

Changing Characteristics of International Labor Migration in Northeast Asia: With a Focus on the Russo-Chinese Border

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1. Globalization and Migration

“In 20 years time, Russia will be Kosovo.”
(Mr. Belov, Chairman of DPNI)

1-1.

The collapse of Soviet Type Socialism ushered in “globalization.” Globalization enables not only commodities and money to cross national borders but also gave rise to a mass international migration flow on a really global scale. At the turn of the 21st century, according to a specialist estimate (Stalker, 2000), there are some 30 to 40 million migrant workers in the world and, if we include their family members, the number rises to the order of 100 million people. If we include refugees and illegal migrants, the number grows sharply to 150 million according to MOM (*Migration News*, December 2000). This is twice as big as it was two decades ago. Cross border migrants are now ubiquitous throughout the world.

The socio-economic consequences of globalization on international migration could be, in the author’s view, roughly summarized as follows:

- 1) Globalization intensified the uneven development of the world economy, and is leading to growing “polarization” of the earth, segregation of the world labor market, which stimulates migration ever more strongly (Differentiation of income, possession, wealth, etc.).
- 2) Globalization gives rise to a stronger segregation of the domestic labor market in the developed countries, allocating migrants to receive unrespectable, dirty, cheap and often dangerous work.

- 3) Globalization brings about the feminization of migration. This is because of the intensification of the “soft economy” which accompanies the growth of the service sector where the great majority of workers are women. It includes, naturally to some extent, an unprecedented volume of trafficking in women as prostitutes.
- 4) Globalization makes international migration a still more uncontrollable social phenomenon and strengthens the antagonism and opposition between the receiving country and the incoming migrants.
- 5) Globalization renders the concept of the national border itself more obsolete and the political and social efforts to keep the borders within the old concept become more and more contradictory to all the liberal principles of international political ideas (we should be reminded of “Fortress Europe” and the “Schengen Agreement”). This contradiction is now observable all around the world.

On the basis of my interpretations of the general relationships between globalization and international migration, I will try to investigate the socio-economic situation in Northeast Asia. As is well known, research on migration in this area has been underdeveloped and leaves much to be done, including investigation of the exact number of cross border migrants and illegal migrants. The aim of this paper is not, however, to attempt a solid estimation of the scale of migration but to offer some different standpoints to reconsider the effects of globalization on the Northeast Asian area.

I-2.

Northeast Asia (hereafter abbreviated as NEA) occupies a vast area but it is a periphery, very far from the center in many senses. It has remained as an extremely underdeveloped area, least populated, with low quality infrastructure. This is to some extent connected with geographical characteristics.

But this area acquired another face. That is, it was closed politically and frozen economically for a long time. But, in the late 1980s, a strong and warm spring wind suddenly blew into this area from the south and the west.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the openness policy of China were the direct causes of the change but clearly this change was also a part of world globalization. But here in NEA, globalization triggered a hitherto unprecedented dynamism of cross border migration. If we look at the map of Eurasia, it is interesting to note that the western Russian borders were crossed by millions of people of different nationalities (Russians, Poles, Hungarians, Czechs and so on), but in the case of the eastern borders, while obviously the total number of migrants was less, the size of migration of one single nationality was by far greater. That is, Chinese people on a mass scale were driven into Russia.

Needless to say, cross-border migration has long been a serious concern for the international community throughout the 20th century but a sort of fixed structure has been established, i.e. the intimate relationship between “sender country” and “receiving country” and the main reason for this was the structural gap of incomes of the population due to uneven economic development.

This structure has recently shown a slight change particularly after the breakdown of the socialist regimes. Not only has the number of countries involved in the migration process increased, but now some countries are sending and also receiving at the same time. This kind of “mixed” type of migration country has emerged in Russia.

1-3.

For the newly born Russia, and for the Russian Far East in particular, globalization and activated cross border migration had two different but closely inter-linked dimensions. First is the mass scale “return migrants” and “forced migrants” who crossed the “new borders” which made their appearance soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the resulting ethnic conflicts. The second is the migration crossing the “old borders” but in quite a new fashion.

Regarding the cross-border migration between Russia and CIS countries, there is plenty of literature, particularly on migration in the form of “Forced Migration” and “Return Migration” (see Vitkovskaia, Zaionchikovskaia, etc and the references below).

