



Chinese Immigration to Russia and Its Non-traditional Security Impact

Shiau-shyang Liou¹

Received: 22 June 2017 / Accepted: 7 November 2017 / Published online: 27 December 2017
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Abstract Russia and China rapidly restore communication after the Cold War, but the Chinese immigration issue is also widely exaggerated and even described as “Yellow Peril again” in Russia. The so-called Yellow Peril is not only a Russian object perception but also a cross-generational conflict between Russia and China. Furthermore, it will be related to the subsequent development of the Russian Far East and Siberia. The Chinese immigration constitutes psychological and survival non-traditional security impacts on Russia and also forms some kind of social competition with Russians. It is vital for Russia to cooperate with its eastern neighbor to accelerate the development of the Russian Far East and Siberia, but national security and social stability are the prerequisites for cooperation. Nevertheless, it is more significant to rebuild self-confidence of the Russians in the Russian Far East and acknowledge that the East will not be a threat to Russia. As long as Russia realizes that it can enjoy unlimited possibilities in the East, the non-traditional security impacts caused by the Chinese immigration will automatically alleviate and even disappear. Today, most Russians are trapped in the dilemma of welcoming or refusing the Chinese immigrants; however, cultural exchange still has some effects and at least causes Russians to begin to positively treat the Chinese immigration and consider whether to accept China and cooperate with China.

Keywords Non-traditional security · Yellow Peril · Chinese immigration · Russo-Chinese relations

✉ Shiau-shyang Liou
ssl@nccu.edu.tw

¹ Department of Diplomacy, College of International Affairs, National Chengchi University, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China

Introduction

Russia and China rapidly restore communication after the Cold War, but the Chinese immigration issue is also widely exaggerated and even described as “Yellow Peril again” in Russia. However, even at the peak of local anti-Chinese tide in the 1990s, Moscow still kept a low profile on the Chinese immigration issue and tried to manage the Chinese immigrant workers since 1994. Moreover, Moscow also avoided the exaggeration about the Chinese immigration issue in the mass media, made Russo-Chinese relations a priority, and reiterated that it would seek a resolution accepted by both sides ([1], 41, 46). In fact, Moscow also had no time to deal with the Chinese immigration issue due to political and economic transitions and domestic political disturbance. Moscow and Beijing also needed each other to construct a multi-polar world for countering the USA.

After Vladimir Putin assumed the presidency, Russia gradually recovered. Thus, Moscow was active in dealing with the Chinese immigration issue. In November 2006, Moscow issued a government decree to step-by-step prohibit foreign immigrant workers from engaging in retail sale [2]. Although the decree was not literally against the Chinese immigrants, almost 100,000 Chinese immigrant workers were still forced to leave from Russia in 2007. Meanwhile, Russia and China also began an unprecedented public diplomacy activity: “State Year.” The anti-Chinese immigrant sentiments in Russian society represents that the Chinese immigration obviously constitutes the non-traditional security impact on Russia. Moreover, there is also a kind of social competition between the Chinese immigrants and Russians. If the Chinese immigration issue has negative impacts on Russo-Chinese relations, culture exchange public diplomacy activities: “State Year,” “Language Year,” “Travel Year,” “Youth Friendly Exchange Year” and the subsequent “Media Exchange Year” undoubtedly have the positive meanings for the bilateral relations. Furthermore, it also can help to defuse the non-traditional security impact caused by the Chinese immigration.

Yellow Peril fear is not only a Russian object perception but also a cross-generational conflict between Russia and China. Moreover, it will be related to the subsequent development of the Russian Far East and Siberia. Since the globe resources are limited, the plentiful resources in the Russian Far East and Siberia should be the treasure of humankind. More importantly, the Chinese immigrants currently are indispensable labor force in the local development mentioned above. The Chinese immigration issue in Russia is not only related to the future Russo-Chinese relations but also important to the globe development. Thus, the thesis intends to trace the origin of this cross-generational conflict, realize the non-traditional security impacts caused by the Chinese immigration, and expound the shift of Russians’ perceptions toward the Chinese immigration to realize whether Russians accept the Chinese immigrants or not.

Onset of Cross-generational Conflict—Chinese Immigration Issue in Russia

Unwelcome Yellow Wave

In Vladimir Soloviev’s prophetic poems, the Chinese are often described as the troops under the command of Japan attacked Russia and Europe. It is because the Chinese

population is enormous enough for military mobilization.¹ Soloviev's argument was ridiculous, but it had far-reaching effects. After Russia lost its Far Eastern prestige in the Russo-Japanese War, the prophetic imagination partly came true. Aleksandr Maksimov's description thoroughly reflected the widespread fear in Russian society at that time. He mentioned that once a war broke out between Russia and China, the Chinese in the Russian new Far Eastern border territory would become the fifth column ([5], 141–142).

