

# Border Demarcation, Cross-Border Migration, and Interethnic Hostility in the Russian Far East

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## Abstract

The article examines the effects of border dispute resolution and cross-border migration in Primorskiï Krai, Russian Federation in the early 2000s on ethnic stereotypes of the Chinese, on Russia-China relations, and on policy preferences toward Chinese migration among the Russian border province population. This is the first statistical comparison of two original opinion surveys designed by the author and carried out by the Institute for History, Anthropology, and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East in 2000 (N=1,010) and 2005 (N=650). Focusing on 387 respondents interviewed in both years, it examines whether and how the same individuals changed their views on Chinese migration after a “treatment” period bookended by the departure of Primorskiï’s anti-demarcation treaty governor in 2001 and the Russian State Duma’s ratification of the Russia-China border treaty in 2005. All statistically significant attitude changes were toward a more positive perception of migration and Russia-China relations. This positive shift was more pronounced among respondents in border counties and among older respondents who had been longer exposed to anti-Chinese official discourses since the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s – regardless of per-capita scale of Chinese and Korean migration. In addition, local Russians who visited China more often between 2000 and 2005, but not before 2000, also viewed Chinese migration more positively. These findings provide evidence that formal settlement of border disputes significantly improves immigration attitudes in neighboring states.

## Introduction

Does the settlement of border disputes reduce interethnic hostility arising from cross-border migration? After all, studies of Russian-Chinese border interactions have shown that such disputes significantly affect attitudes toward migrants.<sup>1</sup> Mainstream theories of interethnic conflict suggest at least five putative answers. First, essentialist theories, emphasizing the enduring path-dependencies of ethno-cultural behaviors, would argue that we should expect no significant change in this situation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon: Russia’s Perceptions of China and the Evolution of Russian-Chinese Relations Since the Eighteenth Century* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp), 182-188; Mikhail A. Alexseev, “Economic Valuations and Interethnic Fears: Perceptions of Chinese Migration in the Russian Far East,” *Journal of Peace Research*, 40:1 (January 2003): 89-106; Akihiro Iwashita, *4000 kilometrov problem: Rossiiskokitaiskaia granitsa [4,000 kilometers of problems: Russia-China border]* (Moscow: Vostok-Zapad, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, *The Tenacity of Ethnicity: A Siberian Saga in Global Perspective* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999); Clifford Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States,” in *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*

Social categorization theory – positing that intergroup bias ensues when boundaries are drawn between groups based on any criteria, no matter how trivial – would suggest a similar outcome unless the border is seen as an intergroup rather than an interstate marker.<sup>3</sup>

Second, theories explaining interethnic conflict as a product of competition for resources and/or for political and social status – such as “ethnic job queues” or diminution of voting majorities resulting from migration – would also apply. From the standpoint of these “realistic threats,” the critical issue is whether any border dispute resolution would result in increased migration and labor market competition in a receiving state.<sup>4</sup> If so, one may expect border settlements to increase intergroup hostility. Third, and conversely, the contact hypothesis suggests that if border settlements boost cross-border migration and intergroup contact increases, intergroup hostility would subside.<sup>5</sup> Fourth, the “defended neighborhood” theory postulates that hostility increases when ethnically homogenous areas receive a rapid influx of ethnic “other” migrants. Given high levels of ethnic homogeneity in Primorskii Krai counties (over 90% ethnic Slav) this theory would predict a spike in anti-Chinese settlement if border dispute resolution leads to rising Chinese migration.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the immigration security dilemma theory links the rise of intergroup conflict to human proclivity to prepare for worst-case scenarios under uncertainty arising from the perceived decline of central government authority. This makes host societies view “defensive” group behavior of migrants (such as trade or tourism) as potentially offensive (illegal settlement and territorial claims). From this perspective, support for hostile anti-migrant policies, particularly involving military power, would decline with a reduction in uncertainty, and so may cultural stereotypes. Additionally, the security dilemma approach posits that hostility would depend on how residents perceive the border resolution (win vs. loss vs. draw) and whether they reside in proximity to the disputed borders.<sup>7</sup>

The present study addresses this general question and theoretical puzzles by assessing the effects of the Russia-China border demarcation settlement in Primorskii Krai, Russian Federation and

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eds. Clifford Geertz (New York: Free Press, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> Henri Tajfel and John Turner, “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict” in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, eds. William Austin and Stephen Worchel (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1979), 19-32; David L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Rupert Brown, “Social Identity Theory: Past Achievements, Current Problems, and Future Challenges,” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 30 (2000): 745-778; Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (University of California Press, 1985) explained social categorization as human proclivity “to cleave and compare” and linked it to mass violent conflict in Africa and South Asia.

<sup>4</sup> Herbert Blumer, “Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position,” *Pacific Sociological Review* 1 (1958): 3-7; Suzan Olzak, *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp, “A Meta-analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90:5 (2006): 751–783.

<sup>6</sup> Donald P. Green, Dara Z. Strolovitch, and Janelle S. Wong, “Defended Neighborhoods, Integration, and Racially Motivated Crime,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 104 (1998): 372-403.

<sup>7</sup> Mikhail A. Alexseev, *Immigration Phobia and the Security Dilemma: Russia, Europe, and the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Mikhail A. Alexseev and C. Richard Hofstetter, “Russia, China, and the Immigration Security Dilemma,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Spring (2006): 1-32.

the scale of cross-border migration in the area on Russia-China relations, on ethnic stereotypes of Chinese migrants, and on policy preferences toward Chinese migration among the Russian border province population. The study draws on the Russian census data aggregated by county, city and town (1989, 2002), migration data from the Primorskii Krai statistical service, and on the original opinion surveys directed by the author and carried out by the Public Opinion Research Laboratory of the Institute for History, Anthropology, and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East in 2000 (N=1,010) and 2005 (N=600). The Institute research team interviewed 387 respondents in both years, sampled from all the counties where the first survey was taken. This subsample enabled us to see how the same individuals changed – or failed to change – their views on Chinese migration in the Russian Far East after a period of significant changes.

The timing of these surveys makes it possible to deploy as close an approximation of an experimental before-and-after test of migration attitudes as any previous study was able to achieve with mass opinion data. The data offers a methodologically rigorous test of the social and political effects of the border demarcation process on public responses to Chinese migration in the region. The first (2000) survey took place during intense public debates in Primorskii Krai on Russia-China border demarcation talks and, in particular, on the ability of Russia's federal government to implement agreements with China so as to preclude any escalation of China's territorial claims that the local residents feared would result in a loss of local territories. The second (2005) survey took place several years after the 2001-elected governor of Primorskii Krai stopped protesting border demarcation as Moscow's betrayal of Russia's national interest and more than six months after Russia's national legislature, the State Duma, ratified the final border demarcation and settlement agreement for the eastern section of the Russia-China border in May 2005. In the same time period, economic and regional development issues became more salient than migration and security implications.<sup>8</sup> Also, the survey samples were designed to tease out spatial differences in these effects



**Figure 1: Sino-Russian Eastern Border**

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Sullivan and Bettina Renz, "Chinese Migration: Still the Major Focus of Russian Far East/Chinese North East Relations?" *Pacific Focus* 23:2 (2010): 261-285; Sergey V. Ryazantsev and Ian Hunnemy, *Kitaiskaia migratsiia v Rossiui: tendentsii, posledstviia i podkhody k regulirovaniu* [Chinese migration into Russia: trends,

in cities/counties in Primorskii Krai, strategically selected to ensure variation on border proximity and on Chinese migration patterns.