This is natural because the collapse of the Soviet system of allocating human resources has directly resulted in the new problems of the redistribution of population, of different Diasporas, different nationalities. The scale of migrants can be seen from Table 1. The absolute numbers of this migration obviously passed the peak in the middle of the 1990s, but in terms of volume, it still occupies the first position. Sincere efforts to trace this migration have been done and are still continuing by an independent group of researchers headed by Janna Antonovna Zaionchikovskaia with some aid from international organizations. Except some countries like Tajikistan, the information is fairly well based and documented.

Table 1. Number of Foreigners Registered as Working in Russia

	Thousand persons							
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
All CIS countries	70.8	134.4	145.6	113.0	111.1	94.7	106.3	148.5
Including								
Azerbaijan	0.4	1.3	2.2	3.2	4.0	2.8	3.3	4.4
Armenia	1.7	6.1	7.1	6.9	7.5	5.2	5.5	8.5
Belorus	5.8	11.1	10.3	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Georgia	0.9	7.0	8.1	6.6	6.3	5.2	5.2	4.9
Kazakhstan	1.0	2.1	2.2	1.8	1.8	1.7	2.9	3.6
Kyrgyzstan	0.1	0.7	1.2	1.3	0.7	0.5	0.9	1.7
Moldova	3.7	6.7	9.4	8.9	10.5	8.6	11.9	13.3
Tajikistan	0.6	1.5	2.0	3.1	3.3	4.1	6.2	10.0
Turkmenistan	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1
Uzbekistan	1.5	3.6	4.1	3.2	3.0	3.4	6.1	10.1
Ukraine	55.1	94.2	98.7	76.6	73.7	62.9	64.1	91.9

Sources: *Russian Statistical Yearbook 2002*, p. 146; 2000, p. 118.

As for the second migration crossing the old borders, as is well known, there was a flood of migrants, mostly labor migrants both on the western and eastern borders of Russia and the CIS countries, which had not established a solid visa regime compatible with the new socio-political situation. The problems were two-fold: one part of the border remained what it used to be but another

end was almost open because the new border was not checked for those crossing, as it was open for “old brothers and sisters.” For the Chinese, crossing the border outwardly became much easier by the new open policy and crossing into Russia it was made almost open by the new “Non-visa” agreement with Russia. There is perhaps no need to dwell longer on this matter because various writers have already published many articles and reports.

However, from the academic point of view, there is regrettably little reliable documentation and information, whereas the mass media and journals carry hundreds of sensational reports. Most of them are strongly biased and heavily involved in the ethnic problems and its reflection in the political position of the author. After some critical years (this may be called a “shock period”), there is a tendency for this migration to be less than before (see Table 2).

Table 2. External Migration To/From the Russian Federation

	1980	1992	1994	1996	1998	1999	2000	2001
Arrival to RF	876371	926020	1146735	631592	495304	367197	350876	187413
including								
From the CIS and Baltic Countries	876100	925733	1146349	631173	494819	366655	350290	186226
Kazakhstan	180456	183891	346363	172860	209880	138521	124908	65226
Uzbekistan	59744	112442	146670	49970	41800	41615	40810	24873
Ukraine	371796	199355	247351	170928	111934	81297	74748	36503
From outside CIS	271	287	386	419	485	542	586	1187
China	2	103	35	26	44	64	60	68
Others	69	78	231	239	296	336	342	951
Leaving from RF	780650	673143	337121	288048	216691	237967	161046	137573
including								
To the CIS and Baltic Countries	773603	570026	231752	191383	133017	129704	83438	62545
Kazakhstan	146049	87272	41864	38350	26672	25037	17913	15186
Ukraine	361083	309336	108370	83813	57318	58922	35601	24026
To outside CIS and Balts	7047	103117	105369	96665	83674	108263	77608	75028
Germany	1303	62697	69538	64420	49186	52832	45264	51293
Israel	4075	21975	16951	14298	16880	36317	16279	10166
China	1	2	8	42	12	25	15	6
USA	99	13200	13766	12304	10753	11078	9509	8781
Others	724	1073	1395	1683	2940	3505	3467	2305

Sources: *Russian Statistical Year Book 2002*, p. 128; *2000*, p. 100 (From Interior Ministry Data).

What about the current situation? According to the Government Migration Department, the number of foreign workers in Russia is as follows: 213,000 in 2000, 283,000 in 2001, and 300,000 in 2002. The share of employment by branch is as follows: 39% in construction, 15% in commerce and public catering, 13% in industry, 10% in agriculture and forestry, 7% in wholesale trade, and 4.6 % in transport and communication.