Even in the 1890s, Anatoli Kulomzin who dominated all matters of colonization in Siberia already urged the tsar to make increased amounts of land available to peasants in the Far East and encourage anyone to settle there as possible ([6], 27). Although the last Prime Minister Peter Stolypin promoted the peasantry migration eastward to weaken rural community and develop the private ownership of land, he still had a strategic consideration for the development of new Far Eastern border territory. In March 1908, Stolypin even appealed to the State Duma to pay attention to this issue. He argued that Russia's distant and stern border territory was rich, rich with gold, wood, fur, and vast spaces suitable for agriculture. Nevertheless, having a densely populated country as Russia's neighbor, the border territory would not be deserted. If Russians did not develop it before foreign penetration, this rich border territory would only nominally belong to Russia ([5], 143). Undoubtedly, the neighbor Stolypin mentioned is China.

General Aleksei Kuropatkin, the Minister of War under Nicholas II and the Commander of Russian Forces during the Russo-Japanese War, also extremely worried about this problem. He argued ([7], 177–178):

The huge immigration wave... is rolling over our border and is getting mixed with in the Priamur'ye, especially in the Ussri region with the Russians competing in every types of labor. If we were to abolish the Russo-Chinese border and allow the Chinese enter Siberia as the Russians, Siberia would soon be Sinicized and the Russians would be moving beyond the Ural Mountains.

As Kuropatkin argued, the Chinese migration to Manchuria and Mongolia in the second half of the nineteenth century was not only a new offensive of the yellow race but also the first time emergence of contemporary Yellow Peril ([7], 72–73). Kuropatkin treated Japan as Yellow Peril after the Russo-Japanese War ([8], 200); however, the Chinese immigrants in the Russian Far East became an acute social issue in Russia with the relaxation of Russo-Japanese relations.

Thus, St. Petersburg was obliged to react and take measures to exclude the Chinese in order to secure its Far Eastern borders. The Chinese initially were treated as a cheap labor force; nevertheless, on June 12, 1910, the authorities issued a government decree to prohibit Asian (mainly Chinese) workers from engaging in the public and private sectors for the sake of Chinese illegal local activities ([9], 297). While Russia occupied its pacific border territory, Russia was surrounded by the other races and civilizations. The imperial rule could be stable only when Russians were full here. Hence, the

¹ For example, "Pan-Mongolism" and "A Short Story of Anti-Christ" are Vladimir Soloviev's famous prophetic poems. See [3] (336–337) and [4] (180–185).

foreigners that disobeyed the Russian laws here were initially treated as a security threat ([10], 118).

Aleksandr Larin, the Leading Research Fellow of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies (IFES) at the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), claimed that Yellow Peril was exaggerated at that time, but it was an indisputable fact that the partial Far Eastern local power were in the grasp of the Chinese. The situation was quite similar to a state within a state, because the Russian local authorities not only needed the oversea Chinese associations' help to manage the Chinese, but it also dissatisfied with the de facto independence of these associations. Some people even suspected that these associations were under control of Beijing ([11], 5–6). Thus, it was not surprising that Russians rejected the so-called Yellow Wave, especially the Chinese immigrants.

Rupture with Yellow Proletariat Brother

After the October Revolution in 1917, the Chinese workers in Russia were regarded by the Bolsheviks as a natural ally in the fight with the bourgeoisie and imperialism for the sake of ideology. Moreover, the citizens of China and other Asian countries in Russia were not treated as the bourgeoisie, they also did not need to take responsibility for their governments' policies. In the struggle for the regime, the Bolsheviks Party also assembled the Chinese to form the Red Army Chinese International Detachments and declared that it would not persecute their yellow brothers but should inspire, organize, and protect them from the capitalists' exploitation.

Generally speaking, the image of the Chinese in Russia in the 1920s and 1930s was positive. However, before the World War II, the Chinese had two well-known images: "the dangerous Chinese" and "the diligent and dutiful Chinese." When the Soviet regime was perceived as weak, the dangerous Chinese image began to gain popularity ([5], 190–191, 195–196, [11], 10).

