

The Development of Russophone Korean Ethnocultural Enclaves in South Korea: A Socio-Geographical Case Study of Anseong and Gyeongju

Vadim Akulenko¹

Received: 15 April 2024 / Accepted: 25 June 2024 /

Published online: 1 December 2024

© Korean Social Science Research Council 2024

Abstract Using the cities of Anseong and Gyeongju as case studies, this paper explores the development of Russophone Korean ethnocultural enclaves in South Korea ('Goryeoin Maeul'), examining the socio-economic and geographical factors that have contributed to their formation. It also aims to explore the main problems facing Russophone Korean ethnocultural enclaves, and what measures can be taken to address them. The study analyzed data collected during field and desk research. In both Anseong and Gyeongju, the ethnocultural enclaves have well-defined borders and developed commercial infrastructure. However, there is a significant shortage of social infrastructure and educational organizations, which negatively impacts their interaction with South Korean society and state institutions while also hindering the adaptation of Russian-speaking migrants living within the ethnocultural enclaves.

Keywords Goryeo-saram · Goryeoin Maeul · ethnic enclave · Anseong · Gyeongju

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2017S1A6A3A03079318).

✉ Vadim Akulenko
pattimka@gmail.com

¹ PhD, Research Professor, RCCZ Research Center, Institute for Historical Studies, Chung-Ang University

Introduction

Despite the fact that small groups of Russophone Koreans, commonly referred to as ‘Goryeoin’ or ‘Goryeo-saram,’ had been residing in South Korea since the late 1990s, the 2010s and the 2020s saw their mass migration, driven by economic reasons and changes in legislation regarding overseas Koreans. According to the Ministry of Justice (Immigration and Foreigner Policy Bureau, n.d.), over the past three years, there has been a particularly significant increase in the number of Goryeoin arriving from three main countries of residence: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Russia. In 2021, their total number was 73,697 people, and by 2023, it had reached 104,115 people, thus indicating an increase of over 41% (Ministry of Justice, 2024). Ethnocultural enclaves of Russophone Koreans, now known as Goryeoin Maeul, grew quickly due to the rapid increase in the number of Goryeoin in South Korea as well as the relocation of entire families spanning several generations as a result of the legally recognized right to be called an overseas compatriot regardless of generation.

It is noteworthy that the term Goryeoin Maeul in social scientific works by South Korean researchers was initially used to denote the residential areas of Russophone Koreans outside South Korea. For example, an article by Kim Seungeun (2007) discusses ‘Ujeong Maeul,’ located near the city of Ussuriysk in Russia’s Primorsky Krai. Another work authored by Im Yeongsang and Park Maya (2010) describes a ‘new Koreatown’ in Tashkent. Overall, Goryeoin Maeul appears to be a calque or loan translation of the more widely recognized term ‘Koreatown,’ a term long established in the academic literature. Notably, this new term emphasizes that Koreans residing in these ethnocultural enclaves are part of the Russophone Korean community.

Within the context of South Korea, the term Goryeoin Maeul in academic research was presumably first used by Kim Nagyeong (2013) to describe a specific phenomenon, namely the Goryeoin Maeul in Wolgok-dong of Gwangju. Moreover, the case of Gwangju is currently perhaps the most studied, with a vast amount of social scientific research having been dedicated to it. The ethnocultural enclaves of Russophone Koreans in the cities of Incheon and Ansan are also fairly well-known in both academia and the mass media. However, the geographic distribution of Russophone Koreans in South Korea is much broader. For instance, Im Yeongsang (2023) believes that there are nearly 30 Goryeoin Maeuls throughout the country. It is also important to note that the majority of South Korean academic research on Goryeoin Maeul focuses on issues of identity, cultural adaptation, and social integration (Kim & Hong, 2013; G. Kim, 2014; J. Kim, 2014; Im & Jeong, 2016; Kwak & Im, 2017; G. Kim, 2018; Kim G., 2019; Park et al., 2022), as well as language, education, and culture (S. Kim, 2021; Kang & Choi, 2021; Seok et al., 2018; Jeong & Ju, 2017; Yang, 2023). In contrast, relatively few studies have been dedicated to the geographical and spatial analysis of Goryeoin Maeul communities (Seon, 2017; Ju & Oh, 2022).

The purpose of this study is to analyze the emergence and development of Russophone Korean ethnocultural enclaves in South Korea, using Anseong and Gyeongju as case studies, examining the socio-economic and geographical factors that have contributed to their formation. Additionally, the study aims to explore the main problems facing Russophone Korean ethnocultural enclaves, and what measures can be taken to address them.

According to Park (1922), in an urban environment, cultural processes are often activated and sometimes exacerbated by the influx of migrants. Studying the manifestations and causes

of the separation of ethnocultural minorities, including territorial separation, Park concluded that this phenomenon is not a result of segregation or isolation within familiar migrant environments but, on the contrary, the adaptation to new environmental conditions. In another work, Park and Burgess (1925) refer to ethnic neighborhoods as ‘natural areas’—a term suggesting that people living in cities sort themselves into neighborhoods based on their shared backgrounds, experiences, and cultural attributes. Thus, ethnic enclaves provide minorities with a means of territorial adaptation as they first adjust to a new reality within the confines of a comfortable group and the space of the ethnic enclave, and then, on an individual basis, become accustomed to the space beyond its boundaries.

According to Vendina (2009), the emergence of ethnic enclaves is largely a way to preserve the cultural identity of the minority group and bring it to the public’s attention. Ethnic self-presentation is an important form of minority integration into a host community, as it allows individuals from different ethnocultural traditions to project their significant world beyond the confines of private life and incorporate it into the general urban order. Thus, in addition to its protective or adaptive function, the ethnic enclave fulfills another significant role: it serves as a means of self-presentation for the ‘titular’ group, enabling it to preserve its cultural identity and assert its presence in the city, embedding its culture into the urban space.