The number of illegal migrants is vastly different depending on the sources. The Government Migration Department offers different figures from 1.5 to 3 million. According to the estimates by experts at the Ministry, demand for foreign workers in the near future will steadily grow and in 2010 the number will become 6-7 million (Reference in *Izvestiia* 030306. Note that the dates of publication of newspapers will hereafter be indicated this way, i.e., 2003, March 6).

In the Primorskii region, the number of foreign workers dropped in 1998 and 1999, the years after the financial crises, but it is again showing a tendency to increase.

Table 3. Foreign Workers Registered in Primor'e 1995-2001

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
All	12848	13535	11306	10333	10102	11712	14837
From the CIS and Baltic countries	244	449	668	670	789	1167	1433
including							
Azerbaijan	11	71	180	187	211	244	309
Armenia	106	230	234	231	186	143	233
Ukraine	96	101	132	102	136	250	329
From other countries	12604	13086	10638	9663	9313	10543	13394
including							
Vietnam	151	216	130	127	309	940	1328
China	8349	8292	6968	7179	6374	7708	9639
North Korea	3956	4144	3119	2134	2373	1469	2013
Republic of Korea	53	211	224	61	155	338	351

Source: *Primorskii Krai v 2001*, p. 46

2. Economic Scenes in the NEA

2-1. Trade Revitalization

Even before the breakup of the Soviet Union, in the Perestroika period there took place a liberalization of Soviet-China trade, and also a revitalization of border trade although a very cautious one. In the 1990s, the volume of trade jumped in the official trade and even more sharply in the case of informal private trade including the “shuttle trade.”

Table 4 below is the results of hearings (September 2001) from the heads of administration in Harbin and Heihe, and/or specialists at the Universities. First, Professor Ma Weiyun, at the Russian Research Center, Heilongjiang University, presented the following figures.

Table 4.

Year (Unit)	Total Trade Million US \$	Growth Rates %
1991	31.23	-28
1992	58.62	50.1
1993	76.79	31.9
1994	50.76	-33.8
1995	54.63	7.6
1996	68.46	25.3
1997	61.18	-10.6
1998	54.81	-10.5
1999	57.20	4.4
2000	80.03	39.9
2001(1-6)	50	

From this table, we can look back at the development of Chinese trade. The years 1992-1993 saw a big growth. China became the third largest trade partner for Russia, after Germany and Italy, but between 1994-1995, the volume of trade suddenly dropped and China became the seventh. In 1996 it showed a slight growth, again becoming the third. In 1998 when the cur-

rency and financial crisis assaulted Russia, both the amount of imports and exports went down and only in the second half of 1999 did the Russian economy start to show a rising tendency and the Russo-Chinese trade also grew rapidly.

2-2. Problems and Barriers

One of the problems arising in the process of assessing the significance of the size of foreign trade between the two countries is the fact that the data are largely different. Regarding the reasons why they differ so much, Professor Ma cites the following factors:

- 1) the size of border trade is still very big, and the size of peoples' trade is also growing;
- 2) abnormal trade patterns occupy a big share. Chinese foreign trade statistics cover only the normal form of trade where they levy tax depending on the size of trade, i.e. large, middle and small.

For further developments of mutual trade, in his opinion, the following problems must be resolved:

- 1) the trade size is still very small and unstable;
- 2) the structure of trade is very simple other than the commodity trade, and technology and service related trade is very small; this must be changed;
- 3) a trade imbalance is still continuing, with excess imports on the Chinese side which could endanger further trade developments between the two countries;
- 4) Russo-Chinese trade does not follow the mainstream development patterns of world foreign trade. Clearance between banks is very weak, trade insurance and security are weak, legal protection is not guaranteed, legal breaches are not duly punished, and so forth.

Some estimates in China dare to say that about half of the whole trade is informal trade and its total amount is as much as one million US dollars. If this estimate is correct, then the total trade volume amounts to two million dollars.

The Russian side is largely negative to the "people's trade" but its merits are great in some regions and sometimes could con-

tribute to the solution of unemployment problems in the region thanks to cheap goods, geographical advantages, and so on.

2-3.

In parallel with favorable China trade, which we touched upon in section 2-1, there appeared a new tendency to strengthen control over the “shuttle trade” between the Russian and Chinese borders. Raising tariff rates and strengthening the visa regime are among the agenda, as already mentioned above. This trend, it appears to the author, is caused by two reasons.

