

# New Chinese Migration to Germany: Historical Consistencies and New Patterns of Diversification within a Globalized Migration Regime

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## ABSTRACT

Chinese migration to Germany is not very well documented, even though sojourners arrived in this country as early as the first half of the eighteenth century. There is some research on particular issues in specific historical contexts, such as the discrimination and persecution during the Third Reich (Yü-Dembksi, 1996, 1997), Chinese students in Germany between 1860 and 1945 (Harnisch, 1999), Chinese-German mixed marriages (Groeling-Che, 1991), and irregular immigration and human trafficking during the 1980s and 1990s (Giese, 1999a). Yet, no systematic research on the history of Chinese migration or continuous analysis of more recent migration trends and related political issues has been carried out so far. Some of the reasons for this include: Chinese communities have always formed only a small minority among the non-German population; after World War II, Chinese communities were dispersed over the whole of (West) Germany and they have not created any visible "Chinatown" yet; and, until very recently, there seemed to be virtually no political or social problems related to Chinese migrants, and the few emerging political issues still appear insignificant compared to those related to other ethnic groups. As a result, Chinese immigration and the lives of Chinese migrants – widely ignored as a potential research topic for Modern China Studies in Germany – have not yet received attention from scholars of social sciences.

This article will attempt to offer a comprehensive summary of the history of new Chinese migration to Germany from the early 1970s to the end of the second millennium. Mainly based on official statistics, it will then discuss recent trends in Chinese immigration for different groups of migrants since the 1990s, focusing on policy-related issues and political implications of these recent and potential future developments.

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## INTRODUCTION

Chinese<sup>1</sup> migration to Germany<sup>2</sup> is not very well documented, even though sojourners arrived in this country already as early as the first half of the eighteenth century. There is some research on particular issues in specific historical contexts, such as the discrimination and persecution during the Third Reich (Yü-Dembski, 1996, 1997), Chinese students in Germany between 1860 and 1945 (Harnisch, 1999), Chinese-German mixed marriages (Groeling-Che, 1991), and irregular immigration and human trafficking during the 1980s and 1990s (Giese, 1999a). Yet, no systematic research on the history of Chinese migration or continuous analysis of more recent migration trends and related political issues has been carried out so far. Some of the reasons for this include: Chinese communities have always formed only a small minority among the non-German population; after World War II, Chinese communities were dispersed over the whole of (West) Germany and they have not created any visible “Chinatown” yet; and, until very recently, there seemed to be virtually no political or social problems related to Chinese migrants, and the few emerging political issues still appear insignificant compared to those related to other ethnic groups. As a result, Chinese immigration and the lives of Chinese migrants – widely ignored as a potential research topic for Modern China Studies in Germany – have not yet received attention from scholars of social sciences.

This article will attempt to offer a comprehensive summary of the history of new Chinese migration to Germany from the early 1970s to the end of the second millennium. Mainly based on official statistics, it will then discuss recent trends in Chinese immigration for different groups of migrants since the 1990s, focusing on policy-related issues and political implications of these recent and potential future developments.

### THE EVOLUTION OF NEW IMMIGRATION FROM THE PRC

Following the upheavals of the Third Reich and World War II, only a few Chinese nationals lived in Germany and for more than two decades their numbers did not exceed a few hundred. It was only after the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)<sup>3</sup> established normal diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1972 that the number of Chinese began to increase slightly. But growth rates, as well as absolute numbers, remained low during the following years (Table 1). The Chinese proportion of foreign national residents in Germany stagnated at approximately 0.02 per cent (Statistisches Bundesamt, 1981: 20f) and their numbers did not increase until the launch of economic reforms in China in 1979. By 1983 the number of Chinese residents from mainland China (3,720) had for the first time caught up with the 3,710 Chinese from Taiwan (Statistisches Bundesamt, 1987: 22f) who, until then, had been the dominant group of ethnic Chinese immigrants.

TABLE 1  
CHINESE CITIZENS IN GERMANY, 1972-2001

Year	Influx	Residents	Share of foreign population	Year	Influx	Residents	Share of foreign population
1972		462	0.01	1987		9,732	0.21
1973		525	0.01	1988		10,761	0.24
1974		658	0.02	1989		14,085	0.29
1975		730	0.02	1990	6,476	18,376	0.34
1976		972	0.02	1991	5,560	22,098	0.38
1977		934	0.02	1992	6,698	25,479	0.39
1978		984	0.02	1993	8,745	31,451	0.46
1979	1,348		0.03	1994	5,787	32,316	0.46
1980	2,146		0.05	1995	5,530	33,172	0.46
1981	2,812		0.06	1996	6,264	34,621	0.47
1982	3,419		0.07	1997	7,450	36,723	0.50
1983	3,720		0.08	1998	7,888	38,726	0.53
1984	4,024		0.09	1999	10,913	42,925	0.58
1985	6,178		0.14	2000		50,885	0.70
1986	8,112		0.18	2001		63,111	0.86

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 1981: 20f, 1994: 18f, 2002: 20f; Bundesministerium des Innern, 2002a; calculations by author.

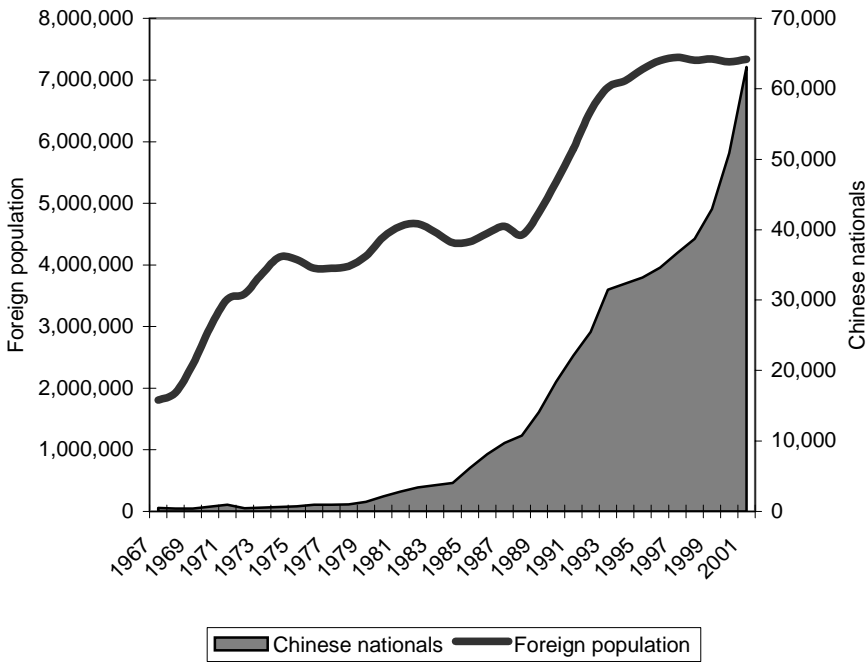
Although still very small in absolute numbers, in only ten years the share of the PRC Chinese increased tenfold from 0.03 per cent in 1979 to 0.29 per cent in 1989 (14,085 persons) (Statistisches Bundesamt, 1994: 18f; calculations by the author). From 1989 to 1993 the growth rate further accelerated as a result of both the increasing volume of new migrants and larger numbers of Chinese remaining in Germany. In the meantime, the Chinese share of foreign nationals in Germany grew by another 50 per cent to 0.46 per cent. Following 1994 and 1995, when the number of Chinese residents remained almost stable and the influx of new migrants sharply decreased, both the absolute numbers of Chinese residing in Germany and the volume of immigration rose again at an accelerating rate year by year. While in 1996 the Chinese population grew at a moderate 4.4 per cent over the previous year, from 2000 to 2001 the Chinese community in Germany grew by a remarkable 24 per cent (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2002: 20f; Bundesministerium des Inneren, 2002a).

