007, p. 55).



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2 Repatriating to the Russian Far East, confronting the transition

Primorskii Krai is a land of wind and fog;
The wind blows in
And suddenly the fog rises.
Living in this land one
Appears quietly and then disappears,
Reappearing undetected.

An anonymous former resident of Primorskii Krai

As we have seen in the previous chapter, there were not supposed to be any Koreans in the RFE following their forced relocation to Central Asia by the Soviet authorities in 1937. However, as James C. Scott (1998) convincingly argues, grand designs by states (such as the mass relocation of populations and large-scale development projects) often do not fully achieve their aims: there are always holes, gaps, and unexpected outcomes due to local practices and human nature. After their forcible relocation to Central Asia, there was a brief period when Koreans were to all intents and purposes absent from the RFE,¹ but they soon began to reappear due to migration from North Korea following Korea's liberation from Japanese colonialism in 1945 and from Central Asia following Stalin's death in 1953.

In other words, Koreans have exhibited a tenacious connection to this land despite the Stalinist attempt to 'cleanse' the region. Although more thorough historical research on Koreans in the RFE during the period between the Stalinist purge and the death of Stalin is needed, this chapter discusses the repatriation of Koreans from Central Asia to the RFE since 1956, when the residence restrictions on Koreans were lifted in the Soviet Union. There have been two large-scale repatriations of Koreans from Central Asia: one following the 'rehabilitation' of Koreans in the mid-1950s, and the other in the

¹ It is known that Kim Jong-Il, the son of Kim Il-Sung of North Korea, was born in a village near Khabarovsk in 1941 and was called Yuri Kim, although his official biography published in North Korea records that he was born at Baekdu Mountain. The guerrilla army led by Kim Il-Sung crossed the China-Soviet border in the late 1930s and was active in the RFE, as well as being pursued by the Japanese Kwangtung army during the Second World War. There are also some reports of the presence of Korean partisans as part of an 'eastern force' of border guards or as interpreters for NKPD, even after the deportation of Koreans. See Dmitrii V. Shin, Boris D. Pak, and Valentine Tsoi (2011).

post-Soviet period in the 1990s. I discuss both in this chapter, although most of my ethnographic material relates to the more recent migration, as does my analytical engagement with the literature on this so-called 'ethnic migration' and my discussion of exclusionary practices towards the migrants.

One of the characteristics of the explosive growth in migration following the collapse of the Soviet Union is that people have appeared to move as homogenous groups, a phenomenon that has often been termed *etnicheskaia migratsiia* ('ethnic migration') (Panarin, 1999; Pilkington, 1998; Vaschuk et al., 2002). The fact that this migration was caused by the outbreak of autochthonous nationalism and violent civil wars in the CIS countries has reinforced the specifically 'ethnic' character of this movement, in which people of certain nationalities were forcibly displaced from their places of residence.² However, ethnographic studies have made it apparent that the migration of these people was a complex process resulting from many interlinked factors, and that it cannot be neatly categorized with the conventional terms used in migration studies like 'ethnic' or 'forced'. In other words, the ethnographic description enables us to deconstruct the dichotomy of the terms (such as 'pull' and 'push' factors) used in the study of migration (Pilkington, 1998), thus revealing not only the complexity of social life but also the interweaving of various factors in the displacement and emplacement process.

In the field of migration studies, motivations for migration are traditionally considered to be the defining criterion for its categorization. The dichotomy is usually represented by a series of paired antinomies, such as economic vs. political, personal vs. structural, or migrants vs. refugees. In the case of the Koreans who moved from Central Asia to the RFE in the 1990s, however, there was neither 'forcible' displacement, nor a 'voluntarily' move on their own accord. Rather, the motivation for their movement seems to blur this clear-cut categorization. In the first part of this chapter, I show that the migration of Koreans from Central Asia to the RFE cannot be understood as a unitary phenomenon, but rather as something that involves many different factors.

In particular, I explore this process of Korean migration through people's personal narratives to show how external factors, such as the political unrest and economic deterioration in Central Asia following the collapse of the Soviet Union, interacted with social relationships to shape the migration process. In this way, I intend to critically engage with the tendency of migration studies to consider intention or agency as the most important criterion

2 The rise of autochthonous nationalism in CIS countries was one of the most hotly debated issues in the 1990s and has been extensively addressed in relation to Soviet nationality policies (see Smith, 1996; Suny and Martin, 2001).

for migration, since in the case of Koreans in the RFE this intention or agency was embedded in their social relations, and particularly in their kinship relations.³ The people who told me their migration stories tended not to act on an individual basis, but as part of a family or kinship group. As I show, some people – such as the male head of an extended family – made more autonomous decisions, but most others followed the decisions of close family members. The political situation may well have acted as a ‘push’ factor, but in my interlocutors’ narratives, it was these personal relationships that were overwhelmingly the main reason for their migration. It is also necessary to note that migration itself influenced social relations, as those who migrated had to decide with whom to go and who to leave behind. In particular, alliance relations appear to form a nodal point in which (dis-)connectedness is articulated; kinship relations not only connect but also disconnect. This aspect of migration is also crucial to understanding the emplacement process.

A secondary but no less important issue is that of the relationship between the timing of the migrants’ emplacement in the RFE and changes in their socio-economic position, particularly changes in the citizenship law and exclusionary practices towards migrants from the 2000s onwards. In the second part of this chapter I show how this relationship was a crucial social resource in the process of emplacement following the rapid economic and social changes in the RFE after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Again, my aim is to deconstruct the seemingly homogenous ethnicity of Koreans by showing how the economic and social differences among Korean migrants arose based on when they migrated to the RFE and when their kinship networks were created, and how they reflect wider political and economic changes.

This second aspect allows us to see that social changes are not limited to the Korean population but are common across the RFE. Rather than investigating Koreans’ situation in isolation from the rest of the residents of the RFE, my intention is to examine the wider changes that took place during the period of the Korean influx. Ethnographic studies of Koreans in the region show that diverse groups of Koreans appeared between the 1990s and early 2000s due to incoming of Koreans from other regions or countries. Nevertheless, the public discourse about migrants in the RFE tends to refer to them as a homogenous group and focuses on the Koreans who came from Central Asia: they are called *liudi iz srednei aziï* (‘people from Central Asia’) or, more offensively, *chernoe litso iz srednei aziï* (‘black faces from Central Asia’). The differences among Korean migrants from

3 See Hilary Pilkington (1998) for a discussion of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors in relation to migration in Russia.

Central Asia are often not made explicit, but they were vitally important to the process of settling in the RFE.⁴ This process can only be fully understood by considering the timing of their migration, as it forms not only the basis of their internal differences but also influences the level of cooperation among people occupying different social and economic positions.

Through ethnographic examples of the different social conditions of migration, I particularly wish to examine the issue of 'inequality and exclusion' in Russia raised by Humphrey (2001). She addresses a peculiar 'inequality' in Russia that cannot be explained in terms of 'economic exploitation', 'class', or 'race', but that is derived from 'exclusionary practices' (Humphrey, 2001, p. 334). According to Humphrey, "practices of exclusion" refers to processes such as exile, banishment or limits on residence or employment that radically disadvantage people but do not expel them entirely from society' (2001, p. 333). Inequalities resulting from such exclusionary practices cannot be explained in unitary terms, as their boundaries are continually reviewed and reset as historical variants of 'dispossession' (Humphrey, 2001, p. 348). In particular, Humphrey pays attention to the emotional aspect⁵ of such practices, as expressed in 'the nexus of anxiety' of the *edinstvo* ('unity'), which may extend from the national level right down to a small group of ordinary people in the form of a *kollektiv* ('collective').

Here I argue that changes in the scale of the 'collective' and variations in exclusionary boundaries can be seen in the different treatments of Korean migrants in the RFE throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s. In the early 1990s, a group formed by migration was accepted as the equivalent of a collective within the continuity of Soviet practices. Thus a clan or an extended family group was easily admitted into a village or city, although they were not fully incorporated into local society. Some Koreans, however, preferred to remain 'outside' of the existing system, as this allowed them to enjoy significant economic opportunities by remaining free from the socialist morality embedded in such a locality or collective. In the later 1990s, exclusionary practices shifted their focus from the collective as a socio-economic unit to the nation as one (Humphrey, 2001, p. 347). The change of citizenship laws in 2002, for example, signified such a shift and

4 In another paper (Park, 2013), I used the notion of 'cosmopolitan ethnicity', a term borrowed from Richard Werbner (2002), to illustrate differences among Korean migrants.

5 I prefer to use the term 'socio(bi)lity' (Simmel, 1971a) rather than emotion in explaining such practices, as emotion can only be observed through practices in society. As I discuss later, many Koreans use the example of 'tea hospitality' to describe changes in attitude towards other people.

dramatically disadvantaged the Koreans who migrated from the end of the 1990s onwards.

While Humphrey insightfully charts a subtle and complex creation of inequality in Russia, it is my intention to supplement her work by means of ethnographic case studies. Put simply, I am wondering how 'dispossessed' people were able to settle in the RFE and continue living there, despite such exclusionary practices and, in many cases, with varying degree of economic success. My ethnographic cases show that there were certain tactics and strategies adopted by the 'dispossessed' that enabled them to deal with 'exclusionary practices' and led to the formation of their own social space through interactions in the form of exchange and sociality. I further argue that there is a certain inversion of exclusion amongst the different groups of Koreans in the RFE based on their time of arrival, i.e. amongst older resident Koreans, newcomer Koreans from Central Asia, and Chinese Koreans.

This inversion of exclusion derives from the duality of the collective in Russia. On the one hand, not being part of a collective leads to a considerable loss of the entitlements and protection provided by the larger group; but, as mentioned previously, it also provides freedom from the morality and loyalty the collective imposes on its members (Humphrey, 2001, p. 345). When operating 'outside' of legitimate social spaces, each of the three groups of Koreans exchange with each other what the others do not have, such as cheap Chinese goods, local connections, and freedom from anxiety about being excluded, with such transactions often taking place in the context of the marketplace and commercial agricultural cultivation. However, this excluded 'outside' space is also subject to change due to the continuous review of boundary making. In the unstable post-Soviet transitional situation, the two groups of Koreans who came from Central Asia before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union both claim their locality based on the Soviet past, and in this way distinguish themselves from Chinese Koreans.

In the following section, I briefly introduce the important features of each group of Koreans. For ease of explanation, I describe each group according to the time of their migration, although in reality such divisions are not so clearly defined as there is a certain amount of blurring and overlapping of the dividing lines in their social interactions.

Early repatriates: returnees from Central Asia in the 1950s

In 1956, Koreans in Central Asia were officially allowed to move out of the Soviet republics in which they had been resident since their deportation

in 1937.⁶ However, only a small proportion of the population of Koreans in Central Asia decided to return to their 'homeland' at this time, as the majority of them had been settled in Central Asia for nearly 20 years.

There is a popular story about this period among the Koreans. According to this story, Nikita Khrushchev, then the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, visited the most well-known and successful *sovkhoz* (Soviet state farm) in Tashkent Oblast' in Uzbekistan, where a Korean, Hwang Mangeum, was the chairman and many members of the *sovkhoz* were also Korean. During his visit, Khrushchev asked Hwang, 'Don't you want to return to your *rodinu* ('homeland'), the Far East? If you wish, I can send you there.' Hwang replied, 'No, we don't want to return there, as this is already our homeland, the USSR.' We do not know whether this reflected his true feeling or not (cf. Yurchak, 1997), but we can safely assume that returning to the RFE entailed certain risks and challenges. Despite the warming of the political climate, there was still antipathy toward any serious political demands by Koreans.⁷

However, there were some who ventured to return to the RFE during the following years. According to the all-Soviet census in 1959, 6,952 Koreans moved from Central Asia to the RFE between 1954 and 1959, out of a total population of 1,381,018 in Primorskii Krai (*Itoki Vsesoiuznoi perepisi nasele-niia 1959 goda*, cited in Vaschuk et al., 2002, p. 110). By 1989, the number of Koreans had increased to 8,125 (Troiakova, n.d.; see Table 2 in Appendix 1).⁸ Many Koreans who repatriated to the RFE in the 1950s migrated to carry out 'rice cultivation' (*bejil* in Korean) and wanted to return to 'the place of

6 In fact, a small number of Koreans in Central Asia moved to the RFE in the 1940s on state-assigned missions. Some were assigned to supervise North Korean workers who came to Russia in the late 1940s as contract workers. Others were dispatched to teach Korean to the children of Sakhalin Koreans who had been left on the island at the end of WWII, initially brought as indentured laborers by Japanese government. A famous novelist, Anatolii Kim, recalls his family's move to the RFE in the late 1940s, as his father was assigned to teach Korean in Kamchatka who were contract workers from North Korea (see Kim, 1998). It is worth noting that since the deportation in 1937, majority of Koreans who came to Russia have been contract laborers, including North Korean workers in the contemporary RFE.

7 Pak Il, a Korean intellectual who demanded the return of Koreans to the RFE after the death of Stalin, was quietly removed from his official position; he had obviously overestimated the degree of political relaxation (Kim and Men, 1995).

8 Between 1959 and 1989, around 1,500 Koreans repatriated to Primorskii Krai. Most of this migration was the result of job allocation or entrance to higher education and was thus in accordance with the norms of Soviet migration policy. Indeed, many Koreans who migrated during this period occupied secure positions in state enterprises during Soviet times. In a book that is a kind of 'Who's Who' for Koreans in the RFE, there are many biographies of Koreans who migrated during this period (see Chen, 2003).

their birth'. Nevertheless, their movement needs to be considered not only as part of a post-war population change, as explained by German Kim and Dmitrii V. Men (1995),⁹ but also within the context of Soviet migration policy to understand their social position after migration.

The central allocation of labor power – ‘the regulation of population movement’ (Kotkin, 1995, p. 103) – was a prerequisite of the ‘allocative power’ of the socialist state (Verdery, 1991), as the labor force was the ‘means of production’ in the Soviet economy (Ssorin-Chaikov, 2003). According to Katherine Verdery (1991), Soviet-type societies operated with the maximization of the state’s allocative powers by keeping consumer goods in shortage, as this would enable the state to regulate people by monopolizing the distribution of demanded goods. Therefore, migration was also regulated or deliberately neglected so that the production level for each sector could be controlled by the state. Within the spectrum of migration practices during Soviet times, there was, on the one hand, ‘optimal migration according to the perceived needs of the state economy’, i.e., the allocation of work by the state (Buckley, 1995, p. 904), while on the other hand there was ‘personal’, ‘voluntary’, and ‘quiet’ migration according to ‘personal needs’. This latter form of migration impeded the ‘distribution network’ of the state and was strongly discouraged during the 1930s, resulting in certain disadvantages for such people. This contrasted sharply with the granting of many state benefits to those settlers who were officially encouraged to migrate to underdeveloped, marginal regions of the USSR – including the RFE. This social arrangement of the labor force became the basis of rights and duties as recognized by the general population. Thus, there was an implicit hegemonic consensus about the categories of people who should have access to certain benefits and services and those who should not.

As David G. Anderson discusses, there was a ‘culturally appropriate triangulation of a person within a position, a kollektiv, and a citizenship regime’ (1996, p. 110). In the ‘bundle of rights’ accorded to such a person, his or her position within the state enterprise was determined according to various criteria such as nationality, gender, length of residence, and educational qualifications, rather than by any universal concepts of equality and individual rights as might be implied in a Western liberal-democratic conception of citizenship. Although Anderson explains such social provisions using the concept of a ‘citizenship regime’, it was through ‘work’ that a person’s position within a society was defined, and this was itself a

9 See also Chapter 3 in this book.

function of work allocation (cf. Tomlinson, 2002, Chapter 6). In this situation, nationality appears to have been an important factor in defining one's position, given the fact that most incomers were 'Russians' and existing residents were indigenous people, as described in ethnographic studies by Anderson and others (Anderson, 2000; Ssorin-Chaikov, 2003).

While the term *priezzhie* ('incomers') is used in sub-arctic Siberia to describe 'people who have been sent with a particular project or mission and is often bound up with an accusation of intrusiveness, acquisitiveness and an insensitivity to local ways' (Anderson, 1996, p. 102), in Primorskii Krai the distinction has persistently been drawn between *starozhily* ('old residents') and *novosely* ('new residents') since the days of Imperial Russia (see Chapter 1). However, this distinction has become blurred due to incoming waves of *more* 'new residents'.¹⁰ The distinction between these groups weakened as the new residents came to understand what the old residents had been complaining about concerning the region's backwardness and began to share their frustration. Complaining about the marginality of the RFE through comparisons with the European part of Russia – rather than the rest of the world – thus became one of the ways of asserting one's sense of belonging to the locality.

However, despite such complaints, the fear that the RFE might be separated from the main body of Russia has remained prevalent (cf. Humphrey, 2001). During Soviet times, many Koreans in the RFE found that this fear was imposed on them as a marker of the region's marginality as a borderland. In the face of such attitudes from the residents of the RFE, the 'old resident' Koreans responded by becoming deeply localized. In other words, those who consider themselves 'Primorian' Koreans embody their local-ness by adopting linguistic practices which used to exclude new arrivals. The transformation of incomers to locals is not limited to the case of Koreans, but it is general practices in Primorskii Krai; localization is in a sense internalization of exclusionary rhetoric and practices as their own towards who happened to come to this region in more recent time. Thus, the old resident Koreans (or Primorian Koreans) sometimes tactically used the words *mestnye* ('locals'), and *primortsy* ('Primorians') to describe themselves, in contrast with the words *pereselentsy* ('migrants'), or *priezzhie* ('newcomers'), and 'people from Central Asia' that were used to describe the

10 Leonid L. Rybakovskii (1990) suggests that one of the features of population movement in the RFE is that 'newcomers' are also people from Siberia who originally came from the western part of Russia. Thus 'the wave' of migration begins from the western part of Russia and ebbs in the RFE.

newcomers (Chen, 2003, p. 42).¹¹ These terms are not specifically focused on ethnic identity, but instead draw a division according to the hegemonic discourse of locality. This creates another potential bifurcation among Koreans according to the time of their migration to the RFE, a topic to which I shall return later.

As a result, many Koreans who repatriated to the RFE without institutional support not only struggled to gain access to social provisions such as housing and employment, but also suffered from anti-Korean sentiments. According to an interview described in Vaschuk et al., when one Korean family returned to the RFE in the 1950s, the neighbors yelled, '*Ponaekhali siuda negry!*' ('Here come negroes!') (2002, p. 118). Many of this first generation of repatriates were unable to obtain good jobs since they had moved to the region *stikhinno* ('quietly'), *sluchaino* ('by chance') and *lichno* ('personally') – outside of the state's regime of labor allocation. One elderly woman, Anya Vladimirovna (born in 1934), who came to Ussuriisk in the 1950s with a degree in journalism from Ekaterinburg University was unable to find a permanent job and had to be content with intermittent and temporary positions. In an interview, she recollected that 'in the past, local people felt very sorry for the Koreans, as we were not given (*ustrollis*) proper jobs'. Thus, the first generation of repatriated Koreans mostly worked on private farms, while the second generation was able to acquire stable jobs more suited to their education, in a pattern quite similar to the migrating cultivation practitioners discussed in the next chapter. In addition to Anya Vladimirovna, I was able to meet other Korean *starozhily* ('old residents') via both personal connections and chance encounters. As this group of Koreans are little known outside of Primorskii Krai, this was unexpected. One of these 'old residents' was the head teacher of a primary school in a village near Ussuriisk. I was introduced to her by a Russian friend whose mother had 'a very big circle of acquaintances' from her many years working in the city administrative offices.¹²

11 Nikolai Chen (2003) noted that this time of migration-whether moved from Central Asia to Primorskii Krai after the collapse of Soviet Union or not- became the *obstoiatel'stvo* ('circumstances') when Koreans met for the first time and exchanged introductions.

12 For personal connections in Russia, see Alena V. Ledeneva (1998). My acquaintance's mother came to Ussuriisk in the early 1960s after graduating from university and worked in the city administration until 2002. Her mother continually complained about the RFE, comparing it to the *pod-Moskve* ('suburbs of Moscow') where she grew up. Although I did not meet her or hear her complaints in person, I felt as though I knew her because her daughter continually made the same complaints and comparisons just as if she too had grown up near Moscow, despite the fact that my acquaintance was born and grew up in Ussuriisk.

The headmistress told me that she was born in 1955 in Tashkent Oblast' in Uzbekistan and came to Ussuriisk, carried 'in her father's bosom', in 1956. Her father originally came from Manchuria in the 1920s and spoke four languages fluently (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian), but was unable to use his language abilities after his repatriation due to Primorskii Krai being cut off from the outside world. He was one of the 'cosmopolitans' produced by the porous border and the intermingling of peoples in this region in the early 20th century, but there were no job opportunities for him in Primorskii Krai apart from rice farming. In our meeting at her home, the headmistress described herself in the following way:

I consider myself a Primorian Korean. I am a very conservative person and still respect Soviet values. In this village, there are about twelve Korean households, most of whom are from Central Asia. I think that I am different from them, as they will do anything for money. My neighbor is a Korean man from Central Asia who lives with his two children. He went to South Korea to earn money, leaving the children alone at home. The elder one is an 11-year-old girl and the younger one is a little boy. I sometimes pop in to see how they are doing. They told me that they are all right and that their father sometimes phones them from South Korea.

I had the impression that she wanted to demonstrate that she was different from the 'newcomer' Koreans from Central Asia 'who will do anything for money', a perception shared by many other 'old resident' Russians. She sought to differentiate herself from other Koreans by referring to 'Soviet values' and her long residency. However, it would be a misconception to see this case as typical of all 'old resident' Koreans.¹³ On the contrary, most 'old resident' Koreans do not make this differentiation, instead viewing the increase in the number of Koreans in Primorskii Krai in a positive way, mainly for two reasons. First, the old residents feel that the influx has made the position of Koreans as a group less vulnerable; and second, 'old resident' Koreans often mention that the arrival of Koreans from Central Asia has helped to relieve the shortage of marriage partners of the same ethnicity, thus increasing the opportunities for ethnic endogamy.

13 The case of this headmistress is interesting as she was the only 'Primorian' Korean I met who worked in a state institution. Also, she drew a clearer distinction between herself and newcomer Koreans than most other 'old residents'. This may be due to the fact that most 'old resident' Koreans work in the informal economy and form active partnerships with newcomers through both business and marriage alliances.

The other impression I had from my meetings with ‘old resident’ Koreans was that they wished to avoid talking about the ‘national question’ in the RFE. This was certainly the case in my interview with Anya Vladimirovna. When she mentioned discrimination against Koreans in the region during Soviet times, I showed interest in pursuing the topic; but from that moment onwards, the atmosphere became awkward, her hospitality suddenly changed, and she appeared in a hurry to finish talking with me. Similarly, in the Chinese market, without being aware of the sensitiveness of this topic, I asked a Korean woman, who also turned out to be an ‘old resident’, about the ‘national question’ in the past. She became cross and replied: ‘During Soviet times, we all lived here very well. Everybody had a job and there was no inequality whatsoever. You are disturbing me, so please go away.’ Until that moment, I had not fully realized the sensitiveness of the issue, as many newcomer Koreans talked freely about the subject in a casual way or were not particularly interested in it. I return to this topic later in the chapter, but first I would like to consider the overall situation for the migration of newcomer Koreans into the RFE in the early 1990s.

Newcomer Koreans in the early 1990s: ‘organized’ migration in chaos

As a result of violent conflict in the Fergana Valley, Uzbekistan, in 1989 and the civil war in Tajikistan in 1991, the number of Koreans arriving in the RFE increased dramatically in the early 1990s (see Table 1). Although the public discourse about these refugees highlights the chaotic nature of their displacement, the narratives that I collected illustrate that many refugees organized their own travel in large groups, usually as extended families. In this section I describe a few cases of the migration of extended families to provide a better picture of the situation in the early 1990s.

The first case is based on my conversations in the Chinese market in Ussuriisk with the clothing trader Roza Kim, who was in her late 50s in 2004. She moved to the city from Dushanbe in 1992 along with her mother, her four sisters, and their families, including their children. They held a *semmonyi sovet* (‘family meeting’) and decided to move when civil war broke out. At this meeting, they looked at a map and decided that Ussuriisk would be their destination in a fairly random way: having excluded Vladivostok on the basis that it was too big and windy, they thought that Ussuriisk should have a good climate as it was ‘on the same latitude as the Crimean

Peninsula'. Following this joint decision to move to Ussuriisk, two men from the five families obtained *otpusk* ('leave') from their work and visited Ussuriisk to see whether the city was suitable or not. On this reconnaissance visit, the men bought two houses for the five families. Roza Kim's husband subsequently moved to one of these houses, *poluchili* ('received') work, and after three months was allocated an apartment by his workplace. Then the families sold their houses in Dushanbe and loaded all their belongings into a 20-ton container that could be transported by train. They all flew to Ussuriisk except for Roza Kim's two nephews, who were in their early 20s and travelled by train to guard the container. Immediately after the families arrived, Roza Kim was able to get a job as an accountant at a grocery distribution center without being asked by the director for any documents. Since then, the extended families of her mother's two sisters have also followed them to the RFE.

This case shows the typical pattern of migration to an urban area as a direct result of the outbreak of civil war in Dushanbe in the early 1990s. Although they were 'refugees', to my knowledge very few people registered as such. This was partly due to the fact that the official migration service in Primorskii Krai was only organized in 1995 (Vaschuk et al., 2002, p. 161),¹⁴ but also because there was little practical need for such registration, given the acceptance of these people by the local authorities. People coming from Dushanbe during this period seem to have been able to find work easily and even received housing from their workplaces.¹⁵ In short, even though they were escaping from civil war in Dushanbe, their migration appears to have been well organized and supported by the receiving local authorities. However, such generalizations only apply to people who had the financial means to purchase houses in urban areas; migrants in rural areas experienced a somewhat different situation. To illustrate this, let me give an overview of a village where many Korean migrants settled in the early 1990s. I came to know this village through a friend of Roza Kim's nephew, who was the daughter of Georg Kim and Marta Ivanovna Ten.

The village of Novoselovo in Spasskii Raion was a stopping-off point for many Korean migrants from Central Asia in the mid-1990s. In 1994, an *obshchezhitie* ('communal apartment') in the village accommodated around

14 The Federal Migration Service of Russia was organized in 1992 and implemented in the provinces in 1995. For more discussion on this subject, including the local situation in Primorskii Krai, see Vaschuk et al. (2002, p. 158-168).

15 Not everyone was lucky in this respect, and many had to buy their own houses. That is why many people settled in rural areas where accommodation was cheaper than in the cities.

50 families, increasing to around 100 families by 1995 (*Newspaper Wondong*, 1994, No. 5; 1995, No. 2). By 2003, there were 56 Korean households in the village, and a total of 108 households if we include the neighboring villages (as counted by Marta Ivanovna at my request).

In 1990, Marta Ivanovna's household was the first to move to Novoselovo from Dushanbe, where they had lived next door to Roza Kim's sister. At my first meeting with Marta Ivanovna, she told me that 'we moved here not only because this place is the birthplace of our ancestors, but also because Korea and Japan are next door'. However, Georg Kim, Marta Ivanovna's husband, provided a different explanation. Georg Kim used to be an agriculturalist in Dushanbe and already knew Novoselovo from his army service in the area in his youth. With his specialized knowledge of cultivation, he knew that the village was good for watermelon production, since it was located in a geographical basin and enjoyed sunshine and higher temperatures in the summer months. When Marta Ivanovna's family moved to Novoselovo, the *sovkhos* ('state farm') provided them with a wooden house for free and offered Georg Kim work as an agriculturalist, which he declined.¹⁶ Marta Ivanovna was offered a teaching job at the secondary school in the village, which she accepted. She retired as the director of *Dom Kultury* ('House of Culture'), which was one of high offices in the village. She is the only Korean in the village working in a state institution. Many of the other households that moved to the village from Dushanbe are directly or indirectly related to Marta Ivanovna's household. Some of them are childhood friends of Georg Kim, who studied in the same school in the same village in Kazakhstan in the late 1950s and who had moved together with him to Dushanbe and then to the RFE. Many of them were subsequently joined by their relatives and families.

Roughly, half of the Korean residents of Novoselovo came from Dushanbe and the other half from Uzbekistan, particularly from the area of the Fergana Valley where violent conflicts occurred in 1993. Whereas many of the households from Dushanbe share childhood friendship connections, the households from Uzbekistan consist of several extended families. Specifically, the extended families of six brothers moved to this village and were joined by their affine families (see Appendix 2). Each extended family of

¹⁶ Families that migrated later than Marta Ivanovna's family had to purchase their own houses. In 2008, Marta Ivanovna sold the house she had been given by the local authority and moved to another house provided by a South Korean NGO, taking the role of village representative for the NGO's activities.

these elderly brothers includes a number of their children's households, and they usually refer to this kinship group as a *klan* ('clan').

Although they are now working in informal agriculture (see Chapter 4) rather than in the enterprises that succeeded the old *sovkhoz*, they were able to settle in this village with the permission of the *sovkhoz*.¹⁷ As in this and Roza Kim's case, migration during the early 1990s shows that there was muted consent for accepting a certain group of people within the boundary of a state enterprise or village. This arrangement was not quite the same as 'the citizenship regime' discussed by Anderson (1996), but I understand his conceptualization to be of a wider context, not limited to a single enterprise but encompassing a region. In this sense, the 'collective' was still a meaningful category for defining one's position in the local context of Primorskii Krai until the mid-1990s; thus, at this stage there were no problems with the legal status of individuals as part of the collective or with obtaining tacit consent for a group of people to take up residence.¹⁸ This trend appears to have changed around the late 1990s when there was a slowdown in the number of so-called 'political migrants' from Central Asia, but an increase in 'economic migration'. This resulted in the invocation of 'migration politics' by the state in an attempt to regulate what it viewed as the 'chaotic' movement of people driven by arbitrary, economic, and personalized motivation. It also sought to establish standards to define the status of *bezidentsy* ('refugees') and *vynuzhdennye migranty* ('forced migrants').

While 'migration politics' was devised to regulate the movement of people resulting from the surge in ethnic conflicts, the situation on the ground during this period – featuring the formation of commercial (though not capital) links with the growing entrepreneurial activities of migrant Koreans – was one step ahead of the state's legislation. In the next section, I examine the economic changes brought about by the Koreans who settled in urban areas.

17 In contrast, the neighboring village did not allow Koreans to settle there.

18 At this time, house prices in Central Asia were comparable with those in the RFE. In the late 1990s, however, house prices in Central Asia collapsed, while those in the RFE began to rise dramatically. This made it harder for later migrants to settle in the RFE. For example, when I arrived in Ussuriisk in September 2002, a one-bedroom flat in the city center cost about 7,000 US dollars, while a cheaper one on the outskirts was around 4,000-5,000 US dollars. One year later, these prices had nearly doubled.

Figure 2.1 Women vegetable sellers in the marketplace



Figure 2.2 Salad selling stall in the marketplace run by a Korean woman



Figure 2.3 A salad factory run by Lena Yugai**Table 1 The change of population in Primorskii Krai according to nationality in 1990-1998**

Year	1990-1991	1992-1993	1994-1995	1996-1997	1998
Nationality					
Ethnic Russians	+13276	-3552	-6680	-11110	-6290
Ukrainians	+805	-6796	-966	-1645	-721
Belarusian	+915	-1311	-678	-452	-238
Azerbaijan	-29	+47	+276	+391	+187
Armenian	+46	+260	+854	+283	+192
Tatar	+166	-256	-128	-365	-161
Koreans	+1049	+2482	+2746	+1362	+1147
Chinese	+2172	+1503	+2191
Sum of population change	+20082	-9117	-3137	-10695	-4184

Source: Vaschuk et al., 2002, p. 157

From migrants to traders in the mid-1990s

In contrast with the cases described above, from the mid-1990s onwards many people began to arrive in the RFE as 'guests' on an individual and temporary basis, shuttling between two regions to carry out trading activities. Though kin connections remained crucial in motivating them to 'visit' this region, they were often encouraged to settle in the RFE by the unexpected success of their entrepreneurial activities.

One such example is a woman called Larisa who owns a fur-coat stall in the Chinese market in Ussuriisk. She first came to Ussuriisk in 1992 as a guest of her cousin. She had no intention of settling in the RFE, but came to escape personal financial hardship. She used to teach history at a secondary school in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, but in the early 1990s, along with many other schoolteachers, she tried shuttle trading during her vacations to supplement her income. She borrowed 2,000 US dollars from an acquaintance and imported some angora shirts from China, but the venture was unsuccessful and she lost money. She was in trouble, as there did not seem to be any way to pay back the debt. Then her cousin in Ussuriisk suggested that she visit him, so she came with her husband as 'guests' during the school vacation. She bought vegetables from Chinese Koreans and sold them in the market. This proved to be very successful, with a long queue of customers every day. After only one visit, she was able to pay back her debt when she returned to Tashkent. She continued this seasonal activity for a couple of years, enabling her to buy a flat in Ussuriisk and move there permanently with her two children in 1995.

Such success stories usually feature the common elements of having a relative already in the RFE and collaborating with Chinese Koreans. Over and above these factors, it is the skill of the individual entrepreneur and the items they trade that determines the scale of their success. Another woman called Lena Yugai, who came from Kazakhstan in 1992 and now owns a flourishing food-production factory in Ussuriisk, presents us with an even more successful story. Before she decided to move, she visited her sister in Vladivostok to find out whether it would be a good idea to move there with her family. She returned home and told her mother-in-law, 'It should be all right to move there. I would be able to sell *kimchi* in the market even if things go wrong'. During the first year Lena and her family carried out migrating cultivation near Ussuriisk, producing watermelons and cucumbers. That winter, when there was no agricultural work, she had the opportunity to work with Chinese Koreans as an interpreter because she was good at the Korean language, and she began selling clothes that she bought from them. Over the following two years, she travelled around Russia

to Moscow, Magadan, and Novosibirsk selling clothes, while her husband stayed at home looking after the children and the house.¹⁹ When trading clothes became less profitable, she began selling vegetables in the central market in Ussuriisk.²⁰ As in Larisa's case above, she was very successful and gained 'a long queue of customers'. However, she lost interest in simply selling goods and embarked on producing and selling prepared meals in the market for the next few years. One day in 1999, a civil servant from the city administration gathered all of the food sellers (around 50 women) in the market²¹ and told them that without a licensed factory to supply them they would be forbidden to continue trading. Lena responded to this challenge by renting a building near the central market and opening a food-production factory, subsequently buying a building with a friend in 2003 and expanding production (see Figure 2.3).²² By this time, she employed about 70 workers, with many of her relatives in administrative and financial positions. She allowed her license to be used by her *sadon* (Korean, 'in-laws'), her cousin, and her sister (even though the food they sell is produced in their kitchens at home) and began to supply products to most of the supermarkets and kiosks both in Ussuriisk and in the other cities in Primorskii Krai while also taking orders for family banquets. Despite her proven record and being chosen as 'Business Woman of the City' in 2003, she continues to experiment with developing new dishes and has a strong belief that she understands 'Russian consumers' tastes' very well.

