EXPLAINING CHINESE MIGRATION TO THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST

By Elizabeth Wishnick
Columbia University, New York

Although for nearly a decade Russia and China have been proclaiming a deepening strategic partnership, now codified in the July 16, 2001 Treaty on Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation, the issue of Chinese migration to the Russian Far East has proven to be an intractable obstacle to the development of mutually beneficial regional economic cooperation. This paper examines the political, economic, and social factors promoting Chinese migration to the Russian Far East and Russian reactions to their presence. It is argued that inadequate human security in Northeast China motivates Chinese traders to seek to improve their economic situation in China by seeking temporary employment across the border. Residents in the Russian Far East, however, interpret the steps that Chinese traders take to enhance their human security as a threat to their own human security, creating a "human security dilemma"[1] with potentially adverse implications for Sino-Russian bilateral relations.

Human Security and National Security

The concept of human security emerged from late Cold War era debates about the interconnection between development and national security. With the publication of the 1994 UNDP Human Development Program, a broad conception of human security was elaborated, including economic security (basic income), food security (access to food), health security (freedom from disease), environmental security (a non-degraded ecosystem), personal security (protection from physical violence and threats), community security (ability to pursue one's cultural identity), and political security (basic rights and freedoms). Although the concept of human security has been criticized for its excessive breadth, the main contribution of this approach has been to highlight the importance of the security of people and to shift the level of analysis in security studies from the nation-state to the individual.[2]

Despite the efforts of political scientists to create distinct analytical categories, some phenomena, such as migration flows, defy such neat categorization. Migration, for example, may adversely affect the security of individuals (both of migrants and individuals in host societies), communities (migrants' home communities and host communities), and states (through conflict

between the migrants' home country and the host country).[3] This paper seeks to identify the "push" factors, i.e. the human security causes of Chinese migration to Russia and notes that the perception of the adverse impact of Chinese migration flows to the Russian Far East on local human security has implications for Russian national security and Sino-Russian bilateral relations.

The History of Chinese Economic Migrants in the Russian Far East

Historically Chinese traders have played an important role in the economy of the Russian Far East—by 1881 there were more than 15,000 of these merchants in the Priamur region and they comprised more than 13% of the population. Chinese traders shipped tea, flour, and soy beans to the Russian Far East, a key export destination for the Chinese Northeast. Every year, from 1911 to 1917, China exported twenty million pounds of soy and 37 million pounds of grains (more than 64% of total grain production) via Vladivostok.[4] Russia began shipping seaweed to China, a new export for the region. Once the trans-Siberian railroad became operational, Russians and Chinese cooperated in an unusual form of transit trade. Due to poor rail connections in China, products from southern China were shipped by sea to ports in the Russian Far East and then by rail to the Chinese border, from where they were exported to Northeastern China.[5]

Nevertheless, in the 19th century officials in Russia's eastern territories were ambivalent about the region's opening to foreign trade. Like today, these territories depended on foreign imports of food and consumer products due to the unfavorable climate and high cost of shipping these goods from European Russia. For example, in the late 19th century flour from Odessa cost four times the price of Chinese flour.[6] Yet Russian officials were concerned that the sparseness of the Russian population in the Far East and weak lines of communication would invite foreign control. Prior to the completion of the Trans-Siberian railroad, it could take almost an entire year to travel from Moscow to Vladivostok by land.

Russian concerns about the security of its Pacific borders served as a rationale for expansion into Chinese territory. Taking advantage of China's weakness after its defeat in the Opium Wars, Russia gained the Qing government's acquiescence to the Treaty of Aigun (1858), according to which the Russian empire extended its territory southward to the north bank of the Amur, all the way to the Sea of Japan. In exchange for Russian assistance in accomplishing a withdrawal of British and French forces from China, two years later the Chinese signed the Treaty of Beijing (1860), granting Russia control over the Primor'e territory, from the Ussuri River all the way to the Tumen River, thereby ending Chinese access to the Sea of Japan.[7] By allowing Manchu subjects residing north of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers to remain and providing

for a free trade zone along the Amur,[8] these treaties codified the existence of a Chinese diaspora within the Russian empire and opened up new possibilities for economic cooperation along the Sino-Russian border.

To forestall Russian expansion into Manchuria, the Chinese government had accelerated Han settlement there in the latter half of the 19th century.[9] St. Petersburg became concerned about the demographic imbalance along the Sino-Russian border. The 1897 census reported that there were 213,287 Russians living in Amur and Maritime regions. During that year, 43,000 Chinese and 26,000 Koreans resided in these regions and comprised 32% of the population.[10] Across the border there were 300 million Chinese, including 6 million in neighboring Manchuria.[11] The changing demographic picture in the Russian Far East, along with underlying fear that the Chinese would seek to regain their lost territories, were cause for concern in St. Petersburg, where officials held fast to their conception of Russia as a unitary state, rather than a multinational federation.[12] Despite such concerns, Chinese and Korean merchants and farmers continued to reside in the Russian Far East until Stalin's concern about the possibility of Russia's infiltration by Japanese spies led in 1937 to the expulsion from the Russian Far East of some 19,000 of 25,000 Chinese and the exile of 135,000 of 165,000 Koreans to Central Asia.[13] Chinese began appearing once again in the Khabarovsk area beginning in 1950, though entry into Vladivostok remained prohibited.[14]

