

A Transnational Tale of Two Nationalities* : Ethnic Koreans in Sakhalin Island and North Koreans in Kamchatka, Russia

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<Abstract>

The goal of this study is to analyze diasporic aspects of North Korean migrants in Kamchatka, in comparison with those of Korean diaspora in Sakhalin. In particular, using narratives of ethnic Koreans obtained in two field surveys in Elizovo in Kamchatka, Russia and Jeonggwang in Busan, South Korea, this study tries to compare transnational practices of those Korean diaspora both in Sakhalin and Kamchatka, Russia. In this paper four transnational practices including alienation from the host countries, differences in kin-states, desire for an eventual return

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to the homeland, and Confucian ethics were analyzed and compared between those Korean immigrants in both residential areas. According to the results of the study, the closure of the political system in North Korea and the kin-state of Koreans living in the Kamchatka Peninsula caused the North Korean diaspora to confuse their feelings about their home country, but those could not weaken transnationalism among them. It may be due to the fact that South and North Korea, homelands for two Korean diaspora in Sakhalin and Kamchatka, are different in their political or economic system or structure but identical in their cultural and spiritual roots. Russian discrimination against the Korean diaspora in Sakhalin Island and the Kamchatka Peninsula as well as subsequent alienation felt by these Koreans have played an important role in strengthening their ethnic identity. In addition, Koreans living in Sakhalin and Kamchatka still have a strong desire to return to their home countries regardless of where they live. Finally, this study shows that traditional Confucian Korean customs, such as funerals, rituals, and sixtieth birthdays, lead those ethnic Koreans in the Russian Far East to strengthen their connection with their homeland. All in all, this study illustrates that transnational practices of ethnic Koreans exert a similar influence on the reconstruction of diasporic identities, even though there are differences in their kin-states.

* Key Words: Sakhalin, Kamchatka, Transnationalism, Motherland, Diaspora, National Identity

1. Introduction

About three years ago, the news report that Tae Yeong Ho, a deputy ambassador of North Korea in the Great Britain has defected to South Korea, has sent a shocking wave to the world. Although there have

been not a few North Koreans who have sought a political asylum in the Western countries including South Korea, the news report on the defection of a high-level diplomat gives us careful reconsideration about North Koreans overseas.

Recently, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2397 adopted in December 2017, U.N. member states were asked to implement the Resolution that all North Korean workers making money abroad be repatriated to their homeland by December 22, 2019. Currently, an estimated 23,000 North Korean workers are working in countries around the world¹⁾.

The foreign currency earning of North Korean workers abroad can be understood in terms of mutual benefits between North Korean workers and government authorities. Given that North Korea's economy is almost in ruin, making money by its own workers abroad is the only way for North Korean workers and North Korean authorities to acquire foreign currency.²⁾

In addition to China, Russia is said to be the country where the largest number of North Korean workers are currently working. Historically, Russia is known as the country where North Korean workers earned foreign currency for the first time in the late 1940s. The origin of North Korean guest workers dates back to those workers in Kamchatka, Russia, during the period from 1946 to 1949. Those North Koreans crossed to the frontier land of the Soviet Union, according to the governmental agreement on fisheries between North

1) Yonhap News Agency, "Some 23,000 N. Korean overseas workers sent back home under U.N. resolution," December 12, 2019.

2) The North Korean authorities intercept 90% of the wages that North Korean workers earn overseas, but those workers have the advantage of being able to contact the outside world through foreign works. These workers also have the advantage of going back to North Korea with their earned money and doing small private businesses to easily climb the ladder of class structure in North Korea after working abroad.

Korea and the Soviet Union.

A field survey³⁾ conducted for this study estimates the number of North Korean workers in the Kamchatka Peninsula to be 50,000 in all, although the exact data is not available. Currently there are only 1,800 North Korean workers and their descendants remained in Kamchatka.

This study attempts to analyze these North Korean workers who are sent to Kamchatka from the diaspora perspective. Specifically, this study is to compare North Korean workers on the Kamchatka Peninsula with Korean diaspora living in Sakhalin near Kamchatka, Russia.

The Korean diaspora in Sakhalin contrasts in many ways with North Korean workers in the Kamchatka Peninsula. Kamchatka and Sakhalin are both geographically located in the Far East of Russia, but Koreans who migrated here differ in their origins and the time of migration.

But there are also similarities between the two groups. The migration of Koreans in both areas is closely related to economic and political factors in Northeast Asia. Therefore, I am interested in how the differences and similarities between Koreans living in Sakhalin and Kamchatka are related to their identity formation.

This study will focus on the formation and subsequent change of identity of Koreans living on Kamchatka Peninsula and Sakhalin Island from the perspective of diaspora research.

In specific, this research analyzes how ethnic identities of ethnic Koreans in Kamchatka and Sakhalin could be reconstructed by four transnational practices, such as alienation from the host countries, differences in kin-states, desire for an eventual return to the homeland, and Confucian ethics.

3) Please refer to a methodology section in this paper.

2. Theoretical Background on the Korean Diaspora in the Russian Far East (RFE)

The origin of the Korean diaspora, which migrated to the RFE, can be traced back to 13 Korean families crossing the Tumen River in 1863 to Primorye, Russia. Due to natural disasters such as floods and famine in the province of Hamgyeong-do in the late Joseon Dynasty, poor Koreans were going to Russia to prepare a new place of life⁴⁾ (Lee, 2007).

In the meantime, the most important historical watershed in Koreans' migration to Russia was the establishment of Korean-Russian diplomatic relations in 1884, the forced occupation of the Joseon Dynasty by the Japanese Empire in 1910, and the forced relocation of Koreans in Russia to Central Asia in 1937.

Specifically, due to the establishment of Korean-Russian diplomatic relations in 1884, Russian immigration policies for Koreans who migrated to Russia gradually began to form. In addition, the forced occupation of Korea by Japan in 1910 led to the massive political migration of Koreans to Russia. Because of Japan's harsh colonial policy in Korea, ordinary Koreans in economic poverty and independence fighters who have pursued political independence in Korea moved to the nearby RFE where they were more free and active in their political and military independence movements.