Zhou (1992), in turn, notes that the main functions of an ethnocultural enclave are to protect coethnics from physical and psychological harm, and to propel coethnics into the institutions of the host country, thereby providing avenues for social mobility. According to Puzanov (2013), these areas represent a segment firmly established in the mental map of the city, distinguished by certain specific features. They are characterized by a higher proportion of residents from a different ethnic or cultural group than the dominant group in the city, and by the incorporation of ethnocultural characteristics and practices into the daily life of the district (28). Another significant feature of ethnocultural enclaves is the presence of ethnic businesses, whose success and competitiveness largely depend on the patronage of customers from specific ethnic groups (Espinoza-Kulick et al., 2020). Such businesses are integral to the sustainability and cultural vibrancy of Goryeoin Maeul areas.

Portes and Manning (1986) argue that an ethnocultural enclave serves as a mode of structural incorporation, providing a pathway for economic mobility that does not require migrants to adopt the majority group’s cultural practices. The authors believe that an ethnocultural enclave can be characterized by the following criteria: a high concentration of migrants, a high participation rate of the local population in ethnic organizations, and a generally low level of knowledge of the host country’s language and institutions. A key characteristic of a Goryeoin Maeul is the population’s generally low level of knowledge of the receiving country’s language and institutions. Most Russophone Koreans have limited proficiency in Korean even after years of resettlement. Consequently, numerous intermediaries within the Russophone Korean community often act as mediators between the inhabitants of a Goryeoin Maeul and the official institutions or native population of the receiving country. These intermediaries perform the role of cultural brokers, who, according to Barth (1969), act as mediators between different cultural groups, facilitating exchange, understanding, and integration. At the same time, they form a crucial part of the Goryeoin Maeul’s infrastructure.

An equally important characteristic of an ethnocultural enclave is its external manifestations. The daily sights, sounds, and interactions within public spaces vividly signal the culture of a

particular social group (Espinoza-Kulick et al., 2020). Goryeoin Maeul communities exhibit a unique fusion of Central Asian, Russian, and Goryeo-saram elements in their everyday culture. The districts inhabited by Russophone Koreans are distinctly identifiable by their signage, notices, and advertising materials, which are predominantly in Russian. Additionally, the pervasive presence of Russian speech throughout the areas further accentuates these areas' unique cultural identity.

Distinguished by a strong ethnic presence and a somewhat insular community centered around a common language, shared cultural practices, and an ethnic nucleus of Russophone Koreans, the Goryeoin Maeul can be defined as an ethnocultural enclave.

Method

There are two primary approaches in social geography for studying ethnocultural areas within cities, which may be referred to as the 'statistical' and the 'humanitarian' approaches. In the author's view, the study of Goryeoin Maeul necessitates a combined approach, juxtaposing statistical data with a wide spectrum of other indicators. The 'statistical' approach generally relies on quantitative assessment parameters, with the key figure being the titular group's percentage of the ethnic district's total population. The localization index, which is used in socio-geographical studies to identify areas with a significant excess of the average share for a specific group in the country or city, also known as the "double share" method (Goliashv & Kelman, 2014), has enabled the detection of compact residential areas of Russophone Koreans in South Korea. In contrast, the 'humanitarian' approach takes into account historical contextualization, toponymy, imagery, and the physical appearance of the area. To analyze the developmental history of the ethnocultural enclaves, I reviewed the existing social scientific literature on this topic. Unfortunately, this field is under-researched, with studies primarily focusing on the largest and most organized Goryeoin Maeul in the cities of Gwangju, Ansan, and Incheon. In this context, semi-structured interviews with representatives from local communities were crucial.

To effectively document the physical appearance of the ethnocultural enclave, the author employed a methodology developed by Kelman (2017), which organizes all gathered information into twelve categories and assesses their significance. During the preliminary stage of the research, I reviewed the social scientific literature and press reports, analyzed statistical data from the Immigration and Foreign Policy Bureau of the Ministry of Justice, along with the Korean Statistical Information Service and Anseong City Portal. I also conducted preliminary surveys of the presumed locations of ethnocultural enclaves using the mapping software services Daum Map and Kakao Map. During the fieldwork stage, conducted from October 2022 to July 2023, I carried out photo and video documentation of the presumed localization sites of Goryeoin Maeul in the cities of Anseong and Gyeongju, as well as nine semi-structured interviews (five in Anseong and four in Gyeongju) with members of the local Russophone communities. While surveying the ethnocultural enclave, I consistently relied on non-standardized questions to gather information about the socio-cultural infrastructure and ethnic businesses. During this stage, the travel route of the field research was recorded for video documentation purposes using Garmin's GPS service.

The choice of Anseong and Gyeongju for this study is due to the fact that Anseong is located in the highly urbanized Gyeonggi Province in the northwestern part of South Korea, while Gyeongju is situated in the comparatively more agrarian North Gyeongsang Province in the southeastern part of the country. Moreover, the Goryeoin Maeul in both of these areas began to develop during the same period. These two factors make them excellent candidates for comparative research on South Korea's Goryeoin Maeul that have developed outside of the long-established and densely populated Goryeoin Maeul in Ansan, Incheon, and Gwangju.

Naeri Goryeoin Maeul in Anseong

Naeri Goryeoin Maeul is located in Daedeok-myeon, Anseong, near Chung-ang University's Da Vinci Campus. According to an interview with a Goryeoin who first arrived in this area in 2003 and is now a local resident, the settlement of Russophone Koreans in Anseong began in the early 2000s. Initially, these immigrants primarily settled near the city center in an area known as the "Bus Terminal." Over time, however, the Russian-speaking population started moving to the Naeri area of Daedeok-myeon. The local Russophone Korean community, which distinguishes itself from those residing in central Anseong, refers to their new settlement simply as 'Naeri.' They often adapt its Korean name by adding Russian language endings, changing 'Naeri' to 'Naeriah' (in Naeri). This community is also active online; for instance, the Facebook group 'Жители Ансонга (Нери)' [Residents of Anseong (Naeri)] has attracted over 27,300 followers as of April 2024.

