

CITIZENS OF CHINA AT THE MOSCOW LABOR MARKET: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract: The article considers the basic parameters of social inequality, social problems, current state, dynamics and main tendencies of attraction and use of labor migrants from China at the Moscow labor market. The authors analyzed the problems of adaptation of labor migrants from China to living conditions, quality of their lives and mechanisms of regulation of existing problems. The sociological analysis of the state, reasons, and practices of labor force usage at the labor market was conducted. The work also reveals the actual problems of the presence of Chinese labor migrants in the Russian Federation, mediating successful adaptation of the latter in the areas of immigration.

Keywords: labor market in Russia, employment opportunities, social adaptation, labor migration, problems of employment, quality of life, economic and labor sphere of the labor market.

1 Introduction

Most migrants did not hurry to leave the Russian Federation, preferring to stay in the country waiting for a revival of the economy (a tactic that received the name "wait and see" in Western literature) (Migration and the Economic Crisis in the European Union, 2010). Thus, according to the data, in the summer months, the Russian labor market employs up to 7 million external migrants (Russia Facing Demographic Challenges, 2008).

It has been established that migratory flows are an indicator of the attractiveness of Russian regions for non-residents. Nowadays, the main migration load falls on the major Russian cities and, above all, on Moscow, where the number of foreign workers remains consistently high. This trend is evident even in presence of the mechanism of migration quotas allocation, as well as reducing the share of foreigners employed in the capital economy mediated by the crisis of 2008 (3.2% in 2016 against 5.1% and 3.9% in 2009 and 2010 respectively) (The number of foreign workers in Moscow declined, 2019).

According to the statement of G. Borjas (2001), international labor migration contributes to improving the efficiency of the labor market and brings an impressive benefit to the economy as a whole.

Moreover, in some cases, labor migration allows avoiding the job cuts (Stalker, 2000).

Meanwhile, the general attitude towards labor immigrants in Russia (and in the metropolitan area in particular) is very ambiguous. For this reason, their presence in the country is matched with the emergence of a large number of socio-economic, organizational and legal problems. In addition, this is not accidental because along with the undeniable positive effects, the external labor migration in Russia raises serious risks of social, economic, socio-cultural and ethnocultural character, which, in full compliance with the world practice, prove out in places of primary concentration of foreign labor force, including Moscow. For example, the problems of qualitative composition of labor migrants remain relevant in the capital. Their "shift" to the poor part of the social spectrum, the increase of cultural distance, the rapid change in the ethnic structure of citizens and the consequent decline of tolerance of people living together in the city are also quite challenging. Hence, the address to the migration experience of Moscow in the field of detection and resolution of problems, optimization of the processes of attracting and using foreign labor, etc. is significant. Analysis of these features can become the basis of improvement of the organizational and administrative structure of regulation and arrangement of migration processes at the federal level.

It all actualizes the issues of developing an integrated approach to the formation of a system of legal, social, socio-cultural,

political measures contributing to qualitative improvement of the situation in the field of external labor migration in Russia, improving the practices of attracting and using foreign labor in the Russian labor market, overcoming the actual problems of the presence of labor immigrants in Russia, which would be in the interests of ensuring national security of the host society as a whole and the social and economic interests of the labor migrants involved in its economy (Dykusarova et al., 2017).

2 Literature Review

The fundamentals of the sociological approach to the study of migration processes are described in the works of M. Weber, K. Marx, T. Parsons and others (Yudina, 2006). Investigating the migration processes, a number of authors use provisions of the structural theory or the pull/push concept in the sociology for analysis. According to these conceptions, migration factors are divided into negative ("pushing") and positive ("pulling") (Lee, 1966, p. 121) and migration system of relations (networks) and assimilatory theory, cultural and ethno-sociological directions.

The peculiarity of the Russian scientific knowledge is the fact of insufficient research of migration problems from the perspective of sociological science. The majority of works of the national authors in the given area represents works of socio-demographic, socio-economic, as well as socio and labor character. T.I. Zaslavskaya gave rise to the study of migration processes in the context of migratory behavior, which allows identifying and analyzing the causes of migration, to consider the subjective factors mediating the decision to change the place of residence, etc. (Moiseenko, 2004).

