



Development of Red Tourism in the perspective of the Russian-Chinese economic cooperation

Desarrollo del *Turismo Rojo* en el contexto de la colaboración económica Ruso-China

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ABSTRACT:

The article is devoted to the study of the role and importance of Red tourism in the system of Russian-Chinese relations. The authors focus on the problems and difficulties in the development of programs in this area, related to the lack of a consolidated position of the parties. At the same time, special attention is paid to the study of the prospects and reasons for the rapid growth of the Chinese economy, in the structure of which tourism occupies a significant place. It is noted that the accelerated growth of China's GDP gives additional impulses to the development of the domestic consumer market of goods and services, the volumes of which are great and constantly increasing.

Keywords: Chinese tourism, Russian-Chinese relations, tourists market, Red tourism, red routes

RESUMEN:

El artículo está dedicado al estudio del rol e importancia del Turismo rojo en el sistema de las relaciones entre China y Rusia. Los autores prestan atención a los problemas y dificultades del desarrollo de los programas de esta corriente por la ausencia de una posición consolidada de las partes. Al mismo tiempo ellos han prestado una atención especial al estudio de las perspectivas y razones del crecimiento rápido de la economía china, donde el turismo desempeña una función importante. Se nota que el crecimiento acelerado del PIB de China provoca el desarrollo del mercado de consumo interno cuyos volúmenes son grandes y siguen creciendo.

Palabras clave: Turismo chino, relaciones entre China y Rusia, mercado de turismo, Turismo rojo, rutas rojas

1. Introduction

Modern China is a country with the diversified economy, in which the features of an innovative

and traditional economy are harmoniously combined. Over the past two decades, China's GDP has grown 6-fold and ensured the country's further economic recovery. China successfully implements social and cultural policies, including through large-scale international events such as the Summer Olympics in Beijing in 2008, the EXPO 2010 in Shanghai and others.

In addition, it should be highlighted that China's plans for the future are ambitious enough, as it is planned to reach the level of development comparable with highly developed countries by 2050. The declared economic guidelines, from the point of view of the Chinese leadership, fully coincide with the planned nature of the economy, which is growing markedly because of serious investment inflows coming from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, Singapore, and other countries and special administrative regions in China. The ethnic Chinese (huaqiao), which are traditionally mentally closely related to their historical homeland, mainly live there. According to different estimates, their contribution to the economy of the Celestial Empire is 60-80% of the amount of business deposits of all other countries of the world (Voskresensky, 2004).

2. Methodology

As a scientific tool for this study, the authors select such general scientific and special methods as the method of system analysis, the method of retrospective analysis, methods of expert evaluations.

The information base of the study is the statistical materials and analytical developments of the Federal Agency for Tourism of the Russian Federation (Rosturizm), research and design developments of the Research Institute of the Hospitality Industry named after G.V. Plekhanov; publications in authoritative domestic and foreign periodicals; electronic content of Russian and foreign Internet portals.

The research of independent research groups and companies, such as the consulting company O. Wyman (2017), the Chinese National Tourist Administration (CNTA), the Tourist Association "The World without Borders", and the materials of the forum "Red Way. Bridge of Friendship" (July 2017) are used in the article.

The basis of the study is also the data of the World Economic Forum. Based on the report on the competitiveness of tourism in different countries (The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017), a comparative analysis of the level of the tourism industry development in Russia and China has been conducted (Table 1).

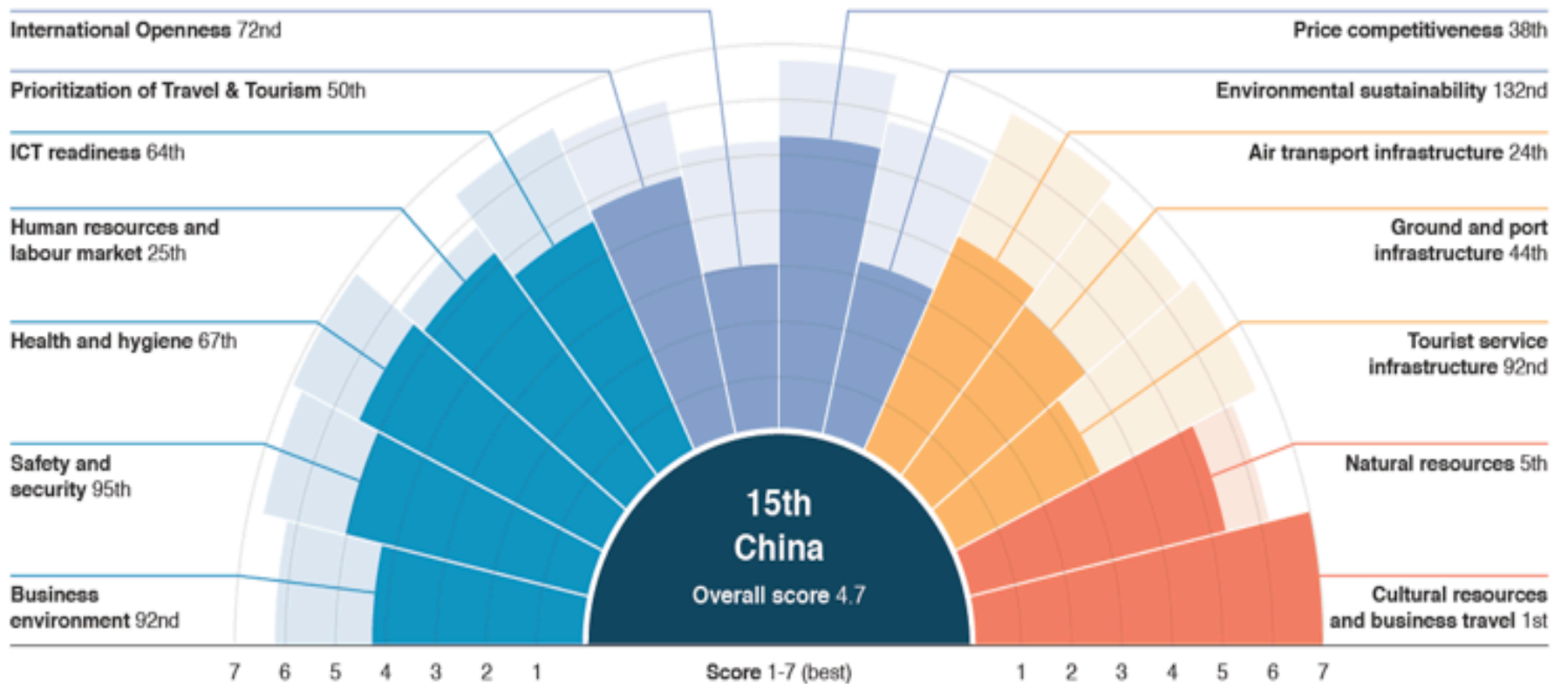
Table 1
Comparison of the tourism development