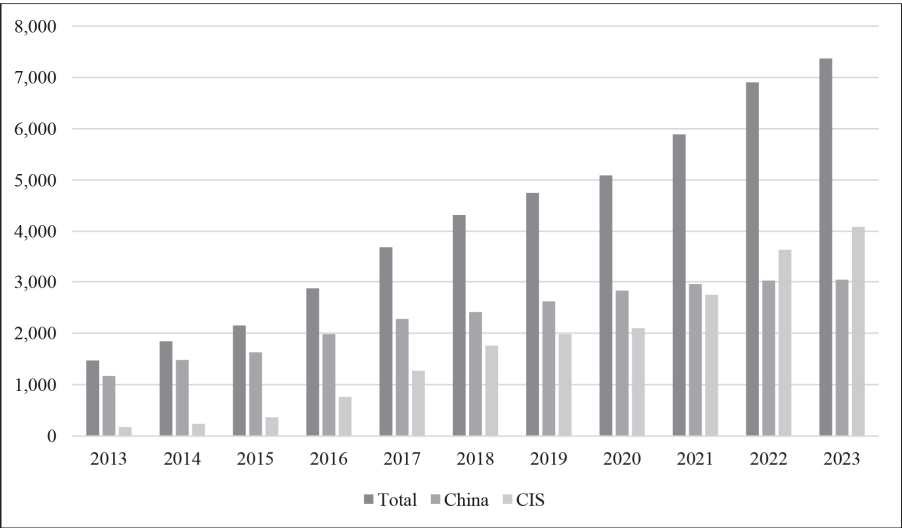
Data from South Korean statistics reveal three significant surges in the population of residents from post-Soviet countries in Anseong, occurring in 2008, 2014, and 2016 (Anseong City Portal). Interviews with locals, coupled with the author's observations, indicate that the formation of the ethnocultural enclave in Naeri began to take shape after 2016. By 2022, there was another notable increase in the population, which further solidified the presence of Russophone Koreans within this enclave. The population dynamics of Russophone Koreans in Anseong can be traced through the number of individuals holding the overseas Korean (F-4 visa) status,¹ as shown in Figure 1.

An even more interesting trend that can be observed is the increase in the number of Russophone Koreans in the municipality of Daedeok-myeon. Statistical data shows that during the same period, their numbers more than doubled those of Koreans from China (Figure 2)².

¹ According to data available on the website of the Immigration and Foreigner Policy Bureau of the Ministry of Justice (2024), although Goryeoin reside in South Korea with various types of visas, and some have even obtained citizenship, the majority of them hold F-4 visas, with their proportion exceeding 70%, as of 2024. Additionally, while Ministry of Justice provides detailed information about the places of residence for foreign nationals holding F-4 visas, such information is not available for holders of other visa types. These two factors, despite their limited precision, make the use of the statistical data a useful tool for studying the population changes of Goryeoin in various regions of South Korea

² It is important to note that determining the number of Goryeo-saram among the total overseas compatriots holding an F-4 visa is challenging, as the statistical data I used specifically highlights citizens from China, the United States, and Canada, while grouping all others under the 'other' category. However, given that the primary sources of F-4 visa holders outside of these countries are Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Russia, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of individuals in the 'other' category are Goryeo-saram.

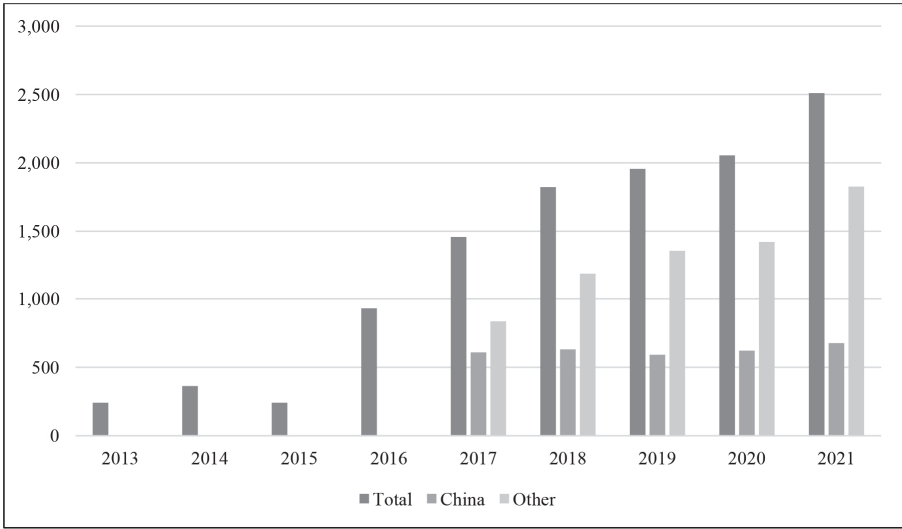
Figure 1 Population Growth Dynamics of Overseas Koreans (F-4 Visa Type) Residing in Anseong (2013-2023)



Source: Tabulated by the author using data from the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and Foreigner Policy Bureau (2024)

Note: CIS refers to Commonwealth of Independent States

Figure 2 Population Growth Dynamics of Overseas Koreans (F-4 Visa Type) Residing in the Municipality of Daedeok-myeon (2013-2021)



Source: Tabulated by the author using data from the Korean Statistical Information Service (2024)

Although there were no country-specific breakdowns prior to 2017, a fourfold increase in the number of overseas Koreans (F-4 Visa Type) in 2016 suggests the early stages of an ethnocultural enclave forming in the Naeri area. This statistical finding was further supported by interviews with representatives of the Russophone Korean community in Anseong.

In July 2023, the total number of Russophone Koreans in Anseong holding overseas Korean (F-4 visa type) status reached 3,906, as reported by the Immigration and Foreigner Policy Bureau of the Ministry of Justice. Although this figure represents just 1.8% of the city's total population, it is substantially higher than the national proportion of Russophone Koreans, which is 0.15%, thereby indicating a significant concentration of Russophone Koreans in Anseong. Most of these individuals are concentrated in the Naeri area, a residential sector spanning approximately 0.43 km². This ethnocultural enclave is situated within natural boundaries, surrounded by fields on three sides and bordered to the northeast by Chung-ang University's Anseong campus.

My observations reveal that the highest concentration of Russian-speaking residents within the district is near Gwangdeok Elementary School. According to data provided by the school's faculty in November 2022, the student body comprised 240 pupils, 200 of whom were international students. Remarkably, 173 of these international students were Russian-speaking, and 154 were identified as Russophone Koreans.