19 I witnessed many cases of this division of labor between husband and wife in the early 1990s, many of which ended in divorce: while their wives were away working as traders, the husbands often indulged in alcohol at home. Drinking appeared to be the main means by which men could assert their masculinity in an economic situation where men had more difficulty earning money than their wives. For more discussion on gender relations, see Chapter 4.

20 While Larisa sold vegetables on the outskirts of the city where the Chinese market was located, Lena Yugai sold vegetables in the central 'Russian market'. The different regulations that were later imposed by the authorities on these two markets influenced the different routes followed by their businesses. When I visited Larisa in 2009 and again in 2013, she had sold her stall to a Chinese Korean, as trade had declined to the extent that she could no longer pay the rent. Instead, she was working as a salesperson for Chinese traders. In contrast, Lena Yugai's business was still getting stronger, and she was opening a Korean restaurant in the city center directly run by her company.

21 In 2003, there were fewer than ten side dish trading stalls in the central market, most of them run by Korean women. Some of these women owned their stalls and some were hired workers.

22 The 'salads' produced in her factory are different from those consumed in Western countries. They are closer to side dishes and made by pickling, frying, or seasoning with spices. Lena entered an agreement with Ussuriisk Balzam, an influential distribution company, to supply her salads to its kiosks all over the city.

In both these cases, opportunities for economic gain arose through connections with Chinese Koreans, who came to the RFE around the same time as the influx of Koreans from Central Asia. In post-Soviet Russia, with the crumbling of the old state enterprises, economic wealth is limited to natural resources such as oil and gas that are controlled by oligarchs and do not benefit the ordinary people.²³ In this situation and given the weakness of the domestic production sector, opportunities for ordinary people to acquire wealth come from trading foreign products. During my fieldwork, it was almost impossible to buy consumer goods produced locally in the RFE, apart from grey toilet paper and basic foodstuffs. Some consumer goods came from the European part of Russia, but most were imported from neighboring countries, with Chinese products and Japanese second-hand cars playing a particularly important role.²⁴ Russian Koreans were in a good position to benefit from cooperating with Chinese Korean traders in these areas for two main reasons.

First, Russian and Chinese Koreans are usually able to communicate with each other in a similar Korean dialect, as their ancestors came from the northern part of the Korean peninsula (see Chapter 1) and they interacted frequently until the Russian Koreans were displaced in 1937. While I was unable to communicate properly in the Korean language with Russian Koreans due to the strong vernacular differences with my South Korean dialect, they continuously emphasized their ease of communication with Chinese Koreans.²⁵ Despite much lamentation about the loss of their native language ability since perestroika, many Koreans of the second generation after the 1937 displacement were capable of understanding the vernacular language of the Chinese Koreans, as their parents used to speak Korean at home.²⁶ Typically, they say, 'At home our parents spoke in Korean and

23 One of my interlocutors explained this situation as follows: 'Previously, Russia lived on us, but now she lives on oil ... I don't know what Russia will live on if the oil comes to an end.'

24 According to a Russian friend, nearly half of the men in Ussuriisk were making a living in the Japanese second-hand car industry by importing, retailing, and repairing second-hand cars and their parts. I discuss the connection between cars and the Korean sense of masculinity in Chapter 4.

25 The vernacular Korean language used in the northern part of Korea is called 'Yukchin' Korean. 'Yukchin' means 'six settlements' and refers to the fortress towns that were established in the 15th century by the Chosun Kingdom, to not only protect it from invasion by various groups of 'alien people' in Northeast Asia beyond the Korean Peninsula but also to assimilate them through settling them in these towns.

26 For a discussion of the status of the Buryats' native language as a 'domestic language' in Russia and its political connotations, see Humphrey (1989). Grant (n.d.) also discusses 'language as an object' in the context of post-socialist ethnic politics amongst Nivkhs. In this chapter,

we answered in Russian'. Thus, their Korean language ability was a great asset in obtaining Chinese products to sell on the streets in the mid-1990s.²⁷ This situation changed somewhat from the mid-1990s onwards, however, as many Chinese Koreans began to establish their own connections with local Koreans. As a result, newcomer Koreans from Central Asia from the end of the 1990s began to work as hired traders at the stalls in the Chinese market. I discuss this later in the chapter.

The second reason that migrant Koreans were able to benefit from their connections with Chinese Koreans was their personal skills and networks. As in the case of Lena Yugai, many Korean women began catering businesses with their cooking skills. Another woman I met who had worked in a garment factory in the city until the early 1990s was able to use her skills to rescue a shipment of angora clothes that had been imported by a Chinese Korean but damaged in transit. Such skills acquired during the Soviet period could be even more effective when combined with connections with local power brokers – both legitimate and not – in addition to the 'Chinese' connection. Mikhail Kim, who was killed in a shooting in 1995²⁸ and was still fondly remembered by many people as 'a great man' during my fieldwork in 2003-4, provides a good example. He is remembered by some as a famous 'Korean Mafioso', but by others as 'a great businessman and leader' because he owned several businesses in the city including an upmarket Italian restaurant, an agricultural enterprise, and a large share of the vegetable wholesale market.²⁹ He originally worked as an engineer for a state enterprise in Kazakhstan, but following the rise of autochthonous nationalism he formed his own business, since there was no longer any hope of advancement within the state system: 'as a person was not evaluated by his activities, but by nationality (*po natsional'nomu priznaku*)' (Chen, 2003). When the Soviet Union disintegrated, he migrated to Ussuriisk in 1991 and registered as a *chastnoe predpriiatie* ('private enterprise') with the *gorispolkome* ('city executive committee'). He set up a business making and

however, I am more concerned with language as a medium for the transactions between Korean ethnic groups, rather than as part of their 'ethnic identity'.

27 The Chinese market operated as an open market on the outskirts of Ussuriisk until it was established on a permanent site on the boundary of the city in 1996.

28 Violence involving beatings and shootings among local 'mafia' was common in Primorskii Krai during the 1990s. For a detailed description of the power struggle among the local mafia in Vladivostok, see Tobias Holzlehner (2007) and Mikhail A. Alexseev (2002).

29 I was told that he was killed in the battle for control of this wholesale market, but I was not able to verify this. The following information about Mikhail Kim is taken from Chen (2003, p. 57-63).

repairing footwear; with the opening of the border and the influx of cheap shoes from China, he transformed his enterprise into a trading company in cooperation with Chinese Koreans.³⁰ Crucial to his success in expanding his business were his links not only with the Chinese Koreans, but also with the old resident Korean mafia who had influence with the local authorities.

Thus, the formation and expansion of corporate enterprises by Koreans were enabled by connections with Chinese Koreans, personal skills that had often been acquired during the Soviet period, and 'protection' provided by local authorities and the physical power of mafia groups. Hence the success of one's trading activity was highly dependent upon these three factors.

Late newcomers and problems with documents

Many Koreans who came to the RFE before the mid-1990s had achieved a relatively stable way of life, economically and politically, by the time I arrived to conduct my fieldwork in 2003-4. As in the cases of Roza Kim and Marta Ivanovna, they had been helped by being admitted as 'a collective' by villages or by state enterprises in the city, and had also benefitted from the opening of borders and the influx of Chinese goods and trade. In contrast, many of those who arrived in the late 1990s onwards were struggling and experiencing hardship. What had happened to bring about this change?

One factor was that Chinese Korean traders did not need any new connections: they had already secured their place in the region by the late 1990s with the establishment of the Chinese market on the outskirts of Ussuriisk. A second and more important factor was the amendment of the Russian citizenship law in July 2002, which restricted the unregulated inflow of migrants to Russia and made it harder to obtain Russian citizenship. This not only disadvantaged later migrants, but also those earlier arrivals who had not yet gained citizenship. According to the citizenship law passed in February 1992, a citizen of the former Soviet Union could change their old Soviet passport to a Russian one by simply attaching a slip to it, or it was even possible to buy a Russian passport. Hence, migrants from the 'near abroad' (CIS countries)³¹ did not have any difficulty in obtaining citizenship.

30 He was also involved in the national revival movement and was the first chairman of the 'National and Cultural Autonomy of Koreans'. See my discussion of Korean ethnic politics in Chapter 5.

31 Despite the geographical remoteness of the RFE and Central Asia, it is described as the 'near abroad'. Aware of this incongruence, Vaschuk et al. (2002) suggest that 'new abroad' be used for CIS countries and 'traditional abroad' for other foreign countries.

Rather, the more difficult issue was obtaining the *propiska* ('residence permit'), which formed the basis for many other documents and rights. Once one had a residence permit, citizenship could be obtained after three years' residence in Russia.

However, the new amendment of 2002 meant that, even with a residence permit, there were many more obstacles to surmount in order to obtain Russian citizenship. First, it required at least seven years of residence, consisting of two years' *vremennoe prozhivanie* ('temporary residence') when registration had to be renewed every three months, followed by five years of *vid na zhitel'stvo* ('permanent residence'). Second, the citizens of CIS countries had to nullify their old citizenship to gain Russian citizenship; this was a matter beyond the control of the individual and was instead a diplomatic matter between Russia and the country in question. This became a serious problem for people who arrived from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as these countries did not want their citizens to move freely to Russia; Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan reached agreements with Russia in 1999 and 2001, respectively, not to hamper changes in citizenship. Third, in addition to the many documents that had to be provided and the fees that had to be paid, migrants were required to have HIV and other medical tests carried out every three months and to pass a Russian language exam. As a result, in the first half of 2003 only 213 people were able to obtain Russian citizenship throughout the whole of Russia (*Rossiskaia Gazeta*, 14 November 2003).³²

I met many people who suffered hardships as a result of this change in the Russian citizenship law, and I would like to describe a couple of representative cases. Vera Tsoi was born in 1967; I met her in the Chinese market where she had a fur-coat stall. She used to be a music teacher in Uzbekistan, but had stopped working in 1996 because she was no longer receiving a salary. She was involved in migrating cultivation for three years in a southern region of Russia, but was not successful. During 1998–99, there was violent conflict in Uzbekistan and her mother urged her to take her children and go to Russia, as there was 'no future for the children' at home³³. She moved to Saratov near Moscow in 2000 and worked as a sales assistant at a Korean deli there. In 2002, her cousin urged her to come to Far East and

32 Iraida Semenova, 2003. '*Grazhdane poshli na popravku; Novyi zakon uproshchaet poluchenie rossiiskogo grazhdanstva dlia millionov sootchestvennikov*' [Citizens need to fix the situation; new law to make it simpler for millions of our compatriots to receive Russian citizenship]. Available at <http://www.rg.ru/2003/11/14/grazhdanstvo.html>

33 Pilkington (1998) presents that ethnic Russians who moved from Central Asia to Russia also expressed similar view.

she moved to Ussuriisk with the promise of his help.³⁴ He arranged a stall in the market for her and guaranteed to pay the 7,000 rubles a month rent if she was unable. However, her greatest worry was obtaining citizenship for her children; without this, she would have to pay foreign student fees for their higher education, which was beyond her means. Her husband went to South Korea as a migrant worker a couple months before I interviewed her, but she had received a call to say that he had been unable to find a job there.

Another woman called Valya Chen (born in 1948) came to Ussuriisk from Samarkand, Uzbekistan in 1999, thanks to her sister. She works as a hired trader for the Chinese Korean owner of a clothes stall for a daily wage of 200 rubles (slightly less than 7 US dollars). When I asked her about citizenship issues, she complained a lot about her legal status, saying that she was fed up with going to the police station. When I met her, she was applying for permanent residence, but she was worried about getting citizenship even after five years of permanent residency, as the Uzbekistan government was forbidding its citizens to renounce their previous citizenship. Thanks to her sister, she had been able to obtain a residence permit by registering herself and her daughter at her sister's flat. She had not sold her house in Samarkand so she still had the possibility of returning home, but this would also be complicated because she had already *vypisala* ('de-registered herself from old address') in Samarkand.

The ironic part of the citizenship law is people's resulting immobility – which is a more urgent problem for those who intend to go overseas. Ira Hegai (born in 1956) came from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and used to work as a schoolteacher. She moved to Ussuriisk with her two sons in 2001 *po lichnoi prichnoi* ('for personal reasons') related to her divorce and to be close to her sister who was living here. For the first two years, she engaged in vegetable cultivation with the help of her sister and her sister's husband, but disliked the insecurity resulting from the weather and changes in product prices. From 2003, she began to work for a Chinese Korean stall owner for a guaranteed daily wage of 200 rubles. She hoped to go to South Korea for migration work with her elder son once she had obtained her Russian passport. To achieve this, she had to 'stand in the queue' at the police station every day. She would finish work in the market at five o'clock, go home for a quick dinner with her children, and then sleep before getting up at midnight to take her place in

34 I often heard from my interlocutors: 'I would not have come to Ussuriisk if my sister (brother, daughter, cousin, etc.) had not been living there'.

the queue.³⁵ In the morning, she would record her place in the queue in the 'queue notebook' before returning home and going to work again. Sometimes, if she was lucky, she would be granted an interview with a police officer, but he would usually return her documents and tell her to come back later. This would mean joining the end of the queue again. Those without residence permits are in an even worse situation, as they live in constant fear of deportation and are unable to even begin the process of applying for citizenship. They have little or no financial means to buy a house, and are unable to call on a relative to sort out the problem of *propiska* by registering them at their address – a practice that is common amongst Koreans in the RFE.

During Soviet times, residence permits and other welfare benefits were granted as 'a bundle of rights' connected with one's job (cf. Anderson, 1996). This system was devised to control where people lived and worked, but at the same time guaranteed a basic level of welfare provisions. It did not encompass the entire population, with people such as the Korean migrating cultivation practitioners and Korean repatriates to the RFE in the 1950s remaining outside of the system. One might even say that such 'outsiders' were tolerated and included on the margins of society because they served to fill gaps in the official Soviet economic system. As Humphrey (2001, p. 333) noted, the system did not 'expel' these people 'entirely from society', but left them in an unstable position with certain disadvantages.

The 2002 citizenship law represented the disintegration of this 'bundle of rights'. As Cynthia Buckley (1995, p. 915-916) points out, while the *propiska* and passport system³⁶ were 'transmitter[s] between collective and individual interests in the distribution of the population' during Soviet times, they also seem to have acted as 'a vehicle' in the privatization and capitalization process in contemporary Russia by requiring people to be private homeowners and individual workers if they are to conform to its directives. It is no longer possible to *poluchit' zhil'o* ('receive housing') or *ustroit' na rabotu* ('be allocated work') in Russia; instead, one needs to buy a house and find

35 The *tetrad' ocheredi* ('queue notebook'), in which the names of those waiting are written down, is not issued by the authorities, but is made by people in the queue when it becomes long. It enables people to go away and return later without losing their place in the queue. I once experienced standing in such a queue to register our car in accordance with the terms of our visa renewal and had to go to the police station at around 5 o'clock in the morning for several days to get a stamp. If one does not wish to stand in a queue, it is possible to pay a large amount of money to an *agentstvo uslogi* ('agency') that is officially connected to the police. During Soviet times, *cherez ocheredi* ('jumping the queue') was only possible for people who had connections; now, at least in theory, everyone can jump the queue provided they have enough money.

36 See Victor Zaslavsky and Yuri Luryi (1979). For the introduction of passport system in the RFE, see Chernolutskaia (2013).

employment. However, employment seems to be conceived as neither it was during the days of the Soviet system, nor in a Western capitalist way. Instead, most people work in a private family business or are employed as day laborers, as in the case of Koreans who work in the Chinese market as hired staff. Reflecting this difference, people use the verb *nanimat'* ('hire') to highlight the temporary and interpersonal aspect of the work contract, which is arranged between two *chastnoe litso* ('private persons') rather than between an economic body and an individual. Thus, although the citizenship law and migration regulations were modeled after the Western European system, it has resulted in a very different situation on the ground.

The citizenship law change also affected people who moved to the RFE long before July 2002, as many Koreans failed to change their citizenship *vo vremia* ('in time'). There were two reasons for this delay. First, many Koreans with residence permits could not see that Russian citizenship provided any additional benefits. Pensioners processed their citizenship change quickly so that they could receive a pension, albeit a minimal one,³⁷ but many people of working age, especially men, did not bother with the process. This created problems with freedom of movement, especially outside of the Russian Federation, such as the case of Katya and Sasha, a couple living in the village of Novoselovo. Katya and her sons changed their Soviet citizenship to a Russian one in Tashkent before their departure by simply going to the Russian consulate, but her husband Sasha did not bother.³⁸ Even after coming to Novoselovo he made no attempt to apply for citizenship, as he was working *rabotat' na pole na sebya* ('in the field for himself') and could see no benefit from it. However, in the winter of 2003, when he wanted to go to South Korea for migration work,³⁹ he discovered that his 'green passport' from Uzbekistan could not be used to apply for a visa for South Korea.

Another reason for failing to apply for Russian citizenship stemmed from a deep sense of belonging to the former Soviet Union. Despite the declaration of independence by the CIS countries, people did not think of them as separate countries – although this sense of belonging became somewhat

37 Many elderly Koreans were unable to claim their full pension, as they did not bring the necessary documents from Central Asia. They received the minimum amount, generally around 600 roubles per month.

38 Katya and her children may have been motivated to apply for citizenship because the Soviet state, and subsequently the Russian Federation, provided welfare benefits for each child in a family.

39 In addition to earning money, Sasha told me that he wanted to see a country where Koreans lived as the majority rather than as a minority.

ambiguous when my Korean interlocutors were faced with disadvantages and problems after their migration, especially with the restrictions imposed by the new citizenship law. Despite such problems, an interesting attitude displayed by newcomer Koreans is their persistent optimism. Although Sasha was quite upset by the fact that he could not go to South Korea, he was not overly concerned about the matter, saying: 'It will be sorted out soon. I heard that President Putin will announce something to solve the problem'.⁴⁰ His optimism was based on the awareness that ethnic Russians from CIS countries shared the same problem and that ordinary Russians had complained that the new law put *sootchestveniki* ('our compatriots') from CIS countries in a difficult position.

As we shall see in the next Chapter, Koreans in Central Asia never viewed themselves as inferior to the autochthonous people, and believed themselves to be playing the same role as Russians in the development of Central Asia. This notion of affiliation with ethnic Russians in Central Asia influenced their perception of their position in the RFE, in contrast with the perception held by old resident Koreans. Newcomer Koreans often said to me: 'Russians are the cleverest, most beautiful and good-natured people among the many nations'. However, they also told me that 'Russians in Central Asia are totally different from those in the RFE', reflecting their negative experiences since migration. What is interesting about this perception of the Russians in two different regions is how it creates a dynamic notion of 'Russian-ness'. Newcomer Koreans are also aware of how the attitudes of the old resident Koreans towards them are influenced by the atmosphere created by the Russians in the RFE. Reflecting this mimetic relationship, my interlocutors often told me: 'The old resident Koreans are quite similar to Russians in the RFE.' However, this does not mean that the Korean minority is merely mimicking the attitude of the Russian majority but is indicative of a more active change in the affective atmosphere among Koreans in the RFE.

The notion of 'locality' for newcomer and old resident Koreans

So far, I have presented various cases of migration by Koreans as if there were clear divisions based on the time of each migration. This explanation of the different economic and social positions of each group according to the temporal flow of Koreans into the RFE makes the notion of 'ethnic

40 Indeed, Putin announced various measures to simplify the citizenship application process for migrants from CIS countries in 2003 and early 2006.

migration' somewhat ambiguous. However, in the emplacement process this difference is downplayed; instead, their social interactions bring about changes in the intra-ethnic relationship that is then incorporated into the notion of locality in the RFE.

To illuminate the changes that have taken place in the intra-ethnic relationship among Koreans in the RFE, I would first like to compare the different perceptions of 'national discrimination' related to me by old resident and newcomer Koreans using the juxtaposition of 'before' and 'now'. Because the old residents experienced displacement in 1937 and lived in Central Asia for a significant period of time until their repatriation in the late 1950s, they share a common ground of experience with newcomer Koreans. Moreover, many of them share kinship relationships across the two regions, these again being the basis for many Koreans' decision to move from Central Asia to the RFE during the early and mid-1990s. Hence the differences in their experience due to the time of their migration do not appear to produce an immediately apparent division between the two groups. However, as I had more interactions with these early repatriates, I noticed on various occasions a subtle difference in their perception of their position in the RFE – a difference that shows the complexity of ethnicity and region-making in the politics of inclusion and exclusion in the post-Soviet era.

I believe it will suffice to describe two episodes that portray the different experience of these two groups. The first involves a young couple; the husband, Leonid, moved from Kazakhstan to the RFE in 1970 at the age of 8, while his wife Rita moved from Uzbekistan in 1995. I was invited to their house for a *shashlyk* ('barbecue') dinner in early summer of 2004, when I asked Leonid for his opinion about *natsional'nyi vopros* ('the nationality question').

Leonid: The nationality question didn't exist officially (*ofitsial'no*) during the Soviet socialist period, but in reality (*v samom dele*) it was there.

Rita: No, there wasn't a nationality question in the past – even in reality. It was only after the dissolution of the Soviet Union that the nationality question arose.

HP: I've heard that it was difficult for Koreans around the time of the border conflict between China and the USSR at the end of the sixties.⁴¹

41 This refers to a conflict between the Chinese and Russian border armies on an island in the Ussuri River in March 1969, called the 'Daman/Zhenbao incident'. After this conflict, public

Leonid: It's true. Koreans went through a very difficult time. At school, I was bullied and beaten up by the other children, as I looked Chinese. But I can understand it, as their fathers and brothers were killed in the conflict.

He added that even though such unfortunate incidents took place, 'We Koreans cannot live in a mono-ethnic country like South Korea, as we are accustomed to living in a multi-ethnic country like Russia'.

I had a similar conversation with an elderly couple who were born in a village in Khasanskii Raion near the border with North Korea and who had returned to live in Ussuriisk in 1957. I was accompanied on this visit by two elderly women – Sveta Sergeevna, who moved from Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 1992, and Lee Ok Sun, who came from Sakhalin Island in the 1960s and was the treasurer of *Noindan* (the elderly Koreans' club). At the end of my interview with this couple, Sveta Sergeevna complained that people criticize Koreans for 'standing around in the marketplace even though it's not just Koreans but Russians who do the same thing'. Lee Ok Sun responded by saying, 'There was strong ethnic discrimination in the past, but it is less so now.' The elderly couple agreed, but Sveta Sergeevna strongly disagreed saying, 'No, we lived together harmoniously in the past, and it's only since the collapse of the USSR that national discrimination has appeared.' As shown in both episodes, there was a clear difference in the views of old residents and newcomers about when 'national discrimination' arose.

What exactly do people mean when they talk about 'national discrimination'? The feeling that Koreans are discriminated against appears to be ontological rather than epistemological. Many of my interlocutors described their experience of discrimination in a somewhat tautological manner: 'They *rugaiut* ("criticize") us for standing around in the marketplace, because we are Koreans', or 'The policeman *tolkaiut* ("pushes") us around and doesn't accept our papers, because we are Koreans'.⁴² Although the stated reason for such discrimination is 'because we are Koreans', at the same time many Koreans recognize that other non-Slavic national groups of migrants share similar experiences. Or, as one of my interlocutors said to me, 'I think the problem we have here is not a national question; it is just that

rallies were organized with anti-Chinese slogans and, as Koreans were 'East Asian', they also became the target of such anti-Chinese sentiment. Another old resident Korean told me that his daughter often came home crying at this time, as other children spat in her face at school.

42 A Korean wrote in his recollection of his childhood, 'We were deported to Central Asia in 1937. Why? Because we were Koreans' (Chen, 2003).

Russians here are different from those in Central Asia.’ Another expressed the opinion: ‘*Umnye* (“wise”) Russians know how *sposovnye* (“capable”) we Koreans are.’ In other words, rather than a question of nationality *per se*, such discrimination was attributed to the fact that Russians in the RFE had not yet fully appreciated Koreans and their worth.

However, despite their apparently disadvantaged position, their sense of self-confidence and of belonging to Russia was reinforced by the presence of Chinese Koreans. As described previously, the presence of Chinese Koreans provided economic opportunities for earlier migrants and employment for later arrivals. At the same time, their presence served to obscure the dividing line between the ‘old residents’ and ‘newcomer’ Koreans. Claims for the legitimacy of one’s presence in a region are often founded on the notion of ‘locality’ created by alienating ‘similar others.’⁴³ In other words, with the arrival of Koreans from China, the meaning of ‘local’ expanded to encompass all of the former Soviet Union. ‘Newcomer’ Koreans repeatedly corrected my usage of the word *pereselentsy* (‘migrants’) during our conversations.⁴⁴ If I used it to refer to them, I was immediately corrected: ‘We are not migrants, we are *mestnye* (“locals”).’

To explain the position of Koreans from Central Asia in the RFE, I draw on the notion of ‘the stranger’⁴⁵ as formulated by Georg Simmel (1971b). According to Simmel, ‘the stranger is an element of the group itself, not unlike the poor and sundry “inner enemies” – an element whose membership within the group involves both being outside it and confronting it’ (1971b, p. 144). Also, ‘the distance within this relation indicates that one who is close by is remote, but his strangeness indicates that one who is remote is near’ and ‘it is a specific form of interaction’ (Simmel, 1971b, p. 143). However, what is interesting in the case of Koreans in RFE is that the locality of Koreans is reinforced by the presence of *more* strangers. In other words, while Koreans are ‘the strangers’ as defined by Simmel, they are differentiated by the presence of other Korean strangers.

43 Richard Werbner uses the metaphor of an ‘umbrella’ when describing this type of relationship between the Kalanga and the Tswana in Botswana. In such a relationship between two similar ‘others’, ethnicity takes on a subjective meaning, which can open and close like an umbrella ‘according to the climate’ (2002, p. 735).

44 After being corrected a few times, I became more careful when using this word.

45 Many Koreans are aware of their marginal position of not fully belonging to the mainstream while not being fully excluded from it. In Russian, there are two words to describe ‘aliens’: *inostrantsy* (‘foreigners’), and *inorodtsy* (‘alien by birth’) (Ssorin-Chaikov, 2003, Introduction). As Geron Li (2000) notes, Koreans are not perceived as *inostrantsy*, but are often viewed as *inorodtsy* despite their loyalty and ‘hard-work’ for Soviet socialism. In the post-Soviet context, the word *inorodtsy* is sometimes replaced by *vtoroi sort* (‘second grade’).

In this context, my interlocutor Anya referred me to a conversation she had with a train conductor during a journey from Novoselovo village to Ussuriisk, in order to provide me with an example of how Koreans from Central Asia like herself had become *vtoroi sort* ('second grade') citizens since their migration to Primorskii Krai.⁴⁶ The conductor on the train asked her and the other passengers for identity documents for inspection. This is a frequent occurrence in Russia, and the conversation went as follows:

- Conductor: Who are you? (*Kto vy*)⁴⁷
 Anya: We are Koreans (*My koreitsy*).
 Conductor: What kind? Chinese or some other? (*Kakie? Kitaiskie, chto li?*)
 Anya: We are locals, Soviet Koreans (*My mestnye, sovetskie koreitsy*).

As soon as the conductor heard this, he asked no more questions and went away. In this way, Soviet 'localness' can be seen to weld together 'old resident' and 'newcomer' Koreans by virtue of the emergence of other Koreans, i.e. Chinese, South, and North Koreans, and their legitimacy of residence as 'locals' is manifested and validated by the presence of these other 'strangers'.⁴⁸

In this chapter, I have tried to show the complexity of ethnicity in the migration process in the context of post-Soviet change in the RFE through ethnographic examples of Korean migrants from Central Asia. The different perceptions of the 'nationality question' are not necessarily based on the length of time spent in Primorskii Krai, but instead incorporate a temporal dimension that suggests a strong connection to the historical space of 'the former Soviet Union'. By imposing a temporal dimension to evaluations of the nationality question, time can be shown to 'serve to separate more than to connect' (Casey, 1996, p. 30). In other words, my interlocutors expressed different views based on their experience of migration and emplacement, not in terms of a spatial 'there' and 'here', but in terms of the temporality of 'before' and 'now' in relation to the collapse of the Soviet Union and

46 Anya took this example to explain the meaning of 'second-rate' citizens, but ended up with asserting her belonging to Soviet past in contrast with the Chinese Koreans. She seemed to consider that being stopped and interrogated by some authorities was an evidence of the lowered status of Koreans which have been unthinkable in Soviet Central Asia.

47 For minorities in Russia, the question, 'Who are you?' implies that one is asking about nationality, whereas for Russians, this question tends to be understood in terms of one's profession.

48 When I visited a village in Spasskii Raion, a policeman stopped me before I was allowed to pass without further incident. When hearing of this, my acquaintance Sasha Kim was amused and commented, 'The police don't stop us, as we are locals.'

their migration from Central Asia. However, the place ‘gathers’ (Casey, 1996) their opinions and experience, as is clear from the fact that both groups experienced ‘discrimination’ in the course of their emplacement in Primorskii Krai, regardless of the time of their migration. Edward S. Casey adds that this ‘place gathering’ is to ‘hold in and out.’

To gather placewise is to have a peculiar hold on what is presented (as well as represented) in a given place. Not just the contents but also the very mode of containment is held by a place. “The hold is held.” The hold of place, its gathering action, is held in quite special ways. First, it is a holding *together* in a particular configuration: hence our sense of an ordered arrangement of things in a place even when those things are radically disparate and quite conflictual. [...] Second, the hold is a holding *in* and a holding *out*. It retains the occupants of a place within its boundaries: if they were utterly to vanish and the place to be permanently empty, it would be no place at all but a void. But, equally, a place holds out, beckoning to its inhabitants and, assembling them, making them manifest. [...] It can move place-holders toward the margins of its own presentation while, nevertheless, holding them within its own ambiance. (Casey, 1996, p. 25, original emphasis)

As I mentioned previously, Koreans often refer to the exclusion they experience in terms of ‘friendship’ or *obshchenie* (‘socializing’), rather than in terms of racism or inequality. When describing ethnic relations and the social atmosphere in Central Asia and the RFE, the most prevalent metaphor they employ is that of ‘tea hospitality’. Typically, they would say: ‘In the past we put on the kettle as soon as we heard the sound of steps at our door. Now our neighbors don’t even exchange greetings’. Since their migration to the RFE, systematic exclusion has been made more apparent by the change in the Russian citizenship law, but in their everyday life Koreans feel most keenly the denial of sociability by local Russians.

Regarding the question of ‘the nature of society’, Simmel (1971a) suggests that society exists in a double sense. On the one hand, there is a form-oriented association of individuals that Simmel refers to as a ‘sociability’, embodying a ‘pure essence of association, of the associative process as a value and a satisfaction’ (1971a), in which social interaction and being together are an end in themselves, rather than the means toward a further goal. Conversation, in this type of sociability, may be a ‘pure play form’ and consist of a plethora of ‘useless things’ (see Nafus, 2006). As association itself, rather than the pursuit of one’s own interests, is the aim of this

sociability, individuals are treated equally; indeed, 'it is a game in which one "acts" as though all were equal', and as though everyone is especially esteemed (Simmel 1971a, p. 133-134). On the other hand, society also exists in the form often referred to as 'civil society', where the content and the specific basis for social interaction may be religious, political, economic, etc. Simmel takes sociability as an ideal of 'the freedom of bondage' motivating social interactions together with the aim or content of association. Simmel's discussion posits a certain type of interpersonal relationship that appears to lie outside of the dominant concept of 'society' in the West, which is made up of contracts based on the interests of 'individuals'. He understands this sociability as 'the residuum of a society determined by content' and sees modern society as developing from a division between content and form in social association. Particularly in Russia, Simmel's concept (1971a) of sociability is useful for understanding the centrality of such forms of social association which, in contrast to those of the West, determine the content of social relations. In other words, sociability is not only an end in itself, but is also a very effective means of defining one's position in a social context shaped by post-Soviet change.

Despite the dismantling of state institutions and collectives in the workplace, friendship is still a dominant factor for defining one's social world in Russia. This can be seen as a continuation of the social unity of the collective during the period of socialism (Markowitz, 1991; Shlapentokh, 2004). At the core of the 'de-territorialized milieu of social space' (Yurchak, 2006) and the 'diffuse group' (Kharkhordin, 1996) of collectives, it was friendship that was able to 'provide individuals with the emotional and material support that the state apparatus constrains or lacks and, most importantly, with a stage for displaying [one's] true personality' (Markowitz, 1991, p. 638). As Yurchak (2006) and Oleg Kharkhordin (1996) note, the emotional closeness and solidarity within small circles of friends produce an intense intimacy that is 'kinship-like' for those within the group.

Despite the centrality of friendship in sociality in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia, many Koreans, particularly the vast majority who operate in the informal economy, say, 'We don't have any *sviaz'* ("connections") here' when they describe their situation. 'Back in Central Asia,' they say, 'I would have asked my friend to give me a job.' Although it was kinship that played a vital role in their migration decision, for many of my interlocutors it is friendship and the future of their children that are vital concerns. In both Pilkington's study (1998) and my own, the recurrent phrase that people use to describe their migration is 'for the sake of the children'. Koreans recognize the important role that friendship played in the former USSR and continues

to play in the post-Soviet period, and although they experience exclusion from this sociality, they hope for better things for the next generation.

Friendship is an attachment that includes and also excludes. As James G. Carrier (1999) explains, in order for there to be friendship, there must also be categories of people who are not friends – just as there are kin and non-kin in the delineation of what constitutes kinship. The difference, of course, is that one is born into and inherently positioned as kin in specific relationships, whereas friendship can be changed according to the criteria of the individuals involved or as a function of a given political and economic situation. This chapter has shown how kinship connections played a key role in the migration of Koreans from Central Asia to the RFE, but it has also illustrated the importance of friendship and its absence. This has allowed us to move beyond the traditional, rigid categorization of migration (e.g. political vs. economic, forced vs. voluntary) and unitary notions of ethnicity.



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3 Living Soviet socialism the Korean way: mobile agriculture at the border of socialism

The collective farm is the school of communism for the peasants.
Catchphrase displayed in a Siberian collective farm in Soviet times, cited in Humphrey, 1998

'Gobonji' was, is and will continue to be, where Koreans learn and live. We should not forget that precisely this method, 'gobonji', appeared as a school of education and study for numbers of Korean businessmen, industrialists, bankers, and scholars in the former USSR.

Yan 2000, p. 7

During my fieldwork, I noticed that Russian Koreans were constantly described as *trudoliubitel'nyi* or *trudoliubivyi narod* (both 'hard-working people'), both by themselves and by non-Korean people. This characterization seemed to provide a concept versatile enough to explain various things, especially how Russian Koreans managed to survive despite all of the hardships caused by their sudden displacement in the 1990s. Thus, 'hard-working' seemed to acquire almost the status of a *natsional'nyi kharakter* ('national character') – itself which is a powerful, essentialist trope in the Soviet and Russian understanding of the nation and culture.¹ Indeed, my interlocutors spoke to me as if this trait had passed from generation to generation, sometimes mobilizing the metaphor of *krov'* ('blood'), as in the saying 'We Koreans are hard-working in [our] blood'.² Indeed, in the

1 The theory of national character reached its peak in the 1980s in celebration of the Soviet nationality policy, as national character was the only remaining difference among the various nationalities after successful implementation of the nationality policy of the Soviet Union. This policy was based on Stalin's famous formula, 'national in form and socialist in content'. National character was seen as a 'national identity', which Soviet nationality policy promoted in a de-politicized manner (Martin, 2001, p. 12-13).