In research design terms, the 2000 survey provides pre-treatment observations, the 2001-2005 period of political change in Primorskii and completion of Russia-China border agreements is the treatment, and the 2005 survey of repeat respondents provides post-treatment observations. The survey questions offer multiple controls for exogenous factors that may have contributed to a change of views among respondents from 2000 to 2005. The two such principal factors are survey location and change in ethnic Chinese and Korean populations from 1989 to 2004 in cities or counties where the surveys were conducted. Additional controls in this study are the number of times respondents said they had visited China, the perceived number of Chinese nationals as a percentage of Primorskii Krai's population, and the evaluation of the military balance between Russia and China.

These controls collectively also perform the function of what in a pure experimental design would be a control ("placebo") group.

Three sets of tests were conducted to examine how these factors relate to putative changes in migration attitudes among Primorskii residents before and after the completion of border demarcation agreements. In the first test, survey questions were identified on which the distribution of responses underwent statistically significant changes from 2000 to 2005 and response frequencies were estimated to show how attitudes changed substantively. The second test examined how these attitude changes relate to location of respondents in counties bordering on China and to the presence of ethnic Chinese in the cities and counties where the survey took place. Finally, multiple regression analysis was performed to flag significant (non-random) predictors of change in Chinese migration attitudes controlling for socioeconomic background of respondents in addition to survey location, the presence of ethnic Chinese, visits to China, and the Russia-China military balance.

### **2000-2005 Attitude Changes: More Positive Outlook**

The first test included ten principal measures available in both the 2000 and 2005 surveys of Russian respondents' attitudes toward Chinese migration and related border issues.<sup>9</sup> Formally, they may be treated as dependent (outcome) variables – although substantively they are better viewed as multiple indicators or dimensions of the principal quantity of interest (migration attitude change). The topics they covered were perceived Chinese territorial claims on Russia; Chinese intent to occupy Russian territories; probability of armed conflict (war) between Russia and China over border disputes; aggressiveness versus politeness as typical traits of ethnic Chinese migrants in Primorskii; allowing Chinatowns in Primorskii; support for Cossacks and other paramilitary groups to stop Chinese migrants crossing the border; and, conversely, support for granting legal residency rights in Primorskii to Chinese migrants. These are all measures of attitudes – the outcome the study seeks to

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*consequences, and approaches to regulation*] (Moscow: Rossiiskii universitet druzhby narodov, 2010): Ch. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Three indicators of the perceived threat of armed border clashes between Russia and China (now, in 10 years, and in 20 years) are considered as part of one measure.

**Table 1. Attitudes toward Chinese Migration and Border Relations Improved from 2000 to 2005** (Percentage of respondents in Primorskii Krai surveys who agreed with – completely and partially—or chose as a response to the following statements)

Survey Question:	2000	2005
DO YOU FEEL THAT THE CHINESE CONSIDER PRIMORSKII KRAI TO BE HISTORICALLY A CHINESE TERRITORY?	83%	76%
IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE NEIGHBORING STATES WILL ENLARGE THEIR TERRITORY AT THE EXPENSE OF PRIMORSKII KRAI? [IF YES, HOW]:	78%	76%
--through conquest by force	19%	26%
--through negotiating process and interstate agreements	24%	36%
--through “peaceful infiltration” (migration for work, trade, tourism, marriages)	61%	37%
HOW LIKELY IS THE REPETITION OF ARMED CONFLICTS AT THE RUSSIAN-CHINESE BORDER, SIMILAR TO WHAT HAPPENED AT DAMANSKII ISLAND IN 1969--In 10 years from now?	39%	22%
HOW TYPICAL DO YOU FIND THE FOLLOWING QUALITIES AMONG ETHNIC CHINESE--They are AGGRESSIVE?	76%	62%
REGARDING CHINESE MIGRATION IN PRIMORSKII KRAI, WOULD YOU SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING POLICY RESPONSE: Permanent legal residency rights for the Chinese ?	12%	29%

-Light gray color marks an increase in positive attitudes toward migration and border relations.

-Gray color marks an increase in negative attitudes toward migration and border relations.

explain.<sup>10</sup>

A paired sample t-test was performed using PASW 18.0 software (formerly SPSS) to determine if individual responses on these questions changed more than they could have done by chance alone.<sup>11</sup> This is a powerful technique because it compares changes per each respondent rather than simply comparing aggregate distributional properties for the totality of respondents. It thus corrects for the problem that certain small aggregate changes in response distributions may be statistically significant, while certain larger changes may be random. For example, a one or two percentage point change on one question may be significant, but a three or four percentage point change on a different question may not be so. The paired sample t-test allows one to avoid such an erroneous conclusion. This point will be illustrated when the results are discussed.

The principal finding is that on eight of the ten measures in the test, the change in attitude on Chinese migration and border relations was statistically significant and on six of those measures the attitudes became more positive (see Table 1). Most importantly, fear of territorial conflict over border disputes – and especially armed conflict similar to the intense battles over Damanskii Island in 1969 – has declined. Despite lingering suspicion of Chinese intent to claim Russian territory in Primorskii – 76% of respondents in 2005 still feared such claims – most respondents no longer associated cross-

<sup>10</sup> They need not be confused with the control variables, most of which are based on aggregate statistics or reported behavior, that are listed at the end of the previous section that, strictly speaking, are independent or intervening variables in the analysis.

<sup>11</sup> This statistical procedure compares the means of two variables for the same group of respondents. For each respondent (case) it computes the difference between the two variables. It then computes the average difference, the 95% confidence interval and tests if this average difference is significantly different from zero (i.e., whether it falls within the 95% confidence interval). Thus, this powerful technique can only be used to assess changes over time in public opinion if the respondents in two consecutive surveys are the same, as is the case in our 2000-2005 Primorskii project.

border migration with the threat to territorial integrity. In the largest attitude shift across the two surveys, the number of respondents who feared that Chinese migrants coming for work, trade, tourism, or marriage would inundate the region and claim Russian territories as their own dropped almost by half – from 61% in 2000 to 37% in 2005. The public sense that Chinese migration was a creeping “peacetime infiltration” threatening Russia’s security and territorial integrity was a prevailing public mood in 2000, but no longer so in 2005. This 24% decline was larger than the 19% increase in the number of respondents who became more suspicious that China may still take away Russian territory by other means – namely, by force (19% in 2000 to 26% in 2005) or diplomacy (from 24% in 2000 to 36% in 2005). These opinion shifts in the opposite direction among various groups of respondents explain why a slight decline – from 78% to 76% – in the number of respondents who feared China would enlarge its territory at the expense of Primorskii was statistically significant.