The primary shopping and social infrastructure of the ethnocultural enclave in Naeri is conveniently situated within walking distance of the residents' homes. The enclave features a variety of commercial establishments, ranging from chain stores like Imperia Foods and Raduga to local retailers such as Fantaziya, Myasnoy Ugolok, and Vostok. The proximity of grocery stores to cell phone service centers, beauty salons, and a pawnshop that caters specifically to Russian-speaking residents is a notable characteristic of the area. This multilingual aspect of the community is evident from the signage as well as the services offered, such as visa type changes and notarized translations. Furthermore, the enclave hosts Russian-themed establishments including Russian Cafe Masisso, Billiard Club Moscow (which features Russian billiards and a bar), and First Russian Bakery. Many of these businesses prominently display signage in two or three languages, with Russian always being one of them.

The crossroads known locally by Russian-speaking residents as 'Pyatak' in the central part of the enclave acts as a hub for pick-ups and drop-offs. Local Korean businesses use this spot to gather permanent and temporary workers for day or night shifts, which can last up to 12 hours. Initially, many Russophone Koreans found employment on the farms surrounding the city, working particularly in pear, apple, and grape cultivation. However, recruitment announcements shared through specialized group chats on the social networking site Facebook suggest that residents of Anseong now work in various other sectors. Their workplaces include factories, construction sites, logistics companies, catering services, and hotels—often in cleaning roles. Many migrants prefer securing jobs through intermediaries such as recruitment agencies (Zhiteli Ansonga, n.d.).

Another pivotal factor contributing to the formation of the Naeri ethnocultural enclave is the abundance of affordable rental housing. This housing primarily comes in the form of compact one to two-bedroom apartments housed within structures termed 'villas.' These three to four-story edifices offer units at moderate monthly costs, necessitating only a nominal deposit. The vicinities in which the villas are located are frequently in close proximity to university campuses, rendering them a desirable option for both migrant workers and students. The cost-effectiveness of these accommodations makes them a preferred choice, regardless of one's citizenship status.

The ethnocultural enclave of Naeri has a somewhat limited and underdeveloped social infrastructure. Beyond a primary school and its associated kindergarten, the “Tahamkke” childcare center was also found during an initial visit, noted for actively serving Russian-speaking children. At that time, informants raised concerns about the scarcity of after-school care and supplemental language education opportunities for children. However, recent developments have led to positive changes. For example, the establishment of the Naeri Multicultural Family Support Center has initiated Korean language classes, tailored for Russian-speaking migrants. Officials have also announced plans to introduce Korean language courses specifically designed for children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds. Additionally, with the establishment of the Gyeonggi Province Anseong City Korean Residents Support Center on June 30, 2023, enhanced support and benefits for Russophone Koreans are expected to increase significantly.

Interestingly, I found a few churches conducting services in Russian. It is noteworthy that churches often act as a foundational platform for creating associations among Russophone Koreans within distinct ethnocultural enclaves. This characteristic of the ethnocultural enclave in Naeri warrants further investigation.

The significant presence of Russophone residents in Naeri is prominently marked by the prevalence of signs in the Russian language. Beyond these typical indicators, a distinctive feature of the Naeri ethnocultural enclave is the substantial attention the authorities have given to segregated waste disposal. This is notable because segregated waste disposal is neither mandatory nor widespread in any of the post-Soviet countries. Consequently, newcomers from these countries often face significant challenges in adapting to this routine when they first arrive in Korea. The authorities in different South Korean cities have devised various strategies to address this issue. In Anseong, for example, houses inhabited by Russophone migrants are easily identifiable by notices that provide instructions on proper garbage disposal. Interestingly, in the northern part of the enclave, such signs are less common, whereas in the southern part, near the primary school, they are ubiquitous. This distribution conspicuously indicates the higher density of Russophone migrants in the latter area.

Thus, since 2016, the Naeri region in Anseong has been actively expanding as an ethnocultural enclave, building on the presence of small groups of Russophone Koreans prior to this period. A new wave of Russian-speaking migrants began arriving in 2022 and continues to this day. While the area boasts a large number of ethnic businesses, its socio-cultural infrastructure remains underdeveloped. The most pressing challenges for the community include providing basic schooling and language education for migrant children, which is crucial for their integration into South Korean society. Additionally, adult foreigners living in Naeri encounter significant hurdles in communicating with the native population and understanding the host community’s basic cultural practices and daily routines.

The Naeri Goryeoin Maeul demonstrates six of the twelve external features identified by Kelman (2017) as defining characteristics of an ethnocultural enclave: 1) signs, store names, institutions, outdoor advertising; 2) places of worship; 3) educational institutions; 4) shops and retail outlets; 5) national cuisine restaurants, fast food outlets; and 6) people’s appearances.

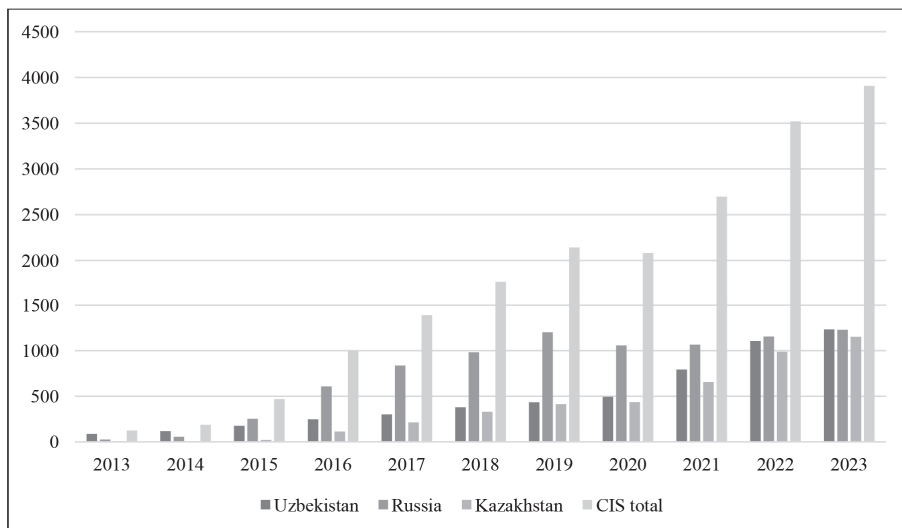
The presence of the Russian-speaking community is marked by numerous signs and announcements. Moreover, the visible presence of individuals of Slavic appearance and members of the Pamir-Fergana race further enhances the distinct character of the enclave, highlighting its unique cultural and demographic composition.

