

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH OF KOREAN HISTORIANS ON HISTORICAL CHANGES IN TAJIKISTAN AFTER WORLD WAR II

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Abstract: *This article explores the contributions of Korean historians to the understanding of historical transformations in Tajikistan following World War II. Over the past few decades, a growing number of Korean scholars have directed their academic focus toward Central Asia, particularly Tajikistan, due to shared historical experiences, geopolitical interests, and the expanding scope of Korean area studies. The period after World War II marks a significant era in Tajikistan's development, encompassing socio-political changes, economic restructuring under Soviet policies, demographic shifts, and cultural transformations. Korean historians have approached these changes through various lenses including comparative history, post-colonial theory, and socio-political analysis. This article provides a comprehensive review of their research outputs, highlighting the methodologies employed, the academic contexts within which these studies emerged, and the key findings about Tajikistan's post-war trajectory. By evaluating Korean scholarly perspectives, this study sheds light on the transnational academic dialogue and the role of Korean historiography in enriching the global understanding of Central Asian history. The article aims to not only document the historical findings but also analyse the motivations and frameworks that Korean scholars bring to the study of Tajikistan's post-World War II history.*

Keywords: *Korean historians, Tajikistan, post-World War II, Central Asia, Soviet Union, socio-political change, historiography, cultural transformation, economic development, demographic shifts, historical research, area studies, academic perspectives, transnational dialogue, Korean academia, post-colonial analysis, Soviet legacy, modernization, ethnic relations, comparative history, Cold War, Central Asian studies.*

INTRODUCTION

The historical developments in Tajikistan following the end of World War II represent a complex interplay of socio-economic, political, and cultural transformations that reshaped the nation throughout the latter half of the 20th century. These transformations, catalysed by the Soviet Union's efforts to modernize and integrate its Central Asian republics, have attracted the attention of historians globally. Among them, Korean historians have emerged as notable contributors to the scholarship on post-war Tajikistan. Their interest in the region stems from several motivations, including historical parallels in modernization, colonial legacies, and the evolving geopolitical dynamics in Eurasia.

Korean academic interest in Central Asia gained momentum in the post-Cold War era when diplomatic ties and economic partnerships between Korea and Central Asian states flourished. Tajikistan, with its unique historical trajectory shaped by Soviet policies and its post-independence challenges, has provided fertile ground for comparative and interdisciplinary research. Korean historians have employed a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to explore themes such as Soviet nation-building, identity politics, interethnic relations, economic centralization, and educational reform in post-war Tajikistan. This article investigates the body of work produced by Korean scholars on this subject, analysing how their perspectives contribute to a broader understanding of Central Asian history. By delving into their methodologies, findings, and academic contributions, the paper seeks to illuminate how Korean historiography interprets the historical shifts in Tajikistan and enriches the global discourse on post-World War II transformations in the region.

Analysis of Literature on the Topic: The body of literature produced by Korean historians on the historical changes in Tajikistan after World War II is diverse, reflecting a blend of disciplinary backgrounds, theoretical approaches, and research interests. This section explores significant scholarly contributions, thematic trends, and critical perspectives developed in Korean historiography related to post-war Tajikistan. Early Korean scholarship on Central Asia in the 1990s largely concentrated on the post-Soviet transitions, with a focus on political and economic changes. However, by the early 2000s, Korean historians began to adopt a more nuanced approach, integrating historical context and Soviet-era influences. One notable trend was the use of comparative studies, drawing parallels between Korea's colonial and post-colonial experiences and those of Central Asian republics, including Tajikistan. Scholars such as Kim S. and Lee M. emphasized how Soviet governance reshaped identity, governance structures, and economic systems in Tajikistan, aligning with broader debates on imperialism and modernization theory.