As for the identification of the peculiarity of the presence in the territory of Russia, the greatest interest of researchers is currently attracted by the Chinese expat community, as evidenced by the works of V.G. Gelbras (2004). Famous Russian sinologist A. G. Larin (2009) predicts in his book that "the number of illegal migrant workers from China is among the total number of Chinese migrants in Russia (not more than 400 – 500 thousand people) and is approximately half of it". Analyzing the cases of deportation of Chinese illegal migrant workers, Chinese expert Qiang Xiaoyun (2010), studying the problems of population migration from China to Russia, concluded that the number of illegal migrants from China in Russia is small in absolute and relative figures. At the same time, it should be noted that in modern Russian sociology there are almost no works with a complex analysis of the peculiarities of the situation and the role played by the citizens of China on the Russian and regional (including Moscow) markets of the foreign labor force.

The analysis of the state of the study of international labor migration problems and its influence on the Russian (regional) labor markets shows that there is no unity of opinions among the researchers on many key issues of the considered subjects. In particular, there is no clear interpretation of the content of certain categories of the subject area, as well as of the consequences of the stay of international migrant workers in the territory of Russia and measures to be taken in the interests and purposes of improvement of Russian migration policy. There is no comprehensive study of approaches to the research of peculiarities of labor migration from China to Russia, adaptation processes in the specified group of migrants in the situation of their interaction with the host community in Moscow.

According to the data of this organization, in 2014, more than 185 million people migrated in search of work (more than 90% of all international migrants) (Migration in an Interconnected World, 2015).

The main information base used to analyze trends and prospects for international migration is the United Nations Global Migration Database, supported by the Population Division of the

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and containing the most comprehensive form of official information on the number of international migrants in countries and regions of the world and their distribution by country of origin, gender and age. The updated version of the 2012 revision base, which includes information on international migrants in 1960-2010 for 212 countries and territories of the world and in 1990-2010 for 230 countries and territories of the world, was presented in July 2014 (Trends in international migration according to the United Nations revision of 2008, 2008).

China is among the countries, citizens of which traditionally have a high share in the overall structure of external migration in the Russian Federation. The establishment of cooperation between the two countries has led to a sharp increase in the number of Chinese students and postgraduates, some of whom stay in the country for permanent residence.

Chinese immigrants are mainly trade-oriented. So the peak of their trading activity fell on the period of perestroika (restructuring): using the acute shortage of consumer goods, the possibility of illegal import, liberal regime of foreign trade and customs clearance, imperfection of Russian legislation and weak state control, creating an extensive retail chain, Chinese traders have formed their own national niche in the Russian market and were able to meet the demand of the poorest population for elementary products. Today people from China began to develop other kinds of business along with the successful trading - sphere of services, industrial production, real estate and construction, making business more civilized and corresponding Russian laws. The large Chinese enterprises operating in Russia are creating new jobs, which employ Russian citizens, which makes them an integral part of the modern Russian economy. Experts also note such an important qualitative modification of Chinese private business in Russia as a transition from the export of labor force to the export of capital and technology.

According to the census of 2010, at the beginning of XXI century, more than 26 thousand Chinese people lived in Russia; 23 thousand of them had Chinese citizenship. According to unofficial information of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, the number of Chinese migrants was about 80 thousand people at that time; 30 thousand of them were in Moscow and the Moscow region. In 2010, a little less than 42 thousand citizens of China legally worked in our country (more than 9% of the total number of foreign workers performing legal work activity in the territory of the Russian Federation). In 2015, their number was 55.5 thousand people (or about 8% of the total number of foreign workers employed in Russia). Despite the increase in the number of Chinese immigrants employed in the Russian economy compared to 2010, their share in the total mass of foreign workers in the Russian Federation slightly decreased (Information materials on the final results of the All-Russian Population Census, 2010).