- 1) In the past few years, the economic situation in the Russian Far East became slightly better than before and the unwelcome phenomenon involved in the shuttle trade became stronger, such as illegal business and criminal activities. This caused, in turn, a negative feeling among the population and some anti-Chinese, “Yellow Peril” sentiments and some conflicts among the local populations. This caused a strong anti-Chinese and quite often racist tone in statements by local political leaders in the border regions.
- 2) Apart from this, the shuttle trade was regarded as a “temporary” form of trade which therefore should be transformed naturally to more organized and normal, civilized commercial activities by trade companies or organizations. In particular, considering the fact that China became a WTO member and Russia’s membership became included on the agenda, normalization of trade activities must soon be achieved observing international trade practices and legal obligations.

Against this background, from the Russian side, such measures like “raising the tariff rates for the border trade in the Far East” were taken by the Government in March 2001. A daily news article “The end of cheap commodities?” reports:

“Russian Customs office adopts a new tactic to fight against dishonest import traders. A new regulatory law starts functioning today, i.e. against those importers who trade with cheap but low quality goods. But the worries that cheap goods might soon disappear from the market

will be too early to voice at the moment. A new form of customs declaration will be introduced today for those traders who import goods from 13 countries in South East and Far Eastern countries. The aims of this new policy are to restrict the number of border crossing points either by automobiles or by trains and induce them to use airports and seaports as the main entrance to Russia.”

According to the data of the state tariff committee, most reliable traders use sea transport and the new regulation does not affect their daily business. Customs officers do want to reduce the risks of overlooking false customs declarations and so-called “gray imports” crossing the borders. For instance, some Chinese traders somehow manage to send their goods to the Baltic countries, where tariff rates are lower, and export them into Russia using motor transport. Russian manufactures get unhappy with this Chinese way of business. This new law meets with their interests as well (*Izvestiia*, 010317).

On the other hand, strengthening of tariff rates caused some conflicts on the ground. For instance, in Amursk oblast, a group of local shuttle traders (often called *kirpitch*) went on strike as a collective performance against the new law. On 29 August 2001, a mass of shuttle traders dared to gather and sit-in in front of Blagoveshichensk customs office, putting the small town into turmoil. A local newspaper (*Amurskaia Pravda*, 010906) correspondent warned that in the near future there will be a social explosion.

The same issue of the same newspaper invited Ms Tatiana Ivanovna Kurts, vice-mayor and chair of the Oblast external trade committee, to explain the official position concerning this problem. According to her view, the recent strengthening of the rules was necessitated by the growing “semi-illegal” form of trade by Chinese businessmen. The former “extraordinary profits” had disappeared but if they found some small niches between goods trading and method of clearing, the Chinese try to make money by using this niche. For instance, the Russian shuttle traders employed by the Chinese businesses, transport goods from Heihe to sell them in the Blagoveshchenk market and with this money (Ruble cash) they buy local goods (for instance, soy beans) and

transport them back to Heihe. All transactions are made by cash, so there remain no records or reports about the total sum of transactions. Ordinarily, this is counted as foreign trade but in this case there is no way to levy tax on this business. They use many other ways to evade tax. In order to normalize this process, there remains much to be done. So at the moment, strengthening the restrictions is the only way out.

3. Labor Exports in Heihe, Heilongjiang

3-1. Official Figures and Difficulties

First we should pay due attention to the official figures. Regarding the labor exports to Russia, professor Chengyingqi at the Russian Research Center, unveiled such figures and related difficulties at a workshop in Harbin in September 2001.

- 1) The size of labor exports amounted 5,500 in 1999, mainly employed in construction works in Russia (This figure, according to him, is found in the *Heilongjiang Statistical Year Book*). In 2000, some 52 labor export contracts were signed and the amount of contracts equals 97 million dollars on the commitment bases. Out of these, those already completed amount to 24 million dollars and the number of workers sent there is 7,306. These are the figures from Heilongjiang province.
- 2) The total number of people who crossed the Russo-Chinese border is one million and fifteen thousand in 1999, and 338,000 in January-July of 2000 – 14,000 more than the same period of the previous year. In Liaoning province, the number of countries with contracted labor exports is 90, comprising 170,000 people and contracted earnings amounting to 500,000 dollars.
- 3) Problems arise such as mutual disbelief and misunderstandings grow. There are instances of abrupt and one-sided abandonment of contracts due to the inability of timely payments on the Russian side, where economic difficulties continue.
- 4) The Russian legal system is not complete and there are

