

Article

Soziologische Chinastudien und chinesische Soziologie im globalen Kontext: Geteiltes Wissen – unterschiedliche Forschungsperspektiven?*

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Summary

Sociological China studies are normally thought of as part of Western social sciences/area studies, whereas Chinese sociology is associated with sociology in China. What both have in common is Chinese society as their research focus, while the country's ongoing rapid social change provides an abundant variety of social issues and challenges to work on. In addition, with China's increasing global presence, there is an ever greater need for deeper understanding of the country's global interrelations and social influences beyond its domestic borders. Taking the German Association for Social Science Research on China as its starting point, this paper explores whether and how sociological China research and Chinese sociology are becoming parts of an emerging cosmopolitan/global sociology existing beyond the methodological nationalism of classical sociology. It argues that the emerging field of global sociology is characterized by the fragmented and asymmetric production and diffusion of sociological knowledge, and that sociological China studies and Chinese sociology are entering this field from different angles — while also being embedded in different national political, academic, and funding frameworks. Drawing on Michael Burawoy's typology of the production of sociological knowledge as a contradictory yet complementary division of professional, policy, critical, and public Sociology, the paper further argues in favor of strengthening the reflexive production of sociological knowledge on China (meaning critical and public sociology) that seeks to elaborate on its critical foundations and to find its academic and extra-academic audiences. At the same time, this might also provide common ground for sociological China studies and Chinese sociology within the currently asymmetrical emerging field of global sociology.

Keywords: China studies, Chinese sociology, global sociology, asymmetric production and diffusion of knowledge, Michael Burawoy, critical and public sociology

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* Bei dem Beitrag handelt es sich um die Ausarbeitung einer Präsentation, die im Rahmen eines Internationalen Workshops „China Studies in a Global Context“ (Veranstalter: Mechthild Leutner, Katja Levy und Zhang Xudong) am 16.10.2015 im Konfuzius Institut Berlin vorgetragen wurde. Das Beitragsmanuskript wurde im Juni 2017 abgeschlossen.