Seonggeon-dong Goryeoin Maeul in Gyeongju

The Goryeoin Maeul in Gyeongju began to form around 2015 when Russophone Koreans from post-Soviet countries started settling in the Seonggeon-dong area. This ethnocultural enclave is geographically defined by natural and urban borders: the Hyeongsan River to the west, its tributary the Bukcheon River to the north, Daejong-ro Avenue to the south, and Wonhwa-ro Avenue to the east. Spanning approximately 2.5 km², the enclave's ethnic business infrastructure is primarily concentrated in a smaller area in the northwest, occupying less than 0.13 km². Like the ethnocultural enclave in the Naeri area, the Seonggeon-dong Goryeoin Maeul is also strategically located near a university campus, namely Dongguk University's Gyeongju campus. This proximity is advantageous due to the campus's affordable pricing and flexible rental conditions, which are particularly appealing to foreign labor migrants.

According to South Korean statistics, there has been a rapid increase in the number of Russophone Koreans in Gyeongju, climbing from 2,470 in 2016 to 4,332 by the end of 2021 (Son et al., 2022). This growth has positioned this ethnocultural enclave as the fourth largest among the Goryeoin Maeul in South Korea. By the end of 2021, Russophone Koreans constituted over 1.7% of the city's total population, a proportion significantly higher than the national average of 0.15%. An examination of the population growth dynamics of Russophone Koreans residing in Gyeongju with the status of overseas Korean (F-4 visa type) also indicates a steady increase starting from 2014 (Fig. 3).

Figure 3 Population Growth Dynamics of Russophone Koreans Residing in Gyeongju (F-4 visa type only) (2013-2023)

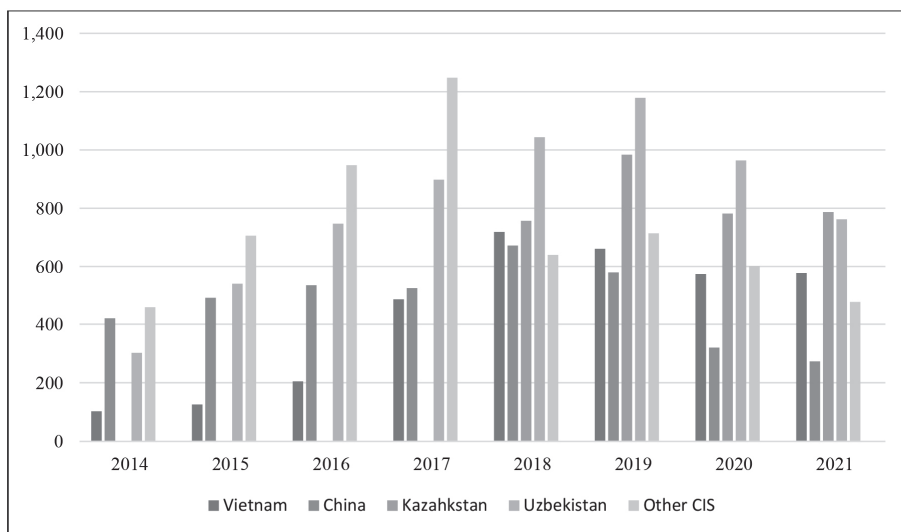


Source: Tabulated by the author using data from the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and Foreigner Policy Bureau (2024)

Note: CIS refers to Commonwealth of Independent States.

The statistical data illustrate a growth in the number of Russophone residents in the Seonggeon-dong area from 2014 to 2020 (Fig. 4). During this period, the overall number of foreigners registered in Seonggeon-dong steadily climbed, peaking in 2019. Concurrently, the proportion of Chinese citizens gradually declined, whereas the populations from post-Soviet countries and Vietnam saw growth. Notably, by 2015, citizens from Uzbekistan emerged as the most numerous group, marking the beginning of the rapid development of the ethnocultural enclave.

Figure 4 Population Growth Dynamics of Foreigners Registered in the Seonggeon-dong Area (2014-2021)



Source: Tabulated by the author using data from the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and Foreigner Policy Bureau (2024)

Note: Prior to 2018, data for Kazakhstan was included in the ‘Other CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States)’ category.

Since many Russophone Koreans have relocated to South Korea with their families, a significant number of Russian-speaking children are enrolled in primary schools within the ethnocultural enclave. As of the spring semester of 2023, according to data provided by the school’s faculty, 62.7% of the students at Heungmu Elementary School, totaling 232 individuals, were children of foreigners, predominantly Russophone Koreans. Additionally, at the kindergarten affiliated with Heungmu Elementary, 87.7% of the children, or 50 individuals, were from foreign families, with a significant number of them being Russian-speaking. At Wolseong Elementary School, another educational institution within the enclave, foreigners made up 45.7% of the student body, amounting to 86 pupils in 2023.

The majority of the ethnic businesses and social infrastructure within the ethnocultural enclave are concentrated in the northwest. Prominent chain stores like Imperia Foods coexist alongside local grocers such as Kolos and Dream Mart. Beyond food outlets, the area includes cell phone retailers, a postal service branch, and even a jewelry store. A bustling local hotspot, aptly named “Pyanka” or “Drunken Street,” boasts a diverse array of cafes and restaurants, creating a vibrant hub of both local and international cuisine. Additionally, the enclave is dotted

with standalone cafes, bakeries, and sweet shops. While some venues brand themselves as “Russian,” the ambiance of these establishments is not distinctly Russian. Significantly, similar to Naeri, the signage in most cafes and retail outlets predominantly features inscriptions in two or three languages, with Russian always included among them, except for a few outliers.

In communities of Russophone Koreans, bread-making is a cornerstone of local industries. Residents from former Soviet territories, who traditionally consume bread with every meal, favor a variety of bread types, often as quick snacks during commutes. The streets in these communities offer not only Russian-style bread but also Central Asian specialties like *samsa* and *lepyoshka* flatbread. Furthermore, in these communities, employment agencies play a crucial role in shaping the ethnic infrastructure. Bus stops, where migrant workers gather for morning or evening shifts, are strategically located near these agencies, attracting various commercial establishments, including shops, restaurants, and bars, to these hubs. The employment landscape in Gyeongju mirrors that of Anseong, with abundant opportunities across the industrial, agricultural, and service sectors. While local ethnic businesses provide some employment, there is a noticeable tendency to hire within familial circles or among known acquaintances.