2 Although diligence was portrayed as and perceived to be a natural character, as expressed by the phrase 'in blood', this statement needs verification as to whether it is really a universal 'Korean' feature. When an English woman, Isabella B. Bishop, travelled to Korea and the neighboring area in the late 19th century, she drew an interesting comparison between Koreans in the Korean Peninsula and Koreans who had moved to the RFE, in terms of economic conditions and industriousness. Bishop was impressed and surprised by the changed attitude toward work of

early 2000s they worked long hours and it was rare to find someone who was not doing anything, unless the person was alcoholic, disabled, or ill. Thus, this attribute was presented as a strong cultural trait of the Koreans, to the extent that it was naturalized as part of the definition of a 'normal' Korean. In other words, 'hard working' was the normative criterion for one's behavior or approach to life, and was conventionally used to define average Koreans in the early 2000s.

However, this cultural norm was not formed suddenly, nor was it an innate aspect of Koreans or Korean culture. From a historical perspective, it is interesting to note that Koreans' excessive emphasis on the ethic of hard work was replicated in two historical periods: the post-deportation period from 1937, and the post-socialist transition from 1991. It was during these two periods that the Koreans experienced massive upheavals through spatial displacement, to an extent that threatened the stable socio-economic life that they had earlier achieved. By emerging at times of crisis, their emphasis on work ethic highlights their subjective transformation vis-à-vis an external force, which suddenly placed their social life in a precarious state. For this reason, the ethic of hard work was always paired with 'survival' – leading to a transformation of the moral economy of the Koreans. In particular, hard work is also a narrative pertaining to the emplacement processes, since the Koreans in the RFE experienced these two periods of upheaval through spatial displacement, from the RFE to Central Asia in 1937 and from Central Asia to the RFE in the 1990s.

In this chapter, I explore how this trait of Koreans' work ethic was naturalized within the historical specificity of Soviet socialism, interwoven with the Koreans' emplacement process in Central Asia. In particular, I focus on their agricultural activities, which constituted the livelihood of many ordinary Koreans; later, I discuss the demise of rice cultivation and expansion of mobile vegetable cultivation. In doing so, we can observe that this hard work ethic can not only be attributed to Koreans, but is widely imbued in the ordinary people of the Soviet Union. This reflected the Soviet socialist propaganda, epitomized in Stakhanovism, that was designed to extract more hours of labor from working people.³ What is interesting is the

the Koreans in the RFE, who had achieved economic prosperity, compared to the 'lazy, poor and unhopeful' Koreans in the Korean Peninsula. She concluded that Koreans could be enlightened once they had a more just and proper ruler and had converted to Christianity, as the Koreans in the RFE had done.

3 In 1935, a miner named Aleksei Stakhanov fulfilled his quota fourteen times in a single year by working long hours, becoming a role model for socialist workers and thereafter, the source of a public phenomenon called 'Stakhanovism' (see Siegelbaum, 1988).

ethnic dimension of Stakhanovism, whereby the hard work ethic was more strongly emphasized for the diaspora peoples in Central Asia who had been forcibly relocated from their usual residence, as well as for Russians who had been dispatched by the state to carry out the mission of the 'Sovietization' of Central Asia. At the beginning, this ideology of hard work asserted their identity in a negative way, i.e. by negating, through their excessively long hours of work, the stigmatizing image of an 'enemy nation' imposed on them.

To understand how this work ethic was successfully rooted in the self-identification of people during the Soviet era, we need to locate the working life of Koreans within the Soviet political economy. With the absence of commodities in the official socialist economy, the value of labor, i.e. the wage, was not measured by the price of commodities but by time (labor days) to reproduce the labor force, following Marxist understanding of political economy; therefore, the state assigned quotas to myriad economic entities, ranging from administrative regions, industries, economic institutions, and collective work units to individual workers, in which economy and politics were interwoven. The whole economy aimed to reproduce the Soviet Union rather than being oriented towards competition in market. Thus, in this political economy, the aim and context of work was highly politicized in the absence of market: the repetitive manual jobs that people usually avoid were assigned to people along with socialist ideological reinforcement, based on the hierarchy of educational and work organizations. In other words, the cultural perception of certain types of physical labor must be understood within the labor hierarchy, taking into account myriad cultural and political evaluations of labor (Humphrey, 1998; Humphrey, 2002b).

According to Humphrey's discussion of the division of labor in the Buryat collective farm in Siberia, praise for 'hard-working' people was not followed with a substantial political reward; rather, it was an ideological device to get people to engage in drudgery (Humphrey, 1998, p. 356-357). In this sense, self-descriptions as 'hard-working' can be understood as the internalization of this socialist propaganda. Humphrey's attention to 'hard-working' as part of socialist ideology concerns the division of labor within a collective farm. The question, then, is how to understand the translation and internalization of this 'hard-working' ideology into an ethnic characterization of Koreans. In addressing this question, I think we need to note that the state ideology of hard work was not injected directly into people's minds; rather, it drew on their own cultural devices to define a 'right' form of work, thus enabling them to believe that hard work was their own characteristic, rather than an ideology imposed by the state. Henceforth, this traditional cultural

device functioned as a filter to understand and interpret the state ideology, producing particular forms of socialism that were unexpected within the state socialist outlook.

Rice cultivation: socialist peasants in Soviet Central Asia

German Kim (2000), an ethnic Korean historian in Kazakhstan, highlights the continuity of Koreans' lives within the framework of Soviet nationality policy and argues that the result was the transformation of Koreans into Soviets (*Homo Sovieticus*) through their displacement to Central Asia – refuting the tendency of public discourse and academic research to see deportation as a rupture and discontinuation. Indeed, in their collective memory, Koreans emphasized how they developed Central Asia through their agricultural skills, especially of rice cultivation. They regarded this not only as an achievement of overcoming hardship, but also as their unique contribution to Soviet socialism within the rhetoric of the development of Central Asia.

The majority of Koreans were rice farmers, and rice was their staple crop when they were deported in 1937. Given the 'bare life' (Agamben, 1998) shortly after their deportation, their craving for rice was paramount: it was a matter of survival. In the people's memory, rice is thus central to their narrative of suffering. Eating a 'rice' meal was expressed as the threshold for moving from a 'bare life' to a 'normal' life. When my elderly interlocutors reflect on their past, they tend to say 'then, we could eat rice'. A rice meal was a barometer of 'normal life' amongst the elderly people who experienced hard times shortly after the deportation. While escape from a 'bare life' was attested by the consumption of freshly cooked rice by a woman, ideally a wife or mother, in more personalized narratives, the general success of rice cultivation in the Central Asian desert was spoken of in terms of a collective achievement or national pride.

With rice as the metaphor for improved living conditions, turning wasteland into arable land through construction of an irrigation system was considered a victory over the harsh conditions of hunger and hard times after deportation (Han and Han, 1999; Li, 2000). My elderly interlocutors also often pointed to how they cleared marshland with their bare hands and constructed collective farms for rice cultivation. One elderly woman, who has now passed away, told me in 2003 that they worked so hard that it left their fingers bleeding and nails worn down. Altogether, rice cultivation was described as a great achievement of the Koreans in the Soviet Union – not

only by themselves, but also by the Soviet authorities. This accord was seen when they sang the praises of Korean socialist labor heroes, who had produced large yields of rice. 'Since the 1950s the Soviet Union' proceeded to 'concentrate on rice cultivation in order to increase cereal production' (Kho, 1987, p. 72). Numerous *kolkhozes* ('collective farms') were encouraged to produce more rice and to develop new varieties of rice.⁴ The Koreans' official newspaper *Lenin Gichi* ('*The Flag of Lenin*') was filled with the heroic achievements of Korean rice farming brigades, workers, and *kolkhozes*, as well as information about rice cultivation techniques, damage to rice paddies by unfavorable weather, know-how, etc. Sand deserts were filled with earth carried from other places, an irrigation system was constructed, and pumping facilities to reuse water in rice paddies were devised. It was a great transformation of the environment; just as the Koreans were transformed from 'the enemy nation' to 'great Soviet rice cultivators', so their achievement provided another reason for their deportation. The establishment of rice cultivation in Central Asia was interpreted upside down, with rice cultivation adduced as a reason for the deportation: 'Koreans were deported to Central Asia to develop virgin lands and raise rice there' (Kho, 1987, p. 26).⁵

However, this seemingly inherent 'rice culture' of the Koreans – based on their traditional staple food and occupation – was not mobilized as the national identity of Koreans in the former Soviet Union in the language of ethnic nationalism, as it was by the Japanese in Japan (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1993) or the Koreans in Korea (Bak, 1997). According to Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, 'rice has been a dominant metaphor of the Japanese *not* because rice was *the* food to fill the stomach' but because 'it has always been of crucial symbolic significance for them' (1993, p. 3-4, original emphasis). Her main argument is that 'some food is "symbolic" and "naturalized" like rice in Japan; such generic food is linked with the territory of the country as the land on which that food is cultivated.

4 For example, new varieties of rice were called ushtobinskiy, Alakul'sky, Uzros-59, Uzros 7-13, Krymysala. Kuban 3, Dubovskiy-129, Avangard, Magister etc. (Kho, 1987, p. 26). The Uzbek Rice Science Research Institute and Kazakh Rice Cultivation Science Research Institute were established to develop better varieties of rice and to do research on rice cultivation methodology, a field in which many Korean researchers worked (Kho, 1987, Chapter 3).

5 The Mesketian Turks, who were deported in 1944 under Stalinism from Georgia to Central Asia, also appropriated the self-image of 'developers of Central Asia' to describe their life in Uzbekistan. For example, Kathryn G. Tomlinson's (2002, p. 44) informant said that she 'taught the Uzbeks how to grow sweet corn and other things', since 'when we arrived they [autochthonous people] ate grass'. This is exactly the same as the narrative of the Koreans, replacing sweet corn for rice. Brown's study also notes the deportees' transformation to 'colonizers' in Central Asia (2005, p. 176-191).

The case of Soviet Koreans could showcase the de-naturalization and de-territorialization of their generic food (rice) and consequently the weakening of its symbolic power among the Koreans in Central Asia. In other words, for Soviet Koreans the political symbolic power of rice cultivation and eating was not naturalized – not only in terms of an exclusive territory, but more importantly in terms of the traditional work organization of Koreans within the modernization process in Central Asia. The maintenance of rice collective farms which could have been the basis of the cultural infrastructure for the production of symbolic and cultural meaning, gathering land-people-culture into a coherent whole. At least before the deportation in the RFE, collectivization was carried out in villages where the majority of Koreans were living, thus maintaining the ‘traditional’ way of dealing with things. The Koreans endeavored to maintain such a way of life by constructing and enriching rice collective farms in Central Asia. As noted in the testimony of Klava Ten Chapter 1, in the pre-Deportation RFE, the Sovietization among Koreans was carried out in the village communities and those villages were led by traditional intellectuals who played mediating role between village residents and Russian authority (see Pak 2004); These village leaders became the chairman of the Soviet village during collectivization. This seemed to be what happened during the Sovietization of Central Asia as well, but only on a permanent basis for the titular national groups. According to Deniz Kandiyoti, the ‘social engineering’ of Soviet projects was ‘translated into a re-composition of solidarity groups’ representing ‘regional factionalism’ (2002, p. 244). Thus, Kandiyoti suggests, ‘we have to entertain the possibility that the concrete institutions of the planned economy and collectivization might have had certain intrinsic properties which furthered the “re-composition” of traditional society in Central Asia’ (2002, p. 244). Though many ‘Korean’ *kolkhozes* were transferred as units from the RFE, many people were still dispersed to various places; this affected the process of the re-composition of displaced groups, which was done mainly through a second or third internal movement. Before going into the topic of internal displacements in Central Asia, I want to briefly outline some difficulties involved in rice cultivation, which help explain the change in the agricultural activities of Koreans towards the migratory cultivation of vegetables.

Staple foods are not merely consumable, edible items to fill the stomach, but are also closely linked with the holistic way of life for a certain group of people whose livelihood is closely related to the natural environment. However, the natural environment is not purely natural, but always exists in hybridity with human activity. I argue that their mere physical dislocation did not mean a sudden cultural change for the Koreans. The more enduring

cultural change took place much later, with the urbanization and modernization promoted by the Soviet Union – not directly from the deportation in 1937. As long as rice was the staple food used to ‘fill their stomach’, Koreans in Central Asia maintained a ‘rice culture’, despite its lack of a symbolic meaning as the national food. Except for their ‘taste’ for this staple food, all other conditions in Central Asia were inimical to rice cultivation. Given the natural steppe environment and the lack of rainfall, adherence to rice cultivation was cost-inefficient, for Koreans as well as others, as shown by the failure of mono-crop agricultures for other deportees and for Soviet agricultural policy in general (cf. Brown, 2005, p. 187-188).⁶

The demise of the rice crop in Central Asia was furthered by an increase of rice production in other regions, such as in Ukraine’s black soil area (Li, 2000). It was easily noted that even the Koreans’ rice-specific *kolkhozes* and *sovkhozes* cultivated a larger proportion of cotton than rice in the mid-1960s. The decrease in rice cultivation was due not only to the lack of territory assigned to the Koreans, but more importantly to the condition of their subjectivity due to their displacement in the context of the building of Soviet modernity. Rather than a fixation on rice itself as the national identity of a group of people, it was the *labor force* of the Koreans growing rice in the desert of the steppe region that was reified, since rice paddies could be replaced with other crops such as cotton; in other words, rice and rice paddies did not function as ‘a signifier’ with which the Koreans could ground ‘the self’, or in Serguei A. Oushakine (2004)’s formulation, they were not the basis for Koreans’ ‘second nature’. According to Oushakine (2004, p. 395), the peculiar construction of Soviet modernity, which was quite distinct from the Western version, lay in ‘the void subject of Soviet modernity’: it emphasized becoming ‘flexible and pliant’ in correspondence with radical political and economic changes, rather than fixed as the permanent basis of society. He pays attention to the near-replication of subjectivity between the Stalinist period and post-Soviet times, as ‘devoid of all previous attachments’ and only viable through the metaphor of ‘survival’. This reveals a process of reducing the complexity of one’s identity as ‘bare life’ to the ‘bio-political body’ (Agamben, 1998, p. 171), so that one’s dependence on the

6 According to Stepan Kim’s testimony, some Koreans were already transferred to Central Asia in 1935, two years before the 1937 deportation. ‘These Koreans arrived in 1935 founded “Korean kolkhozes” in 2-3 years and they “blossomed” in the 1940s and earlier half of 1950s. The following years began “intensive supplant” of rice cultivation to replace it with cotton production. Many Koreans couldn’t bear “the offence of cotton”, throwing away land, cultivating in sweat on face, ran away in search of a place, where raising rice-basic staple product for Koreans’ (1989, p. 193).

protective shield of 'second nature' – that is, state institutions – becomes all the more crucial.

While factories, *kolkhozes*, labor camps, and other Soviet institutions became 'the protective shield' of 'second nature' in Oushakine's discussion, the Koreans' 'second nature' did not seem to lie in institutions like rice cultivation *kolkhozes*, given their later disappearance. Rather, Koreans seemed to search for a way to practice Soviet socialism that would not depend on such 'second nature', since it did not protect them. An elderly woman, one of my interlocutors who had lived all of her life on a collective farm in Ushtobe, Kazakhstan, said to me,

We Koreans founded the *kolkhoz* with [our] bare hands. We changed wasteland to fields, removing all the weeds and reeds. But later Germans came and many Koreans left. And then Kazakhs came after the collapse of the Union, thus, Germans and Koreans had to leave. This is because we don't have *chebi ttang* ['our own land' in Korean]. That is why Koreans are driven out from here and there, having to wander around.

The displacement of traditional work was also related to the internal migration of the Koreans. Kim and Men (1995, p. 15-19) discuss the internal movement of Koreans in Central Asia after the deportation. According to them, the first wave of movement took place between 1937 and 1940. The characteristic of the movement during this period was their struggle to cope with 'natural-climate difference[s]' between the RFE and Central Asia, searching for a way to carry out 'traditional rice cultivation and vegetables'. Many Koreans moved from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan with that objective. In this movement, Koreans were also looking for close relatives and family members who were relocated to different places over the course of their displacement in 1937. For example, my interlocutor who was born in 1940 in Kazakhstan said, 'One day when I was five years old, my uncle came to us. He brought some rice and my parents boiled two cups of rice and fed me. He said that there [in Uzbekistan] it is possible to do cultivation (*nong-sa jil*) and to eat rice meal. So in 1945 our family moved to Uzbekistan.'

The second wave of internal movement in Central Asia occurred in the latter half of the 1950s. The movement in this period was not only facilitated by the cancellation of residence limits and the restoration of citizenship rights made possible by the rehabilitation in 1956 following the death of Stalin in 1953, but it was also motivated by the Koreans' search for the possibility of 'making a living' through their cultivation activities. In the course of this internal migration, they experienced their unchanged status:

it was very similar to that of tenant farmers, as they had lived in the RFE. One of their repeated experiences was the absence of stable cultivation rights. Just as they were expelled from cultivated land due to their lack of land ownership during the RFE period, many Koreans had to be evacuated from the land in Central Asia that they had transformed to arable land: the territory of collective farms in which they did not have full collective membership (Li, 2000). This situation led them to perceive Soviet socialism in light of their continuing status as land developers, rather than owners, so the products of their labor could not be legitimately claimed as their own.

According to Li (2000), Koreans became ‘wise’ because of their ability to draw comparisons, derived from their displacement, between pre-Revolutionary times and the socialist period.⁷ This *mudrost’* (‘wisdom’) came from acknowledging the difference between a tenancy fee paid to landlords under the *sojakchil* (Korean, ‘tenant farming’) system in the pre-deportation RFE, and the *plan* (‘quota’) for the *kolkhoz* and *sovkhos* that they worked for under the socialist regime. In the RFE, tenant farmers tended to give half the harvest to the landowners. In Central Asia, they found that the conditions of cultivation became lighter, as the portion reserved for the state was only a tenth of the harvest. The recognition of these conditions formed their unique perception of Soviet socialism, whereby the state is perceived as the benign landlord and personified as the director of the *kolkhoz*. This perception of the socialist agricultural system and the Koreans’ continuously unstable position in Central Asia provided the background for the development of mobile cultivation from the late 1950s. In the next section, I am going to discuss the background of the birth of this nomadic agriculture, *gobonjil*, which made the Koreans famous as *zemledel’tsy* (‘cultivators’) all over the Soviet Union.

Work *vnye* (‘outside’) the system: *gobonjil* during Soviet times

In the case of Soviet Central Asia, the hierarchy of work was not only inscribed among individual workers, but also among various ethnic groups, many of whom had been relocated by the state in the 1930s and 1940s. In regard to this collective division of labor, it is important to explain

7 This perception of a continuity before and after the revolution provided by their forced displacement contrasts with the total stripping of old attachments and the negation of the past by other people during the Stalinist period, as discussed by Oushakine (2003) and Ssorin-Chaikov (2000).

the significance for the Koreans that they were not a titular nationality in Central Asia, but held an ambiguous position as both deportees and colonizers. As I show in this chapter, there was a double dislocation in the social life of Koreans through being deported to Central Asia: on the one hand, there was the dislocation of 'the body social' from the soil (see Polanyi, 2001, p. 76), following their deportation and on the other hand, the second dislocation was the change in the community which used to be based on generic-food (rice) cultivation, following rapid urbanization since the 1960s. Although Karl Polanyi discussed the dis-embedding of the body social from the land in the context of the formation of the market economy in England in the 18th century, his argument could also be meaningful in the context of Stalinist social mobilization – especially in relation to the massive relocation of people, which produced the proletarianization of land-bounded peasants. The dis-embedding process that allowed the creation of employable people included two co-evolving processes: the separation of peasants from the land and the subsequent disruption of traditional community life. As Stephen Kotkin (1995) and David Hoffmann (1994) argued, the Stalinist relocation of the rural population to industrial urban areas was a part of the modernization process, making it possible to set up a base for state-run industrialism. The relocation of the Koreans to Central Asia could also be understood as their dislocation from the land they used to work (see Chapter 1); at the same time, there was a dislocation of their generic economic life, i.e. rice cultivation, which was replaced by mobile vegetable cultivation during late Soviet socialism.⁸

This dis-embedding process did not happen naturally, but with the forceful imposition of political power: in the case of Koreans, it was Soviet sovereign power through relocation. The political and ideological consequences of 'hard work' were the transformation of the deported Koreans' animal-like condition to the human condition, presented to them as the matter of life or death. Furthermore, the Koreans worked hard to prove that they were not an 'enemy of the nation', but rather a useful element of Soviet socialism. I suggest that these two subjective motivations—striving to live in humane condition and the zeal to refute the accusation— for hard work have been interwoven with the ideology upholding the Soviet socialist political economy. In particular, I discuss how their traditional work of rice cultivation on institutionalized collective farms changed to the migratory cultivation of vegetables in the context of late Soviet socialism. By cleansing

8 'The late Soviet socialism' refers to the period from the death of Stalin to the collapse of the Soviet Union, following Yurchak (2006).

the border area through the forcible relocation of diaspora groups, and by closing the border to capitalist countries, the Soviet Union appeared to have succeeded in sealing off the border in order to become the center of a closed socialist cosmos, forming de-territorialized borders within 'socialism in one country'.

To be sure, their achievement of relocating rice cultivation to a steppe region was no longer protected and legitimized as part of the socialist transformation of Central Asia. Myriad factors defined the position of the Koreans settled in Central Asia, which did not permanently guarantee that the reward for Koreans' work would be located in the legitimate state's institutional context. Rather, their dislocation from state enterprises in relation to their traditional livelihood (rice cultivation) was the result of the separation between the legitimate context of work and their subjective emphasis on hard work. Therefore, Koreans' displacement was a double process of geographical and socio-economic dislocation. Just as the Koreans incorporated their geographical displacement into their socio-economic life, we might also say that the policies of Soviet socialism also changed focus from the territorial boundary to a tighter, state-planned economic model. Interestingly enough, the new tight control of the state economy became loose and created many lacunae. In this chapter, I explore how the closing and cleansing of the Soviet geographic border was transferred to the border of socialism as an ideology by examining the social and economic life of Koreans in Central Asia.

Nomadic socialist peasants in the lacunae of Soviet socialism

Li (2000, p. 203) describes an occasion that confirms the widespread practice of migrating cultivation, or *gobonjil*⁹, during Soviet times. In a gathering of 137 Korean participants in Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan in the late 1990s, he conducted an improvised survey among the attendees. He asked people to raise their hands if they had no experience of *gobonjil*; only three of the

9 *Gobonji* is just as widely used as *gobonjil*, especially in material written by Koreans in the former USSR, such as in Li's monograph (2000). It was very hard to discern whether or not the consonant 'l' is pronounced in speech. However, given synonymous variants of this word such as *nong-sa-jil*, *subak-jil*, and *luk-jil* and the perception that *nong-sa-jil* and *gobonjil* are the same activities, as attested by my interlocutors, I decided to use the term *gobonjil* instead of *gobonji*. Apart from this, there is a linguistic tendency to end nouns with the vowel 'i' in the colloquial Korean language of Russian Koreans: for example, *babi*, *jangmuri*, and *guduri*, which in South Korea are pronounced *bab*, *jangmul*, and *gudur*.

attendees raised their hands. Li (2000) added that even those three people would have benefited from their parents' *gobonjil* when finishing their education, or from relatives' *gobonjil* during hard times. Similarly, the people I met during my fieldwork who were born before the 1950s almost all had *gobonjil* experience; some Koreans had longer periods, and others only a few years, in some cases occasionally pursuing their primary occupation. Furthermore, even in the contemporary RFE, many Koreans were still engaged in cultivation activities, though the element of migration was weaker than in the past. What led these people to continue to cultivate in this particular way, when they were repeatedly forced to leave the land they had cultivated? Why and how did they continue with their agricultural activities, despite their forcible displacements? In what conditions did this economic activity become prevalent as an occupation for Koreans in Soviet Central Asia?

Gobonjil is a native term for the Soviet Koreans' practice of seasonal migration agriculture, conducted from the end of World War II. This term is contrasted with *sojakchil* ('tenant farming'), practiced during the pre-deportation period and placing more emphasis on equal and communal way of cultivation in *gobonjil* practice. Although Koreans usually speak in Russian, there are some Korean words that are hard to translate into the Russian language; *gobonjil* is one of these. This word is not used in contemporary South Korea either, but has only been used by Koreans in the former Soviet Union. According to the *Min-Jung Korean Language Dictionary*, the meaning of *gobon* is 'each portion of investment of an individual participant when several people do enterprise together in old times', but in the case of *gobonjil*, *gobon* (the closest word in English would be 'portion') is generally accepted to mean a plot of land of no predetermined size, cultivated by a household in a *gobonjil* brigade. The size of the plot varies depending on how many households participate in a cultivation brigade and how much land is rented. If a *gobonjil* brigade composed of 15 households rents 30 hectares of land from a collective farm, for example, one *gobon* would be two hectares (Baek, 2002, p. 142; Li, 2000, p. 143-144). *-jil* is a suffix that refers to repetitive activities or to a profession or occupation.

Gobonjil was born not as an official system, but as an *adjunct* to the official Soviet agricultural system: a half-legal but not 'illegal' or *podpol'e* ('underground') practice (Li, 2000). Thus, there is no 'official' record of exactly when and how this practice started. It is widely accepted that 'this form of farming at first appeared in Tashkent Oblast' in Uzbekistan at the end of WWII, between 1941 and 1945' (Li, 2000; Baek, 2002, p. 154-155). The main motive for the creation of *gobonjil* seems to lie in the economic difficulties experienced during wartime. Partly because of the lack of men due to their mobilization in work camps supplying the front, and partly

because of problems in the delivery of collective farms' produce to the war front, the critical issue was how to 'survive' – not only for the Koreans, but also for other nationalities in the Soviet Union during World War II. At first, *gobonjil* came about as a way of cultivating rice on virgin marshy land in the territory of *kolkhozes* by Koreans who were not members of that *kolkhoz* to avoid starving to death. The state also paid very low prices for farm products and Koreans could earn more through doing independent work, leading an increasing number of Koreans to leave collective farms and undertake *gobonjil* (Han and Han, 1999, p. 114; Li, 2000, p. 153).

It was only after the first rehabilitation in 1956 that the character of *gobonjil* significantly changed and long-distance migrating cultivation became a significant feature of the practice. Until then, Koreans were restricted to living within the republic where they had been relocated in the 1937 deportation,¹⁰ so *gobonjil* was practiced near their place of residence. After the death of Stalin in 1953, Koreans were allowed to move to other republics. At that time, around 3,000 Koreans returned to the RFE for various reasons, including rice cultivation (Vaschuk et al., 2002, Chapter 3).

The lifting of these residence restrictions also accelerated the commercialization of their produce, which meant that their productive economic activity was aimed at producing food not for their own consumption, but for exchange. More specifically, the crop changed from rice to vegetables (mainly onions and beets) and *bakhchevye kultury* ('melons'), and long-distance migratory farming that crossed the boundaries of republics, became popular. While rice cultivation requires a certain irrigation system and the foundation of rice paddies, vegetable growing is much simpler in terms of preparing the land. In addition to the abolition of the residence restrictions, the removal of Machine Tractor Stations (MTS) in the late 1950s discouraged the socialist competition of the agricultural enterprises controlled by one local authority, and transferred the agricultural machinery to the *kolkhozes*, with a consequent increase of autonomy for each *kolkhoz*. The mixing of successful *kolkhozes* with other, poor-performing ones to form *sovkhoses* was accelerated in the late 1960s. 'Korean' *kolkhozes*, which were mostly successful, were disadvantaged in this integration process:

10 However, this ban might have been only nominal, consisting of a stamp on their passports. Actual movements were not so stringently controlled. As I discussed earlier, given the large migration of Koreans from Kazakhstan to Uzbekistan between 1937 and 1941, Koreans seem to have been able to change their residence despite the ban. Following Kim and Men (1995), it is safe to say that because the regulation of residence and migration was carried out by the chairman of the village soviet, it was very likely that there were many loopholes allowing for movement.

they not only had to acquire the debts of other *kolkhozes*, but also saw their administrative positions being taken by autochthonous people (Baek, 2002, p. 156). Verdery notes that ‘ethno-national mobilization was the *only* form of political interest-group activity that could be engaged in with some legitimacy in [the] socialist period, even if within certain strict limits’ in the state-led ‘supply constrained’ economy (1993, p. 175). Indeed, in Soviet Central Asia, traditional solidarity groups such as the extended family, neighborhood, and lineage segments were ‘reincarnated as sub-divisions of *kolkhoz*’ and became ‘the individual’s entry point into the system’ (Kandiyoti, 2002, p. 244, cited source omitted). In Central Asia, Koreans as a group were located in politically less advantageous positions than the autochthonous people, but they never considered themselves to occupy a lower position than the colonized Central Asians. Instead, in a sense, many Koreans seemed to identify with the position of the Russian settlers, who were sent to Central Asia with the mission of spreading development and enlightenment.¹¹ During my fieldwork, it was not rare to hear low evaluations of the peoples in Central Asia in terms of an evolutionary hierarchy, such as ‘they are not enlightened’, ‘they are in the dark, not enlightened’, or ‘they are not civilized people’.

The Koreans actively incorporated Soviet modernist values, accompanied by urbanization: individual aspirations were encouraged in the hope that the offspring of the first generation of deportees would reach higher managerial positions through education.¹² Rapid urbanization was the background of *gobonjil* during its inception period, and Koreans’ zeal to send their children to higher education was the motivation for long-distance *gobonjil* practices later when the residence ban was lifted.

Trading cultivators or cultivating traders: trading political status with economic wealth

It is possible to position *gobonjil* in other similar Soviet economic practices. In particular, *gobonjil* can be understood as similar to *shabashka* (‘temporary

11 Deportees’ perceptions of themselves as ‘colonizers’ alongside the Russian migrants in Central Asia were very popular with nearly all deported nationalities, including Germans, Poles, Greeks, Turks, etc. This also partly explains the ‘Russification’ of the deported nationalities.

12 According to Kim and Men (1995, p. 15), 73.2% of the Koreans in Kazakhstan were living in cities by 1970, compared to the 80% rural population in 1937-40. The proportions of the rural and urban populations of the Koreans in Central Asia were therefore reversed during the Soviet period.

brigades', literally 'moonlight brigades'), which were widespread in the late Soviet period (see Yurchak, 2002) and were formed due to the shortage of labor in the state-planned economy. More precisely, there was a shortage of motivation for laborers to work in state institutions; hence the flourishing of temporary brigades met the need to fulfil the plan assigned to each enterprise in the Soviet Union (Ssorin-Chaikov, 2003, p. 119). However, the Koreans persist in using of the word '*gobonjil*' – itself replaceable with other Korean words such as *nong-sa-jil* ('cultivation work'), *be-jil* ('rice cultivation work'), *su-bak-jil* ('watermelon cultivation work'), or *luk-jil* ('onion cultivation work') – and I have not heard the term *shabashka* used to refer to *gobonjil*. The distinctiveness of the Koreans' *gobonjil* brigades lies in their permanent temporariness when compared to state-run agricultural corporations. In other words, the Korean brigades mainly engaged in vegetable growing, hardly settling in the collective farms with which they contracted for work.

Let me describe *gobonjil* practice briefly. In early spring, the *gobonjil* brigade was organized. The brigade was not composed of people from the same residential area, but included people from other places who were connected via kinship, alliance, or acquaintance. In a sense, a *gobonjil* brigade seemed to act as an information network and quite a stable organization irrespective of the participants' place of residence. On the other hand, this also produced competition amongst the Koreans. Because of the shared information, more Korean cultivators flocked to some regions, leading to the rise of contract arrangements with collective farms. One of my interlocutors related such a development. When he worked as the head of a brigade, or a brigadier, in the 1970s, there were occasions when he had to withdraw from contracts because another Korean brigadier had offered better terms, leaving him in jeopardy for that year. This also led to competition over trading. The same person told me that in one year he could not get a stand in the marketplace, because another Korean brigadier had already paid for the whole marketplace in order to have a monopoly. Angered by this, he set up his trading stall on the way to the market and in revenge sold his melons at half the price of the other Korean brigade's.

The basic work unit within each brigade mostly consisted of a husband and wife, but many single mothers also joined the brigade as an individual household with some help from other participants, usually male relatives. If the children did not go to school, they usually brought them as well (see also Baek, 2002, p. 167). In the *Lenin Kichi* newspaper during the 1970s and 1980s, this was noted as a serious social problem: the children left at home got into trouble by, for example, not going to school or drinking alcohol. During the summer vacation many teenaged children would join their

parents to help with work in the fields, if the *gobonjil* site was close enough for the children to travel on their own. The widespread winter gambling¹³ of the money earned from *gobonjil* farming was also often deplored in newspaper articles.

Simultaneously maintaining two houses that are far apart has become a feature of the economic activities of Koreans, continuing to the present time (see Chapter 4). At each *gobonjil* site, Koreans would erect temporary settlement camps to live in during the cultivation season using materials supplied by the *kolkhozes* (Baek, 2002, p. 172-175). These camps contained many amenities, including bath/shower facilities and toilets. Many Korean migrants to the RFE complained that the living conditions in the RFE were even worse than their temporary *gobonjil* camp residences in the Soviet era. *Gobonjil* farming – mobile agriculture – produced a stereotype about ‘the *kochevoi* (“nomadic”) character of the [Koreans] work’, given their frequent change of collective farms (Li, 2000, p. 191). This public image reflects the limits placed on this type of economic activity by the government. For example, *gobonjil* brigades were vulnerable to breaches of contract by local authorities. As contracts with individual collective farms were illegal until 1986 (when then-the General Secretary of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev introduced new legislation on land leasing and corporation), approval – or at least a blind eye – from a higher level of authority such as the local administration was a prerequisite for each contract. ‘Unlucky’ things occasionally happened to *gobonjil* participants because of the nature of this contract: in other words, Koreans were subject to arbitrary decisions by the ‘officials’ of the *kolkhozes*. For example, although they cultivated produce according to a contractual plan provided to the collective farm, the *kolkhoz* could violate the terms of the contract for any, or no, reason. This was most commonly done by not allowing surplus products to be taken outside of

13 This gambling is done by playing a card game called *hwatu*, deemed to have originated in the Japanese colonial period. After the Koreans’ deportation to Central Asia, there was no way to get hold of factory-produced cards for this game, but people still continued to play it by making their own cards. As there are 48 cards in a set and each card features an intricate picture with very colorful patterns, we can imagine their passion for this game. It is still popular among Koreans in both the former Soviet Union and South Korea. Today, Russian Koreans play with plastic cards brought from South Korea. For an interesting ethnographic study of card games in Greece that focuses on the transformation of money into sociable exchange through gambling, see Evthymios Papataxiarchis (1999). In addition to gambling, singing and dancing were popular forms of socializing during the winter seasons of the Soviet era. While the Japanese colonial legacy in South Korea was condemned in the post-colonial period, it was actively enjoyed in informal everyday life by Soviet Koreans as a marker of their cultural distinctiveness.

the raion ('county'). Breaches of contract were one of the main reasons that Koreans changed *kolkhozes* so frequently.