Between 1978 and 2001, the Chinese population increased 64 times, whereas the foreign population in Germany in general less than doubled during the same

period (Figure 1). Nevertheless, in absolute numbers, the 63,000 Chinese from the PRC legally living in Germany by the end of 2001 are still a very small and insignificant ethnic minority compared to the more than 7.3 million foreign nationals residing in Germany at the same time. Moreover, the Chinese appear to be a particularly unproblematic minority that usually does not become the focus of public and/or political debate on foreign nationals and immigration.

FIGURE 1

FOREIGN POPULATION AND CHINESE NATIONALS IN GERMANY, 1967-2001



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 1981:20f, 1994: 18f, 2002; Bundesministerium des Innern, 2002a.

### THE CHINESE IN GERMANY TODAY

New Chinese migration to post-war Germany started in 1973. That year also marked a turning point in German immigration policies. After 18 years of active guest worker recruitment, the number of foreign nationals working in Germany had reached 2.6 million. Because of growing unemployment and the economic slow-

down, the German Government put a general halt on new foreign labour recruitment.<sup>4</sup> Since then, only four legal entry channels to Germany have been available to foreign nationals from non-EU countries. German visas have been available for students and scientists, close family members of persons legally residing in Germany (spouses and dependent children below the age of 16), professionals with special skills by special arrangement (mostly cooks), and tourists or business people on short-term visits. In addition to these groups entering Germany legally, there are asylum seekers who usually arrive as unauthorized migrants and receive a special residence status upon their application for political asylum.<sup>5</sup>

The great majority of Chinese nationals in Germany hold temporary residence permits. By the end of 2001 only 10 per cent of the approximately 63,100 Chinese in Germany had a permanent residence permit (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis* or *Aufenthaltsberechtigung*, 5,452 and 1,020 cases, respectively) compared to 38 per cent of all foreign nationals in the FRG. The largest proportion of Chinese living in Germany – more than 17,000 – held a temporary residence status with designated purpose of stay attached to it (*Aufenthaltsbewilligung*). Almost 2,000 (1,951) had qualified for the status of de facto refugees (*Aufenthaltsbefugnis*), and 2,860 were granted temporary stay (*Duldung*) until voluntary departure or forced repatriation became possible. At the same time, 2,665 Chinese nationals who had applied for political asylum in Germany were still awaiting a decision either by the responsible authorities, or from German courts (Ausländerzentralregister, 2002; Bundesministerium des Innern, 2002a).

As Table 2 shows, the Chinese population in Germany is dispersed over the whole country. Geographic distribution basically follows patterns observed for the foreign population in general, although a slightly higher proportion of Chinese can be found in the eastern part of Germany. Although there are no “Chinatowns” as there are in Paris or London, Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen/Bremerhaven, for example, have significantly higher concentrations of Chinese nationals than other German states. In fact, these three city-states, apart from their high number of institutions of higher learning, look back on a long history of Chinese immigration before World War II, when small China towns existed at least in Hamburg and Berlin. Therefore, it may be concluded that they constituted the core from which the Chinese community in Germany evolved after the War.

Chinese migrants in Germany share many common features with other migrants in Germany and beyond. But, owing to historical developments and politics, Chinese migrants in Germany also show specific characteristics of their own. A closer look at the major age groups, for example, shows that in 2000 Chinese migrants tended to be significantly younger than in 1992 (Figure 2). This, however, was not

caused by the presence of more small children – their percentage remained stable at approximately 11 per cent, but rather by a sharp increase in the number of Chinese migrants between the ages of 18 and 25. Accounting for 17.8 per cent of the total by the end of 2000, this age group had almost doubled from 9.5 per cent in 1992. Although the proportion of migrants in the economically most active age bracket (21-40 years) declined from 66.3 to 59 per cent, this was mainly because of the significantly smaller numbers of migrants between the ages of 25 to 35, while the percentage of those aged between 35 and 40 or older than 45 had basically remained stable (Statistisches Bundesamt, 1994: 90f; 2002: 28f; calculations by the author). A remarkable counter trend can be observed for Chinese nationals aged 40 to 45. In absolute numbers, this group increased threefold, and their proportion grew by almost 30 per cent (Statistisches Bundesamt, 1994: 90f; 2002: 28f; calculations by the author).

This result might also provide a possible explanation for the increasing share of young Chinese between the ages of 10 and 18 who might well be the children of the aforementioned generation. Although not based on hard facts, it is probably more than mere speculation to identify the Chinese nationals aged 40 to 45 as those who had lived or arrived in Germany shortly before or in the aftermath of the political tragedy in China of 4 June 1989. For humanitarian considerations practically all Chinese students present in Germany at that time – among other migrants from China – were granted long-term residence permits under preferential conditions. Many remained in Germany after Western political sanctions against China had again been lifted and the overall situation in China greatly improved during the first half of the 1990s. Either they had found spouses in Germany among migrants who shared the same fate, or later returned to China once they had secured long-term or permanent residence permits, married there and brought their spouses and other members of their families back to Germany.

The fate of this particular group of migrants and the political decisions taken in their favour by the German Government of the time can also be clearly traced in current statistics on the length of stay of Chinese migrants in Germany. At the beginning of the new millennium, the percentage of those who had already lived in Germany for ten to 15 years, that is, those who had arrived between the mid-1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, were three times as high as in 1992 – 15.7 per cent by the end of 2000 from 4.7 per cent in 1992. On the other hand, in that year the proportion of those staying for one to four years (48.2%) also clearly reflected the anomaly caused by the political disruptions of 1989 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 1994: 112; calculations by the author). The normal picture seems to be characterized by very high numbers of newcomers who stay in the country for less than one year, and a decreasing proportion of migrants who stay for extended periods of time (Figure 3).

