

Kurzbeschreibung:

Chinese migration to African countries is a central aspect of the debate on Sino-African relations. While the general features of this migration are well-documented, the specificities of flows of people, goods and ideas that constitute migration between particular regions in China and Africa are less-well researched. However, it is these specificities which will allow us to move away from the single story about Chinese migration to Africa, and pave the way to view “Chinese migration as a kaleidoscope of flows, biographies and ambitions” (Pieke, 2004:13). Against this backdrop, this project proposes a multi-sited study of Fuqingnese migrants (actual, potential and return migrants) in ten selected towns in Lesotho and selected towns in Fuqing prefecture. The projects will focus on the motivations and ambitions connected to Fuqingnese migrants’ decision to go to Lesotho, to return to, or to stay in Fuqing. More specifically, it will investigate how migration to Lesotho fits into past and present life projects of Fuqingnese migrants (actual, returnee and potential migrants). The project takes an inductive approach and is of an interdisciplinary nature. Narrative-biographical interviews with actual, potential and return migrants in Lesotho and Fuqing, as well as a survey among Chinese migrants in Lesotho constitute the main tools for data collection. The project aims (i) to identify the processes – i.e. the interplay of structural and actor-level factors – which impel Fuqingnese people to migrate to Lesotho and not to other countries; (ii) to deepen our understanding of these South-South migratory processes unleashed by China’s integration into the global economy, and are part of the wider global Chinese migration; and (iii) to yield new general insights into South-South migration. In yielding both new theoretical and empirical insights, the project addresses not only migration researchers specializing on Chinese migration to Southern Africa, but also the wider migration studies community.