Migration Issues in Russia's Contemporary Asia Policy

<u>Chinese Migration to the Russian Far East: Push factors</u>

1) Opportunity

After the reopening of the Sino-Soviet border to trade in the early 1980s, Chinese border regions seized on new opportunities to expand economic relations with Russia to remedy their own economic difficulties. Heilongjiang and Jilin Provinces in China's economically depressed Northeast initially saw border trade with Russia as a means of spurring development and encouraging the growth of economic links with more advanced coastal provinces. Goods produced in the more developed southern regions of China could be finished and then exported via the Chinese Northeast. The "link to the south, open to the north (nan lian, bei kai, quan fangwei kaifang)" strategy became the watchword of regional leaders.[15] Heilongjiang officials were especially bullish on the expansion of regional trade, claiming that "there's no limit to border trade (bianjing you bian, bianmao wu bian)."[16] For their part, policymakers in Beijing predicted that regional economic relations would flourish due to the complementary features of the economies of the Russian Far East and Northeast China.

With the collapse of the USSR, the Russian Far East suddenly was cut off from traditional suppliers of food products and consumer goods in European Russia due to interrupted economic links and high transportation costs. Disillusioned by inadequate federal support, the Russian Far East began viewing economic integration in the Pacific Rim as a solution to regional underdevelopment.[17] Initially, regional leaders focused their efforts on expanding trade and joint ventures with China. Much of the trade with China during this period was barter trade, carried out by shuttle-traders from China's northeastern provinces.

The boom in border trade proved to be short-lived, however. Although Russian and Chinese policymakers emphasized the complementary nature of their economies—Russia has the natural resources and machinery that China lacks while China produces the consumer goods and food products that are in short supply in the Russian Far East—the Sino-Russian trade balance fell by 34 percent in 1994, reflecting a sharp downturn in border trade. This could be seen clearly in regions of the Russian Far East such as Amurskaia oblast, dependent on border trade for 92 percent of its foreign trade: the territory's overall trade volume plummeted from $407.6 million in 1993 to $189.5 in 1994. Sino-Russian border trade suffered a sharp decline for a variety of interrelated reasons, including complaints about inadequate control in both countries, the imposition of new rules regulating border trade, decreased demand in China for traditional Russian exports such as construction materials, and the growing demand in Russia for higher quality consumer goods.

2) Labor Policy

The eager participation by traders from China's Northeast in the shuttle trade with Russia in the early 1990s was soon followed by a new Chinese policy expanding legal opportunities for working abroad. From 1983-1993, some 400,000 Chinese worked overseas. A 1995 ruling on the administration of the entry and exit of Chinese citizens reduced restrictions on workers employed in foreign corporations and allowed for direct recruitment within China. Similarly, the new ruling eased restrictions on the employment of foreign workers in China.[18]

Though Chinese policymakers view labor exchanges as mutually beneficial, cooperation in Northeast Asia has been hindered by fundamentally different approaches to use of foreign workers. Although Japan, South Korea, and Russia all face varying degrees of worker shortages, they tend to have more closed immigration policies, limiting opportunities for China's surplus workforce.[19] For example, as a part of Sino-Russian discussions about Russia's entry into the WTO, China reportedly urged Russian leaders to open the Russian market completely to Chinese labor and service providers as a part of Russia's accession, a move that has met with opposition in Moscow.[20]

3) Underdevelopment and underemployment

Russian concerns about Chinese illegal immigration are fueled by a perception of demographic pressure from China. The Russian Far East constitutes 36.4 percent of Russian territory with a population of 6.68 million. Due to the high cost of living and underemployment, the Russian Far East lost 7 percent of its population by the mid-1990s. Although the northern regions of the Russian Far East experienced the most substantial outflows, the population of Primorskii Krai and Khabarovskii Krai declined by 1.5 percent and 3.3 percent respectively.[21]

Table 1: Population of the Chinese Northeast

Province	1988	1998
Heilongjiang	34,660,000	37,773,000
Jilin	23,574,000	26,440,000
Liaoning	38,255,000	40,904,000
Total	96,489,000	105,074,000

Source: Zhongguo Dongbei quyu jingji, Changchun: Jilin University Press, 2000

While the Chinese Northeast is relatively less populated than central and southern China, it has been disproportionately affected by adverse economic trends. Thus, according to Hu Angang, a renowned Chinese economist, layoffs from state-owned enterprises in the northeastern provinces are nearly twice the national average of 18.3%: 31.3% in Heilongjiang, 31.9% in Jilin, and 37.3% in Liaoning.[22] Moreover, food-producing regions such as Heilongjiang also have been adversely affected by China's entry into the WTO, as the province's key soy crop now faces competition.[23] Even prior to Chinese entry into the WTO, farmers have faced continually diminishing revenues as prices for their products dropped by 22% from 1997-2000.[24] Decreasing industrial employment opportunities in the Northeast and inadequate government compensation have increasingly led to strikes. With the number of new entrants into the urban workforce not

peaking until 2005, Chinese Labor Minister Zhang Zuoji recently characterized the employment situation as 'very grim'[25]

Anecdotal information and informal interviews by the author suggest that Chinese shuttle traders who work in the Russian Far East disproportionately come from the Chinese Northeast, primarily from Heilongjiang province. Further field research in Northeast China is necessary to provide a more detailed profile of the traders (rural/urban residents, employment status, marital status, etc.) and compare them with Russian stereotypes. Chinese scholars admit that they have done insufficient work on the issue, partly out of a broader political concern that the migration issue not be blown out of proportion and used to undermine the development of Sino-Russian bilateral relations.