The most crucial element of *gobonjil* was the right to sell harvested products in the marketplace. Though Li (2000) stated that its 'nomadic character' was the basis of the antipathy toward *gobonjil*, in fact this antipathy was rooted in antagonism toward the trading activities of Korean vegetable growers. Their disposal of surplus products in the marketplace was believed to weaken the 'allocative power' of the state (cf. Verdery, 1991). *Gobonjil* was frowned upon by the public because it was considered to be based on 'self-interest', not on the 'social and common interest'. However, *gobonjil* and other informal economic activities were a part of the state system: they served as a buffer, alleviating the deficiencies of the rigid state-planned economy. Therefore, though the practice was not encouraged, it was tolerated because of its location in the lacunae of state institutions.

Let me briefly outline the organization of *gobonjil* brigades to demonstrate how they managed not only to supply goods to the collective farm according to the agreed plan, but also to obtain surplus products for themselves to trade in marketplaces.

In terms of the organization of labor, a *gobonjil* brigade is not very different from the collective work unit of state enterprises. The brigadier's authority and control over members are no less critical than those of the collective farm chairman. Like the chairman or brigadier of a *kolkhoz*, a *gobonjil* brigadier is in charge of accomplishing the 'plan' agreed to in the contract, usually by more than two or three times the original volume assigned by the state to the *kolkhoz* in question (Li, 2000). To accomplish this 'plan' while also producing surplus products to sell, the brigadier of the *gobonjil* sets some regulations, such as a prohibition on alcohol and leaving the *lageri* ('work camp') during the summer season when labor demands soar (Li, 2000). Each household is allotted a plot and a minimum production quota is assigned per hectare. The products remaining after fulfilling this quota become the individual household's own surplus and are at its disposal. Usually the brigadier assigns to each member a higher quota than needed to fulfil the contract with the farm: the difference between the quota for the whole brigade and the agreed plan becomes the brigadier's income. The brigadier might also cultivate his own portion; if he chooses to do so, he has the privilege of taking the best plot of land, as allotment of the plots is wholly up to the brigadier's decision (Baek, 2002). The success of *gobonjil* was believed to be very much in the hands of the brigadier. The controlling power of the brigadier was, on the one hand, moral: although he was also seen as the patriarch of an extended family, this morality was derived from

the shared interest and mutuality among the brigade participants. On the other hand, the administrative and technological capability of the brigade was also critical and required skill in dealing with the local authorities and officials of the collective farm, as well as specialized agricultural knowledge and technology.

There did not seem to be significant conflicts of interest between the brigadier and the members of *gobonjil* brigades, in contrast to the situation on collective farms, where the socialist ideology of agricultural production are in competition with group or private interests or real circumstances, requiring tedious negotiation between higher and lower levels, from the central government to the production teams and individual households. Within the official Soviet agricultural system, there were always tensions concerning the division of labor: who will work in better conditions or with more rewards, and who will do the unskilled or undesirable work (Humphrey, 1998, Chapter 4 and 7). In collective farms, labor was not considered 'undifferentiated'; people used withdrawal from work as 'their weapon' in bargaining with the brigadier and the chairman of the farm (Humphrey, 1998, p. 304-307). At the lowest level of the Soviet system, laypeople were more interested in economic gains for their household and utilized their *kolkhoznik* ('a member of *kolkhoz*') status to increase hours of work on their private plots and to carry out private production for cash or inalienable goods. Nonetheless, the *kolkhoznik* had a certain social status, tied to work within the *kolkhoz* as part of an intricate hierarchy linked to its structure and division of labor (Humphrey, 1998, Conclusion), meaning that the bargaining process was not solely economic, but political matter; as long as one remained a *kolkhoznik* there were numerous possibilities to employ minor tactics and position oneself for better status in the division of labor, even for trivial benefits. In other words, so long as a *kolkhoznik* does not leave the *kolkhoz*, she or he needed to be tied to the game revolving around 'rights over people',¹⁴ in which 'manipulable resources' were transformed into 'rights over people' by means of gift exchange amongst *kolkhozniks*, while the management used these resources to get people to work or to meet the plan (Humphrey, 1998, Conclusion).

In the Koreans' temporary farming brigades, their careers or positions in the division of labor within the *kolkhoz* did not matter: they were only a temporary part of the state enterprise and did not have official membership.

14 Douglas Rogers (2006) suggests using 'wealth in people' instead of Humphrey's term, 'right over people', to explain the working logic of former Soviet-type societies, though we have to take into account that his work concerns the post-Soviet period.

Therefore, their economic interests were not directly interwoven with the division of labor hierarchy within an individual *kolkhoz*. Here, the position of the Koreans' *gobonjil* brigades in relation with state institutions presents some issues concerning the control of people. First, they *had* to be located *vnye* ('outside') of the state institution so that the brigade could produce surplus products and sell them in the *kolkhoz* market as their own. Second, this 'outside' location enabled their social organization to sustain and reproduce similarly to how the *kolkhozniks* used 'manipulable' products in gift exchange within the *kolkhoz* to keep themselves in a better position. Thus, it is possible to say that the temporariness of their *kolkhoznik* status allowed the conversion of surplus products into profit among the members of the *gobonjil* brigade, and this profit was used in different contexts from those of the state enterprise. I might say that they traded their political prospects as permanent residents tied to the state enterprise for economic gains by displacing themselves from place to place, and from one *kolkhoz* (or *sovkhov*) to another across the Soviet Union. How, then, were the surplus products used by Korean mobile agriculturalists, compared to how 'manipulable resources' were used in state enterprises as discussed by Humphrey (1998)?

While initially *gobonjil* was pursued for the sustenance of each household, from the 1960s the surpluses gained from *gobonjil* farming increased for many Koreans. Until the 1980s,¹⁵ the first few years of successful *gobonjil* working usually enabled them to buy expensive things such as houses or cars.¹⁶ The other significant expenditures were the education of children and the cost of family ceremonies (see Chapter 4). It is often stated that education was the most important motive for undertaking *gobonjil* farming, and that provisioning familial ceremonies was a pre-requisite condition and barometer for people to have a proper life course.

In Soviet society, education was the essential requirement for upgrading one's social status. Obtaining a place in higher education was very competitive, depending not only on a child's academic performance but

15 *Gobonjil* practice since the collapse of state socialism tends to be closer to subsistence farming. The 'best times' to do *gobonjil* were during the Brezhnev era (1962-82), 'given large investment in agricultural infrastructure and widespread corruption of administration in state enterprises' (Baek, 2002, p. 157). For the historical context of *gobonjil*, see Taehyun Baek (2002, p. 152-166).

16 Car ownership made *gobonjil* easier. Many Koreans bought cars during Soviet times with the money earned from *gobonjil*. Cars were also used like temporary moving houses. An elderly couple whom I met in the RFE owned a car from the mid-1960s, and they recollected that they had commuted to Ukraine for nearly a month for *gobonjil*, stopping to cook at the roadside and sleeping in the car.

also on other factors entangled in the selection and recommendation process (Humphrey, 1998, p. 363). It is repeatedly emphasized by the Koreans themselves and in their literature that 'Koreans rank[ed] in second place next to Jews in the proportion of those obtaining higher education among the whole population of each nationality in Central Asia'. In other words, the promotion of social status seemed to rest on the individual family's concern for giving the children higher education with the money gained from *gobonjil* farming. Indeed, it is known that many Koreans in Central Asia occupied higher positions and specialized occupations after graduating from higher education, at least until the collapse of the Soviet Union. This education fever was furthered by their sense of cultural superiority over the Central Asian native people, perceiving themselves to be almost of equal status with the settler/colonizer Russians.¹⁷

However, the conversion of an education or degree into political capital was another matter for the Koreans. On the one hand, some individuals' success through the educational ladder remained a 'personal' achievement in the context of the official workplace, unconnected to the individual's consideration for 'his/her own people' – which could lead to 'ethnic mobilization' as discussed by Verdery (1993) – since ethnic mobilization was not considered 'proper', but viewed with suspicion. There was subtle and cautionary anxiety about causing harm to Soviet-type multiculturalism, often praised as the 'friendship of peoples'. Thus, many Koreans pointed out that people were cautious about being seen as motivated by nationality criteria in their career activities, unless the workplace was mainly composed of Koreans such as Korean's rice-producing collective farms. For example, if a Korean man were in a higher position and there were two candidates for recruitment or promotion, one Korean and the other non-Korean, he tended to select the non-Korean candidate if their other qualities were not very differentiated, which was usually the case (cf. Chen, 2003). On the other hand, while this 'personal' achievement was maintained in the official workplace by allowing oneself to appear non-biased toward one's *sootchestvenniki* ('own compatriots'), the same personal achievement also had symbolic value in relations with one's *svoie* ('own people') in other informal contexts. This meant that the achievement had to be transferred to and recognized in the extended domestic domain. Individuals with prestigious status were highly praised and displayed in family ceremonies as if they were yams or necklaces or bracelets in the Trobriand Islands studied by Malinowski. At a first birthday party for my interlocutor's grandson,

17 Such a view is expressed by the term 'Russian-speaking people' in the post-Soviet context.

one of the guests was a police officer in a higher position in Khabarovsk. Even though the birthday party was held during the weekend and he had to stay in my interlocutor's house for one night, he wore his smart uniform during the party, clearly showing his occupation and status, and the host repeatedly summarized his profile for other guests.

Another case was that of an elderly couple who had practiced *gobonjil* for more than 20 years and had three sons and one daughter, all of whom had higher education: a typical generational story of poor parents who successfully educated their children through their hard work. One of their sons graduated from Leningrad University in the late 1980s and now works as a lawyer in St. Petersburg, while their other children were engaged in trading and the catering business in Siberia and the RFE. The lawyer was married to a Russian woman and did not seem to maintain interaction with his parents and other relatives. They talked about him uneasily, saying that they had not gone to his wedding, which is very rare. Indeed, until then I had not realized that they had such a son; they had not talked about this 'successful son'. His success was confined to himself, given his disconnect from his parents and other relatives.¹⁸ Therefore, even though an individual might gain high status, if he or she did not try to maintain the relationship *s svoimi* ('with their own people'), this success did not have any symbolic value in certain contexts; in this case, the lack of sociality between parents and son also deprived the parents of opportunities for their son's high status to confer symbolic value on the family. In other words, for many Koreans, 'a person' is constituted by his/her acts *sredi svoikh* ('amongst themselves'). Who then are these 'own' people?

One's own people in/outside the Soviet system

Yurchak (2006, p. 127-128)¹⁹ provides an analysis of the notion of *vnye* as a 'de-territorialized milieu' formed in late socialism as a displacement of the authoritative Soviet socialist ideology of the Stalinist period. According to him, it is hard to translate *vnye* into other languages. While it is usually translated to 'outside' in English, it is not necessarily outside the system,

18 Pnina Werbner (1999) also discusses different cultural evaluations and notions of 'success' among diasporic ethnic groups in relation to the 'ethnic economy'.

19 In parallel to Yurchak's conceptualization of *vnye*, Oushakine (2004) addresses the notion of *vnenakhodmost'* ('outsidedness') during the 1930s in Russia, both drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualization of the concept. In Oushakine's discussion, this notion refers to external conditions worked upon by the subjects to articulate their internal self.

but '*simultaneously* inside and outside' of it (Yurchak, 2006, p. 127-128, my emphasis). As he noted, this *vnye* space was also enabled by the state, and was thus inseparable from state institutions. Taking an example from his ethnographic data, although they still attended lectures and public rituals, university students formed their own social groups based on the sociality of friendship, finding this to be more interesting and meaningful in their lives and feeling indifferent to the regime's authoritative discourse. This 'de-territorialized milieu' of informal sociality among friends became a part of almost every state institution, profoundly displacing the authoritative socialist discourse (Yurchak, 2006, p. 114-115).

In tandem with the notion of *vnye*, Yurchak pays attention to another central notion about the relationship of the subject to the system, namely the centrality of *svoi* outside the system. The word *svoi* is a possessive pronoun (for example, *svoi dom* means 'one's own house') and as a pronoun means 'one's own', thus changing its meaning according to the adjoining word.²⁰ In Yurchak's discussion, the weight placed on *svoi* ('our own') by laypeople in the de-territorialized milieu represented their assertion of normality by distancing themselves from the other, 'abnormal people' who were 'too passionate supporters of authoritative regime' or who were overtly 'dissident-like people critical against the state'; Yurchak calls this disposition in Soviet people's assertion of normality 'cynical reason' (Yurchak, 2006, p. 107). In addition, this notion is grounded in interpersonal sociality. Thus, though Yurchak devoted most of his analysis to the way authoritative discourse was displaced in the everyday lives of people during late socialism, he also explores the constitution and continuity of *svoi* through *obshchenie* ('contact') alongside Soviet socialism. There were numerous 'tightly knit networks of friends and strangers who shared some interest, occupation, or discourse' (Yurchak, 2006, p. 131). This sociality was based on 'inter-subjective spatio-temporality' (Munn, 1986) through exchanges of shared interests, talk, songs, dance, drink, food, tea, hobbies, etc. In short, people see their self through acts in shared spatio-temporality.

However, Yurchak's and other studies on this 'informal', 'diffuse group' (Kharkhordin, 1999), or 'private sphere' (Shlapentokh, 1989), note that the core value of this sociality is emotional attachment, or 'kinship-like' friendship. The mediated goods, talk, interests, hobbies, and activities are based

20 The closest English translation would be 'one's own', in my view, though Yurchak translated it as 'us/ours'. Compared to *nashi* ('our'), which denotes 'commonness', *svoi* implies '*sobstvennosti*' ('property rights'), but differs from the Western conception of this term. For comparison with *nashi*, see Yurchak (2006, p. 103).

on the participants' seeming non-interest in economic gain. In comparison with these studies, the sociality of Koreans centered around *gobonjil* farming basically constituted an economic social group based on kinship. However, given the openness to new members and flexible inclusion of kin, this social group also created friendship-like kinships. While people were eager to find time for these 'numerous knit networks' during Soviet times by minimizing the energy and time demanded by their 'official' occupations, Koreans gathered themselves in a certain place and organized their labor. By working longer, they tried to secure more products, which were transformed into money, and then changed into many different things and relationships.

Living on the border of Soviet socialism

Anthropological research on 'the really existing socialism' (Verdery, 1996; Hann, 2002), in contrast to totalitarian approaches toward socialism as a regime, gave special attention to the way social lives were organized by interwoven processes in the 'informal', 'domestic', 'private' spheres and the state, public, official, and institutionalized realms (Kharkhordin, 1999; Shlapentokh, 1989; Yurchak, 2003; Ledeneva, 1998). In other words, there was no clear-cut division between the private and the public or the formal and the informal; rather, they were muddled in everyday lives. For example, in studies of collective farms (Humphrey, 1998; Ssorin-Chaikov, 2003; Anderson, 2000) or of social groups (Yurchak, 2003; Yurchak, 2006), the state ideology or institution is approached through various conceptions of the relationship between the people and the state in this space: for example, some terms used are 'diffuse group' (Kharkhordin, 1999), *blat* ('connection') (Ledeneva, 1998), a 'parallel culture' (Yurchak, 2003), *svoi* ('one's own') or a 'de-territorialized milieu' (Yurchak, 2006), 'border of socialism' (Siegelbaum, 2006), and the 'private sphere' (Shlapentokh, 1989). The common feature between all of these various analyses seems to be the intermingling of one's position(s) within state institutions and other personal relationships. Thus, personhood in Soviet-style societies seems always to be constituted through the duality of this arrangement at the intersection of the public and private spheres.

Against the background of these approaches, the case of the Koreans provides us with a very distinctive arrangement of their relationship with the state. While other ethnographic cases testify to the intermingling of the public and domestic spheres, there appears to be a priority given to kinship relations, which were not only the means but also the ends of migratory

cultivation for the Koreans. The moral emphasis on their own people based on the logic of kinship is accompanied by the rhetoric of success and the excessive motivation to work, which seem to be a counterpoint to workers' 'failure' and 'lack of intention to work' for state enterprises as discussed by Ssorin-Chaikov (2003, p. 7, 119). In his study of the Evenki people in sub-arctic Siberia, Ssorin-Chaikov investigates the question of labor shortage, drawing on the concept of the state as a relationship across myriad hierarchies. Addressing the issue of a 'labor shortage' as a 'signification framework', not a reality, that was accrued through the agency of the Evenki reindeer hunters and herders during the bargaining process around the allocation of labor and resources, he draws on the notions of 'allocative power' formulated by Verdery (1991; 1996) in studying socialist political economy and the 'political uses of labor' in Humphrey's (1998) study of the Buryat collective farm. He further discusses the 'expansion of labor shortage', explaining how this labor shortage was covered by the mobilization of young students and *shabashiki* ('temporary work brigades') for drudge jobs, 'while collective farmers attend to their own affairs' (2003, p. 126). Certainly, 'labor shortage' and 'excess of labor' fall within the same frame to create a picture of the Soviet political economy. While Ssorin-Chaikov's study focuses on the effect of such avoidance of drudge jobs on collective farms, Koreans were inevitably located on the edge of this institutionalized economic form due to their displacement to Central Asia – and this position seems to provide a different version of the same picture. In this regard, the temporal and spatial disjunctures in the relationship between mobile agricultural brigades and state agricultural institutions are notable for understanding Soviet socialism the Korean way in Central Asia.

4 Greenhouse society: the subsistence economy and house-holding

My vyzhivaem, kto kak mozhet ('We are surviving, as one somehow does'). We are *edinstvennyi narod* ('the only nation') that does not ask for and does not count on the help of the state. *My prosto privykli – tol'ko na sebja* ('We've just got used to it – only relying on ourselves'). In summer, we grow vegetables in the *sovkhoz*,¹ and at the beginning of winter we make a living by standing in the market and trading.

Marta Ivanovna's interview with a newspaper reporter 'Eleven months passed', February 1995, 2(13), Wondong Newspaper

In the post-Soviet transition, economic turbulence led many people to turn to the land, mostly to their *ogorod* ('backyard kitchen garden'), for the sustenance of everyday life. This is a well-known pattern and Russian Koreans were no exception, although their cultivation activity appears to have been more successful than many: some Koreans have even managed to develop their cultivation into commercial ventures beyond mere subsistence farming.

In a study of post-socialist economic change in Siberia, Humphrey (2002a) critically examines the applicability of the concept of 'domestic mode of production' (DMS, hereafter) proposed by Marshall D. Sahlins (1974) through an example of the Buryats in a collective farm in Siberia. Humphrey criticizes Sahlins' notion of a subsistence economy for two reasons. First, given the dependence of each household on the state enterprise for material and equipment like fodder and agricultural machinery on a Siberian collective farm in the early 1990s, the application DMS's presumed household self-sufficiency is problematic.² In other words, the fact that the domestic economy is forced to retain its connection with the outside world is not given ample consideration in Sahlins' theory. Second, she criticizes his *a priori* presumption of equality within the household and his analytical neglect of internal differences such as gender and age

1 *Sovetskoe khoziaistvo* ('state farm').

2 For another critique of Sahlins' subsistence economy that focuses on the concept of the household and its relationship with other economic entities such as the market and the state, see Olivia Harris (1981). Harris criticizes the way that Sahlins 'naturalizes' the household in his term 'natural economy', thereby assuming that the household is the basic economic unit. This implies that households are located outside of the realm of the market and the state, whereas many ethnographic studies have shown that this is not the case.

that lead to different obligations and rewards. Sahlins' notion of DMS is largely based on the concept of a natural economy and thereby leads to very functionalist interpretations, which Donald L. Donham (1981) considers to be neoclassical theory.

While I agree with such critiques of Sahlins's (1974) work, in this chapter I want to address the issue of the 'subsistence' or 'independence' of the Korean household as a moral construction, rather than as an economic reality. I argue that the independence of the household is an illusion, in the sense that it obscures reality, but at the same time it is an illusion with a certain power to shape reality. It is also an illusion that is indispensable for the realization of Korean moral values. Theoretically, I consider this illusion to be the 'objectification of a relation' in material form, drawing on Lévi-Strauss's concept of a 'house society' – a critique of the substantive approach to kinship. According to him, kinship theories, and especially descent and lineage theories, assume a substratum of relationship, as if the groups exist as objective entities (Lévi-Strauss, 1987, p. 155).

Lévi-Strauss conceptualized 'societies made up of units which cannot be defined either as families or as clans or lineages' but as 'house societies'. On the one hand, he proposed seeing this house as 'a moral person [...] perpetuated by transmission of its name, wealth and titles through a real or fictitious descent line'. On the other hand, he criticizes the Anglo-American anthropological notion of the 'corporate group [...] endowed with a moral and legal personality', which rejects 'the criteria of descent, residence, and property [...] but, considering it 'only subject to rights and obligations' (Lévi-Strauss, 1987, p. 151-153).

The strength in the concept of 'house society' lies in locating alliance at the analysis of kinship, which allows neither limiting analysis to family nor taking social groups such as descent group, lineage, or clan *a priori*. Lévi-Strauss notes that the 'conjugal couple constitutes the true kernel of the family, more generally, of the kindred' and continues to make a hypothesis about the fragile alliance in the house society as represented by the conjugal couple: the relationship between the couple and the belonging of their children to either wife's family or husband's family shows the tension between descent and alliance. He contends that this fragility is obscured by the illusion of the material form of the house (Lévi-Strauss, 1987, p. 156). Lévi-Strauss's concept of the 'illusory form' is borrowed from Marx's notion of 'commodity fetishism', in which the commodity (as a relationship between things represented by its price, i.e. exchange value), is considered to obscure the social relationship between the capitalist and wage workers. As much as Marx de-mystified the capitalist production system and analysed

the core working logic of capitalist production, Lévi-Strauss attempted to expose the hidden logic of reproduction and the very elementary kinship institutions in societies. In other words, the concept of house society helps us to de-naturalize either kinship or family. My attempt in this chapter is to de-naturalise DMS by means of ethnographic description of labor process which was entangled with social relationship within and beyond the household.

I found Lévi-Strauss's notion of 'house societies' to be useful for analysing the social relationships of Koreans engaging with domestic cultivation. The Koreans in the RFE, especially those engaging in domestic cultivation, do not form a lineage, clan, or corporate group, and yet not only their social relationships but also their livelihood activities are kinship-based. For them, families and relatives compose the core social relationship, but the relationship among the relatives are so amorphous that it is hard to pin down a rule for defining kin. In discussing the ethnographic details of their social lives, I focus on the greenhouse, constructed and utilized by Korean vegetable growers, taking it as the 'moral person'; and my discussion develops this notion further by exploring the gendered relationship within the house and between houses.

I highlight two points when addressing the morality embedded in the greenhouse. First, I consider the disposability of the greenhouse, which enables Korean vegetable growers to assert their economic capability. With little resources to invest in the construction of a permanent greenhouse (usually made of glass in Russia), Korean vegetable growers in the village of Novoselovo construct greenhouses from whatever materials are at hand and by enlisting a larger labor force.³ This capability is realized through their commercial relationships with the market and with day laborers, which is itself a result of the post-socialist condition. Although Korean vegetable growers are dependent on the market and the labor of non-Korean villagers, I will show how they absorb this reality through their moral emphasis on the 'sacrifice' of fathers for their children, expressed through an analogy concerning the disposability of the body and materials used for greenhouse cultivation. Second, by looking at the changing meaning of the greenhouse in gendered terms and the distinctive spatial use of its interior and exterior, I aim to demonstrate that the relational character of the greenhouse is the projection

3 The material in this chapter largely comes from my fieldwork in a village called Novoselovo, located at the middle point between Khabarovsk and Vladivostok (see Map 3). I stayed in this village for the spring season of 2003 with short follow-up visits in 2004. Later, I stayed for two months in 2009 and made short follow-up visits in 2013 and 2014 whenever I had a chance to visit the RFE.

of a male-gendered person, which is an objectified form of the moral values of the *samostoiatel'nost'* ('independence') of each household. Further, I intend to show that this production-centered, male-gendered person is only meaningful when connected to the female-centered indoor space of the house.

The economic conditions for greenhouse cultivation

The houses occupied by Koreans in the RFE do not embody any distinct architectural features of 'Korean-ness'; you cannot pick out Koreans' houses from those of other people, particularly in urban areas. Koreans tended to buy empty houses,⁴ rather than constructing new ones, when they migrated to Primorskii Krai.⁵ As a result, most of their houses are typical Russian wooden houses or multi-story flats.

However, it is the presence of a greenhouse in the yard that often indicates that a house belongs to Koreans. Almost all houses inhabited by Koreans have a *teplitsa* ('greenhouse') and/or an *ogorod* or *uchastok* (both 'kitchen garden')⁶ (see Figure 4.1); this is the indicator that commercial cultivation is the household's main means of livelihood. Conversely, the absence of a greenhouse indicates that the members of the household are making a living by other means: they might operate a trading stall in the markets, work as employees in the Chinese market, run some other kind of private business, work as migrants in South Korea, or, more rarely, be employed as salaried workers in state institutions in urban areas.⁷ According to one elderly woman, 'Koreans constructed greenhouses, because they had *kori il charhanŭn'* ('good-working brains' in Korean).⁸ I was told that

4 Since the early the 1990s, outward migration from Primorskii Krai has left many houses available for purchase by in-migrants such as Koreans, particularly in rural areas.

5 This contrasts with Pilkington's study (1998), in which many Russians migrated from Central Asia and constructed their own houses in southern Russia.

6 *Uchastok* (pl. *uchastka*) is a more formal word meaning 'allotment'.

7 This description applies to Ussuriisk as well as to Novoselovo, as urban Koreans also engage in greenhouse cultivation. In Novoselovo, it is usually people that do not have a greenhouse that go to South Korea as migrant laborers, but their number is few. The choice of livelihood for Korean residents in this village is highly dependent on global economy, as their decision for migration work has been the most influenced by exchange rate between Russian and South Korean money. Recent EU's sanction on Russia devalued Russian roubles twice, hence, the number of migration work drastically increased in recent years.

8 This woman told me that greenhouse cultivation began after they migrated to this region, but the literature about the migrating cultivation of Koreans during Soviet times states that plastic vinyl was already being utilized in the 1970s (Li, 2000).

people who had previously worked as brigadiers in migrating cultivation (*gobonjil*, see previous chapter) constructed greenhouses ‘straight away’ when they arrived in the RFE.⁹ Many others, however, had worked for state institutions or enterprises in Central Asia, so cultivation was a new experience for them. Nevertheless, everyone agreed that it was the greenhouse that allowed them to escape from extreme poverty. When they arrived in Novoselovo,¹⁰ those who did not construct greenhouses began to cultivate potatoes and cabbages in their yard or in fields rented from the *sovkhos*,¹¹ just ‘like Russians’. The results were devastating. Sudden floods caused cabbages to rot and spring snow froze young plants. One woman explained that they had to live on her ‘grandmother’s pension for bread’ at that time. The greenhouse provided a way for them to escape from such dire poverty through cultivating cash crops.

A distinctive aspect of cultivation activities by Russian Koreans seems to be a certain non-attachment to the land. They do not attribute any meanings to land, such as power, a sense of belonging, or identity – all ideas that are commonly found amongst peasants (see Gudeman and Rivera, 1990). Rather, their identification with cultivation work tends to be somewhat negative; they say, ‘*v samom dele, my ne gde ne rabotaem*’ (‘in practice, we don’t work anywhere’), meaning they are not affiliated with any state institution.¹² While many Koreans positively evaluate their ability to produce good results through cultivation, they often regard their work as an inevitable last option and caused by their migration from Central Asia. At first, I thought this attitude came from the lack of proprietorship over their land, as Koreans in Novoselovo rent land for cultivation from Raikom¹³ and change the fields they use nearly every year. Rents were between 2,000 and 4,000 roubles per hectare in 2003 (one US dollar = approx. 30 roubles at that time), depending on the quality of soil, the location, and

9 In a village not far from Novoselovo, around 21 households had worked together in a *gobonjil* brigade in the past and had migrated together to the village. These households are also related by kinship and marriage. They call their village *Sadoni* (‘affinity’ in Korean).

10 For specific migration processes, see Chapter 2.

11 *Sovkhoz* were state-run collective farms during Soviet times; Novoselovo used to be centered around a *sovkhos*. Even though this farm has been privatized, Koreans continue to call the local authority that administers land-use a *sovkhos*.

12 The background reason for this negation of identification between the ‘peasant’ and cultivation can be found in the peculiar Soviet ideology of ‘work’, as discussed by Humphrey (2002b).

13 Raikom is the abbreviation of *Raionnye Komunal'nye Uslogi*, meaning District Communal Service; during Soviet times, it stood for *Raionnyi Komitet KPSS (Kommunisticheskaia Partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza*, meaning District Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party). However, I have not been able to check the connection between these two terms.

the negotiation process. Unlike Eastern Europe, where the privatization of land was aimed at restoring the ownership from before the socialist period, Russia privatized land according to people's residency and contribution to the state or collective farm at the time of the local implementation of land reforms around the mid-1990s.¹⁴

However, residency alone was not enough for land acquisition.¹⁵ One had to have an affiliation with the state enterprises, and one also had to have the courage to deal with the bureaucratic process. Generally speaking, many Korean villagers showed no interest in land ownership. I asked one man, Vitali, why he paid rent every year rather than buying land. He replied, 'For what use? There is a lot of land here.' In other words, for these rural residents, especially for the peasants, land is not linked to concepts of territory, identity, and rights of ownership, but is seen merely as soil in which to plant crops. This tendency becomes obvious in the actual labor process, as I describe later.¹⁶

Russian Koreans do not perceive their relationship with the local authority as one of dependence signified by the obligation to pay rent. Rather, many Korean villagers consider this to be their unique contribution to the local economy, as it is obvious to them that the land would otherwise have lain idle. The Korean cultivators know that their rent provides a significant income for the former *sovkhos*, which became dysfunctional following the collapse of Soviet socialism. My interlocutors complained

14 Land privatization in Russia began with a presidential decree at the end of 1991. Local implementation followed from the end of 1993 according to constitutional law with regional variances (Barnes, 1998; for a brief description of the situation in the RFE, see Duncan and Ruetschle, 2001). For local responses to agricultural land privatization in Russia, see Louise Perrotta (1998), Myriam Hivon (1998), and Humphrey (1998).

15 In fact, the land privatization law categorized land and people in a complicated way. I do not intend to explore this topic further here, but suffice it to say that in general Koreans did not obtain any land during the land reforms, and nor was it a subject of great interest for them. This cannot be viewed as solely due to their migration, as older residents of the village also showed little interest in land ownership at the time of privatization. This was the situation as I observed in the early 2000s and it certainly changed later. Increasing number of villagers tried to buy land plots in recent years. However, the price of land plots already rose beyond rural residents' affordability. Most of the land plots were purchased by Moscow-based company in the late 2000s, according to my informant.

16 This is illuminating in terms of historical change. During the building of socialism in this region in the 1930s, land allocation for Korean peasants was the most crucial question and was considered to be one of the reasons for their forced displacement (see Chapter 1). Two or three generations later, even though they still cultivate, the meaning of the land has changed significantly. Related to this, Hivon's (1998) study shows that there is no concept of the 'private ownership' of shares of land in collective farms among villagers in the southern part of Russia.

that 'the *sovkhos* does not do anything for them' and only takes rent from them. In addition to paying rent for land, those who do not own tractors also pay a daily rate to rent tractors for the tilling of the fields before planting vegetables.¹⁷

Obtaining the material for greenhouse construction, such as plastic cups and vinyl sheeting, does not seem to present any significant obstacles. Koreans can easily buy such materials imported from China in a nearby city or from the Chinese market in Ussuriisk at cheap prices. I never heard them complain about the price of these items or about difficulty in buying them. As many Korean households have a car or lorry, transportation is also not a big problem. Some households that do not have cars ask those who do to buy some materials for them from the city or to share the transportation costs and carry products to market in the cities. The high prices of the good quality seeds needed to produce a good harvest concerned them more.

Their most crucial investment for cultivation was the purchase of transportation and wages for day laborers. These two significant investments are a potent index of the position of Koreans in the village. From the perspective of non-Korean villagers, cars initially symbolized the wealth of Koreans in a very negative way. One evening, I had a talk with my hostess, an elderly Russian woman who I will call Masha, about alcoholics, which in the end led to a story about a car:

- HP: Babushka Masha, what do you think of people who don't work but drink and hang around all day? I have seen many such people in this village.
- Masha: I don't know [very grumpily].
- HP: In the past were there many people like that?
- Masha: Before perestroika, the *kolkhoz* and *sovkhos* allocated work for people. If they conducted their work as assigned by the *kolkhoz*, they were all right. But after perestroika, we were given our freedom. People are now free and they don't want to work. That's all.
- HP: But Koreans work very hard here.
- Masha: You can see that, because they have got money! So they can buy a car, pay for workers, and cultivate. But poor people don't have any money. They don't have work to do. What

17 In April 2004, Marta Ivanovna bought a tractor from a young man in the neighboring village who was about to leave for Chechnya to join the army during the war there.

can they do? They have to be employed by the Koreans. Before the revolution, rich people had a lot of land and it was passed on to their offspring. But after the revolution, the state confiscated all the land and allocated it to poor people, and then the state collectivized. After perestroika, the present situation is like the one before the revolution. Look at Marta Ivanovna. She will give all she owns to her son when she dies and he will become rich. [...] Marta Ivanovna brought money when she came here from South Korea so she could buy a lorry.

HP: Wait a minute! She didn't come from South Korea. She came from Central Asia, Tajikistan! There was a war and she fled from it.

Masha: Really? I thought she is from South Korea like you and that is why you knew her.

Though many other villagers knew that Koreans came from Central Asia, the idea that they had brought money with them when they came to the village was widespread. Because cars are seen as an object symbolizing wealth and capitalist possessions, my elderly female host assumed that Marta Ivanovna had come from a capitalist country, South Korea.