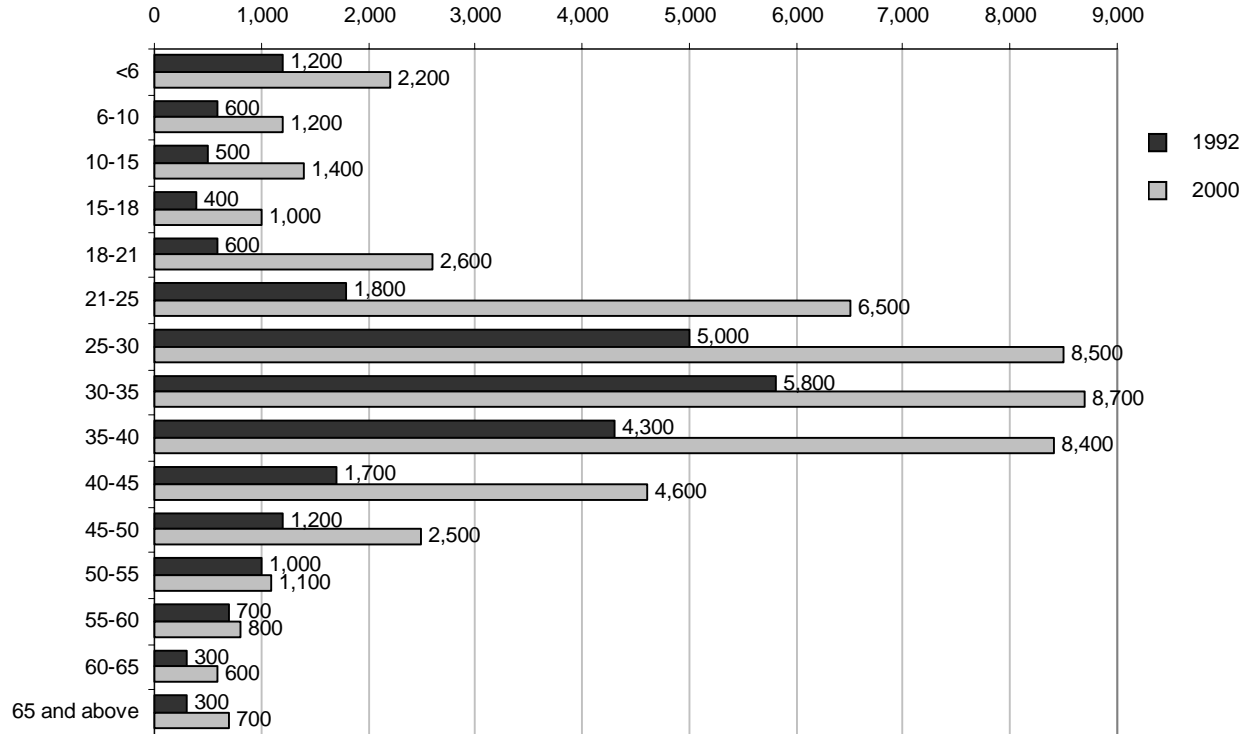
TABLE 2  
GERMAN POPULATION, CHINESE AND FOREIGN NATIONALS  
BY GERMAN STATES

State	German population 1999	Foreign nationals 1999	Chinese nationals 1992	Chinese nationals 2001	Share of Chinese nationals*
Schleswig-Holstein	2,777,300	151,900	610	1,151	0.04
Hamburg	1,704,700	261,900	1,719	4,211	0.25
Lower Saxony	7,898,800	527,800	1,712	3,964	0.05
Bremen	663,100	79,200	527	1,117	0.17
North Rhine-Westphalia	17,999,800	2,044,600	6,789	13,189	0.07
Hessen	6,052,000	730,500	1,999	5,570	0.09
Rhineland-Palatinate	4,030,800	306,300	978	3,244	0.08
Baden-Württemberg	10,475,900	1,305,200	3,255	8,808	0.08
Bayern	12,155,000	1,123,300	4,039	8,193	0.07
Saarland	1,071,500	88,300	361	781	0.07
Berlin	3,386,700	433,600	3,046	5,887	0.17
Brandenburg	2,601,200	61,200	114	1,362	0.05
Mecklenburg-West Pomerania	1,789,300	31,700	46	339	0.02
Saxony	4,459,700	105,000	141	2,765	0.06
Saxony-Anhalt	2,648,700	44,200	81	1,365	0.05
Thuringia	2,449,100	41,700	62	1,165	0.05
Total	82,163,600	7,336,400	25,479	63,111	0.08

\* Calculations based on the number of Chinese citizens in Germany in 2001 and size of German population in 1999.

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 1994: 66-77; Bundesministerium des Innern, 2002a; calculations by the author.

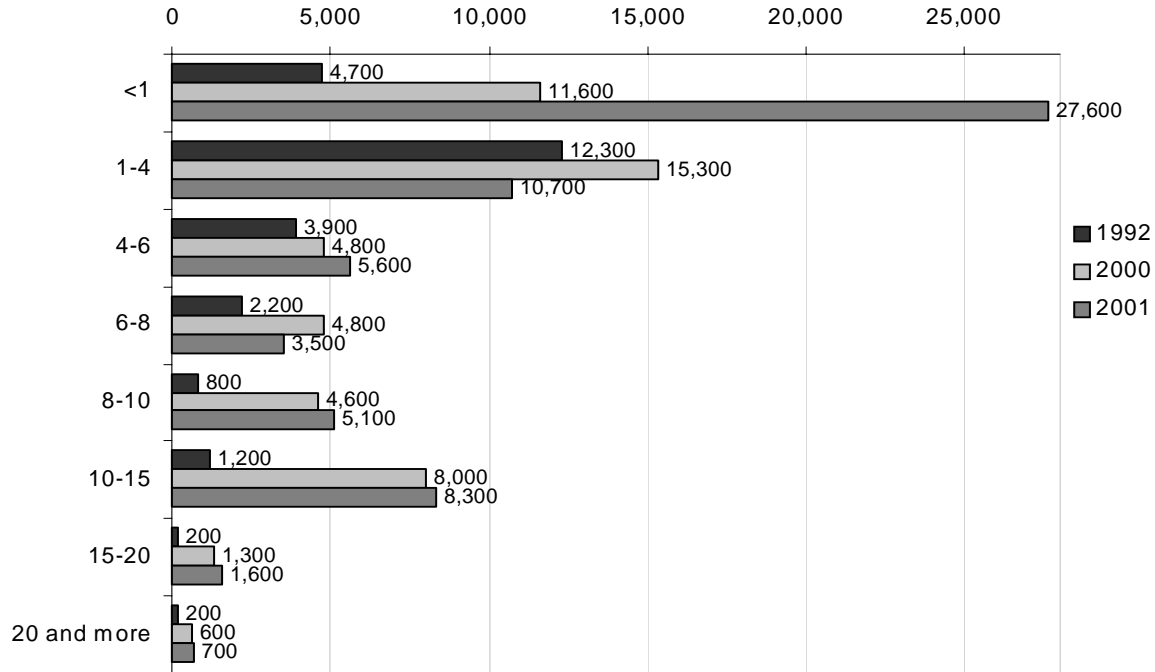
FIGURE 2  
CHINESE NATIONALS IN GERMANY BY AGE GROUPS, 1992, 2000



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 1994: 90f, 2002: 28f.



FIGURE 3  
CHINESE NATIONALS IN GERMANY BY LENGTH OF STAY, 1992, 2000, 2001



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 1994: 112, 2002: 36f; Bundesministerium des Innern, 2002a.

## FRAGMENTATION – VARIOUS GROUPS OF CHINESE

Chinese migrants in Germany are not a uniform group. Rather, there are several distinct groups of migrants, who, while they share similar characteristics, also greatly differ from each other. General statistics on Chinese residents in Germany also reflect this diversification and official numbers are available for students, working migrants, dependent children, and asylum seekers in Germany (see Table 3). In addition, information on family members not participating in paid labour and tourists can be extracted from various sources. To develop a deeper understanding of new Chinese migration to Germany, the following discussion will focus on the four groups of Chinese migrants who have recently attracted a good deal of attention – not least on the political side – and will probably continue to do so in the future: students, working migrants, tourists, and irregular migrants, including asylum seekers.

TABLE 3  
DIFFERENT GROUPS OF CHINESE MIGRANTS IN GERMANY, 1998-2001

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001
Students	5,355	6,526	9,109	12,000**
Asylum seekers	869	1,236	2,072	1,530
Employees	6,760	6,958	7,944	9,432
Children under 16	4,500*	4,700*	4,800*	5,040
Others	21,236	23,505	26,960	35,108
Total	38,726	42,925	50,885	63,111

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2001: 17f, 26; 2002a: 36f; Bundesministerium des Innern, 2002a; \*rounded; \*\*estimates.

### Student immigration

The migration to Germany by Chinese students since the 1970s can be divided into three stages. The first stage entailed students who came to Germany to study mainly on scholarships from the Chinese Government and from German academic exchange institutions. Just like in the second half of the nineteenth century, these students were anxious to participate in the self-strengthening efforts of their government and to participate in the technical and economic modernization of their nation. Second, since the second half of the 1980s, when the coastal export-oriented economy in China took off and rising urban incomes and living standards became visible, the number of students financed by their families rather than any official institution grew remarkably. At the same time, hundreds of cooperation programmes established between German and Chinese institutions of higher learn-

ing further facilitated student migration (for details see Stober, 2001) and led to a rapid rise in the number of Chinese students in Germany.

Interestingly though, the suppression of the democracy movement of 1989 and the years of repression and the political isolation of China that followed, did not prevent the number of students from growing further. On the contrary, governments and populations in the Western world, most sympathetic to the Chinese students on Tiananmen Square, viewed it as their duty to support the political change in China by admitting ever higher numbers of students. Although the Chinese Government imposed restrictions on student emigration (*China Aktuell*, 1989: 477f; 1990a: 195f; 1990b: 266), the numbers of Chinese nationals enrolled in German universities, or just staying in Germany, continued to increase until 1992 and 1993. The granting of preferential residence status by the German Government to almost all Chinese living in Germany at that time has to be viewed as a very strong additional incentive to migrate to Germany.