With the end of the civil war and the withdrawal of foreign interference, the Soviet regime gradually stabilized. Nonetheless, the Soviet authorities also began to worry about the influx of the yellow race to its periphery as before. This issue was discussed at local and central levels several times. Finally, the meeting hosted by the member of the Diplomatic People's Council Georgy Chicherin decided that it was necessary to adapt all feasible measures to prohibit the Chinese and the Koreans from flowing into the territory of the Soviet Union ([12], 109–110). Although the Soviet authorities began to take precautions against the so-called yellow immigrants, there were still a large number of Chinese and Koreans living in the Far East adjacent to China and engaging in trade and agriculture before 1937. To guard the Russian Far East against Japan's invasion, Joseph Stalin executed a large-scale expulsion and migration in the 1930s. After a last batch of about 19,000 Chinese were expelled in 1938, the number of Chinese was less than 1% of the local population. The Soviet Union and China had a short honeymoon period in the 1950s, the Chinese were even regarded as the proletariat brother of socialist camp. But the two sides soon criticized each other due to the ideological and policy differences, the eastern border issue was also debated in 1963. Russia and China finally started a war in 1969 for the sake of border issue. In addition to the failed border negotiation, the two sides gradually garrisoned along the borderline. It is also known from the relevant studies that the Chinese in the Russian Far East and Siberia decreased year by year since 1917 and reduced to a minimum during the

Russian civil war and Japanese intervention. Afterwards, most Chinese in Russia were communist supporters, but they were still persecuted during the Stalin era. Since the 1960s, the data of the Chinese in the Soviet Union were not available, there were no relevant statistics as well. After the normalization of Soviet-Chinese relations, two countries gradually restored communication in the late 1980s ([13], 126).

In sum, Russians' perceptions toward the Chinese dramatically changed during the Soviet era. Initially, the Chinese were brave and loyal Red Army soldiers or diligent and dutiful workers but became the fifth column or Yellow Wave and then became the proletariat brother again. However, the Chinese were finally refused. It means that Russians suspected the Chinese at the beginning. Nikita Khrushchev's comment on the dispute of importing the Chinese labors was the best explanation ([14], 250, [15], 2262):

We gradually had a consensus that the Chinese intended to occupy Siberia without firing a shot. They wanted to penetrate and take over the local economy so that the Chinese settlers in Siberia would outnumber the Russians and the other local ethnic groups. Thus the Chinese could root in the Russian Far East.

Khrushchev's suspicion was just like a copy of Yellow Peril fear in late imperial Russia. Owing to communist ideology, Khrushchev could not use such a term Yellow Peril to describe the Chinese. However, two proletariat brothers finally became rivals, and the contact between the two peoples was interrupted nearly three decades.

Chinese Immigration's Non-traditional Security Impacts on Russia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russians face the influx of the Chinese again, but the previous good impression toward the Chinese is gone due to the past long-term confrontation and the negative shock of bilateral communication at the beginning of 1990s. "The new Chinese immigrants" in Russia not only irritate Moscow and local authorities for years but also become a focus among the mass media and political scientists' debates ([16], 19, 22).

Viktor Larin, the Director of the Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East (IHAE) at the Far East Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (FEB RAS) in Vladivostok, claimed that there were no less than 100 articles accusing China of expanding to the Russian Far East in Russian newspapers and magazines from 1992 to 1995, and the statistics were still incomplete ([17], 87). Viktor Larin also pointed out that China deemed its people's activities in Siberia and the Russian Far East was a legal return to its historical territory ([18], 17). According to author's survey, the Chinese in Vladivostok also indeed deem that they return to Chinese historical territory. They even consider that the Russian Far East was seized by Russia while China was weak and therefore do not admit that Russia owns this land.²

² Author's interviews with the Chinese immigrants on the Sportivnaya Street and at the "Bachurin" market in Vladivostok in 2009.

Immigration likes a two-edged sword, and it always combines with positive and negative effects. However, immigration's negative effect is usually noticed by the residents in the destination country and even amplified at worst. In Russia, the Chinese immigration issue is just amplified. The positive economic contributions of the Chinese immigrants are undoubted, because they timely fill the vacancy of Russia's labor shortage. The failure of voluntary resettlement to the Russian Federation of compatriots abroad³ already confirmed that Russia cannot seek a proper substitutable working force to replace the Chinese in a short period of time. Nevertheless, Russians are trapped in the dilemma of welcoming or refusing the Chinese immigrants due to historical legacy.