The social infrastructure in the Seonggeon-dong Goryeoin Maeul includes several educational centers that cater to children and teenagers, as well as significant community hubs like the Gyeongju Goryeoin Community Center and the North Gyeongsang Province Goryeoin Integrated Support Center. Additionally, there are various sporting activities, including Taekwondo and Mixed Martial Arts. Many are either directly managed by Russophone Korean athletes or offer separate groups for Russian-speaking children. Furthermore, a local nonprofit organization founded by entrepreneurs from the Russophone Korean community called DreamWay Social received a grant from the North Gyeongsang Province Office in 2023. This funding has enabled them to establish an academy that provides mathematics and Korean language education to Russian-speaking children, and they also offer programs tailored for Russian-speaking elders. However, according to E. Ogai, one of the founders of DreamWay Social, Russian-speaking immigrant children and adolescents struggle a great deal in adapting to social Korean society. They are reportedly in need of specific educational programs that Korean public schools or local institutes cannot provide.

Churches catering to Russian-speaking immigrants are an important part of the Goryeoin Maeul’s social infrastructure in Gyeongju. Notably, the “Family of Jesus” church, which also has several branches in Russia, is centrally located within the enclave. An informant who relocated from Vladivostok to Gyeongju with her family in September 2022 became a member of this church. She reported that the church provided her with document preparation and related services necessary for immigration procedures, free of charge. Additionally, her children attended the “Rainbow School,” operated by the church’s pastor, before transitioning to a Korean school.

Looking at the Goryeoin Maeul from a linguistic perspective, it is impossible not to mention the abundance of signs and advertisements in Russian. In the author’s estimation, the density of such Russian signs is among the highest in South Korea. Many of these signs and advertisements have something in common: they frequently contain information related to the waste disposal, crime prevention, and smoking bans, which appears to reflect well on the relationship between the native population and Russian-speaking immigrants.

The Seonggeon-dong Goryeoin Maeul in Gyeongju began to take shape after 2015, although some informants reported the presence of Russian-speaking migrants even earlier, and the first

ethnic business opened in 2012. This ethnocultural enclave hosts a considerable number of ethnic businesses tailored to the needs of Russian-speaking migrants. The socio-cultural infrastructure includes several educational institutions, particularly those located at foreigner assistance centers. Despite these resources, receiving basic schooling remains an urgent issue, compounded by the increasing proportion of Russian-speaking students at local elementary schools. Fortunately, local Goryeoin activists are actively working to improve their living conditions. Adult residents also face significant communication challenges with the host community, which can be seen in the widespread use of informational signage in various languages, predominantly Russian, throughout the enclave.

The Seonggeon-dong Goryeoin Maeul exhibits six out of the twelve external characteristics of an ethnocultural enclave, as proposed by Kelman (2017): 1) signs, store names, institutions, outdoor advertising; 2) places of worship; 3) educational institutions; 4) shops and retail outlets; 5) national cuisine restaurants, fast food outlets; and 6) people's appearances.

Notably, aside from Russophone Koreans, the enclave is home to many residents from Southeast Asia, as well as from Slavic and Central Asian backgrounds.

Conclusion

The emergence of Russophone Korean ethnocultural enclaves in South Korea dates back to the early 2010s, coinciding with mass migration from post-Soviet states and the introduction of a distinct visa regime that allowed these migrants to legally reside and work in the country. While such communities in Incheon, Ansan, and Gwangju have been well-documented by both Korean and international scholars, several other enclaves populated by Russophone Koreans exist throughout Korea.

This study focused on two such enclaves, which, despite their geographical distance from each other, are at similar stages of community development, having been established around the same time. Through a combination of desk research and fieldwork, this analysis delineated the principal characteristics of the Goryeoin Maeul in the cities of Anseong and Gyeongju. It further identified prevailing patterns that are indicative of many Russophone Korean ethnocultural enclaves in South Korea, suggesting a degree of uniformity in their developmental stages.

A notable characteristic of these enclaves is the presence of well-defined boundaries, influenced by both natural geographical features and distinct residential architecture. For instance, in Anseong, although Russophone Koreans began settling in the city's central region earlier, Naeri was where a true ethnocultural enclave emerged. This development can be attributed to the principle that an ethnocultural enclave crystallizes when the proportion of an ethnic group within a specific district significantly exceeds the citywide average. This critical mass not only shapes the unique aesthetics of the ethnic district but also supports the viability of ethnic businesses. The district's distinctive ambiance, enriched by its ethnic infrastructure, promotes community formation. Clearly demarcated boundaries, defined by both natural landscapes and urban planning, facilitate the congregation of the ethnic population within a designated area.

Another crucial factor in the formation of Goryeoin Maeul is the availability of reasonably priced rental accommodations. Both Naeri in Anseong and Seonggeon-dong in Gyeongju are situated near university campuses and primarily consist of low-rise buildings of 3-5 stories.

Initially, these compact apartments were leased at rates considered affordable by South Korean standards, with minimal initial deposits, and therefore could cater to the economic capabilities of migrants from post-Soviet states. This compatibility is not only due to affordability but also stems from the straightforward nature of the rental terms, especially since the concept of *jeonsae* (a lump-sum deposit rental system prevalent in South Korea) is largely unfamiliar in post-Soviet contexts.

A pivotal factor in the formation of such districts is the availability of employment opportunities. The ethnocultural enclaves under discussion are strategically located away from metropolitan hubs but near significant industrial and agricultural zones. This close proximity to job opportunities is crucial for their development. The recruitment process of these businesses is often facilitated by recruitment agencies and intermediaries, many of whom are Russophone Koreans with an established presence in South Korea. Additionally, various commercial entities within the enclave have extended their services beyond their primary business roles to act as intermediaries for legal and related concerns. This multifaceted support system not only aids in the economic integration of new residents but also reinforces the social cohesion and identity of the enclave.

