ASIAN BORDERLANDS

Hyun Gwi Park

The Displacement of Borders among Russian Koreans in Northeast Asia

Amsterdam
University
Press

The Displacement of Borders among Russian Koreans in Northeast Asia

Asian Borderlands

Asian Borderlands presents the latest research on borderlands in Asia as well as on the borderlands of Asia – the regions linking Asia with Africa, Europe and Oceania. Its approach is broad: it covers the entire range of the social sciences and humanities. The series explores the social, cultural, geographic, economic and historical dimensions of border-making by states, local communities and flows of goods, people and ideas. It considers territorial borderlands at various scales (national as well as supra- and sub-national) and in various forms (land borders, maritime borders), but also presents research on social borderlands resulting from border-making that may not be territorially fixed, for example linguistic or diasporic communities.

Series Editors
Tina Harris, University of Amsterdam
Willem van Schendel, University of Amsterdam

Editorial Board Members
Franck Billé, University of Cambridge
Duncan McDuie-Ra, University of New South Wales
Eric Tagliacozzo, Cornell University
Yuk Wah Chan, City University Hong Kong

The Displacement of Borders among Russian Koreans in Northeast Asia

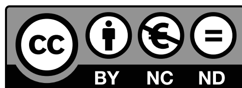
Hyun Gwi Park

Amsterdam University Press

Cover illustration: photo by Hyun Gwi Park

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden
Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 90 8964 998 0
e-ISBN 978 90 4852 911 7 (pdf)
DOI 10.5117/9789089649980
NUR 761



Creative Commons License CC BY NC ND (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0)

© The author / Amsterdam University Press B.V., Amsterdam 2018

Some rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, any part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise).

To my parents

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 11

Note on transliteration, translation, and names 13

Preface 17
Clearing the ground

Introduction: the obscure presence of Russian Koreans in Northeast Asia 23
Displacement and mobility 25
Encounters 32
'Wounded attachment' 34
Russian Koreans and Soviet disengagement from the Asia-Pacific frontier 37
Unity and diversity 40
Fieldwork and outline of chapters 43

1 **The history of 'the Korean question' and border-making in the Russian Far East** 47
An early crossing: the flight from hunger 50
The formation of a border and the beginning of regulation (1884-1904) 58
The Korean question and the 'yellow peril' 63
Internal diversification of Korean settlers and the anti-Japanese movement 65
Building Soviet socialism and cleansing the Soviet Far East 66
Memory in silence in the present 75

2 **Repatriating to the Russian Far East, confronting the transition** 81
Early repatriates: returnees from Central Asia in the 1950s 85
Newcomer Koreans in the early 1990s: 'organized' migration in chaos 91
From migrants to traders in the mid-1990s 97
Late newcomers and problems with documents 101
The notion of 'locality' for newcomer and old resident Koreans 106

3 **Living Soviet socialism the Korean way: mobile agriculture at the border of socialism** 115
Rice cultivation: socialist peasants in Soviet Central Asia 118
Work *vnye* ('outside') the system: *gobonjil* during Soviet times 123
Nomadic socialist peasants in the lacunae of Soviet socialism 125
Trading cultivators or cultivating traders: trading political status with economic wealth 128
One's own people in/outside the Soviet system 135
Living on the border of Soviet socialism 137

4 **Greenhouse society: the subsistence economy and house-holding** 139
The economic conditions for greenhouse cultivation 142
Greenhouse construction and the preparation of young plants indoors 152
The greenhouse as threshold 153
The greenhouse in gendered terms 158
The extended space of the house 161
Food: everyday meals and ceremonial banquets 164
The transformation of women in the continuity and extension of the house 171
Becoming persons 175

5 **Recalling history: Koreiskii Dom, transnational connections, and diaspora politics** 179
Koreiskii Dom as a stage for diasporic politics 182
Leadership change and its implications 185
Different visions for a Russian Korean collective identity 188

Epilogue 205

Appendix 1 211

Appendix 2 213

Glossary 215

Bibliography 221

Index 233

List of Maps, Figures and Tables

Maps

Map 1 Russian Far East 1884-1917 14
Map 2 Russian Far East circa 1937 15
Map 3 Contemporary Russian Far East 16

Figures*

Figure 1.1 A memorial stone for the first Korean settlement in Khasanskii Raion 53
Figure 1.2 The governor of Primorskii Krai in excursion to the border in Khasanskii Raion 54
Figure 1.3 A memorial statue for war heroes in Khasanskii Raion 55
Figure 2.1 Women vegetable sellers in the marketplace 95
Figure 2.2 Salad selling stall in the marketplace run by a Korean woman 95
Figure 2.3 A salad factory run by Lena Yugai 96
Figure 4.1 A greenhouse in the backyard of Marta Ivanovna's house 150
Figure 4.2 Inside of a greenhouse, seen from the entrance 150
Figure 4.3 Day laborers 151
Figure 4.4 Seedlings indoors 151
Figure 4.5 A quotidian meal 168
Figure 4.6 Banquet table at the wedding party for Larisa's son 168
Figure 4.7 A girl's first birthday party in the evening 169
Figure 4.8 A table at the 84th birthday of a woman in Novoselovo 169
Figure 5.1 Old Koreiskii Dom 181
Figure 5.2 Friendship Village 197
Figure 5.3 Korean Cultural Center in Ussuriisk (New Koreiskii Dom) 197
Figure 1 (Appendix 2) Diagram of relatedness in Novoselovo 213

