
FORSCHUNG UND LEHRE

German-Chinese Research Project: Anomic Structures of Social Change in the PR China. Migrants and Migrant Communities in Chinese Metropolises

Department of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum, in cooperation with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Peking

In the coming years, global modernization trends will be analyzed worldwide especially with respect to processes of urbanization. According to present demographic projections, within one Generation more than half of the world's population will be living in urban environments. The character and direction of social change--especially urbanization processes--and the ability to control this change will become increasingly important issues.

The project aims to analyze this phenomenon using the case of the PR China, where modernization is accelerating at an extraordinary pace. In the course of economic reforms, at least 100 million peasants have migrated to the cities within only a few years, following a period of decades during which spontaneous migration had been virtually impossible due to a very rigid system of household registration. Different forms of migrant communities have developed in the cities as a result of this increased migration. It can be assumed that processes of radical social change that are presently taking place in China will increase particularly in these settlements. The analysis should contribute insight into the stability or instability and the integration or growing disintegration of Chinese society.

In doing this the term "anomie" --based on the work of Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton-- will be made operational and productive. This approach will take up and further develop ideas and reflection of an international research project of the Swiss Academy of Development. (cf. Peter Atteslander/John Western/Bettina Gransow (eds.), *Comparative Anomie Research - Hidden Barriers and Hidden Potential for Social Development*, Aldershot: Ashgate 1999).

The research project, applied for by Prof. Peter Atteslander, Ph.D., and Bettina Gransow, Ph.D., has received a two year grant from the German Research Foundation (1998-2000). It is being carried out at the Department of East Asian Studies of the University of Bochum. Claudia Wüllner, M.A., is the research assistant, and Prof. Li Hanlin, Ph.D. of the Institute of Sociology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Peking, is the Chinese partner in the cooperative effort.

Programme for Europe/Asia Research Linkages (PEARL)

The Programme for Europe-Asia Research Linkages (PEARL) was established in Seoul in October 1998 by a group of 35 researchers from ASEM (Asia-Europe