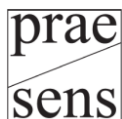# Between Mainland and Island:
Causes for Migration and the Way of Life of
Chinese Mainland Migrant Workers in Bó'áo

Elisabeth Gumpenberger

Abstract

This article presents the results of a case study conducted in Bó'áo, a small town on Hǎinán Island currently undergoing rapid transformation. Triggered by the founding of the Boao Forum for Asia, an unknown fishing village has turned into an important location for conferences and tourism. On the basis of Grounded Theory this case study focuses on migrant workers from mainland China, using qualitative semi-structured interviews in order to explore the causes behind this migration influx to Bó'áo. In addition, this paper investigates the way these migrants organise their lives in this small town by raising the question of social integration within the local society—a topic largely neglected in the general academic discourse in and on China. The results of this study show that the level of education determines both reasons for migration as well as the way the migrant workers organise their everyday lives and the way in which they interact with locals. This paper also scrutinises common concepts of integration, e.g. the need to acquire the language spoken by the majority.

Introduction and research question

Within the last few years, Bó'áo 博鳌, a small town on Hǎinán 海南 Island in China, has transformed itself from an unknown fishing village into an important location for conferences and tourism—mainly because of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) 博鳌亚洲论坛 (Bó'áo Yàzhōu lùntán), an international summit that is held in Bó'áo once a year. The rural town of Bó'áo attracts a continuously rising number of visitors as well as a large number of migrant workers from the Chinese mainland. This study analyses the main reasons for the Chinese mainlanders' migration to Bó'áo, and utilises the concept of push and pull factors to determine the motives. Thus, on the one hand Bó'áo's appeal to migrants is investigated, and on the other hand this study analyses the circumstances that make migrants leave their former residences.

Far away from home, settlement in a small town on a tropical island brings manifold changes to the lives of migrants: their job situation, eating habits, leisure activities, change of climate, a difference in the vegetation or their social environment are only a few possible factors migrants are confronted with in their new living situation. From a sociological perspective, this study explores the migrants' perception at a micro-level, raising the question of how they are dealing with their own social and professional life in Bó'áo. Furthermore, it focuses on the degree of integration into local town life and questions the migrants' perception of the host society as well as their own individual life situation.

After analysis of the main reasons for migration for Bó'áo's migrant workers and an exploration of the migrants' experiences in the host society, conclusions for the social phenomenon of work migration and integration in China will be drawn and will be linked to scientific evidence dealing with these issues.

Migration and integration: review of current research

Migration and integration research are both established, independent fields of research (Zwengel and Hentges 2008: 7). At the same time, in the academic discourse, migration and integration are under consideration as interlinked.

Heinz Fassmann et al. (2003: 12-13) describe integration as a process of migrants' social inclusion and participation. Rainer Bauböck (2001b: 14) argues further that integration must not be understood as a unilinear process. Feeling foreign or being perceived as a foreigner are both social constructions that are produced by the (host) society (Fassmann et al. 2003: 12).

This study focuses on migrants' integration in their own country. This type of migration can be called internal migration, because even though migrants cover huge distances, they do not cross country borders. The migrants of this study sample

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can be referred to as migrant workers, because work is the main purpose of their migration. As already mentioned in the introduction, this study focuses on the reasons behind the mainlanders' decision to go to Bó'áo. These reasons can be separated into push and pull factors influencing the decision to migrate (Haug 2000: 3). Push factors describe negative aspects that literally push the migrants towards leaving their place of origin. Pull factors on the other hand describe attractive, positive characteristics associated with the destination (Kröhnert 2007: 1-2). Everett S. Lee (1966: 56) assumes that migrants migrating primarily for pull factors are often actively and deliberately selected by their future employer—in consideration of their age, education, competencies and motivation. Lee explains that this interpretation stands in opposition to the observations made on migrants who predominantly leave their country of origin because of push factors. Their migration is often a less voluntary decision and they face fewer options concerning the choice of their future employment.

The model of push and pull factors is certainly not the only concept in the field of migration research. Sonja Haug (2000) differentiates between classical theories and modern concepts. 'Classical theories of (international) migration mostly refer to economic factors, in order to explain either migration movements on a macro-level or migration decisions on a micro-level.'[1] More recent concepts put a special emphasis on other aspects, e.g. the 'social integration of migrants in migration networks'[2] (Haug 2000), the historicity of migration, the structures behind the observable phenomenon of migration, or the transnational spatial perspective. This paradigm shift in the field of migration research took place in the 1980s (Parnreiter 2000: 26).

Classical theories of migration are criticised for simplifying the phenomenon of migration. Furthermore, they do not take into account more complex mechanisms of migration nor its historicity or processuality. Classical theories focus too much on economic aspects and disregard social networks (Haug 2000: 15-16). Christof Parnreiter (2000: 45) counts the model of push and pull factors among the classical theories of migration. His criticism of this model comes from the fact that push and pull factors are regarded as something pre-established, whereas they should be considered as something in a developing stage. Moreover, he says that in this model the determining factors of migration are being omitted. Many modern approaches towards migration research opt for theories that embrace a less simplifying approach and investigate both processuality and historicity of the phenomenon. They try to develop new analysing tools for migration instead of creating new schools of

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1 The original German text is: 'Klassische Theorien der (internationalen) Migration beziehen sich hauptsächlich auf ökonomische Faktoren, sei es zur Erklärung von Migrationsbewegungen auf der Makro-Ebene oder von Migrationsentscheidungen auf der Mikro-Ebene'. All translations into English are by the author.
2 German original: 'soziale Einbettung der Migranten in Migrationsnetzwerke'.

thought (Parnreiter 2000: 26-27). Parnreiter (2000: 48) stresses that an open approach within migration research is necessary, as this phenomenon should be met with a multi-facetted approach integrating several theories. He insists on a critical and creative combination of various approaches in order to gain a proper understanding.

On the one hand this study analyses the push and pull factors causing migration to Bó'áo, while on the other hand social processes (underlying the phenomenon of migrant workers) in the context of work migration in Bó'áo are investigated.

Overview: integration and migration in the People's Republic of China

A comprehensive, yet not very successful literature search on the phenomenon of social integration as well as on integration research in and about China—both in Chinese data bases and in various libraries—supports the conclusion that this topic has not been researched on an extensive level yet. So far, the general focus of research has concentrated on communities of migrant workers in Chinese cities.[3] These studies are, however, not suitable as points of reference for this study on Bó'áo's migrants, because the migrants in this present study moved to a smaller town. Neither can studies on overseas Chinese and their behaviour in terms of integration (e.g. Christiansen 2003) be compared to the focus in this study on internal work migration. Hence, in the Chinese context both integration and integration research have not yet been sufficiently researched and appear as blind spots within academia. In this respect—relying on Western concepts and discourses on integration—this study is one step to bridge the gap.