Conditions that forced Koreans to move to a rural area rather than an urban one are an indicator of their inferior economic status: the cost of housing in cities was beyond their financial means. Many Korean villagers told me that they bought a car with the money earned from watermelon cultivation a few years after they arrived in the village. Ironically, Masha was able to witness the same process in her son's case. In 2003, Masha's son and daughter-in-law cultivated her backyard, while they themselves lived a 'civilized lifestyle' in a flat in the village. Her son was able to use the car from the local branch of a state-run telecommunications enterprise where he worked as a driver; this minivan was at his disposal outside of work hours as well. In that year, they took a long holiday in the summer and took all of the harvested vegetables to Bolshoi Kamen', a city several hours' drive from the village. They stayed there until they had sold all their produce. In September, they were able to buy a lorry with the money they had earned.¹⁸

18 Lorries and cars are mostly second-hand imports from Japan. The price of a 10-year-old 2.5-ton pick-up lorry was around 2,000 US dollars in 2003. Cars are more expensive. For example, a 10-year-old Toyota Corolla cost between 3,500 and 4,000 US dollars. The price changes depending on how much the Krai government imposes as customs when they are imported. According to

The process by which Koreans purchased vehicles was similar to that of Masha's son, i.e., using the money from the sale of harvested vegetables. Yet, what differentiated Koreans was the way that they shared transportation and raised finance for purchases among close kin, instead of taking advantage of connections with state institutions, as Masha's son had done. Generally speaking, Koreans started out sharing transportation and then purchased a vehicle with credit from close relatives such as siblings and cousins. My acquaintance Sasha Kim was able to buy his first lorry with money borrowed from his wife's siblings and he paid back the money after a few years' work in the fields. This demonstrates Koreans' reliance on an extensive kinship network, as discussed in the previous chapter. Another case concerned a woman who bought a car with money she earned by migrant labor in South Korea. Although the means that different people employ to buy a car seem to be fairly diverse, the unifying principle is that, next to a house, a car is the first and foremost object to buy, not only for cultivation work and trading, but also to facilitate other consumption-related activities and visits to relatives.

The main crop that Koreans in Novoselovo cultivate for sale is watermelons.¹⁹ Besides this, they also grow peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, and eggplants. The clustering of many Korean households in this village and a neighboring village seem to make it easier to sell their products, most of which are sold wholesale. There is great demand and a reliable market for the agricultural goods that Koreans in Novoselovo produce. The wholesalers send the watermelons and vegetables to other regions of Russia such as Sakhalin Island, Kamchatka, Sakha Republic, and Magadan. In summer, some are sold at the roadside of the main junction near the village to passing drivers, and some people take their produce to the markets in bigger cities such as Vladivostok and Ussuriisk to get better prices. Imported Chinese agricultural products and Chinese cultivators who grow similar vegetables in the RFE are significant competitors, as they sell at very low prices. Some Koreans think that the Chinese influence is the decisive

a man who was trading in second-hand cars from Japan, they buy a car that is around 10 years old at less than 500 US dollars, and the import tax is twice or even three times more than the price they paid in Japan.

19 The village is located near the Khanka Lake (see Map 3), and its climate makes it suitable for the cultivation of watermelons, which require a certain minimum number of sunny days in summer. Marta Ivanovna told me that her husband has done army service near the village, so he knew that it was suitable to cultivate watermelons. The famous traveller Przheval'ski also commented on the watermelon and melon cultivation near the Khanka Lake during his travels in 1865-7 (1947, p. 68).

factor that determines the price of their products each year, while others think that the weather and technical machinery are more important.²⁰ For example, in 2003, because of the outbreak of the SARS epidemic in China, the inflow of Chinese migrants and Chinese agricultural products was restricted, resulting in a higher income for the Korean vegetable growers. However, in general, urban consumers prefer watermelon cultivated in Russia, so their products can be priced higher than those of the Chinese. In fact, where the food has been grown is not enough to assure consumers that the products are *nashi* ('ours'), but the growers and sellers also must be 'our people'.²¹ This is where the Koreans' sense of belonging to Russia is highlighted in their cultivating and trading activities: my interlocutor convinced customers to buy his watermelons by saying, 'We grow them for ourselves, using just a small amount of chemicals, but not nearly as much as the Chinese do.'

Let me present the example of a couple in their early forties with two unmarried sons to help us better understand the Koreans' cultivation work in Novoselovo. The couple harvested about 20-30 tons of watermelon per hectare in 2003. The wholesale price was about 2-3 roubles per kilogram 'depending on the size of the watermelon' and so they were able to make 60,000-90,000 roubles (2,000-3,000 US dollars) per hectare, according to my calculations. As they cultivated three hectares of watermelon in 2003, the annual income of the household was roughly 6,000-9,000 US dollars, though they do not know exactly how much net profit they made and the money they earned was *raskhoziat* ('dispersed') in various directions, which are not recorded or calculated. As Stephen Gudeman and Alberto Rivera (1990,

20 When Korean villagers gather for social occasions such as birthday parties, they talk endlessly about their cultivation work. The talk usually leads to a discussion of important economic issues such as the prices and purchasing routes for the materials and seeds, who is doing well or poorly in cultivation, etc.

21 Chinese farmers come to the RFE in spring and rent fields to cultivate watermelons; these are considered to be invaders to the watermelon market of Russian Koreans, because they keep the price of watermelons lower. Russian Korean cultivators try to take advantage of anti-Chinese sentiments to combat this trend. Some of these migrant cultivators are ethnic Koreans from northeast China, but this ethnic aspect of the Chinese migrant farmers is never mentioned by Russian Koreans when they talk about competition with Chinese products in the market. Watermelons produced locally were sold between 5 and 7 roubles per kilogram in Ussuriisk in 2003 and the seller put a big note saying, 'Watermelons from Spassk' (the name of the Raion that the village belongs to), while the Chinese ones were sold for approximately half the price. Compared to 'food nationalism' in Moscow where 'our' and 'not-our' food is the main criteria of nationalistic consumption (Caldwell, 2002), the 'local' and the 'Chinese' is the central criterion in the RFE for categorizing food between good/healthy and bad/unhealthy, at least for agricultural products.

p. 118-119) also noted in their study on peasants in Panama, this income is far from a 'profit', as a significant portion must be spent on next year's cultivation to pay for 'the replacement of the base'.

The relatively high income of Koreans from commercial cultivation in Novoselovo is the basis of their sense of independence, especially in relation to the state. This sense of independence is evident from in monetary exchange with local authorities. Some cultivators who had experience with *gobonjil* (Chapter 3), drew a contrast between the provision of all the materials, land, and tilling services by the Soviet state farms and their payment for such provisions in Novoselovo. The notion of independence therefore reflects the disappearance of social protections provided by the state and a corresponding increase in dependence on market relations that center on the sale of harvested products, the employment of day laborers, and the payment of rent to the quasi-limited company that is the successor of the state farm.

There are deeply ambivalent feelings about the dismantling of the old Soviet system and the increasing influence of market forces. The feeling that they have been deprived of their *pravo* ('right') to demand or claim something from the state derives from the tacit assumption that this is due to their position as migrants. For example, my acquaintance told me that the local Raikom had begun to charge Korean households about 1,000 roubles a year in the name of 'nature preservation', saying that it was because Korean vegetable growers left plastic vinyl in the fields after cultivation. According to her, other Russians carrying out similar greenhouse cultivation were not charged,²² as 'they would write to *zhalovat*' ("complain") about it', but Koreans pay up in order to avoid trouble. Because of this, 'Koreans are seen as *tupye* ("stupid") by the villagers', she said. Yet, the status of migrants also enabled them to employ day laborers without hesitation, free from the socialist morality that tends to perceive such monetary transactions negatively (also see chapter 2).

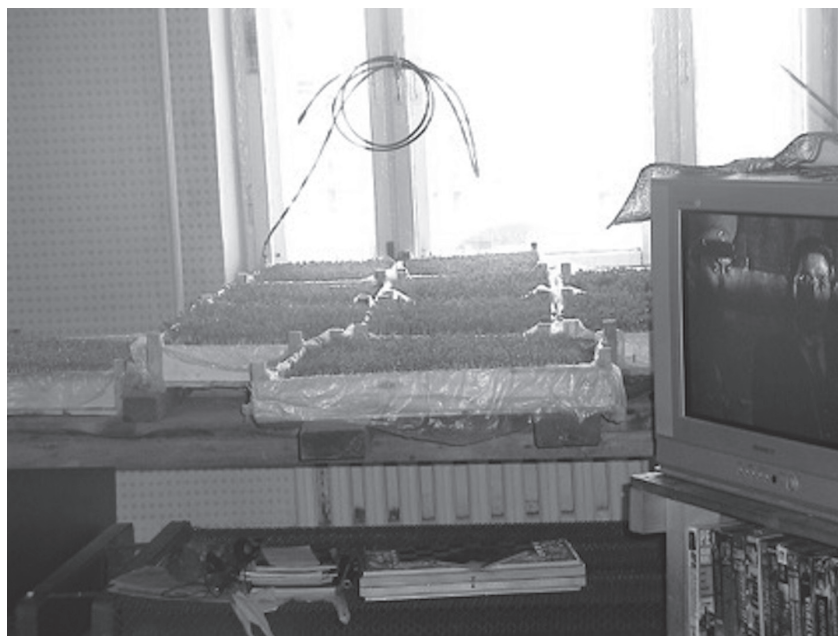
22 Some Russian villagers have also begun to engage in greenhouse cultivation, as shown in the case of Masha's son.

Figure 4.1 A greenhouse in the backyard of Marta Ivanovna's house



Figure 4.2 Inside of a greenhouse, seen from the entrance



Figure 4.3 Day laborers**Figure 4.4 Seedlings indoors**

Greenhouse construction and the preparation of young plants indoors

Greenhouses are built in the yard beside or behind the house, wherever there is space for them. The construction of a greenhouse is carried out exclusively by the male members of the household, or by means of cooperative work among close male kin from related households. In that sense, the greenhouse symbolizes masculinity and male creativity. Greenhouses constructed by Korean villagers are temporarily and spontaneously improvised. The construction is more a work of bricolage, combining materials that happen to be at hand, rather than engineering (Lévi-Strauss, 1962). They are constructed every two or three years, and the frame is not very sturdy. Many Korean cultivators have been expanding the size of their greenhouses in the last few years. Rather than constructing an additional greenhouse, they sometimes prefer to construct a larger one for the convenience of maintenance and to save on the cost of heating. The frame of the greenhouse is made of wooden poles and it is covered with plastic vinyl (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

As can be seen in the pictures, many wooden poles are recycled and may previously have been old pillars of houses or long logs that escaped being chopped into firewood. Indeed, when I first arrived in the village in spring, the scene of greenhouse construction with long logs by Korean men that greeted me was in stark contrast with that of Russian men chopping logs for firewood and stacking them neatly alongside the house walls. The other important structural element of the greenhouses is a chimney for heating. These are *truby* ('pipes') taken from heating networks across the village. In Stephen Collier's study (2011) of a town in the European region of Russia close to the border with Ukraine, he notes the enduring nature of the Soviet social infrastructure: pipelines, cable networks, and the local administration of public services remained functional despite the dismantling of the socialist state, which he refers to as 'post-Soviet social'. However, dismantled pipes from the public services network that have been fitted as chimneys in the greenhouses of Novoselovo illustrate the different way in which the socialist state has been dismantled on this periphery. The interior of the greenhouse presents an assemblage of recycled wooden poles, chimneys made of portions of pipe taken from the old network of pipelines, and cheap plastic cups and vinyl imported from China to grow the seedlings. It exemplifies the local variant of the post-Soviet transition: natural gas was never supplied for domestic use in this Far Eastern region, and coal or wooden logs continued to be the main

natural resources for heating; the pipeline networks in the village carried heated water from the regional power generating station to flats and other communal buildings, and the pipes were taken away and sold when some of these buildings became vacant. The lack of infrastructure facilities is something that Koreans continually referenced in comparison with the more convenient facilities and modern lifestyle that they had experienced in Central Asia.

In addition to constructing greenhouses, processing the soil and making wooden boxes for young plants is also male work. They do not use the soil in its natural state, but sieve it to make it fine and to remove small stones. Plants are never planted directly in the ground until they are strong and tall enough to be transported to the fields, but are instead planted in soil in indoor containers or in wooden boxes that can be moved later. Therefore, a large number of containers are required. There are two types of containers. One type is a rectangular box made of wooden panels, and the other is a small disposable cup or a very narrow cylinder-shaped plastic vinyl tube that is cut to the height of a young plant (about 5-6 cm). As these small plastic vinyl cups are not self-standing, they are put into a wooden box that makes transport for transplantation easier (see Figure 4.2). Any used yogurt containers or plastic beverage bottles are not thrown away, as these can also be used as plant containers. For example, Marta Ivanovna often bought yogurt for her grandchildren and used the containers as plant pots. I was also impressed by the beautiful roses that were growing in the soil contained by old tires near the gate of her house.

The greenhouse as threshold

The greenhouse not only connects the house to the outside world, but also marks a boundary. In this section, I explore the spatial use of the greenhouse in relation to the market and the house. To begin with, let us examine how the boundary of a household is made visible in the daily lives of Korean villagers. The clearest boundary-keeper for each house is a barking dog. Usually dogs are tethered close to the gate and bark madly at 'strangers'. Sometimes the dog mediates the changing relationship between the host and the visitor. If the dog still barks fiercely even after several visits and increasing closeness with the visitor, the host tells the dog off for not knowing 'our guests' from strangers, in a way that is audible to the guest. Or a close friend or relative who visits frequently might themselves tell off the dog in a way that expresses their sense of intimacy with the host. However,

people who ignore the fierce behavior of the dog are considered outsiders or even potential dog thieves if they attempt to pass through the gate of the house without regard to the prohibition represented by the dog.²³ Dogs are not pets, but guards, and I have not seen a single household that does not keep a dog. According to Korean custom, the dog may be slaughtered and cooked on special occasions such as a birthday party.²⁴

Apart from dogs, Koreans rarely keep any domestic livestock, although many Russians raised chickens or cows in the early 2000s when all of their resources and labor were dedicated to agriculture. Chickens sometimes cause arguments between Koreans and their Russian neighbors, especially in spring when young plants are taken out of the greenhouses to get more sunshine in the yard. Free ranging chickens often pick at the plants, and this may lead to heated exchanges. Usually the Koreans ask their neighbors to keep their chickens on their own property and not to allow them to cross the boundary between them.²⁵

As the vegetables grow, interactions between Koreans and Russians increase, particularly in terms of employment. Once the seedlings have begun to grow in the greenhouse the workload increases; extra hands are needed when it is time to transplant them. Nevertheless, Korean cultivators' 'hard work' cannot be presented in quantifiable labor hours. Their hard work is constructed and highlighted in a specific spatio-temporal dimension, usually in contrast with indoor comforts and the laziness of the winter season. Yet comfort at home is very hard to achieve in the RFE due to its poor social infrastructure, which is the main reason for the depopulation of the region. Many people from Central Asia remember being surprised at the 'horrible' living conditions in the RFE upon their arrival. They were particularly concerned about the lack of plumbing and the use of wood-fired stoves to

23 Masha complained about these kinds of people. According to her, some alcoholics steal dogs in the village. During my stay there, an interlocutor who 'drinks vodka too much' came inside Masha's house, despite the dog's fierce barking, to take me to his cousin's birthday party. At that moment Masha returned home and told me off for 'bringing a stranger to her house'. The fierce disposition of the dogs in the early 2000s reflected the social atmosphere in the RFE then; when I returned to the village in 2010, the dogs were less fierce and some were even set free to move around the village, which had not happened because of the fear of dog-thieves at my first visit.

24 In Russia Koreans are notorious for eating dogs, as it was occasionally reported in the nation-wide newspaper during Soviet times. An interesting essay on this custom was written by a Russian woman married to a Korean man. She confesses how she came to love this food with the addition of hot spices (Akisheva, 2002).

25 There are not usually any walls separating the land between houses. At best, a ditch for the disposal of dirty water marks the boundary.

heat the house. Even more striking for them was that the old residents in Primorskii Krai did not appear to view these things as inconvenient.

The experience that Koreans have of living in different places creates the desire to improve their living circumstances, while the older residents of this region seem to be content to be stuck with these ‘inconveniences’.²⁶ In reverse, their statement that they have also gotten used to the inconvenient lifestyle testifies to their emplacement. This pursuit of comfort inside the home is in stark contrast to the hard work that takes place outside, and this spatial arrangement involves clearly defined gendered practices. In the greenhouse, cultivators need to keep up with the growth of the vegetables. This involves transplanting the seedlings from wooden boxes to disposable cups, and finally to the field. This is very intensive work; if the space between plants becomes too small, their growth will be inhibited. At least 7,000 seedlings per hectare need transplanting from a box filled with soil, to individual cups, and then to the field in late May or early June. After that, watering, weeding, and harvesting increase the demand for labor. The average-sized plot for a household composed of a couple with young children is three hectares, resulting in over 20,000 seedlings to care for. It is difficult to describe the intensity of their work through figures or to convey the physical pain and bodily exhaustion that it involves. Dripping with sweat in the hot greenhouse and having back pain are seen as necessary to help the vegetables grow. Marta Ivanovna talked of her body as if it were elastic: ‘I am skinny in summer [pushing her cheeks with both hands to make them smaller] because of the work, but I become fat again in winter.’

Given the amount of work involved in the transplantation process and subsequent work in the fields, the hiring of Russian villagers as *rabochie* (‘day laborers’; *ssakguni* in Korean, meaning ‘workers for money’) is unavoidable. The Koreans’ ostensible identity as migrants appears to enable them to hire day laborers – something that might otherwise be difficult, given that ‘working for money’ in Russian rural areas was a largely alien concept, with the traditional notion of ‘help’ preferred at least until the mid-1990s (see Humphrey, 1998, Epilogue). In other words, the Koreans’ position as strangers (Simmel, 1971b)²⁷ in the village was one factor that enabled wage and labor exchange between Korean villagers and poor Russian villagers

26 My hostess, Masha, showed me her skill in economizing by using the minimum amount of water possible. She used to go to the public bath every week, paying 10 roubles for the entry fee, but the public bath was shut when I returned to the village in 2010.

27 See also Chapter 2 in this book.

in what I consider to be an alliance of 'the dispossessed' (Humphrey, 1997; Harvey, 2005, p. 168-171).²⁸ These two groups of 'dispossessed' occupy the lowest positions in the hierarchy of rural Russia. While Korean cultivators suffer a certain lack of social legitimacy due to their status as migrants, Russian day laborers have been left economically destitute with the crumbling of state economic enterprises. Many poor non-Korean villagers do not have any salary from their old state enterprise, and the daily wage that they earn by working for the Koreans is their only source of cash income. Given the social exclusion in terms of sociality discussed in Chapter 2, this commercial labor exchange is an effective conduit that enables Korean cultivators to connect with the world outside of their domestic domain through the money they pay to laborers and the money they earn by selling of their products.

The interwoven positions between these two groups of private cultivators and daily wage workers can be seen as 'an elaboration of a sense of peripherality' of these two groups 'in changing and mutually constituting relations with each other' (Stewart, 1997). Although they are socially mixing together through work, Korean vegetable growers make a distinction between themselves and Russian day laborers that follow their bodily desires 'to drink and hang around'. The most common remark that Koreans make about Russian day laborers is that they often buy vodka as soon as they get their wages, without regard to whether their children are starving or not at home.²⁹ However, despite this distinction highlighted by the Korean vegetable growers, the relationship between them is symbiotic or interdependent, as their work is essential for successful commercial cultivation.³⁰ Indeed, the dependence on day laborers is acutely acknowledged by the

28 In 2004, day laborers working from 9 am to 6 pm were paid 60 roubles (about 2 USD) for greenhouse work and 80 roubles (about 3.50 USD) for work in the fields. In addition, they were provided with lunch, a packet of cigarettes, and transportation to and from their house (usually by a Korean with a car or a lorry). However, wages and the cost of living have dramatically increased since then, owing to Russia's burgeoning economy based on the sale of its natural resources. When I revisited the village in 2010, daily wages had risen to 200-300 roubles. Due to the large investment required, many Korean households had given up the cultivation of watermelons,

29 Some children who were neglected by their parents also worked for Korean households at the lower rate of 50 roubles per day. This gave rise to accusations of 'slave labor' by the other villagers against the Koreans.

30 According to one interlocutor, each Korean household in Novoselovo employs an average of six day laborers. Given the number of Korean households in the village (57), Korean cultivators were not able to find all of their day laborers in the same village, but had to hire more workers from a neighboring village. In 2010, when I returned to the village, the shortage of laborers had become more salient. Some households recruited laborers from distant cities and other

Koreans, as their only alternative to greenhouse cultivation is heading to South Korea as labor migrants or selling seedlings in the spring, only relying on the labor of family members.

It is interesting that people occupying a disadvantageous position in a given society represent their cultural world through a distinction between themselves and 'other' people who are in a similar or poorer position. The most salient distance-making often seems to be found in the practice of non-commensality between these groups. Some ethnographic studies report that group boundaries are marked by the non-sharing food in the same space (for example, Stewart, 1997; Lemon, 1996; Carsten, 1989); and this can be seen in the case of Koreans and Russian day laborers. Though Korean cultivators work amicably with Russian day laborers and often exchange jokes, they rarely eat together. Lunch is brought to the greenhouse on a tray and day laborers eat in the greenhouse, while the Korean men go inside the house to eat.³¹

Janet Carsten provides an interesting interpretation of two different spheres of economic activities concerning household and kinship in Lankawi, a Malaysian fishing village, where the men pursued commercialized fishing and the women practiced self-subsistent rice cultivation. She notes the non-commensality among the fishermen who were related through commercial wages. In the striking phrase 'cooking money', she suggests that this non-commensality is a symbolic construction of communal kinship value in contrast with commercial and monetary value. She interrogates the concept of community by interpreting cooking by women as a transformational act and re-examines the concept of 'society' as centered on the household rather than on males' commercial economic activity of fishing. Cooking 'transforms one kind of community, based on differentiation, exchange and alliance, and primarily male, into the other, based on the notion of a collection of similar female-dominated houses' (Carsten, 1989, p. 138). After discussing how the greenhouse represents male autonomy in the next section, I will return to the meaning of Korean women's cooking in terms of nurturing and extending the household, not only in the sense of raising the next generation but also in the formation of an extensive network beyond the individual household.

households had been forced to stop cultivating watermelons, instead living on the sale of seedlings in the spring and trading vegetables on the roadside of the main road.

³¹ Lemon (1996) describes a similar case of incommensurability between Moscow Roma actors and a Russian crew who were shooting a film together.

The greenhouse in gendered terms

The appearance of the greenhouse can be viewed as representing the male capacity³² of the household in quantifiable terms. For example, one can say that, if there are many young men in the household, they tend to make a bigger greenhouse – such as in the case of brothers who cooperate together. Nevertheless, there are cases that contravene this equation between the size of greenhouse and the number of men in the household. Even if there are men in the household, the size of the greenhouse is proportional to the number of ‘dependent members’ of the household and what kind of relationship is manifested through the greenhouse. This seems to certify the theory of A.V. Chayanov (1966), who discussed the Russian peasant economy in the 1920s. He analysed the domestic economy in terms of economic cost and gains, in accordance with the available labor force and the number of dependents in the household. Rather than seeing dependency as a cost, however, I am going to highlight the moral force of dependency that creates the motivation to work. I will begin by describing some cases that illustrate the relationship between the male capacity of a household and its greenhouse.

The first case is that of a household composed of an elderly mother and two adult sons, one disabled and the other divorced. Here, the male capacity was limited to feeding themselves and their mother, and the small size of the greenhouse reflected this relational capacity. This household was one of the poorest households among the Koreans in the village. A similar situation is that of a bachelor in his forties living at home with his elderly mother. To feed just himself and his mother, he did not need to exert himself and work hard. He maintained a small greenhouse to enable around one hectare of plot cultivation and indulged in drinking vodka in his spare time.³³ A contrasting case is that of an elderly woman called Olya, who lived on her own, but had the burden of paying for the court case for her younger son, who was in jail, and of supporting her disabled elder son’s family, who were living in Uzbekistan. As a result, she mobilized her nephews (her late husband’s younger sister’s sons)

32 I follow Marilyn Strathern’s notion of ‘gendered capacity’, which is ‘the capabilities of people’s bodies and minds, what they contain within themselves and their effects on others’ (1988, p. 182).

33 The elderly mother did not depend on her son’s cultivation, but lived on a monthly pension, which had been set at the national minimum rate (for most people about 600 roubles (20 USD) in 2003 and a little more for others, depending on their circumstances). While there were many alcoholics in the village who did not work at all, at least it can be said that the Korean alcoholics worked for their old mothers. During my fieldwork, I did not see any households where a single man lived alone, although there were several composed of single elderly women.

and managed to cultivate one hectare on her own (see Appendix 2). In these examples, the size of the household and its potential for growth is also worth noting. In the case of the bachelor, there were no family members for him to feed apart from his mother, and no prospect of the household increasing. As a result, his greenhouse did not grow either. Most Korean families in the village, however, were struggling to keep up with the increasing size of their greenhouses and the land that they cultivated, reflecting the changing size of their households. The size of a greenhouse can therefore be said to be proportionate to the way in which the household relationships and male capacity are manifested, rather than being based on the desire of individuals to maximize their profit, as assumed in neoclassical economics.

When I visited the village again in 2004, many households had increased the size of their plot by two or three hectares and, as a result, the size of their greenhouses had also increased. This required the input of more resources, mainly in the form of wages for a greater number of Russian day laborers. However, this expansion in the scale of cultivation could be characterized as ‘house-holding’, as defined by Polanyi (2001, p. 55-56). In other words, domestic cultivation did not develop into corporate businesses involved in industrial agriculture; instead, the day laborers were incorporated into a household overseen by Korean men. These temporary households of seasonal workers were set up as camps in the fields in the summer, where the day laborers worked, ate, and slept. They can be viewed as a type of ‘transposed greenhouse’, alongside the transplantation of the watermelon seedlings to the field. The Korean men who run these camps were usually addressed as ‘*khoziain*’ (‘host’) (Rogers, 2006) by the workers and were judged not only by their ability to produce profits, but also by their overall management skills that enabled them to run the enterprise smoothly. This included recruiting laborers, negotiating with wholesalers, obtaining credit, purchasing good quality seed, making sure that the workers had everything they needed to perform their roles, and sorting out unexpected trouble. These Korean hosts and other socially active members of society in the village were usually called by nicknames, such as ‘Kapitan Kolia’ (Captain Nikolai), ‘Banzai’ (nobody in the village knew the meaning of this word, but my guess is that it may originate from the Japanese word meaning ‘Hooray!’), ‘Tsentr Sasha’ (Sasha living in the center), ‘Apteka Kolia’ (Nikolai who lives opposite the chemist), etc., and such appellations affirm their public persona.³⁴ However, becoming a *khoziain* is difficult without

34 Rubie S. Watson (1986) discusses the relationship between the named and the nameless by gender in a Chinese lineage village. According to her research, the more names men acquire,

the consent and cooperation of one's wife. In 2010, when I returned to the village, I found that many men had given up expanding the scale of their cultivation, and they told me it was mainly due to their wives' objections or a decision on their own part to prioritize 'female values'³⁵ such as a clean house, more time to spend relaxing at home with the family, and the clear division between work and leisure time.

The gendered nature of the greenhouse is clearly illustrated by the case of two single sisters, Galya and Anya, who were both divorced (see Appendix 2). Galya had one daughter and Anya was raising three sons but, as single women, they struggled to cultivate land. Galya used to cultivate a half hectare with the help of her brother and brother-in-law, who would construct the greenhouse, plough the field, and provide transportation. The situation was the same for Anya, whose sons were still young children when they came to the village. In 2004, Galya gave up cultivation because she was able to get a temporary secretarial job in the village school earning 100 US dollars a month. Anya, however, continued cultivation and expanded the plot of land as her sons grew. In 2003, her household was one of the poorest amongst the Koreans in the village, as she was living in a very small one-bedroom house with her three sons, but by the following year things seemed to have improved. She had been able to buy a bigger house for herself and her two unmarried sons, and had given her old house to her eldest son, who had married just before my visit in 2004.³⁶ As soon as the eldest son graduated from vocational school in the village, he and his younger brother (aged 17) worked together and were able to earn enough money to buy another house.

According to Galya, 'Cultivation needs a man and a car at home. Otherwise, it is almost impossible.' I asked her whether she could hire laborers if she had more money to invest, but she went on to explain: 'It's not enough just having money to hire laborers. There needs to be a male around the house, even if it is just a small boy. It's because laborers don't want to come to work in a house where there are only women.' Managing a greenhouse symbolizes the male autonomy of a household, and taking over that male capacity appeared to be a burden for Galya. Although as a single mother Anya had to depend on her male relatives' help for the construction of a

the more they are socialized and individuated, whereas women remain 'nameless' over their entire lifetime, confined within the domestic household.

35 By 'female values', I refer to the values that resulted in wives' objections to the expansion of cultivation. Gendered values and gendered persons are not always isomorphic; in other words, women can advocate for 'male values' and the other way around.

36 The couple were not able to have a proper wedding party due to a lack of money.

greenhouse, now that her eldest son was married he no longer needed 'help' from his relatives, but was instead able to 'cooperate' with them. Interestingly, although Korean men quite clearly help each other's households and rely on labor from Russian workers, they always emphasized that they work only *sam* ('for oneself') whenever I showed curiosity about who cooperates with whom. Thus, the autonomy of a household is represented by its male members, who, as shown in the case of Anya's eldest son, may not necessarily be adults. Instead, they may be a growing presence nurtured by their mother, containing within themselves the potential to produce the next generation of children, just as a greenhouse contains wooden boxes holding seedlings.

This case of the two single mothers also illustrates that the autonomy of a household is something that is valued and actively pursued. Help and support is not taken for granted; although a household may have to rely heavily on siblings, great efforts are made not to be indebted to others. This can be seen in the sacrifices that Anya was willing to make to provide her eldest son with a car once he was grown up, which is indispensable for anyone seeking to engage in commercial cultivation. Anya told me that she had saved her state benefit for single mothers for seven years to buy that car, to the extent of only feeding her children potatoes from the garden and bread bought with her pension.

The extended space of the house

As discussed in the previous section, the relationship between the greenhouse and the house is exclusive in terms of meals. People coming to the greenhouse to work are classified as 'others' and thus do not eat food inside the house, whereas people visiting the house are guests who are *svoi* ('our own people'). They come to *so-obshchatsia* ('socialize'), and hospitality is shown by offering them food. The house is viewed as a place for consumption rather than production: this unproductive character is expressed in phrases related to immobility, such as *sigit doma* ('sitting at home') which denotes a boring, lazy, motionless, and aimless state³⁷ in contrast to 'working' or

37 Munn (1986) discusses bodily speed in terms of 'expansive spatiotemporal control' in her study on Gawa in Melanesia. Halting or slow body movement is evaluated negatively, as it 'entails [...] a contradiction or negative transformation of the body to a level of spatiotemporal integration in which it does not form a dynamic interrelationship with the external, physical world.' In a similar way, my hostess, Masha, referred to the period of unemployment of her son in the early 1990s by saying, 'He was sitting at home for six months.'

'running'. These verbal phrases also have gendered connotations related to activities in certain spaces. For example, women are rarely described using the phrase, 'sitting at home', presumably because home is considered to be the 'natural' environment for women, whereas men who stay at home 'not working' are often described with this phrase. In contrast, if a wife moves around on her own outside the house, her actions are generally not evaluated positively.

However, the seemingly confined domestic space of the house expands on certain occasions to make the household the center of Korean social interactions. On such occasions, the interior space of the house is transformed into extra-household space by the presence of guests (Hirschon, 1989, p. 13). Thus, the house has a double orientation: inward in relation to the greenhouse, and outward in relation to guests. The exclusive and closed nature of the household is seen in relation to the outsiders in the greenhouse, and its inclusive and open nature is seen in the wider social interaction that takes place in the presence of guests. In both cases, food becomes the main medium for defining the intra- and extra-household.

Reneé Hirschon's work (1989; 1993) is illuminating in its discussion of the use and organization of domestic space by the descendants of Greek refugees who were displaced from their Asia Minor homeland in the early 1920s by population exchange between Greece and Turkey. In an urban refugee quarter in Athens, Greece, the 'independence of each nuclear family' or 'household' 'is manifested in the creation of separate kitchens as the realm of each housewife' (Hirschon, 1993, p. 70). Thus, even though a mother and her married daughter live together in the same house, they form separate households by creating their own kitchens; hence, there can be as many kitchens as the number of married daughters in a house. In this case, the autonomy of each household is based on uxorilocal residence and the provision of living space for the couple as a dowry by the bride's parents.

Notable in Hirschon's ethnography is that women's activities are 'vital in maintaining social life' (1993, p. 84) and that households are connected through two spatial objects: the kitchen and the chair. The kitchen represents the autonomy of a household by providing a table of food for the guests, who 'bridge the "inside" and "outside" worlds by their presence in the home' (Hirschon, 1993, p. 80). In the longer version of her ethnography (1989, p. 145), Hirschon also mentions that 'a woman's position in society, her attainment of full adulthood as mistress of the house depends upon marriage, and thus upon her husband.' In other words, the separate kitchen can be seen to symbolize the autonomy of a household insofar as there is a man who supplies products, or the money to buy products, to be cooked

and served. Hirschon (1993) also refers to the large number of chairs that are often moved out of the house into the street, thereby forming a community of the 'neighborhood', given the geographical proximity of the refugees' houses. In comparison, Korean households are spaced further apart, so the car takes on a significance similar to the chairs of the Greek refugees. In addition to being necessary for transporting materials to the fields or vegetables to retail locations, cars are also essential items for enabling social interaction between Korean households, such as visiting relatives in various locations. The image of Koreans in the village is tightly linked to their cars, usually in a negative way as shown by Masha's comments described earlier.³⁸ Therefore, the formation of sociality through the object is not limited to the space-making of a household, but also by the body itself becoming a mobile somatic space in a vehicle (see Munn, 1986; Casey, 1996).³⁹

Visitors from far away often stay overnight or for a longer period of time. Floor space in the house is maximized by the Korean tradition of sitting and sleeping on the floor. Many households possess one or more low homemade tables, about the height of a coffee table, with folding legs that can be set up when guests come, and small homemade wooden stools that can be offered as seats. The height of the stool is only about 10-20 cm and can be easily moved around the house; they are highly versatile and are used not only as chairs for guests, but also for moving young plants in the greenhouse or

38 One reason for the negative image of cars owned by Koreans comes from the sexual intercourse that takes place in cars between Korean men and Russian women for the exchange of money. Concerning this practice, villagers blame Korean men for 'buying sex' and Koreans blame Russian women for being promiscuous. Such views, however, tend to be expressed in private rather than being voiced openly.