	China	Russian Federation
International tourist arrivals	56,885,700	31,346,486
International tourism inbound receipts	US \$114,109.4 million	US \$8,465.0 million
Average receipts per arrival	US \$ 2,005.9	US \$ 270.0
T&T industry GDP	US \$224,005.0 million	US \$17,855.8 million
% of total	2,1%	1,5%
T&T industry employment	22,489,600 jobs	973,503 jobs
% of total	2,9 %	1,4%

According to the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI), China ranks 15th in the world while Russia ranks 43th. The index is calculated based on the following qualitative parameters: Business environment, Health and hygiene, Human Resource and Labor Market, ICT readiness, Prioritization of Travel & Tourism, International Openness, Price Competitiveness, Environmental Sustainability, Air Transport Infrastructure, Ground and Port Infrastructure, Tourist Service Infrastructure, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources and Business Travel. Calculation and ranking of the index have been carried out for 136 countries. Scale for indicating the TTCI level is from 0 to 7 scores.

Tourism competitiveness of China and Russia according to these parameters in relation to the reference value is presented in Figures 1 and 2.

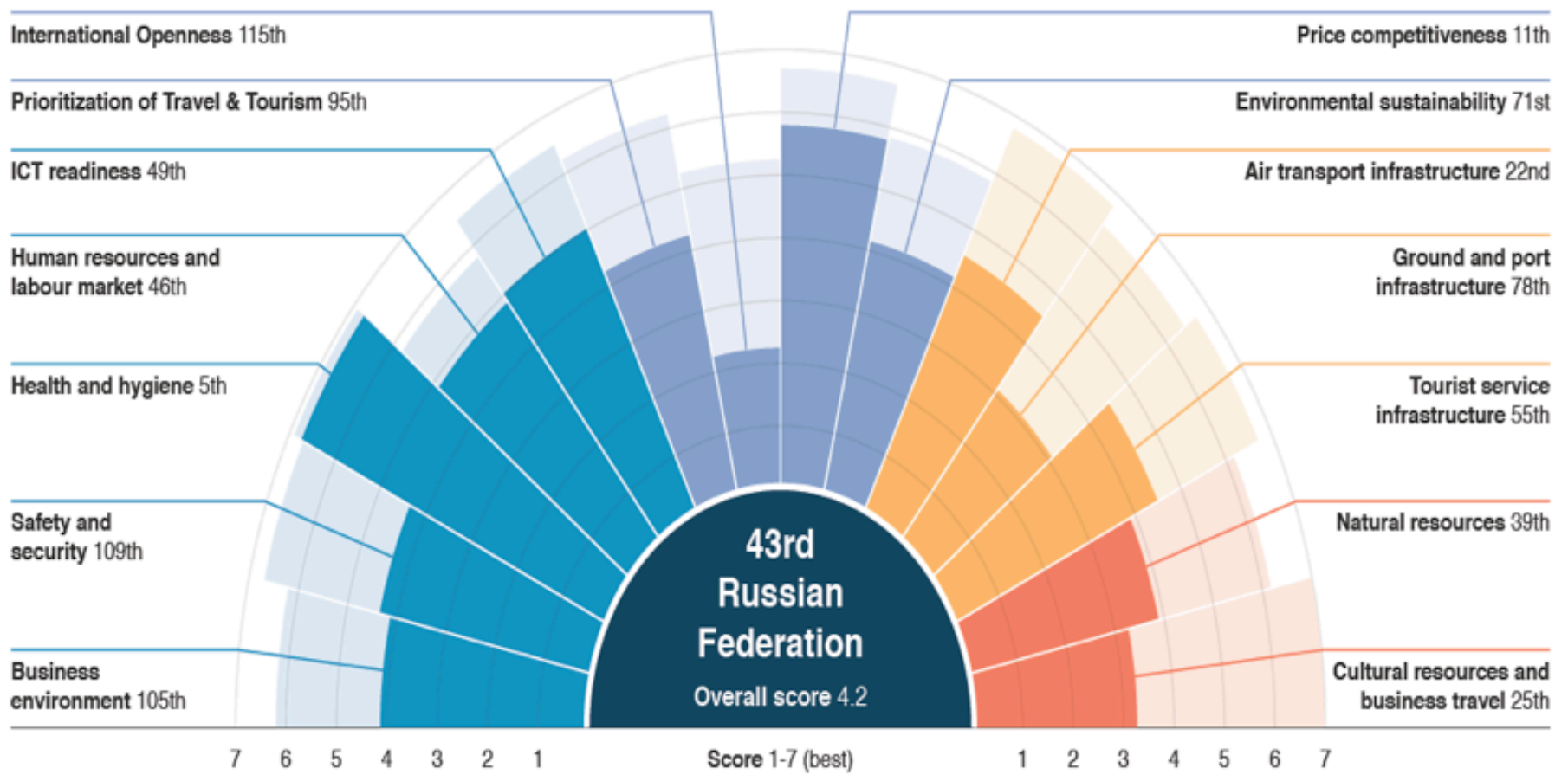
Figure 1
Potential for tourism development in China



