
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

Meetings) member countries, representing leading Asian and European Studies departments and institutions for research funding.

Asia and Europe: towards a shared research culture

ASEM is primarily devised to address economic, political and security issues. PEARL considers joint research and education to be the most effective tools to strengthen an Asia-Europe rapprochement. It emphasizes the importance of a closer intellectual partnership that also pays attention to cultural co-operation.

Research linkages between Asia and Europe, especially in the Humanities and the Social Sciences, have remained relatively weak since the end of the colonial era, in particular when compared with the contacts of both regions with the United States of America. Also, many Asian scholars continue to work within the same scientific paradigms acquired during their studies in the US, whereas Europeanists have tended to be academically self-sufficient.

PEARL aims to develop a shared research culture between the two ends of the Eurasian continent. This would not only enrich the quality of research in each region, but would enable attention to be directed more effectively to issues which are shared between the two regions, but which do not commonly emerge on research agendas in the United States.

A European initiative, PEARL promotes and initiates the study of contemporary developments in Asia and Europe in a comparative perspective and against their historical and cultural backgrounds. It seeks to integrate the best of the European Studies and Asian Studies and to provide an institutional framework to work together on topics of common interest.

Objectives

PEARL has taken on three main tasks:

- to place joint research, education and training on the agenda of ASEM;
- to strengthen, facilitate and co-ordinate interregional research and education as a means of rapprochement between Asia and Europe;
- to offer international institutions such as ASEM academic and strategic information and advice.

Instruments

PEARL seeks to achieve these ends through:

- organizing and seeking funding for major long-term collaborative research projects involving both Asian and European scholars;
- organizing and seeking funding for workshops on interregional contemporary issues. The defining characteristic of these meetings will be the juxtaposition of Asian and European perspectives and experiences;
- developing exchange programmes for scholars in mid-career; acting as a clearinghouse and facilitator for such programmes;
- acting as a forum in which Asian and European researchers in the Humanities and the Social Sciences meet representatives of ASEAN, the EU, the private and public sectors, and the media;

- promoting dialogue between researchers from the two regions as well as between researchers and ASEM itself.

Implementation

PEARL Members are taking steps to introduce PEARL to their respective national governments. Recognition of PEARL by the individual countries will enable the programme to put research, education and training on the agenda of ASEM III in Seoul in 2000 and for it to be designated a vehicle for the implementation of these activities.

Three European partners, the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), and the Institut für Asienkunde, have obtained funding from the Asia Committee of the European Science Foundation (ESF) for the drafting of research proposals on two of the topics identified for long-term research projects in Seoul:

- Security and Social Welfare: Coping with Recession and Globalization;
- The Impact of Politico-Economic Development on Lifestyles and Norms (identity, state, cultural heterogeneity and homogeneity in global vs. local perspectives)

Organizational framework and funding

It is not the intention of PEARL to develop a large administrative infrastructure. The IIAS will provide a secretariat for two years while PEARL secures funds for both its research projects and its own management.

ASEM as a whole, the governments of the individual ASEM member countries, countries which have an observer status at ASEM, and international institutions such as the European Union and ASEAN, will be asked to contribute financially to the work of PEARL from 2000. PEARL gratefully acknowledges the support of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the ESF and wants to develop closer links with these foundations, as well with the national research councils and funding agencies of the countries involved in the ASEM process.

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