Tables

Table 1 The change of population in Primorskii Krai according to nationality in 1990-1998 96
Table 1 (Appendix 1) The change of Korean population in comparison with other nationalities between 1897 and 2010 in Primorskii Krai, Russia 211

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

Acknowledgements

In the long process of completing this book, I have been given great help, support, and encouragement from a number of people and institutions. Firstly, I am indebted to my interlocutors in Primorskii Krai, who accepted me into their homes and told me their stories despite their busy lives and hardships in the early 2000s. During my fieldwork in Ussuriisk, I received kind help and advice from Nikolai Sergeivich, Tel'mir Afanasievich, Mrs. SS Kim, and the staff at Peace Asia. In Spasskii Raion, Kolya and Sveta Kim and their extended family, Nina Vladimirovna and her family, Kolya Tsai, Timosha and Marina, the late Babushka Masha, and many other villagers in Novoselovo made my stay there enjoyable and memorable. I am especially grateful for Lyuda Li who allowed me to stay at her house in the summer of 2010 and whose wisdom and warmth has been a lasting inspiration to me. Though I cannot list the names of all of my other interlocutors, I am sincerely grateful for their hospitality and allowing me to share many moments with them.

In Russia, I also had the pleasure of getting to know some scholars whose engagement with my research helped me to conceptualize the lives of the Koryŏ Saram in connection to the region's crucial issues. In Vladivostok, Tamara Troyakova, Angelina Vaschuk, Elena Chernolutskaya, Natalia Ryzhova and Anastasia Konyakhina welcomed me; their presence enabled me to feel more familiar and comfortable in Primorskii Krai. I am very grateful for Nastya Konyakhina's help in creating pseudonyms for places and providing me with the wonderful maps for this book through her geographer friend.

At Cambridge I was lucky to be surrounded by great teachers and colleagues. From the beginning of this project, Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov has always been supportive of my work and I am grateful for his encouragement and advice throughout the long period of this research project. Marilyn Strathern and Caroline Humphrey have shown me what it means to be a truly good anthropologist. Heonik Kwon has been a great example of an engaged anthropologist with compassion. Very special thanks go to Franck Billé. It would simply not have been possible to finish this book without his encouragement and support. He read the whole manuscript and gave me incisive comments and the right advice, and his warmth and friendship enabled me to continue this project. In the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies of Cambridge University, I received support and encouragement from John Nilsson-Wright, Peter Kornicki, and Rebekah Clement, and my special thanks to warmhearted Mark Morris for lovely

chats over the past years. My teachers in South Korea, Kim Kwang-Ok and Oh Myeong Seok guided me when I was a novice in anthropology.

The research this book is based on was made possible at a very early stage by an overseas scholarship from the Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea. The research was further assisted by the Richard Fund, William Wyse Fund, and Long Roth Fund of the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge. A Postdoctoral Research Fellowship from the Economics and Social Science Research Council, UK provided me with financial support for writing the first draft of this book and follow-up fieldwork in 2010. I was able to revise the draft while holding a Research Fellowship from Clare Hall, which provided me with a comfortable and stable scholarly home. At its final stage, this publication was supported by an Academy of Korean Studies Grant (AKS-2017-P08). I am grateful for institutional and financial support given to me in the process.

Mary Anketell's excellent editing has made this book more polished. The editor at Amsterdam University Press, Saskia Gieling, showed great confidence and belief in this book from the beginning to the end. Two reviewers' comments on the manuscript helped me to make my discussion in the book more coherent and clear. While I am grateful for all this support and help from the people and institutions I mentioned, I am solely responsible for the contents of this book. In particular, if any Koryŏ Saram happens to read this book and finds my argument and description not very agreeable, I can only say that this book presents my construction of Koryŏ Saram's social lives in the hope that we can see other works to get published in future. Chapter 2 and chapter 5 were revised from articles published in *Inner Asia* and the *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology,* and I am grateful for the permission to re-use the material in those articles in this book.

In completing this book, the companionship and full support of my husband Su-Jong You has been indispensable. Without his encouragement and criticism, it is simply true that this book would not have seen the light. Sea and Minnie have grown together with this book project, giving me great joy; I appreciate their tolerance of me spending so much time on this project. I am also grateful for the long-distance and never wavering support from my mother, my sister, Soyeong, and my parents-in-law. I dedicate this book to my late father, Park Woo Sik, who would have been pleased with its publication, and to my mother.

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 Russia 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.

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 East[1] (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 *cherez 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 *koryŏin*?' – 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.