These perceptual shifts dovetail with changes in the regional political context. They also suggest that it is not only the formal interstate border dispute resolution that matters, but the domestic political debates about the dispute resolution process, and the costs and benefits. And in the case of the Russian Far East, this translates into the nature of center-periphery relations. The arrival of Putin’s “power vertical” knocked the wind out of the bargaining game in which provincial leaders accuse Moscow of betraying national security interests so as to boost their own patriotic credentials at Moscow’s expense. Thus, the decoupling of migration from border disputes followed the change of tone at the Primorskii government offices after the ouster of the jingoistic governor Evgenii Nazdratenko and his replacement with the pragmatic Sergei Darkin in mid-2001 who instantly stated his loyalty to Putin. Some of these public debates continued and were most likely captured in 2000-2005 attitude changes. But absent center-periphery bargaining, these effects were significantly smaller than positive attitude shifts. The 12-percent increase in the number of respondents who feared that Russia might cede disputed border territories to China through bilateral agreements most likely reflected the publicity over the ratification in May 2005 of the final border settlement between Russia and China in the eastern part of the border. Leaving aside the complexities of territorial divisions, the Russian public became agitated by the fact that, according to the treaty, the almost equal division of approximately 375 square kilometers along less than 2% of the length of the Russia-China border, Russia lost sovereignty over parts of Bolshoi Ussuriiskii Island and the entire Tarabarov Island near Khabarovsk, a large city and the capital of the Russian Far Eastern Federal District.<sup>12</sup> In an interview on the pro-government national radio network Maiak, piped in every Russian home through a system of landlines originating in Stalin’s USSR, Russia’s special representative to the border talks with China, Vitalii Vorobiev, was persistently asked about the negative consequences of the border demarcation in the Russian Far East. Even Vorobiev’s response that most of the land ceded to China was swampland, elicited a comeback from the anchor mirroring public suspicions and insecurities:

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<sup>12</sup> The 7% rise in the number of respondents believing China may use force in territorial disputes is considerably smaller and is also consistent with anxieties over the division of border territories following the May 2005 ratification of the same border treaty.

People will say, yes, it's just swampland, but it used to be our Russian swampland, and now we gave it away to the Chinese. Others will look at China and will also confront us with territorial claims. Will there be enough swamps for all of them?<sup>13</sup>

Negative ethnic stereotypes of Chinese migrants continued to prevail, but they have softened significantly. In 2005, the number of respondents in Primorskii who considered aggressiveness as a typical personality trait of ethnic Chinese migrants declined by 14% compared to 2000 (i.e., from 76% to 62%).

Also consistent with the diminution of threat and negative stereotyping has been the increase in the number of respondents who advocated more acceptant migration policies. In particular, the number of respondents supporting the wholesale granting of permanent legal residency rights to Chinese migrants in Primorskii Krai more than doubled between surveys – from 12% in 2000 to 29% in 2005.

To summarize thus far, we observe a significant qualitative correlation between public opinion on migration and the politics of border demarcation – including the critical dimensions of threat, intergroup bias, and policy preferences. A particularly strong result – the decline of the “peaceful infiltration” view of Chinese migration in the Russian Far East (RFE) – is *prima facie* evidence of the importance of border issues framing in local political discourses. Though mistrust, threat and hostility were still predominant among respondents in 2005, it may be worth considering that against this negative perceptual background the shift toward a more positive perception of migrants is even more significant than it appears.

### **Border Location: Disassociated from the Threat of Migration**

While we saw that border demarcation at the interstate level mattered, what about location of respondents in counties that share a land border with China? Does such location systematically affect changes in migration attitudes, and, if so, how? On the one hand, residents in border counties could be suspicious about China's long-term intentions and they may have viewed the ratification of the 2005 border agreement as setting a precedent for further territorial concessions. While the final demarcation of disputed territories was in Khabarovskii Krai, geographic proximity to that province and similarity of substantive issues could have reminded residents in Primorskii of disputes over territories in its own province and raised fears that China may someday revive them. On the other hand, the sense of the growing strength of central authority under Putin combined with the Kremlin's approval of the border treaty could have made Primorskii border county residents feel more secure that Moscow would transfer no more territories to China.

To test this, the survey sample was stratified by location. Of the 387 respondents in the 2000-2005 sample, 225 lived in counties bordering directly in China – 80 in Dalnerechensk County,

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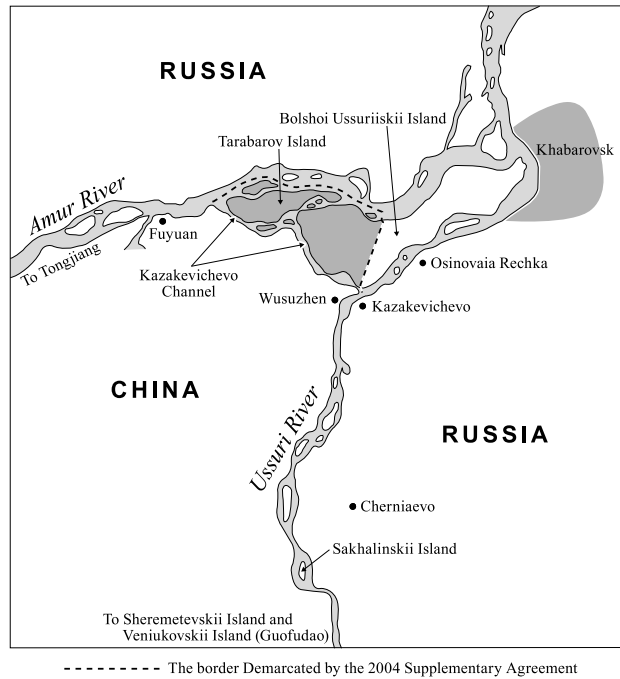
<sup>13</sup> Elena Shchedrunova, “Gde proidet granitsa s Kitaem?” [Where will be the border with China?], *Radio Maiak*, May 20, 2005, 1804 MSK.

79 in Ussuriisk County, and 66 in Khasan County. Of the remaining 162 respondents 37 came from the Artem municipal area, 52 from Vladivostok, and 73 from Lazo County. Based on this, the border location variable was computed, coding location in the three border counties as “1” and in all other counties as “0.” A finer distinction was added to control for location of respondents on publicly disputed borders. Since Khasan and Dalnerechensk counties were the location of media-publicized border disputes with China in the 1990s and early 2000s they were coded as border disputed areas.

