

STUDY OF THE POST-WORLD WAR II PROCESSES IN KAZAKHSTAN BY KOREAN HISTORIANS

Turdimirzayev Mirjalol Khamidjon

*is a lecturer at the University of Business and Science. Tel: +998 93 198 11 61
turdimirzaevmirjalol@gmail.com*

Annotation: *This article analyses the interpretations and findings of Korean historians regarding Kazakhstan's post-World War II development. Highlighting themes such as political restructuring, socio-economic policies, population migrations, and the influence of Korean diasporas, the article provides a comparative historiographical approach. It identifies key trends in Korean academic thought and emphasizes the importance of intercultural scholarship between Korea and Kazakhstan. Through the inclusion of tables and graphs, the article quantifies the growth and direction of Korean scholarly interest in Kazakhstan, showcasing both thematic depth and interdisciplinary scope.*

Key words: *Korean diaspora, Kazakhstan history, post-WWII Soviet policies, Central Asia, Korean historiography, forced migration, industrialization, cultural identity, comparative history, interdisciplinary research.*

INTRODUCTION

The aftermath of World War II marked a significant turning point for the Central Asian republics within the Soviet Union, particularly Kazakhstan. The period following the war was characterized by accelerated industrialization, collectivization, demographic shifts due to forced deportations and voluntary migrations, and the institutionalization of Soviet ideology across social and cultural structures. While these developments have been comprehensively studied by Kazakh and Russian historians, Korean scholars have recently contributed meaningful insights into this historical trajectory.

One of the critical dimensions introduced by Korean historians is the nuanced exploration of ethnic minorities, especially the Koryo-saram, or ethnic Koreans, who were forcibly relocated to Kazakhstan. Their resilience and adaptation under Soviet rule have become focal points for understanding broader issues of cultural preservation and assimilation. Korean historians have also employed comparative and interdisciplinary approaches that incorporate sociology, economics, and diaspora studies to enrich traditional historical narratives.

This article seeks to examine how Korean historians interpret post-WWII processes in Kazakhstan, with a particular focus on the experiences of the Korean diaspora, economic transformation, and political reorganization. By analysing Korean historiographical approaches and comparing them with local narratives, the study

provides a broader understanding of Kazakhstan's evolution during the Soviet era. This engagement is also symbolic of strengthening intellectual ties between Korea and Central Asia, paving the way for future collaborative research and deeper intercultural understanding.

Relevance of the Topic. The study of Kazakhstan's post-World War II development is a crucial aspect of understanding not only Central Asian history but also broader Soviet-era geopolitical and socio-cultural transformations. This topic holds growing relevance in global academic discourse due to the evolving interest in post-colonial and DE colonial frameworks, diaspora studies, and multicultural narratives. Korean historians have brought fresh perspectives into this area, especially through their focus on the Koryo-saram (ethnic Koreans) who were forcibly relocated to Kazakhstan in 1937. This unique vantage point allows for the re-examination of Soviet assimilation policies and their human consequences.

Furthermore, with the rise of interdisciplinary research and regional cooperation, the historiographical contributions of Korean scholars underscore an important shift from traditional, state-cantered Soviet narratives to people-cantered, transnational ones. The topic is also relevant in light of Korea's increasing political and economic engagement with Central Asia. As Kazakhstan and South Korea strengthen their bilateral relations, cultural and academic exchange deepens, encouraging broader inquiries into shared historical experiences.

This subject is not only of academic importance but also of contemporary significance. It offers valuable insights into diaspora resilience, identity preservation, and the lasting impacts of forced migration and industrial policies. Understanding this history can aid policymakers, educators, and cultural institutions in fostering inclusive narratives that honour minority contributions. Therefore, the study of Kazakhstan's post-war history through the lens of Korean historians addresses both scholarly gaps and real-world issues, enhancing intercultural understanding and collaborative potential.

Further literature reflects an increasing scholarly interest in how memory, trauma, and identity were reconstructed in the post-war years. Ethnographic studies and oral history projects have emerged as important tools to capture personal experiences and communal adaptations during this transformative period. A number of Kazakh and Russian studies have examined the representation of these shifts in folklore, visual arts, literature, and regional music, providing deeper insight into the intangible cultural consequences of Soviet modernization policies.

This body of literature is complemented by Korean academic interest, which gained momentum in the late 20th century. The forced deportation of Koreans to Central Asia in 1937 became a pivotal subject of interest. Scholars like Lee Won-Sik and Kim Yong-Hee examined how these communities navigated Soviet assimilationist policies while preserving cultural identity. Their works emphasize the resilience and

adaptability of the Korean diaspora under oppressive conditions, and how these communities contributed to the broader socio-economic fabric of Kazakhstan.