Nevertheless, scholars in Beijing increasingly are paying attention to regional problems in Sino-Russian relations[26] and related research has been undertaken in the Chinese Northeast for some years, for example on the economy of border relations (Heilongjiang) and on the labor market in Northeast Asia (Jilin).[27]

4) Inadequate regulation and corruption

The rapid expansion of border trade with China in 1992–93 was a major adjustment for the Russian and Chinese border regions, largely closed off for security reasons for almost three decades. For example, in 1988 only 6,233 border crossings were reported in Amurskaia oblast, a land-locked region bordering on China, but in 1992 there were 287,215 crossings, and the region's imports and exports were oriented almost entirely to the Chinese market.[28] According to the USSR's 1989 census, there were just 784 Chinese officially resident in the Russian Far East.[29]

In 1992–93, traders were allowed to travel across the Sino-Russian border without visas. Initially, the regions welcomed the rapid opening of border trade to address their economic needs, but transportation, housing facilities, and administrative mechanisms needed to support it were woefully deficient. Poor regulation on both sides enabled criminals and unscrupulous businesspeople to take advantage of the sudden opening of the border. The new markets catering to the shuttle trade soon became associated with criminal activity.

From 1991 to 1993, enthusiasm for "opening to the north" by far outpaced measures to regulate border trade. Many inexperienced firms participated in the mad rush to the border, leading to vociferous complaints in the Russian Far East about shoddy goods and unscrupulous Chinese traders. Chinese traders also accumulated their own list of complaints about the difficulties of doing business in Russia due to the unstable economic environment and pervasive corruption.

Chinese officials in Beijing have been supportive of measures to regulate border trade. They have protested vigorously against Russian allegations that Beijing promotes illegal immigration. Indeed, criticism of provincial authorities in Heilongjiang for inadequate administration of border trade was a factor in leadership reshuffling in the province in 1996 and led to such sharp restrictions on the issuance of passports for foreign travel that businesspeople complained of difficulty in going about their work.[30] Moreover, Chinese authorities have faced similar problems of criminal activity by Russians living in China and implemented a well-publicized campaign against illegal border crossings. At the same time, Chinese leaders have expressed concern that efforts to prevent illegal immigration could harm the rights of law-abiding Chinese citizens who are legitimate businesspeople or tourists in Russia.

In response to Russian complaints, Chinese tourists are only allowed to remain in Russia for a maximum of three months. According to a former official in the Chinese consulate in Khabarovsk,[31] Russian enforcement of this time limit is lax. Instead of requiring that Chinese who overstay their visas leave Russia immediately, local officials demand regular "payments," thereby creating a mutually beneficial criminal situation, allowing Chinese to remain beyond their allowed time limit, while providing a source of regular illegal income for Russian officials. This practice would explain how Russian officials simultaneously claim that 99% of foreign tourists (the majority of whom come from China) now return within their allowable time frame, while continuing to warn about the threat posed by Chinese illegal immigrants.[32]

While Chinese policymakers have taken steps to encourage legal labor exchanges, they consistently deny Russian allegations that China is promoting illegal immigration.
During Jiang Zemin's first visit to Moscow in September 1994, he defended China's policies in the border regions and stated that he hoped that Russia "would protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese citizens who are engaged in normal trade and other activities. The Chinese leader stated his opposition to illegal immigration and attributed concerns over the issue to the inadequate preparation on both sides to the opening of the border.[33] Jiang noted that he and Russian President Boris Yeltsin had agreed to continue to develop regional cooperation despite these problems, "rather than giving up eating for fear of choking, as the Chinese saying goes."[34]

The issue of Chinese migration to the Russian Far East has remained on the bilateral agenda, although both Russian and Chinese leaders have done their best to minimize its impact. The July 16, 2001 Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship, Good-Neighborliness and Cooperation commits both parties to create an atmosphere of trust and cooperation in the border regions (article 2) and cooperate in combating illegal immigration (article 20).[35] At an October 18 press conference, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stated unequivocally that "there is no Chinese

expansion." He noted that there are 150,000-200,000 Chinese living in Russia on a more or less permanent basis, a relatively small number compared to the 6 million residing in the United States.[36]

Chinese Migration in Perspective

One key question in understanding Chinese migration to the Russian Far East is its overall purpose. Do the Chinese migrants intend to settle permanently in Russia, as many Russians fear, or do they plan to stay temporarily in the Russian Far East and then return home to their families in China? In Chinese the words used for migrants are distinguished by their intentions with respect to the host country. Chinese nationals who live abroad temporarily (however extended the stay) are referred to as *huaqiao* (sojourners), while ethnic Chinese with permanent residence rights or foreign nationality are called *huaren* (people of Chinese descent).[37]

The *huaqiao*, by maintaining ties with their home villages, became key links in migration chains, facilitating the migration of their compatriots.[38] Whether or not they became *huaren* depended on the citizenship rules of the host country, as well as their overall prospects back in China should they choose to return. For the millions who settled in Southeast Asia prior to 1950, for example, return was not an option, despite pervasive discrimination, because the PRC government treated returnees harshly during the Cultural Revolution. Today, on the other hand, *huaqiao* residing in the United States are encouraged to return, and many do so given the right job opportunities.