Finally, in 1937, under the Stalin regime of the Soviet Union, Russian Koreans were considered spies of the Japanese Empire, and over 170,000 Koreans living in the RFE were forcibly relocated to Central Asia by train. And this led to Koreans being scattered throughout Russia and Central Asia today⁵⁾.

4) Chaimun Lee, *Dongtoui Diaspora* [The Korean Diaspora in a Permanently Frozen Land]. Kyungpook National University Press, 2007.

However, what is of interest in this study is not only the migration of Koreans living in Sakhalin and Kamchatka, but also their adaptation process. Therefore, such existing theories as economic-behavior theories, historical-structural approaches and social network theory, which have been useful in identifying the causes of migration of Koreans earlier, have limitations in the analysis of the adaptation process.

First of all, according to the economic-behavior theories, for example, population movement is strongly dependent on the supply and demand of labor force. Thus, according to this theory, Korea, with its abundant human resources, is considered to have played an important role in supplying a relatively scarce labor force in Sakhalin and Kamchatka. But in terms of identity, it is difficult to explain why North Korean workers who migrated to Kamchatka in the late 1940s are now more closely connected with South Korea than their home country, North Korea.

Secondly, according to the historical-structural approach, the cause of immigration between countries is that due to the uneven development of capitalism, low-wage workers in neighboring countries move in search of abundant employment opportunities and high income in the central country. But in the 18th and 19th centuries, when labor migration from Korea was actively underway, there could be a different view as to whether East Asia and Russia could be included in the category of capitalism.

Finally, social network theory regards migration as part of a series of activities, that is, chain migration. The focus is on explaining how migrants' families, relatives, friends, and residents from the same hometown are connected to early migrants⁶⁾. This theory is convincing

5) Chaimun Lee, *Dongtoui Diaspora* [The Korean Diaspora in a Permanently Frozen Land]. Kyungpook National University Press, 2007.

in explaining not only the migration of the 19th century but also the current situation of migration. But it is not easy to explain why the Korean diaspora, who live in Sakhalin and Kamchatka, for example, are influenced by Confucian culture, and why Confucian culture further strengthens their attachment to their homeland.

Therefore, those theories mentioned above can suggest the cause of migration and the results of various types of migration in relation to ethnic Koreans living in Russia. However, it is difficult to analyze the effects of alienation in the current residence area, the desire for ultimate return to home country, and the traditional Confucian customs of Koreans, which Korean residents in Russia experienced, on the identity formation of Korean diaspora.

In this regard, this study attempts to use the transnational perspective, an approach to explain both diaspora migration and adaptation, rather than conventional migration theory. The transnational perspective that emerged in the late 1980s was not an attempt to explain the existing dichotomous structure of immigration, that is, the separation between places of residence and origin, but rather the linkage between diaspora communities and homeland. Transnationalism therefore noted the social fields in which immigrants form social, economic, cultural and political relationships in their daily lives⁷⁾.

More specifically, Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton⁸⁾ define transnationalism as a process for migrants to build social fields that

6) Kim, Hyunsook & Huijae Kim. *Sociology of Immigration*. Bakyeongsa, 2014.

7) Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and the Deterritorialized Nation-State*, New York: Gordon and Breach, 1994; A. Appradurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

8) Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, "Transnationalism: A new Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* Vol. 645, Issue 1(1992), pp. 1-2.

connect the country of origin with the current residence as follows.

We have defined transnationalism as the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated “transmigrants.” Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously.

According to a transnational perspective, migrants are spatially separated from each other, but develop multilayered relationships across borders in the social, political, cultural and economic realms. Thus, transnationalism is locally based, but sometimes called diaspora networks that cross national boundaries⁹⁾. And these transnational social fields span the family, social, organizational, religious and political realms¹⁰⁾.

In this regard, the topic to be highlighted in the framework of transnationalism in this study is as follows: How do such factors as the alienation of Koreans in the settlements of Sakhalin and Kamchatka, differences in kin-states, consciousness of ultimate return to homeland, and Confucian customs influence the identity formation of ethnic Koreans living in Russia.

9) Michael Samers & Michael Collyer, *Migration* (Routledge, 2009). *Imin* (Pureongil, 2013), trans. by Lee Yeongmin, Park Gyeongwhan, Lee Yonggyun, Lee Hyunwook & Lee Jonghee, p. 142.

10) Chaimun Lee, «Korean Migration to the Russian Far East: A Transnational Perspective» *Journal of the Korean Association of Regional Geographers*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2008.

3. Historical Sketch of Ethnic Koreans in Sakhalin and Kamchatka, Russia

In this part of the paper, I will briefly explain the history of Koreans who migrated to Kamchatka and Sakhalin. This migration history of the Korean diaspora is very important because it is closely related to the process of adaptation in their current residence.

1) Koreans in Sakhalin

When the history of Sakhalin Koreans is discussed, it is necessary to divide it before and after the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Before the War, the Russian Empire occupied the Island, while it relegated the Kuril Islands to the hand of the Japanese Empire, according to the Treaty of Shimoda between the two nations in 1855.

It was before the Russo-Japanese War that Koreans appeared in the Island of Sakhalin. In specific, the Russian census in 1897 reported that there were 67 Koreans residing in the Korsakov okrug: 53 of them engaged in fishing and hunting, 9 in farming, 1 in tailoring, 1 unemployed, and 3 serving criminal sentences.¹¹⁾ But until 1910, there were not a few Koreans, who were coming and going freely between Korea and Sakhalin through the Maritime Province in Russia¹²⁾. The Maritime Province has been serving as a channel to Sakhalin from Korea, since there were many Koreans immigrants living there since 1863.