In the context of Russia's population crisis, the contemporary Chinese immigration issue causes Russians to feel that the Chinese may become the majority and then threaten Russian society and culture. In the 1990s, the local governors even instigated Yellow Peril. In addition to the deportation of the Chinese, they also manipulated this issue and strived for power from Moscow. The cognitive confrontation between central overall strategy and local regional development caused the local authorities to run counter to Moscow. Thus, while Moscow and Beijing declared their strategic partnership, the Chinese immigrant workers were expelled in the Russian Far East at the same time. Russian President Vladimir Putin's statement in 2000 was a tangible testimony. In Blagoveshchensk, Putin expressed his concern and said, "If Moscow does not actively develop the Russian Far East, the local residents will speak in Japanese, Chinese or Korean one day." [20]. In accordance with Putin's statement, there seems to be a threat of "Asianization" in the Russian Far East; however, the subsequent voluntary resettlement program and essential anti-Chinese decrees already confirmed that Putin was obviously anxious about the Chinese immigration. Hence, what kind of impacts does the Chinese immigration make on Russia after all?

Chinese Enclave

In addition to the provocation of local governors in the 1990s, the Chinese immigrants themselves are also the reason why Russians do not accept them. Andrei Zabyako, Professor of Amur State University in Blagoveshchensk, claims that the reason why the Chinese suffer unfriendly treatment in Russia is the emergence of the Chinese communities. The propaganda from the 1960s to the 1980s taught people to consider the border a potential front line, and therefore, Yellow Peril became the most frequent theme in the mass media and the academic journals. The opponents claim that the Chinese come to Russia as sojourners and view Russia as a transit zone to Europe. Andrei Zabyako admits that it was true in the early 1990s; however, the current situation is not the same as before. More and more Chinese people consider it an opportunity to stay in Russia nowadays. The Chinatown is a form of Chinese self-protection against Russian government's discriminatory policy. Such a settlement type has many disadvantages for Russia. Therefore, Andrei Zabyako suggests that it is more beneficial for Russia to create such conditions that would encourage the Chinese dispersed settlement ([21], 448–449).

³ According to the demands of different regions, this plan provided support to encourage the compatriots abroad to resettle to the Russian Far East and Siberia—these strategic areas but facing vast outflow of population. Furthermore, it stimulated the birthrate and lowered the death rate and emigration. See [19].

In accordance with Andrei Zabyako's argument, the so-called Yellow Peril again was resulted from the self-protection of the Chinese immigrants and their refusal of new culture. The Chinese immigration Yellow Peril was undoubtedly exaggerated in the early 1990s, and most Chinese people were also sojourners in Russia, but the current situation is different. Moreover, Andrei Zabyako's suggestion was also to avoid the possibility of the Chinese enclaves in Russia.

To some extent, the possibility of the Chinese enclave may be not exaggerated, although most Chinese immigrants are circular migrants and are not permanent residents in Russia. On the contrary, many Chinese immigrant workers who need to move back and forth have intentions to be naturalized due to severe migration laws.⁴ Moreover, the existing distribution of the Chinese immigrants in Russia is also the cause of Yellow Peril myth (see Table 1).

The latest Russian census in 2010 appears that most Chinese immigrants gather in big cities and Asiatic Russia, because the total of the Chinese immigrants (18,157 people) of the federal districts in Asiatic Russia (the Far Eastern Federal District, the Siberian Federal District and the Ural Federal District) was far more than the total of the rest ones. Among them, the total of the Chinese in the Far Eastern Federal District was the most one (9082 people) and was even more than the European Russian essence district—the Central Federal District. In fact, the Central Federal District was also beneficial from Moscow, because there were 5505 Chinese immigrants in Moscow ([22]).

Such a distribution not only reveals the consideration of the migration convenience but also reflects that the main purpose of most Chinese immigrants is pursuing profit. Nonetheless, the census only can reveal parts of Chinese immigrants in Russia and still cannot discover the complete picture, because the objectives of census are voluntary, and the other kinds of Chinese, including proved or possible illegal immigrants, short-term tourists, and seasonal guest workers, are almost not included in the statistics ([16], 22). Since the limited proportion of Chinese immigrants appears such a distribution, the unknown part may be more extreme. However, the unintended geographical proximity made by the Chinese immigrants may cause a misinterpretation in Russia.

Aleksandr Larin claims that Russians are afraid of demographic expansion with geopolitical elements ([23], 123). This is because Russians are always anxious that one day China will reclaim its territory ceded during the late Qing Dynasty when China becomes stronger than Russia. Such a fear also can be confirmed in the IHAE's survey in 2010. According to the survey, 42% of people in the Russian Far East thought that the population outflow and the influx of immigration were the main causes that made Russia lose its Far East. The proportion which considered the external threats from neighboring countries also reached to 35%. China was the most dangerous one among them and was considered an external threat by 64% of people ([24], 54–55).