Public opinion surveys of Chinese migrants to the Russian Far East are inconclusive regarding their long-term intentions. The author plans to carry out public opinion surveys of Chinese working in Russia in Spring 2004. One third of the 154 respondents polled by Vil'ya Gel'bras and German Dudchenko in 2002 regarding the length of Chinese respondents' stay in Russia are students and interns, whom one would expect to report shorter stays (under one year or 1-4 years).[39] Gel'bras notes that the figures for respondents reporting stays of under one year may be exaggerated, 51.4% in Khabarovsk and 65.3% in Vladivostok, in 2002.

Moreover, this same data set reports that 1/3 of the Chinese respondents live in rented or owned apartments, a finding that leads the author to conclude that "there is a group of rather prosperous Chinese who are planning a long-term stay in Russia, in both cities." [Vladivostok and Khabarovsk] Such a conclusion seems beyond the scope of the data since it no additional information is provided about these apartments. Are they rented or owned by a company? How many Chinese live in the apartments and for how long? If Chinese have short-term stays in crowded apartments owned by a Russian firm, for example, this would indicate an intention to stay in Russia on a short-term basis.

Gel'bras' 1998-99 survey of 757 Chinese respondents' views of marriage to a Russian citizen indicate a reluctance to form such associations. Respondents also seemed relatively uninterested in bringing their children to Russia. These results would seem to contradict Russian perceptions that Chinese plan to resettle in Russia.

Table 2. Chinese Views of Close Relations with Russian Citizens[40]

Question: Would you like to marry a Russian citizen? Percentage of respondents in Four Cities

	Moscow	Khabarovsk	Vladivostok	Ussuriisk
Already Married to a Russian Citizen	2.8	4.4	3.0	0
Yes	8.6	11.7	3.0	12.0
No	49.7	47.4	58.0	54.0
Don't Know	21.2	22.3	23.0	20.0
No Opinion	17.7	14.2	13.0	14.0

Question: Would you like your children to visit Russia?

	Moscow	Khabarovsk	Russia	Ussuriisk
Yes	9.1	22.9	10.0	8.0
No	40.1	32.9	41.0	52.0
Don't Know	40.8	35.1	37.0	34.0
Yes, for a Period of Time, To Work or Study	6.7	5.5	8.0	6.0
No Opinion	3.0	3.3	4.0	0

Russian Perceptions of Chinese Migrants

As the Russian Far East was reopened to regional economic cooperation with Northeast Asian neighbors in the 1990s, the migration of Asian populations to these territories once again became an important concern for federal and regional officials. However, integrating the Russian Far East into the Asian economy turned out to involve a delicate balancing act. While openness is necessary to encourage trans-border economic flows, the unintended consequences of these exchanges, such as increased migration, require greater regulation, which could stifle regional economic cooperation.

Since the mid-1990s, Chinese migration to the Russian Far East has become a controversial issue in center-regional relations in Russia and China alike, as well as in Sino-Russian bilateral and regional relations. Unlike their colleagues in Moscow who have made the Sino-Russian partnership a priority, officials in the Russian Far East currently view China as Russia's main competitor in the short-term and as a potential threat in the long-term. These differences in views in Moscow and the Russian Far East stem from divergent priorities, assessments of the regional balance of power, and understanding of the costs and benefits of cooperation.

1) Complementary economies and regional economic cooperation

Officials in the Russian Far East believe that Russian and Chinese policymakers overstate the potential for economic cooperation in China. Although the Russian border regions showed initial enthusiasm for trade with China in 1992-3, this was more a reflection on the collapse of the Russian economy and the dependence of the Russian Far East on imported low-cost consumer goods and food products, which they were no longer able to purchase from European Russia at affordable prices.

Policymakers in Moscow and Beijing like to vaunt the economic complementarities underlying economic cooperation between their two countries. For officials in the Russian Far East, these are political anathema.[41] The Russian border regions have no interest in taking advantage of China's main asset—an unlimited supply of cheap labor—due to concerns about illegal migration and the dwindling Russian population in the Russian Far East. Politicians in the Russian Far East especially resent the role of their regions as resource suppliers to Asian states and hope to secure investment capital to develop processing industries. China, which has its own processing industries, has little interest in facilitating the growth of this sector in Russia. Moreover, China has invested very little in the Russian Far East, with the exception of short-term trade ventures and the service sector.

