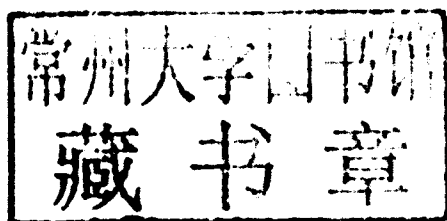


CHINESE MIGRANTS IN RUSSIA, CENTRAL ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE

Edited by Felix B. Chang and Sunnie T. Rucker-Chang

Chinese Migrants in Russia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe

**Edited by
Felix B. Chang and
Sunnie T. Rucker-Chang**



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Chinese Migrants in Russia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe

Much of the former Soviet bloc has become a destination for new Chinese migrants. Throughout Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Chinese migrants are engaged in entrepreneurial activities, primarily as petty merchants of consumer goods in unsteady economies. This book situates these migrants within the broader context of Chinese globalization and China's economic "rise." It traces the origins of Chinese migration into the region, as well as the conditions that have allowed migrants to thrive. Furthermore, it discusses the perception that Chinese globalization is purely economic and explores the relationship among petty merchants, laborers and institutional investors. Finally, by examining the movement of China's minorities into Central Asia, this book challenges the ethnic construct of new "Chinese" migration.

Felix B. Chang is Visiting Assistant Professor at University of Cincinnati College of Law, USA.

Sunnie T. Rucker-Chang has taught at Ohio State University, University of Akron, Xavier University, and Northern Kentucky University, USA.

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Abbreviations

BCHR	Belgrade Centre for Human Rights
CAR	Central Asian Republic
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCT	China Central Television
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute (Norway)
CNPC	China National Petroleum Corporation
FOM	Public Opinion Foundation (Russia)
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992–2003)
ICMI	International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (Bulgaria)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs (Kazakhstan)
NKVD	People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (the secret police during the Soviet Union)
PRC	People's Republic of China
RAS	Russian Academy of Sciences
RFE	Russian Far East
RMB	<i>renminbi</i> , the Chinese currency
RP	Radical Party (Serbia)
SaM	Serbia and Montenegro (2003–2006)
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
<i>Sl. glasnik RS</i>	<i>Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije</i> (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia)
<i>Sl. list RCG</i>	<i>Službeni list Republike Crne Gore</i> (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro)
<i>Sl. list SCG</i>	<i>Službeni list Srbije i Crne Gore</i> (Official Gazette of Serbia and Montenegro)
<i>Sl. list SRJ</i>	<i>Službeni list Savezne Republike Jugoslavije</i> (Official Gazette of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)
<i>Sl. glasnik SRS</i>	<i>Službeni glasnik Socijalističke Republike Srbije</i> (Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Serbia)
SPS	Socialist Party of Serbia
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States dollars

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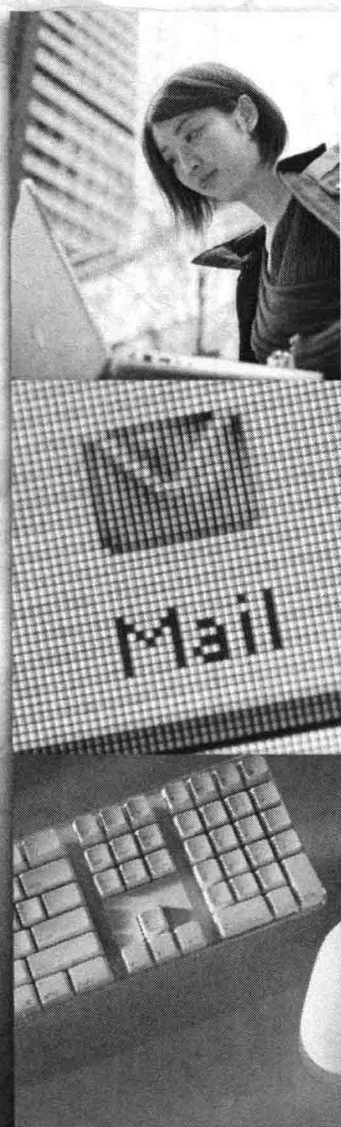
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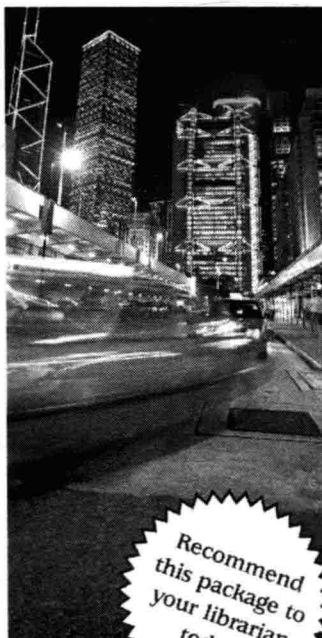
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Introduction: Globalization without gravitas

Chinese migrants in transition economies

Felix B. Chang

China today sends more of its citizens abroad and into more countries than ever before. Chinese businesses have come to dominate so many sectors in Africa—from construction to energy to telecommunications to commerce—that journalists, academics and policymakers across the world are speculating about the implications for development and human rights on the continent (Ghazvinian 2007; Rotberg 2008; Raine 2009). Similarly, though less visibly, Chinese merchants and laborers have been moving en masse into Russia, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe since the early 1990s, when the fall of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc turned post-Communist Eurasia into a free market free-for-all. A handful of scholars documented the emergence of these “new Chinese migrants” (*xin yimin*; generally, Chinese migrants from 1978 onward, particularly after the easing of emigration restrictions in 1985), analogizing them to conduits between the mighty production centers of China and the new consumers of Eastern Europe (Pieke 1998: 1; A. Larin 2003; Nyíri 2005: 155; 2007; V. Larin 2006).

Of course, Chinese migration into economies in turmoil draws from a long line of precedents. The Chinese were shopkeepers and laborers in Mexico during the Revolution of 1910–1917, Western Europe after World War I, Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution and Africa after decolonization (Thunø 1999; Saveliev 2002; Hu-DeHart 2005; Raine 2009). Yet the emergence of Chinese communities in today’s economic frontiers coincides with the “rise” of China as a global superpower—as a source not only of human capital, but also of cheap consumer goods and investment funds that can be efficiently manufactured or raised and expediently delivered. Indeed, news headlines across the world seem to be dominated by China’s forays into ever more unexpected parts of the world, whether through government-backed bids for well-known Western companies or through the sudden appearance of Chinese merchants in volatile consumer markets (Wilson 2008; Roberts and Balfour 2009). Underserved by domestic and multinational manufacturers, these markets are commonly located in post-conflict zones of Africa, Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe; they are not obvious destinations for Chinese migrants because of tremendous cultural gaps, but the Chinese have made it work, creating an efficient pipeline to bring products from the PRC to local consumers. All in all, we are witnessing a “globalization” of Chinese communities, particularly in far-flung corners of the world, by which