The fourth determinant influencing the growth and evolution of an ethnocultural enclave is the development of a distinctive commercial infrastructure tailored to the consumption preferences of migrants from post-Soviet territories. Bread and associated bakery products, staples in their dietary routine, are consumed with notable regularity. As a result, many local stores within the enclave have incorporated bakeries. Moreover, cafes and restaurants in Goryeoin Maeul areas offer more than culinary delights; they also create an ambiance reminiscent of home, serving as refuges for residents seeking solace from the challenges of a predominantly foreign linguistic landscape.

The fifth determinant focuses on the development of socio-cultural infrastructure, which includes specialized institutions and establishments initiated by both South Korean entities and governmental bodies, as well as by proactive Russophone Koreans. Many Russophone Koreans have limited proficiency in the Korean language, making overcoming language barriers a priority. In cities like Gyeongju and Anseong, this challenge is addressed through dedicated language courses, enrollment in private school classes, or individualized tutoring sessions. Notably, religious organizations frequently play a crucial role in facilitating language acquisition, which underscores their importance not just for spirituality, but also as vital centers for community integration and support.

Residents of Goryeoin Maeul make their presence known through their display of signs and advertisements, predominantly in Russian. Moreover, both local native residents and the administrative authorities make concerted efforts to engage with the Russian-speaking inhabitants by issuing bilingual or Russian-dominant notices. Throughout my fieldwork conducted in both ethnocultural enclaves, a significant volume of these notices was documented, primarily addressing issues related to waste management and public order violations.

A paramount challenge facing the nascent Goryeoin Maeul is the underdevelopment of its socio-cultural infrastructure. There is a noticeable scarcity of specialized educational institutions catering to both children and adults, which poses substantial obstacles to the smooth integration of the enclave's inhabitants into South Korean society. In my view, addressing this challenge requires the development of a unified education policy for Russophone Koreans. Such a policy

should extend beyond teaching basic Korean language skills; it should also ensure that children in ethnocultural enclaves receive primary and secondary education in their native language.

References

- Anseong City Portal. (n.d.). *Anseong city website*. Retrieved April 7, 2024, from <https://www.anseong.go.kr>
- Barth, F. (Ed.). (1969). *Ethnic groups and boundaries: The social organization of culture difference*. Little, Brown and Company.
- Espinoza-Kulick, M.A., Fennelly, M., Beck, K., & Castañeda, E. (2020). Ethnic enclaves. In L. Spillman (Ed.), *Oxford bibliographies in sociology*. Oxford University Press.
- Goliashev, A.V. & Kelman, Y.F. (2014). Indeks lokalizacii v socialnoi i ekonomicheskoi geographii: tradiciya I novyie podhody [Localization Index in Social and Economic Geography: Traditional and New Approaches], *The World of Science, Culture, and Education*, 3(46), 376-380.
- Im, Y. (2023). *Hanguk e seo Goryeoin Maeul chatda* [Searching for Goryeoin Maeul in Korea]. Bookorea.
- Im, Y., & Pak, M.. (2010). Tasyukenteu ui sinkoriataun siongo goryeoin maeul gwa hanguk munhwa [New Koreatown Siongo Goryeoin Maeul and Korean culture in Tashkent], *Global Cultural Content*, 5, 41-86.
- Im, Y., & Jeong, M.. (2016). Hanguk sok ui Reosia, Goryeoin Maeureul jungsim euro [Russia in Korea, Focusing on Russophone Korean Villages]. *East-West Humanities*, 52, 275-295.
- Immigration and Foreigner Policy Bureau. (n.d.) *Ministry of justice*. Retrieved April 7, 2024, from <https://www.immigration.go.kr>
- Jeong, M., & Ju, D. (2017). Gwangju Goryeoin Maeul ui baljeon eul wihan wikibaek gwa guchuk yeongu [A study on building a Wikipedia for the development of Goryeoin Maeul in Gwangju]. *Journal of Slavic Studies*, 32(3), 149-171.
- Ju, H., & Oh, J. (2022). Reupebeureu ui sahoejeong gonggan iron euro barabon Goryeoin Maeul gongganseong e gwanhan yeongu [A Study on the spatiality of Goryeoin Maeul through Lefebvre's theory of social space]. *Cultural Exchange and Multicultural Education*, 11(3), 295-319.
- Kang, S., & Choi, U.. (2021). Ansan 'Ttaetgol Maeul' Goryeoindeul ui hakseum munhwa gisulji yeongu [An ethnographic study of the learning culture of Russophone Koreans in the 'Ddaetgol villages' of Ansan]. *Humanities and Social Sciences* 21, 12(3), 1309-1324.
- Kelman, Y.F. (2017). Polevoe issledovanie etnokul'turnykh anklavov v gorodakh SShA. Metodika i primery [A field study of ethnocultural enclaves in US cities: Methods and examples], *Urban Studies and Practices*, 2(2), 56-80.
- Kim, G. (2014). Jungang Asia Goryeoin ui Hanguk iju wa jeongchak: Gwangju 'Goryeoin Maeul eul jungsim euro [Migration and settlement of Central Asian Russophone Koreans in Korea: Focusing on a 'Goryeoin Maeul' in Gwangju]. *International Regional Studies*, 17(4), 259-282.
- Kim, G. (2018). Gukje iju gwajeong eseo adong ui jeongchang gyeongheom: Gwangju gwangyeoksi goryeoin adong eul jungsim euro [Settlement Experiences of Children in the International Migration Process: Focusing on Russophone Korean children in Gwangju Metropolitan City]. *Cultural and Historical Geography*, 30(2), 130-148.
- Kim, G. (2019). Gwangju gwangyeoksi Goryeoin Maeul - Iju wa jeongchak [Russophone Korean Village in Gwangju Metropolitan City - Migration and Settlement]. *Cultures*, 55, 272-299.
- Kim, J. (2014). Gwangju gwangyeoksi Gwangsangu jiyeok gwihwan Goryeoin ui iju baegyeong gwa teukseong [Migration background and characteristics of returned Russophone Koreans in Gwangsangu, Gwangju Metropolitan City]. *Overseas Koreans Studies*, 32, 139-163.
- Kim, N. (2013). Jaehan Goryeoin ui gonggan hyeongseong gwa gongdongche hwaldong [Spatial formation and community activities of Koreans in Korea], *Conference proceedings of the Center for Global Diaspora Studies*, 137-155.
- Kim, S. (2017). Reosia Yeonhaeuji jiyeok ui Goryeoin Maeul mandeulgi wa unyeong siltae e gwanhan josa yeongu - Useuriseukeu Ujeong Maeul eul jungsim euro [Research on the establishment and operation