many sudden changes of law. Because of these factors, economic damage on the Chinese side is very big and this leads to ever more unfavorable relations between the two countries. In Russia, legal regulations on immigration often change and the administrative structure is also unstable. Therefore, the procedures for completing the official contracts are very time-consuming and demands laborious works on the Chinese side. Various documents and certificates are needed for sending construction workers. These detailed procedures are sometimes the result of the bureaucracy and its rent-seeking interests which strongly discourages the Chinese organizations to continue and finally meet the legal requirements from the Russian administration. Added to this, frauds by Russian criminal groups, the low level of qualification of Chinese workers, and so on, could become other sources of discontent and growing unhappy relations.

3-2.

Perspectives for the reconstruction and economic growth of the Russian side, and improvements and better functioning of international labor market mechanisms are among the items urgently required. Considering the strong substitutionality of the Russian and Chinese economies, according to Chinese specialists the following factors should be given more attention for the future improvement of economic ties between the two countries, particularly from the point of view of long-term development strategy;

- 1) long-term partnership
- 2) geographical advantages
- 3) co-operation in agriculture
- 4) joint development of technology and high-tech industries
- 5) raising the quality of goods.

Unfortunately, there are no official attempts to create and develop co-operation to amend the situation in the field of legal systems and relations.

3-3. The “Heihe Labor Export Agency” as a Concrete Case

Who is actually engaged in organizing the labor exports? In order to get more information, we met a person named Liteshan, involved in these activities in Heihe.

The “Heihe Labor Export Agency” was set up in 1988, first as a foreign trade organization, then in 1996, it got a license for labor export. There were restrictions about the size of trade: for foreign trade one million US dollars and for labor export up to 100 people in one contract, but there were no restrictions about the numbers of contracts for labor exports. The main clients were in the Asian part of Russia. Each year they sent to Russia about 300 persons. At the peak time, in 1997, they exported about 800 persons, mainly for agriculture, forestry and the construction industry. The amount of contracts in one year was 3 to 4 million US dollars (including the sum of salaries to the workers).

The agency was given a monopolistic position from the local government. Its major tasks are to arrange contracts with the employers and Chinese workers who want to go to work in Russia. The agency now consists of 64 employees. They deal with various Russian partners, not only in the Amur region but also in Krasnoyarsk region in Siberia. The number of partners they do business with is about 30 each year, mostly in agriculture (with *kolkhozy*), the others being in restaurants and construction firms. In Amursk region, there are some construction companies currently run by Chinese managers.

The reason why they have the monopoly position in this field is that, first, the size of each transaction is small, and second, as a result, there is a need to avoid the possible excess competition among small businesses. The amount of transaction they can deal with is restricted to one million dollars. If the amount is bigger than this, then the government foreign trade ministry takes it for them. It is obvious that they can easily control this business area, if the number of companies is small.

One of the complaints that this agency always has is that every time they start deals with Russians, they have to travel all the way to Moscow, although the concrete matters are precisely on the local level. In other words, practical deals on an adminis-

trative line are with the local immigration service and foreign trade department of the Amur oblast administration building. They all located in Blagoveshchensk city, on the square by the Amur River, facing Heihe port on the other bank of the same river within easy eyesight for both. Also, in Russia, the relevant legislation and rules are changed quite often. The tariff rates can be altered even twice in one year. When the regional leadership changes, the policy line of the new administration also changes quite subjectively. These are the difficulties and hindrances they face daily.

Regarding the market development, there are cases when the agency itself, rather than waiting for clients to appear, compiles plausible projects and then seek organizations to offer their project as a possible commodity, saying “This is exactly what you need.” The Russian side, occasionally, could also show interest and consider that it is much quicker and more efficient to react to that offer. If the Russian trust needs 2-3 years for the construction of an Opera House, which was actually the case, the Chinese construction company finished the work in just one year. Incomes for the company are calculated as a specific percentage of the total sum of the contracts.

4. Growing Presence of Chinese Citizens in the RFE

4-1. Revitalization of International Tourism and Beyond

In NEA, international tourism became popular among Japanese and Koreans already in the 1970s and 80s, but their destinations were mainly East Asia. Then in the 1990s, the Chinese joined in such tourism. China started to open “international tourism” in 1988, and at the peak year, in 1996-1997, roughly 100,000 Chinese traveled to Russia, and some 80-90 thousand Russians came to China within the framework of the agreement of “Non visa” tourism.