After the Russo-Japanese War, the number of Korean immigrants to

11) Первая всеобщая перепись населения Российской империи. Издание Центрального статистического комитета Министерства внутренних дел, 1904, тетрадь № 2, с.7. Анатолий Кузин, Дальневосточные Корейцы: жизнь и трагедия судьбы. Южно-Сахалинск: Литературно-издательское объединение ЛИК, 1993, с. 141.

12) Chaimun Lee, «Koreans in Sakhalin and Transnationalism», *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2009, p. 298.

the southern part of Sakhalin, which had been occupied by Japan under the name of Karafuto, has increased. But until the mid-1930s, ethnic Koreans migrated to Sakhalin on their own free will. When the 2nd World War was imminent in East Asia, the Japanese Empire embarked on recruitment (募集) of Koreans in 1939, but later in 1942 on official placement (斡旋) for working of coal mines in Sakhalin. What is worse, the Japanese empire even began to draft (徴用) Korean workers forcibly to raise coal production in Sakhalin after 1942. As a result, the total number of ethnic Koreans in Sakhalin was estimated to be 43,000 to 47,000¹³⁾ when the Japanese occupation of the Island of Sakhalin came to an end in 1945.

At the end of World War II, Sakhalin Koreans were abandoned due to indifference of Japan, Korea, and the Soviet Union. Only in 1956, three governments agreed to repatriate 2,345 Koreans in Sakhalin with Japanese wives to Japan¹⁴⁾.

In the meanwhile, there was an occasion which complicates the citizenship issue of Sakhalin Koreans, when 20,891 North Korean contract workers were dispatched to Sakhalin, Kamchatka, and the Maritime Province according the agreement between the Soviet Union and North Korea in 1946. Problems came into existence after 1946 when the Soviet Union pressured Sakhalin Koreans to choose either Soviet or North Korean nationality. In fact, 28,000 out of 43,000 Sakhalin Koreans obtained North Korean nationality and 10,000 selected Soviet citizenship, while 4,300 remained without either citizenship¹⁵⁾ (Choi, 2004:120). Selection of North Korean citizenship

13) Анатолий Кузин(1993), p. 200; Kim, Min Yeong. «The Migration and Labor of the Sakhalin Koreans, 1939-1945» *The International Association of Area Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2000, p. 49.

14) Chaimun Lee, «Koreans in Sakhalin and Transnationalism», *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2009, p. 300.

15) Choi, Ki-young. 2004. "Forced Migration of Koreans to Sakhalin and Their

was absurd, given that about 90% of Sakhalin Koreans came from the Gyeongsang Province, the southern part of the Korean peninsula. The selection of citizenship complicates repatriation of Sakhalin Koreans in 1993 when the permanent repatriation of Sakhalin Koreans was on agenda for discussion.

The permanent repatriation of Sakhalin Koreans, which was allowed only to those Koreans born before 1945, began to be discussed in 1965 at the time of normalization of diplomatic relationship between Korea and Japan. But it produced results only in 1989 when the Japanese and Korean Red Crosses agreed to pay their shares of financial expenses necessary for the repatriation. In specific, the Korean government is supposed to pay for living and medical expenses, while the Japanese counterpart to pay for temporary or permanent return to motherland and their permanent settlement¹⁶⁾. The total number of permanently repatriated Sakhalin Koreans from 1990 to 2014 is 4,293¹⁷⁾.

2) Koreans in Kamchatka

The history of Korean gastarbeiters (guest workers) in Kamchatka goes back to 1946, when the Soviet Union and North Korea have concluded an agreement on fisheries cooperation. According to this agreement, 2,000 North Korean gastarbeiters from May to July, 1946 and further 2,200 in 1947 went to various provinces in the Russian Far East including the Kamchatka Peninsula and Sakhalin Island¹⁸⁾.

Repatriation” *Korea Journal* Vol. 44, No. 4, Winter, 2004, p.120.

16) Woo, Boknam, “Regional Settlement Situations and Support Measures for Permanently Repatriated Sakhalin Koreans in Chungcheongnam-do,” Report 2013-3, Chungcheongnam-do Women’s Policy Development Institute, 2013.

17) Kyungin Ilbo, Oct. 5, 2015 (<http://www.kyeongin.com/main/view.php?key=20151004010000902>, Retrieved on Oct. 5, 2015)

18) Kim, Chungyung, “Koreans in Russian Sakhalin: Lives and Destiny,” Gyomin Nonchong, Vol. 1, 1997, p. 161.

In fact, in order to meet the shortage of labor powers in the Soviet Far Eastern area, both the Soviet Union and North Korea pushed for a plan to introduce abundant North Korean labor forces in such local areas as the Kamchatka Peninsula, the Kuril Islands, and Sakhalin Island with scarce labor power in the late 1940s. Entrusted with full powers to recruit North Korean workers, the Soviet Fisheries Administration asked their North Korean counterpart to send North Korean laborers based upon the labor contract.¹⁹⁾ The term of the labor contract was various ranging from several months to years.

Table 1. Ethnic Composition in Sakhalin Island (Number (%))²⁰⁾

Year	1956	1979	1989	2002	2010
Russian	504,665(77.71)	540,570(81.68)	579,887(81.65)	460,778(84.28)	409,786(82.29)
Korean	42,337(6.52)	34,978(5.29)	35,191(4.95)	29,592(5.41)	24,993(5.02)
Ukrainian	48,073(7.4)	40,600(6.13)	46,216(6.51)	21,831(3.99)	12,136(2.44)
Tartar	11,679(1.8)	11,030(1.67)	10,699(1.51)	6,830(1.25)	4,880(0.98)
Belorussian	13,762(2.1)	10,957(1.66)	11,423(1.61)	5,455(1.00)	2,994(0.60)
Nivkh	1,798(0.28)	2,053(0.31)	2,008(0.28)	2,450(0.45)	2,290(0.46)
Kirgiz		58(0.01)	241(0.03)	86(0.02)	1,763(0.35)
Moldovan	10,826(1.67)	6,710(1.01)	5,641(0.79)	2,943(0.54)	1,666(0.33)
Others	-	-	-	-	-
Total	649,405(100%)	661,778(100%)	710,242(100%)	546,695(100%)	497,973(100%)

19) North Korea: A Case Study in the Techniques of Takeover, Department of State Publication 7118, Far Eastern Series 103, released Jan. 1961. Cited in pp. 107-108 by George Ginsburgs, "Imported Asian Labor in the USSR," *Asian Perspective* Vol. 14, No. 2, 1990, p. 6.