As the market in the Russian Far East has become more differentiated, consumers have expressed a preference for higher quality goods from South Korea, Japan, and the United States. Although the August 1998 Russian financial crisis raised the cost of imports from the latter and led Russian consumers to turn once again to more reasonably priced Chinese goods, nevertheless, officials in the Russian Far East continue to see their economic future as linked to their ability to expand economic relations with Japan, South Korea, and the United States—countries that have the investment capital that is desperately needed in the region.[42]

2) Border relations and perceptions of the regional balance of power

More than economic strategy is at stake in the divergent views of China in Moscow and the Russian Far East. Policymakers in Moscow and the Russian Far East have very different views of the regional balance of power. For politicians in Moscow, the strategic partnership with China provides a respite against Western pressure, ensures a peaceful border, and provides a rationale for substantial arms sales. In the Russian Far East, on the other hand, China represents the main potential threat to regions weakened by economic decline and population outflow.

While policymakers in Moscow still focus on Russia's standing vis-à-vis the West, in the Russian Far East officials worry about the impact of a rising China. Although the rise of China often is overstated and the Chinese regions across the border actually share many of the same structural impediments to reform that are present in the Russian Far East, Russian regional leaders nonetheless fear that their regions will be overshadowed by an increasingly prosperous and populous neighbor with unclear intentions.

For this reason, policymakers in Moscow and the Russian Far East perceive the consequences of cooperation with China completely differently. In Moscow, the Putin administration stresses the mutually beneficial political and economic results of partnership. If national policymakers emphasize the absolute gains of Sino-Russian cooperation, then regional leaders see only relative gains—China's gain inevitably will be Russia's loss.[43] Such logic has posed obstacles to regional cooperation projects such as the Tumen River Development Program (and to some extent the inter-Korean railway project), as regional officials opposed any region-wide infrastructure projects with potential benefits for China. In their view, even if Russia also benefited, the incremental gains for China would offset any gain for the Russian Far East and put the region at a disadvantage in economic competition with an even stronger neighbor. Consequently, even though officials in the Russian Far East recognize the necessity of cooperating with China, they express a distinct preference for expanding cooperation with the United States, Japan, and the Koreas.

3) The consequences of migration: Russian regional opinion surveys

Recent public opinion polls in Moscow, Khabarovsk, and Vladivostok, show that center-regional differences over China policy are not just found among political elites but also among the general population. In Moscow individuals holding positive views of Chinese migrants (16 %) outnumbered those with negative views (11%), while in Khabarovsk and Vladivostok the opposite results were found. The most pejorative assessments were found in Vladivostok, where 27.9% of respondents expressed negative or extremely negative views, compared to 11% of Muscovites or 21.3% of Khabarovsk residents.[44]

Negative views in the Russian Far East stem from perceptions of the adverse impact of Chinese migrants on respondents' human security, especially economic security. The Russian Far East, like the Chinese Northeast, has been experiencing economic decline. As of 2000 industrial production in the Russian Far East amounted to less than 44 percent of the 1990 level (compared to 54.4 percent for Russia as a whole). Although Russia experienced an average decrease in employment of 16.8 percent from 1990-98, the Russian Far East saw a 22 percent drop. Because the cost of living is higher in this part of Russia, the standard of living of the population fell. Regions such as Khabarovsk Krai with more diverse economies reported 28.9 percent of the population living below the subsistence level (just below the national average of 29 percent), while 70 percent of Chukotka residents had incomes below subsistence.[45]

As Table 3 shows, respondents in the Khabarovsk and Vladivostok object to Chinese migrants because of the belief that the latter live better than Russians do.

Table 3 Attitudes of Russian Respondents toward Chinese Migrants

% of respondents per city

Consequences of Chinese migration to Russia	Moscow	Khabarovsk	Vladivostok
No negative consequences	38.5	19.3	21.1
Take Russian jobs, refuse to process raw materials	10.0	15.6	20.6
Inexperienced in trade, unreliable, trade in low quality goods	10.0	4.3	5.3
Present a security threat to Russia, engage in drug trafficking, organize criminal groups	0.5	10.9	3.9
Live better than we do, take earnings back	21.5	56.1	60.1

to China, rent housing, act badly			
Hard to say	24.0	11.8	10.1
Refused to answer	0	1.4	0.5

Muscovites and residents of Vladivostok and Khabarovsk differed in their views of the consequences of Chinese migration to Russia.[46] Muscovites were twice as likely as respondents in Khabarovsk and Vladivostok to see no negative consequences of Chinese migration and least inclined to view Chinese migrants as a threat to Russian security.

Table 4 Russian Respondents' Assessment of Chinese Migrants

% of respondents per city

How do you assess Chinese migrants to Russia	Moscow	Khabarovsk	Vladivostok
Positively	16.0	14.6	13.0
Normally, no change has resulted	39.0	28.3	23.1
They come because economic conditions are bad in China, but we'd be better off without them	20.0	15.1	14.9
Negatively	10.0	15.6	24.0
Extremely negatively	1.0	4.7	3.9
Indifferently	12.0	17.5	16.8
Hard to say	1.5	4.2	4.3
Refused to answer	0.5	0	0

In Khabarovsk and Vladivostok, the majority of respondents expressing a negative view of Chinese migrants above all complained that they lived better than local residents (56.1% in Khabarovsk and 60.1% in Vladivostok, compared to 21.5 % in Moscow). Khabarovsk respondents were most likely to report Chinese migrants as a threat to Russian security (10.9 %

compared to 3.9 % in Vladivostok and 0.5% in Moscow), a testament to the unresolved border demarcation issue in the region.