In the People's Republic of China (PRC), internal migration is a "hot" issue. Western media every now and then give sensational figures for the masses of migrant workers moving from the countryside to Chinese cities.[4] Depending on the source and definition of migration, numbers can vary and rise to 260 million people (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 2011). This number is approximately equal to one-half of the EU's population (Europa.eu).

China possesses a very particular system to control migration, the household registration system, which was introduced in 1958. The household registration system determines a Chinese individual's permanent residence—the household registration 户口 (*hùkǒu*)—upon birth. For a long time, this system served as a mechanism to control the spatial distribution of the Chinese population throughout the territory and implicitly also as 'one of the major tools of social control employed by the state' (Chan and Zhang 1999: 819). Social control of the population was a main feature, as

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3   For further examples see Ma and Xiang (1998); Fan (2008a: 95-116).

4   For further examples see Erling (2009); Seith (2007).

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social security was tightly linked to the household registration. It was the state that decided on the allocation of access to social security among migrants.

Since the Chinese economic reform 改革开放 (*gǎigé kāifàng*) launched in 1978, the household registration system has been gradually eased, not least because of different framework conditions as industrialisation and enormous construction schemes led to a high labour demand (Solinger 2003: 139). At the same time, reforms and restructuring in agriculture created a surplus labour force in the countryside, and the emergence of free markets allowed farmers to survive in cities without social security provided by the state (Mallee 2000: 89).

Today the Chinese government meets the growing number of migrants with progressive decentralisation and legal relaxation. However, the socio-political control function of the system is still obvious, and the majority of the floating population has no means of changing their household registration (Wang 2004: 121). In addition, the state reforms its system very cautiously (Liang and Ma 2004: 484). However, in 2004 the central government tried to target the issue of a system change in the publication of Document No.1,[5] which emphasises the ever-growing relevance of this topic, on a political level as well:

> For the first time in PRC history it openly addresses the problem of urban privileges that have so far been based on the exploitation of the countryside...[I]t underlines the positive effects of rural migration to the cities and condemns the widespread attitude among urbanites to criticize the peasants leaving their villages in search of job opportunities in the booming regions of the PRC (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 2008: 217).

Rural population migration itself puts pressure on the central government, which reacts with successive legal relaxations. Cindy C. Fan (2008a: 52; 2008b: 69) assumes that more reforms of the household registration system will be under way, as the state appears to be in favour of migration.

A lack of consistent definition and of standardised terms makes it difficult to compare figures in order to capture the entire migration activity in China. Among the many different concepts and definitions that are used, the two most common terms are migrants (*qiānyí rénkǒu* 迁移人口) and floating population (*liúdòngrénkǒu* 流动人口). Furthermore, some statistics differentiate between two types of migrants within the term *qiānyí rénkǒu*: permanent migrants (*chángzhù qiānyí rénkǒu* 常住迁移人口) and temporary migrants (*zànshí qiānyí rénkǒu* 暂时迁移人口) (Fan 2008b: 70, 72). Fan (ibid.) defines floating population as follows: 'Regardless of when actual migration occurred, a person is counted as part of the floating population as long as his or her usual place of residence is different from the *hukou* loca-

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5 Document No. 1 was published in Chinese newspapers by the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council on February 8, 2004 and addresses the question of how to boost farmers' incomes (Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 2008: 217).

tion' (original italics). Even government statistics employ different definitions and do not always make clear where to draw the line between temporary migrants and floating population.[6]

Migration patterns in China

The heterogeneity of the phenomenon makes it quite challenging to determine migration patterns in China. As explained earlier, it proves difficult to analyse statistics and consolidate available data because of the vague definition and ambiguous use of terms. However, some conclusions can be drawn in terms of patterns and flows.

Jonathan Unger (2002: 125-126) demonstrates that mostly the poorer people—but not the poorest—tend to migrate. According to the China Labour Bulletin (CLB 2008),[7] about half of migrant workers are between 16 and 30 years old. CLB (2008) cites a government study from the year 2006, which states that 64 percent of all migrant workers are men. However, in the last few years, the number of female working migrants has been increasing. Most migrants are young and unmarried. Those migrants who are part of the floating population have a much lower level of education than permanent migrants (Liang and Ma 2004: 480).

The official survey (government study) cited above (CLB 2008) states that migrant workers account for 58 percent of all workers in the industrial sector and for 52 percent of all workers in the service sector. Their proportion in manufacturing industry and in the construction industry is even higher (68 percent and 80 percent respectively). Hein Mallee (2000: 95) lists not only the construction industry and manufacturing industry, but also small enterprises, households and independent activities as typical fields of employment. Changmin Sun (2000: 179, 183-185) describes the spatial patterns of migration. According to his research, migrant workers move primarily from remote areas towards the coast and from less developed areas to more developed places in the country. The most common spatial pattern is rural–urban migration. However, the floating population also engages in urban–urban migration, from cities to cities or from towns to towns. This does not imply that Chinese migrant workers never move from rural to rural areas (Banister 1997: 79). An even smaller proportion moves against the common flow and leaves the cities in order to work in the countryside (Davin 1999: 1). While in 1990 only 11.5 million people crossed provincial borders, in 2000 already double that number (32.3 million people) engaged in that kind of migration. At the same time, the distances the migrants cover are getting bigger (Fan 2008a: 21, 39).

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6 For further examples see Davin (1999: 20-21).
7 As the China Labour Bulletin (2008) does not clearly define who is counted as a worker, the figures cited must be treated with caution.

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In terms of reasons and triggers for the pronounced rural–urban migration of the floating population, Chinese scientists share many different views. Yáo Huásōng 姚华松 et al. (2008: 70) show that the primary reason for migration is economics. However, they disagree when it comes to the definition of push factors: scarcity of land at home, high levels of unemployment[8] in the countryside, a high labour demand in the cities, scarcity of resources in the countryside leaving families in precarious situations, or simply the fact that people in the countryside face poverty. Wáng Chūnguāng 王春光 (2003) criticises this view, arguing that especially in the last few years the reasons for migration have become more and more individualised. He underlines the major difference between older and younger migrant workers: the younger migrants leave with higher expectations concerning their destination and do not foster the idea of ever returning back home. Wáng emphasises that changes within society highly influence migrant workers' motivations to migrate and stresses that society's behaviour itself underlies constant change. He parts company with the tradition of stating only one reason for migration and thus agrees with the critics of the classical theories on migration. For him, reasons and triggers for migration are strongly influenced by the respective social situation and experience of the individual. By stressing the processuality of migration, he rejects the simplistic model of push and pull factors. Duàn Píngzhōng 段平忠 (2008: 74) emphasises that the majority of migrant workers migrate in order to improve their income situation. However, he also points out that the decision to migrate is not necessarily taken by the individual but rather by the entire family or by a specific social group exerting an influence. It is quite obvious that his position correlates with the theory of the new economics of migration, according to which the entire household situation is factored in when it comes to the process of decision-making. Chinese migrant workers mostly keep in touch with their family back home—not only once a year when they go back to celebrate Chinese New Year, but also through financial remittances (Pieke 1999: 7). Fan (2008a: 8) states that in most cases only parts of the family migrate. Usually after a certain, limited amount of time they return home to their relatives who are waiting for them (Fan 2008a: 8).