Pearson correlation (zero-order) was then estimated for border, disputed border, and each county/city location with survey items measuring views on migration and border issues. As shown in Table 2, the change on all statistically significant correlations was toward more positive views on migration. The perceived threat of armed conflict over border territories was no longer related to border location in 2005, except when respondents were asked if such conflict was possible 20 years into the future – but even that relationship was weaker than in 2000. Border location was not a significant correlate of the perceived Chinese claims to Russian territory in 2000 and it did not emerge as such in 2005. On migration policy, border location in 2005 was no longer significantly related to anti-migrant exclusionism. In 2000, respondents in border counties – more so than in other parts of Primorskii Krai – opposed the establishment of Chinatowns, granting legal residency rights to Chinese migrants and allowing Chinese language in the media and in school instruction. That was no longer the case in 2005.

Finally, regarding interethnic bias, border county residents were significantly more likely than residents elsewhere to believe that Chinese migrants were impolite in 2000, but not in 2005. More than that, in 2000, border county residents on average believed about as much as residents in non-border counties that the Chinese were typically aggressive. However, by 2005, the border county residents changed their perceptions significantly. They were now more likely than residents in non-border counties to view ethnic Chinese migrants as not aggressive.

The summary of this test is clear and simple. If the relationship between border location and migration attitudes changed on a given issue, it was toward a more positive, less exclusionist view of migrants. And overall, border location was no longer a proxy for stronger-than-average anti-migrant hostility.



**Figure 2: 2004 Russia-China Border Demarcation**



**Table 2. Migration Attitudes in Primorskii Counties Bordering China** (Pearson correlation tests on border county location measures of attitudes toward migration and Russia-China border relations among respondents who took part in both the Primorskii 2000 and 2005 surveys, N=387)

Survey Questions:	2000	2005
Likelihood of armed conflict over border disputes now	.180**	n/s
Likelihood of armed conflict over border disputes in 10 years	.288**	n/s
Likelihood of armed conflict over border disputes in 20 years	.398**	.136*
Suspicion that the Chinese see Primorskii as their territory	n/s	n/s
Intent of China to expand its territory	n/s	n/s
--through conquest by force	n/s	n/s
--through negotiating process and interstate agreements	n/s	n/s
--through "peaceful infiltration" (migration)	n/s	n/s
Allowing Chinatowns in Primorskii	-.183**	n/s
Granting Chinese migrants legal residency rights	-.264**	n/s
Allowing public use of Chinese language (media, schools)	-.188**	n/s
Chinese being typically polite	-.283**	n/s
Chinese being typically aggressive	n/s	-.148*

NOTES: Positive correlation coefficients indicate that border county residents were more likely to hold a given view than non-border county residents; negative correlation coefficients indicate that border county residents were less likely to hold a given view than non-border county residents.

n/s = not statistically significant; \* = correlation statistically significant at the 95% confidence level ( $p < .05$ ); \*\* = correlation statistically significant at the 99% confidence level ( $p < .01$ )

-Light gray marks an increase in positive attitudes toward migration and border relations in border counties relative to non-border counties.

-Uncolored areas mean no change in attitudes toward migration and border relations in border counties relative to non-border counties.

### Chinese Migration Rates: No Longer Correlates of Hostility

This study also examined whether the scale and composition of Chinese migration conceivably affected changes in migration attitudes in Primorskii Krai from 2000 to 2005. Because precise counts of Chinese migrants in the region are unavailable and because migration may affect perceptions in different ways, multiple indicators of the Chinese presence in Primorskii were designed and tested to maximize the probability of capturing its effect on perceptions. The first group of indicators is the Russian census estimates of the number of Chinese migrants in Primorskii counties and cities in 1989 and 2002. Whereas typically viewed as a significant undercount of their actual numbers, the census estimates are arguably reliable proxies for variation in migration scale within Primorskii unless one can prove that the reasons for the undercount in the census varied systematically and non-randomly across the province. This case is hard to make, since the sources of the undercount appeared to be uniform across Primorskii counties – i.e., departure of traders and laborers to China during the time of the census, seasonal fluctuations in migrant flows, and concealment of migrant residents in private or corporate lodgings. For the statistical analysis of the questions examined here the actual scale of migration does not matter, as long as variation across counties and cities (cases in the survey dataset) reasonably approximates the real world. Five such proxy indicators were estimated – the number of Chinese nationals by city/county in 1989; the same for 2002; the difference between 1989 and 2002; the same difference per capita by survey location;

and the percentage-point change of the number of Chinese nationals from 1989 to 2002. It might appear that one major limitation of this measure is the time frame – it records a long-term change that does not begin and end with the “treatment” period in our study. However, this concern is mitigated by the fact that population shifts typically take time to generate significant perceptual effects and, in fact, one may even argue that a longer time perspective would be more indicative. One way or another, this consideration certainly does not invalidate the utility of using census data from those years in the statistical tests.

The second group of indicators replicates the same demographic data for ethnic Koreans. The third group does the same for the Chinese and Koreans combined. The majority of the Korean population in Primorskii at the time under analysis were ethnic Koreans who in the late 1980s and early 1990s returned from Central Asia where they had been exiled in the 1930s under Stalin, with the rest representing ethnic Korean cross-border migrants from the northeastern provinces of China (most of them Chinese citizens), North Korean migrant workers and tourists, and South Korean tourists and businessmen. While ethnic Korean returnees were significantly better assimilated into Russian society, the impact of this factor on local migration attitudes is ambiguous and this study treated it as an empirical question, examining correlations between migration attitudes and multiple measures of the Korean presence in Primorskii. The rationale for this is at least two-fold. First, it controls for the argument that host populations react to faces they see in public, not to the stated ethnicity of migrants. Therefore, those who confuse ethnic Koreans and Chinese on sight and do not communicate with migrants would plausibly feel greater hostility toward the Chinese in areas with larger Korean populations.<sup>14</sup> Second, one needs to control for the “demographic shadow of China” argument – i.e., that ethnic Russians in Primorskii could attribute the influx of ethnic groups from East Asia predominantly to China as the migrant-sending state with the largest population.

The fourth group of indicators was the number of tourists who visited Primorskii Krai using tourist vouchers in 2004 – most of them being Chinese nationals who may not have been accounted for in the census data. According to Russia-China agreements, Chinese nationals could enter Russia’s border provinces on tourist vouchers without visas if they were on a certified tour group list.