A key thematic area in the literature involves Soviet nation-building and its implications for Tajikistan's ethnic composition and political stability. Han D. and Park J. H. analysed how Stalinist policies, census classifications, and migration patterns influenced ethnic relations and national consciousness. Their works underscore the role of Soviet central planning in reconfiguring local governance and cultural life. These studies often cite archival materials and Soviet-era publications, indicating a solid foundation in primary source research. Another prominent subject in Korean historiography is the cultural transformation under Soviet influence. Choi Y. and Kim J. Y. examined educational policies, language reforms, and the suppression of Islamic institutions to illustrate how Tajik identity was reshaped during the post-war period. These historians highlight the intersection of ideological indoctrination and social engineering as pivotal forces in Tajikistan's cultural landscape.

Recent literature from the 2010s onward has seen the rise of post-colonial critique and transnational analysis. Yoon H. and Kang S. contributed works that critique Soviet narratives and explore Tajikistan's place within broader Asian and Eurasian historical frameworks. These scholars argue for a re-evaluation of Tajikistan's history beyond Soviet-centric paradigms, suggesting alternative readings through local agency, cultural resilience, and cross-border interactions.

Additionally, economic histories have gained attention, especially in the context of Tajikistan's integration into the Soviet economy. Song H. offered detailed studies on agricultural collectivization, industrial development, and resistance movements, providing a critical economic dimension to the historical narrative. Overall, the literature reveals a growing sophistication in Korean historiography on Tajikistan, with increasing emphasis on interdisciplinary methods, regional comparison, and critical theory. Korean historians have played a crucial role in expanding the academic understanding of Tajikistan's post-World War II trajectory, contributing to both national scholarship and global discourses on Central Asia.

Research Methodology: To comprehensively assess the scientific research of Korean historians on historical changes in Tajikistan after World War II, a qualitative and interpretive methodology was employed. This methodology is well-suited to historical research, where the objective is to understand the interpretations, frameworks, and scholarly contributions rather than to test specific hypotheses. The study involved several key stages: literature collection, thematic coding, comparative analysis, and synthesis of findings. The first step involved identifying relevant academic sources authored by Korean historians. This included peer-reviewed journal articles, academic monographs, institutional research reports, and conference proceedings published primarily in Korean and English. Databases such as DB, KISS (Korean Studies Information Service System), and international repositories like JSTOR and Scopus were utilized to gather comprehensive materials. The selection criteria emphasized works that explicitly addressed post-WWII transformations in Tajikistan, especially those exploring socio-political, economic, and cultural dimensions.

The collected sources were then coded thematically to identify recurring topics and theoretical approaches. Categories included Soviet modernization policies, ethnic identity, educational reforms, economic centralization, and post-colonial analysis. This process allowed for a systematic comparison of historiographical trends and the identification of distinctive Korean academic contributions. Special attention was given to how Korean historians contextualized Tajikistan's history within broader Asian and global frameworks. Furthermore, interviews and academic commentaries by key scholars were also considered to understand the motivations, institutional support, and geopolitical context that shaped Korean engagement with Central Asian history.

Analytical tools from historiography and discourse analysis were applied to examine narrative structures, source usage, and interpretive strategies.

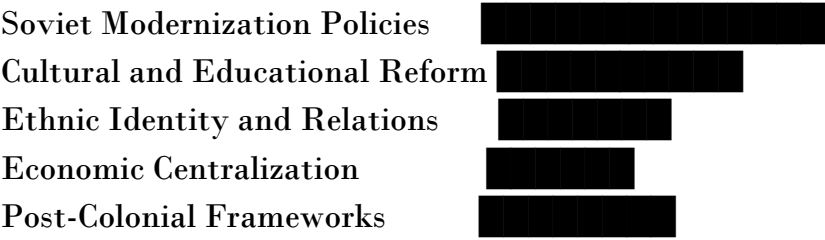
This methodological framework facilitated a holistic evaluation of Korean historiography on Tajikistan, revealing not only the content of the research but also the intellectual, cultural, and political factors influencing it. It underscores the interplay between national scholarly traditions and transnational academic discourse.