Duàn (2008: 74), again, stresses that the reasons that make people leave their home in order to work somewhere else are individual and cannot be generalised. Since the 1980s economic motivations prevail (Fan 2008a: 74). Migrant workers leave their homes because they expect better living conditions in the thriving parts of the country. Additionally the high labour demand in the industrial areas acts as a pull factor.

In the Chinese context, social networks are of high importance, especially with regard to the decision-making process on where to move to (Sun 2000: 184). The

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8 Yáo et al. (2008) use the Chinese term "unemployment rate (*shīyèlǜ* 失业率)", a term which normally is not employed in the official discourse but is mostly replaced by the term "manpower surplus".

community at home also plays a very important role, as it often co-ordinates the migration and structures the communities of the migrants from within (Pieke 1999: 8).

Empirical study and research design

The fieldwork underlying this study was conducted in the still widely unresearched town of Bó'aó and was guided by Grounded Theory,[9] which was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in Chicago at the beginning of the 1960s. According to Andreas Böhm (2005: 476), Grounded Theory focuses on the object of research. Insights gained from the object of research are refined to a theory. In this context, Glaser and Strauss (2005: 12) emphasise the importance of exploring which concepts and hypotheses are of relevance in the field of research as a first step. Verification and generation of theories go hand in hand, and both quantitative as well as qualitative methods are employed and all kinds of data analysed (ibid.: 12, 26). The circularity of data collection and data evaluation is vital and determines the entire research process.

Grounded Theory embraces a concept of research which is unbiased towards the result. This means that the research questions were not determined before the researcher's arrival on Hǎinán Island. Rather, they gradually developed in the field through observation of conditions in Bó'áo as well as through a thorough reading of current research.

Observation was chosen as one of the central instruments employed in this field research. The degree of participation varied between a position of an observer-as-participant and that of a complete participant.[10] Observation always means intervention, especially if the researcher is obviously not a local—this fact must be kept in mind. Important insights were documented in a research diary. Additionally, as an aide-mémoire, photography was employed. Numerous informal talks with people living in Bó'áo as well as informal questions complemented the observation and were gradually systemised over time. In this way, it was possible to collect more and more information about relevant codes and concepts in the sense of a theoretical sampling.[11]

In order to meet the requirements of circularity in data collection and data evaluation as postulated by Grounded Theory, additional data and documents were

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9   For further information see Glaser and Strauss (2005).

10 For further information on the different types of participant observation see Thomas Brüsemeister (2000: 83-84).

11 'Theoretical sampling' means purposive sampling in order to increase the diversity of the researcher's sample. Step-by-step core concepts or core categories are saturated by a deliberate, directed selection of information (Glaser and Strauss 2005: 70).

analysed. Additionally, the findings were discussed during the interviews. In June and July 2009, eleven qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Chinese mainlanders who had moved to Bó'áo in order to work there. The questionnaire covered many different topics: an interviewee's biography, their preparations for migrating, their first few weeks in town and their memories of their arrival time, their current life in Bó'áo, daily life, satisfaction and status quo. The interviewees for this study were selected according to the theory of deliberate sampling. Beforehand, certain limiting selection criteria were defined: the interviewees had to be from the Chinese mainland and the purpose of their migration to Bó'áo had to be job related. They had to be of working age and their decision to migrate had had to be taken independently and autonomously. Furthermore, at the time of the interview their length of residence in Bó'áo had to be at least one year. The researcher not only tried to find a balance in terms of gender, but also to interview a broad spectrum of people with regard to their educational level, field of work, civil status, place of origin and age. This wide range should on the one hand give a very diverse picture, and on the other hand enable the researcher to determine many important factors and migration patterns.

The interviews were evaluated with the help of MaxQDA, a software designed for qualitative data analysis. Subsequently, on the basis of their interviewees' educational levels, they were divided in two groups—non-college graduates and college graduates. Already during data collection, these categories had proven to be essential factors for different processes of integration and migration. The first group comprises all interviewees who graduated from primary, secondary or high school. The second group includes those interviewees who graduated from college (three or four years of university education). In the next step, based on Philipp Mayring's guideline (2008), text elements were first paraphrased and then generalised along the codes in the code tree.

Context analysis

Hǎinán: China's island province

Hǎinán province, China's tropical island province in the South China Sea, consists of the island of Hǎinán as well as 240 other islands. The total area covers 33,920 sq km of land (Xiao et al. 2005: 2; Gu and Wall 2007: 159) and two million sq km of sea territory. Up to the modern period, the island had an unfavourable reputation as an 'unsafe border region'[12] and a 'place of exile'[13] (Gottwald 2002: 12). For a long

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12 Original German: 'unsichere Grenzregion'.

time, the region was exploited by the mainland for its raw materials (Feng and Goodman 1997: 53). In 1988, Hǎinán was assigned independent provincial status and converted into the biggest special economic zone in China. Since its establishment as a special economic zone, the influx of capital has enabled diversification of the economy from the production of agricultural products to an expansion of the service industry (Gu and Wall 2007: 159-160). In 2007, already more than 40 percent of the gross domestic product originated from the service sector (NBS 2008: 52). It is primarily the growth of the tourism industry that has contributed to the expansion of this sector. Thus, it is not surprising that tourism was designated a core sector and focal point in the official strategy for regional development (China Institute for Reform and Development (CIRD) 2008: 378; Gu and Wall 2007: 160). The majority of Hǎinán's tourists come from the PRC (CIRD 2008: 369). The constant increase in tourism has helped the industry to grow considerably. In 2007, about 18.4 million tourists visited the island, equivalent to 25 times the figure of 1987 (Xie 2008; Xú 2009: 202). Thus yearly more than double the number of people living on Hǎinán travel to the island. In 2008, Hǎinán was declared an 'International Tourism Island' in order to increasingly attract international tourists (CIRD 2008: 33). Hǎinán's economy as a whole is constantly growing (NBS 2008: 49), but, from a development perspective, the province still belongs to the developing world, according to the World Bank definition of development (Brødsgaard 2009: 40).

How to define a Hainanese

Recent scientific publications on Chinese ethnic identity suggest a lack of research regarding Hainanese identity and culture. Two previous articles written by Chongyi Feng (1999) and Feng and David S. Goodman (1997) offered substantial revelations, while, in contrast, recent articles by Kjeld E. Brødsgaard (2009) or Goodman (1999 and 2007) seem to offer somewhat less in-depth information.