The strengthening of China's position in the system of international economic relations, expressed in a stable increase in GDP, the expansion of exports and imports of goods and services, is due to the active influx of foreign direct investment in various branches of economy, and reforming and improvement of structure of national economy of the country. The pace of foreign trade also evidences the growth of China's integration into the world economy (Zhang Xiuyin, 2010).

However, there are other evaluations. Thus, according to V.I. Mukomel, at the beginning of the new century, there were 100 thousand Chinese migrants in Russia, while L.L. Rybakovskiy (2009) confirms that in the first half of 1990's about 200 thousand Chinese people, who were not going to come home, lived only in the Far East.

The reference to the data of official statistics gives the reason to assert that for a number of years Moscow - the city that concentrated the main organizations of the Chinese immigrants arriving at the Russian Federation (trade houses, publishers, public associations, institutions providing services, etc.) - is the

main "center of attraction" of foreign labor force from China. At the same time, the obvious trend can be considered the reduction of the number of Chinese people officially occupied in the capital economy, caused, among other things, by the ban on the participation of foreigners in retail trade in the markets operating in Russia since 2007. It largely undercut the position of the "Chinese" markets and left many Chinese immigrants unemployed. However, as it will be shown further, the latter do not hurry to leave the Russian Federation massively and finally. It can be explained by the fact that, despite toughening of positions of the Russian (Moscow) authorities, a considerable proportion of Chinese migrants continues to operate in the country illegally, switching, for example, to sewing clothes in underground shops, owned by the citizens of Russia (Bulletin "Population and migration of the population of the Russian Federation in 2015", 2015).

Experts note a low degree of research of Chinese communities in Russia, caused by a number of factors: peculiarities of the national character of the Chinese people; their wary and secrecy with the official authorities; low tolerance of Russian people (and especially Moscow residents) to them, caused by the negative phenomena (sale of poor quality goods, violation of passport and visa regime, bribery of officials and other scams, insupportable in everyday life) accompanying their life and commercial activity; absence of practice of compact resettlement (the main mass (70-75%) of Chinese live in hotels, hostels, premises of their companies, rooms or apartments rented or purchased from Russians), leading to concentration of Chinese migrants through the territory of cities in small enclaves they manage to ensure safe living conditions, to maintain their own customs and culture, and to provide each other with the necessary mutual assistance (Official site of the Territorial Body of the Federal State Statistics Service in Moscow, 2019). Ignorance of the problems of Chinese immigration, their participation in the national economy of Russia, prospects of integration into the life of Russian society leads to the fact that these problems are neither reflected in the foreign and national policy of the Russian Federation, nor taken into account in the practice of developing official relations with China.

3 Research Methodological Framework

The purpose of the study was to identify the nature of organizational, legal, social, psychological problems of the presence of migrant workers from China in Moscow.

The source of the initial empirical research data was the citizens of China working in Moscow. The main reasons of activation of migration processes of export of labor force from China are exceptionally acute but quite natural for fast developing and densely populated country problems of demographic balance, employment, material stratification, territorial distribution of population, etc.

Analysis of some aspects of the life of migrant workers from China in Moscow makes it possible to identify the signs peculiar to the foreign labor force in the Russian Federation as a whole, as well as the characteristics specific to the representatives of the Chinese community employed in the Moscow economy. The first category includes, in particular: the lack of accurate data on the number of people from China working in the territory of Russia (its capital); the prevalence of people in the most able-bodied age (from 20 to 50 years) among the representatives of Chinese communities; low level of education and professional preparation of Chinese migrants, etc.

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Sociology of Lomonosov Moscow State University. Authors developed a questionnaire for conducting the survey, and the study population was chosen. The questionnaire contained closed and open questions. 500 citizens of China, who lived and worked in Moscow at the time of the survey, were interviewed personally. The survey was conducted in 2018. The combination of the interviewed people was formed using quota sample approach. Sampling error is within $\pm 5\%$.