Later, between 1992 and 1993 and 1997 and 1998, several factors caused the number of Chinese students enrolling at German universities to decrease. In the early 1990s, the high hopes engendered by the German reunification quickly gave way to a more sober outlook, when the economy in the eastern parts of the country failed to develop as expected (“blossoming sceneries”), and the overall economic situation deteriorated, unemployment rose, and xenophobic tendencies spread. At the same time, in China the political situation relaxed again, and the Chinese Government endeavoured to regain the confidence of students and academics.

Urged by economic circles, political and economic sanctions against China were lifted. Economic performance improved and industrial growth rates in the coastal areas of China accelerated. In short, the Chinese Government managed to create confidence not least within the well educated urban youth. At the same time, the administrative adjustments of the Chinese economy followed the American accounting model. This fact, combined with the surge in the American IT industry and the availability of well-paying jobs at that time, and the existence of an already large Chinese community in the United States, was more attractive to young Chinese than long academic studies in a difficult language of obviously decreasing importance in the economic field in Germany.

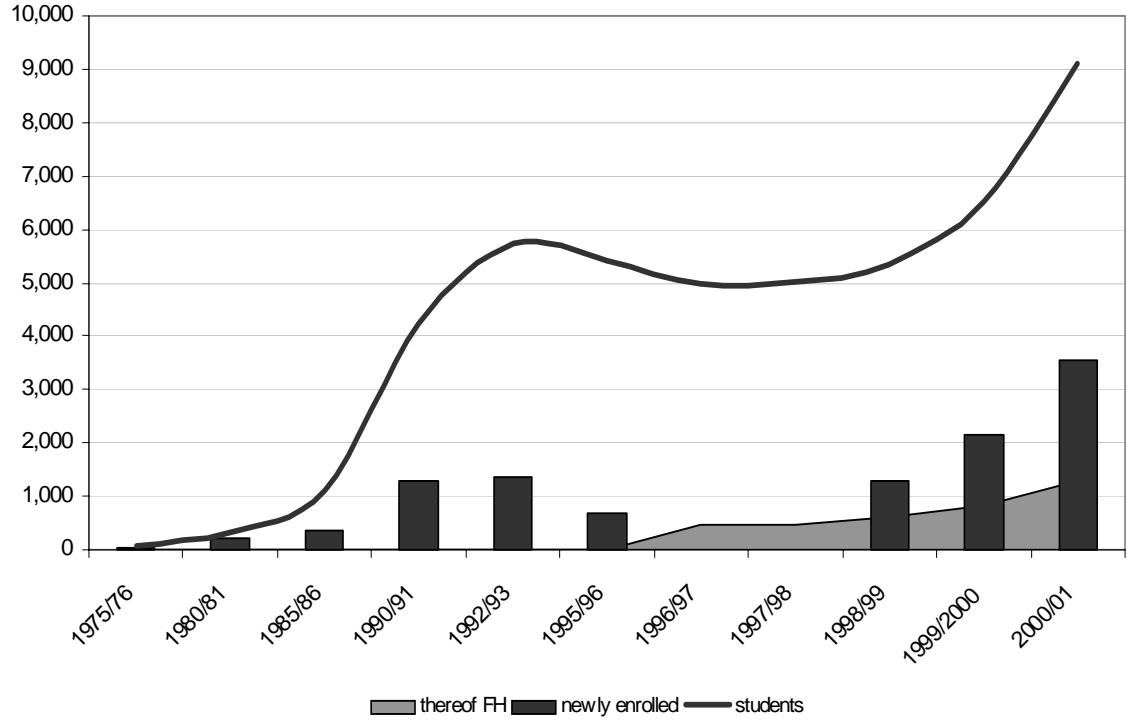
Since the late 1990s, studying in Germany has regained some of its attractiveness. Chinese students began to discover the German *Fachhochschulen* (polytechnics) as institutions of higher learning, which offer more focused and practical courses of study in less time than traditional university studies. The main obstacle to studying at polytechnics was that they had been virtually unknown in China and their diplomas, therefore, were deemed less desirable than comparable academic degrees received from universities. However, since the mid-1990s, the number of students enrolled in these institutions has grown steadily (DAAD, 2002; BMWI, 2002).

Since the end of 2000, 3,545 new students have signed up for these courses and the Chinese now account for the largest group of foreign nationals in this category. At the same time, the 8,745 Chinese ranked first in numbers among foreign students with a foreign educational background (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2002). This might reflect a growing demand for higher education from more diverse social strata of the Chinese population. The lower cost of studying in Germany since no tuition fees have to be paid in Germany, in contrast to the United States, may have attracted larger numbers of students, the majority of whom had been financed by their families up to now. Increasing efforts by German universities to attract students from abroad and efforts to establish so-called internationally recognized courses taught in English have certainly contributed to the increase in the number of Chinese students since 1998 and 1999 (see Figure 4). But an additional factor should not be ignored: the establishment of commercial agencies in China that offer passport and visa application services and arrange for the placement of Chinese students with German institutions of higher learning (Deutsche Botschaft Peking, 2002).

These Chinese (and German) placement agencies may well play a significant role in the sharp increase in applications for student visas and the number of Chinese students in Germany since 1998, as well as for the high percentage of falsified, forged, or purchased documents qualifying students for study in Germany, which has increased immensely in recent years. As a first step to prevent further abuse of student visas, since July 2001 all applicants have to sit a personal examination at the German embassy in Beijing to provide evidence of their ability to study at a German university. The examination fee is approximately EUR 225 and also covers the fee for the visa application (Deutsche Botschaft Peking, 2002). However, this step has not been very successful. On the contrary, the German authorities have argued that student visas issued to Chinese nationals authorizing them to participate in preparatory courses, such as German language courses preliminary to regular studies in Germany, were widely abused by both the placement agencies, which cheated their clients, and the applicants, who misused them for other purposes. Statistics for the period 1998 to May 2001 show a steep increase in the number of student visas issued during that time and, as a result, in March 2002, this visa category was completely discontinued (Auswärtiges Amt, 2002).

Currently, the German Government foresees two major challenges for the future regarding the influx of Chinese student migrants. First, a growing number of well-off Chinese parents and their offspring are reportedly interested in schooling abroad. Even the expensive elite boarding school Salem has been able to attract Chinese from the PRC by promoting its services via a specially designed Chinese language website (Salem International College, 2002a). By now, of the pupils currently enrolled there 15 are Chinese nationals (Salem International College, 2002b). Several agencies in China and Chinese-German joint ventures in Germany have already tried to set up specialized schools for Chinese students.

FIGURE 4  
CHINESE STUDENTS IN GERMANY, 1975-2001



Source: DAAD, 2002; Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2002.

Second, the practice of “au pair” has attracted some Chinese students. Since January 2001, at least one commercial website hosted on a university server in Germany has advertised au pair positions in Germany in both German and Chinese as an “opportunity for Chinese girls to work and study in Germany” (China Shop A.G., 2001). However, in view of the social and cultural background and value orientations of the predominantly urban clientele interested in studying abroad, this approach to secure an overseas education is not very attractive.

But, as the demand for higher education abroad spreads to rural areas where the aversion to such work is not as strong, au pair positions abroad may, in fact, be welcome as a channel for larger numbers of young Chinese women to move to Germany in the hope of studying at a German university. It is quite likely that commercial agencies will not fail to take advantage of this opportunity to extract money from ambitious families of lower social and educational background, although, given the current legal requirements in Germany, there is virtually no chance for au pairs to be able to enrol for normal studies.