- of Goryeoin Maeul in the Primorsky Krai region of Russia - Focused on Ussuriysk Ujeong Maeul], *Journal of the Korean Institute of Rural Architecture*, 9 (26), 129-137.
- Kim, S. (2021). Gajok saengtachak gwanjeom euro barabon Gwangju Goryeoin Maeul e daehan munhwa gisulji yeongu: Bumo gyoyuk peurogeuraem gaebal eul wihan yeonjak yeongu [An ethnographic study of Goryeoin Maeul in Gwangju from a family ecology perspective: Collaborative research for developing a parent education program]. *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 25(4), 223-254.
- Kim, Y., & Hong, I. (2013). Jungang Asia Goryeoin ui Gwangju jiyeok iju wa munhwa byeonyong e gwanhan yeongu [Study on the migration and cultural transformation of Central Asian Russophone Koreans in Gwangju]. *Diaspora Studies*, 7(1), 131-161.
- Kwak, D., & Im Y. (2017). Goryeoin dongpo ui 'Gwihwan' gwa dosi jaesaeng ['Return' of Russophone Korean and urban regeneration]. *Historical and Cultural Studies*, 64, 175-211.
- Korean Statistical Information Service. (n.d.). *Gyeonggi-do Anseong-si giban tonggye. Geoso singoinsu* [Gyeonggi Province Anseong City Basic Statistics. Number of Registered Residents]. Retrieved April 7, 2024, from https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=632&tblId=DT_63201_B000052&conn_path=I2
- Ministry of Justice. (2024, June 20). *May 2024 Immigration and Foreigner Policy Statistics Monthly Report*. Ministry of Justice, Immigration and Foreigner Policy Bureau. <https://www.immigration.go.kr/immigration/1569/subview.do?enc=Zm5jdDF8QEB8JTJGYmJzJTJGaW1taWdyYXRpb24IMkYyMjclMkY1ODQ0NzYIMkZhcncRjBFBZpZXcuZG8IM0ZwYXNzd29yZCUzRCUyNnJnc0JnbmRIU3RyJTNEJTl2YmJzQ2xTZXEIM0QIMjZyZ3NFbmRkZVN0ciUzRCUyNmlzVmlld01pbmUIM0RmYWxzZSUyNnBhZ2UIM0QxJTl2YmJzT3BlbldyZFNlcSUzRCUyNnNyY2hDb2x1bW4IM0QIMjZzcmNoV3JkJTNEJTl2>
- Park, M., Kang, S., & Choi, I. (2022). Incheon Hambak Maeul Goryeoin mit Hangugin jumin ui geoju gyeongheom gwa gongjon bangan yeongu [A study on the residential experiences and coexistence plans of Russophone Korean and Korean residents in Incheon Hambak Village]. *Multiculturalism and Peace*, 16(2), 80-106.
- Park, R. E. (1922). *The immigrant press and its control*. Harper & Brothers.
- Park, R. E. & Burgess, E. W. (1925). *The city: Suggestions for the investigation of human behavior in the urban environment*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Portes, A. & Manning, R.D. (1986). The Immigrant Enclave: Theory and Empirical Examples, In Olzak, S. & Nagel, J. (Eds.). *Competitive Ethnic Relations* (pp. 47-68). Academic Press.
- Puzanov, K.A. (2013). Territorialnye granitsy gorodskikh soobshchestv [Territorial boundaries of urban communities], *Sociology of Power*, 2, 27-38.
- Seok, J., Park, S., & Chu, Y. (2018). Gwangju Wolgok Maeul Goryeoinui eoneo sayong siltae josa reul wihan gichojeok yeongu [A basic study on the language use of Russophone Koreans in Wolgok Village, Gwangju]. *The Korean Language and Literature Society*, 105, 71-99.
- Seon, B. (2017). Hanguk eseo oegugin jip geoji ui hyeongseong gwa gongganjeong teukseong e gwanhan yeongu: Gwangju gwangyeoksi Goryeoin Maureul jungsim euro [A Study on the formation and spatial characteristics of foreign residential areas in Korea: Focusing on the Russophone Korean Village in Gwangju Metropolitan City]. *Journal of Northeast Asia Studies*, 22(2), 193-214.
- Son, N., Pak, M. & An, J. (2022). *Gyeongsangbukdo Goryeoin sintae josa mit jiwon jeongchaeng yeongu* [Research on the New System and Support Policies for Russophone Koreans in North Gyeongsang Province]. Gumi: Gyeongbuk Haengbok Jaedan.
- Vendina, O.I. (2009). Kulturnoe raznoobrazie i «pobochnye» efekty etnokul'turnoi politiki v Moskve [Cultural Diversity and the "Side" Effects of Ethnocultural Policy in Moscow]. In J.A. Zayonchkovskaya (Ed.), *Immigrants in Moscow* (pp. 240-265). Tri Kvadrata.
- Yang, M. (2023). Sangho munhwa sidae munhwa jeopgyeong gonggan euro Gwangju Goryeoin Maeul eseo gongyeon yesul hwaldong ui uimi: Jungang Asia seutoritelring peopomeonseu <Na neun Goryeoin ida>reul jungsimeuro [The meaning of performing arts activities in Goryeoin Maeul, Gwangju as a cultural border space in the intercultural era: Focusing on a Central Asian storytelling performance / am a Russophone Korean]. *Multicultural Content Studies*, 46, 251-281.
- Zhiteli Ansonga (Neri) [Residents of Anseong (Neri)]. (N.d.). Facebook [Group page]. Retrieved April 7, 2024, from <https://www.facebook.com/groups/847288162011075>
- Zhou, M. (1992). *Chinatown: The socioeconomic potential of an urban enclave*. Temple University Press.