Source: The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017,
The World Economic Forum <https://www.weforum.org>

Strong competitive advantages of tourism development in China are Cultural Resources and Business Travel, Price Competitiveness, Health and hygiene, Natural Resources. But special attention in the tourism industry development should be given to such parameters as Business environment, International Openness, Environmental Sustainability. Increasing the level of openness, maintaining a favorable business and the environment are the main directions of the Chinese policy of state regulation of this sector.

Figure 2
Potential for tourism development in Russia



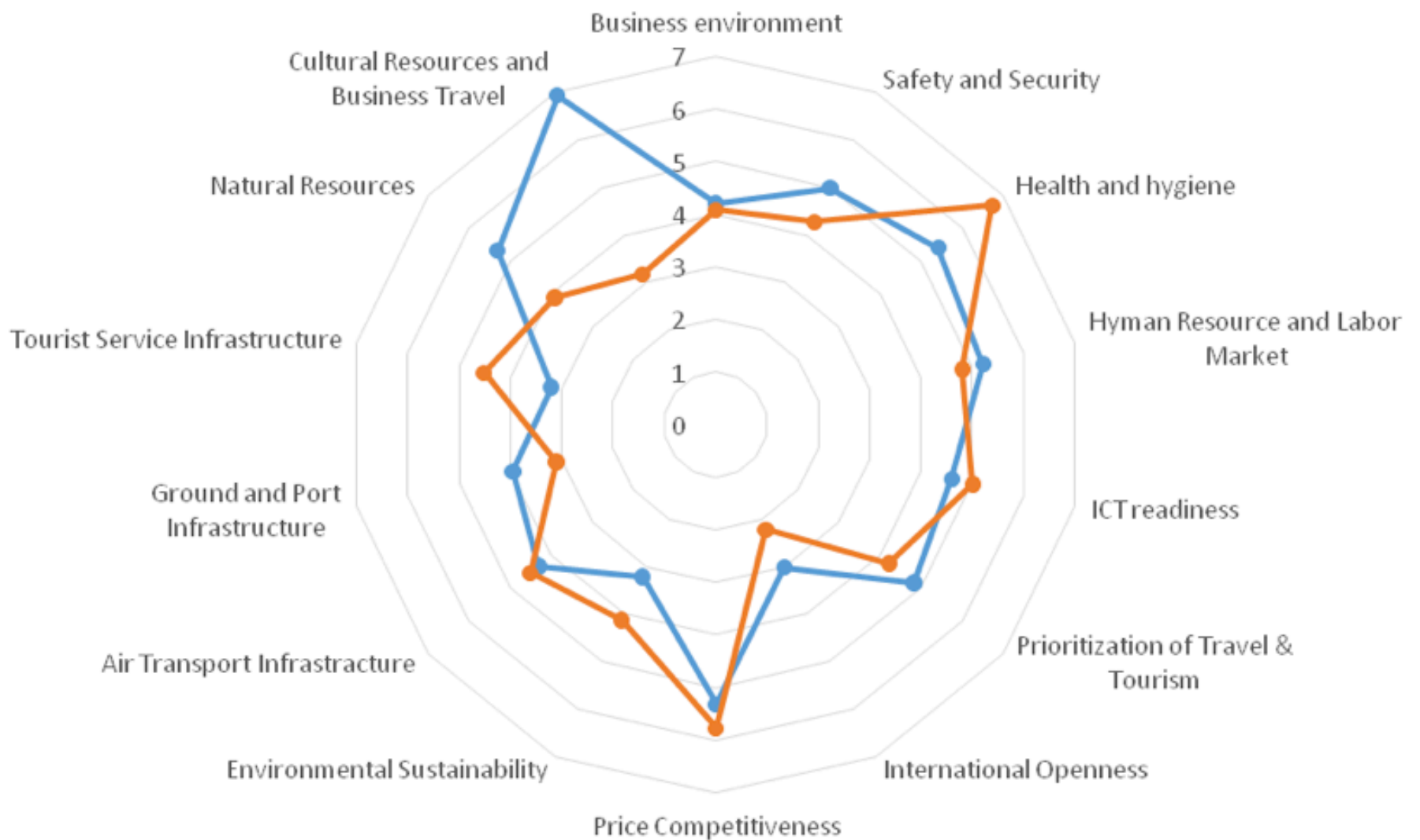
Source: The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, The World Economic Forum <https://www.weforum.org>