Chinese Immigrants Population Myth

According to former Director of Federal Migration Service Konstantin Romodanovsky's statement in the State Duma in March 2012, there were about 400,000 Chinese immigrants in Russia per year ([25]). Although he did not explain how to calculate it, it was still

⁴ Author's interviews with the Chinese immigrants at the "Ali" market in Khabarovsk in 2009.

Table 1 The distribution and population of the Chinese immigrants in Russia (2010)

Federal district	Number
Central Federal District	6682
Northwestern Federal District	1576
Southern Federal District	884
North Caucasian Federal District	131
Volga Federal District	942
Ural Federal District	1963
Siberian Federal District	7112
Far Eastern Federal District	9082

Note: Adapted from Rossiyskaya Federatsiya Federal'naya sluzhba gosudarstvennoy statistiki (Russian Federation Federal State Statistics Service). Naseleniye po grazhdanstvu i vozrastnym gruppam po sub'ektam Rossiyskoy Federatsii (Population by citizenship and age groups by subjects of the Russian Federation). *Itogi Vserossiyskoy perepisi naseleniya 2010 goda (The results of the All Russia Population Census of 2010)*. http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/Documents/Vol4/pub-04-18.pdf. Accessed December 26, 2016. The census was held from October 10 to 25 in 2010 and was the second time census after the independence of the Russian Federation

fairly credible. In fact, it is really difficult to handle the Chinese immigrants' situations in vast Russia. When the Chinese immigrants enter Russia, most of them are legal. After entering, they often seek legal loopholes and then become illegal immigrants.⁵ However, just because different government branches have different attitudes toward the Chinese immigration and cannot handle it completely so that the Chinese immigrants are often exaggerated as several million people ([26], 72), therefore, the contemporary Chinese immigration issue in Russia is an irrational speculation. Although some Chinese immigrants overstay or engage in activities that do not comply with the purpose of visa application, these behaviors are not the massive invasion acknowledged by Russians or the quiet recapture of territory ceded before. However, the exaggerated speculation about the number of Chinese immigrants has caused the groundless fear and the anti-Chinese immigrant sentiments in Russian society.

In March 2004, the Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation Sergei Prikhodko published an article—"We should not be afraid of China. A viewpoint from Moscow" in *Izvestiya*. This can be regarded as the Russian official response to the Chinese immigration issue ([27]):

There is no consensus on the current and future development of Russo-Chinese relations within Russia.... There are also certain obstacles between the two countries..., but the high degree mutual trust and understanding are necessary.... We should keep the so-called "red line" in mind, ...and support Chinese stable and sustainable development so as to maintain Russia's strategic interests. We cannot say there is no immigration problem between the two countries, but it is not as exaggerated as the domestic media said.

⁵ Author's interviews with the Russians and Chinese in Vladivostok, Khabarovsk and Blagoveshchensk in 2009.

It is not difficult to realize that the Kremlin made Russo-Chinese relations a priority and did not want to provoke useless disputes at that time. However, after Putin assumed the presidency, Russian political situation gradually stabilized. Thus, Moscow began to deal with this problem actively and execute an immigration decree that had a great impact on the Chinese immigrants. It also can be proved in author's interview with Andrei Zabiako in Blagoveshchensk. Andrei Zabiako claimed⁶:

The Chinese immigrants often seek legal loopholes, moreover, their working and residential places usually do not conform to their visas. These phenomena greatly irritate the Russian government. We accuse the Chinese immigrants of their illegal behaviors to China several times, however, China always shifts its responsibility to us on the grounds that it is Russia's domestic issue. To some extent, it is indeed our problem. In the 1990s, Russia had no time to deal with the Chinese immigration issue due to internal disturbance, but Russia is different now. Since China does not want to face the issue, we cannot but undertake to reform it.

It is why Russia dared to issue an immigration decree and expel the illegal Chinese immigrants while Russia and China hold their public diplomacy activity. On the other hand, it most likely gained the electorate's recognition in response to the forthcoming 2008 presidential election.