From an anthropological point of view, Hainanese can be defined as those parts of the Chinese population living on Hǎinán, speaking a local dialect (Hainanese 海南话 (*Hǎinánhuà*), *Líhuà* 黎话, *Miáohuà* 苗话, etc.) and considering themselves as Hainanese (or being their offspring) (Feng 1999: 1039). This study limits this definition to those speaking the Hainanese dialect—the dialect that is also spoken by the locals in Bó'áo.

Hainanese is the mother language of two million out of seven million people living on Hǎinán Island (Goodman 2007: 190). It developed slowly after the incorporation of Hǎinán into the Chinese empire in 110 BC, when Chinese migrants started to

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13 Original German: 'Verbannungsort'.

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live together with indigenous tribes. Another strong influence originated from Southeast Asian societies close to the island (Feng 1999: 1041-1042; Xie 2001: 53). In everyday language, the Hainanese are called *Hǎinánrén* 海南人 as well as 'locals'—*běndìrén* 本地人 or *dāngdìrén* 当地人.

In this study, the term 'Chinese mainlanders' defines those who left the mainland in order to move to Hǎinán after the foundation of the PRC and who do not speak Hainanese, the local dialect. A possible transfer of the household registration would legally classify them as Hainanese,[14] but both when considering their everyday language and also from an anthropological perspective, they are and remain Chinese mainlanders—regardless of where they might actually reside. This was confirmed by numerous conversations with people from Bó'áo, who said that people who moved from the mainland to Bó'áo will always be considered as 'people from the mainland'—*dàlùrén* 大陆人 or *nèidìrén* 内地人.

Ethnic identity and racism

Both the majority of the mainland Chinese as well as the majority of the Hainanese living on Hǎinán belong to the ethnic Hàn 汉族 (*hànzú*) group. However, Feng (1999: 1038) stresses that the concept of the Hàn-Chinese ethnicity is somewhat problematic: '[D]ifferences within the Han Chinese group are sometimes no less readily observable than those between Han Chinese and "minority nationalities" designated by the party-state.' According to Feng, the creation of a regional identity—as is the case on Hǎinán—is an ethnic issue. This can easily be verified along the lines of cultural and social differences:

> In a place like Hainan, the issues of regional identity are unmistakably ethnic in nature, not only in the sense of cultural differences with regard to language and customs, but also in the sense of the social hierarchy and the unequal distribution of economic and political resources resulting mainly from the unequal distribution of linguistic capital.

Already in 1995, Keng-Fong Pang addressed this issue when speaking of racism among the Hàn-Chinese ethnic group:

> The concepts of 'intra Han racism' and 'intra Han ethnicity' are particularly appropriate in Hainan as some local Hainan ren [author's comment: Hainanese] begin to perceive an emerging mainland dominant economy, government and society which might be best conceived as a form of 'internal colonialism' (Pang 1995).[15]

This issue only gained importance after the founding of the PRC. Those migrants who moved to Hǎinán after the year 1949 were 'too proud to learn from local culture

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14 For further information see Feng (1999: 1038).
15 The source cited is available as an abstract published in an academic discussion forum.

and determined to build up their own community apart from locals' (Feng 1999: 1043). Feng (ibid.) calls those mainland Chinese who migrated to Hǎinán between 1950 and 1981 'Old Mainlanders'. At that time, they represented about a quarter of Hǎinán's population. The most important political posts were taken over by this part of the population (Goodman 1999: 63). Even after the promotion in status of Hǎinán to a province, key positions in the economic and political sphere continued to be in the hands of Chinese mainlanders (Feng 1999: 1043).

Feng and Goodman (1997: 64) call those migrants who moved to Hǎinán after the establishment of a special economic zone the 'New Mainlanders'. The majority of this group either works in construction or in the tourism industry (Gu and Wall 2007: 161). In the year 2000, the proportion of those living on Hǎinán without a local household registration was estimated to be 8.7 percent of the population (Liang and Ma 2004: 472).

In academic debates inside and outside China, Hǎinán's culture is described as being different from the mainland Chinese culture.[16] Some sources speak of Hǎinán's culture as an exile culture or even a cultural desert, and the locals are perceived as people without culture: '"Hainanese are of low quality"' (Feng 1999: 1045). This perception is not only the case among academics, but also in the media, where each group within the population is attributed a different form of behaviour as well as cultural and social habits.[17] The Chinese mainlanders' refusal to learn from the local culture has led to a certain separation from the locals (Feng 1999: 1043). Especially among those migrants who came to Hǎinán after the establishment of the special economic zone, many perceive themselves as an elite (Feng and Goodman 1997: 64).

For mainland Chinese, language proves to play a very big role in the process of distinguishing themselves from the Hainanese. On the island, standard Chinese[18] turns into an instrument of power, since in Hǎinán most Chinese from the mainland speak it quite well:

> The hegemonizing power of language is beyond exaggeration in Hainan. The hierarchical ordering of languages and dialects has been fully exploited by the mainlanders to reverse the positions of the host and the guest on the island. While a thick local accent is common everywhere in China, mainlanders in Hainan have succeeded in establishing proficiency in standard Mandarin as one of the most important factors for appointment in government and other professions (Feng 1999: 1049).

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16 It must be kept in mind that a single, homogenous mainland Chinese culture does not exist. This fact is not discussed in the academic discourse cited above.

17 Among others, see Wú (2004) as an example.

18 Standard Chinese, also called Mandarin (*pǔtōnghuà* 普通话 and *guóyǔ* 国语 in Chinese), is the official language in the People's Republic of China.

Those mainland Chinese who have migrated to Hǎinán since 1988 are particularly unwilling to learn Hainanese: '[They] would never dream of learning the local language and there is an observable tendency to consider native Hainanese as distinctly lower class' (Feng and Goodman 1997: 65).

However, the fact that mainland Chinese speak proper standard Chinese is not the only reason that these people hold better paid and more respected jobs on the island; it is also because of the lower educational level of the Hainanese that Chinese mainlanders are more successful in the Hainan labour market. Philip F. Xie (2001: 59) confirms that the tourism industry is confronted with this problem: 'There is difficulty in finding skilled labour in Hainan and migrants from the mainland take many tourism positions.' Feng (1999) does not discuss this issue at all. According to the NBS (2008: 100), in 2007 about 7.7 percent of Hǎinán's population (above the age of five) did not have any scholastic education at all. About 28 percent graduated from primary school, 44.1 percent from secondary school and 14 percent from high school. Only 6.3 percent held a university degree.

Feng (1999: 1052) assumes that nowadays the different groups among the population are growing closer together as there is more room for interaction. Furthermore, according to him, all groups share a common objective: the economic development of Hǎinán. This paper will explore to what extent Feng's assumptions correlate with the results of this study.