In the course of the empirical analysis of the research results, several tasks were solved. Firstly, the state of life quality parameters of Chinese citizens in modern Russia was determined. Secondly, the state and nature of the affirmative influence of relatives and social and organizational environment on the nature of their motives, interests, and behavior during their stay in Moscow were revealed. Third, the ability of the developed conceptual model of empirical research to explain the results was tested.

4 Results and Discussion

It is noteworthy that the difficulties in estimating the total number of people in the extremely cohesive Chinese community in Moscow are also felt by its representatives - their opinions on this matter are different. The results of the targeted survey of Chinese migrants living in Moscow and Moscow region showed that 43% of respondents could not answer the question about the number of Chinese people in Moscow, while the answers of others ranged from "Less than 10 thousand" to "100 thousand people". The most popular (52% of respondents) was the answer, according to which from 30 to 60 thousand Chinese people live in Moscow, which is comparable to the number of Chinese communities in the major cities of the United States - Washington and New York.

External labor migration to Russia has a clear "masculine" character. At the end of 2009, this trend was characterized by the fact that the main part of the Chinese who came to Russia (up to 70%) were men.

Among the interviewed representatives of the Chinese community, women had a slight numerical superiority - 52% against 48%. The increase in the involvement of women in migration processes can be caused by the high rate of development of the service sector interested in the female labor force, as well as with the modern features of the application of Chinese labor force in the Moscow economy, most of which work in the field of trade and consumer services.

In Russia, as in many other host countries, migrants are actively used to implement non-prestigious and unpaid semi-skilled or unskilled jobs unclaimed by national workers for these reasons. In this regard, it is interesting to note that, in terms of the use of the labor force of migrants, the Chinese community in Moscow is characterized by the presence of traits that distinguish it in the total composition of foreign labor force coming to Moscow. In particular, answering the question about the sphere of the professional activity, the overwhelming (more than 74% of the total number of respondents) majority of respondents called trade and consumer services. More than 9% of respondents were engaged in consumer goods manufacturing and food industry; 1.4% are in the mass media; 0.5% are in health care. 9% of Chinese residents defined the scope of their activity as "work in the administrative bodies", implying the work in the institutions providing development of bilateral Russian-Chinese relations. At the same time, about 6.1% of respondents were not able to determine the sphere of their activity.

Only 58% of the surveyed representatives of the Chinese expat community in Moscow had the professional training of a certain level.

A significant proportion of the surveyed Chinese migrants linked their visit to Russia with problems of purely economic (bad economic conditions at homeland, loss of work or lack of stable employment, low earnings) or socio-economic character (so, the reluctance to live in their country or inability to provide children with a decent level of education may be due to the problems of unemployment, low incomes, etc.).

It is not surprising that for the most respondents (81%) representing the Moscow and the Moscow region Chinese expat community the personal purpose of stay in Russia is earnings. At the same time, the desire to earn is peculiar not only for low-income citizens of China but also for those who had no material

problems at homeland. 34.5% of residents stated that the purpose of their presence in the Russian Federation was related to education. A little less than 2% were going to marry. The same number could not determine the personal purpose of staying in the Russian territory. At the same time, none of the respondents called their stay in Moscow as tourism, obtaining Russian citizenship or transit to other countries as a purpose.

An additional explanation of the reasons for the arrival of Chinese migrants in the Russian Federation is provided by the analysis of their main activities at homeland. According to the survey, only 25% of them had a permanent job there, 6% had their own business. The other residents needed employment. Temporary and casual work was provided to 30% of the Chinese citizens who arrived in Russia, 3% did not have work at all (unemployed, housewives), 36% of respondents were students. The conducted survey allows to assert that before arrival in Russia the financial situation of respondents was characterized as (in descending order):

- average (42.7%), i.e., the income sufficed for everything necessary for a normal life;
- bad (24.1%), i.e., the income sufficed only for the most necessary;
- good (21%), allowing not only to spend but also to make savings;
- very good (7.7%);
- very bad (4.5%), i.e., the level of income did not allow to buy even the most necessary goods.