The Russian Federation has similar competitive advantages such as Price Competitiveness, Health and hygiene, developed Tourist Service Infrastructure and Natural Resources. As for the parameters such as Business environment, International Openness, Cultural Resources and Business Travel, the Russian Federation lags far behind other countries. Business tourism developments, effective use of cultural patterns are the main directions of the tourism industry development in Russia.

Figure 3 compares the competitive profiles of Russia and China. The similarity of positions and development problems, the territorial proximity of the countries, the economic interest in cooperation make the development of Russian-Chinese relations an important direction of the state policy of both countries in general, and in particular in the tourism sphere.

Figure 3

Polygon of tourism competitiveness of China and Russia



Source: Compiled by the authors according to the materials of The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, The World Economic Forum <https://www.weforum.org>

The famous statement by Isaac Newton “We build too many walls and not enough bridges”, which is used by the experts of the World Economic Forum to determine the problems of the tourism development around the world, can be used to describe Russian-Chinese relations in the field of tourism.

3. Results and Discussions

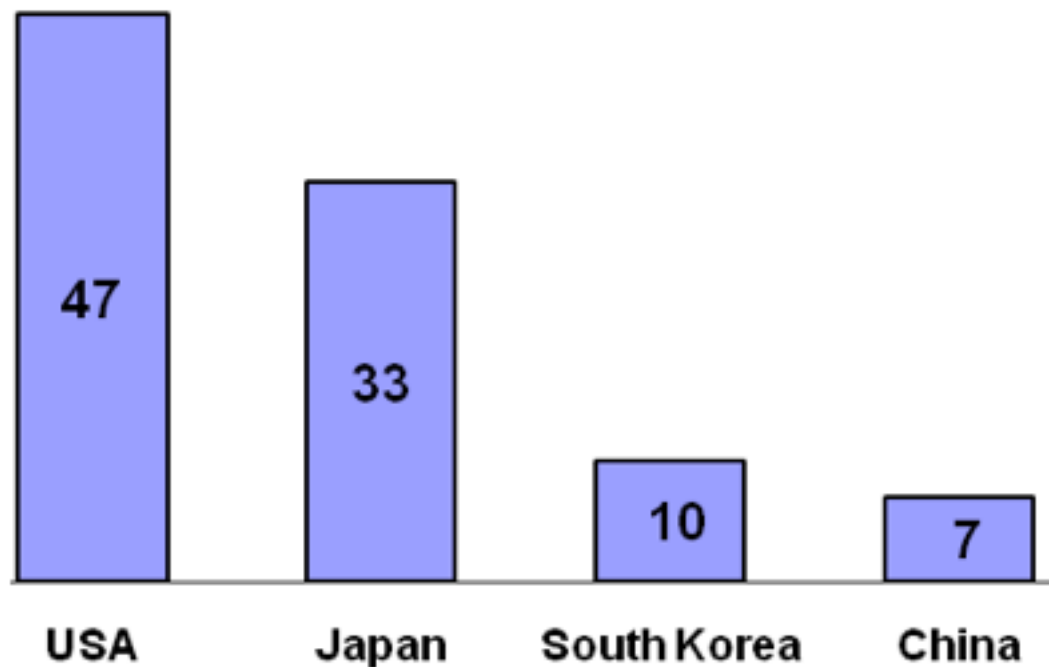
3.1. Structural changes in consumer behavior of the Chinese population

The reasons for China's rapid upturn are undoubtedly the following: human potential (1.38 billion people), weighted economic policy, a high degree of organization of the Chinese population. All this is complemented by the effect of a low base, providing cheap labor for a fairly long period of time. At the same time, despite the rapid growth of Chinese exports, amounting to 25-30% annually, the potential of Chinese economic advance is directed to the development of domestic demand, creating a huge domestic market, fully providing orders for its own industry and services.

The powerful potential for the domestic market development in China is developing very quickly and is directly dependent on GDP growth rates. Thus, the analysis of GDP growth rates per capita (Figure 4) shows that China's GDP has doubled over 7 years, and this is almost 7 times faster than in the USA, 5 times faster than in Japan and 1,5 times faster than in South Korea.

Figure 4

GDP doubling per capita by the countries - leaders of economic growth



Undoubtedly, a strong manpower (over 1 billion people of the working-age population) makes the PRC one of the most attractive countries in terms of investment, especially for transnational corporations (TNCs), for which the low cost of labor is the most important competitive advantage. Simultaneously with the upswing in the investment assets, China's national wealth is also going up, which should increase by 2 times for the period of 2015-2020 from 21 trillion up to 45 trillion yuan. The upsurge of national wealth contributes to the growth of welfare and personal consumption of the Chinese population. Over the past few years, the number of wealthy Chinese has more than doubled (from 15 to 33 million people).