39 Casey (1996) provides fresh insight into our understanding of place by adopting Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. He says, 'place integrates with body as much as body with place [...] we need to recognize the crucial interaction between body, place and motion. [...] Part of the power of place, its very dynamism, is found in its encouragement of motion' (Casey, 1996, p. 22-23, emphasis removed). Though I find his discussion helpful as an alternative perspective for the understanding of the relationship between subject and place, which were assumed to be separable in structuralism, I am not convinced by his suggestion of 'the intentionality of place'. Rather, I would suggest that we need to understand 'place' as an agency embodying human relationships. In other words, it is the 'inter-subjectivity' between persons in places that moves the mind and body of the person, rather than the place itself. This also applies to forms of transportation. Casey continues: 'an unmoving body may still move if it is transported by another moving body: the driver of a car, the rider on horseback'. I think that, rather than focusing on whether the body is moving or not, we need to consider how the unmoving bodies allow the moving body to act. As Munn explains, the body or vehicle can be understood as 'a spatial field and spatial field as a bodily field' (Munn, 1996, p. 94), which means that the vehicle can be moved insofar as there is an agency embodied in the body held by the vehicle.

by women for preparing food. Another notable use of space that allows for the accommodation of guests is a raised wooden platform that is found in many houses, usually in a corner of the kitchen or hallway.⁴⁰ This platform is not found in Russian homes but is common in Central Asia, where it is used extensively for eating and sleeping.

Food: everyday meals and ceremonial banquets

The transformation of the domestic space from reserved for a closed family to a place of open sociality is marked by different amounts and types of food. In this respect, I discuss two types of food: the everyday (sometimes referred to as 'quotidian') and the ceremonial.⁴¹ I consider these two kinds of meals to be related to each other, in that everyday meals enable bodily growth, which is objectified and acknowledged by ceremonial meals in the presence of guests from outside the household. This follows Strathern (1988)'s proposition for understanding the relationship between feeding and growth. According to her (1988, p. 251), 'feeding and growing relationships do indeed have to be distinguished'.⁴² In other words, she criticizes the direct connection between 'food' and 'bodily substance' in the 'Eurocentric image'. Strathern continues that 'it is not the food as such that must be analysed, but the feeding relationship, the question of whether food is "given" (mediated exchange) or "shared" (unmediated)' (1988, p. 251, citation omitted).

At first, repetitive acts in the process of everyday labor and eating do not appear to be related to growth; the calories provided by daily meals are burnt up by working and everyday activities. These meals are taken for granted, and this is shown by the absence of any expressions of thanks

40 Tomlinson (2002, p. 64-7) also notes the presence of this platform in the Meskhetian Turk's houses. In Marta Ivanovna's house, instead of a wooden platform, her husband had transformed one room into a traditional Korean-style room with a *guduri* (Korean, 'under-floor heating system') (see Dzharlygasinova, 1977; Chun, 2002). He installed a log-fire pit outside the house that in the evenings fed heat to the floor. This was the favourite room of the household members, and Marta's son slept there with his wife and two children. One of the most popular items brought back by people visiting South Korea was an electric blanket to use when sleeping or sitting on the floor.

41 Kyung Soo Chun (2002) categorizes Korean food in Kazakhstan into three categories: everyday, ritual, and preserving for future use. In this paper, I focus on the first two of these categories.

42 Her suggestion was elaborated in the review of ethnographic material on the Trobriand Islands, where the act of nurturing and the nurtured were not directly related, but were mediated via another relation.

or gratitude at the moment of eating. The purpose of everyday meals is to replace what has been lost from the body and to assuage hunger; hence no great consideration is given to the taste or type of food prepared. Staple foods form the center of such meals, and they act as an indicator of living conditions and the ability of a father to provide basic sustenance for his family (Strathern, 1988, p. 182-187).

'I don't want to cook anything today,' tired Korean wives will say before supertime after a long day of labor. This means that they will make an evening meal of bread, sliced smoked ham, tomatoes, cucumbers, and (in summer) whatever is available from the kitchen garden.⁴³ In winter, they eat better quality meat, and people tend to become *tolsty* ('fat'). Many people told me that their main staples were bread and potatoes, since they became 'hungry very soon' after eating rice. People often asked me whether there was bread in South Korea; those who had worked there as migrants complained that there had been 'no Russian bread' and that they had gotten 'fed up with three rice meals a day.' In this usage, 'Russian bread' is a generic term for their everyday food in the RFE. In a similar way, when people reflected on the hardships they had experienced in the early days after their migration from Central Asia in the early 1990s, they said, 'We didn't even have enough money to buy bread.' Or when they complained about inflation, they cited the rising price of a loaf of bread as increasing by one rouble per year. This is reminiscent of the recollections by elderly people about their life shortly after the deportation in 1937 – except that the focus was on rice instead of bread, with 'rice' being the generic term for food at that time.

A rice meal is considered to be a more authentic and traditional Korean meal than one with bread or potatoes. One young man jokingly told me, 'I am a *chisty koreets* ("pure Korean"), as I prefer rice to potatoes.' Although the generic term for food has changed from rice to bread, the staple food consumed by each household often depends on the age of the women in the house. If there are elderly women in the household, they tend to cook rice meals more often than do households composed of younger people.

The composition of everyday meals also depends on the economic conditions prevalent at the time, with a distinction drawn between 'normal' and 'poor'. Here, for Koreans, normal/poor life conditions correspond to Lévi-Strauss's Nature/Culture transformation in his discussion on food, symbolized as 'raw' and 'cooked' in his 'culinary triangle' (Leach, 1976,

43 Usually, wives keep their own kitchen garden to provide food for household members, whereas the field is for cash crops.

p. 40-41; Lévi-Strauss, 1966). My elderly interlocutors often talked how being able to eat a proper rice meal was viewed as a normal life, after passing through the condition of a 'bare life' following their deportation (Agamben, 1998). Mary Douglas (1972, cited in Sutton, 2001, p. 104) notes that the composition of meals is governed by certain rules. Employing her analysis to this ethnography, the basic schema for a rice meal is rice, soup, and side dishes, which are served on the table at the same time rather than as a series of courses. If this schema of the traditional meal (i.e., rice, soup, and side dishes) collapses, it indicates an abnormally poor life, which is considered to be 'pure being' or 'just existing' (Agamben, 1998, p. 182). Elderly Koreans describe such a life as 'humiliating': the three elements of a normal meal are mixed and boiled in one pot, with a tiny portion of grains (such as barley instead of rice), water (a replacement for soup), and edible weeds (a replacement for side dishes). Such meals are often mentioned when people reminisce about their state of destitution after the deportation and during World War II.

In addition to economic conditions, the other crucial aspect of a proper meal is the relationships involved in its preparation and consumption. A proper meal entails a specific gender relationship and, in general, it is the women in the household who are expected to cook. However, if there is more than one woman in the household, this general hypothesis must be reconsidered according to the specific context, in this case the kinship rules that define obligations.

In this gendered relationship concerning feeding and eating, a notable aspect is the change of women's location in the domestic sphere by age, particularly concerning their sexuality, while men seem to remain unchanged or only change according to their relationship with women in the household. In the course of man's life, the most significant male property is the ability to feed the household – in more conventional terms, 'economic capability' or 'hard work'. However, such a property is not innate in men, but must be drawn out by the change of women's location within a household. In other words, men are always considered to represent the independent and autonomous, but these male properties become visible in the gendered relations with their mother and wife.

The work of men (growth by feeding) can be only recognized through the work of women (cooking) in preparing ceremonial meals. It is in the context of ceremonial meals that cooking takes on a meaning beyond basic daily sustenance and becomes the means of expanding social relationships in the Korean community beyond the individual household. Ceremonial meals are more concerned with the taste of food and the number of side

dishes served; the host's generosity must be manifested in the food and also in the entertainment provided, if possible. Here, bread and potatoes, the staples of everyday meals, are not important and are left out. The number of guests and the number of side dishes and their contents indicates the wealth of the household, the combined result of both the man and the woman's work.⁴⁴ While quotidian meals are prepared according to a daily cycle, celebratory meals are usually focused on life-cycle events.⁴⁵ Given the cost and work involved in the preparation of ceremonial food, it may be considered similar to the giving of gifts (Strathern, 1988, p. 238).⁴⁶ For example, for her son's wedding, my acquaintance Larisa invited about 250 guests,⁴⁷ mostly relatives and friends from the Chinese market (all of them Koreans). She is a middle-aged woman who owns a fur-coat trading stall in the Chinese market and is economically better off than average. The wedding was held on a grand scale and included entertainment by two professional dance teams and singers. On each six-person table there were two kinds of rice cakes (*chüngp'yön* and *ch'alttök*), soup-based noodles, dumplings made from potato starch, boiled pork, deep-fried rice cakes tossed in puffed rice, sweets and chocolates, a plate of fruit, sliced ham and cheese, *ikra* ('caviar'), smoked salmon, several kinds of salad, *samsa* (a triangle-shaped pastry filled with minced meat and onion), as well as drinks including spirits. All these were prepared by Larisa and her friends and there were additionally dishes of cutlet and potato, which were provided

44 For a discussion of food as a gift, see David E. Sutton (2001, p. 43-53). He contends that 'the perishable food' becomes a 'gift' by creating a memory of the hospitality and the impression given by the host.

45 Traditional Korean seasonal rituals are not widely celebrated by Koreans in the RFE, though a large banquet is organized by the Korean ethnic organisation in Ussuriisk to celebrate the harvest and the lunar New Year. However, other anthropologists report that *hansik* (a day for looking after the graves of one's ancestors, which falls in April of the lunar calendar), *ch'usök* (Harvest Thanksgiving Day, 15 August in the lunar calendar), and the lunar New Year are widely celebrated in Central Asia (Jang, 1998; Chun, 2002). Despite the disappearance of traditional seasonal ceremonies, some of my Korean acquaintances show great interest in the lunar calendar. For example, a mother arranged a date for her son's wedding ceremony according to the lunar calendar after consulting a Chinese Korean fortune teller.

46 Strathern (1988, p. 238) writes, 'food should be treated to the same range of objectifying operations as indicated for wealth items and persona. [...] But I signal that we cannot know from inspection alone if feeding and growing relationships are analogous or being contrasted with one another.' She distinguishes 'feeding' and 'growing' in Melanesia by re-examining the conflated materials on these two acts provided by Malinowski on the Trobriand Islands (Strathern, 1988, p. 375 footnote.10).

47 Koreans usually invite more guests than is customary than at Russian weddings.

Figure 4.5 A quotidian meal



Figure 4.6 Banquet table at the wedding party for Larisa's son



Figure 4.7 A girl's first birthday party in the evening



Figure 4.8 A table at the 84th birthday of a woman in Novoselovo



by the restaurant (see Figure 4.6).⁴⁸ It is notable that the foods provided by Larisa and her friends are those that are not commercially available. The meaning of 'Korean' food can be differently articulated, depending on the context. For example, the famous carrot salad – widely commodified as a 'Korean' cuisine in Russia – was not on the table. Nevertheless, the most important aspect of this family ritual lies in the assertion of hospitality by the host in the form of lavish banquet. Indeed, Larisa told me it was 'not easy here [in the RFE] to have a very good wedding, compared with Tashkent in Uzbekistan.' There one could have a more luxurious wedding costing less. Despite this slight grumble, she spent more than 2,000 US dollars on the wedding.⁴⁹

For Koreans in the former Soviet Union, there are four significant family ceremonies that are held during a lifetime: the first birthday (*dor(i)* in Korean), wedding, 60th birthday, and funeral;⁵⁰ these are described using the metaphor of a *stol*, ('table'; *sang* in Korean). L.V. Min states that the 'custom of receiving four tables is very important for contemporary Koreans [in the former Soviet Union]' (1992, p. 15, cited in Li, 1998, p. 116). The principle of this custom lies in the exchange of 'tables' between generations during the passage of life. The tables also symbolize the relations between generations; giving, receiving, and distributing food is reified in the relationship between the tables involving three consecutive generations. Thus, the temporal flow of tables forms a cycle rather than a linear development with a beginning and an end. In this cycle, a child's first birthday table presupposes the

48 There are several testimonies of 'legendary' family ceremonies in terms of the amount and items of food served: 'I went to a 60th birthday party in Tashkent ten years ago [1988] and I saw a room filled with clean dishes at the end of the party stacked five high. There were around 600 guests and food was prepared for about 1,200 people' (Li, 1998, p. 114); and 'At one wedding, I saw 25 different kinds of salad laid out for the guests on the table as well as meat, soup, and noodles' (Li, 2003). In another example, at a Korean wedding in 1965 in Ushtobe, Kazakhstan, '*ttok* (traditional steamed Korean rice cakes) 200 kg, vodka 250 bottles, 2 pigs, a half cow, 50 chickens, 10 turkeys, 500 eggs' were prepared to serve the guests. Eleven houses were rented to accommodate the guests, and a well was drilled to prepare the food, but the water still ran short owing to the enormous quantity required. In addition to the food, they hired a band so that everyone could dance and sing together (Chun, 2002, p. 274).

49 The cost of wedding parties can be partially met with the money that guests give to the parents of the wedding couple. These gifts of money for family ceremonies (*bujjo* in Korean) form a significant portion of household expenditure. Elderly women often say that their pension is spent on such gifts. In addition to the cost of the wedding, Larisa also bought a flat for the newly wedded couple.

50 Besides these, all birthdays are also celebrated by inviting close friends and relatives. For Russians, birthday parties are a core symbol of their sociality and involve a wider and more diffuse group of people (Kharkhordin, 1999, p. 335-336).

wedding table of its parents, and the 60th birthday table presupposes the wedding table of the person's offspring. The salient image of these tables (except for at the mortuary ceremony) is the richness of the food and the emphasis on the social side of providing fun and enjoyment. In contrast to the everyday meals where women's work is not significantly emphasized and is usually taken for granted, women's efforts are clearly visible in these ceremonial feasts, as shown in the case of Larisa above.⁵¹ Further, the food provided for family ceremonies is usually Korean food, so it is not commercially available; women must prepare the food themselves or mobilize their own network of female relatives and friends.⁵² It is the elicitation of values created by the productive activities collaboratively performed by the family members, and their recognition and display, that reaffirms the continuity and proliferation of the vitality of life.

The transformation of women in the continuity and extension of the house

In this section, I consider the autonomy of male members of the household from a female perspective, and I examine how dependent wives become independent (or, in a sense, 'male-like') in relation to their husbands and sons. Though the autonomy of Korean men in terms of work morality is widely viewed as an innate characteristic ('working hard is in the Korean blood'), or at best something that distinguishes them from Russian day laborers, I would also like to show that this autonomy is established through changes in their relationship with two women (their mother and wife) in the household.

At the beginning of this chapter, I drew on Lévi-Strauss's (1987) concept of 'house society' in analysing the fetish of the house as a moral person, focusing on the illusion of 'disposability' embedded in Russian Koreans' greenhouses. Here, I address the 'illusion' of the continuity of the house as a descent rule, whereby the house as a material form obscures the fragility of the balance of 'dominance, status and power' (Lévi-Strauss, 1987, p. 162) entailed in the 'house society'. Thus, the power relationship between

51 At the funeral ceremony, weeping is considered a female act. An elderly woman whose husband had died a year previously, told me that she had never regretted not having a daughter (she had two sons). It was only when her husband died that she felt her lack of a daughter, as there was no one to weep with her.

52 Commercial catering services run by Korean women are now available and are increasing in Ussuriisk and other cities where the number of Koreans is sufficient to provide a customer base.

wife-givers and wife-takers is manifested in a wife's relationship with her natal family and her location within her husband's house. The concept of 'house society' is proposed for societies where there is no descent group or lineage, but only a descent rule that is observed through filial relations. In a 'house society', the 'conjugal couple constitutes the true kernel of the family and, more generally, of the kindred' (Lévi-Strauss, 1987, p. 155). Thus, 'what really happens in societies with "houses"' is 'the hypostatization of the opposition between descent and alliance that has to be transcended' (Lévi-Strauss, 1987, p. 158). How does this happen?

First let me introduce some kinship rules regarding generational succession and marriage amongst Russian Koreans. The axiomatic descent rule among Koreans in the RFE is patrilineal with an increasing bilateral tendency, and the residence rule is virilocal/patrilocal or neolocal, depending on the circumstances of each family.⁵³ This implies an expectation from the parents that one of their sons will look after them when they are old and weak, and that the inheritance of their belongings and their family name will be passed from father to son. This patrilineal filial succession can be observed ethnographically in the case of Marta Ivanovna's family, when her son-in-law came to live with them for cultivation work in 2003 between March and September. Although he slept and ate together with his parents-in-law and used his father-in-law's greenhouse to raise *his own* young plants, Marta Ivanovna told me that he did not 'work together with them'. Instead, he cooperated with other men in the village, forming a brigade and renting a plot of land on his own. More than anything else, what made him independent from his parents-in-law was having the autonomy to make his own decisions. In fall of that year, Marta Ivanovna told me that her son-in-law did not listen to their advice to plant more watermelons, but instead planted mostly peppers. As a result, he did not earn very much: the price of watermelons was very good that year due to restrictions on the influx of Chinese agricultural migrants and Chinese products after the SARS epidemic, whereas the price of peppers, which are mostly supplied by local production rather than being imported, did not rise.

In contrast, Marta Ivanovna's son worked in the greenhouse and in the field with his father, and the continuity between them was demonstrated in their sharing of possessions. In the spring of 2003, when their son-in-law came to live with them, the son's family moved to Ussuriisk. When I visited

53 Of course this is not a rigid rule, but it is still dominant among Koreans in Primorskii Krai. Chun (2002, p. 278), however, reports an increasing bilateral tendency among Koreans in Kazakhstan.

Marta's house, her son was busy loading household goods into the car, which was shared by all the members of the extended family. He loaded as much as he could, including a new kettle, pots, plates, utensils, duvets, etc., most of them relatively newly purchased. After he left, they brought out an old spare Soviet-style kettle in place of the new white kettle, and shabby plastic stools instead of their sturdy wooden ones.

Thus, the continuity in this relationship between father and son is in contrast to the distance in the relationship between father-in-law and son-in-law. However, unlike the otherness of the son-in-law, the son's wife (who is also from 'outside') is expected to be incorporated into the extended family. If the son-in-law remains separate from Marta Ivanovna's family even though he lives in the same house, how does the daughter-in-law who came to live with her husband's parents become incorporated into the family?

To answer this question, I will begin by reviewing restrictions on the conduct of young women to show their position in the domestic sphere. There are more restrictions on the conduct of young women in the domestic sphere than there are on that of men. One example concerns restrictions on smoking and drinking by young women. While older women condemn drinking and smoking as 'a male thing', younger women enjoy socializing with their peers from various backgrounds, and I have seen many young Korean women drink and smoke outside their homes. When I visited Marta Ivanovna's house in April 2004, her daughter-in-law, Sonia, returned from Ussuriisk because her husband had gone to South Korea for migrant work. At night, Sonia did not come inside the house, but instead happily volunteered to feed the fire for the *guduri* where she slept with her young children. When she came inside the house, I asked why it took her so long, and she told me that she had enjoyed a cigarette while feeding the fire. She told me that she did not want her parents-in-law to know that she smokes, although her husband did not mind. The implication of this restriction on women's 'male' behavior seems to be related to their sociality with men. As smoking and drinking usually take place in male society, the concern about such 'male behavior' in young women is related to the need to protect (or prohibit) young women from unregulated socializing with men.

This same sense of protection is even more conspicuous in the restraints on their freedom of movement, which are usually imposed by older women in the household. For example, it is frowned upon for young women to go on their own to other places such as South Korea. Migrant work in South Korea became very popular in the early 2000s and, in theory, young unmarried women are good candidates for this work because they are physically healthy and do not have any obligations such as looking after children.

However, this rationale is not always followed by older family members or by the young women themselves. I have met some young women who are reluctant to go to South Korea on their own. In other words, for young women a place without 'anyone' is a non-place.⁵⁴

The limitations placed on young women's mobility contrast with the freedom that young men enjoy. This is especially true in regard to sexuality, as male sexual desire is considered to be natural.⁵⁵ Such surveillance of women's sexuality is also related to the marriage preference for ethnic endogamy, while trying to keep the rule of exogamy and avoid marrying someone with the same *bon*.⁵⁶ Even though the freedom to choose one's own marriage partner based on love and romance is now dominant, parents still try to influence their children's choice, sometimes by expressing their disapproval. The prevailing preference is that young people should marry an ethnic Korean who does not share the same *bon*. Marta Ivanovna's daughter, Natasha, who was in her mid-thirties in 2004 (born in 1967) recollected being pressured by other Koreans' 'vigilant eyes' when she was unmarried in Dushanbe, Tajikistan: It was *strashno* ('scary') to feel other Koreans' eyes watching who she was dating. If a young woman danced with a man of a different nationality at a party, she would suffer a lot of pressure and rumours afterwards.⁵⁷ However, this does not mean that ethnic endogamy is an absolute norm. In fact, there are numerous inter-racial marriages, and

54 This is in contrast to the large number of female migrant workers from Southeast Asia, where family ideology dictates that young unmarried women should contribute to the family economy (see Ong, 1987).

55 Similarly, Hirschon (1989, p. 149) observes among Minor Asian refugees in Greece: 'A man's sexual drive was held to be physiologically imperative, uncontrollable, and diverted only with dire consequences [...] However, a woman's sexual drive as believed to be subject to her conscious control [...] These views make women responsible for maintaining the moral code: since women have the power to control their sexual urges, they are at fault when transgressions occur.' While I acknowledge her observation and interpretation, I am more interested in how the asymmetry between male and female sexuality is constructed through the control of older women.

56 The word *bon* originates from the Chinese character meaning 'root', but for Russian Koreans it is more like 'a rhizome' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). *Bon* is a crucial social category among Russian Koreans for establishing social relationships in the first encounter, and it is not unusual for people to call themselves 'relatives' half-jokingly at their first meeting when they discover that they share the same *bon*. This is different from South Korea, where *bon* is rarely viewed as a basis for kinship. *Bon* refers to the geographical origin of a branch of a family name i.e., usually a place where one's proto-ancestors formed a lineage group. Each family name is divided into branches with different *bon*. According to the principle of *bon*, all the people in the world can be divided into the two groups of relatives and non-relatives; these equate to 'people not to marry' and 'people to marry'.

57 However, Chun (2002) does note the popularity of inter-ethnic marriage amongst Koreans in Kazakhstan.

harmony and conflict in marriage are usually considered to depend on the efforts and behavior of the individuals involved.

Sex outside of marriage is strongly discouraged for women; if it happens, it is the women who are blamed regardless of the circumstances. Usually people say, 'It is surprising that a Korean woman does such a thing'. Controls on young Korean women, both married and unmarried, are carried out in specific ways. This control is not exercised by men, but rather by same-sex kin, usually the older female members of the family. Therefore, it appears that age is a more crucial factor than sexuality in the patriarchal control of young women. In a sense, older women are not female in terms of gender relations, but represent their son's interest in their relationship with their daughter-in-law. This impression is reinforced by the high status of 'grandmothers' who are respected by both younger women and men and actively socialize among themselves. In other words, women who have raised their children are respected and enjoy a similar autonomy to men, while women who have the potential to become future mothers or are the mothers of young children are treated as incomplete and in need of the protection of older women or male kin. While women's authority increases as their children grow, a father's authority decreases in the household. This increase in women's authority in the household is in accordance with the passage of male authority from father to son. However, the autonomy of the male head of the household is only passed onto the son when his young bride has been transformed into a mother who can look after the well-being of her husband and their children with the support and direction of her mother-in-law. Until the first birthday of her grandson, it is the mother-in-law who is fully responsible for organizing familial ceremonies. Once the mother-in-law has seen her daughter-in-law give birth to children and become accustomed to her husband's house, she passes on more initiative and responsibility. In the next section, I show how this relationship is represented and linked to the concept of personhood through familial ceremonies.

Becoming persons

In this section, I examine the metaphor of eating as central to the perception of personhood in a familial ceremony, taking the first birthday of a child as an example. Here, I explore how close and distant consanguinity and friendship are manifested through the dual structure of familial ceremonies and the meaning imposed on the concept of personhood through the exchange of food and money gifts.

On the occasion of a first birthday, the child is dressed in new clothes in the morning and brought in front of a table at home where basic items are displayed such as money, a bowl of uncooked rice, a notebook, and a bunch of threads. According to a South Korean anthropologist who observed a first birthday during fieldwork in Kazakhstan (Chun, 2002, p. 249; cf. Li, 2003), there were 'three bowls of sticky rice cakes, a bowl of white beans, a bowl of uncooked rice, a pair of scissors, money, a notebook and a pencil.' If the child picks up the thread, he or she will have a long life; if he or she picks up the money, he or she will be wealthy; a book and pencil means success in studies; and the scissors mean that a girl will be good with her hands. However, the rice does not signify anything good.⁵⁸ Although people do not seriously believe in the prophetic meaning of each object, it is crucial that the child be surrounded by close kindred and the center of attention during this ritual. On the day that I observed the first birthday of Marta Ivanovna's grandson, the child did not seem to be very enthusiastic or interested in any of the objects on the table. The grown-ups began to encourage him to pick up something by clapping and saying encouraging words. When he finally picked up a roll of thread, people exclaimed with joy, 'He will live long!' Then when he was about to pick up the rice, the guests gasped but were relieved when he touched the red beans instead. A guest commented, 'He will get through the chickenpox easily.' This ceremony is performed in the morning at home with very close kindred and friends. The child is the connecting point for all of the people in attendance, and their connection and alliance makes this child present. The child therefore represents the transcendence of 'the hypostatization of the opposition between descent and alliance' in the house (Lévi-Strauss, 1987, p. 158). The child becomes a person by *moving* according to the anticipation and expectation of those in attendance. This ceremony marks the beginning of the life of a person who is the focus of the expectations of close kindred and who is also in debt to them. This ontological indebtedness is contrasted with the simultaneous transactions of the exchange of food and money gifts in the party that follows afterwards.

In other words, Koreans make a distinction between intra- and extra-domestic celebrations of a first birthday. Following the table ritual, in the evening or on another day, depending on circumstances, they throw a big banquet for more people, usually hiring a venue such as a restaurant – or a

58 While other objects have mnemonic meanings, such as scissors for dexterity, it is curious that rice carries a negative connotation.

House of Culture in the case of Marta Ivanovna.⁵⁹ All of the invited guests hand over a gift of money at some point during this wider celebration. Here the intriguing aspect lies in the centrality of money and the perishable nature of the gift item of food. In a gift economy, our understanding is preoccupied with the notion of reciprocity created through the indebtedness of the receiver, who repays the gift in some form at a later point in time. This creates interdependence and the need for further transactions between actors. However, the presentation of food by the host and the immediate 'representation' (Mauss, 1969) by the guests creates an impression of equilibrium. Indeed, most Koreans I met were very aware of the provider of the food they were eating, and their gratefulness was represented by their money gift in return. This desire not to be in debt to others can be fulfilled by means of the almost simultaneous exchange of food and money gifts, and yet there is no way to avoid 'debt' in the parent-child relationship – though 'debt' may not be the correct word in this context. I think the difference in obligations may be represented through this contrast: food is shared between parents and children, but it is exchanged between the host and guests. In the same way, the act of giving money by the guests is contrasted with the debt of the person at the center of the celebration, who cannot repay through such a medium, but only by their ongoing existence.

Nurturing is not only a matter of physical growth, but also one of moral growth in continuity with the transformation of one's relationships as one grows up in the family. The center of morality lies in acknowledging the other's mind toward the self and displaying one's recognition of this. A child must recognize the work of those who have enabled them to grow and must return a part of him- or herself in that relationship. I am not here intending to reiterate the lessons or tenacity of 'filial piety' amongst the Russian Koreans, which has been described as a central notion in the morality of East Asian kinship relationships. Rather, I want to address 'filial piety' not only in terms of the line of descent, but also in terms of gender relations, specifically focusing on two women (the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law) in the familial relationship.

In extending Lévi-Strauss's discussion on 'house society' to the Koreans' greenhouse and house, I wanted to interrogate the continuity of a 'house as building itself', given the disposability and temporariness of the greenhouse and Koreans' multiple displacements. Lévi-Strauss suggested two concepts of the house: 'house as a moral person', and 'the illusion of the house' (Carsten,

59 These restaurants or House of Culture become temporary public space on these occasions. In the next chapter, I am discussing a new public space and its political meaning.

2004). The house as 'a moral person' holds 'an estate made up of material and immaterial wealth which perpetuates itself through the transmission of its name down a real or imaginary line, considered legitimate as long as this continuity can express itself in the language of kinship or of affinity, and more often, of both' (Carsten and Hugh-Jones, 1995, p. 6-7). I suggest that Korean greenhouses manifest an independent person in terms of morality as distinct from an Other. This Other is embodied specifically by Russian day laborers, who are seen as lacking the all-important concept of making 'sacrifice[s] for their children'. This morality is deeply rooted in the sacrifice expressed by the disposability of Korean cultivators' bodies and embodied in the greenhouse and the disposable containers within it. As I showed earlier in this chapter, the independent person is the one on whom another person can be dependent. Yet, at the same time, it is clear that the growth of the cultivated vegetables is manifested only by disposing of the protections afforded by the greenhouse. It can be built in a short time and can easily be dismantled. It is a moral person that contains containers for vegetables and disposes of itself following the growth of those vegetables – just as the plastic vinyl of the greenhouse is removed and disposed of when the vegetables have fully grown and the weather is warm. The continuity and tenacity of life lies in the disposability of something, transposed with the growth of valuables. The wealth or name to transmit is not a tangible wealth or the vegetables themselves, but the sacrifice of the self, embodied in the disposal of the body for the sake of continuity or the will to sacrifice oneself for the others contained by the self.

Furthermore, I suggest that there is a double fetishism of the house for the Koreans, just as there are two houses in the household: the greenhouse and the house. I already discussed the illusion of the temporariness of the greenhouse above. I argue further that the hidden face of the seemingly rigorous independence of the greenhouse is the inter-dependence represented by the house, as many related people come to stay and eat together, people that are not limited to the nuclear family of the household. This forms an inter-domestic space as manifested by acts of exchange in hospitality – a hospitality that takes place in the domestic sphere, where women occupy the central position, and that is mediated through money and food. In the next chapter, I explore the political situation that enabled Koreans in Ussuriisk to have their own public space in a building called 'Korean House'. I will examine how the cultural logic rooted in the domestic sphere has expanded to the political sphere in this newly formed public space.

5 Recalling history: Koreiskii Dom, transnational connections, and diaspora politics

Slezkine's seminal article (1994a) employed the analogy of a building ('the Communal Apartment') to explicate the core logic of the Soviet Union's nationality policy. In a similar vein, Grant's *In the Soviet House of Culture* (1995) illustrates how the Soviet Union pursued its policy of enlightening 'backward' groups of people by incorporating various nationalities into a single, socialist 'house of culture'. The metaphor of a house has also been used by ordinary citizens to describe the Soviet Union (and, in more recent years, Russia): such as the catchphrase '*Rossia – nash obshchii dom*' ('Russia – our common house'). Given the strong symbolic meaning of the word 'house' to describe a sense of communality, it is not surprising that the two-storey building near city center of Ussuriisk was widely referred to as *Koreiskii Dom* ('Korean House', hereafter *Koreiskii Dom* without italicization, see Figure 5.1). The official owner of this building is an ethnic Korean organization called 'The Fund for Rehabilitation of Koreans in Primorskii Krai' (*Vozrozhdenie, Fond Primorskikh Koreitsev Kraevoi*, hereafter 'the Fund').¹ As discussed in earlier chapters, the social world of Koreans in the RFE is centered on their individual households, with wider social interactions based on inter-household exchange via kinship and alliance networks. In this context, *Koreiskii Dom* is a newly created public space that provides Koreans with a social arena beyond their households.

The creation of such a public space for Koreans reflects the political changes that accompanied the collapse of the Soviet Union. Whereas in Soviet times any discussion of the 1937 deportation of Koreans had been prohibited, perestroika and glasnost' brought new freedom to bring such topics into the public arena of debate. In turn, this new political environment provided a legal basis for the *reabilitatsiia* ('rehabilitation') of Russian Koreans through being recognized as one of the *narodny repressirovannye* ('repressed peoples'). This internal change in the political atmosphere coincided with the opening of the Soviet Union to the rest of the world, including capitalist countries – providing Koreans with the opportunity to reconnect with what was presumed by many Russians to be their *istoricheskaiia rodina* ('historical homeland'), South Korea.

1 In Korean, *Koryō Chaesaeng Gigūm*.

This presumption disregarded the fact that the majority of Russian Koreans had originated in the northern part of the Korean Peninsula and had no sense of affinity with South Korea due to the long period of separation during the Cold War, but this newly constructed 'historical homeland' gained potency amongst Russian Koreans through the proliferation of the word 'diaspora' (also *diaspora* in Russian) in public discourse. Thus, *Koreiskii Dom*, the new public space for Koreans in the RFE, was created at a time of dramatic change, when new transnational connections were being forged with South Korea that disregarded and negated their experience of the Soviet past.

In this chapter, I explore how this new public group identity was enacted through nationwide legislation at the regional level, and how it was further articulated and implemented by means of social relationships. In particular, I focus on the activities of Korean ethnic political organizations in Ussuriisk in the post-Soviet space. Against the background of the Russian Federation's provision of an institutional and legal basis for a Korean revival and funding from South Korean NGOs, an increasing number of Koreans in the RFE began to participate in ethnic political activities. In this context, resources that were provided for the use of the public required individuals to imagine themselves as 'groups', a process accompanied by debates and conflicts amongst participants in the local political arena.

The post-Soviet political space is characterized by uncertainty and the absence of the institutional security provided by the former socialist system; in this new environment, people turn to the concept of *pomoshch'* ('help'). This concept acts as a metaphor for the threads of networking among Russian Koreans, and their connections with local authorities and sometimes with South Korean organizations. In defining the 'proper' way for an ethnic organization to work, the management of 'help' and its concomitant resources becomes the locus of conflict and the source for the justification for each party's claim in situations of conflicts. In this process, the categorizations of people in the early ethnic politics of the post-Soviet space – from 'repressed people' to 'diaspora' – have been re-evaluated and contested. The experience of receiving 'free help' from South Korean NGOs or Christian missionaries was new and unfamiliar to most Russian Koreans, due to their historical relationship with the state; Koreans have very few expectations for the central authorities, a stance that was reaffirmed by the lack of basic provisions in provinces such as Primorskii Krai after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Martin (2001) states that the Soviet Union was 'an affirmative action empire' that assigned certain benefits to minority peoples with the aim of consolidating and reinforcing the ethnicity of 'small peoples' instead of

Figure 5.1 Old Koreiskii Dom

traditional forms of community such as lineages. Koreans, along with other ethnic groups that were collectively deported because of their cross-border ethnic ties, were excluded from such affirmative action.² Therefore, Koreans were not able to rely on any help from the state during the Soviet era; instead, they tried to prove their value to the state by working hard, as discussed in Chapter 3. Initially, they did this to erase the stigma of their label as an ‘enemy nation’, but later in an attempt to excel in the socialist competition among nations that was promoted by the Soviet Union to motivate increased productivity under the planned economy. The irony of Soviet affirmative action lies in the increasing dependence of a small number of indigenous peoples on the state (see Gray, 2005). As I discuss later, the Soviet focus on indigenous peoples and simultaneous neglect of diasporas forced the latter into the informal economic sphere, a move that somewhat ironically led some of them to adapt better to the rapid privatization of state assets and

2 Neglect by the state is embedded in the everyday life and perceptions of Koreans in the RFE. To illustrate this point, a young Korean man told me: ‘When I was at school, if a child from a “small peoples [indigenous peoples]” group got beaten up, the KGB would come to school to investigate the matter. But when Korean children were beaten up, nobody cared.’

property and the withdrawal of public support and state funding for various spheres of social life, especially in the provinces.