20) Население Сахалинской области (https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5_%D0%A1%D0%B0%D1%85%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B9_%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8, Retrieved on August 8, 2019)



Figure 1. First North Korean Migrants in Kikhchik, Kamchatka, in the late 1940s
(The photo provided by the informant in 2016 field survey in Kamchatka, Russia)

The exact number of North Korean *gastarbeiters* in Kamchatka still remains unknown thus far. But there are some reports on North Korean laborers in Kamchatka: 16,300 out of 35,000 North Korean guest workers were dispatched to Kamchatka, while others were sent to the Okhotsk coast, the Kuril Islands, and southern parts of Sakhalin Island²¹). Other source showed that the luggage ship *Zyrianin* carried 2,200 North Korean workers to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski from North Korea in 1947. These workers included 700 workers from Myungcheon province, 1,000 from Kiljoo province, 875 from Duksung province, and 415 from Hesun province in North Korea.²²)

In addition, the number of North Koreans guest workers in Kamchatka in 1948 reached the level of 9,081 and most of whom were

21) Л.А. Крушанова, *Миграционная политика СССР на Дальнем Востоке (середины 1940-х - 1970-е гг.)* (Владивосток: Институт истории, археологии и этнографии народов Ляльного Востока ДВО РАН, 2014), p. 133.

22) "Откуда на камчатке корейцы?"

(<http://www.pkforum.ru/index.php?topic=5726.50>, retrieved on June 9, 2016)

deployed in various fishery camps along the coast of the Kamchatka Peninsula, according to the labor contract up to 3 years.²³⁾

Overall, the total number of North Korean workers in Kamchatka is estimated to be around 50,000 from 1946 to 1949²⁴⁾. Upon expiration of their labor contract, most of them were recalled home in late 1940s and late 1950s. But once adapted themselves to the fish-rich Kamchatka Peninsula, North Korean migrants were reluctant to return to their poor motherland despite the governmental order to return, since they know very well the situations in North Korea. Thus, they fled to the mountainous areas in Kamchatka when North Korean homebound ships anchored in for their repatriation in the late 1940s and 1950s²⁵⁾.

Currently, there are about 1,800 North Koreans or 0.43 to 0.49 percent of the population in Kamchatka.²⁶⁾ Most of them are the second- or third-generation North Korean guest workers. The first-generation workers almost passed away and few of them are still alive.

23) С. В. Гаврилов, "Камчатское наследие: Исторические очерки." (<http://www.npacific.ru/np/library/publikacii/nasledie/nasled.htm>, retrieved on August 16, 2016)

24) Chaimun Lee, "Migration and Adaptation of the Russian Koreans in Kamchatka: Policy of the Korean Government," Report on New International Areas, the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) (2016. 09. 20.).

25) Chaimun Lee, "Migration and Adaptation of the Russian Koreans in Kamchatka: Policy of the Korean Government," Report on New International Areas, the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) (2016. 09. 20.).

26) "Мой Город: Народная энциклопедия городов и регионов России" (http://www.mojgorod.ru/kamchat_obl/index.html, retrieved on August 6, 2016); Население Камчатского края (https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5_%D0%9A%D0%B0%D0%BC%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE_%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%8F, Retrieved on August 8, 2019)

Table 2. Ethnic Composition in Kamchatka Krai (Number (%))²⁷⁾

Year	1959	1989	2002	2010
Russian	176,136(79.79)	382,423(81.03)	290,108(80.85)	252,609(78.43)
Ukrainian	14,852(6.73)	43,014(9.11)	20,870(5.82)	11,488(3.57)
Koryak	5,319(2.41)	7,190(1.52)	7,328(2.04)	6,640(2.06)
Itelmen	985(0.45)	1,441(0.31)	2,296(0.64)	2,394(0.74)
Tartar	2,921(1.32)	5,837(1.24)	3,617(1.01)	2,374(0.74)
Belorussian	2,420(1.10)	7,353(1.56)	3,489(0.97)	1,883(0.58)
Evens	1,113(0.50)	1,489(0.32)	1,779(0.50)	1,872(0.58)
Kamchadal			1,881(0.52)	1,551(0.48)
Chukchi	1,072(0.49)	1,530(0.32)	1,487(0.41)	1,496(0.46)
Korean	6,740(3.05)	1,952(0.41)	1,749(0.49)	1,401(0.43)
Azerbaijan		1,117(0.24)	1,311(0.37)	1,270(0.39)
Others	-	-	-	-
Total	220,753(100%)	471,932(100%)	358,801(100%)	322,079(100%)

Table 3. Comparison of Two Nationalities

Components	Koreans in Sakhalin	Koreans in Kamchatka
Motherland	Southern Parts of Korea	North Korea
Migration Stages	1870s(1880s)~1905 1905~1939(free migration) 1939~1942(recruitment) 1942~1944(official reference & allotment) 1944~1945(draft)	1946~1949
Current Generation	2 nd ~4 th generation	1 st ~3 rd generation
Native places	Kyungsang province in S. Korea	Hamkyung province in N. Korea
Migration motives	Economic & compulsory draft	Economic & governmental policy
Acculturation strategies (integration, assimilation, separation, marginalization) ²⁸⁾	Integration and separation	Integration and separation
Relationship with Kin-state	strong	weak

27) Население Камчатского края (https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5_%D0%9A%D0%B0%D0%BC%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE_%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%8F, Retrieved on August 8, 2019)

28) J. M. Farver, Bhadha, B. R., & Narang, S. K., "Acculturation and psychological

4. Methodology

This paper uses narratives of ethnic Koreans obtained in two field surveys in Elizovo in Kamchatka, Russia and Jeonggwan in Busan, South Korea. There are about 1,800 North Korean migrants and their descendants in Kamchatka where most Koreans are compactly residing. In-depth interviews with six ethnic Koreans were conducted in June, 2016. Among them are five participants born in North Korea and one woman born to the 1st generation Korean gastarbeiter in Kamchatka.