The growth of material well-being stimulates the upturn of consumer demand, and changes in consumer behavior of a significant part of the Chinese population. The results of a survey of 1,000 wealthy Chinese people conducted by the consulting company O. Wyman (2017) has showed that the growing needs of Chinese society face the existing restrictions in the country. The research results demonstrate that the segment of wealthy consumers becomes not only more significant, but also more liberated. Consumers are increasingly shifting the emphasis from saving to consumption. This trend gives a clear picture of the key trend in the development of the Chinese consumer market increasingly focusing on the formation and consumption of goods and services that satisfy the need for emotion and experience (Dzhandzhugazova, 2016).

More than 60% of the respondents surveyed boost their spending on sports, tourism and leisure. At the same time, Chinese consumers not only begin to buy more, but the structure of their consumption changes toward goods and services that improve the quality of life, promote self-realization and self-development (Wyman, 2017).

Changes in consumer behavior are primarily related to the problems accompanying the enhanced growth of the Chinese economy: deterioration of the environment, aging of the population, economic disparities associated with the growing Chinese economic expansion (Dzhandzhugazova, 2017). All this forms the "new consumption" in the Chinese society, which encompasses the more affluent Chinese population. The key direction of development of the new Chinese consumption is tourism, which allows changing the traditional Chinese way of life, contributes to the acquisition of new experiences and diverse impressions.

3.2. The Chinese tourism market is one of the most attractive in the world

The Chinese tourism market is estimated as the most capacious and fast-growing in terms of

exit and internal flows. So, by 2017 the geography of trips of Chinese tourists has expanded to 151 countries. This means that more than 60% of the total number of countries in the world are covered by the Chinese tourist flow. At the same time, in 61 countries, travelers from the Celestial Empire can enter either without visas or under a simplified regime, which facilitates the transformation of China into one of the most powerful tourist country in the world.

Despite the downward trend of outbound tourism from the PRC, since 2004 the exit rates have been steadily going up. According to the UNWTO, in 2014, 107 million tourists traveled abroad from China, while 120 million Chinese tourists traveled abroad in 2015, spending 104.5 billion US dollars, which is 12% and 16.7% (respectively) higher than in travelling abroad constituted about 89.5% of the total volume of the Asian market. China is currently the main donor for the tourism markets of Europe and ASEAN (Atorus.ru, 2017).

In 2016 135 million Chinese citizens traveled the world, which is 6% higher than in 2015. In turn, the costs of Chinese citizens on foreign trips amounted to \$261 billion, which is 4.2% higher than in 2015. At the same time, it should be emphasized that this indicator shows steady upward trend starting from 2012. Along with quantitative changes, the Chinese National Tourist Administration (CNTA) also notes serious qualitative changes in Chinese tourism, which, first of all, are explained by a change in tourist motivation and changes in the consumption of tourism products caused by the increase in the living standards of Chinese citizens. Now the accents of tourist motivation are increasingly shifting from shopping to excursion, cognitive, ecological and recreational tourism, which is undoubtedly indicative of the growing maturity of tourist motivation, however, they set new tasks for host countries, including Russia (Atorus.ru, 2017).

3.3. Chinese tourists in Russia

As for the latest trends in the development of the inbound tourism market in Russia, it should be noted that in recent years the economic conjuncture, which is favorable for the host Russian tourism business, and the political conjuncture, which is favorable for the PRC, have developed. The consequences of the depreciation of the ruble, the recent unfavorable developments in Europe for international tourism, and the strengthening of political and cultural partnership between Russia and China have contributed to the activation of the entry of tourists from China into Russia (Blinova & Manteyfel, 2016).