China and Russia's Migration Policy

While many Russians fear that the *huaqiao* will entrench themselves in Russian society by buying property and marrying local women, does Russia have control over its long border with China? Does Chinese migration occur because of forces that cannot be regulated or because of Russian policies? Russia's role in controlling Chinese migration is at issue here.[47] How Russian policymakers address the problem depends on their appreciation of the Sino-Russian balance of power, global economic forces, specific migration policies, and cultural factors.

Political realist explanations argue that 1) migration policy is a matter of state security and potential host countries such as Russia will open their borders if it is in their national interests to do so; and 2) the distribution of power in the international system and the relative position of states will affect the dynamics of migration.[48] At the root of some Russian concerns about Chinese migration is the potential imbalance in the Russian-Chinese balance of economic power, as China continues to boom economically while continued Russian economic growth appears less secure. Nevertheless, it is the economic weakness of the northeastern regions in China where migrants originate that prompts them to seek opportunities in Russia.

Scholars who study globalization see a contradiction between the trend in most states toward lifting controls on flows of capital, information, and services, yet strictly controlling national borders to limit migration.[49] According to Nestor Rodriguez, migration flows challenge the relevance of national boundaries. Using the U.S.-Mexican border as an example, Rodriguez describes a process of "autonomous international migration" as the development of migration networks, making national boundaries irrelevant. Motivated by economic survival, Mexican workers and peasants form extra-legal transnational networks facilitating migration. Thanks to progress in telecommunications, transnational communities maintain constant contact with their former homes.[50]

As Saskia Sassen notes, it is erroneous to attribute migration to the decisions of individual migrants, due to the existence of structured migration networks.[51] However, Russian policymakers are also mistaken in attributing Chinese migration to a Chinese state policy to resettle the Russian Far East, since Chinese migrants appear to be motivated by short-term economic survival needs.

It is true that the formation of transnational networks of migrant communities facilitates migration by reducing its costs (providing a hospitable environment for newcomers, financial support, information). Moreover, the easing of travel restrictions within and from China also

makes it easier for migrants to leave their home communities. Nevertheless, other conditions must be present for migration to Russia to occur: 1) employers must be willing to hire them or to persuade Russian authorities to tolerate the presence of the Chinese; 2) historic ties must predispose Russia to allow Chinese to settle there; and 3) Russia must allow families of Chinese migrants to join them.[52] The first condition is easily satisfied—many employers in the Russian Far East will hire Chinese. Historical patterns of Chinese settlement in the Russian Far East serve as a disincentive for regional political leaders, fearing a loss of sovereignty to China. They are unlikely to encourage family reunification, which would be tantamount to promoting Chinese resettlement in the Russian border regions.

The impact of Chinese migrants on the regional economy is not the only consideration for regional policymakers, however. According to Myron Weiner, security and stability considerations may become paramount in determining how a state deals with migration. He notes that the admission of migrants into a community may be perceived as a threat to national security if the host perceives the newcomers as violating existing norms or threatening cultural values.[53] For the underpopulated Russian Far East, isolated from Asian communities for more than 50 years, yet situated on China's northern border, the formation of Chinese migrant communities is perceived a threat to the region's Russian identity.

The Human Security Dilemma in China-Russia Regional Relations

Policy Implications

The human security dilemma that has arisen regarding Chinese migration to the Russian Far East has proven intractable because its resolution is contingent upon the independent actions of Russian and Chinese authorities to address domestic problems, such as regional underdevelopment and corruption. Moreover, at present neither the Russian nor the Chinese governments is placing a priority on funding the development of these border regions, making it likely that factors promoting Chinese migration and Russian hostility to it are likely to persist in the near future.

Generally the resolution of a security dilemma involves accentuating defensive actions and reducing behavior that can be seen as offensive. For Chinese policymakers, this would involve further efforts to regulate cross-border interaction. As Chinese officials acknowledge, there is an asymmetry in the handling of the situation: while Russian central and regional authorities regularly raise the Chinese migration question, the Chinese side has provided little public documentation regarding Chinese migrants to Russia. Although Chinese officials have refrained from publicizing such information to avoid dramatizing a problem they feel Russian regional leaders have blown out of proportion, this merely fuels Russian suspicions of Chinese

intentions. According to Chinese analysts, however, the lack of a Russian migration policy is at fault.

The Putin government has tried to take steps to address the issue. Since May 2002, the Russian Ministry of the Interior has been given responsibility for migration issues, with the Federal Migration Service now integrated within the ministry. According to new legislation that came into force on November 1, 2002, a quota of approximately 500,000 foreign migrant workers will be set annually and such workers will be awarded special permits, instituting a system similar to the admittedly imperfect American green card.