### **Migrant labour and ethnic businesses**

Family restaurants, cooks, and waiters have long been the characteristic features of Chinese business and employment in Germany. Besides this ethnic niche economy there are some Chinese students who are employed by German universities or – to a much lesser degree – by German industry. This at least has been the widespread impression and longstanding stereotype. During the last decade, however, the number of Chinese nationals employed in non-ethnic economic segments is believed to have more than doubled. Based on reliable statistics available since 1994, the total number of Chinese employees in Germany grew by more than 60 per cent to almost 9,400 persons by mid-2001. At the same time the share of female employees grew from 25.4 per cent in 1994 to more than 35 per cent in the middle of 2001, whereas, the proportion of Chinese employees working in the eastern German states dropped from 9.75 per cent to 6.5 per cent.<sup>6</sup>

The general picture of Chinese employment shows that the ethnic catering trade still clearly dominates the labour market for both male and female Chinese migrants. By mid-2001, approximately 46 per cent of male and 29 per cent of female employees holding Chinese passports were employed in the catering business – probably in one of the several thousand family-run Chinese restaurants all over Germany.<sup>7</sup> But compared to earlier years, when in 1994, for instance, 61 per cent of the male and 48 per cent of the female Chinese employees worked in the catering trade, the dominance of this ethnic niche has continually decreased. This development can partially be attributed to the over-expansion of this particular trade during the initial years following German reunification and the general economic slowdown since the second half of the 1990s (Overseas Chinese Affairs

Commission, 2000: 558). Another reason may be the expansion into a greater variety of economic activities by Chinese living in Germany.

Universities and research institutions, traditionally the second-largest source of employment for Chinese in Germany, employed 12 per cent of the male and 10 per cent of the female Chinese immigrant population in 1994. By 2001, these numbers had risen only slightly to 13 per cent for both categories.

By now, commerce and trade constitute a second major outlet for Chinese economic activities. Although no statistics are available, the general impression is that the number of Chinese trade offices in particular has increased rapidly over the last few years. Chinese language sources, though not differentiating by nationality, counted approximately 400 such enterprises in 1999 with an average of two to three employees each (Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, 2000: 558). Although according to German statistics this economic sector already ranks as the third-largest source of employment for Chinese nationals (7% of male and 10% of female employees), neither absolute numbers nor growth rates suggest an increase in employment opportunities in the near future.

Specialized services for the growing Chinese community also provide an economic opportunity in which Chinese enterprises are increasingly active. As the start-up investments in this sector are relatively low, this market segment shows great potential for future growth. Since 1994 the number of male employees grew tenfold. As a result, by mid-2001 the ethnic services industry already accounted for 6 per cent of employment. Chinese travel agencies are a typical example. By the end of 1999 the number ethnic Chinese enterprises offering travel services in Germany was already estimated at around 200 (Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, 2000: 559). As Chinese immigration and tourism are expected to continue to grow, increasing demand for specialized services will also lead to more employment opportunities.

Chinese employment in other economic sectors is closely related to the development of bilateral economic relations. Growing *Chinese connections* with German producers, particularly in the fields of electrical engineering and automobiles, along with their business experiences, convinced German enterprises to rely on highly qualified ethnic Chinese staff for some of the operational tasks – a new development. Increasing recruitment of Chinese, particularly in recent years, is clearly reflected by the 7 per cent share of Chinese male employees in these two sectors in mid-2001, against only 3 per cent in 1994. At the same time, the share of Chinese women employed in electrical engineering, for example, also increased six-fold to around 6 per cent in 2001. Furthermore, legal or financial services related to the growing bilateral economic exchange also show increasing employment potential for highly skilled Chinese.

The German ICT sector provides a good example for possible future developments. Government efforts to promote this industry resulted in the 2001 decision to introduce the so-called Green Card Programme for highly qualified professionals and, by May 2002, 437 Chinese specialists had been recruited by German enterprises under this policy. However, designed for the recruitment of highly skilled labour abroad, this programme clearly failed for the Chinese. Only 238 of the new Chinese holders of German Green Cards could be recruited abroad which indicates that the “Green Cards” issued in the ICT sector opened a new employment channel for Chinese academics who, in fact, were already living in Germany (Bundesministerium des Inneren, 2002a; Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, 2002b).

In conclusion, Chinese business in Germany is still very much confined to the traditional fields of the ethnic niche economy. Catering, ethnic retail trade, and services based on co-ethnic relations clearly dominate. Nonetheless, employment trends clearly show a growing tendency toward the incorporation of highly skilled Chinese into the German mainstream economy and transnational business activities. On the other hand, the still very small share and absolute number of Chinese nationals in regular employment is striking. If official statistics are correct, approximately 30 per cent of the adult Chinese population in Germany do not participate in any economic activities. Informal employment and “helping family members” as traditional features of the catering trade provide a possible explanation. But the Chinese in Germany are themselves convinced that, under normal conditions, average Chinese restaurants are able to support no more than two to three persons each, and restaurants here have not been able to generate high profits during the last few years (Chinese Overseas Affairs Commission, 2000: 558). So long as there is no further research on the Chinese economy in Germany, which is urgently needed from a broader perspective, the question concerning the financial sources of a large number of Chinese migrants will remain unanswered.

## **Irregular migrants and asylum seekers**

### **Clandestine migration**

The irregular entry and illegal stay of Chinese migrants, though small in numbers compared to other nationals, has become a topic of potential conflict between Germany and the PRC.

German authorities did not become aware of the higher numbers of Chinese irregular migrants in Germany before 1987. But, the late 1980s and mid-1990s in particular reportedly saw increasing numbers of irregular Chinese immigrants (Giese, 1999a: 199f; 1999b: 473). Data collected by German prosecuting organs reveal that the number of irregular Chinese migrants apprehended in Germany increased only slightly from 370 in 1992 (beginning of data recording) to 718 in



2000, which is insignificant compared with other nationalities (Grenzschutzdirektion, 1994: 31-35; BAFL, 2001: 48). But, according to the authorities, the small number of cases does not necessarily also indicate low migration activities, but points rather to firmly established structures of Chinese immigrants in Germany and tight organization of trafficking activities (Grenzschutzstelle Flughafen Düsseldorf, 1993: 14; Grenzschutzdirektion, 1994: 31-35).<sup>8</sup>

The high tide of irregular immigration from China to Germany undoubtedly began in 1989 as a result of the successive disintegration of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and the opening of the borders between the West and East. At least until the first half of the 1990s the great majority of irregular Chinese migrants apprehended in Germany originated from the Lishui and Wenzhou regions in Zhejiang province, and Chinese restaurants and their massive proliferation since 1989 obviously played a decisive role in this phenomenon and its growth. Migrants from Fujian and Guangdong, the other two important provinces of origin, were usually apprehended on their way to the United States through Germany (Giese, 1999b: 473).

Especially after the fall of the German wall, the east of Germany was quickly “colonized” by Chinese restaurants, and the rising demand for cheap Chinese labour in the kitchens of these newly opened restaurants accorded perfectly with the growing ambitions for emigration in the home counties of “lao ke” in Germany. During 1992 and 1993 prosecuting organs in various parts of Germany conducted several large-scale searches in cooperation with the local police force and labour authorities. As a result, German authorities found evidence that human trafficking activities were at that time largely controlled or at least supported by Chinese restaurants in Germany and other European receiving countries. New immigrants were absorbed by those restaurants, and their owners often paid in advance for the migration, while the restaurants offered the necessary infrastructure for the international trafficking activities and the necessary information network for those involved in this business. It was therefore assumed that all Chinese illegally entering and/or staying in Germany at that time were, at least for a certain period, also illegally employed by Chinese restaurants. (BKA, 1991: 11f; GSDir, 1994: 24-27; GSDüdo, 1994: 6-8).