It is in this historical context that I examine how the political changes in post-Soviet space were manifested through conflicts and contestation over the meaning of Korean collectivity and the interpretation of their history in the public space among those involved in ethnic politics. Political and social change does not happen in a vacuum; it is articulated through social processes embedded in human relationships, and through the re-interpretation and enactment of certain ideas and concepts. To demonstrate this process, I analyse the political conflicts surrounding *Koreiskii Dom* that resulted in a change of leadership among the Koreans in Ussuriisk.

Koreiskii Dom as a stage for diasporic politics

During my fieldwork, when I stopped Koreans in the street to ask a question, they often told me to go to *Koreiskii Dom*. In one sense, this building has provided Koreans with a collective representative.³ In the early 2000s, it housed two organizations: the Fund⁴ and the 'National Cultural Autonomy of Koreans in Ussuriisk' (*Natsional'naia Kulturnaia Avtonomiia Koreitsev Ussuriiska*, hereafter the NKA). Although they were separate organizations, they cooperated in many activities and there was a wide overlap in their participants. In addition, parts of the building were rented by two South Korean NGOs, a restaurant serving South Korean cuisine, the office of the local branch of a broadcasting company (TVS), an agency for *uslogi oforomleniia dokumentykh* ('documentation services'),⁵ and an agricultural

3 A picture of this building is featured in a series of postcards of Ussuriisk printed by the city administration in the early 2000s, but it is not clear how it obtained its name. It is interesting that people do not refer to the ethnic organizations housed in the building by their names, but to the whole complex as simply 'Koreiskii Dom'. This may be related to Soviet cultural politics surrounding the 'House of Culture', the traditional communal center in local municipalities. For a detailed study on changes in the 'House of Culture' after the collapse of the Soviet Union, see Brian Donahoe and Joachim Otto Habeck (2011).

4 The Fund was founded in February 1993 under the provisions of the 1991 law 'On the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples'; the NKA was founded in 1996 under the law 'On National-Cultural Autonomy'.

5 In Russia, the preparation of documents to apply for identity papers is a complicated task because of the large number of documents required. Hence, there are many agencies providing such services. The agency in *Koreiskii Dom* specialized in South Korean visa applications, temporary residence permits, permanent residence permits, and Russian citizenship. The owner of the agency used to work for the Fund, helping Korean migrants with their documents; since the change of leadership in 2000, she had been running the agency as her own 'private' business,

seed retailing company. At the back of the premises, there was a garage for car repairs. The Korean Culture Center, with computers and internet access, library, Korean language school, and traditional Korean dance team, also had its premises in the building.

Changes in the ownership of the building reflect post-socialist political and economic changes in the region. In Soviet times, it had been owned by the state bank (*Gosbank*), but in the privatization process of the early 1990s it was acquired by Roberto Son, a local Korean 'businessman'⁶ who was also one of the most powerful members of the 'mafia' in the city. On 1 December 1994, a South Korean company owner, Jang Chihyok, bought the building from Roberto Son for \$100,000 and donated it to the Fund.⁷ As the official owner of the building, the Fund became responsible for its maintenance, thus creating the need for additional financing to cover heating costs, taxes, and salaries for the caretakers and cleaners.⁸ Its acquisition by the Fund also opened up a complicated series of issues and debates about the role of ethnic organizations, the management of the building as a 'corporate' property, and the evaluation of political leaders with a focus on their values and visions for the Fund.

Humphrey's research provides some insights into this situation by examining actual practices in 'the Soviet communal apartment' and how its built environment affected the relationship between the state and the residents (2005, p. 43). Soviet communal hostels were initially built by the state with the aim of creating an environment in which Soviet socialist ideology could permeate into every nook and cranny of people's day-to-day lives. Humphrey (2005), however, suggests that the material structure of the communal hostels failed to generate socialist values as envisioned by the state because of the sociality of communal living and shared usage of the interior space; in this sense, the built environment can be thought of as a prism that deflected socialist ideology from its intended course. The image of Koreiskii Dom as a prism that refracts and deflects the wider political

renting one office in the building. This change reflects the commercialization of public services in Russia in the 2000s.

6 In Russia, the word *biznesmen* ('businessman') had a negative meaning at the time of my fieldwork in the early 2000s, as businesses were often connected with mafia-like groups.

7 His donation was made in memory of his father, who was a historian and lived in the RFE during the Japanese colonial period. Jang also contributed funds towards the establishment of the Institute of Korean Studies (*Institut koreevedeniia*) at the Far Eastern State University in Vladivostok.

8 The NKA had an office in the building, but did not pay rent; instead, they allowed the Fund to register some of the NKA's activities as its own in reports to the Krai authorities. An NKA staff member commented to me, 'The Fund doesn't do anything. It just exists in name only.'

changes around it also seems to be applicable to my research. In the following sections, I analyse social interactions in the space provided by Koreiskii Dom, paying particular attention to the conflicts and the apportioning of blame concerning changes of leadership in the Korean ethnic organizations and what these reveal about the perceptions about the history and collective identity of Russian Koreans.

The establishment of the Fund enabled Koreans to be heard in the public sphere and also created a formal channel between Russian Koreans and the South Koreans carrying out humanitarian activities. However, it also became a stage on which the material resources and conflicting views of the Korean community were contested. Initially, the Fund was founded in 1993 as a *blogotvoritel'naia organizatsiia* ('charitable organization') in addition to its aim of 'rehabilitating the Korean people'. Since the mid-1990s, many Koreans have experienced hardship following their migration from Central Asia to the RFE; South Korean NGOs donated food, medicine, clothes, blankets, heaters, agricultural equipment, etc., for distribution via the Fund.⁹ In this way, Koreiskii Dom acted as a conduit for the flow of assistance stemming from this transnational connection, but the actual distribution process was also influenced by previous connections of kinship and friendship. For example, one elderly couple told me that they had stopped attending the Noindan (a club for elderly Koreans) because they were excluded from receiving assistance in the distribution. The wife's comment was that 'they only give things to *svoin* ("their own")', and she described how a quantity of wallpaper that had been donated to the Noindan had been given only to the relatives and friends of the person in charge of the distribution. Similarly, when Peace Asia¹⁰ distributed a couple hundred sacks of rice in the village where I conducted part of my fieldwork, people who received them discovered that the rice was rotten and inedible. One of my acquaintances there, who ended up feeding the rice to her dogs, suspected that the contents of the sacks had been changed in transit. Thus it was a common experience for people to hear about 'help' from South Korean donors but fail to receive any actual benefit: somehow, the 'help' would disappear in the course of its delivery. Basically, this aggravation about unfair distribution practices

9 Christian missionary organizations from South Korea were also active in 'helping' Russian Koreans.

10 Peace Asia is a South Korean NGO aimed at helping refugee Koreans settle in the RFE and at promoting peace and mutual understanding among the different nationalities there. This organization also engages with Chinese Koreans and Japanese Koreans.

arose because the financial support provided by South Korean NGOs was not enough to alleviate the economic difficulties of people in need. Indeed, many interlocutors commented that such help could not substantially improve their lives in the RFE. Instead, the conflicts and divided interests created by transnational connections with South Korea, although often avoided as a subject of discussion at the personal level, led to a leadership change in Korean diasporic politics that was linked to a regional change brought about by the Putin government.

Leadership change and its implications

In December 2000, a vote of no confidence was passed against Tel'mir Kim, the inaugural president, at the annual conference of the Fund. Usually, this conference was little more than an opportunity to report the work of the Fund during the past year and to outline plans for the coming year. In many ways, it resembled the public rituals of Soviet times, as discussed by Yurchak (2003), in which meetings consisted of pre-arranged decisions and planned contributions from delegates rather than being decision-making forums. Tel'mir Kim gave an interview in the *Wondong* newspaper before the conference that gave no indication of knowledge about the planned impeachment, a fact that he later confirmed in an interview with me. As this happened before I began my fieldwork, my sources of information about this event were the lingering accusations of Tel'mir Kim and the special issue of the *Wondong* newspaper that was produced after the conference. According to these sources, the main charges against Tel'mir Kim concerned the way he managed the Fund and the finances donated from South Korea. In short, the common charge was that he wasted the donations, which could have been used more effectively to improve the lives of Koreans migrants.

The accusations specifically focused on a project that Tel'mir Kim had initiated in 1998. To understand the context of these accusations, I would like to briefly overview the changes that took place in the political activity of the Fund before the conference in question, focusing on the settlement project for migrant Koreans from Central Asia. The Fund's activity during the presidency of Tel'mir Kim can be divided into two phases (*Wondong*, September-November 1999, No 9-10, p. 49-50). During the first period (1993-1997), the activities of the Fund focused on activities aimed at 'cultural revival', such as the founding of the *Wondong* newspaper, teaching the Korean language, establishing an historical-ethnological archive, and forming the Korean dance team. Such activities closely resemble the way

Houses of Culture had operated in the Soviet period: *Koreiskii Dom* provided the local residents of Ussuriisk with a public space for cultural activities and leisure facilities that had been lost in the 'post-Soviet chaos' (Nazpary, 2002). During this period, no political issues arose concerning the building or the activities of the Fund.

The second period (1998-2000) was significantly influenced by two factors. First, the Fund was granted 'transfer of the deserted army settlements free of charge'¹¹ with the help of Evgenii I. Nazdratenko, the governor of Primorskii Krai and a former colleague of Tel'mir Kim from the fishing industry.¹² At the same time, the Fund signed a contract with the South Korean Association of House Building Companies for investments in the building, housing refurbishments, and agricultural development. This agreement appeared to offer benefits for both the project organizers and the Korean migrants, with the former acquiring a labor force and the latter gaining improvements in their housing conditions. In 1998, the Fund established six camps for Korean migrants and allowed them to work in the fields, renting land from former *sovkhoses* ('state farms'). However, a conflict of interests soon arose between the two parties. According to Tel'mir Kim, the South Korean Association of House Building Companies viewed the project primarily as an investment, while the main aim of the Fund was to secure historical justice for the migrants. The first year's harvest was so bad that the residents of the camps had difficulty in feeding themselves, and in August 1999 the South Korean company withdrew its financial support and nullified the contract. This resulted in grave financial problems for the Fund and severe hardships for the camp residents, such as the electricity supply to the camps occasionally being disconnected because the Fund could not pay the bill. Tel'mir Kim desperately sought other financial sponsors, but was unsuccessful. This failure led to criticism of the settlement project and of Tel'mir Kim's leadership abilities, as can be seen in the following passage, which heaps praise upon his successor Evgenii Sergeivich Kang.

He [Tel'mir Kim] was not able to produce good results; he didn't use the charity investment *po naznacheniiu* ('as assigned'), but *na lichnye nuzdyi* ('for his own *personal use*'). The Fund ceased to function [after a fire at

11 These were the settlements abandoned by army officers and their families when they moved to western Russia in the early 1990s. See Nikolai F. Bugai (2002, p. 216-217) for official letters granting the use of these former army settlements in response to Tel'mir Kim's request.

12 According to Tel'mir Kim, this personal connection enabled him to talk with Nazdratenko *okrytno* ('openly') and he was told 'to get hold of any land before the Japanese do.'

the Koreiskii Dom]. [...] The decision to invite Evgenii Sergeivich, an able organizer and successful businessman, to head the Fund was accepted. [...] In this role, he stands to receive no personal benefit, and he has even had to spend a significant amount of his *sobstvennykh sredstv* ('own money'). It is necessary to emphasize this fact for our readers, as amongst Koreans in Primor'e there are many who talk about Koreiskii Dom's supposedly huge income. The former director of the Fund received plentiful charity donations but used them very foolish and ineptly. People who had never worked in agriculture were apportioned part of the finance to grow vegetables. [...] This and other foolish mistakes brought the Fund close to bankruptcy. Hundreds of Primorskii Koreans from Central Asia were disappointed, leading them to sometimes criticize the leadership. [...] Evgenii Sergeivich came to the realization that the complete ruin of the Fund would discredit the image of our *sootchestvenniki* ('compatriots') in the eyes of other residents of Primor'e, the local authorities and the Krai administration. Without a doubt, the actions of Evgenii Sergeivich have gained respect [...] and he has managed to rehabilitate the Fund. (Chen, 2003, p. 65, my emphasis)

The reasons given for Tel'mir Kim's dismissal and the praise heaped upon his successor provide some indication of the kinds of qualities that the Korean community were seeking at this time from their leadership, along with how they wanted donated resources to be administered and delivered. The suggested mode of leadership also alludes to the collective identity they are aiming to uphold. In understanding this 'critical moment' of conflict (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1999), I believe it is important to consider the Korean concept of personhood, as exemplified in the charge of 'personal use'. In the accusation that Tel'mir Kim used resources 'for his own personal use', 'personal' does not necessarily mean that he used them for his own interest. The word for 'private' in Russian is *chastnyi*, which does not appear here; rather, the sense seems to be closer to 'individual' as opposed to 'the collective'.¹³ In essence, I argue that this accusation aims to downgrade Tel'mir Kim's nationalistic aspiration to the level of the personal and individual rather than that of the national community.

In discussing situations of conflict, Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (1999) observe that we need to focus on the 'critical capacity' of the actors.

13 For a discussion of 'individual' and 'collective' based on a Foucauldian approach, see Kharkhordin (1999).

When people familiar with each other think that something is going wrong, they distance themselves from the situation and consider past actions and their own involvement. It is usually at this moment that a dispute develops, in which 'criticisms, blames, and grievances are exchanged' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1999, p. 360). However, this dispute or 'transitory' phase cannot become a permanent state, but must somehow be brought to an end, usually 'as an agreement or compromise'. This dispute process is not only 'a matter of language' but also involves 'human persons' and 'a large number of objects', 'bringing together different items or different facts' to justify an agreement 'with reference to a principle of equivalence which clarifies what they have in common' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1999, p. 360). This analysis is helpful when applied to the conflicts surrounding *Koreiskii Dom*, as parties justified their claims based on tangible objects such as 'rice sacks', 'rolls of wallpaper', and, most importantly, '*Koreiskii Dom*' itself. Tel'mir Kim is also criticized for using the settlement project to forward his own *lichnyi* ('personal') mission of directly confronting the Slavic nationalistic discourse in the public sphere. In other words, Tel'mir Kim's opponents downgraded his mission of seeking historical justice and improving the position of Russian Koreans in the RFE to *lichnyi* ('personal'), making him the scapegoat in an attempt to deflect the growing public discontent about the surging number of Korean migrants and their increasing influence in the private economic sector.

Different visions for a Russian Korean collective identity

The establishment of settlements for Korean refugees from Central Asia was based on Tel'mir Kim's vision of creating concentrated areas of residence for Koreans in the RFE such as had existed before the 1937 deportation. This appears to be an ideal Western form of 'diasporic discourse', similar to Zionist yearnings for the recovery of a lost homeland. When I visited Tel'mir Kim in the summer of 2004, I was surprised to discover the extent of the personal archive that he kept in his summer flat in Khasanskii Raion, an area bordering North Korea that before 1937 had had a Korean population approaching 90%. The archive contained a large number of documents, including all the records of the Fund, newspaper cuttings and journal articles about Koreans and the nationality question, and other documents from the state archives. Based on these materials, Tel'mir Kim often wrote articles for the *Wondong* newspaper concerning the 'Korean question' (see Chapter 1) and conducted research in the same way as academics studying

diasporas within the framework of 'the context of diasporas' (Axel, 2004).¹⁴ He based his claim for the legitimacy of a 'homeland' in the RFE on these historical materials and attributed the present migration and suffering of Koreans to injustices caused by misguided Soviet socialist policies toward Korean nationality. Looking ahead, he based his hope for the fulfilment of his diasporic vision on links with South Korea.

Tel'mir Kim's vision is based on his unique 'personal' life history, which had the potential to be promoted as a 'collective history' in the early 1990s when the rehabilitation movement was at its peak. He was born in 1933 in Khasanskii Raion, which today borders North Korea. His father, Afanasii A. Kim, was the Secretary of the Communist Party of the district then known as Pos'etskii Raion during 1935-6, and was widely known as the 'Korean Lenin'. He was an ardent socialist, an anti-Japanese partisan, a journalist, and a Communist Party cadre who met Lenin in person while working as an interpreter for Korean socialist delegates in 1926 (see Kim, 1979). Despite (or because of) this, he was purged along with 2,500 other Koreans who held local administrative posts, and was executed during Stalin's Great Terror in 1938. At this time, Tel'mir Kim was a child and had been deported with his mother and grandmothers to Central Asia the previous year. His mother was unaware of her husband's fate and, despite many letters and petitions to various authorities throughout her remaining years, she died in 1986 without knowing the details of his death. Tel'mir Kim's upbringing in Central Asia was dominated by the shadow of his father, so after completing his secondary education, he decided on a career at sea to try to discover new freedom. However, he was unable to escape the influence of his father's past. Due to a stamp on his passport stating that he was the son of 'an enemy of the nation', he was prohibited from leaving the ship when it anchored in foreign harbours and, to his chagrin, was unable to accompany the other crewmembers on trips ashore.

In the 1960s he moved to the RFE while his mother remained in Central Asia, eventually retiring as the captain of a fishing fleet. His entire life at sea had been spent among Russians and he had married a Russian woman, and yet he never forgot his identity as a Korean. For this reason, he became an active member of the ethnic revival movement following perestroika, travelling to Moscow nearly every month in the late 1980s and early 1990s to take part in rallies in Red Square demanding justice for Koreans. This meant working long hours and sleeping in his office on a camp bed for

14 He had been invited to give lectures at the Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnology of Far Eastern Peoples in Vladivostok, but had declined the offer.

two weeks every month so that he could spend the remaining two weeks in Moscow. Following the enactment of the law on 'rehabilitation', he read the articles and laws related to setting up charitable groups and embarked on organizing the Fund along with other Koreans. It is clear to see how the legacy of his father and his own personal experience of displacement lay at the heart of his political advocacy of a Korean national collectivity based on historical consciousness.

For many of his critics, however, the important thing was 'business' rather than 'historical justice'. Evgenii Kang, who succeeded him as president of the Fund, acquired his wealth from scratch 'selling tomatoes in a bazaar'. Compared with Tel'mir Kim, his life history was neither unique nor remarkable; in fact, it so closely resembles the stories of other successful Korean businessmen that the same information could be used in their biographies with only a few changes to minor details. The important point is that Evgenii Kang knew how to create and increase wealth, rather than wasting it on an 'absurd ideal' or 'personal vision'. Another supporter of the movement to dismiss Tel'mir Kim was Olga Pak, the chairperson of the Korean dance team. The principal motive for her action was that Tel'mir Kim had refused to grant funds for the dance team's travel expenses for a performance in Moscow. After she criticized him for this at a conference, it was later generalized as an example of Tel'mir Kim's 'personal' use of the Fund – with 'personal' encompassing his political activities for Koreans. From Tel'mir Kim's point of view, this incident occurred when the Fund was in financial crisis: it would have seemed absurd to reimburse travel expenses for a dance performance when both the Fund and the residents of the settlement camps were struggling for survival.

Disagreement regarding the correct use of funds from South Korea can be seen as resulting from different views of Korean history and identity. In general, Koreans tend to view themselves as self-confident, able, and independent people, rather than as victims. The free provision of support for poor migrants and residents of settlements could be viewed as 'spoiling' them (Chen, 2003); instead, they should be 'taught how to fish, rather than given a fish', according to a Korean proverb often cited by Russian Koreans.¹⁵ Those ascribing to this view – that free resources spoil people by making them irresponsible – believe that the link with South Korea should primarily be used to enable business people to expand their enterprises, which

15 This view represents the 'patriarchal' mode of thinking, as discussed by James Ferguson (2015).

will in turn lead to an improvement in the lives of their *sootchestvenniki* ('compatriots') by generating more employment and income.

Facing the charges of using the Fund for his own 'personal' purposes, Tel'mir Kim attributed the failure of the settlement project to the *individualizatsiia* ('individualization') of Korean migrants, resulting from their experience of deportation. In the course of several interviews that I conducted with him, he expounded his position in the matter of ethnic politics, Russian nationalism, and Korean attitudes. The following interview took place in Ussuriisk in April 2004 after his successor as president of the Fund had died suddenly of a heart attack.

HP: Did you know that Evgenii Kang had passed away?

Tel'mir Kim (TK): Yes, I know. It is fate.

HP: Are you still interested in the Fund?

TK: No, not any more. My biggest mistake was in failing to get people to understand what I was doing. That is why I still manage the *Wondong* newspaper.¹⁶ [...] I was very disappointed by the individualism of the people who sought their own survival through making use of their own connections. Koreans don't know how to demand their rights collectively; instead they have learned how to lie and play games (*khitriiat*) to get by, as their experience of deportation has left them with a fear of the state. Once they have been struck on the right cheek, they offer the left cheek as well. I hoped that Koreans would settle in the settlement camps and live together in close proximity as they did before the deportation, but they dispersed, searching for a way to live by relying on their own connections. Koreans have become individualized because of the deportation and subsequent scattering. They avoid each other. For example, even when a Korean is elected to the Duma, he cannot work for the benefit of Koreans, as he has been elected by the voters, the majority of whom are Russian. When I was working for the Fund, the [South Korean] consul in Vladivostok wanted to install satellite dishes to allow Koreans to watch South Korean television. To save money, they wanted to find buildings that housed several Korean households, but they couldn't find any.

16 He also expressed regret at not having paid his interpreters well enough to retain their services, as they often left for better-paid jobs with private companies and missionary organizations. This led to frequent changes of staff and mutual misunderstandings between him and the South Korean sponsors as a result of the language barrier.

- HP: I agree with you. I also find it very difficult to find places where Koreans are living together for my fieldwork.
- TK: When I was living in Kremovo [one of settlement camps],¹⁷ I came across a Korean; I was so glad and approached him, but he avoided me. Koreans fear socializing with other Koreans. They just get together with their relatives. A Korean *nachal'nik* ('manager') is afraid to select Koreans for promotion or for working together. [...] Koreans don't think about living together, but just talk about which is better, to live with Russians, Uzbeks, or Kazakhs. Russians don't have any problem with one Korean house in a village, but they begin to hate Koreans if many Korean households appear there.¹⁸

Tel'mir Kim was not the only one who recognized Russian nationalism and the Korean fear of it. In April 2004, I accompanied Natasha Kim, who was working as a reporter for the Korean newspaper *Koryō Sinmun*, to meet Vladimir Yugai, a businessman who had created an 'Association of Koreans' in Spassk in 2003. At the interview, Natasha suggested that the Association of Koreans in Spassk might like to stage a *meropriiatie* ('event'), such as a street parade, to commemorate the 140th anniversary of the Korean migration to Russia. Vladimir Yugai replied: 'Koreans can hold such events in Ussuriisk, as many Koreans live there and the Korean organizations are very active, but it's different here. Spassk used to be a *voennyi gorod* ("army town"). Ukrainians might be able to hold such events, but we can't. Here, there are ethnic tensions. I am *ne boius'* ("afraid"), but I want to be *ostorozhno* ("careful").

In fact, increased antagonism toward Koreans had also been evident in Ussuriisk. This came to a head in 2000, when the Association of House Building Companies began to construct an estate of around 30 red-brick houses using Korean migrant labor from Central Asia in a small town near Ussuriisk after breaking their contract with the Fund (see Figure 5.2). The houses, known as 'Friendship Village', could be seen from far away in the flat

17 Tel'mir Kim dreamed of creating communities of Koreans who would live and work alongside each other. He wished to be part of such a community himself, hence his decision to live in one of the camps and work in the fields with the other residents. His ideals were based on the communities that had existed in Khasanskii Raion when his late father was the secretary of the local administration. Noting that his activities were based on communist ideals, I asked him whether he was still a communist; he replied, 'I am a Korean nationalist and a communist; these are two sides of the same face'.

18 Conversation reproduced from field notes, 27 April 2004.

landscape and were all the more conspicuous for their *kottedzhi* ('cottage') style – a symbol of the Russian nouveau riche. These houses had neither plumbing nor central heating due to financial problems and disagreements among the South Korean participants in the project,¹⁹ but they still provoked widespread anti-Korean sentiment among local residents, who believed that special privileges had been given to the Koreans to allow their construction. Such sentiments can be seen in the following letter to the local authorities and President Putin, which was written and signed by 'Primorians' and published in the local newspaper:

Talks are currently taking place with Korean *pereselentsy* ('migrants') from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. We could have understood if they had settled and mixed together with us on *obshikh osnovaniiaxh* ('a common basis') in accordance with the actual legislation [...] The fundamental reason for their migration [from the Korean Peninsula] was hunger. [...] they were emigrants and foreigners and came to Russia *po dobroii vole russkikh vlastei* ('by virtue of the goodwill of the Russian authorities'). And their subsequent long residence in our territory of Krai is thanks to *dobraia volia nashego naroda, ne bolee* ('the goodwill of our nation – nothing more'). It was the evil orders of Stalin that forced Koreans to change their residence against their will, but we note that, although they had been living in the territory of Primorskii Krai, they did not leave behind any cultural or religious buildings or well-engineered structures. It is possible to conclude from this that they did not intend to live in Primor'e *postoianno* ('permanently'). [...] Primorskii Krai borders North Korea and is not far from South Korea. Would it not have been a more reasonable decision for Korean migrants to return to their *iskonnuiu rodinu* ('original homeland')? [...] If Koreans do not want to live on a common basis with us but desire instead to live as their own separate ethnic group, we need to help them return to their original homeland. And their homeland is next door [...]

A. Anokhin and 70 signatories (3 August 2000, *Kommunar*)

The common charge against the ethnic revival movement concerns a threat to the *tselostnost'* ('integrity') of the Russian Federation.²⁰ In Primorskii Krai,

19 In addition to the split between the Association and the Fund, there was also conflict between the building companies in the Association, which was an ongoing legal case in South Korea at the time of my fieldwork in 2003.

20 See Vladimir Y. Zorin (2003) for a more detailed discussion.

this threat was embodied by the settlement project and the construction of collective residences for Koreans, which were perceived by some Slavic nationalists as a move that could potentially lead to the *otrez* ('cutting-off') of Primorskii Krai from Russia. The accusatory letter also used the term 'proto-state', presumably in reference to the settlement project. Such anti-Korean sentiment was a significant factor in the change of leadership in the Fund: criticism was levelled at Tel'mir Kim for supposedly stoking antagonism with his settlement projects and confrontational attitude towards Krai officials, whom he publicly accused of 'discrimination towards Korean migrants' (Chen, 2003). The concept of *strakh* ('fear') is a prevailing trope amongst Korean intellectuals and, as Tel'mir Kim noted, is linked to the 1937 deportation. It is interesting to note, however, that Tel'mir Kim did not display any fear in his dealings with the authorities, despite his personal history of being so strongly affected by 'state terror'.

I suggest that the criticism of Tel'mir Kim's perception of history underlines its nationalized logic, which is homologous to the anti-Korean Slavic nationalist narrative. In other words, from the perspective of Tel'mir Kim's critics, his historical consciousness establishes a direct link between the suffering of the Korean refugees in present and political trauma in past in unilinear timeline. According to him, the death of his father in the Stalinist purge has colored his whole life; his unique family history was the basis for him to interpret the collective history of Koreans in the former Soviet Union. However, what mattered in this context was not that his opponents refuted this historical view itself: there was no criticism against him in the 1990s, for example. Rather, the 'rehabilitation' politics in the early period as represented by Tel'mir Kim were supported by his colleagues in ethnic organizations, insofar as they were in accordance with the Russian 'ethnopolitics [*sic*]' discussed by Oushakine (2010) – a popular discourse in the 1990s that also drew on Russians' past trauma. To paraphrase, any political claim that would position Russian Koreans differently than the ethnic Russians is *internally* refuted by the Koreans themselves. The people who impeached Tel'mir Kim saw that Tel'mir Kim's way of dealing with anti-Korean sentiments drew a boundary for the Koreans' moral community against the hegemonic discourse in the early 2000s. In other words, the opponents of Tel'mir Kim criticized his intact morality, which positioned the Koreans as victims despite changes in the political atmosphere. In contrast, they wanted to blur such moral boundaries drawn in national terms, not only to maintain Koreiskii Dom but also to prevent the exacerbation of anti-Korean sentiments.

This rivalry over the meaning of Russian Koreans' collectivity within Russian identity politics at the turn of twenty-first century echoes the

situation described by Liisa Malkki in the context of Hutu identity. In an ethnographic study of Hutu refugees who had fled from Burundi to Tanzania, Malkki (1995) compares two groups of 'camp' refugees and 'town' refugees and their different notions of collective history and nationhood. These two localized notions of history and the nation seem to correspond to the two divergent visions asserted by Tel'mir Kim and his critics. She found that the camp was 'a fertile ground for producing historicity and categorical nation-ness', whereas the township had 'instead given form to 'cosmopolitanism' (Malkki, 1995, p. 233). She explains this difference by describing how the 'camp' refugees sought to fit into 'the overarching national order of things'²¹ and maintain their sense of nationhood despite the absence of territory or their own state apparatus. This sense of national community was strengthened by recounting stories of the genocide by the Tutsi-dominated Burundi government in their homeland, thus creating a clear moral boundary between 'them' and 'us' (Malkki, 1995, p. 253-254). She further argues that the way the camp was administered reinforced the category of 'Hutu refugees'; in other words, it was not only the historical events of the past but also the contemporary local conditions (i.e. the camp situation) and the national order of things at a transnational level that led these displaced people to turn to historical consciousness and nation-making. In contrast, the 'town' refugees sought 'another order of liminality' in an attempt 'to elude national categorization' in order to be able to live side by side with Tanzanians in the mixed environment of the town: they denied any moral or essentialist sense of the Hutu nation, and instead employed their existential condition as Hutus in a strategic manner for specific purposes. In examining these two types of refugee residencies (camp and town), Malkki (1995) emphasizes that national consciousness does not have a single origin in an essentialist sense, but is instead contingent, appearing in certain moments of local, supra-local, and transnational changes.

In a similar way to the Hutu refugees' responses to their displaced condition, the ethnographic study of Koreans in Ussuriisk also appears to reveal two different constructs of Russian Korean history. While Malkki (1995) sees the contemporary local context (camp vs. town) as the major factor influencing the refugees' sense of identity and history (i.e., nationalistic vs. cosmopolitan), the ethnographic case I have discussed in this chapter

21 This term has been suggested by Malkki (1992, p. 137) instead of 'nationalism', which is a political ideology. With this term, she intends to 'describe a class of phenomena that is deeply cultural and yet global in its significance'.

shows how different views emerged from political and historical shifts in Russia in the early 2000s. As Malkki argues, it is important to represent 'an ethnography of the contingent sociohistorical processes of making and unmaking categorical identities and moral communities' (1995, p. 17). Therefore, we need to examine more carefully how the change of leadership in Korean diasporic politics was influenced by these changes in Russia in the early 2000s, and the implications of such transformations.

The most significant factor affecting the Korean political scene was the change in the relationship between the federal government and the provinces. After Putin became president, the relationship between Moscow and the periphery quickly returned to a vertical one, with the scrapping of the autonomous political movements in the provinces that had grown in the post-socialist space of democratization and liberalization (Petrov, 2011, p. 82-86). In the 1990s, the Koreans' rehabilitation movement had been supported by both the federal and the provincial government; specifically, it had been made possible due to the personal connection between Tel'mir Kim and the governor of Primorskii Kai. However, this personal alliance and the provincial power regime were fragile and subject to changes imposed by the central government. As Putin once took up the reins of control over the provinces, there were changes to the policies concerning the political and cultural activities of ethnic minorities on the peripheries of the Russian Federation.

In the case of Primorskii Krai, Moscow succeeded after a couple of failed attempts in replacing the provincial administration with one that would not oppose the central government (see Alexseev, 2002). As part of this process, Nazdratenko's resignation from the post of the governor appears to be directly linked with the impeachment of Tel'mir Kim. At the same time, the rehabilitation-focused nationality policies of the early 1990s, which had raised the possibility of 'territorial rehabilitation' and encouraged some regional and ethnic leaders to pursue territorial autonomy even to the extent of 'sovereign status', became increasingly regarded as a 'serious threat to the integrity and sovereignty' of the Russian Federation (Zorin, 2003, p. 127). The central authorities responded to this crisis by shifting to a cultural autonomy-focused nationality policy, which resulted in the passing of the Federal Law on National-Cultural Autonomy and the setting up of branches of *natsional'no-kul'turnaia avtonomia* ('national cultural autonomies', NKA) in many cities for various nationalities. The NKA of the Koreans in Ussuriisk was formed swiftly after this law was passed in 1996. According to a council member, 'a decree came from Moscow to organize an NKA and the city administration ordered us to form such an organization

Figure 5.2 Friendship Village



Figure 5.3 Korean Cultural Center in Ussuriisk (New Koreiskii Dom)



for Koreans'.²² One of Ussuriisk's wealthiest businessmen became the first NKA president; after his murder in the late 1990s, he was succeeded by his younger brother (Chen, 2003). However, until the early 2000s the Korean NKA in Ussuriisk remained no more than a nominal organization under the umbrella of the Fund.

After 2001, there were changes in the relationship between the Fund and the NKA, and in the type of activities carried out by the two organizations. In contrast with the situation in the late 1990s, the NKA began to play a leading role in ethnic politics, while the Fund became an inactive, nominal organization. Whereas the Fund had focused on the distribution of donated resources and settlement projects during Tel'mir Kim's presidency, the NKA placed more emphasis on obtaining recognition for Koreans, such as by sending representatives to the All-Russian Association of NKAs for Koreans,²³ celebrating national commemoration days such as Victory Day, and organizing events to mark the first settlement of Koreans in Russia. Although they received some funding from local businessmen, it was Peace Asia, a South Korean NGO active in humanitarian aid work for Korean refugees in the RFE, that chiefly financed these activities.²⁴ Peace Asia appealed to South Korean donors by presenting the tragic history of Russian Koreans and featuring pictures of their activities in their pamphlets and on their website.

In spring 2004, the second president of the Fund Evgenii Kang died suddenly; Roberto Son, the businessman who had originally acquired the building from the state, was elected as the next president at a meeting I attended in summer 2004. I listened to his acceptance speech in which he stated, 'I will make sure that Koreiskii Dom *zarabotat' dlia sebja* ("earns money for itself").' Under Roberto Son's presidency, the Fund increasingly came to resemble a privately run company rather than a public organization, and when I visited Koreiskii Dom in 2010 the whole building had been refurbished and rented out to private firms. It was no longer being used as a center for social activities, the NKA had moved out of the building, and I was unable to make contact with any representatives of the Fund.²⁵ On

22 Interview with a member of the Korean NKA in Ussuriisk, 18 December 2003.

23 It is worth noting that the Fund is a *kraievoi fond* ('local organization') without any other branches, though it did collaborate with Korean associations in other cities in Primorskii Krai. In contrast, NKA is part of an extensive national network, making it a more useful platform for businessmen to connect with influential people beyond the RFE.

