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“Sweet and Sour” of Female Migrants from the Russian Far East into Northeastern China: A Pilot Study

ABSTRACT

Cross-border migration has been characterized with a rapidly growing proportion of female migrants worldwide. Feminization of this phenomenon has become a major trend in the global migration process since the 1980s. Attending to gender issues is analytically productive, and can lead to a deeper analysis of how social and institutional transformations take place. Governments, NGOs and international agencies have been pooling their resources to address this issue. Although a few studies on cross-border migration from Northeastern China into Russian Far East have been conducted, they primarily focus on international relations, politics, economics, sociology and few have investigated the feminization of cross-border migration in this region, which is an urgent and important issue under current post-socialist contexts. In Russia, gender has been re-politicized in the transition from socialism to the market economy. Under these circumstances, women are blamed for family crises, and rapid demographic decline. Cross-border migration of women has thus become a sensitive topic at various levels. This pilot study is designed to find out to what extent and scale cross-border female migration exists. I will network with scholars to find out about existing studies of Russian female migrants in China. I will also approach the local authorities and communities in both China and Russia to explore the feasibility of conducting future research on female cross-border migrants, in regions where uncertainties, complexities, and stark controversies abound. Heihe in China and Blagoveshchensk in Russia, cities that face each other across the Amur, will be selected for this study.