On the other hand, the suspicion that Chinese triads had entered the core business of human trafficking could not be substantiated – although media reports suggested it.<sup>9</sup> Triads had been involved in some aspects of the illegal activities, such as falsifying passports and documents, but no evidence could be found relating to the direct recruitment of potential Chinese migrants for German restaurants at that time. Therefore, one has to conclude that at that stage, the organization of irregular migration from Zhejiang to Germany was mainly directed through family networks, although large amounts of money and payments for this special kind

of “services” were indeed involved in virtually every case (Giese, 1999a : 202-207 ; BAFL, 2001: 27-30).

Since the beginning of irregular migration from China to Germany, basically the same main routes have been observed. Differences noticed over the years seem to be the result of temporary factors such as concerted search operations by the responsible organs of one of the transit or destination countries involved. On the route from China to Germany the countries of former Yugoslavia as well as the Russian Federation have played a decisive role as transportation centres for irregular Chinese migrants on their way to western Europe ever since. Migrants leave China either legally with Chinese passports or illegally by plane from Beijing and to a lesser extent from Shanghai or by train or automobile (trucks, cars, buses) to the neighbouring countries in the north or in the south. Sooner or later they usually arrive in Moscow, Belgrade, or Prague to be smuggled into Germany by plane, by car, or on foot. During the entire travel they are accompanied by different traffickers responsible for each of the many individual sections of the long migration route (Giese, 1999a: 202-207; BAFL, 2001: 17-23, 30-33, 50f).

During the last two years, it seems that the proportion of irregular migrants who enter Germany by plane under the pretext of legal journeys has increased continuously. Depending on the pre-arrangements made between traffickers and their customers, the migrants are sometimes sent to the responsible administrations to apply for political asylum or, in the majority of the cases, are taken to a city of their choice or to meet with their future employer – usually the owner of one of the thousands of Chinese restaurants in Germany. Arrangements, from migration route to means of transportation to the possible placement for a job, basically depend on the price the migrants were able or willing to pay. Prices usually range from the equivalent of EUR 5,000 to EUR 25,000, a first substantial instalment of which normally has to be paid in China, and the rest upon arrival in Germany (BAFL, 2001: 27-30).

According to what apprehended migrants told German prosecuting organs, the price for trafficking tends to be substantially lower for migrants from the northern provinces than for those from the more prosperous south-eastern regions of China. German authorities doubt that this lower price is meant to serve as an additional incentive, since traffickers have begun to recruit new customers from regions which traditionally were not main regions of origin for irregular emigrants. It seems that growing unemployment and deteriorating social conditions as a result of the reform of state industries, which had long dominated the economy of north-eastern China, have generated a growing new clientele for the trafficking organizations. Increasing numbers of irregular migrants from these regions seem to substantiate this assumption (BAFL, 2001: 30). Up to now, most of the

irregular migrants from China were recruited in Zhejiang, with increasing proportions originating in Fujian and Guangdong. Migrants were usually in their early 20s to early 40s. Substantially more male than female migrants have been apprehended, and migrants mostly arrived with only a small piece of luggage, if any at all (BAFL, 2001: 50).

As stated earlier, though this phenomenon became generally apparent in the 1980s, no reliable statistics on irregular migration have been available at the national level. Fluctuating numbers compiled by individual sources covering limited periods and regions seem to reflect variations in search concentrations by prosecuting organs rather than any actual inflow of migrants. What can be said is that, then and now, illegal entry into Germany has occurred via a great variety of land and air routes, even though in recent years the arrival by plane seems to have assumed greater prominence (BAFL, 2001: 86). At least this is the impression of the German border police and other departments concerned, although the number of Chinese nationals denied entry upon landing at German airports because of doubts regarding the authenticity of their documents, has remained relatively stable at approximately 900 cases a year since the mid-1990s (Bundesministerium des Innern, 2002a).

### **Political asylum**

Chinese nationals claiming political asylum in Germany did not attract any attention until the suppression of the Democracy Movement in China in early June 1989. As a result, German public debate on Chinese asylum seekers has since clearly focused on intellectuals and academics. But, in fact, intellectuals actually accounted for a very small proportion of Chinese asylum seekers in Germany, even in the aftermath of the suppression of the Democracy Movement of 1989. Politically active Chinese students already in Germany, in particular, were more than reluctant to apply for political asylum. Consequently, the number of Chinese applicants for political asylum, as shown in Table 4, did not immediately rise following these incidents. However, there was a sudden rise in 1992 and 1993, at a time when the political situation in China had actually improved again, but search concentrations for irregular Chinese workers in Germany had sharply increased.

The high tide was reached in 2000 when, for the first time, China ranked among the top ten countries of origin of asylum seekers in Germany. In that year alone, more than 2,000 Chinese nationals applied for asylum (rank 10). In Europe, China ranked fifth in terms of applications received between January and May 2001 (BAFL, 2001: 37).

The percentage of irregular Chinese migrants who directly contact the responsible administrations to apply for asylum immediately upon arrival is unknown. But

because virtually no Chinese migrant applied for asylum at the port of entry, it seems reasonable to believe that the majority had already been, and possibly also worked for some time, in Germany before filing an application for political asylum with the responsible German authorities. Therefore, variation in the numbers of new applicants recorded for individual years since 1986 cannot be directly attributed to any particular incident or development. Nevertheless, decreasing numbers of applicants during the first nine months of 2001 are reported to have been coincidental with improved collaboration between Czech and Slovak border guards (BAFL, 2001: 49). However, decreasing numbers could also be related to the successful fight against corruption in China the year before, which may have substantially weakened the structures of trafficking networks in China (BAFL, 2001: 43).

TABLE 4  
APPLICATIONS FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM BY CHINESE  
NATIONALS IN GERMANY, 1986-2001

Year	Applications	Granted	Other permission to stay	Year	Applications	Granted	Other permission to stay
1986	81			1994	628	212	
1987	89			1995	673	108	60
1988	86			1996	1,123	90	83
1989	209			1997	1,621	52	125
1990	574		37	1998	869	32	277
1991	784		33	1999	1,236	16	46
1992	2,564		27	2000	2,072	27	72
1993	4,396		18	2001	1,531	28	52
1986	81			1994	628	212	
1987	89			1995	673	108	60
1988	86			1996	1,123	90	83
1989	209			1997	1,621	52	125
1990	574		37	1998	869	32	277
1991	784		33	1999	1,236	16	46
1992	2,564		27	2000	2,072	27	72
1993	4,396		18	2001	1,531	28	52

Source: Amnesty International, 1997: 33; Bundesministerium des Innern, 2002a; numbers for 1986 to 1994 include both first-time applications and follow-up applications.

In the same way as the numbers of applicants have gone up and down, the reasons Chinese nationals gave in support of their applications for political asylum show “seasonal fluctuations”. After 1989 the majority of applicants in Germany tried to justify their claims with reference to the Chinese population control policy. At that time, many were obviously influenced by reports that in the United States refugee status could be obtained on those grounds.

Only once they realized that under German law their opposition to population control policies did not qualify for asylum did the mostly rural and not very well educated migrants begin to give their participation in the Democracy Movement of 1989 as a reason for applying for asylum in Germany. Nevertheless, many applicants continue to give that reason, more recently in combination with stereotype stories about Chinese officials destroying the property and the home of the offender, or that the applicant or a close relative injured or unintentionally killed officials. Unaware of the legal bases for political asylum in Germany, many give private, economic, or social reasons, while the number of those who state that they were persecuted for dealing in pornographic material dropped a few years ago, only to increase again recently. Growing numbers of migrants also state their disagreement with corruption or dismissals, or their participation in protests against these, which sometimes resulted in public disorder and violence. Not surprisingly, migrants also cited Falun Gong as justification for their migration to Germany, although by now only a few claim to be active members. Most of them state that they feared persecution for having been in contact with members, or because family members were followers of Falun Dafa, or simply for selling incriminating publications or videos (BAFL, 2001: 40ff; Ver-waltungsgericht Potsdam, 1996-2002).