Social Competition Caused by Chinese Immigration

Aleksandr Larin's survey can provide us a rough picture of social perceptions toward the Chinese immigrants who seek legal loopholes in Russia. He argues that most Russians are dissatisfied with the Chinese immigrants. Although some charges are unfair, the tax evasion and buying material at low prices are undoubted (items 5 and 6). In other words, the Chinese are skilled at utilizing Russian bureaucratic corruption and seeking legal loopholes. Selling defective merchandise still exists (item 4), but it will reduce one day. Competing job opportunities with local people or hindering Russian manufacturing development exists at most time (items 1, 2, and 3), but there are still no definitive conclusions about good or bad. Accusing the Chinese of carrying fortunes back home and occupying living space are absolutely xenophobia (items 7 and 8). Liking the Chinese or not (items 9, 10, and 11) is obviously the unhealthy social psychological reflection under the circumstances of the influx of Chinese immigrants. The Chinese immigrants do not abide by the Russian law is a direct cause, but it also reflects that there is indeed a cultural gap between Russia and China ([23], 123–124) (see Table 2).

Moreover, according to the survey, there are also a fairly high percentage of Russians (from items 1 to 7) accusing the Chinese immigrants of depriving and threatening Russian future economic development and even hindering their living. Most Russians apparently think that the influx of Chinese immigrants has constituted serious social competition. Perhaps for the sake of Russo-Chinese relations, Aleksandr Larin just does not point it out.

⁶ Author's interview with Andrei Zabiako at Amur State University in Blagoveshchensk in 2009.

On the whole, the anxieties about the Chinese immigration indeed exist in Russian society. Russians not only worry that there are innumerable Chinese immigrants in Russia but also worry about the possibility of the Chinese enclaves, especially in the Russian Far East. Moreover, they are anxious that the Chinese immigrants will threaten their future survival and development. In other words, the Chinese immigration has constituted psychological and survival impacts on Russia and formed some kind of social competition with Russians.

The Shift of Russians' Perceptions Toward Chinese Immigration

Both Russia and China have a consensus that the present bilateral relations are at the unprecedented friendly stage, and they also have intentions to maintain it. Therefore, Russia and China hold public diplomacy activities in turn from 2006 to present. This represents that the bilateral cultural exchange has a restrictive effect to coordinate and regulate their behaviors, and they can interact with each other in accordance with the norm accepted by both sides.

On the basis of mutual consensus, Moscow also actively develops its Far East and Siberia adjacent to China. In addition to promoting the compatriots abroad to resettle in Russia, Moscow also issued decrees to prohibit foreigners from engaging in retail sales to guarantee the employment of local Russian people. Thus, we can see that Moscow realizes that the vast population outflow from the Russian Far East constitutes a serious

Table 2 If you do not like the Chinese, what is your reason?

		Russia	Moscow	Far East
1	They grab our work	9%	8%	10%
2	They will grab our work in the future	10%	11%	9%
3	They hinder the development of our manufacturing with cheap merchandise	11%	11%	10%
4	They sell defective merchandise to us	13%	12%	13%
5	They evade taxes and customs duties	10%	9%	10%
6	They buy our raw materials at low prices (metal, wood, etc.)	18%	14%	20%
7	They earn our money and take it back to China	11%	11%	11%
8	They occupy our streets and traffic space	3%	4%	3%
9	We do not like their personality and demeanor	5%	4%	5%
10	In short, we just do not like everything	2%	3%	2%
11	We like them and their performance is not inferior to our merchants	4%	5%	4%
12	Others	1%	0%	1%
13	Difficult to answer	4%	8%	2%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Note: From Larin, Aleksandr. (2011). Kitayskiye migranty v Rossii: Problemy adaptatsii i tolerantnosti (The Chinese migrants in Russia: Problems of adaptation and tolerance). *Etnograficheskoye obozreniye (The Ethnographic Review)*, (2), 125

national security threat. However, several large-scale developmental programs obviously cannot improve the population outflow problem in the Russian Far East and cannot reduce the dependence on the Chinese immigrant workers. As far as the cultural exchange—public diplomacy concerned, is it helpful to change Russians’ perceptions toward the Chinese immigration?

Undoubtedly, the Russian Far East is the best object for inspection. According to the IHAE’s survey in 2008, local people did not change their attitudes toward the Chinese immigrants after the public diplomacy activity: State Year (see Table 3) The reason why the effects of State Year were relatively limited lies in its narrowness of object, because it focused on the young generation. Moreover, it slightly reduced the anti-Chinese sentiments in Russia’s periphery, but it still could not change Russians’ superiority feeling ([28], 37–40). In 2014, the IHAE’s survey indicated that the influx of immigration and the growth of Chinese economic, military power were continuously treated as the main security threats to Russian eastern border ([29], 14) (see Table 4), but the percentage which considered that the Russian Far East should cooperate with China also gradually rose. The percentage rose from 33% in 2003 to 50% in 2008 and then rose to 53% in 2010, finally rising to 68% in 2013 ([24], 66, [29], 12).