Research field Bó'áo: from an unknown fishing village to a tourist magnet

This study was conducted in the small town of Bó'áo 博鳌镇[19] (Bó'áo zhèn). Before the research results are presented, the town will be briefly introduced. Bó'áo comprises an area of 86 sq km and is situated in the east of Hǎinán province. Its distance from Hǎikǒu 海口, the seat of the provincial government, is 83km, and Sānyà 三亚 is 180 km away (Xiao et al. 2005: 7-8). Today, Bó'áo numbers around 27,000 inhabitants (Bó'áo Zhèn rénmín zhèngfǔ 2009b:1; Boao.net 2008). For a long time Bó'áo existed as 'an untouched simple fishing village' (Hainan Boao Investment Holdings Ltd 2009b: 3), but in 1992, Jiǎng Xiǎosōng 蒋小松, a Chinese business man, discovered the village's potential (Xiao et al. 2005: 18). He started to build a golf course which was officially inaugurated in July 1997. The former Japanese prime minister, Hosokawa Morihiro 細川護熙, as well as Robert Hawke, a former prime minister of Australia, attended the festivities. Together, the two politicians developed the idea of the Bo'ao Forum for Asia (BFA) (Fa and Zhang 2005; Xiao et

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19 The Chinese character 鳌 Aó is not always pronounced with the second tone. The locals often pronounce it with the fourth tone (Bó'ào), because the Chinese character for the second syllable once used to be a different one, as Lín Juéhào 林觉浩 (2005: 14-15) explains.

al. 2005: 22), which—similarly to the World Economic Forum in Davos—is supposed to serve as a platform for open discussions on co-operation and joint strategies in Asia. Their idea was to hold the forum in Bó'áo on a yearly basis (Fù 2008: 88; German.china.org.cn 2008). The forum was established in 2001, followed by the first BFA to be held in Bó'áo one year later.

It was the very decision to hold the BFA in Bó'áo and to incorporate even the town's name into the title of the organisation that helped transform Bó'áo into a prosperous location for conferences and tourism. This transformation took place within only a few years (Zhōu 2009: A2). At the time of its 'discovery', Bó'áo was definitely no tourist destination (Bó'áo Zhèn rénmín zhèngfǔ 2009a: 2), but today, the picture has completely changed. According to Zhōu Huìmǐn (2009: A2) about two million tourists flock to Bó'áo every year, coming from China and abroad.[20] The most important form of tourism in Bó'áo is conference tourism (Fǎ and Zhāng 2005).

The increase in tourists has led to an enormous rise in the service industry to the advantage not only of tourists but also of the people living in Bó'áo, as Table 1 shows:

Table 1 Service industry facilities before and after the founding of the BFA[21]

Facility	Before the founding of the BFA	2002	2009
Guesthouse	3	8	21
Restaurant	11	36	52
Shop	36	64	not available
Tourist boat	15	134	not available
Tourist bus	15	21	50
Three-wheeler	18	160	200

The establishment of a tourist infrastructure as well as the rising profile of the town has led to a strong influx of Chinese from the mainland (interview with Bó'áo offi-

20 Bó'áo officials' estimates are even higher (three million) (Bó'áo Zhèn rénmín zhèngfǔ 2009a: 5).
21 Sources: Bó'áo Zhèn rénmín zhèngfǔ 2002: 2; Bó'áozhèn rénmín zhèngfǔ 2009a: 5. Table compiled by author.

cials, July 11, 2009). Official statistics estimate that around 5,000 Chinese mainlanders live in several towns in the vicinity of Bó'áo, 60 to 70 percent of whom are male. Bó'áo residents, on the other hand, estimate that the number of Chinese mainlanders living in Bó'áo could be as high as 10,000—that would mean that more than one-third of Bó'áo's population is originally from the mainland. Not only migrant workers, but also people in need of relaxation as well as retired mainlanders move to Bó'áo. For the future, the party secretary expects between 30,000 and 50,000 people with permanent residency to be living in Bó'áo (interview with Wú Ēnzé, 14 July 2009).

The employment structure in Bó'áo has changed massively due to the establishment of the BFA and the tourism that has developed along with it. A strong shift in work force from primary production (mainly fishing) to the service sector can be witnessed. The lion's share of new jobs originates from the hotel and pension management sector as well as from the food service industry (Qiónghǎishì Rénmínzhèngfǔ 2007). Bó'áo officials (interview, July 11, 2009) estimate that in terms of employment structure, primary production and the service sector will balance each other in about two years.

The economically active parts of the floating population in Bó'áo mostly engage in construction, the service industry or work as tourist guides. Their educational level varies depending on the field of employment. The following tendencies may be noted: while employees in construction mostly graduated from elementary school 小学 (*xiǎoxué*) alone, mainlanders employed in the service industry largely graduated from secondary school 初中 (*chūzhōng*) or high school 高中 (*gāozhōng*). Tour guides either graduated from high school or held a university degree (interview with Bó'áo officials, June 29, 2009).

Demand for management posts in the Bó'áo labour market is geared mostly towards Chinese mainlanders, who tend to have a higher level of education than locals. According to Bó'áo officials (interview, July 11, 2009), Chinese mainlanders hold more than 95 percent of all management jobs. Locals who hold a university degree (around 5 percent) migrate to the mainland in order to find better-paid work in the secondary sector or service industries.

Locals hardly work in the construction field. However, those who do work in this field are more likely to work for smaller projects. For bigger projects, mostly Chinese mainlanders are recruited, as they—according to Bó'áo officials—can work very hard and often have more technical knowledge (interview with Bó'áo officials, July 11, 2009).

Ambitious plans exist for Bó'áos further development. Marketing activities to promote Bó'áo as an international town for relaxation and conferences are constantly being increased. In the near future, an airport as well as Bó'áo's own railway station on the rapid train from Hǎikǒu to Sānyà should facilitate tourists' and confer-

ence participants' arrival in the town (Zhāng 2009; Hainan Boao Investment Holdings Ltd 2009a: 4-5).

Between mainland and island?

Earlier parts of this text have demonstrated how Bó'áo has developed over the past twenty years, and the circumstances that Chinese mainlanders face when moving to Bó'áo for work. This section analyses the reasons that led to migration on the part of the mainlanders and differentiates between push and pull factors. At the same time, it sheds light on the way migrants handle their professional and social lives. The results of this study relate to the two categories mentioned earlier: non-college graduates and college graduates, as the educational level apparently plays an important role in terms of migration and the integration processes. As a first step, both groups are introduced along with important socio-demographic characteristics.

Family backgrounds of non-college graduates are very heterogeneous; the majority comes from rural families with many children. Some of their siblings still live in their home town, while others have left in order to find work in other provinces. The non-college graduates who feature in this study are between 40 and 53 years old, married, and with at least one child. Before working in Bó'áo, they had already engaged in various other fields, also outside their home province.

The college graduates in this study come mainly from middle-class families in urban areas. Their siblings have mostly graduated at least from high school. The majority of the college graduates are young (between 22 and 28 years old) and have already climbed the ladder to higher success. Many of them had already left their home province for a job before moving to Bó'áo.