Since 1995 the average rate of recognition of asylum claims filed by Chinese nationals dropped from 6.1 per cent to only 1.2 per cent in 2000. Those who received permission to stay in Germany on humanitarian grounds accounted for only 1.8 per cent in 1995. Since then, their numbers have again increased to an all-time high of 4.6 per cent from January to September 2001. Hence, the proportion of migrants who in one way or another qualified for a residence permit on political or humanitarian grounds never exceeded 6 per cent (Amnesty International, 1997: 33; Bundesministerium des Innern, 2002a).

Therefore, it is not so much the growing number of Chinese asylum applications, but rather the repatriation of unsuccessful asylum seekers, which are of concern to the German authorities. By the end of 2001 their number had reached more than 5,400 (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen, 2002). In many cases, the Chinese authorities were unable, or unwilling, to issue passports because the migrants could not be identified in China. On the other hand, unsuccessful applicants are usually only ordered to leave Germany within two weeks for a third

country, without any further measures being taken at that time. Therefore, German authorities assumed that a large proportion of the Chinese migrants in question make use of open borders and move to other places within the Schengen area.<sup>10</sup>

### **Tourism – a new feature of Chinese migration to Germany**

Until very recently, Chinese tourism did not exist in Germany – at least not officially and, therefore, not in the normal sense of the term. According to Chinese and German regulations, no visas for tourists were issued by the German consular missions in China. Nevertheless, apart from visits by family members, the number of overnight stays, which, according to the German Centre for Tourism have to be counted as tourist travel, grew by 78 per cent from 280,000 in 1994 to 500,000 in 2001. Since then, China ranks third after the United States and Japan in terms of overnight stays by overseas visitors in Germany. Between January and March 2002, overnight stays by Chinese visitors further increased to 131,000. Based on the average number of days spent in Germany, this amounted to approximately 75,000 visitors during the first three months alone (Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus, 2002).

Organized Chinese tourism has already become an economic factor, as the great majority of Chinese tourists are financially well off by European standards. They come primarily from the wealthy urban centres along the eastern coast of China, and shopping is as one of their main activities when travelling overseas (DZT-Vertriebsagentur Peking, n.d.: 34). In 2001, Chinese tourists already ranked fourth in terms of money spent, accounting for 5 per cent of all tax-free purchases made by non-EU visitors to Berlin (Deutsche Welle, 2002). Statistics compiled by the German Central Bank (Deutsche Bundesbank) show that earnings from Chinese tourism in Germany accounted for a total of EUR 14 million in 2000, and EUR 10 million in 2001 (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Industrie, 2002a). After lobbying the German Government for some time, a marketing centre for the promotion of overseas tourism in Germany was opened in Beijing on 1 November 2001, and promotional efforts have been on the increase.

On 1 July 2002, the door for organized Chinese group tourism to Germany was officially opened by the signing of a memorandum between the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and the German minister of trade and commerce, which assigned Germany the so-called “Approved Destination Status” (ADS) by the Chinese Government as a necessary precondition for Chinese and German tour operators to be able to organize travel groups to Germany. At the same time, the German Government decided to issue special tourist visas to Chinese tourists who travel in groups organized by travel agencies authorized by the Chinese Government (Giese, 2002).

As already referred to, one major source of concern for the German Government has been the unsolved problem of the repatriation of Chinese nationals. Therefore, overstaying appeared to be one of the major obstacles during the negotiations that lasted for more than one year. Regarding this problem the bilateral memorandum remains oddly vague. Thus, it is stated that in the event that participants of organized groups overstay their visa entitlement, the relevant departments of both governments shall cooperate to resolve the problem as quickly as possible. Detailed provisions on how to do this have been left for future working-level consultations between the responsible departments (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Industrie, 2002b).

As only fewer than 100 travel agencies in China are authorized by the Chinese Government to organize overseas travels, even a rapidly growing demand for tourist visits to Germany would not be a problem for the small staff at the German consular missions in China. Germany's experience with a so-called bona fide system in Russia, delegating the examination of applications to designated travel agencies, had been positive. For the same reason, German authorities are basically optimistic concerning the ability to prevent Chinese nationals from abusing this new entry channel for irregular immigration. As the experience from Australia shows, the proportion of overstayers is expected to be quite low, not least because Chinese travel agencies would face tough sanctions (Bundesministerium des Innern, 2002b). Besides, recent German experience indicates that neither sharply higher numbers of Chinese tourists nor of overstayers should be expected in the near future.

## POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The high mobility of irregular Chinese migrants in Europe is well documented. For example, at the beginning of the 1990s the growing economic pressure on Chinese restaurants together with coordinated investigations carried out by German prosecuting organs made lives difficult for irregular migrants from China. Sharply higher numbers of Chinese asylum applicants since 1992 – though no clear evidence is possible in this case – as well as an increase in criminal offences committed by Chinese against Chinese at that time, can probably be ascribed to these two factors.

Cases of extortion and robberies suddenly increased and, feeling threatened, long-time Chinese residents, who earlier had not been very keen to cooperate with the German police, now reported such incidents to the prosecuting organs. As a result, ample evidence was found that irregular immigrants and asylum seekers without sufficient economic means and under enormous pressure because of the huge sums their families at home had borrowed for their migration had fallen prey to Chinese criminals. Those committing the crimes and the organizers were highly

mobile, moving freely between several EU countries (Germany, France, Spain, and Italy) and Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and former Yugoslavia) (Landeskriminalamt Berlin, 1993-2001; Grenzschutzdirektion Ost, 1993). The situation improved once the police in several European countries had conducted coordinated search actions. In Germany such joint efforts were made possible only when, for the first time ever, significant numbers of Chinese residents in Germany began to cooperate with public organs.

With regards to illegal immigration, the number of Chinese irregular migrants apprehended shortly after having illegally crossed the German border, or who were denied entry by German authorities, did not increase significantly over the last ten years. Therefore, Chinese irregular migration is said not to pose a serious challenge to the German border police compared with migrants from other countries of origin. For the time being, China has never been among the top ten countries of origin as far as irregular migrants are concerned and, therefore, usually did not receive any special attention. Nor is this expected to change in the near future.

On the other hand, there is growing concern within the German Federal Border Guard and the Federal Criminal Police Office over the increasingly sophisticated methods of Chinese trafficking networks abusing liberal German visa regulations to obtain entry permits for irregular migrants under the pretence of legitimate reasons to stay in Germany. According to the Federal Criminal Police Office there are indications that trafficking organizations have already begun to establish fronts such as travel agencies, language schools, or import/export businesses to create new channels to obtain legal entry visas (BAFL, 2001: 66).

As a result, the police, the Federal Border Guard, and the administration responsible for handling applications for political asylum have called for counter measures ranging from the creation of EU-wide databases of individuals and institutions who invite Chinese nationals for short stays, to the introduction of a system using entry- and exit-cards to better control the movements of non-EU nationals within the Schengen area, or to fingerprint suspicious visa applicants (BAFL, 2001: 86ff, 91f). As a first step, from January 2003, every German visa will bear the photograph of the applicant so as to make forgeries virtually impossible. The incorporation of biometric data is expected to follow (*Hamburger Abendblatt*, 2002: 4).

## CONCLUSION

New Chinese migration to Germany is anything but a homogeneous process. The Chinese-German migration system is characterized by distinct groups of migrants who are only loosely connected, if at all. An important basic feature, however, common to students, highly skilled professionals, business people, restaurant



owners and their staff, as well as irregular migrants and asylum seekers is their responsiveness to policy changes both in China and in Germany, which results in significant variations in migration flows.

Although migrant groups greatly differ from each other, the findings suggest a tendency toward a certain polarization within the fragmented and dispersed Chinese community in Germany. This new trend is particularly noticeable regarding economic activities and labour market developments. On the one hand, there is the traditional ethnic niche economy, structured around extended families and still dominating the market for Chinese (low-skilled) labour. On the other hand, the number of both modern Chinese transnational economic ventures and highly skilled Chinese nationals entering the German mainstream economy is growing rapidly.