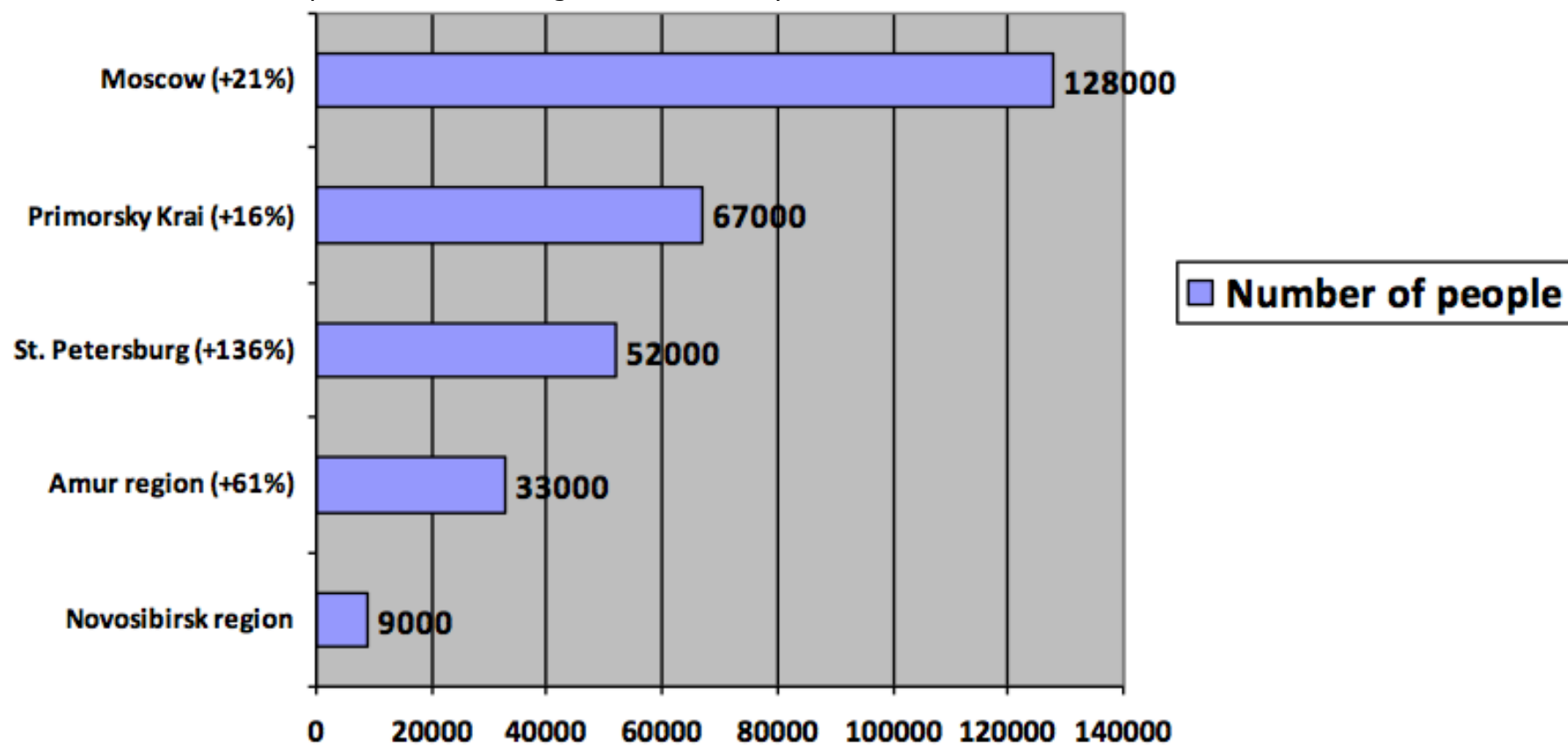
The enormous potential of outbound Chinese tourism, which appeared in the past decade (Layko & Blinova, 2008), was appreciated by the Russian tourism business and the state, and the new geopolitical situation undoubtedly contributed to it. Both at the state level and at the level of business in Russia there is an understanding of the importance of consolidating actions aimed at attracting tourists from China to Russia for tourist purposes. The need for the soonest implementation of large joint infrastructure projects and attraction of investment from China is realized at the state level of both countries. The significant progress, achieved by the largest tourist attraction centers via improving the transport and hotel infrastructure and the museum services, has led to an upturn in the attractiveness of the Russian Federation as a tourist destination, including for citizens from China. Since 2014 the China Friendly program has been underway, and since 2015 Chinese Friendly International has been running, to which hotel and food companies and tourist reception operators have joined. The number and variety of excursion routes for the Chinese tourists, personnel training programs for working with the Chinese visitors.

The incentive for visiting Russia by Chinese tourists is the visa-free regime, the weakening of the ruble, the orientation of the Russian tourist product for Chinese needs and good Russian-Chinese political relations (Romanova, 2016). For the further development of Chinese-Russian relations, it is planned to facilitate the visa regime for tourists from China in the foreseeable future, in particular, reduce the number of people in the group from five to three, and also extend the stay in Russia from two to three weeks.

The flow of Chinese tourists to Russia is constantly escalating, according to official figures, the total number of Chinese citizens who visited Russia in 2016 reached 2.6 million people, which is 70% more than in 2015. Additionally, more than 760,000 Chinese citizens visited Russia as part of visa-free groups (this is 41% more than in the previous year).

Despite the fact that the Chinese tourist flow is great, most of it is distributed among the following Russian directions (Fig. 5):

Figure 5
Top 5 most visited regions of Russia by Chinese tourists in the first half of 2017



[<https://nsk.rbc.ru/nsk/31/10/2017/59f779209a794757bfb70247>, 2017]

The largest increase in visits in the first half of 2017 is indicated in St. Petersburg; bordering territories such as the Amur region, PrimorskyKrai are actively visited. The immediate proximity to the border with China, the availability of checkpoints and arrangements for group visa-free travel, the simplification of the visa regime in the Free Ports allow multiplying the flow of tourists from China.

Multiple growth of the tourist flow in the near future can be achieved through the construction of the Blagoveshchensk-Heihe Bridge, which will be a landmark step in the transport infrastructure development of the region. The construction of the facility is planned to be completed by 2019. In addition to the bridge, the Amur region is ready to build the world's first cross-country cable way across the Amur. As the authorities of the region believe, in 2019 the number of tourists from China will increase to 1 million people per year. In our opinion, the growth of the tourist flow can also be explained, among other things, by the interest of the guests from the PRC to the socialist past due to the centenary of the revolution.