In this new situation, within the agreement with the Russian tourist agency, there appeared Chinese travel agents. By 2000, there were some 14 overseas travel agencies in Heihe city alone.

But at the beginning of 2001, they were all integrated into one, i.e. the “Zhongzhi Travel Group.” This amalgamation took place not as a result of free competition, but because of strong pressure from the local administration for easier control. Most of the previous private companies are doing business within the new organization but with less competition.

Among the Russians, after entering to China, there are very few who stay longer than indicated in their documents and become illegal foreigners. From the Russian side, some 80 to 90,000 thousand people enter China, whereas from China people travel to Russia, the majority of them to Blagobeshchensk city on the opposite side of the Amur River and some to Krasnoarsk in Siberia. There are also people who cross the border several times. About half of them are engaged in “shuttle trade” and many are connected with black market business.

4-2. Assessing the Migration Potential of the Chinese

Migration potential is a multi-dimensional function of many different variables. But if we select “income” as the most important factor from these many variables, we can simplify as follows: migration potential is a function of income. When the level of income is extremely low, migration potential is almost zero; people simply do not know how to leave their homes. When their incomes grow, migration potential grows as well, or grows even faster than the speed of income growth. Possibilities become larger to get information and to buy tickets to travel, etc. But when their income grows to a certain level, migration potential stops to grow or becomes very low. People lose their interest to go abroad to earn money.

Roughly speaking, the majority of people in Europe and America, including Japan, are found in this third stage whereas people in India and Africa are in the first stage. People in China are exactly in the second stage. The important thing to note here is that if the income level of Chinese people had been growing at the pace of 10% a year, then the migration potential could grow even faster than this.

This is a very simple reasoning which is difficult to deny although it is also clear that this formula is far from being a “theory” and is very much short of academic requirements. But this enables us to explain the present situation and possible future regarding Chinese migration potentials. This formula also helps us to understand that Chinese migrants found in the Russian Far East are not as poor as people often think and that their numbers will continue to grow in the near future, provided their income levels continue to grow.

4-3.

“Too many Chinese.” This is one of the representative voices of the people at large. In the Russian Far East, the Chinese presence is so big the word “illegal migrant” is almost equivalent to “Chinese people.” This is not without reason, but one thing I would like to add is the way of perception of the Russians of the presence of foreigners, particularly Chinese.

Firstly, on the global level, the number of Chinese occupies one quarter, Asia nearly one quarter of the world population. Table 5 shows the distribution of the Chinese in terms of stocks. As Chinese people are found everywhere, it is absolutely normal to come across Chinese people on the street.

Secondly, one thing specific to the Russian Far East is the ratio of Chinese to local Russians. In other words, the number of Russians is very small compared with Chinese; this could give the impression of the over-presence of Chinese in the Russian Far East.

5. Important Changes at the Turn of the Century

5-1. Stricter Regulations in the EU towards Illegal Migrants

In the EU member countries in recent years, there is a tendency to make regulations towards illegal migrants stricter than before. The need to raise the wall higher is necessitated by multiple factors but consequently they lead to efforts to construct a “Fortress Europe.” This is in many cases contradictory to the principles of “migration liberalism” which are still held officially by the old member countries.

Table 5. Chinese Overseas, Regional Distribution (in stocks)

Country or area	Total Chinese*	Share
	1000	%
USA	2800	8.5
Canada	960	2.9
Total of Americas	5020	15.2
Indonesia	7110	21.2
Thailand	6500	19.7
Malaysia	5520	16.7
Singapore	2440	7.4
Myanmar	1000	3
Vietnam	1000	3
Laos	160	0.5
Asia, 34 Countries	26640	80.7
Pacific 17 countries	560	1.7
Europe 25 countries	940	2.8
Africa 36 countries	130	0.4
Total	33000	100

Source: "International Migration of China," 2002, p. 2.

*=Number of Chinese includes both Huaqiao (those with Chinese passports) and Huaren (those with nationality where they live).

One of the serious problems facing the present EU is whether, after the Central and East European countries acquire membership, there will be a mass migration flow from Eastern Europe to the West. Current EU member countries, particularly those core countries like France and Germany, take this problem seriously and have already proposed the postponement of freeing movement with equal rights under the Schengen Agreement and for the time being (say for 5 years) have set this as a monitoring period. Many of the new members are, of course, opposed to this.