However, Andrey Kalachinskiy, Docent of Vladivostok State University of Economics and Service, argues that the “China threat” factor is becoming a thing of the past and more and more Russians suppose that the proximity to China is beneficial to the development of the Pacific Russia’s regions. The breaking point is Vladivostok’s preparation for APEC summit in 2012; moreover, “Russia’s Turn to the East” is a positive connotation in press. Russia’s stand toward China was heavily attacked by foreign media and opposition press from 2011 to 2015, but on the whole, negative views have given way to more rational judgments ([30], 128).

In fact, “Russia’s Turn to the East” initiative at least has been launched from 2008. It intends to strengthen the political and economic relations with the East and not only contacts with China and South Korea. It argues that Russia should become a major regional power in Asia. According to a survey conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) in October 2015, most Russians considered that the pros outweighed the cons when it came to “Russia’s Turn to the East,” and 70% believed that Russia’s more active cooperation with Asian countries would to some extent change their living. More than one third of respondents (37%) supported the current “New East Policy,” and 22% considered that Russia should be more active. Sixty percent thought that Russo-Chinese cooperation was reciprocal. However, the survey also indicated that the connection between Russia and Asian countries was driven by common interests in political and economic spheres, such as the struggle with

Table 3 The attitudes of the Far Eastern residents toward the Chinese (2003, 2008)

	Superior	Never think	No	Exclusive	Never think	No
2003	29%	32%	38%	34%	39%	26%
2008	28%	34%	38%	29%	28%	43%

Note: Adapted from Larin, Viktor, & Larina, Liliya. (2009) Okruzhayushchiy mir glazami dal’nevostochnikov (po itogam oprosa naseleniya, 2008 g.) (Far East citizens view the outside world (based on the results of the population survey, 2008)). *Rossiya i ATR (Russia and the Asia-Pacific Region)*, (1), 40–41

Table 4 Security threats to the Pacific Russia (2003–2013)

	2003	2010	2013
Rising economic and military power of China	46%	55%	43%
Increase of immigrants from neighboring states	NA	51%	49%
Insufficient consideration to the interests of the Far Eastern Federal Authority	30%	50%	44%
Nuclear weapon proliferation	NA	25%	40%
Dispute over the Kuril Islands with Japan	40%	24%	17%
US aspiration for hegemony	35%	22%	34%
International terrorism	NA	17%	12%
Conflict on the Korean Peninsula	12%	15%	30%
No threat	9%	7%	2%

Note: Larin, Viktor & Larina, Liliya. (2014) *Vostochnaya Aziya v obshchestvennom mnenii Tikhookeanskoy Rossii (po itogam oprosa 2013 g.)* (East Asia in the public opinion of the Pacific Russia (based on the results of the 2013 survey). *Rossiya i ATR (Russia and the Asia-Pacific Region)*, (2), 14

the USA and the Western sanctions, rather than geocultural factors. In other words, geocultural factors are often referred to disconnecting elements. While Russians deem that it is positive to turn to the East, negative stereotypes and fears remain exist. For example, 64% were anxious about an increase in the flow of inferior goods from Asian countries in the next 5–10 years, and 61% were anxious about a massive influx of Asian immigrants. At the same time, 53% believed that China would take advantage of Russia to strengthen its influence in the world. Forty-seven percent believed that the indigenous population in the Far East and Siberia probably would not be replaced by the visitors from Asian countries such as China, Korea, and the others; however, the item “it probably will happen or already happened” was also supported by 44% of Russians ([31]). The survey did not focus on the Chinese immigration, but at least almost half percentage (47%) began to positively treat Asian immigrants in the Russian Far East and Siberia. In other words, at least “Asian threat” is gradually becoming a thing of the past.

We still cannot handle the latest situation of the perception toward the Chinese immigration in Russian society due to a lack of subsequent data. Only a VCIOM’s survey conducted in November 2016 indicated that most Russians believed that immigrants had a significant impact on the labor market, and Russians were still not ready to accept immigrants. Seventy-eight percent considered that it was necessary to limit the influx of foreign immigrants to Russia, but 61% did not object their children or grandchildren to make friends with the second generation of immigration. Fifty percent considered that immigrants should not live in the designated areas, and 57% were not interested in learning about the culture, customs and traditions of foreign immigrants. In social competition dimension, 81% considered that it was more profitable for employers to hire immigrants than local residents; however, 74% considered that most immigrants worked illegally. Although 57% considered that immigrants provide cheap services, 71% still considered that the low wages of immigrants led to curb the growth of salaries of indigenous people. Moreover, 57% disagreed with the ethnic and cultural diversities brought by immigrants to their living, and 67% disagreed with the argument

that it was impossible to solve Russian domestic demographic problem without immigrants [32].