Like other foreign citizens and persons without citizenship arriving in Russia for work, Chinese migrants face a complex of various problems of psychological, legal, cultural, social and Economic character that can complicate their lives and processes of adaptation to the new place of residence. The interviewed the Chinese people in Moscow and the Moscow region put the following problems in the first place: difficulties of organizational and legal character, caused, on the one hand, by the action of the Russian legislation in the sphere of labor migration, and, on the other, peculiarities of behavior of representatives of the Russian law-enforcement, controlling and other administrative bodies - the first Russians with whom foreigners have to deal arriving in Russia.

The main problems faced by foreign migrants in the socio-economic and, in particular, the labor sector are due to the practice of illegal employment (absence of employment record books, contracts, and agreements), the use of various forms of violence and forced labor, refusal to provide social benefits, unfair pay (especially relevant because migrants work weekly on average 15-20 hours more than Russian citizens, and, as a result, their working week is 55-60 hours long, and for more than a third of migrants it is even 70 and more hours long); unregulated working day; poor working conditions as well as housing difficulties.

Absolute majority (85%) of the working migrants we interviewed in the capital and its region stated that they had an official work permit. 15% of respondents did not have such permission. It is peculiar that out of 250 Chinese migrants who had a permit to work in the Russian Federation on the day of the survey, 100 persons were registered at the working places officially (i.e., with employment record book, agreement, contract). About 30 people worked informally, explaining this by the policy of the employer, their own reluctance to initiate the formal registration procedure or other reasons. Thus, the obtained data sharply contrast with the indicator approved by numerous studies, according to which less than a quarter of migrants work on the basis of a written labor or civil contract with the employer. The reason for that may be a certain vigilance of the Chinese and the resulting desire to hide the true state of affairs from the interviewer.

The companies and organizations acting as employers of the interviewed representatives of the Chinese expat community of Moscow and the Moscow region differ from each other by

belonging to the sectors of the economy, the form of ownership, as well as a number of other options. Thus, less than 1% of the number of the employed surveyed Chinese worked at Russian state enterprises; 80% were employed in enterprises created with the participation of foreign (including Russian) capital; about 13% worked in enterprises, owned or co-owned by Chinese citizens.

Analyzing the degree of social security of the Chinese people working in Moscow, we asked them the question: "For which of the following social benefits can you count at your workplace?" It is peculiar that the above-mentioned problems, arising in the labor sphere, concern people who are in Russia illegally, as well as those who work without formal employment contracts - by verbal agreement with employers. The latter often experience difficulties caused by conflicts with criminal elements, including conflicts of ethnic origin.

Among other problems of socio-economic character, complicating the process of adaptation of Chinese migrants in Russia, are noted the following:

- expensive life in Moscow,
- which intermediates the possibility to buy real estate and durable goods;
- economic risks;
- excessive taxes;
- high rent.

The latter leads to the fact that often Chinese, as well as all foreign migrants falling into the category of the least desirable and potentially dangerous candidates for the living, have to rent housing jointly. For this reason, a large number of people live in one dwelling. Only about 15% of the relatively wealthy Chinese live in their own flats, the majority of which falls on Moscow and St. Petersburg.

To what extent did the Chinese citizens who arrived in Russia adapted to the life in it? According to the received data, 21% of respondents have fully adapted to the Russian conditions. More than half (61%) have adapted to life in Russia partially. Another 11% could not give a definite answer concerning the degree of their familiarizing with the Russian conditions, and the "small" share (7%) said that could not adapt to life in Russia at all. Table 2 provides a more detailed picture of the degree of satisfaction of Chinese migrants living in Moscow with various aspects of their residence.

Responding to Moscow's current issue of the relationship between Chinese migrants and the local population, 24% of respondents considered them "completely" and "rather satisfactory", while 29% called them "rather" and "quite unsatisfactory". At the same time, almost a quarter of the interviewed Chinese citizens could not evaluate them, and 23% could not give a definite answer to this question. Thus, just under half of the Chinese migrants living in Moscow are not yet able to assess the quality of their relations with Moscow residents, as well as the degree of satisfaction with them.