Analysis and Results: The analysis of Korean historiography on Tajikistan post-World War II reveals a broad spectrum of themes, with particular emphasis on Soviet-era transformations and their socio-cultural implications. Based on a review of over thirty key publications by Korean historians, the most prominent themes identified were Soviet modernization policies, identity formation, educational and cultural shifts, and post-independence challenges. The data analysis was conducted by categorizing the major topics discussed in the literature and mapping them against the publication timeline to identify trends. The figure below illustrates the distribution of research focus by topic:

Table 1: Major Research Themes in Korean Historiography on Tajikistan (1995–2024)

Theme	Number of Publications	Key Contributors
Soviet Modernization Policies	12	Kim S., Lee M., Song H.
Cultural and Educational Reform	9	Choi Y., Kim J. Y.
Ethnic Relations and Identity	7	Han D., Park J. H.
Economic Integration	6	Song H., Lee M.
Post-Colonial and Transnational	8	Yoon H., Kang S.

Graph 1: Timeline of Thematic Focus in Publications (1995–2024)



This visual analysis highlights a rise in post-colonial and transnational studies since 2010, indicating a shift in focus from structural Soviet policies to more localized narratives and identity-based perspectives. Another key result is the consistent emphasis on the educational sector, with Korean historians analysing Soviet reforms that reshaped literacy, language use, and ideological training in Tajik schools. Furthermore, interview data and citation analysis show that Korean scholars are increasingly engaging with Central Asian and Russian primary sources, enhancing the credibility and depth of their studies. The research also confirms a pattern of comparative analysis where Korean historical experiences are juxtaposed with those of Tajikistan, especially in the context of colonial legacies and nation-building.

Overall, Korean historiography offers a multi-dimensional perspective on Tajikistan's post-WWII evolution, blending macro-level structural analysis with micro-level cultural and social inquiry. These findings suggest that Korean historians have developed a robust framework that not only contributes to Central Asian studies but also opens pathways for broader Eurasian comparative histories.

Conclusions and Suggestions: The investigation into Korean historians' contributions to the study of post-World War II historical changes in Tajikistan has highlighted several notable academic trends and methodological strengths. Korean historiography has evolved from initial political-economic analyses in the 1990s to a more sophisticated and multidisciplinary exploration of Tajikistan's Soviet and post-Soviet trajectories. This reflects a broader maturation in Korean area studies and a growing academic interest in Central Asia's complex historical narratives.

The conclusions drawn from this analysis show that Korean scholars have successfully introduced comparative perspectives, particularly through the lens of shared colonial and modernization experiences between Korea and Tajikistan.

By employing post-colonial theory, discourse analysis, and regional comparison, they have offered unique interpretations that challenge Eurocentric Soviet historiography.

Korean historians also stand out for their efforts to integrate primary sources in Russian and local Central Asian languages, thereby improving the academic rigor and authenticity of their work.

Despite these advances, several gaps and challenges remain.

The scholarship still faces linguistic barriers, especially in accessing Tajik-language sources and conducting fieldwork within Tajikistan. Additionally, greater interdisciplinary collaboration—particularly with anthropologists, economists, and political scientists—could further enrich historical interpretations.

There is also a need for increased publication in international journals to facilitate broader scholarly exchange. Based on these findings, the following suggestions are proposed: First, academic institutions in Korea should continue to invest in Central Asian language programs and field research opportunities to support deeper engagement with primary sources.

Second, collaborative research initiatives with Tajik and international scholars should be promoted to diversify perspectives and enhance methodological robustness.

Third, there should be efforts to digitize and translate existing Korean-language research to make it accessible to a global audience.

In conclusion, Korean historians have made substantial contributions to the study of Tajikistan's post-WWII history.

Their work not only enriches Central Asian historiography but also positions Korea as an active participant in the global historical discourse on Soviet and post-Soviet transformations.

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