Another aspect of "Fortress Europe" should not be forgotten. EU enlargement towards the East becomes a reality from 2004. This means that the new frontier moves eastward. Now the new members like Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania are responsible to keep illegal migrants away from the new EU

borders, i.e., the EU's eastern borders. In this connection, it is noteworthy that new member countries on the eastern borders are now obliged to keep their walls higher than before and full responsibility falls on their shoulders both physically and financially.

An even more serious problem facing the new member countries, however, is whether it is really possible for them to effectively stop those "determined" migrants who just enter the CIS countries in transit and travel further to the western borders to get to their final destination. This problem is quite imminent but how is Russia herself prepared?

5-2. The New (Second) Wave of Anti-Chinese "Expansion" in Russia

"Illegal migration grew to such an extent as to become a threat for the national security of Russia": this declaration was made at the State Security Council of the Russian Federation, October 2001.

According to the Federal Border Guards, the number of foreigners entering Russia, (on business, private, transit, tourism, etc.), was 15 million in 2001. The number who returned (or departed Russia) was 11.5 million. The difference is 3.5 million and this figure has not changed in the past 10 years. "I can't understand this why this serves as a ground for the optimistic views" says Armen Asuryan in *Konservator* (030221).

On July 10th 2002, in a campaign against anti-illegal migrants, a new organization was set up with the name of "National Movement against Illegal Migrants" (DPNI). People who were involved in the creation had a common concern. "In twenty years' time, Russia will turn into Kosovo, if the present situation is not amended" (Mr. Belov, DPNI Chairman). They demand, first of all, stronger control of the illegal foreign dwellers and are working to raise national concern over this problem. This is not the same as ultra-rightwing "neo-Nazi" or "skin-head" groups. Ordinary citizens gathered together to discuss and demand security for ordinary Russian citizens at the national level. This movement was formed after two violent incidents in Moscow

where a 15-year-old Russian girl was abused by a group of five Tajik youngsters who were all illegal residents. In that case the police did not react properly to the demands of the families and neighborhoods of the victim. Addressing a conference in Vladivostok, Professor Krylov of DVGU warned that, “Now, the Chinese try to take over Russia through marriage to our girls” (*Vremia Novostei*, 030219).

The “Chinese Diaspora” in Ussuriysk is a “state within a state.” In the area where Chinese residents dominate, several different diasporas are often formed, depending on the difference of the place of their homes in China. They try to be independent and do not interfere with each other. They appeal to the Russian police only when they have conflicts with Russian people. When another problem occurs, they debate among themselves and an old man (a *starik* in Russian) resolves difficult matters completely within the diaspora. Regarding medical care, for instance, they adopt their own way of care, ignoring the Russian medical-legal system. There are cases where people without medical qualifications treat patients, which is prohibited by Russian law.

There are, of course, other points of view. For instance, Professor Andrei Karneev says “Chinese expansion is an ordinary intimidation due to ordinary ignorance.” But the real problem, according to him, is the problems of the Russians and their specific transitional problems connected with the process of state building.

It is true that Chinese migrants grew in number since 1992, but in 1998, due to the monetary crisis, Chinese migrants with big money quickly decreased. Among those remaining, there are various kinds of Chinese people. It is not correct to say, however, that almost all Chinese are illegals. Many of them have some documents, either proper or obsolete. It is not to be forgotten that on the Russian side, some elements of security organizations are not reliable enough and are themselves corrupt. This is a fairly liberal point of view expressed by a scholar of Moscow University, Andrei Karneev (*Izvestiia*, 030219).

Vilia Gelbras, Professor at Moscow State University, the author of the famous *Chinese Reality of Russia* (see the reference

below), conducted a series of questionnaires of 526 Chinese migrants in 2002 in the same way as he did in 1998-1999, in the same four cities in Russia, a sort of follow-up research to his former book. He points out one of the changes in the attitudes of Chinese migrants regarding their intention. In 1998-1999, the absolute majority intended, after earning money in Russia, to return to their home country. In 2002, however, only half of them declared their intention to return home to China. Approximately 10-15% in some degree declared the desire to stay in Russia for permanent residence. The others wanted to move to a third country to live and work. Based on this research, Dr. Gelbras suggests “this abrupt change in the motivations of arrival and stay of Chinese in Russian territory is to a great extent connected with the socio-economic situation in the PRC, aggravated in the last years” (Gelbras, 2003, p. 1). From his research activities, we can register important changes in the attitudes of Chinese migrants.