Pearson’s correlation tests revealed that the measure most strongly and robustly related to all others – and to the principal measures of migration attitudes in Primorskii from 2000 to 2005 – was the difference in ethnic Chinese population per capita by city/county from 1989 to 2002. The correlation coefficients were statistically significant with eight out of ten measures of migration attitudes in either 2000 or 2005, or both. Other indicators fared poorly. For parsimony, the per capita change of the number of Chinese nationals from 1989 to 2002 was thus selected as the best available proxy for migration rates and used in the analysis reported in this section as well as in subsequent regression tests.

As in border location tests, Pearson correlation (zero-order) analysis was used to estimate the

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<sup>14</sup> In a stark confirmation of this point, throngs of angry ethnic Russians in Moscow attacked and injured numerous ethnic Central Asians while lashing out against migrants from the Caucasus in December 2010, following the killing of an ethnic Russian Spartak Moscow soccer club fan by a member of one of Dagestan’s ethnic groups.

association of Chinese migration scale with the ten survey items measuring views on migration and border issues. The test reveals that in the 2000 survey respondents living in areas with higher per capita rates of Chinese migration were, on the whole, more likely to hold paranoid, exclusionist views on migration and border relations than residents in survey locations with lower per capita migration rates. This, for the most part, was no longer the case in 2005 (Table 3).

The perceived threat of armed conflict in 20 years was no longer higher in cities and counties with the larger increase in per capita Chinese migration rates. The most telling change was on policy preferences. By 2005, residence in higher Chinese migration areas no longer translated into exclusionist policy preferences – namely, opposition to Chinatowns, to legal residency rights for Chinese migrants, and to Chinese language use in schools and the media. Moreover, it appears that the contact hypothesis – positing that prolonged intergroup contact reduces intergroup hostility – is supported. In the 2000 survey, respondents who lived in areas with higher increases in Chinese migrants per capita than other areas were significantly more likely to view ethnic Chinese as impolite. In 2005, the same respondents in the same locales viewed ethnic Chinese as polite.

A particularly interesting case is the shift of views on how China may expand its sovereignty over territories in Primorskii Krai. At first glance, it seems that most opinion change on this question has been toward alarmist attitudes. Residential areas with higher Chinese migration rates were associated with the threat of territorial loss through interstate agreements in 2005 – something that was not the case in 2000. And in 2005 residences in higher-migration areas were no longer associated with fear that migration was a “peacetime infiltration” of Russia and that it would lead to territorial losses to China. Both shifts, however, are consistent with the changing socio-political context in Primorskii Krai. The former is plausibly linked to public concern about handing over Russian lands as part of the final eastern sector border settlement with China in May 2005, discussed in the previous section of this paper. The latter most likely reflects the decline in the belief in Primorskii Krai as a whole that Chinese migration was hostile a “peacetime infiltration.” It is not therefore that the residents of higher-migration areas became less immune to this view, but that the residents of lower-migration areas became more immune to this view. It is not that the higher-migration area residents sank down to the level of residents elsewhere on this issue, but it is that residents elsewhere became more secure and rose to the level of the higher-migration area residents.

An additional correlation test showed that Primorskii residents in areas where the number of Chinese nationals per capita grew more rapidly from 1989 to 2002 consistently had a less alarmist view about the scale of Chinese migration. The perceived Chinese migration levels indeed remained inflated throughout Primorskii Krai with a modal response in 2005 putting the share of Chinese nationals in the province at about 20% (careful counts by this author using local migration service data indicated there were fewer than 1.5% of Chinese on any given day in Primorskii at about that time). This inflated perception changed little since 2000, and individuals who felt that the proportion of Chinese migrants increased from 2000 to 2005 also believed armed border clashes were more likely and expressed less support for Chinatowns and granting legal residence status to Chinese migrants. It is symptomatic, however, that alarmism about a Chinese “swamping” of local populations was less pronounced in survey locations where the actual number of Chinese migrants

**Table 3. Relationship between Chinese Migration Rates and Migration Attitudes** (Pearson correlations between difference in the number of Chinese ethnics per capita change from 1989 to 2002 and measures of attitudes toward migration and Russia-China border relations among respondents who took part in both the Primorskii 2000 and 2005 surveys, N=387)

Survey Questions:	2000	2005
Likelihood of armed conflict over border disputes now	n/s	n/s
Likelihood of armed conflict over border disputes in 10 years	n/s	n/s
Likelihood of armed conflict over border disputes in 20 years	.282**	n/s
Suspicion that the Chinese see Primorskii as their territory	n/s	n/s
Intent of China to expand its territory	n/s	n/s
--through conquest by force	.151*	n/s
--through negotiating process and interstate agreements	n/s	.213**
--through "peaceful infiltration" (migration)	-.144*	n/s
Allowing Chinatowns in Primorskii	-.130*	n/s
Granting Chinese migrants legal residency rights	-.161*	n/s
Allowing public use of Chinese language (media, schools)	-.145*	n/s
Chinese being typically polite	-.179*	.187**
Chinese being typically aggressive	n/s	n/s

NOTES: Positive correlation coefficients indicate that residents in areas with more Chinese migrants per capita were more likely to hold a given view than residents in areas with fewer Chinese migrants per capita; negative correlation coefficients indicate that residents in areas with more Chinese migrants per capita were less likely to hold a given view than residents in areas with fewer Chinese migrants per capita.

n/s = not statistically significant; \* = correlation statistically significant at the 95% confidence level ( $p < .05$ ); \*\* = correlation statistically significant at the 99% confidence level ( $p < .01$ )

-Light gray marks an increase in positive attitudes toward migration and border relations in cities/counties with higher rates of Chinese migration.

-Dark gray marks an increase in negative attitudes toward migration and border relations in cities/counties with higher rates of Chinese migration.

-Uncolored areas mean no change in attitudes toward migration and border relations in cities/counties with higher rates of Chinese migration.

was higher. This means that migration affects attitudes multi-dimensionally and indirectly – through personal interactions and economic impacts – which, in turn, likely affect estimates of migration scale.

The broader picture emerging from this test (Table 3) is similar to what we observed with respect to border location. Most changes in views on Chinese migration were in the positive direction. And residency in areas with the larger net influx of Chinese migrants was no longer a proxy for stronger anti-migrant views in 2005 compared to 2000.