Non-college graduates mostly engage in work which does not require higher education. Most of them have their own small businesses or hold foremen's positions at construction brigades that can be hired for projects. Their monthly income ranges from 1,000 to 5,000 yuán.

College graduates mostly hold management posts in real estate or in bigger companies in the tourism and leisure industry. Their primary work is office work and they have responsibility over their personnel. Their monthly income ranges from 1,300 yuán to 8,000 yuán. Often they enjoy fringe benefits such as free room and board.

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Migration trajectory and reasons for migration

Bó'áo: its reputation has preceded it

The majority of non-college graduates first heard about Bó'áo because of the media coverage of the BFA or through friends and relatives. Almost all of them had relatives, friends or former colleagues from home in Bó'áo or at least on the island, which means that their social networks in the area were well-established.

Most of the college graduates had also heard of Bó'áo due to the media coverage, and most of them had known Bó'áo for quite a while before actually deciding to migrate. While some of the college graduates did not know anyone before moving to Bó'áo, others already had contacts, both among locals and among Chinese mainlanders.

Push factors: Why the migrant workers did not stay where they were before

The majority of non-college graduates left their home province because of scarcity of land, high population pressure and meagre opportunities to earn money. In particular, those engaged in construction pointed out that they had to show greater flexibility and mobility in order to adapt to the market and demand. Low demand at their last place of employment led them to move to Bó'áo. In other fields, business competition was experienced as too heavy, or the business was running badly, so that it seemed logical for them to leave their former location in order to try their luck in Bó'áo. Non-college graduates would leave Bó'áo if their working and income situation deteriorated to a certain extent.

What catches the attention is that the college graduates hardly named any push factors. However, the few reasons they stated were very heterogeneous and ranged from problems with former supervisors to the desire to work far away from home or the huge work pressure they had experienced on the mainland.

Pull factors: Why Bó'áo is an attractive place to move to

For non-college graduates, Bó'áo sounded like a great place to earn money. They expected to find work and the opportunity to profit from the town's positive development. A few also named the climate and the quiet environment as attractive factors when considering migration to Bó'aó.

According to the college graduates, Bó'áo's attraction stems from its professional opportunities in terms of the development and growth of their future careers. When deciding whether to move to Bó'áo or not, they figured that Bó'áo could act as an excellent chance for professional advancement and could be a stepping stone in their career. In that context, the role they attributed to the BFA was a substantial one. For them, the young hotel and tourism industry in Bó'áo appeared to be a career booster. In that context, many of them said that Bó'áo was a great *píngtái* 平台

(platform) und provided them with plenty of *kōngjiān* 空间 (space) to develop. The leeway and freedom they expected to experience in Bó'áo made migration to this town highly attractive. Furthermore, they considered Bó'áo a very good place to live for the sea nearby, the natural beauty and the healthy environment. They would leave Bó'áo if there were no further opportunities for professional development. Their current job was part of a long-term strategy. Therefore, some of them even put up with a temporarily smaller income, as the wage level in Bó'áo is lower than that in many other parts of China.

Social networks as intermediaries for jobs

For non-college graduates, relatives, friends and acquaintances in Bó'áo provided a certain security to finding a job in town. Contacts enabled them a smooth entrance into the local labour market, as contact persons on the spot had already provided them with helpful information about local labour scarcity and job opportunities. In the case where they had no contacts in Bó'áo, they either came to scan the job market themselves or looked for work in newspaper advertisements.

College graduates did not use private relations or non-professional networks for their job search. Rather, they used official, regular channels for their search.

Way of life of migrant labourers in Bó'áo

A second focus of this study is on the migrants' way of life. It both sheds light on their working life, and investigates the ways in which the migrants spend their free time.

Working life in Bó'áo

The composition of colleagues and the level of satisfaction with work proved to be important factors in terms of integration and migration processes.

Colleagues at work

In the construction business, Hainanese do not work together with this study's non-college graduates. According to the latter, this is because they often encounter difficulties when co-operating with locals. Furthermore, they say that locals generally do not engage in physical labour. This last point has also been confirmed by Bó'áo officials (who are themselves locals) (interview with Bó'áo officials, July 11, 2009). It is interesting to see that Feng and Goodman (1997) do not bring up this aspect. They limit themselves to stating that only a few Hainanese find jobs in the newly established industrial enterprises and say that the workers are recruited on the

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mainland. However, they do not bring up the question of whether the Hainanese would even be willing to take certain jobs.

In other fields, the staff is mixed. Those who run a family business or work in one co-operate intensively with other family members.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of the college graduates work in bigger companies in the tourism and leisure industry and in real estate, holding management posts. They have many social relations, and except for those engaged in real estate, most of their working colleagues are Hainanese. This is explained by the fact that employees in the field of real estate are required to have a higher level of education. The low level of education among locals means that it is mostly Chinese mainlanders who work in this profession.

Job satisfaction

Non-college graduates are mostly very satisfied with their work and say that their standard of living has improved since their arrival in Bó'áo. They appreciate the fact that there is a steady labour demand in the town. According to them, they do not face any particular challenges or opportunities, and they are happy with things the way they are. To them, security is more important than challenge and opportunity.

The college graduates also show a high level of satisfaction with their work in Bó'áo. To them, it is of great importance to be able to grow and evolve in their professional sphere. The nature of their assignments is perceived as positive. While some of them feel a heavy workload with high pressure, others enjoy a very relaxed working atmosphere. However, both circumstances are perceived as beneficial. The college graduates do not have any plans to change their job location within the next one or two years. To them, their work is challenging and they want to make the utmost use of their time in Bó'áo and learn as much as possible.

Life beyond work

This part sheds light on both groups' social relationships and leisure behaviour in Bó'áo since their migration to the town.

Social relationships

For non-college graduates, both family members and friends who moved to Bó'áo from the mainland represent the most important sphere of reference. Family must be seen in a wider context and goes beyond the nuclear family. Those who perceive the family as a central social point of reference do not seek for a wider circle of friends. However, for many non-college graduates, friends are also very important. Their relationships bring out a very strong bond with their home region, as the majority of their friends come from areas not too far away from their home town. For most non-

college graduates, Hainanese play a minor role among their social contacts. Most of them are not even interested in developing relationships with locals.

Compared to their life back home, this study's college graduates have a smaller circle of friends, which they explain by Bó'áo's size. For them, Bó'áo is a micro-cosmos, and because the town centre is so small, everybody knows each other. Especially in bigger companies, colleagues are friends and vice versa. Leisure time is spent with them, and to most of the college graduates, it does not matter whether they are locals of Chinese mainlanders.

Leisure behaviour

The non-college graduates spend most of their leisure time at home with their families. Activities outside of home are rare and mostly limited to visits to restaurants and bars owned by Chinese mainlanders. For those who consider friends their main point of reference, tea houses and restaurants play a bigger role and they often go there in order to drink and eat together. Furthermore, many of them engage in card play and mahjong[22]—without the presence of any locals at the table.