If successful, the new Russian migration permits will improve the information available regarding numbers of Chinese migrants working in Russia and reduce fears regarding massive migration, though the Deputy Interior Minister conceded that the quota figure would not cover those Chinese registered in Russia prior to the new regime.[54] While the ministry is trying to reduce the opportunity for bribe taking (by requiring that half of the foreign migrant's permit stub be numbered and left with the authorities), proper enforcement will be necessary. Although the Interior Ministry expects to weed out illegal migrants over time, by establishing who lacks the proper permit, this process also provides ample opportunity for bribery and circumvention. Thus inadequate attention by other governments to regional development needs, a lack of transparency regarding Chinese migrant flows, inadequate regulation and enforcement, and corruption will hinder the resolution of the human security dilemma regarding Chinese migration to the Russian Far East.

Notes

[1] Robert Jervis first developed the concept of the security dilemma in "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," World Politics, Vol. 30, No. 2, January 1978, pp. 167-174.

[2] Amitav Acharya, "Human Security: East Versus West?" Working Paper No. 17, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, September 2001, pp. 3-4; 8; Kanti Bajpal, "Human Security: Concept and Measurement," Kroc Institute Occasional Paper #19: OP:1, August 2000, pp. 36-38; Roland Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?" International Security, Vol. 26, No. 2, Fall 2001, p. 100.

[3] Anatoly Vishnevsky, "Migratsiia i bezopasnost': Analiz aspektov vzaimodeistvii," [Migration and Security: Analysis of Interactive Aspects] Migratsia i bezopasnost' v Rossii, [Migration and Security in Russia] (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 2000), p. 36.

[4] Go Yanchun, "Vzaimovygodnye svyazi," [Mutually Beneficial Ties] Rossiya i ATR, [Russia and the Asia-Pacific] No. 1, 1994, pp. 120-121.

[5] N.A. Troitskaia, "Russkaia dal'nevostochnaia burzhuaziia i severo-vostochnyi Kitai. O vlianii prigranichnogo polozheniia na predrpinimatel'skuiu deiatel'nost'," [The Russian Far East bourgeoisie and Northeast China. On the influence of the border location on entrepreneurial activity] unpublished paper prepared for the conference on "Russia in Asia: Past and Present," Khabarovsk, August 26-28, 1995, p.6-8.

[6] Troitskaia, p. 8.

[7] John Stefan, The Russian Far East: A History, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, pp. 48-49. S.C.M. Paine, Imperial Rivals, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1996, pp. 69, 89.

[8] Paine, p.89. The trade zone was confirmed by the Treaty of St. Petersburg (1881). (Paine, p. 162.) Also see R.K.I.Quested, Sino-Russian Relations: A Short History, Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1984, pp. 74-77.

[9] Paine, pp. 180-81.

[10] Steven G. Marks, "Conquering the Great East," in Stephen Kotkin and David Wolff, eds., Rediscovering Russia in Asia: Siberia and the Russian Far East, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1995, p. 27.

[11] Paine, p. 196.

[12] Marks, p. 24.

[13] Stefan, The Russian Far East, pp. 212-213.

[14] Igor R. Saveliev, "Chinese Migration to Russia in Space and Time," in Pal Nyiri and Igor Saveliev, eds., Globalizing Chinese Migration: Trends in Europe and Asia, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002, p. 43.

[15] Du Xianzong, Bian mao molu [Model for Border Trade], Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1995, p. 540. Du Xianzong was a former governor of Heilongjiang province.

[16] Zhang Housheng, Heilongjiang dui Su jingmao zhanlue he duilue yanjiu, [Research on Heilongjiang's Border Trade Strategy], Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1991, p. 2.

[17] Viktor Ishaev, Mezhdunarodnoe ekonomicheskoe sotrudnichestvo: regional'nyi aspect, [International Economic Cooperation: Regional Aspect] Vladivostok: Dal'nauka, 1999, p. 60.

[18] Wang Shengjin, "Donbeiya laodongyuan kaifa yanjiu," [Research on Use of Labor Resources in Northeast Asia] Northeast Asian Research Center Report, Changchun: Jilin University, 2001.

[19] Wang, p. 23.

[20] China Eases Its Stand on Russia's Accession to the WTO," Vedomosti, June 10, 2002.

[21] Galina Vitkovskaiia, Zhanna Zayonchkovskaia, and Kathleen Newland, "Chinese Migration into Russia," in Sherman Garnett, ed., Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000, p. 351.

[22] Cited in Dorothy J. Solinger, "Jobs and Joining: What's Effect of the WTO for China's Urban Employment," paper prepared for the conference on "The Political and Economic Reforms of Mainland China in a Changing Global Society," National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan, April 25-27, 2002.

[23] "Chinese Experience Gains, Pressure from WTO Membership," Renmin Ribao, March 8, 2002.

[24] Wang Shaoguang, Hu Angang, and Ding Yuanzhu, "Behind China's Wealth Gap," South China Morning Post, October 31, 2002, p. 22.

[25] David Murphy, "Nothing to Lose," Far Eastern Economic Review, November 7, 2002, p. 3.

[26] See Lu Nanquan and Xue Chuntu, eds., Eluosi Xiboliya yu Yuan Dong, [Russian Siberia and Far East] Beijing: Shijie Chubanshe, 2002.

