

Workshop

January 24 – 25, 2025

“Megacity or Kiez, residential towers or housing shortages? A dialogue between urbanisation research in China and Germany”

organised by

Ryanne Flock and the project "Social Worlds: China's Cities as Spaces of Worldmaking"

(funded by BMBF) at the University of Würzburg

in cooperation with

Section Urban and Regional Sociology of the German Sociological Association

Cities often stand pars pro toto for a society and are understood as a driving force or laboratory for the latest social trends. Do they vary based on the characteristics of capitalism, political systems, and (digital) infrastructure, or do similarities through urbanity – due to size, density, mobility and heterogeneity – predominate? At first glance, the urban worlds and urbanisation processes in Germany and China appear fundamentally different: compared to China's megacities, Germany's large- and small-scale agglomerations seem marginal; the speed of modernisation and transformation in China contrasts with the gradual pace of German urban development; and the political systems – autocracy vs. democracy – open and restrict the influence of local politics and citizens in different ways. However, both countries face challenges with housing demand and supply, influenced by capitalist and neo-liberal constraints. Issues of urban polarization and left-behind places, social isolation versus participation, emerging and withering social structures and questions of gentrification arise in China and Germany.

This workshop presents a unique opportunity for researchers from urban sociology and sinology to come together and explore the differences and similarities between urbanisation in China and Germany. We aim to foster a vibrant forum of knowledge exchange and interdisciplinary networking, with the goal of a joint publication in the form of a special issue or an anthology. We are particularly interested in presentations focussing on Germany or China dealing with topics related but not limited to the following:

- Neighbourhood development and social cohesion;
- Emerging, adapting or vanishing social worlds;
- Grassroots mobilisation and participation;
- Digitalisation as infrastructure at the macro or micro level;
- Dwelling trends or issues of housing shortage;
- The role of government/politics in urban development;
- The role of social research and data collection in urban governance.

The **in-person workshop takes place on January 24 to 25, 2025, at the University of Würzburg, Germany**. Please submit an **abstract of up to 500 words by November 10, 2024**, to ryanne.flock@uni-wuerzburg.de. We will circulate workshop invitations by December 15, 2024. In addition, we kindly ask you to submit a paper of five pages by January 10, 2025.

To facilitate networking, participation without a presentation is also possible for scholars with respective research interests.

Participants can be reimbursed for travel and accommodation costs that arise in the context of the workshop; meals will be provided for by the "Social Worlds" project. The project will furthermore offer assistance with hotel reservations.

For any remaining questions, please contact Ryanne Flock ryanne.flock@uni-wuerzburg.de.