In addition, narrative data of Koreans in Sakhalin used in this paper were collected from repatriated Sakhalin Koreans in Jeonggwan newtown in Busan, South Korea, one of several settlements where permanently repatriated Koreans are living together. There are currently 118 Sakhalin Korean residents repatriated in the research site, and all of them were born before 1945. All participants are the 2nd generation Koreans born in Sakhalin. Our interviews with those participants were carried out both in February and March, 2016. Among repatriated interviewees are four male and four female.

Table 4. List of Interview Participants (from Sakhalin Island)²⁹⁾

Case #	Year of Birth	Gender	Birthplace in Sakhalin	First Immigrants (Yr.)	Remarks
#1	1943	Male	Chekhov	Father (1937)	Served in the army. His father moved to Sakhalin Island to avoid forced recruitment by the Japanese Empire.
#2	1945	Female	Ulegorsk	Father (1939)	Worked as a teacher and a journalist in the newspaper. Her father's immigration due to forced recruitment by the Japanese Empire.

functioning in Asian Indian adolescents.” *Social Development*, vol. 11, 2002, pp. 11-29.
 29) This data was reorganized, based upon my field survey at Jeonggwan, Pusan City, South Korea. Park, Shin-Kyu & Chaimun Lee, “A Study on the Lives of Sakhalin and Their Adaptations in South Korea: Focusing on Permanent Returnees from Sakhalin in Jeong-gwan, Busan City.” *Hankook Minjok Munhwa*, Vol. 60, 2016, p.19.

Case #	Year of Birth	Gender	Birthplace in Sakhalin	First Immigrants (Yr.)	Remarks
#3	1946	Female	Korsakov	Father (1938)	Worked as a hospital manager. Her father's immigration due to forced recruitment by the Japanese Empire.
#4	1945	Female	Makarov	Father (1930)	Worked as a teacher and a professor. Her father moved to Sakhalin Island via Japan.
#5	1940	Female	Shakhtersk (Илхэтрэск)	Father (1938)	Worked as a geological designer. Her father moved to Sakhalin Island while working in the coal mines in Osaka, Japan.
#6	1942	Male	Krasnogorsk	Father (1927)	Worked as a doctor. His father moved to Sakhalin Island while working as laborers in Osaka, Japan.
#7	1943	Male	Korsakov	Father (1940)	Engaged in business as an entrepreneur. His father moved to Sakhalin Island due to forced recruitment by the Japanese Empire.

Table 5. List of Interview Participants (from Kamchatka)³⁰⁾

Case #	Year of Birth	Gender	Birthplace	Year of Immigration	Remarks
#1	1941	Female	Whuayang-gun, Kangwon-do Province	1948	She resided at Natski, Kamchatka, from 1948 to 1952 after arriving at Petropavlovsk. In 1959, she moved to Elizovo, Kamchatka. Her husband died at 2003.
#2	1925	Female	Giljoo, Hamgyeongbuk-do Province	1948	She arrived at the fishery Kombinat in Ozernaya, Kamchatka before moving to Elizovo in 1958. Remarried.
#3	1934	Female	Deoksin, Hamgyeongbuk-do Province	1946	She arrived at the fishery Kombinat in Ozernaya, Kamchatka. Married her husband from Gilzoo, Hamgyeong-do Province and remarried another husband from Pyeongannam-do Province in 1990.
#4	1954	Female	Ozernaya, Kamchatka	Not Applicable	Her father came from Gimchek, North Korea, and her mother from Giljoo arrived at the fishery Kombinat in Ozernaya, Kamchatka in 1947. Together with her old brother, she graduated from Petropavlovsk Teachers College in Kamchatka. Her husband died. Engaged in sewing work.

30) This data was reorganized, based upon my field survey in Kamchatka, Russia and Chaimun Lee, 2016, p.381.

Case #	Year of Birth	Gender	Birthplace	Year of Immigration	Remarks
#5	1927	Female	Bukcheong, Hamgyeongbuk-do Province	1947	Arrived at Pynta, Kamchatka in 1947 only with her younger brother. Married her husband from Heecheon, North Korea in 1948. Later her brother moved to Seoul during the Korean War and has still been living there. Hostile toward the North Korean regime.
#6	1928	Female	Wonsan, Hamgyeongbuk-do Province	1949	She arrived at Korf in 1949. As a the Russian language translaor, her husband has been living in Kamchatka during the period from 1947 to 1949. She worked in a tailor and a flower shop.

5. Transnationalism and the Soviet Koreans in Sakhalin and Kamchatka

1) Alienation from the Host Countries

Transnationalism has been used widely to refer to social and cultural phenomena, which are related with physical, material and spiritual interactions between home and the host countries. Thus, transnationalism has been affected by various ties of ethnic migrants. It may be natural, given that identities of ethnic migrants are fluid, not fixed, as Stuart Hall(1990:225) elaborates on Caribbean migrants in Great Britain.

Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power.

One of various ethnic qualities to be considered here is alienation in the new country. Regarding the effect of alienation on transnationalism, Modarres (2005) analyzes the adaptation process of Mexican immigrants in the United States. Modarres (2005) paid attention to transnationalism as a phenomena resisting alienation of Mexican immigrants in the U. S. Therefore, the more alienated are they, the more transnational practices they are seeking.