[27] For example Wang Shengjin, Dongbeiya quyu renkou yu fazhan [Population and Development in the Northeast Asian Region], Changchun: Jilin Daxue Chubanshe, 2001.

[28] Galina Vitkovskaia and Zhanna Zayonchkovskaia, "Novaya Stolypinskaia politika na Dal'nem Vostoke Rossii," [New Stolypin Policy toward the Russian Far East] in Vitkovskaia and Dmitri Trenin, eds., Perspektivy Dal'nego Vostochnogo Regiona: Mezhstranovye Vzaimodeistvye,[Perspectives on the Far Eastern Region: Interstate Cooperation], Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 1999, pp. 96-97.

[29] Timothy Helniak, "Demographic Change in the Russian Far East," in Michael J. Bradshaw, ed., The Russian Far East and Pacific Asia: Unfulfilled Potential, London: Palgrave, 2001, p. 133.

[30] I discuss this in detail in "Chinese Perspectives on Cross-Border Relations," in Sherman Garnett, ed., Rapprochement or Rivalry? Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000,

[31] Interview, Beijing, October 2002, pp. 240-248.

[32] According to Russian regional interior ministry data, in 1994 just 64 percent of foreign visitors to Primorskii Krai left the region within the time allotted by their visas, but from 1997 to 2000, more than 99 percent left on schedule. Igor' Verba, "Polzuchaia ekspansiia velikogo soseda" (The Great Neighbor's Purposeful Expansion), February 17, 2001.

[33] Text of speech by PRC President Jiang Zemin at the Institute of International Relations of Russia, September 3, 1994, in FBIS (PRC), September 6, 1994, p. 18.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Text of the Sino-Russian Treaty, Xinhua, July 17, 2001.

[36] Interfax, October 18, 2002, *www.mid.ru.*

[37] Wang Gungwu, Don't Leave Home: Migration and the Chinese, Singapore: Times Academic Press, 2001, p. 145.

[38] David S.G. Goodman, "Are Asia's 'Ethnic Chinese' a Regional Security Threat?" Survival, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Winter 1997-98), p. 142.

[39] Vil'ya Gel'bras, "Chinese Migration to the Russian Far East: A View from Moscow," in Tsuneo Akaha, ed., "Human Flows across National Borders in Northeast Asia, Seminar Proceedings, United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan, November 20-21, 2002," Center for East Asian Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey, California, 2003, pp. 142-3.

[40] Gel'bras, p. 118.

[41] Nationalists and liberal democrats in Moscow share the concerns of officials in the Russian Far East about the potential threat from China. For a detailed exploration of the different views on China in the foreign policy elite in Moscow, see Elizabeth Wishnick, Mending Fences: Moscow's China Policy from Brezhnev to Yeltsin, chapter 9, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001.

[42] Interviews with officials in Blagoveshchesnk, Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, October 1999.

[43] Joseph Grieco has found that "relative disparities" in capabilities may lead a state to resist economic cooperation for fear of strengthening a stronger partners. See Grieco, "Systematic Variation in Regional Institutionalization in Western Europe, East Asia, and the Americas," in Edward W. Mansfield and Helen V. Milner eds., The Political Economy of Regionalism, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, p. 176.

[44] Vilya G. Gelbras, Kitaiskaya real'nost' Rossii, [Russia's Chinese Reality], Moscow: Muravei, 2001, pp. 144-5. A September 2000 poll by the Vladivostok-based Center for Public Opinion at the Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East, reported similar findings. See Michail A. Alexseev, "Socioeconomic and Security Implications of Chinese Migration in the Russian Far East," Post-Soviet Geography and Economics, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2001, p. 128.

[45] Statistics come from Nadezhda Mikheeva, "Social and Economic Differentiation in the Russian Far East," in Judith Thornton and Charles E. Ziegler, ed., Russian Far East: Region at Risk, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002, pp. 88,95, 101.

[46] Gelbras, pp. 147-8.

[47] James F. Hollifield, "The Politics of International Migration: How Can We "Bring the State Back In?" in Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, eds., Migration Theory: Talking across Disciplines, New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 137.

[48] Hollifield, p. 154.

[49] Saskia Sassen, "Beyond Sovereignty: Immigration Policy Making Today," Social Justice, Vol. 23, No.3, 1996, p. 9.

[50] Nestor Rodriguez, "The Battle for the Border: Notes on Autonomous Migration, Transnational Communities, and the State," Social Justice, Vol. 23, No. 3, 1996, pp. 22-25.

[51] Sassen, p. 14.

[52] Aristide Zolberg, "Introduction: Beyond the Crisis," in Aristide R. Zolberg and Peter M. Benda, eds., Global Migrants Global Refugees, New York: Berghahn Books, 2001, pp 10-11.

[53] Myron Weiner, "Security, Stability, and International Migration," International Security, Vol. 17, No.3, Winter 1992/93, p. 110.

[54] Press Conference with Andrei Chernenko, Deputy Interior Minister and Chief of the Federal Migration Service regarding the Law on the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens in the Territory of the Russian Federation, Federal News Service, October 31, 2002.