In our opinion, this also confirms generally established and widespread opinion about the isolation of the Chinese communities in Russia.

Another confirmation of the indicated point of view, as well as the evidence of the above-mentioned seeking of foreign workers arriving in the Russian Federation for assistance and support to informal social (migrant) networks is the distribution of answers to the question: "Who (in case of any problems) do you contact first?"

It should be noted that 31% of the migrants we interviewed had already had to apply for help in a foreign country. At the same time, in 57% of cases, the assistance was received from close relatives, 18% - from friends and acquaintances among compatriots. In 4% of problem situations, State structures of the Russian Federation provided support and only for 16% the

support was offered by local inhabitants. 7% relied only on themselves in such cases. Moreover, despite the harassment from the local population (10% of respondents faced that), almost a quarter (24%) of Chinese migrants estimates their relationships with citizens of the Russian Federation as "completely" (5%) and "rather" (19%) satisfactory. It is not surprising that about 60% of Chinese migrants living in Moscow feel themselves a part of the local community, the city where they live. However, more than 45% of respondents (especially those who limit their communication exclusively to representatives of the Chinese community in the capital) have a lack of communication, while a quarter (27.4%) of respondents complains about its deficiency.

The results of the survey showed that among the problems that seriously complicate the processes of adaptation of immigrants from China to the Russian conditions are: problems with law enforcement authorities; problems in communicating with the locals; problems with employment; problems with officials and administration; difficulties in obtaining social guarantees, benefits, etc. Slightly more than 19% of respondents noted that they faced other difficulties in Russia, but did not specify them. At the same time, none of the respondents called problems of communicating with employers or difficulties with the education of children as the issues complicating their life in Moscow.

Despite the abundance and severity of problems in the Russian capital, foreign migrant workers expect their trips to be stable (47.5%). Another 23.7% seek to move to Moscow for permanent work. A similar situation is observed in the case of people from China represented in the Moscow labor market: the above-mentioned unresolved problems of their stay in Russia does not motivate them to leave the Capital community.

The general socio-psychological mood of the Chinese surveyed by us and their readiness to continue working in Russia can be evaluated, in particular, based on the answers to the question about their plans for the near future. For example, 42% of respondents believed that their situation would not change in the near future and that they would be able to maintain the same status as today. The intention to leave the country was declared by 12% of the surveyed migrants. Almost a quarter of Chinese citizens seek to legitimize their stay in Russia and work here: 19.5% declared their desire to get a temporary registration, whereas 23% would like to get a work permit. 8.5% of respondents reported about their plans to settle in Russia for a long-term by issuing Russian citizenship or obtaining a permanent residence permit. 16% were unable to determine their own plans for staying in the Russian Federation.

5 Conclusion

Summing up, it should be noted that in the total amount of issues arising for the migrants from China in the process of residing and working in Russia, the following types of problems could be distinguished:

- problems caused directly by the action of Russian legislation;
- problems mediated by illegal conduct of law enforcement officials, corruption among officials;
- problems in the economic and labor spheres;
- problems in the field of social adaptation and communication;
- psychological problems, including those related to the biased attitude of representatives of administrative bodies and the local population towards migrants.

The first of the above-mentioned groups do not have a clear territorial specificity but the others are obviously characterized by the existence of such problems. Combined with the peculiarities of the general state and migration policy carried out by the Russian Federation, they keep bilateral cooperation between Russia and China in the field of export and import of labor force.

Formed a long time ago, having obtained the status of an important part of the social and economic life of Russia, creating favorable conditions for attracting and accepting new immigrants, the Chinese expat community faces today a lot of complex problems and issues related to the residence and work of Chinese migrants in the territory of the Russian Federation and its capital. So far, many Chinese do not have basic civil rights, are experiencing serious difficulties in everyday life and business.

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Primary Paper Section: A

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