In 2016 China topped the list of the countries that gave the largest flows, ahead of Germany, Turkey, Israel, France, the United States, Britain, etc. The Chinese made up 520,000 people (33%) of the 1.5 millionth inbound flow of the 10 top tourist countries. At the same time, Russian tourism industry notes a certain specificity of the Chinese tourist segment such as an autonomous approach to the formation of a tourist product, including the desire of the Chinese tourist management to minimize expenses in the territory of the Russian Federation, as in any other tourist detonation. Although it should be said that China's tourist flow has significant volumes and gives good prospects for the future.

It should be taken into account that the portrait of the Chinese consumer is changing. More and more often, Chinese people travel by families, not alone or with friends, which requires a

change in tactics in the development of priority tourist destinations, designed for the modern Chinese tourist flow.

However, despite the steady growth, there are also problems of the development of Chinese tourism in Russia; they are primarily related to the geography of tourist routes. For the present, most of the Russian regions stand apart from large Chinese flows, but, nevertheless, along with Red tourism, which is especially popular among the Chinese, new routes appear such as Silver necklace, Tea way, etc. The main trends in the development of the Russian tourism industry is becoming an import substitution, which provides for the formation of a competitive domestic tourism product capable of meeting the growing demand of both Russians and foreign citizens (Dzhandzhugazova et al., 2017).

The development of new tourist opportunities for the reception of Chinese tourists will allow the Russian regions to actively engage in competition for a capacious and attractive Chinese segment of the world tourism market, especially since a number of border regions with China have already had such experience (Zolotareva, 2016).

3.4. Red tourism as a factor in the development of Chinese-Russian tourist cooperation

The idea of Red tourism is very important for both China and Russia. The term itself appeared in 2004 when the National Plan for the Development of Red tourism was created. After the approval of the program, 30 routes were created and 100 tourist sites were allocated. Visiting objects associated with revolutionary history is encouraged by the Chinese Communist Party.

A peculiar mirror Russian project of Red tourism was the Grand Tour "Red Route", which was developed in 2014 within the framework of the joint Russian-Chinese initiative and included in the plan of measures to implement the strategy for the development of tourism in Russia until 2020. In general, as the Chinese tourist business notes, the project is interesting for the Chinese older generation. It is based on the nostalgic moods of people who want to visit places of revolutionary events, which are united by a single thread of the "Red Route", which includes memorable places connected with the name of Vladimir Lenin in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ulyanovsk and Kazan. In addition, the interest in the very idea of Red tourism gets a new sound in the current year 2017 commemorated by the centenary of the Great October Revolution (Visit-russia.ru, 2017).

However, the project development is experiencing a number of significant difficulties related to the insufficiency of the regional tourist infrastructure, the lack of a single scientific and information base in the field of Red tourism, an acute shortage of specially trained tourist personnel, including those who know the Chinese language. At the same time, while in Russian capitals these problems have been largely overcome, in the Russian regions they are very acute and require an early solution. The expansion of the geography of Red tourism in Russia is closely connected with the solution to the problem of creating a comfortable environment for the stay of Chinese tourists in Russia. At present, the program China Friendly created in 2014 with the support of the Travel Association "World without Borders" has become an important basis for the development of Russian-Chinese tourism.

The China Friendly program is a large-scale project aimed at promoting Russian tourist products on the international market. It covers a wide range of tourism and hospitality companies, including hotels, restaurants, museums, entertainment centers, excursion bureaus and other companies serving Chinese tourists in Russia. These companies create a familiar and understandable environment for the Chinese: information, every day and cultural environment, contributing to attracting Chinese tourists and increasing the incomes of the tourist industry (Chinafriendly.ru, 2017).

The China Friendly program is aimed at solving a number of important tasks such as:

- Creation of a network of tourism industry facilities in Russia that meet the needs of Chinese citizens in quality tourism services;
- Promotion of the Russian national tourism product on the Chinese tourist market;
- Expansion of the geography of travel of Chinese tourists across Russia and the involvement of new regions in a variety of tourist programs;
- Maximizing attraction of tourists from China and stimulating repeat sales;
- Conducting voluntary certification of tourist facilities and routes confirming that the services provided by the project participant meet the criteria of the program;
- Obtaining of Quality Mark and certificate of compliance with the needs of tourists from China.

However, the successful implementation of this program largely depends on the creation of the information field familiar to the Chinese through the provision of tourist maps in Chinese with pre-marked major routes, communication with Chinese guides and members of tourist groups in the Chinese favorite WeChat messenger, and the creation of opportunities to pay with China UnionPaycards . All this will enable Chinese tourists to feel confident in the Russian tourist space, which will allow us to better know our country, gain new impressions and experience. It should also be noted that successful work on the Chinese tourism market requires a high level of mastering information technologies and their targeted integrated use to launch and promote tourism products and services (Dzhandzhugazova, 2015).

At the same time, it should be noted that only the solution of infrastructure and language problems is not enough for the development of Red tourism programs, it is necessary to overcome the difference in approaches to solving the problems of Red tourism, both from the Russian and the Chinese side. And here the reason lies not only in mental differences, but also that the Russian side does not take into account such an important factor as the deep motivation of the Chinese. An important milestone in the development of a dialogue on the essence and prospects of the development of Red tourism was the Forum "The Red Way. Bridge of Friendship" which took place in the border Manchuria (PRC) in July 2017. (mp.weixin.qq.com, 2017).