In a similar vein, in the analyses of Russian migrants in Scotland, Mamattah³¹⁾ showed that alienation of diaspora lead to enhancement of transnational atmosphere in terms of collective memory, desire to go back to homeland, and homing consciousness, emphasizing dynamic roles of alienation from the host country.

When North Korean gastarbeiters in Kamchatka were interviewed, they disclosed their feeling of alienation from the host society. As is seen below, Russian residents scoffed at poor North Korean workers, ridiculed them as slaves of Kim Il-Sung. This discrimination helped lead them to strengthen ethnic co-solidarity. The only means for ethnic Koreans to take is to work hard, keeping in touch with their brethren in Kamchatka and thus resulting in re-imagining of co-ethnic culture, customs, and tradition (Diener, 2006:218).

Upon arrival at Kamchatka from North Korea, we were discriminated harshly. We were asked to go back to the land of Kim Il-Sung. We were asked to sell Kim Il-Sung vegetables cultivated at Kamchatka. Russians here treated North Korean workers with contempt because we came to Kamchatka to live on Russian bread. Following the contemptuous conducts of their parents, Russian kids also made fun of us. In the late 1980s, however, they stopped

31) Sophie Mamattah, "Migration and Transnationalism: the Complete Picture? A Case study of Russians Living in Scotland," eSharp Issue vol. 6, no. 2 (http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_41186_en.pdf, retrieved on October 4, 2016)

making fun of us, rather respecting and admiring us for the reason that the Republic of Korea, our motherland, is well off. The 1988 Olympic Games in which the Soviet athletics took part for the first time, served as a turning point to recognize the miraculous economic situations of South Korea. Since then, Russians no longer laughed at us in scorn (Case 5 in Kamchatka).

In the meanwhile, alienation of Sakhalin Koreans from the host society led to the creation of immigrant community. In their community, ethnic Koreans shared a space for transnational practices, for instance, frequent contacts among members of Korean ethnic society, retention of homeland customs and experiences, making and enjoying of traditional ethnic food together.

We lived together with other ethnic Koreans at a tiny Korean village in Korsakov, Sakhalin. Therefore, we came to know all Korean residents in our village very well, and we have always kept in touch with each other there. We also helped each other on various occasions such as ancestral rites, Korean festive days or the sixtieth anniversaries of Koreans' birth. Together ethnic Koreans helped Korean brethren make bean-paste pot stew with green peppers, and thus we were soaked in the cultural traditions of Korea, for instance, preparing traditional Korean food together (Case 3 in Sakhalin).

Although there are some differences in reaction of the host society to Korean migrants between Koreans in Sakhalin and Kamchatka, this kind of alienation or discrimination from the host society were sure to play a significant role in construction of ethnic identities. When facing strong emotional discrimination, indifference or refusal from a new land, Korean migrants tend to socially reconstruct their identities positively, as in Kamchatka and Sakhalin.



Figure 2. North Korean Migrants among local Russians in Kikhchik, Kamchatka (The photo provided by the informant in 2016 field survey in Kamchatka, Russia)

2) Difference in Kin-State

As was shown in the previous section on historical background, kin-states of two Korean ethnic groups are different. Kin-states generally refer to countries that pursue policies that enable their nationals living abroad to maintain their national identity. Therefore, kin-states play a very important role for diaspora living abroad so that they can be protected from unfair discrimination in their current place of residence.³²⁾ Therefore, kin-states play an important role for diaspora residing abroad so that they can be legally protected without being treated unfairly in their current residence.³³⁾

For example, the policies of kin-states such as Romania, Hungary and Macedonia are of great importance to the ethnic groups of

32) Kin-state (<https://glosbe.com/en/en/kin-state>, retrieved on January 9, 2020)

33) Luboslav Sisak, "The role of a kin state in the field of minority protection in international law. Case of Hungarian minority living in Slovak Republic" (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323809026_The_role_of_a_kin_state_in_the_field_of_minority_protection_in_international_law_Case_of_Hungarian_minority_living_in_Slovak_Republic, retrieved on January 9, 2020)

Romanians, Hungarians, and Macedonians living in former Yugoslavia. Thus these countries have various bilateral agreements with former Yugoslav states to ensure that their nationals who live in Serbia or Croatia can maintain their national identity and are not treated unfairly.

From this point of view, a kin-state of Koreans in Kamchatka is North Korea, but that of Sakhalin Koreans is South Korea, although a tiny portion of Sakhalin Koreans are from North Korea. As time passes by, however, motherlands of both ethnic Koreans tend to be converged to South Korea, as the regime of North Korea is not only getting closed, but also economically impoverished.

The typical example is Korean diaspora in Kamchatka. Most of them used to visit their hometowns in North Korea several times until late 1980s at least. But as North Korean regime is more isolated from the rest of the world, North Koreans in Kamchatka opt for another kin-state, that is, South Korea. As they frequently send their descendants to the democratic country for education and employment, their relationship between South Korea and dispersed North Korean communities are getting closer.

These days we do not visit North Korea since there are no longer our relatives living there. Most of them are already deceased. In addition, North Korea is terribly poor nowadays. Rather I have been to South Korea recently. Our visit to South Korea was pretty good experiences, although we were born in North Korea. My relationship with South Korea is more intimate. It also might be due to the fact that my granddaughters are now living in Pusan (Case 6 in Kamchatka).

Most Korean migrants in Sakhalin were stateless until the mid-1950s. It may be due to the fact that they were not in a position to select their

nationalities. It may be because they have been in a state of disorder in the Sakhalin Island since the liberation of Sakhalin from the Japanese rule in 1945. Later they have several options in selecting nationality: North Korean, Russian, and stateless.³⁴⁾ Most ethnic Koreans thought that it is proper for them to remain stateless since they have always thought of an eventual return to their hometown in South Korea. But some Koreans, who were ahead of the times, chose the Russian nationality since they want to be successful in a future life in the Soviet Union.³⁵⁾

When my parents were asked to select one among North Korean citizenship, Soviet citizenship, and non-citizenship in the mid-1950s, they chose an option of non-citizenship, only determined that they have to go back to their motherland, South Korea. At the time, some of Sakhalin Koreans opted for North Korean citizenship. Thereafter, however, there has never been any option available for my parents to take or change. Instead, I opted for Soviet citizenship. With the help of selecting Soviet citizenship, I could have continued to study at the higher education facilities in the Soviet Union (Case 4 in Sakhalin).