Moreover, social characteristics of Chinese migrants did not change significantly enough between 2000 and 2005 to have possibly affected these attitude shifts in their own right. First, white collar migrants such as students and professionals – regarded most favorably by the local public and officials – continued to represent the smallest group of Chinese in Russia as late as 2008 and certainly a smaller group in 2005. Traders and laborers continued to be the majority of Chinese migrants in Russia.<sup>15</sup> Second, these groups among Chinese migrants are also the most socially visible – as local

<sup>15</sup> Maria Repnikova and Harley Balzer, "Chinese Migration to Russia: Missed Opportunities," *Eurasian Migration Papers*, No. 3 (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Kennan Institute, Comparative Urban Studies Project, 2010): 16-19.

residents observe them regularly in the streets and in the markets. Professionals, students, and other white collar migrants spend most of their time outside open public view, so one would have to record a disproportionately large rise in this category of migrants to make it as socially visible as their blue collar counterparts. Overall, a lack of significant knowledge-based industries (no Silicon Valley on the Amur), xenophobia, the underdevelopment of Russia's education system and the "push" factor (Russian students and specialists themselves want to leave rather than remain in Russia) precluded substantial shifts in the social composition of Chinese migration to the Russian Far East in the first decade of the 2000s.<sup>16</sup>

### **Multivariate Results: Age, Location, and Personality Matter**

Whereas border location and migration levels are clearly associated with major changes in migration attitudes in Primorskii from 2000 to 2005, our results so far do not necessarily imply that border location and migration levels *per se* – and not other factors – actually accounted for these attitude changes.

To investigate this, three procedures were deployed. First, new variables were computed measuring how much each respondent changed their views from 2000 to 2005 on the probability of armed border clashes in ten years; China's intent to advance territorial claims; the likelihood of China eventually acquiring territory in Primorskii Krai – and, if so, doing this through conquest, migration ("peacetime infiltration"), or diplomacy; support for Chinatowns; support for residency rights for Chinese migrants; and the perception of politeness and aggressiveness of ethnic Chinese.

Second, Pearson correlation tests for these variables were performed with border location, net influx of ethnic Chinese by city/county, and socio-demographic characteristics of respondents such as age, gender, education, and income.<sup>17</sup> Indicators were flagged that correlated significantly (within 95% confidence level, one-tailed) with at least one measure of migration attitudes change listed in the previous paragraph.

Third, a hierarchical ordinary least-squares regression was used to examine the effect of the statistically significant correlates identified in the previous step on each of the migration attitudes.

Three additional control variables were computed and used in regression tests. The first item captures the effect of personal life outlook (optimism vs. pessimism) on migration views. It is based on the question asked in 2005 whether respondents felt their lives in general were getting better or worse, or about the same.<sup>18</sup> The second control measure was the number of times respondents visited

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>17</sup> For education a binary variable was used to distinguish between respondents who had attended at least two years of college by 2005 and all others. Income was based on respondents' valuation of their household income in rubles in the 2005 survey.

<sup>18</sup> Research on immigration attitudes in the United States suggests that optimism – particularly when tied to positive national economic outlook – typically reduces anti-immigrant hostility. For example see: Peter Burns and James G. Gimpel, "Economic Insecurity, Prejudicial Stereotypes, and Public Opinion on Immigration Policy," *Political Science Quarterly*, 1 (2000): 3-25. Considering that the Russian economy was in decline for a

China prior to 2000, prior to 2005 and between 2000 and 2005. The latter was used to determine how much of the attitude shift toward Chinese migration could be attributed to the cumulative effect of cross-border travel of Russian respondents. The third control measure was perception of military balance between Russia and China in 2000 compared to 2005, to check if migration attitudes shifted due to changing perceptions of military power balance that conceivably could have had an impact on the general threat perception.

The added value of the multiple regression test is that it examines the effects of each explanatory variable on the outcome variable while holding all other explanatory variables (including control variables in individual tests) constant – for example, we can find out how much education level relates to support for Chinatowns assuming all other characteristics of respondents or their location are equal. In this test, statistically significant coefficients mean that any given variable relates to the outcome variable with a 95% confidence level or above regardless of the effect of other variables. In our example, this means that if education shows up as a significant predictor of support for Chinatowns, it means this relationship holds regardless of whether a more highly educated respondent in the sample has a higher or lower income or lives in Vladivostok or Dalnerechensk. The hierarchical aspect of the test is that variables were entered in two blocks – the first block was location of respondents and the second block was socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and control variables (optimism, military balance, and travel to China). The relative impact of each block is statistically estimated with adjusted R-square change that is reported for each test. This value tells us how much variation in the outcome variable was explained by the second block of variables. Subtracting this value from the adjusted R-square total provides the measure of the total impact of the first block of variables (location of respondents). Ten models were tested – each model per one dependent variable (measure of attitude change toward Chinese migration and border security). Each model included all explanatory variables. As far as the control variables, the measure of optimism was used in all regression models given its theoretical significance and test results in other contexts. The other two control measures were entered in models where they had significant zero-order correlations with the dependent variable in preliminary tests.<sup>19</sup>

Table 4 reports the results. As a convention, unstandardized multiple regression coefficients ( $\beta$ 's) are reported. They estimate how much a one-unit change in each causal variable affects the change in the outcome variable. This depends on how these variables are coded. The sign of the

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decade preceding the 2000 survey, it then enjoyed a sustained 8-percent average annual growth in the five years leading to the 2005 survey, it is plausible that this reversal of national economic trends would account for immigration attitude shifts. Other studies found that while economic motivations matter they are not necessarily decisive, e.g., Jack Citrin, Donald P. Green, Christopher Muste and Cara Wong, "Public Opinion Toward Immigration Reform: The Role of Economic Motivators," *The Journal of Politics*, 59 (1997): 858-81. Notably, the 2005 survey measure used in the tests is broader than merely economic perceptions because it asks about "life in general" and thus includes a significant personality dimension in addition to instrumental assessments of economic climate and trends.

<sup>19</sup> This selective inclusion was done to mitigate overloading the model with an excessive number of independent variables that have no statistical relationship with the outcome variable – this inflates the R-square and may be misinterpreted as explaining more than the model does.

Table 4. Regression of Change in Migration Attitudes from 2000 to 2005 on Selected Predictors

Predictors	Models									
	Model 1 Threat of armed clashes over border	Model 2 China views Primorskii as Chinese land	Model 3 China intends to claim territory	Model 4 -through military conquest	Model 5 -through "peaceful infiltration"	Model 6 -through diplomacy	Model 7 Allow Chinatowns	Model 8 Allow legal residence of Chinese	Model 9 Chinese are aggressive	Model 10 Chinese are polite
Chinese border county	-.662*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.664**
Vladivostok	-	-.300*	-.274*	-	-	-	1.262***	-	-	-
Artem	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dalnerchensk	-	-	-.223*	-.299*	-	-	-	-	-	.898***
Education (college)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.580*	-.385*	-.410*	-
Gender (female)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.372**	-	-
Age (older)	-	-.005*	-.008*	-	-.011*	-	-	-	-.022***	-
Family income (2005)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.75E-5*	-	9.134E-5*
Optimism	.377*	-	-	-	.260**	-	-.517**	-	.377**	-
Chinese migration (net change 1989-2002)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Visits to China 2000-2005	-	-	-	-	-.055*	-	.137*	-	-.097*	.086*
Russia-China military balance 2000-2005	-0.413**	-	-	-	-	-.126*	-	-	-	-
<i>R Square</i>	0.14	0.045	0.081	0.063	0.128	0.097	0.17	0.107	0.1	0.161
<i>Adj. R Square</i>	0.089	0.001	0.037	-0.012	0.051	0.01	0.138	0.075	0.063	0.128
<i>Adj R Square change</i>	0.041	-0.007	0.025	-0.014	0.07	-0.002	0.071	0.046	0.058	0.021

NOTES: Unstandardized regression coefficients reported for statistically significant relationships.