Despite their fragmentation and polarization, the various migrant groups share a major common characteristic – their transnational dimension. Chinese students, for example, increasingly enter the global market for highly skilled labour and participate in international economic ventures. Those engaged in the traditional economic niches are linked to other European countries through close economic and family ties, whereas irregular migrants show high international mobility, frequently moving between different European countries. And, all migrants maintain close contacts with their home communities in China.

Regarding these developments it remains to be seen what kind of relations will emerge between the different groups. For instance, will transnational dimensions and increasing immigration make the Chinese community in Germany more autonomous and self-reliant, or may this become the basis of a new emancipated type of relationship between the community and the host society and, particularly, the authorities?

Although the International Organization for Migration (IOM) project, of which this study is a part, is a useful beginning, reliable information on Chinese migrants in Germany, i.e. their living conditions; social lives; self-organization; political representation; relationships with the host society, non-Chinese migrant communities, Chinese communities outside Germany and, home communities in China; and their economic activities is still very limited. Future research should focus on the various Chinese migrant groups and take into account their differences and their linkages with each other in order to better understand the complex Chinese migratory system. Finally, emphasis should be given to the pan-European dimension of the phenomenon, as there is evidence of a growing tendency toward integration with the various migrant communities spread over the whole continent.

## NOTES

1. The terms China and Chinese in this paper refer to People's Republic of China and her citizens since 1949, but not to Taiwan nor Hong Kong or Macau. Nor are ethnic Chinese of other nationalities included, unless stated otherwise. For earlier periods, the terms are used for the Qing-Empire and the Republic of China and their citizens, respectively.
2. The term Germany applies to the Federal Republic of Germany including West Berlin for the years before German reunification, unless otherwise stated.
3. All numbers given for Chinese immigration to post-war Germany are limited to the situation in the Federal Republic of Germany, unless otherwise stated. Beginning with the year 1992, statistics cover the whole of Germany including the new *Länder* of the former GDR. In data on Germany from 1990 to 1991 that territory is usually not included – with the result that statistics for these years appear to be incomplete. Furthermore, there are no flow statistics nor data on ethnic composition of German nationals. Therefore, this article is confined to residence statistics and holders of Chinese passports.
4. This policy still applies today (for details see Cyrus, no date).
5. Legal entry, exit, and stay as well as the naturalization of foreigners in Germany are regulated by the German *Ausländergesetz* (AuslG) and corresponding regulations, particularly §§ 15, 24ff, 51, and 55.
6. All numbers quoted in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, are based on statistics provided by the German Labour Administration and additional calculations by the author (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, 2002a).
7. By the end of the millennium, estimates varied from 2,200 (Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, 2000: 558) to more than 5,000.
8. According to official German statistics, during 1994 Chinese suspects were prosecuted in a total of 131 cases connected to organized crime. In 49 cases or 32.5 per cent the prosecuted were suspected to be traffickers of Chinese migrants; 21 cases for falsifying official documents such as passports or visa have to be viewed as closely related. (Bundeskriminalamt, 1995).
9. Scholars as well were not immune to misleading media reports on triad involvement (see, for example, Weyrauch, 1995: 47-52).
10. Relevant German authorities are convinced that this was the case whenever rumors reached Germany that amnesties for illegal migrants were expected in Italy, Spain, or Portugal in the near future (see Bundesministeriums des Innern, 2002b). Also compare the respective country chapters in this volume.

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LA NOUVELLE EMIGRATION CHINOISE A DESTINATION  
DE L'ALLEMAGNE: LOGIQUE HISTORIQUE ET NOUVELLES  
RAMIFICATIONS DANS UN REGIME MIGRATOIRE GLOBALISE

La migration chinoise en Allemagne n'est pas un phénomène bien connu, même si l'on a vu arriver des immigrants chinois dans ce pays dès la première moitié du XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Certaines recherches ont été effectuées sur des thèmes particuliers dans des contextes historiques spécifiques, comme la discrimination et les persécutions subies durant le troisième Reich (Yü-Dembski, 1996a, 1997), les étudiants chinois en Allemagne entre 1860 et 1945 (Harnisch, 1999), les mariages mixtes germano-chinois (Groeling-Che, 1991), et l'immigration irrégulière et la traite des êtres humains dans les années 80 et 90 (Giese, 1999a). Cependant, aucune recherche systématique sur l'histoire de la migration chinoise ni analyse continue des tendances migratoires les plus récentes et des questions politiques s'y rapportant n'ont été effectuées à ce jour. Il faut y voir entre autres les raisons suivantes : les communautés chinoises ont toujours constitué une petite minorité au sein de la population non germanique ; après la deuxième guerre mondiale, les communautés chinoises ont été dispersées sur l'ensemble de l'Allemagne (de l'Ouest) et, à ce jour, elle n'ont encore créé aucun « Chinatown » visible ; en outre jusqu'à tout récemment, il semblait n'y avoir pratiquement aucun problème d'ordre politique ou social concernant les immigrés chinois, et les rares questions politiques se posant en la matière restaient peu significatives par rapport à celles que posent d'autres groupes ethniques. De ce fait, l'immigration chinoise et la vie des migrants chinois – largement ignorées en tant que thèmes potentiels de recherche pour des études sur la Chine moderne en Allemagne – n'ont pas encore suscité l'attention des spécialistes en sciences sociales.

Le présent article s'efforce de dresser un tableau résumé complet de l'histoire de la nouvelle migration chinoise en Allemagne depuis le début des années 70 jusqu'à la fin du second millénaire. Sur la base de statistiques officielles, il examine ensuite les tendances récentes de l'immigration chinoise pour différents groupes de migrants depuis les années 90, en mettant l'accent sur les questions politiques et les implications politiques de ces développements récents et potentiels futurs.

## LA NUEVA MIGRACIÓN CHINA HACIA ALEMANIA: COHERENCIA HISTÓRICA Y NUEVOS PATRONES DE DIVERSIFICACIÓN EN UN RÉGIMEN MIGRATORIO GLOBALIZADO

La migración China hacia Alemania no está muy bien documentada, aunque los inmigrantes llegaron a este país en la primera mitad del siglo XVIII. Algo se sabe sobre cuestiones particulares en contextos históricos específicos, tales como la discriminación y persecución durante el tercer Reich (Yü-Dembksi, 1996a, 1997), los estudiantes chinos en Alemania entre 1860 y 1945 (Harnisch, 1999), los matrimonios mixtos entre chinos y alemanes (Groeling-Che, 1991), y la inmigración irregular y la trata de personas durante los años ochenta y noventa (Giese, 1999a). Sin embargo, no se ha realizado una investigación sistemática sobre la migración china a lo largo de la historia ni un análisis continuo sobre las tendencias migratorias más recientes y las cuestiones políticas conexas. Ello se debe a que: las comunidades chinas siempre han conformado una pequeña minoría entre la población no alemana; tras la Segunda Guerra Mundial, las comunidades chinas se dispersaron en toda Alemania (Occidental), y no han creado, todavía, ningún “Chinatown” visible; y, hasta hace poco, prácticamente no había ningún problema político o social relacionado con los migrantes chinos y las pocas cuestiones políticas emergentes eran insignificantes en comparación a aquellas relacionadas con otros grupos. Por tanto, la inmigración china y la vida de los migrantes chinos – ignorada en gran parte como tema de investigación en los estudios sobre la China moderna en Alemania – no han sido objeto de atención por parte de los sociólogos.

Este artículo intenta ofrecer un resumen global de la historia de esta nueva migración China hacia Alemania desde principios de los años setenta hasta finales del segundo milenio. Se basa principalmente en las estadísticas oficiales, y debate las recientes tendencias de la inmigración China para distintos grupos de migrantes desde los años noventa, concentrándose en las cuestiones políticas y repercusiones políticas de estos hechos recientes y potencialmente futuros.