Thus, difference in kin-state, however, did not abate or decrease transnationalism among Korean diaspora either in Sakhalin or in Kamchatka. To say nothing of ethnic Koreans in Sakhalin who eagerly desires to return home, those in Kamchatka were engaged in cultural revival, feeling affinity for South Korea. They have bought daily necessities from South Korea and watched soap operas in cassette players made in South Korea, re-imagining co-ethnic land as ethno-national or native motherland.

34) Interview with Case 1

35) Interview with Case 4

3) Desire for an Eventual Return to the Homeland

William Safran cites 'desire for an eventual return to the homeland' as one of six important working conditions for diaspora to satisfy. He suggests that diaspora believe that their ancestral motherland is true and genuine, so that they can go back to this native country(Safran, 1991:83). In a similar vein, Robin Cohen also regards 'return movement' to their motherland as one of nine features shared by diaspora (Cohen, 1997:17).

Ethnic Koreans both in Sakhalin and Kamchatka showed a strong desire to return their kin-state. It is well known that, in particular, the 1st generation Sakhalin Koreans have been always enthusiastic about returning to their hometown in South Korea. Thus, in 1945 when the Japanese occupation came to an end, a lot of ethnic Koreans got together near Korsakov, the only southern port in Sakhalin, eagerly waiting for ship to carry them back to their motherland.

When our family moved from Ulegorsk to Korsakov in the late 1940s, every morning my parents rushed to the coast of Korsakov to see and welcome passenger ship coming from South Korea. They were always convinced that those ships from South Korea could carry themselves to their homeland, South Korea. The ship they have so eagerly expected to come did not show up after all, making all ethnic Koreans in Sakhalin sob bitterly and go away in tears (Case 2 in Sakhalin).

My father's hometown is Namwon, Cheonlabuk-do. My parents went to work at the Mitsubishi Coal Mine in Osaka, Japan and later in 1938 they crossed to Shakhtersk in Sakhalin on their own free will. In 1944, my father was severely wounded in an accident in the coal mine, becoming crippled since then... He always dreamed about going back to his hometown in Korea. Especially, remaining awake all night at his last birthday in 1997, he desperately confessed

his final desire to return to his hometown in Korea at his deathbed. Along with my younger sister, I decided to seek permanent settlement in Korea in accordance with my father's last will (Case 6 in Sakhalin).

In the meanwhile, the case of ethnic North Koreans in Kamchatka is a little different from their counterparts in Sakhalin, but those in Kamchatka have always kept their hope to visit their homeland someday. Those Koreans had chance to visit their homeland and to see their parents or relatives at least three times on average, according to my field survey in 2016. Although they changed their mind to return to North Korea in person as the North Korean regime were getting closed and impoverished these days, their dream to return was not abated. Thus, some of them sent their descendants to South Korea to live, hoping even to go to South Korea, an enemy state of the North Korean regime, their motherland.

I have been to North Korea three times, that is, in 1970, 1973, and 1975. At those times in order to visit our motherland, we have brought many necessities of living there. We were allowed 10 days to visit our old houses and to meet our relatives in our hometowns. The North Korean Embassy in the Soviet Union gave us permission to visit our native country when we asked for permission to visit our motherland... (Case 6 in Kamchatka),³⁶⁾

Longing for return migration by Koreans in Sakhalin and Kamchatka can be interpreted as “a desire to rediscover their roots” (Tsuda, 2013:172-189), thus strengthening transnationalism. Diasporic homecomings are usually precipitated by negative experiences, ethnic discrimination or economic recession in host countries. Thus,

36) Interview with Case 6 and Chaimun Lee, 2016, p.402.

diasporic return is strongly connected with ancestral homelands, and ethnic return migrants seek for vicarious satisfaction. This usually leads to strong transnationalism.

There are several factors related with their desire to return to homeland. One of them is economic difficulties in their host nations. In addition, favorable migration policies for ethnic brethren could be cited as another factor. Sakhalin Koreans, who were born before 1945, are entitled to return to their motherland.

But the case in Kamchatka is pretty different. Ethnic Kamchatka Koreans were mostly born in North Korea and thus, unable to repatriate to South Korea, they obtained their Russian citizenship only recently. In any way, their hope to refresh their ethnic roots leads to a growing interest in their homeland.

4) Confucian Ethics

Religious practices were shown in playing a significant role in connecting the host and the home countries in the study on transnationalism of the ethnic Koreans in Sakhalin (Lee, 2009:307). Especially the author focused on the role of traditional religious folkways in reinforcing the belonging to the motherland.

In addition, in the study of Turkish immigrants in a German city, Patricia Ehrkamp also supports the thesis that religious practices play a crucial role in the construction of Turkish immigrants' identities. She suggests that maintenance of religious practices could serve as an intermediary between a Muslim community and their native country, establishing their ties to brethren in Turkey and Germany (Ehrkamp, 2005:345-364).

In a similar vein, the thesis on belonging to motherland is supported in this study, in which two ethnic groups in Sakhalin and Kamchatka used to follow traditional Confucian model in the traditional Korean

society. Those ethnic Koreans, who are used to the Confucian funeral services in Korea, also followed their native customs in their host societies.

Interviewee in Sakhalin and Kamchatka observed 3-year mourning period or took care of tombs of their family members, as were practiced in their ancestral country. This kind of cultural circulation has been crucial in enhancement of transnationalism.