\* = relationship statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (p < .05); \*\* = relationship statistically significant at the 99% confidence level (p < .01); \*\*\* = relationship statistically significant at the 99.9% confidence level (p < .001).

-Light gray highlight means the predictors have a positive effect on attitudes toward Chinese migration (this is the function of the sign of regression coefficient and the distributional properties of the outcome variable in question).

coefficient also depends on how the variables are coded. These measures are important to assess causal-outcome variable dyads, but they cannot be straight forwardly used to assess the effects across variables. Thus, for example,  $\beta=0.5$  may describe a stronger relationship than  $\beta=0.75$  if the outcome variable in the former instance is coded on a 3-point scale and in the latter instance on a 6-point scale. The important indicators in the table are the color (based on variable coding) that identifies whether an increase in the causal variable translates into more positive or negative attitudes toward Chinese migration and the number of asterisks indicating the significance of the relationship (see Table 4 notes for details).

Six principal findings from multiple regression tests are noteworthy:

1. In all statistically significant relationships respondents had become more positive on Chinese migration and border issues (i.e., they are all marked light gray in Table 4).<sup>20</sup> This indicates that location mattered not in a sense that in some places attitudes became more negative while in others they became more positive, but in a sense that in some places positive change occurred more consistently than in others. The same applies to variation in the socio-demographic background of respondents. The test also strengthens the general finding of the earlier correlation and cross-tabulation analysis by border location and migration levels – namely, that change was taking place predominantly in the positive direction in locations where general attitudes had been negative over the previous decade. Such findings, in general, are consistent with broader, “tectonic” shifts in the public mood. In this sense they are consistent with the change of official discourses following changes in the Primorskii government position on border demarcation and the completion of the Russia-China border demarcation process in the Eastern sector in mid-2005. Importantly, when all location and socio-demographic variables were controlled, residence in high-migration counties was no longer significantly related to the shift toward more alarmist views on China’s territorial expansion through diplomacy or military force (see Table 3).
2. In terms of location, the most improvement in views of migration and border issues took place in two areas – the Primorskii capital of Vladivostok and the city and county of Dalnerechensk. No statistically significant change happened elsewhere. Vladivostok, the most populous metropolitan area within the province and the seat of the Primorskii governor, also experienced the highest influx of international – predominantly Chinese – tourists from 2000 to 2005 and was the area from which the largest number of local Russians travelled

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<sup>20</sup> This does not apply to the impact of changes in perceived military balance because they likely contributed to both more positive and more negative perceptions of Chinese migration issues. Respondents who felt that China became stronger relative to Russia from 2000 to 2005 also felt that armed conflict as well as ceding lands to China through diplomacy were more likely. However, for those who felt Russia became stronger, the net impact is most likely to be close to zero, based on the distributional properties of the control variable. Thus, among 300 respondents who answered the question in 2000 and 2005, the majority (53.3%) saw no change in Russia-China military balance, and the number of respondents who felt that either China or Russia got stronger (26.4% and 19.4%, respectively) was within the combined margin of the sampling error – meaning the difference of this magnitude could have occurred due to chance alone.



abroad, including a significant proportion going to China. Respondents there became significantly less concerned with the threat of China's territorial claims and prospects of China's territorial expansionism when compared with similar respondents elsewhere in the province. Vladivostok respondents also became more acceptant of Chinatowns. It is also understandable that the change of governors and the decline of the Primorskii-Moscow conflict over border issues resonated more in Dalnerechensk than elsewhere. This county was the site of brutal fighting over Damanskii Island in 1969 and also the staging ground of the former governor's campaigns against the federal policy of Russia-China border demarcation throughout the 1990s. The strongest evidence in this respect is the decline in the view among county residents that China may seize parts of Primorskii Krai using military force (Table 4, Model 3) – particularly since on average this view became more widespread in Primorskii (Table 1).

3. This test reveals that change in the per-capita net influx of ethnic Chinese from 1989 to 2002 had no statistically significant relationship with changes in respondents' attitudes on migration and border issues when other factors were controlled. This means that changes noted in Table 3 happened systematically more in some areas than in others and may have appeared to reflect changing migration levels, yet they were not systematically related to these changes in their own right. Once other factors were taken into account, the impact of the migration variable declined. This finding, however, is understandable given that these net migration rates were low (comprising less than 1% of the local population in most survey areas). They are also consistent with the extensive literature on immigration opinion studies and with specific earlier studies of the Russian views of Chinese migration in Primorskii Krai that found that perceptions of other issues rather than respondents' socio-demographic background or location were the key predictors.<sup>21</sup> This explanation is also consistent with the fact that regression models overall explained a rather small amount of variation in the dependent variable. At best, the models in the test – which did not use perceptions as predictors, but only location and socio-demographic characteristics of respondents – explained just under 14% of change in migration and border views in Primorskii from 2000 to 2005 (on Chinatowns and on the Chinese being typically polite). Whereas explaining 14% of variance is respectable in large-N survey research, the overall results strengthen the argument that changes in the political context of migration (including border demarcation) contributed to the migration attitude shift rather than the most plausible control variables.
4. Perhaps a counterintuitive finding is that college education was significantly related to change on only three out of eight measures of migration attitude change.<sup>22</sup> More robust predictors were age and optimism. Older and optimistic respondents were systematically

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<sup>21</sup> Mikhail A. Alexseev, "Economic Valuations and Interethnic Fears: Perceptions of Chinese Migration in the Russian Far East," *Journal of Peace Research* 40:1, January (2003): 89-106; Mikhail A. Alexseev and C. Richard Hofstetter, "Russia, China, and the Immigration Security Dilemma," *Political Science Quarterly*, Spring (2006): 1-32.

<sup>22</sup> Education levels both in 2000 and 2005 were tested for.

more likely than younger and pessimistic respondents to undergo positive change in attitudes on migration and border issues (Table 4, Models 1, 5, 7, and 9). The age factor is consistent with the putative effect of the “treatment” in this study. Older respondents were more likely to be politically socialized during the period when Sino-Russian relations were hostile or tense (1960-1988), to be initially more receptive to the former governor Nazdratenko’s xenophobic campaigning in the 1990s on border disputes and his warnings of Primorskii becoming “Sinified” and annexed. Yet, precisely because of that they were more likely to see Nazdratenko’s bargaining on border security with Moscow as destabilizing Primorskii security and to welcome the arrival of a strong central government that could conduct even-handed relations with China. The finding on optimism is interesting, because it was significant regardless of family income. This suggests this variable reflects personality more than the socioeconomic position of a respondent.