The leisure activities of the college graduates are manifold and range from physical exercise to walks along the beach, time spent on the internet, TV and off-the-job education to gastronomical and social activities with colleagues in the town centre. They use both Hainanese and mainland Chinese locations. A lack of shopping possibilities in Bó'áo obliges the college graduates to go to Qiónghǎi 琼海 or Hǎikǒu to run an errand and go shopping. To the college graduates, their career is of great interest, and they voluntarily reduce their leisure time in order to work longer hours. When required, they limit their leisure activities to be able to fulfil their professional duties.

Self-perception and view from the outside

This study also focuses on the question whether the Chinese mainlanders perceive themselves as locals at Bó'áo. Furthermore, it investigates the question of how they would answer if asked where they were from while in a place picked at random from outside of Bó'áo.

Both non-college graduates and college graduates agreed that they would always name their home province as their place of origin. They would merely add that at the moment they were living on Hǎinán Island. For many interviewees, the question whether they considered themselves as locals from Bó'áo was difficult to answer. They pondered whether they could perceive themselves as local inhabitants and whether they would be able to do so in the future. However, the majority of the in-

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22 Mahjong (*májiāng* 麻将) is a Chinese game for four people, consisting of 144 gaming pieces.

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terviewees came to the conclusion that Bó'áo was not their home—this status was reserved for their home province.

In addition to questions about their sense of identification, this study asked about differences they perceived between themselves as mainland migrant workers and the local workers. Furthermore, it investigated in which areas differences were perceived and whether those differences were listed in a biased way.

Mindset

Both non-college graduates and college graduates perceive the locals as simpler in their way of thinking, more conservative, slower and more narrow-minded. They present Chinese mainlanders as the locals' opposite and say that they themselves are ambitious, forward-looking and more modern. They observe a strong desire among Chinese mainlanders to become better and improve their lives. However, as far as locals are concerned, they believe that they are totally satisfied with their status quo. According to them, Hainanese people prefer a quiet, stable life and are very undemanding through a lack of desires and needs.

It is interesting that some of the college graduates in this study were looking for explanations for the differences they perceive between themselves and the locals. According to them, one of the reasons is that Hǎinán's soil is very fertile. Despite the locals' slowness and their lack of willingness to invest a lot of time and effort, a bountiful harvest is guaranteed.

Lifestyle

Some non-college graduates and college graduates believe that the cosy, lazy life of the locals is made possible because they can cultivate their own soil and do not depend on wage labour in order to survive. The Chinese mainlanders mention that the locals stay up late, underlining the social aspect of the locals' lifestyle and pointing out the Hainanese habit of spending hours drinking tea with friends. Both non-college graduates and college graduates emphasized that for Chinese mainlanders, work is at the centre of their life and therefore they are under continuous tension. According to them, the rhythm of life is different on the mainland—people spend more time at home and go to bed early.

Hainanese are criticised for being untidy and careless about their hygiene standards compared to the Chinese mainlanders. Furthermore, the college graduates especially consider it very odd that it is mostly the women who care for their families, whereas on the Chinese mainland, it is the men who earn the money in order to support the family.

Diet

Eating habits on the Chinese mainland should not be seen as homogeneous, but both non-college graduates and college graduates noted the same differences, no matter which region they came from. According to them, the Hainanese cuisine is boring and stale and does not include enough spices. In particular, the locals' breakfast, which is usually consumed in one of Bó'áo's numerous tea and coffee houses, does not meet their taste. Non-college graduates complain that they do not like the Hainanese tea. To them, the local custom of drinking sweetened tea marks a huge difference. Both groups agree that the types of cuisine from the mainland pay more attention to the visual aspect of the food (e.g. form of cutting) and the way the food is arranged and presented.

Work attitude

Non-college graduates distinguish substantially between their own work attitude and that of the Hainanese. They emphasise their own industriousness and willingness to do every kind of work, no matter how arduous it might be. The Hainanese, on the other hand, are described as slow, lazy and incapable of hard work.

The college graduates, as already mentioned, are primarily employed in management positions. According to them, their Hainanese subordinates are unwilling to work extra hours or use their leisure time for training courses. They say that the locals only think about today, do not plan ahead and do not work as efficiently as Chinese mainlanders do.

Language

As discussed above, the locals in Bó'áo speak Hainanese, a local dialect incomprehensible for Chinese mainlanders who speak only standard Chinese. The language difference was mentioned again and again both by the interviewees and in many informal conversations in town. Therefore it is of particular interest to assess the migrant workers' attitude towards the Hainanese dialect and to investigate whether they are willing to learn it.

Many non-college graduates feel that due to the language difference, a certain barrier exists against successful communication with the locals. Notwithstanding, hardly any of them are willing to learn Hainanese. This is also a consequence of their hardly ever being in contact with locals and never being forced to speak the local dialect. Some of them say that they would like to speak Hainanese, but at the same time this desire does not lead to any actions to learn it. To them, the output and use would not be worth the effort.

Most college graduates do not speak Hainanese either, but they do not perceive this fact as a handicap in everyday life. Most of them understand a few simple sentences and can count in Hainanese. They lack the willingness to learn Hainanese,

because the Hainanese in their daily environment speak enough standard Chinese in order to communicate. The college graduates cannot see any advantage connected to the acquisition of the local dialect.

Conclusions

This study demonstrated that in the case of Bó'áo, both work-related reasons for migration and social integration into the local life in town are heavily influenced by the migrants' educational level.

Most college graduates decided to migrate out of strategic reasons. For them, migration to Bó'áo is considered to be an important step for their future professional development. Their choice to go to Bó'áo proves to be divergent from the usual migration patterns in China: they migrated to a less developed area within China. Many of the college graduates grew up in cities that have a higher level of development than the town of Bó'áo or Hǎinán in general. Nevertheless, Bó'áo exerted a pull on them for its above-mentioned career potential.

The non-college graduates, on the other hand, primarily migrated out of an economic necessity. Longer-term considerations with regard to their career development did not play a role. The crucial point in the decision process whether to migrate or not was an improvement in their personal income situation. This correlates with Yáo et al. (2008: 70) and their finding that economic reasons are the leading motive for migration among the floating population.

The educational level not only has an impact on the reason for migration, but also exerts an influence on the preparatory phase of migration. Some of the college graduates were recruited—their higher education made them particularly attractive to employers. Those migrant workers without a college degree, on the other hand, had fewer options regarding their work place. As mentioned earlier, Lee (1966: 56) presents similar results: he states that those migrants who primarily migrate because of pull factors are positively selected by employers along criteria such as age, education, abilities and motivation. According to his study, the opposite applies for those who primarily leave their place of origin through push factors: they often migrate less voluntarily and do not have the same range of choices concerning their work place.