Recent Korean research, such as that by Park Hyun-Soo (2015), analyses Kazakhstan's economic and political reforms from a comparative perspective. These studies incorporate statistical analyses, policy reviews, and oral histories, offering multidimensional insights into Kazakhstan's development. Comparative historiography reveals that Korean scholars often emphasize themes of migration, identity, and memory more than their Kazakh counterparts. They also utilize interdisciplinary methods, combining history with sociology and economics, to offer nuanced interpretations. The mutual reinforcement of Korean and Central Asian historiography allows for a richer narrative and promotes a global understanding of Soviet legacies.

Korean academic interest in Kazakhstan emerged more prominently in the late 20th century. The forced deportation of Koreans to Central Asia in 1937 became a pivotal subject of interest. Scholars like Lee Won-Sik and Kim Yong-Hee examined how these communities navigated Soviet assimilationist policies while preserving cultural identity. Their works emphasize the resilience and adaptability of the Korean diaspora under oppressive conditions, and how these communities contributed to the broader socio-economic fabric of Kazakhstan. Recent Korean research, such as that by Park Hyun-Soo (2015), analyses Kazakhstan's economic and political reforms from a comparative perspective. These studies incorporate statistical analyses, policy reviews, and oral histories, offering multidimensional insights into Kazakhstan's development.

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Literature Review. Scholarly research on post-World War II Kazakhstan primarily centres around Soviet policies of industrialization, collectivization, and demographic engineering. Kazakh historians such as Nurbekov (1997) and Akhmetova (2003) detail how Stalinist policies led to massive infrastructural expansion and reconfiguration of rural society. These processes, however, also catalysed repression and dislocation, especially among ethnic minorities. The effects of Soviet policies were multifaceted, often resulting in the loss of cultural heritage, community cohesion, and traditional governance structures. Rural Kazakh communities faced not only economic and structural upheaval but also systematic efforts to reshape their social values and cultural identity under the Soviet ideological framework. Further literature reflects an increasing scholarly interest in how memory, trauma, and identity were reconstructed in the post-war years. Ethnographic studies and oral history projects have emerged as

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Research Methodology. This study employs a qualitative research methodology, incorporating content analysis, comparative historiographical review, and bibliometric

tools. The first stage involved selecting relevant scholarly publications authored by Korean historians, both in Korean and English, from academic databases such as DBpia, KISS, and JSTOR. Criteria for inclusion were: focus on post-World War II Kazakhstan, use of primary or translated sources, and peer-reviewed status.

The second phase involved thematic coding of selected texts, identifying recurring motifs such as industrialization, forced migration, diaspora experiences, and political transformation. These themes were analysed in comparison to interpretations by Kazakh historians to identify differences and overlaps. Bibliometric analysis was also used to quantify trends in Korean historiography, including publication frequency, co-authorship networks, and citation metrics. This statistical data was presented in the form of graphs and tables for clarity. Field interviews with Korean scholars specializing in Central Asian studies provided qualitative data. This primary information helped contextualize the scholarly motivations, challenges, and institutional support behind Korean research on Kazakhstan. Moreover, archival research, especially of translated Soviet documents and Korean-language periodicals from the 1990s onward, enriched the empirical basis of the study.

Combining content analysis with bibliometric and expert interviews allows for a comprehensive understanding of Korean academic engagement with Kazakhstan's history. This interdisciplinary approach ensures both depth and scope in tracing historiographical evolution.

Conclusion and Recommendations. The study reveals that Korean historians offer distinctive perspectives on Kazakhstan's post-World War II evolution. Their emphasis on migration, diaspora identity, and Soviet assimilation policies brings new dimensions to conventional Soviet historiography. Unlike many local interpretations that prioritize state-building and institutional narratives, Korean scholars often foreground the lived experiences of ethnic minorities, including their struggles and resilience.

Supporting this conclusion, data from Table 1 and Graph 1 illustrate the steady rise in Korean academic publications on Kazakhstan, especially after the 1990s. Table 2 highlights the thematic distribution of research topics, with a strong concentration on diaspora studies (40%), identity formation (25%), and economic transformation (20%). Graph 2 visualizes the citation network among prominent Korean scholars, showing strong interconnections that indicate a maturing research field. Korean research also benefits from comparative methodologies, blending insights from sociology, economics, and history. This interdisciplinary lens provides a holistic view of Kazakhstan's socio-political dynamics and enriches the global historiographical discourse. Korean historians contribute to decentring Russian-dominated narratives and promoting multi-ethnic, multicultural perspectives.

Moving forward, it is essential to foster academic collaboration between Korean and Kazakh scholars. Joint conferences, bilingual publications, and shared archival projects can deepen mutual understanding and scholarly exchange. Institutions in both

countries should support translation projects to make important research accessible to a wider audience. Furthermore, integrating Korean perspectives into Central Asian studies curricula can enhance global education and research diversity. As geopolitical and cultural ties between Korea and Central Asia continue to grow, historical research can serve as a powerful medium for strengthening intellectual diplomacy.

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