24 For further information about Peace Asia, see their website at <http://www.peaceasia.or.kr/>.

25 The privatization of public space in Russia has also been reported in ethnographic studies of the 'Houses of Culture' that were established as community halls in many towns and villages during the Soviet period (see Donahoe and Habeck, 2011).

my visit to Ussuriisk in 2013, I heard a rumor that Roberto Son had sold the Old Koreiskii Dom for USD 2 million and was on the run for tax evasion.²⁶

In response to this commercialization of the communal space, Peace Asia launched a campaign in 2004, in commemoration of the 140th anniversary of the first Korean migration to Russia, to raise funds for the construction of a new building for the NKA and the Koreans in Ussuriisk. The building was opened in 2010.²⁷ It is this building that is now widely referred to by Koreans in Ussuriisk as Koreiskii Dom, rather than the original one associated with the Fund (see Figure 5.3). The new building is bigger and has many more facilities than the previous one; some space is rented out, but it is chiefly used for language classes, dance and martial arts teams, the Korean newspaper, and also as a library and museum. Commercial rent prices for the privately rented rooms keep the public space within Koreiskii Dom financially sustainable and independent of the need for other funding from the Russian state or from South Korean NGOs.

By focusing on Koreiskii Dom, this ethnographic study of the diasporic politics of Koreans in Ussuriisk enables us to appreciate how Koreans' extra-domestic space was formed and subsequently transformed in recent decades due to the wider political and historical changes in the RFE. The public space for Koreans in Ussuriisk was originally created in the 1990s for the rehabilitation of their culture and the recovery of historical justice. After the leadership change, the political public space of Koreiskii Dom became divided into commercial and social spaces as represented by two buildings, the original Koreiskii Dom and the new Korean Cultural Center. Despite these changes and the involvement of various political entities on the regional, national, and transnational levels, I argue that there is a cultural hegemony which legitimizes a certain space as Koreans' public space in Ussuriisk. This legitimized Koreans' public space (Koreiskii Dom in this ethnography) tends to remain invisible and separate from more authoritative public space such as the central plaza of the city. However, despite its invisibility and separation, the public space of Koreans (Koreiskii Dom) remained *within* the Russian order of things.²⁸ My examination of the

26 I have been unable to confirm the veracity of this rumor.

27 The official name of the new building is the 'Korean Cultural Center in Ussuriisk', and in the media it is also known as the 'Memorial Complex'. The final stage of construction was financed by the president of the NKA, and the building is now owned by the NKA.

28 By 'the Russian order of things', I mean certain unspoken and underlying assumptions that define what is acceptable or unacceptable in the construction of 'Russian-ness', following Michel Foucault (1970). This Russian order of things usually only becomes apparent when it is violated, such as in the opposition that emerged to construction of the 'Friendship Village', a

conflicts surrounding *Koreiskii Dom* leads me to conclude that 'Korean space within the Russian order of things' is a better and more accurate description of their process of adaption than 'Russification', a rather simplistic term that is frequently used to describe the assimilation of Koreans into Russian culture. In my view, the term 'Russification' not only obscures the degree of autonomy that Russian Koreans instinctively try to preserve in the face of Slavic nationalism, but also prevents us from understanding the flexible and multiple forms of identification adopted by Koreans in Ussuriisk and exemplified in their strategic approach to changes in social and political conditions.

Throughout the conflict over leadership of the Fund, the priority for Koreans in Ussuriisk was to preserve the social space provided by *Koresikii Dom*, which was threatened by commercial and political forces. In this way, the rehabilitation politics that led to Koreans being conspicuously visible in public discourse in the 1990s and early 2000s, have been relegated to the realm of social space in the newly constructed Korean Cultural Center, which is now an important part of the urban landscape of Ussuriisk thanks to its architectural size and contemporary style (see Figure 5.3). Its visibility asserts that the Korean community in Ussuriisk is an important constituent and collective member of the city, and yet the actual social activities that take place within its walls, such as the large hall being hired out for family ceremonies, choir practice by *Noindan* (the club for elderly Koreans), and traditional Korean dance lessons, remain largely invisible to the outside world.

In this regard, Melissa L. Caldwell (2015) provides us with an interesting observation about 'Korean' food in the Russian foodscape.²⁹ According to Caldwell, there is a certain ambivalence about the way that Korean cuisine is consumed in Russia: although there is a marked lack of proper Korean restaurants in the public space of Moscow, Korean cuisine is regularly consumed in 'ordinary', 'intimate', and 'domestic' spaces, and has become 'a part of Russian food habits' (Caldwell, 2015, p. 135). She describes the

group of new houses for Russian Koreans near Ussuriisk, and the settlement project pursued by Tel'mir Kim. In addition, anti-Korean sentiment may also have been stoked by the growing number of successful Korean businesses in Ussuriisk, resulting in increasing complaints about the number of Korean-owned shops in the city and about Koreans 'standing around in market places' (behavior that had been viewed as a violation of socialist morality in Soviet times).

29 Caldwell (2015) does not view the difference between South Korean and Russian Korean cuisine as significant for the purpose of her discussion. I believe it is important, however, as Russian Koreans frequently highlight the uniqueness of their cuisine in comparison with that of South Korea.

process that has led to this somewhat peculiar situation as ‘domestication’, in which ‘Korean foods are thus imbued with qualities of “normalcy” in Russia’ (Caldwell, 2015, p. 137). One result of the domestication of Korean food items is their apparent invisibility, ‘both because they are so ordinary and taken for granted and because they have been so seamlessly incorporated into the most intimate spaces of Russians’ daily life’ (Caldwell, 2015, p. 137, citation omitted). One representative example is carrot salad, which is often called ‘Korean salad’ (see Figure 2.3). It is made with carrots in a spicy sauce of oil, chilli powder, salt, vinegar, and garlic and is widely consumed in Russia and Central Asia. Both the salad and the spice mix for making it are readily available at most supermarkets and grocery shops throughout the country. As Caldwell (2015) notes, carrot salad is considered to be *nash* (‘ours’) by Russians, despite the recipe being well recognized as Korean. Caldwell (2015)’s thoughtful discussion of the domestication and invisibility of Korean food in the Russian foodscape led me to discern a common core cultural logic in the origin of carrot salad and in the representation of *Koreiskii Dom* that illustrates the centrality of domesticity in the representation of Russian Koreans, even in the public sphere. In the same way that carrot salad is basically a ‘home-cooked food’ for family consumption that has become widely available to all and sundry as part of Russian cuisine, *Koreiskii Dom* can be viewed as an extension of the domestic space beyond individual households. I argue that it is this value placed on domesticity that not only connects Russian Koreans with the wider society but also ensures the sustainability of their own community.

While Caldwell (2015) focuses on Korean cuisine as an example of the consumption of ‘the East’ in Russia, I would like to highlight how and why carrot salad in particular became popular in terms of its origin, production, and distribution. First, it should be noted that carrot salad was a creative and resourceful invention by Korean women in the Soviet Union.³⁰ As discussed in Chapter 3, the commercialization of carrot salad and other Korean-style salads occurred from the 1960s onwards, when *gobonjil* (‘migrating agriculture’) became popular among Soviet Koreans. Working far away from home, workers often lacked sufficient funds to return home for the winter months if cultivation had not been successful. It was the sale of carrot salads by their wives at the end of unsuccessful cultivation seasons that enabled them to return home. In this way, carrot salad and other Korean-style vegetable salads are frequently referred to as a ‘last

30 The archetype of carrot salad is *mooli* (a type of radish) salad in Korea; as *mooli* was not available in the Soviet Union, carrots were used instead and oil was added to suit Russian tastes.

resort' in times of crisis, and have come to symbolize the creative capacity and resourcefulness of Korean women. In fact, the variety of salads on festive tables represents female wealth, as discussed in Chapter 4. This gendered response to crisis can also be seen in the accusations levelled at Tel'mir Kim, as cited earlier in this chapter: in response to the crisis surrounding *Koreiskii Dom*, the narrative turns to the ideal type of 'male person' embodied in the second president of the Fund, whose *sposobnost'* ('capability') of 'rehabilitating *Koreiskii Dom*' has already been proved by his successful business career – which began from selling vegetables in the bazaar (Chen, 2003, p. 65).

Both carrot salad and the domestic Korean household represent the importance of 'being normal and ordinary', which is constituted through a combination of male and female performances. As discussed previously, the greenhouse for the cultivation of vegetables by Russian Koreans not only objectifies male capacity but is also a space that connects the individual household with the wider market. Thus, to interpret the crisis in diasporic politics described in this chapter, we need to understand *Koreiskii Dom* as a 'house society' in gendered terms, combining the economic autonomy of the household provided by its male capacity and social events in the domestic space enabled by its female capacity. Yet, the notion of 'house society' proposed by Lévi-Strauss (1987) still focuses on the lineal continuity of family and kinship through the house, by which a new member is born into the house and the family name and the physical building is passed from generation to generation. If we can say that maintaining the house as a building and a container of social relationships enables people to maintain their 'culture' (i.e. a particular style and mode of human dwelling), then I suggest that the basic logic of Russian Korean culture manifests through the gendered capabilities demonstrated when dealing with any crisis in the house. Due to their recurring history of displacement across the generations, maintaining a 'normal and ordinary' life is not something to be taken for granted among Russian Koreans, but the house and domestic space are central in their efforts to preserve 'normality' in the midst of external change.

Hannah Arendt writes that the stateless minorities in Europe in the inter-war period 'belong to the human race in much the same way as animals belong to a specific animal species'. In other words, they became 'men of an animal species, called man' and were 'thrown back [...] on their natural given-ness, on their mere differentiation' (Arendt, 1973, p. 301-302). Those who survived labor camps and other forms of incarceration 'insisted on their nationality, the last sign of their former citizenship, as their only

remaining and recognized tie with humanity', rather than being defined by 'their natural rights of being humans, as savages are also considered to have natural rights' (Arendt, 1973, p. 300). However, Arendt (1973) rightly points out that this tenacious clinging to nationality by stateless minorities was only meaningful on the individual level, as they had already lost their place in a community defined as a territorial nation-state. In Chapter 1, we saw how the older generation often used words referring to animals when they talked about their experience of the 1937 deportation; for example, they drew attention to the fact that they had to live in *ttang-gul* ('burrows' in Korean), which they dug after being unloaded from the cow carriages in Central Asia in the late autumn. Emerging from these burrows and building temporary houses using reeds, mud, and any other available material was the first step they took in the spring of 1938. The deportation deprived them not only of their community, which had functioned in the form of a traditional agricultural village, but also of any individual status and position: all that remained was their Korean identity, a token of an 'enemy nation'. Because they were unable to fully reconstruct their community and gain a secure position with the political opinion in the Soviet Union, the cultural logic connecting scattered groups of Koreans centered on the house as the container of family and kinship relations. This cultural logic centered on domesticity was replicated in the conflicts and debates surrounding *Koreiskii Dom* and the role of its leader, with the opponents of Tel'mir Kim insisting upon the sovereignty of the house and rejecting the politicized language that focused on the question of state sovereignty. Such language and nationalistic sentiments again raised the time-old question of the loyalty of Russian Koreans towards the Russian state and laid them open to accusations of violating 'the Russian order of things.'

As we have seen, the central value of *Koreiskii Dom* for Russian Koreans lay in its provision of an indoor space for family ceremonies such as wedding parties and birthday celebrations; particularly in the case of the older generation, such ceremonies reached beyond the family to the wider Korean community. The Old *Koreiskii Dom* lost its fundamental representative nature when 'people stopped going there' as a result of its owner organization working too closely with the local authorities or with South Korean companies, the building being neglected, and the commercial renting out of rooms leaving no space for communal activities.

I would like to end this chapter with my experience of a New Year party for elderly Koreans that was held in one of the large halls of the Old *Koreiskii Dom* in 2004. This was an annual event organized by *Noindan* and made possible by the financial donations of wealthy Korean businessmen and

the hard work of middle-aged women who prepared the food. It was an opportunity for the older generation to dress up and enjoy a fun night out with singing and dancing. I was busy videotaping the event and enjoying the jolly atmosphere when suddenly, without any instruction from the conductor, all of the elderly people began to spontaneously sing with one voice. It was a song called 'Mountains and Rivers of my Homeland' (*koguksanch'ŏn* in Korean). The lyrics translated from Korean into English are as follows:

Being in a foreign land thousands of miles distant from my homeland,
Sending my regards from another country where the mountains and
rivers are unfamiliar,
My sad heart longs for my homeland,
And all I can think of is my parents and brothers and sisters.

Despite the nostalgia of the lyrics, I was moved by the joyful and uplifting way they combined their voices in song. It was in stark contrast to my own reflections on their history. Many of the attendees had experienced great hardship as a result of displacement and the war, and they had labored all their lives in accordance with the ideals of Soviet socialism. The roughness of their hands and the knuckles of their fingers that looked like knots of wood bore witness to such a history. It was the contrast between the positive energy of their singing and their gnarled fingers that created a strong and lasting impression in my memory and reminded me of the careful path they had trodden as an ethnic minority through the minefield of nationalisms (whether Slavic or Central Asian autochthonous ones) to preserve a small space of their own to hold such a feast.

Epilogue

One day in May 2004, I was travelling by car from Ussuriisk to an archive in Vladivostok where I was researching the history of Koreans in the RFE. I noticed that there were many more police cars on the roadside than usual, and there were even helicopters patrolling the road from the air. Later that evening, I found out from the television news that President Putin was visiting Vladivostok to see the annual training exercises for the Far Eastern navy fleet. In the local newspapers, one popular topic of discussion was whether or not Putin would be dining on local salmon during his visit. To widespread disappointment, Putin had salmon flown in from Moscow (called *semga*) and did not touch *losos*, the local Primorian salmon. The residents of Primorskii Krai were disappointed that the president did not avail himself of the opportunity to taste their local salmon, a product in which they take great pride. Perhaps they hoped that the superior quality of their local product compared to that of Moscow might remind Putin of the worth of the periphery and help disprove the perceived marginality of their region. Concern for the well-being and security of the president in the light of Primorskii Krai's status as a special military region that had been closed to outsiders during the Soviet period may have deprived Putin of the chance to sample this local delicacy, due to fears of poisoning or contamination.

While in this episode salmon can be seen as symbolizing the relationship between the center and periphery of the Russian state, this fish also carries special meaning for many elderly Koreans and occupies an important place in their childhood memories. They remember the RFE as a place rich with fresh fish from both the rivers and the sea, in contrast to the inland steppes of Central Asia that are cut off from the ocean. Salmon need both river and sea during their lifecycle, and thus they came to symbolize the Far East that these elderly Koreans had to leave. Just as salmon return to the river where they were born in order to die, some Koreans told me that, during their time of residence in Central Asia, they had always hoped to return to the place of their birth and be buried in the Far East. Thus, salmon came to represent memories of the Far East for many of the Koreans who experienced displacement from their homeland.

However, such memories were often replaced by disappointment and disillusionment when people eventually returned to the Far East. Like a fortress, the region had been closed to the outside world for several decades until the 1990s, so the social structure of everyday life had stagnated at the level of the late Soviet period – and suffered further significant degradation

and deterioration in the post-socialist period. Many of my interlocutors who had been born in the RFE or had heard about it from their parents expressed their sense of disappointment: 'My parents told me that there were plentiful fresh fish from the sea in the Far East, but here there are only frozen fish and we can't afford even those'; and, 'My mother always talked about the Far East and how she missed it. She always said how beautiful it was, but it's not beautiful at all. It's cold and dirty and the streets are full of rubbish.' Many narratives of their migration to the RFE also referred to expectations of improvement in their physical health, such as 'I moved to the Far East as my heart was not good in the steppe climate of Central Asia', and 'My son had continuous blisters on his ears there [in Central Asia], and we thought the change of climate might be helpful.'

The body was the center of place-making (see Casey, 1996), not only in terms of people's survival after the deportation of 1937 but also in locating themselves in the RFE after migrating from Central Asia. In this book I have shown how such bodily emplacement, in terms of their hard work during Soviet times and their cultivation work in the changed economic conditions following the collapse of Soviet socialism, has affected Koreans. The body is central not only in their labor and everyday practices but also in their memory (Connerton, 1989). However, the bodily experiences that became the basis of their memory about certain places were not always compatible with the official 'facts' relating to the past. This discrepancy between embodied memory and the bureaucracy of the verification process became apparent when returnees to the RFE attempted to access rehabilitation procedures.

During the ethnic revival movement of the 1990s, Koreans who returned to the RFE could apply for rehabilitation in accordance with the law 'On the rehabilitation of the repressed peoples'. Eligible applicants were those born before 1953 who could prove that they or their parents were born in the RFE. For many, however, the problem was how to prove their eligibility. Applicants had to submit a *spravka* ('enquiry') about their date and place of birth with supporting documents; this enquiry was passed on to the Krai archive, and if the staff were unable to find the information corresponding to the applicant's claim, then the application was rejected. Very few applicants possessed documents certifying the birthplace of their parents; such births were only recognized as legal facts when 'backed by papers' but most Korean families had lost any such documents in the course of their deportation and migration across the generations (cf. Yngvesson and Coutin, 2006). The following personal testimony by Galina Ugai (born in 1930) in the Korean newspaper *Wondong* illustrates how the legal process often negated and disembodied people's memory of the past.

My husband's sister, Raisa Denisobna, who was born in 1925, is now living in Tashkent but she remembers clearly about where they used to live [in Primorskii Krai]. She explained to us that in the village there were three roads and that she could clearly picture her father's house and her own house. I also clearly remember my parents' house. It stood right by the road and next to a kitchen garden, which was full of trees. But now no traces remain of these houses. We made an application to the commissioner for rehabilitation in Ussuriisk. We went to the Krai authorities, to the Krai commissioner and the director of customs three times. They told us that we needed to make an application to the procurator (*prokuratura*) of Krai. We went there twice but with no success. After 60 years, no archive documents could be found anywhere. That is how it was explained to us. We were very disappointed. ('How to return to the place of your childhood', August 1994, *Wondong*, No7(7))

As Paul Connerton (2008, p. 55) argues, 'to say that something [a historical record] has been stored [...] is tantamount to saying that [...] we can afford to forget it.' In other words, the information available in the state archives negates the validity of Koreans' memories based on bodily topology. Nevertheless, Koreans continue to perceive their bodies not only as the corporeal medium for memory but also as the center of their social relationships, in which bodies are conceived, nourished, and expended in a cycle of labor, daily transactions, and familial rituals. In this book, I have shown that Koreans in the RFE are not merely objects of political and social change, but that they deflect the changes that lie outside of their control and absorb them into their subjective world.

Although this book focuses on the Korean minority, many of their experiences are shared with other local residents who are in a similarly disadvantaged position in the RFE. It is notable that Leonid E. Bliakher (2014, p. 54) also discusses the existence of *nevidnye liudi* ('invisible people') in 'an invisible region from the viewpoint of Moscow', thus echoing my observations of Koreans in the RFE. Bliakher (2014) notes that an increase in 'shadow' economic activities centered on exchanges among relatives and friends, often across borders, were the main means of survival for such people during the post-Soviet period. During these two decades, the everyday life of residents in the RFE was *neupravlenaia* ('non-administered'), evoking Scott's (2009) research on anarchism in the borderlands of Southeast Asia (Bliakher, 2014).

If anything remains of the socialist legacy in the post-socialist period, it is this morality and obligation towards relatives and friends, and the social

networks that were created to fill the vacuum left by the lack of state welfare provisions. Not only the Koreans, but a majority of the population of the RFE had to resort to such social networks when the state ceased functioning and industries and institutions ran out of funding. In recent years, however, this strategy for survival has come increasingly under the control of the central government as Putin actively pursues policies to develop Eastern Siberia and the Far Eastern region.

When I was carrying out the fieldwork for my doctoral degree in the early 2000s, I did not fully realize the implications for the RFE of Putin's election as president of the Russian Federation, as the influence of his government had not yet become clearly visible in the region. By the end of 2007, however, I began to read local newspaper articles on the Internet about legislation prohibiting foreign citizens from engaging in selling, which particularly affected the Chinese market in Ussuriisk. This legislation was accompanied by police raids on the Chinese market and the deportation of many Chinese citizens whose documents were not in order. When I visited the market in 2010, I discovered that a significant number of Chinese Koreans had been affected by this law, returning to northeast China with 'black stamps' on their passports that prohibited them from re-entering Russia for at least the next five years. Moscow's policies also targeted other parts of the local border economy in the region, as illustrated by the proposed law 'On the Safety of Road Mobility' that concerned the import of second-hand Japanese cars to Primorskii Krai. This law was due to be implemented shortly after the restrictions on Chinese traders had been imposed. The ostensible reason for banning the import of these right-hand-drive Japanese cars was to improve road safety, but many people in Primorskii Krai believed that the government's true intention was to curb transnationalism in this border area and purge the RFE of some of the East Asian influences that had become an important part of the everyday lives of its residents. In the end, this law was not introduced due to widespread objections and large-scale public demonstrations.

Moscow's revived interest in the Far East since the late 2000s showed itself not only in a crackdown on East Asian traders but also in constructive policies and a series of large-scale state investments in the region. One example was the 2012 APEC summit in Vladivostok; this had been planned since 2007 and was the most expensive summit in APEC history, costing the central government an enormous amount of money. In addition to the APEC summit, a series of development programs for the people and regions of Eastern Siberia and the Far East resulted in the establishment of the Ministry of Development of the Far East in 2012. The recent Ukrainian

crisis, the European financial crisis, and the West's economic sanctions on Russia have also contributed towards a more proactive *povorot na vostok* ('turn to the East'), not only in search of new markets for Russia's natural resources but also to strategically position Russia as a great power on the Asia-Pacific frontier.

This recent 'turn to the East' can be seen as replicating Tsarist Russia's colonization of the Far East in the late nineteenth century, when the direction of its imperial expansion had turned eastwards after its defeat in the Crimean War in 1856. This *kolonizatsiia* ('colonization') has been replaced by *razvitiie* ('development') in the twenty-first century. Of course, these two 'turns to the East' are not identical, but they share some similarities despite the one-and-a-half-century gap between them. They both exhibit a state-centered and Western-driven approach to the region, despite the emphasis on the 'East' in their slogans. Ever since imperial Russia acquired this region, the Far East has attracted the interest of the state as a consequence of crises in the western part of Russia, rather than stemming from a desire to understand and develop the region for its own sake. Both turns have also focused on the 'peopling' (Breyfogle, Schrader, and Sunderland, 2007) of this peripheral borderland by granting state benefits such as free land allocation and tax relief for settlers and investors in the region. Thus, the attempts to 'colonize' and to 'develop' the Far East share the common threads of subjugating the region to the center and increasing the population. Despite the coherency of this approach, it involves a chicken-and-egg dilemma: the state wishes to colonize/develop the region to establish its claim over it, but lacks the necessary population to achieve this; at the same time, the region lacks population because it is undeveloped. This dilemma has been exacerbated by the fact that interventionist policies in the region have often failed to produce the intended improvements in living conditions and, in many cases, have had the opposite effect.

Both the withdrawal of Moscow's engagement from this peripheral region in the 1990s and the rekindling of its interest and the development of state projects in the 2010s resulted in radical changes in people's lives. Such sudden changes in state policy, including re-engagement, often have a negative impact on local people because their way of life cannot respond to change as swiftly as policy demands. The discourse of failure resulting from the gap between the state's lofty ambitions and the reality of life on the ground has tended to make a scapegoat of Russian Far Eastern culture, viewing it as something that impedes development and modernization. Ssorin-Chaikov (2016, p. 692) describes how such discourse around the failure of state projects, which contrast the benevolent intentions of the central

government with the indolence and backwardness of the periphery, 'works as a device of naming otherness' and becomes a part of the sociocultural reality of the periphery. In Putin's 'turn to the East', the 'otherness' of the East in this border region appears in two forms: the locally embedded border economy of the Far East that developed during the post-socialist period is viewed as something that should be dismantled and replaced by a somewhat fetishized form of an 'Eastern' economy, as represented by high-tech industries and the advanced economic development of East Asian countries; and the idea that this region of East Asia has never been truly part of the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union despite its geographic proximity.

Against this background of Russia's intransigent view of East Asian people and their culture, this book has tried to show how Russian Koreans, who originated from a neighboring East Asian country, transformed themselves first into 'Soviet people' and later into *russkoiazychannyi narod* ('Russian-speaking people') following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Displaying great resilience and perseverance, those Koreans who migrated from Central Asia to Primorskii Krai two decades ago are now settled and have become 'Primorians', believing that the future for their children lies in the RFE. We might say that they are now well and truly located on the internal side of the Russian border with East Asia.

Appendix 1

Table 1 The change of Korean population in comparison with other nationalities between 1897 and 2010 in Primorskii Krai, Russia

Year/ population by nationality	Koreans	Russians	Ukrainians	Tatars	Chinese	Whole population
1897	21448	55220	31962	547	20130	144492
1914	61694	307751	N/a	287	32580	408070
1923	101938	203627	163067	N/a	37680	525770
1926	145511	209740	148768	N/a	43513	572031
1931	159100	330000	222300	N/a	32100	836900
1939	0	676866	168761	11016	0	906805
1959	3748	787944	85827	13968	N/a	1379100
1970	8003	1472322	162767	18254	N/a	1721285
1979	8125	1721606	163116	19459	N/a	1976600
1989	8454	1960554	185091	20211	200	2256072
1999*	30000	1018766	N/a	N/a	25000	2167300
2002	17899	1861808	94058	14549	3840	2071210
2010**	18824	1675992	49953	10640	2857	1956497

Source: Vaschuk et al., 2002, p. 220

I converted the original graph to a table form. Data for 2002 came from *Vserossiiskaia perepis naseleniia 2002 goda* ('all-Russia population census in 2002'), available at <http://collectivization.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=87>.

* Data for this year was not based on the official census, but was made by the regional government using various sources. Therefore, there is a remarkable discrepancy between the whole population and the sum of the populations of specified nationalities. The number of Koreans and Chinese is unreliable, especially when compared with the number in the official census of 2002.

** One of the most remarkable changes in the demography of Primorskii Krai as noted in the 2010 census can be attributed to the steep increase of migrants from Central Asia. The number of Uzbeks increased from 1,634 in 2002 to 8,993 in 2010, the number of Kirgiz increased from 453 to 1,412, and the number of Tajiks increased from 743 to 1885. More information is available at https://primorsky.ru/upload/iblock/0c0/1621_1_.doc.



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Glossary

(R) = Russian; (K) = Korean; (RK) = Vernacular Russian Korean

<i>bakhchevye kultury</i> (R)	melons
<i>batraki</i> (R)	farmhands
<i>bejil</i> (RK)	rice cultivation work
<i>bedniaki</i> (R)	poor men
<i>besporiadok</i> (R)	disorder
<i>bez-poddannye</i> (R)	non-subject, stateless
<i>bizinesmen</i> (R)	businessman
<i>blat</i> (R)	connection
<i>blogotvoritel'naia organizatsiia</i> (R)	charitable organization
<i>chastnoe predpriiatie</i> (R)	private enterprise
<i>chebi ttang</i> (RK)	our own land
<i>cherez koro</i> (R)	via somebody
<i>cherez ocheredi</i> (R)	jumping the queue
<i>chisty koreets</i> (R)	pure Korean
<i>chuzhoi</i> (R)	aliens, strange, others'
<i>desiatin</i> (R)	imperial measuring unit of land plot, 1.09 hectare
<i>Dal'nii Vostok</i> (R)	the Far East
<i>deportirovats</i> (R)	deport
<i>Dom Kul'tury</i> (R)	House of Culture
<i>dor(i)</i> (K, RK)	first birthday
<i>edinstvo</i> (R)	unity
<i>etnicheskaia migratsiia</i> (R)	ethnic migration
<i>gobon</i> (RK)	plot of land used for mobile cultivation
<i>gobonjil</i> (RK)	migrating/mobile cultivation
<i>gorispolkome</i> (R)	city executive committee
<i>grazhdanstvo</i> (R)	citizenship
<i>guduri</i> (K)	under-floor heating system
<i>hwatu</i> (K)	card game played by both Russian Koreans and South Koreans
<i>inorodtsy</i> (R)	people of different origin
<i>inostrantsy</i> (R)	foreigners
<i>istoricheskaia rodina</i> (R)	historical homeland
<i>jaeso hanin</i> (K)	Koreans in the Soviet Union
<i>jagube</i> (RK)	offspring from mixed marriage

<i>khoziain</i> (R)	host, master
<i>kochevoi</i> (R)	nomadic
<i>kollektiv</i> (R)	collective
<i>kolkhoz</i> (R)	abbreviation of <i>kollektivnoe khoziaistvo</i> , meaning 'collective farm'
<i>kolkhoznik</i> (R)	a member of collective farm
<i>kolonizatsiia</i> (R)	colonization
<i>Koreiskii Dom</i> (R)	Korean House
<i>koreiskii otдел</i> (R)	Korean Department
<i>koreiskii vopros</i> (R)	the Korean question
<i>koreitsy</i> (R)	Koreans
<i>korenizatsiia</i> (R)	nativization
<i>kori il charhanün'</i> (RK)	good-working brain
<i>Koryō saram</i> (RK)	people of Koryō
<i>koryōin</i> (K)	koryō people
<i>kottedzhi</i> (R)	cottage
<i>kraievoi fond</i> (R)	provincial fund
<i>krest'ianskoe obshchestvo</i> (R)	peasant society
<i>krov'</i> (R)	blood
<i>kulak</i> (R)	wealthy land-owning farmer
<i>lageri</i> (R)	camps
<i>l'goty</i> (R)	benefits
<i>lichno</i> (R)	personally
<i>lichnyi</i> (R)	personal
<i>luk-jil</i> (RK)	onion cultivation work
<i>malochislenye narody</i> (R)	small peoples
<i>mestnye</i> (R)	locals
<i>meropriiatie</i> (R)	event
<i>mudrost'</i> (R)	wisdom
<i>nanimat'</i> (R)	hire
<i>narody repressirovannye</i> (R)	repressed peoples
<i>narushenie</i> (R)	violation
<i>nash or nashi</i> (R)	our, ours
<i>natsional'no-kul'turnaia avtonomia</i> (R)	national cultural autonomies
<i>natsional'nyi vopros</i> (R)	the nationality question
<i>natsional'nyi kharakter</i> (R)	national character
<i>nong-sa-jil</i> (K, RK)	cultivation work
<i>novosel</i> (R)	newcomer
<i>novosely</i> (R)	new residents

<i>obshchenie</i> (R)	socializing/sociality
<i>obshchestvennyi</i> (R)	public
<i>obshchezhitie</i> (R)	communal apartment
<i>obstoiatel'stvo</i> (R)	circumstances
<i>ogorod</i> (R)	backyard kitchen garden
<i>okrytno</i> (R)	openly
<i>otchistka</i> (R)	cleansing
<i>otpusk</i> (R)	leave [from work]
<i>otrez</i> (R)	cutting off, separation
<i>passportizatsiia</i> (R)	implementation of internal passport system
<i>pereselentsy</i> (R)	migrants
<i>pereselit'</i> (R)	migrate
<i>muzhskoi dush</i> (R)	male person
<i>poddannye</i> (R)	subjects
<i>poddanstvo</i> (R)	subject-hood
<i>podpol'e</i> (R)	underground
<i>podriadchiki</i> (R)	contractors, brokers
<i>pomoshch</i> (R)	help
<i>povedenie</i> (R)	behavior
<i>povorot na vostok</i> (R)	pivot to the East
<i>priezshie</i> (R)	incomers
<i>primortsy</i> (R)	Primorians
<i>propiska</i> (R)	residency registration/permit
<i>rabochii</i> (R)	laborer
<i>raion</i> (R)	county
<i>razvitie</i> (R)	development
<i>reabilitatsiia</i> (R)	rehabilitation
<i>repressiia</i> (R)	repression
<i>rugat'</i> (R)	criticize
<i>russkie</i> (R)	ethnic Russians
<i>Russkii bilet</i> (R)	a type of identity document in pre-Revolutionary period
<i>Ruskoiazychannye</i>	
<i>narody</i> (R)	Russian-speaking peoples
<i>sadoni</i> (RK)	affinity
<i>samostoiatel'nost'</i> (R)	independence
<i>sang</i> (K)	table
<i>shabashka</i> (R)	temporary brigades
<i>so-obshchatsia</i> (R)	socialize
<i>sobstvennosti</i> (R)	property rights
<i>sojakchil</i> (K)	tenant farming

<i>sootchestvenniki</i> (R)	compatriots
<i>soryōn saram</i> (K)	Soviet people
<i>soslovie</i> (R)	estate
<i>soslovnost'</i> (R)	social status, belonging to a certain estate
<i>sovkhoz</i> (<i>Sovetskoe Khoziaistvo</i>) (R)	state farm
<i>sovetskii narod</i> (R)	Soviet people
<i>sposovnyi</i> (R)	capable
<i>spravka</i> (R)	enquiry
<i>sredi svoikh</i> (R)	among our own people
<i>s svoimi</i> (R)	with one's own people
<i>ssakguni</i> (RK)	workers for money
<i>starozhily</i> (R)	old residents
<i>svoi</i> (R)	one's own
<i>strakh</i> (R)	fear
<i>strashno</i> (R)	scary
<i>su-bak jil</i> (RK)	watermelon cultivation work
<i>teplitsa</i> (R)	greenhouse
<i>tijlbanga</i> (K)	pedal-operated mill
<i>truby</i> (R)	pipes
<i>trudoliubitel'nyi</i> (R)	hard-working
<i>trudoliubivyi narod</i> (R)	hard-working people
<i>tselostnost'</i> (R)	integrity, wholeness
<i>ttang-gul</i> (K)	burrows
<i>uchastok</i> (R)	allotment
<i>ugroza</i> (R)	threat
<i>vid na zhitel'stvo</i> (R)	permanent residence
<i>vnenakhodmost'</i> (R)	outsidedness
<i>vnye</i> (R)	outside
<i>voennyi gorod</i> (R)	army town
<i>vopros zemleustroistva</i> (R)	the question of land distribution
<i>vospitanie</i> (R)	upbringing
<i>vostochniki</i> (R)	easterners
<i>vremennoe prozhivanie</i> (R)	temporary residence
<i>vtoroi sort</i> (R)	second grade
<i>vygody</i> (R)	advantages, benefits
<i>vygoniat'</i> (R)	drive out
<i>vynuzhdennye migranty</i> (R)	forced migrants
<i>vypisala</i> (R)	write off from registered address
<i>wonhoin</i> (K)	settler Koreans, Koreans with Russian subject-hood

<i>yak-dam-bae</i> (RK)	opium
<i>yeohoin</i> (K)	newcomer Koreans, non-subjects of Imperial Russia
<i>zelenyi kiln</i> (R)	green wedge
<i>zheltaia opasnost'</i> (R)	yellow peril
<i>zheltyi ras</i> (R)	the yellow race



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