5-3. Migration Cards Introduced in Russia from 2002

Against the back ground of the growing anti-Chinese sentiments among the Russians and also the growing criminal incidents by illegal and semi-illegal foreign migrants, the Russian government started a campaign and a strong move to introduce more restrictive measures to control passports regime and establish a migration card system.

A political drive was made to create the legal bases for the new migration control. The Putin government, while going ahead with social network reform such as the pension system and medical care, is also pursuing the long-awaited problems of migration policy.

First, the legislation activities started in 2002, when several laws passed the parliament. The most important among them were (from the web site, www.Demoscope.ru, №105-106 17-30 March, 2003):

- 1) Federal law “On legal status of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation”
- 2) Federal law “On Citizenship in the Russian Federation” (Law No. 62-F3, 020531 State Duma)

3) Decree on the introduction of migration cards (Ministry of Justice registration No. 3908, 11 November 2000)

The aims of the new legislation are obviously to control illegal foreign workers, including those from the eastern borders, by obliging new entrants to show immigration cards and employers to pay taxes for employing foreign workers (some 4000 rubles per head).

These measures reflect, in a sense, the sincere efforts of the central government to construct a functional framework for the new migration policy and therefore they are on the right track, but at the same time, they are creating more problems than they are solving. In particular, problems are mounting in the law enforcement process, i.e., the total lack of preparation in the administration, insufficient information for those concerned, and so forth. As a result, a very strong swing in policy direction and enforcements happened in 2003. Many people are watching this process and saying, "They are doing exactly what they did in Soviet time, i.e., simply enforcing the new rule on the people." It will take some time before we will see any significant results.

5-4.

Elena Tiuriukanova, a leading specialist at the Institute of Socio-economic Problems of the Russian Academy of Sciences has said that, "For Russia, there is no choice whether or not we accept migrants. We need them desperately." By accepting migrants from abroad, Russia can raise educational levels and improve economic welfare. There is no need to push out the youngsters to the labor market; instead, migrants are available.

In addition, she continues, the majority of our migrants are occasional foreigners. In fact, Russian people have been returning to Russia. In the past seven years alone, only, about one million people came from Kazakhstan and about half a million came from the Ukraine. Similarly strong migration flows came from Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. That means returning to the historical homeland, because these immigrants are mostly repatriates, with only one difference from the "forced migrants," i.e. they are without subsidies and credits from the state. But still these repatriates are not easily accepted.

Now, the speed of movement of the migration belt-conveyer has obviously slowed down. If in 2001, naturalization for Russians reached about 370,000 foreigners, in 2002 the number declined to 330,000. For instance, in Kazakhstan, in the first half of 2002, 2,500 people received the Russian visa, but in 2001 it was 133,000. Similar big declines have occurred in Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

These trends are due to the new migration law, which identifies former Soviet citizens with real foreigners. There are strong criticisms against the new migration law but it is better than the old Soviet law which could have allowed entry to Osama Bin Laden as a fighter against world imperialism (Elena Duda, *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, 030219).

Concluding Remarks

Chinese migration into the Russian Far East could be examined from various aspects. We have so far confined ourselves to examining the contemporary globalization and national interest context within a rather short-term time span. Needless to say, the economic development and acquirement of the Far East does have global significance as one of the strongest energy and material suppliers for the rest of the world. Let us conclude, therefore, with some discussion of the broader context. It is quite clear that both Soviet and post-Soviet development of the Russian Far East have not so far been successful. The relative success of oil and gas production in these last three years, which has led to a slightly upward turn in Russia, is a result of investment and technological support by Western capital. Whether this upward trend will continue in the years to come is yet to be seen.

If we turn our eyes to the problems of the development of Siberia and the Far East as a whole, there are too many constraints for the problems to be solved by Russia alone. Naturally, international cooperation is necessary but the problem is how and by whose initiative. In Northeast Asia, various problems arise due to the geo-political situation and the historical context. One of the serious barriers hindering cooperation is the difference of national

interests. Behind the national interests of each country lies a common concept of the “nation state.” This has been regarded as a sort of divine concept: in other words each nation adhered to this old ghost of an idea in the same way. The EU is trying to overcome the shortcomings of this ghost. But to my mind, the possibility to work out the desirable international cooperation system in order to develop Siberia and the Far East is extremely small. Obviously, the central problems here are the cooperation by neighboring countries through mutual understanding and overcoming the historically-accumulated mutual disbeliefs. This is a very difficult process indeed but it is vital for the future development of the Northeast Asia in the long run.

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