In the case of non-college graduates, social networks play an essential role and influence the decision on whether to migrate or not to a far bigger extent than among college graduates. When looking for a job, many of the former got help from relatives, friends and acquaintances from their home region, while the latter were either directly recruited by companies or used conventional, official channels and application processes to find a job.

The research results from Bó'áo confirm Wáng's (2003) hypothesis, which postulates that the younger generation of migrant workers has higher expectations about their destination. At the same time, according to him, they have fewer plans to return to their home area one day. This study's younger interviewees expected to advance in their career. They plan to leave Bó'áo once they do not see any further potential for professional growth. At the same time, they do not seriously consider moving back home, not even in the long run.

Both non-college graduates and college graduates are satisfied with their current work situation. The reasons for their satisfaction, however, differ. Non-college graduates are content because their economic needs are fulfilled, whereas for college graduates, the opportunities concerning their further career prove satisfying in the context of their present work experience in Bó'áo.

This study has made clear that the leisure behaviour of the two groups of migrants differs widely. Non-college graduates spend their free time first and foremost apart from the locals, at home with their family or with friends from the mainland, mostly from their home province. College graduates, however, spend their time with colleagues both from Hǎinán and from the Chinese mainland. Both groups go to restaurants and bars. However, there is a difference when it comes to the owners of the locations. College graduates do not care whether the owner comes from the mainland or is a local, but non-college graduates are very much focused on restaurants and bars owned by Chinese mainlanders.

For many non-college graduates, their home plays an essential role and they like to spend their spare time there. College graduates, however, often spend their leisure time in the office in order to improve their status and work overtime.

In the current European discourse, knowledge of the host society's language is perceived as fundamental in order to enable successful social integration (Council of the European Union 2004: 6; Zwengel and Hentges 2008: 9). Bó'áo's locals speak Hainanese, and, on the basis of the European discourse on integration, one might assume that mastering Hainanese is essential for social integration in local town life. In Bó'áo, however, the language situation is more complicated. Despite the fact that some of the official channels in Bó'áo work in Hainanese, standard Chinese is the official language, and the migrants often speak it a great deal better than the locals, especially college graduates. The migrants do not see any need or feel any interest in learning Hainanese, as they rarely find themselves in situations in which it would pay off to speak Hainanese. With some exceptions, this study therefore confirms the assumptions made by Feng and Goodman (1997: 65) that those Chinese mainlanders who moved to Hǎinán after 1988 are not willing to learn Hainanese. Although they perceive a certain language barrier, according to them, learning the dialect would not bring enough advantages. In informal talk, many of the interviewees mentioned a feeling of linguistic exclusion when among a group of Hainanese. They also said that the language barrier leads to higher prices at the fruit and vegetable market.

However, the migrants did not conclude that it would be a good idea to learn Hainanese. Rather, they showed some resentment against the locals because of the language difference. This study showed that it was mainly the non-college graduates who felt uneasy because of this language barrier. College graduates, on the other hand, felt less confronted by situations in which their interlocutor did not speak standard Chinese.

Overall, this study shows that in the case of Bó'áo the mastering of Hainanese is not a prerequisite for successful social integration of the migrant workers. Moreover, the research results indicate that social integration does not automatically exist when the local dialect is spoken. Those interviewees who spoke a little bit of Hainanese were not necessarily those with a higher degree of social integration. Language skills proved rather to be a means to do business, and were less employed as a means of communication in social interaction.

Successful social integration requires openness and willingness to get to know the local culture and make contact with locals. The college graduates in particular show this kind of motivation. They often eat in local restaurants, spend more time in the town centre and engage in more professional co-operation with Hainanese than non-college graduates do. They even call some of the locals their friends. The non-college graduates, on the other hand, lead more isolated lives and only make contact with the locals when they have to. Their circle of friends consists mainly of mainlanders, and they show little interest in local customs and traditions.

This leads to the conclusion that the level of education is an important factor in people's behaviour in terms of migration and integration. The results of this study point to the fact that a higher level of education leads to better social integration in the host society. This, again, conforms to research results from Germany, presented by Sinus Sociovision (2007), which confirm that there is a close connection between education, urbanity and integration. An urban background was not chosen as a criterion for formation of groups in this analysis. However, the majority of this study's college graduates grew up in cities.

It would be wrong to assume that the college graduates' openness equals assimilation in the host society: no matter what the educational level, differences are perceived and evaluated. Although the college graduates might adopt a few behavioural patterns, to them it is still very important to express their dissociation from the locals—e.g. in terms of lifestyle and way of thinking. Their self-awareness as migrants as well as their cultural and emotional attachment to their home province persists. This becomes clear as differences keep being perceived and the mainlanders do not cease naming their place of origin when asked for their home.

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GLOSSARY

běndìrén	本地人	locals (term for ethnic Hainanese on Hǎinán Island)
Bó'áo	博鳌	Bó'áo, a town in Hǎinán province
Bó'áo Yàzhōu lùntán	博鳌亚洲论坛	Boao Forum for Asia (BFA)
Bó'áo zhèn	博鳌镇	Bó'áo town
chángzhù qiānyí rénkǒu	常住迁移人口	permanent migrants
chūzhōng	初中	secondary school
dàlùrén	大陆人	mainlanders (term used on Hǎinán Island for people from the Chinese mainland)
dāngdìrén	当地人	locals (term for ethnic Hainanese on Hǎinán Island)
gǎigé kāifàng	改革开放	Reform and Opening
gāozhōng	高中	high school
guóyǔ	国语	official language in China, also called *pǔtōnghuà* or Mandarin
Hǎikǒu	海口	Hǎikǒu, city on Hǎinán Island, capital of Hǎinán province
Hǎinán	海南	Hǎinán, a Chinese island
Hǎinánhuà	海南话	Hainanese, one of the local dialects on Hǎinán Island
Hǎinánrén	海南人	Hainanese (people)
Hànzú	汉族	Hàn
hùkǒu	户口	household registration
kōngjiān	空间	(free) space
Líhuà	黎话	*Líhuà*, a dialect of a Chinese ethnic minority
liúdòng rénkǒu	流动人口	floating population
májiāng	麻将	mahjong, a Chinese game
Miáohuà	苗话	*Miáohuà*, a dialect of a Chinese ethnic minority
Hosokawa Morihiro	細川護熙	former Japanese prime minister
nèidìrén	内地人	mainlanders (term used on Hǎinán Island for people from the Chinese mainland)
píngtái	平台	platform
pǔtōnghuà	普通话	*pǔtōnghuà*, also called Mandarin
qiānyí rénkǒu	迁移人口	migrants
Qiónghǎi	琼海	Qiónghǎi, a city close to Bó'áo
Sānyà	三亚	Sānyà
shīyèlù	失业率	unemployment rate
xiǎoxué	小学	primary school
Yuán	元	yuán, official currency in the People's Republic of China, also called *rénmínbì*
zànshí qiānyí rénkǒu	暂时迁移人口	temporary migrants