5. None of the geographic, socio-demographic, or behavioral measures – when all of them were controlled – related significantly to the change of the view on prospects of China acquiring territories in Primorskii Krai through diplomatic negotiations between the governments of China and Russia.<sup>23</sup> Yet, as Table 1 shows, attitudes changed significantly on this issue and became more alarmist reflecting concerns over the transfer of Russian land to other states after the news that the Russian State Duma ratified an agreement covering the eastern border with China in May 2005. The regression results imply that public reactions to these news reports drew on sentiments common to the local public regardless of their location or background. This interpretation is also consistent with the already noted findings of previous research on the dominance of perceptions (social psychology) over geographic and socio-economic context in migration attitudes – especially perceptions related to the strength of government authority, as suggested by the immigration security dilemma theory.<sup>24</sup>
6. When the number of times respondents visited China was included in the analysis, the hypothesis was that it could be an alternative explanation to migration attitude change – distinct and separate from the political context change bookended by the arrival of Putin’s “power vertical” and the ratification of the border treaty with China.<sup>25</sup> The tests revealed, however, that the relationship between visits to China and migration attitudes in itself was sensitive to the regional political context and thus most likely serves to confirm the principal hypothesis in this study. As it turned out, the number of times respondents visited China prior to 2000 (based on that year’s survey data) had no statistically significant relationship with any of the ten measures of migration attitude change from 2000 to 2005. But the number of times respondents visited China from 2000 to 2005 was related significantly to

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<sup>23</sup> The only statistically significant correlate was a perceptual variable (military balance), yet it most likely enhanced both positive and negative views of Chinese migration and related issues in about equal measure, as explained in the previous note.

<sup>24</sup> See especially Alexseev and Hofstetter, “Russia, China, and the Immigration Security Dilemma.”

<sup>25</sup> The author would like to thank one of the anonymous reviewers of the original manuscript for the suggestion to check for this alternative explanation.

four such measures. Given that regression tests reveal controlled correlation but not causation, we may infer from the analysis that either Primorskii residents who visited China in the context of normalizing relations (but not in the context of alarmist regional government rhetoric) developed more positive attitudes toward Chinese migrants, or that they were actually more inclined to visit China because the political climate in the region changed. One way or another, the significant associations of visits to China with migration attitudes in Models 5, 7, 9, and 10 (Table 4) are consistent with the positive effect of border dispute resolution under a stronger federal government authority in Russia – more so than with the argument that visits to China in and of themselves could be a crucial driver of changes in a person’s attitude to migration.

## Conclusion

These findings have implications for research on borders, migration, and intergroup relations. Overall, the analysis supports earlier research showing that border disputes are a significant predictor of immigration attitudes. With respect to social science theories, the findings show little support for essentialist interpretations – particularly the finding that interpretation of the typical traits of ethnic Chinese changed over time contextually. With respect to social categorization theory, the implications are not straightforward. Shifts in ethnic traits are not necessarily consistent with its emphasis on the role of group markers – “cleaving and comparing” – in the formation of ethnic hostilities. However, if we interpret the interstate border itself as an intergroup marker – plausible in the Russia-China case – then the relationship between the diminution of border disputes and improving attitudes toward Chinese migrants is consistent with the theory. Theories linking interethnic conflict to “realistic” competition for resources and status, however, have little support in the tests, showing that at the very least socioeconomic conditions are moderated significantly by personality traits such as optimism and political context. The level of optimism, in the meantime, had no significant correlation with family income. The local context also shows that these theories have limited explanatory reach in contexts where the actual scale of migration is low, as has been the case in the Russian Far East.

The results largely confirm the contact hypothesis, particularly the improvement in attitudes toward Chinese migration and border issues in Vladivostok – and, by extension, the “defended neighborhood” theory’s claim that after protracted contact hostilities decrease following the arrival of migrants. The limitations of this study preclude a test of the other aspect of the latter theory – namely, the rise in hostility in response to the initial influx of migrants into ethnically homogenous areas. On the one hand, a lack of relationship between the net influx of Chinese and interethnic hostility runs against the “defended neighborhood” predictions. On the other hand, the theory is developed with respect to hate crimes – and this may not apply to changes in opinion.

Regarding the immigration security dilemma, the overall finding that border dispute resolution combined with the diminution of the political confrontation between the province and the federal government uphold the theory’s central premise – i.e., that perceptions of “anarchy” are crucial in the formation of anti-immigrant views. The study, however, shows that these effects are not

necessarily direct and automatic, that individuals may emphasize some aspects of “anarchy” more than others and change their views accordingly. The decline of threat perception and improvement of views about the Chinese migrants in the county of Dalnerechensk – as well as the decline in the “peaceful infiltration” view of migration – are the strongest indicators of the explanatory power of this theoretical approach.

Finally, the findings are strengthened by other polls on the Russians’ perceptions of China. Nationwide surveys conducted by the reputable and, for the most part, independent FOM (*Fond Obshchestvennoye Mneniia* [Public Opinion Foundation]) show that the improvement in attitudes toward migration in Primorskii happened *despite* worsening attitudes toward China as a state in Russia as a whole for most of the period between 2000 and 2005 when surveys were conducted. It means that when local political context is conducive to interstate border agreements, geopolitical apprehensions in other parts of the migrant-receiving state take second place. Thus, in Russia’s nationwide samples of 1,600 respondents interviewed by FOM, 67% considered China a friendly country in November 2002, but only 48% shared this view in March 2006. The reverse was also true – only 18% of the FOM Russia sample saw China as an unfriendly state in November 2002, but 30% did so in March 2006. After that perceptions became more positive. By October 2009 about 60% of Russians in the same FOM surveys viewed China as a friendly state. Thus, the disproportionately low dip in the assessments of China around the time of the border treaty ratification in 2005 still failed to preclude attitudes toward Chinese migration from improving in Primorskii Krai.<sup>26</sup> One plausible explanation of this, inferred from the Primorskii 2005 poll, is that the decreasing sense of vulnerability in the face of Chinese migration had to do with local perceptions of the increasing strength of central government authority under Putin – manifest in the integration of Russia’s Federal Migration Service under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the reincorporation of the border guard service under the FSB (Federal Security Bureau), the increased funding for these agencies, and the designation of border security zones in the borderland counties such as Khasan. According to the survey, about 47% of local respondents believed that Putin’s reforms of center-periphery relations significantly strengthened federal government authority in the regions, while only 18% said these reforms weakened Moscow’s powers.

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<sup>26</sup> Fond Obshchestvennogo Mneniia [Public Opinion Foundation], *Dominanty* [Key Indicators], 43, October 29 (2009): 17.