On the whole, the acceptance of immigrants is still low in Russian society. Under such a social exclusive circumstances, the unwelcome Chinese immigrants are hardly the exception. Perhaps, just like Aleksandr Larin's survey, Russians' attitudes toward the Chinese immigrants can be described as "limited tolerance." Most Russians recognize the economic benefits brought by the Chinese immigrants but are cautious about the population problem and the consequences of the Chinese immigrants' economic activities. Thus, Russians can treat the Chinese immigrants as short-term guest workers but cannot accept their long-term residence. Such an inclination is even stronger in the Russian Far East ([23], 125, 127).

By contrast, Russians' attitude toward China rapidly changes due to the Western economic sanction against Russia caused by the Ukraine crisis. According to VCIOM's survey in October 2014, the percentage of "China is the friendliest state to Russia" rose from 23% in 2008 to 51% in 2014. On the contrary, the percentage of "the United States is hostile to Russia" rose from 25% in 2008 to 73% in 2014 ([33]). Moreover, another survey in November 2014 indicated that the percentage of "China is a friendly state and ally" was 36% in 2014, and it was almost twice the percentage of 2009 (19%). The percentage of "China will be a friendly state and ally" rose from 20% in 2009 to 43% in 2014, the percentage of "China will be a close partner" rose from 27% in 2009 to 36% in 2014, and the percentage of "China may become a rival" fell from 24% in 2009 to 9% in 2014. The percentage believed that the economic cooperation between Russia and China was reciprocal also rose from 37% in 2009 to 60% in 2014 [34]. Cultural exchange may help the two peoples to understand each other and gradually improve Russo-Chinese relations, but the effect of the Western sanctions against Russia is obviously more rapid.

Owing to the limitation of research data, we still cannot discover the whole picture. Perhaps the China threat is becoming a thing of the past, but we are sure that most Russians nowadays are trapped in the dilemma of welcoming or refusing the Chinese immigrants. Furthermore, although cultural exchange does not have a rapid and obvious effect, it still has some effects and at least causes Russians to begin to positively treat Asian immigrants in the Russian Far East and Siberia, including the Chinese.

Conclusion

The loss of eastern territory was unrealistic in late imperial Russia, but nowadays, it may be possible and even realized by non-traditional security measures. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the power contrast between Russia and China reverse for the first time for 400 years, and such a possibility mentioned above is strengthened again. The Chinese immigration indeed constitutes non-traditional security impacts on Russia and also forms some kind of social competition with Russians. Russians not only worry that there are innumerable Chinese immigrants in Russia but also worry about the possibility of the Chinese enclaves, especially in the Russian Far East. They are still anxious that one day the Chinese immigrants will threaten their future survival and development.

In view of the current Russo-Chinese relations, both Russia and China have a consensus to maintain their relationship, so they hold public diplomacy activities in turn from 2006 to present in order to promote cultural exchange. Perhaps its effect is not rapid and obvious, but to some extent, it still helps to alleviate the cultural gap between Russia and China, and it indeed causes Russians to begin to positively treat the Chinese immigration and consider whether to accept China and cooperate with China.

The anti-Chinese immigrant sentiments are related to Russia's Oriental perception. Russian Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador Aleksandr Panov argues that it is correct for Russia to go east and integrate into the Asia-Pacific region. Nevertheless, Russians enter this region, but we do not allow others to enter Russia, especially the Russian Far East. The East will not be a threat to Russia; on the contrary, Russia will enjoy unlimited possibilities, but such a possibility is restrained due to Russia's weak economy and deficiency of insight ([35], 72–74).

Today, Russia is accelerating to turn to the East. It is vital for Russia to cooperate with its eastern neighbor to accelerate the development of the Russian Far East and Siberia, but national security and social stability are the prerequisites for cooperation. Nevertheless, it is more significant to rebuild self-confidence of the Russians in the Russian Far East and acknowledge that the East will not be a threat to Russia. As long as Russia realizes that it can enjoy unlimited possibilities in the East, the non-traditional security impact caused by the Chinese immigration will automatically alleviate and even disappear. Furthermore, the cultural exchange between Russia and China will still be crucial to their future development.

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