During the discussion of the key problems of the Red tourism development, one of the most important reasons hindering the development of red routes in the Russian Federation was identified. The Russian side, creating red routes, starts from its own view of the tourist motivation of the Chinese and in particular suggests that the Chinese, including those interested in the original nature of the Volga region - the homeland of Lenin, as well as other natural objects associated with the name of V.I. Lenin. However, as shown by practice, Chinese tourists are not interested in these attractions; they travel through other, most ecological routes to see the natural objects (Sergienko, 2014). According to sinologists, the main attention of Chinese tourists is tied to the so-called "red" sights, personalities and events associated with them in the ideological tour, to which the red route belongs. The Chinese rather need well-known symbols of the era, including those related to the history of Russian-Chinese relations.

The idea of Red tourism development, as well as the idea of the development of China's economy is symbiosis - a combination of communist traditions and the development of market relations and a successful business. The leadership of the PRC declares that the Chinese should not lose the "red genes" and at the same time should become more and more economically successful. An interesting combination of economy and red idea is reflected in a rather controversial goal set by Chinese practitioners for the Red tourism development: "Creating a Chinese-Russian tourism brand of Red tourism". But the existence of ideological contradictions in the creation of Red tourism products only confirms the need for non-standard approaches and solutions, which are already ready for some regions of Russia. In order to increase the impact of tourism on the economies of countries and regions, the state policy on development of the tourist industry is enhanced; Committees and the Ministry of Tourism Development at the regional level are created (Ruban, 2015). Thus, the idea of searching for the "Chinese trace" in the revolutionary events of Transbaikalia is actively developed by the Zabaikalsky regional museum of local lore named after A.K. Kuznetsov (Chita). The main objects for tourist show in

the framework of the created red route are five historical and cultural sites, located in the city of Chita and already equipped with plaques in Russian and Chinese. All objects are closely related to the outstanding historical personalities of the Chinese Communist Party such as Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. [xn--b1allbezbi1h.xn--80aaaac8algcbgbck3fl0q.xn--p1ai, 2017]

Two new red routes were developed in St. Petersburg; they are directly related to the Chinese participants in the Russian revolution and called "Chinese comrades in Red Petrograd" and "Red commander of Pau Tisan".

In 2016 the Novosibirsk region joined the All-Russian project "Red Route", connected with the visit of foreign objects of the Soviet cultural heritage [nsk.rbc.ru, 2017]. There are two transit flows from China through Novosibirsk:

- the first transit flow leaves in three or four hours for Moscow or St. Petersburg,
- the second transit flow stays in Novosibirsk for a day and a half.

The creative development of the idea devoted to the fate of the "red descendants" (the children of the Chinese Communists), who came to the USSR through Manchuria in 1933 and lived for a long time in a special international boarding school in Ivanovo, can become an interesting trend in the development of red routes. Among them there were the children of the outstanding leaders of the Chinese Communist movement Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, and others. Many of them are still alive and actively participating in China's public life, being a living legend for their children and grandchildren.

The Chinese government and the Chinese people remember and are well aware of our country's role in maintaining China's political stability in the 1930s in the most difficult period - Japan's invasion of Manchuria and the creation of the Manchukuo state on the Chinese territory, through which Japan sought to spread its influence to the West countries (Mirovitskaya, 2012).

During this difficult period, the Soviet Union decided to support China and, among other things, raised hundreds of children of Chinese communists, many of whom lost their parents, but found a large and friendly family in the famous Ivanovo orphanage, and they consider staying there the best time in their lives. In modern China, the fate of these people is very interesting, which can be the basis for creating a new red route "Russian children of Chinese leaders". The name "Russian children" can be used without quotes, since they, despite more than 50 years of life in China (they were returned to China in the 1950s) consider the Russian language to be native, very fond of Russia and consider it their second homeland.

4. Conclusions

Summarizing all the above mentioned, it should be noted that for the development of Russian-Chinese tourism in general and its most important segment Red tourism, it is necessary to deeply and systematically comprehend all the problems identified and propose a set of measures aimed at their solution. On the basis of joint scientific and methodological activities of Chinese and Russian researchers involved in tourism issues, it is necessary to form common approaches to the issues of organizing and developing Red tourism, including the conceptual apparatus, methods for describing objects, forming a route, etc.

Joint research and information-expeditionary work should be organized on the basis of profile tourist universities of China and Russia to create and promote new national and international red routed which unite all red sights and will become the ground for the further Chinese-Russian Red tourism brand.

Research and expeditionary studies should be conducted for learning and forming the united scope of red sights and routes in Chinese and Russian languages. They will become the basis for forming the special tourist content, which will be connected with geo-information systems (electronic maps).

Development of accompanying information in the form of memos and short directories should be carried out to ensure the required level of quality and safety of the services provided for

accompanying tourist and sightseeing groups on the red route (guides, guides-translators, instructors-guides).

The work on the development of supplementary education programs for the training of qualified personnel should be organized for servicing the Red tourism routes, including the establishment of a joint China-Russia Scientific and Methodological Center for the Development of Red tourism.

Joint research works by Chinese and Russian scientists should be implemented with the publication of joint articles on the topic of Red tourism in scientific journals, scientific monographs, educational and teaching aids, including electronic publications.

Joint search of sources of financing, including with the use of opportunities of public-private partnership should be done.

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