Our generations in Sakhalin tried to keep traditional Korean customs intact. For instance, performing ancestral sacrifices every morning and evening, we had to keep 3-year mourning period when our parents and grandparents deceased, according to traditional Confucian customs. Nowadays, however, such practices are no longer observed by our descendants in Sakhalin (Case 4 in Sakhalin).

My father passed away at the age of 72 in North Korea although I forgot the exact death date of my father now. When I received a notice of my father's death from North Korea, I observed a period of three-year mourning in Kamchatka, according to our old Confucian customs... In addition, when my husband died in Kamchatka, I used to go to the grave of my husband every morning and evening (Case 5 in Kamchatka).

Above, it is clear that participation in Confucian traditional customs give Korean diaspora a strong belonging to their motherland. Furthermore, religious practices by Korean diaspora in Sakhalin and Kamchatka serve as a role of transnational connection between their homeland and host nation. Those Korean participants in such practices can feel a sense of belonging both to motherland and to local Korean communities.



Figure 3. Funeral Services of North Korean Migrants in Kamchatka in 1990s (The photo from the informant in 2016 field survey in Kamchatka, Russia)



Figure 4. Kamchatka Koreans in the 50th Golden Wedding Anniversary (The photo from the informant in 2016 field survey in Kamchatka, Russia)

6. Conclusion

More than a century has passed since the Koreans moved to Sakhalin Island, and over 70 years have elapsed since the North Korean workers migrated to the Kamchatka Peninsula. Since old Sakhalin Koreans were able to return home permanently through cooperation between Japan, Korea and Russia, many studies on Korean Sakhalin have been conducted in Korea.

However, few studies have been conducted on North Korean workers who have moved to Kamchatka, a region near Sakhalin Island, maybe due to differences resulting from the political rivalry between South and North Korea. Moreover, there are few comparative studies on Koreans who have migrated to Sakhalin Island and the Kamchatka Peninsula. In view of this, this study in terms of transnationalism, attempted to analyze how ethnic Koreans formed their Korean identities in the adaptation process in the remote areas of Sakhalin or Kamchatka in the Russian Far East.

According to the results of this study, this paper shows how transnational practices of ethnic Koreans both in Kamchatka and

Sakhalin, Russia have led to reconstruction of ethnic identities. Ethnic Koreans in Sakhalin and Kamchatka are different in their history and their adaptation to different Russian provinces, but such transnational practices as alienation from the host countries, differences in kin-states, desires for an eventual return to their homeland, and Confucian ethics were strongly shown to be connected with a drastic change in their identity reconstruction.

Specifically, alienation from the host nations and traditional Confucian practices that Koreans experienced in their residences play an important role in the formation of Koreans' identity. And the closure of the political system in North Korea and the kin-state of Koreans living in the Kamchatka Peninsula caused the Korean diaspora to confuse their feelings about their home country, but did not weaken transnationalism. Also, the closure and economic deterioration of the North Korean regime abated the desire for Koreans living in Kamchatka to return to their homeland. However, in the process of their adaptation, Korean residents living in Kamchatka had a stronger connection with South Korea.

It may be due to the fact that South and North Korea, homelands for two Korean diaspora in Sakhalin and Kamchatka, are different in their political or economic system, but identical in their cultural and spiritual root. In particular, the limitation of this study is that only 7 cases were studied and reviewed in the Korean Diaspora study on Sakhalin Island and 6 cases in Kamchatka. Therefore, in order to make the results of this study more general, it is necessary to further increase the number of research cases in future studies.

Although this study had limitations in the collection of quantitative data on the Korean diaspora, I hope that this study will serve as a catalyst for more active Korean diaspora research in remote area such as the Kamchatka Peninsula in the near future.

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〈국문초록〉

두 개의 초국가적 민족 이야기 : 사할린의 한인과 캄차카의 북한 이주자

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본 연구는 캄차카와 사할린의 한인 이민자들을 디아스포라적 관점에서 비교 및 분석하는 것을 목표로 하고 있다. 연구방법에서는 캄차카의 엘리조보와 부산 정관의 사할린 영주귀국자들을 대상으로 한 현지조사에서 수집된 구술을 연구자료로 하여 두 지역 한인 디아스포라의 초국가적 관행을 분석한다. 구체적으로 본 논문에서는 거주국으로부터의 소외, 혈연국의 차이, 모국에 대한 귀향욕구 및 유교적 관습 등의 초국가주의적 관행을 중심으로 연구를 진행하였다. 연구의 구체적인 결과에 따르면, 캄차카 거주 북한이주민의 혈연국인 북한의 정치체제의 폐쇄성 및 최근 한국과의 밀접한 관계 등의 영향으로 이들 이주민들은 경제적 혼란을 경험하고 있는 것으로 나타나고 있지만, 그럼에도 불구하고 이들의 초국가적 지향성은 여전히 존재하고 있음을 보여주고 있다. 아마도 이런 결과는 캄차카와 사할린 거주 북한이주민과 사할린 영주귀국자들간에 존재하는 혈연국에 있어서의 차이 때문으로 판단되지만, 그럼에도 불구하고 이들 한인 이산민들의 정체성 형성에 초국가주의는 중요한 역할을 하고 있는 것으로 나타난다. 사할린섬과 캄차카 반도에서 코리안 디아스포라에 대한 러시아인들의 차별, 그리고 이들 한인들의 현지에서의 소외는 이들로 하여금 더욱 종족 정체성을 구축하는데 중요한 역할을 하였다. 또한 사할린과 캄차카에서 거주하는 한인들은 거주하는 지역에 상관없이 여전히 모국에 대한 귀환 욕구가 매우 강한 것으로 나타나고 있다. 마지막으로 본 연구에서 유교적 관습에 따른 장례식이나 제사 및 환갑 등의 전통적인 한국 문화는 캄차카와 사할린의 한인들로 하여금 끊임없이 모국과의 연계성을 더욱 강화시키는 역할을 하는 것으로 드러나고 있다.

* 주요어: 사할린, 캄차카, 초국가주의, 모국, 디아스포라, 민족정체성

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