

International Workshop: China Studies in a Global Context

Confucius Institute at Freie Universität Berlin. Organised by Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Mechthild Leutner and Prof. Dr. Katja Levy, Freie Universität Berlin, and Prof. Dr. Zhang Xudong, New York University and Peking University, October 16–17, 2015

China's International Relations from a Historical Perspective

Confucius Institute at Freie Universität Berlin, organised by Prof. Dr. Mechthild Leutner and Prof. Bettina Gransow, Freie Universität Berlin, Prof. Niu Dayong, Peking University, and Prof. Eberhard Sandschneider, Freie Universität Berlin and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, November 27–28, 2015

The two international workshops at the Confucius Institute in Berlin focused on the relationships between China and the world: the first examined the increasing influence of China itself on Sinology and China Studies worldwide and the second considered international and foreign relations, taking into account China's historical relations with various parts of the world as well as the long-lasting effects of these up to the present day.

The first workshop investigated the ways in which China Studies and Sinology are being challenged by recent developments, that is, by the rise of China in political, economic and academic terms. The conference was opened by Mechthild Leutner who presented an overview of Germany's sinological tradition and showed how various political upheavals, including unification, have influenced academia's perception of China. Bettina Gransow, who has many years' experience in teaching and conducting research in China and in the West, highlighted the various contradictions between Chinese sociological research and Western social science-based research on China which nevertheless seldom follow the strict dichotomies of "West" and "East". Jens Damm (Chang Jung University, Tainan) dealt with Chinese studies in Southeast Asia, showing how the Chinese diaspora has influenced China studies even in China itself, especially since the reform and opening period, by building partly on specific research that has been conducted outside the presumed centre of Chineseness (that is, Beijing and the Northern Chinese civilization) which has flourished for decades.

Paul U. Unschuld (Humboldt Universität, Berlin) discussed the increasing dominance of nationalist discourses on TCM (traditional Chinese medicine), showing how non-medical considerations now dominate China's discourse on TCM and how critical Western and Chinese voices have been muted. Huang Haifeng (Peking University) discussed the green revolution in China in the context of the global discussion, but failed to consider the question of how the Chinese discourse is influencing the global discourse. Hauke Neddermann (FUB) discussed the idea of youth in various journals and in the public discourse in China. Jiang Hongsheng (Peking University) analysed the image of the Shanghai Commune of 1967 in the Chinese and Western discourse: although he demonstrated a considerable degree of awareness of the various Chinese discourses, his references on the French discourses were much weaker, particularly since he overlooked the fact that, for many French intellectuals, China was largely seen as an exotic country far beyond reality which offered them a space to reflect on their own ideas despite their obvious lack of interest in Chinese developments. Finally, Ariel Armony (University of Pittsburgh) discussed the increasing worldwide influence of China today, showing the difficulties facing other area studies (Latin America studies) when they try to reach out to China studies as well as the difficulties facing the Chinese academic world when they are suddenly required to cover regions which have never been the focus of China's academic interest.

The second workshop on China's International Relations from a Historical Perspective adopted a much broader approach to consider China's changing role in foreign and interna-

tional relations, which has now become of critical interest as a result of the indisputably important economic role played by China in the globalised world today. There was a strong focus, of course, on China's position with regard to her northern neighbours, Central Asia and Russia, but the discussion also covered other regions, such as Latin America and Southeast Asia, which are not usually the primary focus of attention. Eberhard Sandschneider propagated the thesis that China's aims regarding socio-economic development and stability have been the enduring motives during recent decades and that little change has been observed during the rule of Xi Jinping. He also mentioned a new "poly-central" world order which has replaced the US–USSR bipolar world order, instead of "the end of history" and the victory of Western democracy as briefly promoted by Francis Fukuyama. Lian Yanru (Peking University) examined China's foreign policy as a "common destiny" (*mingyun gongtongti*) dealing with China's role as an accepted and responsible member of the globalized world and, at the same time, the principle of state sovereignty. Jens Damm, in his paper on China's cultural diplomacy, showed how traditional values, that is, Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, have been integrated in China's cultural values which emphasize China's role as a civilised nation inter pares.

The current Chinese–Russian relationship was explored by Nikolay Samaylov (St. Petersburg State University). Although both states have various issues concerning the US, Russia is very apprehensive about the potential economic dominance of China. One specific issue is Central Asia, where Chinese and Russian interests collide. Bettina Gransow analyzed China's idea of a global silk road linking China to various important global players in Europe and Southeast Asia, but also highlighted some of the challenges and drawbacks. Peter Linke dealt with the Arctic region, where tensions between China and Russia are obvious and he also mentioned the role played by Japan which too often is neglected in today's global political analysis. Two papers, by Katja Levy and Daniel Cardoso, then discussed the relations between China and Latin America, with Levy providing an analysis of Chinese newspapers and Cardoso dealing with realpolitik and economic relations between China and Latin America.

On the second day, Niu Dayong presented his research on Tibet and the influence of the CIA in the 1950s. This was based on previously unpublished documents from China, and showed how the US tried to diminish the influence of China on Tibet.

In her talk on the "Limits of Knowledge Sharing in Soviet–Chinese Academic Relations in the 1950s", Izabella Goikhman examined the strategies of knowledge-sharing adopted by individuals involved in academic collaboration. She argued that the limits of the knowledge transfer were not only set by the two modifiers "allowed by officials" and "known by experts" as recent studies on the subject suggest, but also by the variable "what the scientists were willing to share". Soviet and Chinese scientists and scholars were torn between the obligation to share their knowledge and the fear of sharing too much.

Kong Funjun (Peking University) analysed the strange case of Albanian-Sino relations in the 1960s which brought Albania into the picture; although Albania played a key role in China's propaganda programme, Albania itself was much less interested in China's support for their state media. Susanne Kuss (University Bern) analysed German–Chinese relations during the time of the Korean war, looking at both West and East Germany. Even during the cold war conflict, West Germany's mass media was already presenting a very negative image of China, while the GDR was following the example of the USSR by presenting a rosy picture. Mechthild Leutner and Dagmar Yü-Dembski (Freie Universität Berlin) analysed German–Chinese relations from a historical perspective with a specific focus on media publications, in particular, the German political magazine, *Der Spiegel*. They emphasised the discrepancies between the positive reports on Chinese–German economic relations and the negative reports

on China's policy, society and human rights' issues, pointing out the long traditions of these negative images.

To summarise, both workshops brought together various scholars from China and Germany as well as from Russia to discuss the new role being played by "rising" China in area studies that deal with China as well as with international relations.

Jens Damm

Challenges in Doing Research in and on Contemporary China, Iserlohner Kreis

Schwerte, 30.–31. Januar 2016

Am 30. und 31. Januar 2016 lud der Iserlohner Kreis zum Workshop „Challenges in Doing Research in and on Contemporary China“ in das Haus Villigst in Schwerte ein. Der Iserlohner Kreis ist ein informeller Zusammenschluss sozialwissenschaftlich zu China arbeitender NachwuchswissenschaftlerInnen. Dieses Jahr wurde der Workshop von Laura Gruß (BMAS), Marina Rudyak (Univ. Heidelberg) und Kai Enzweiler (Univ. Bonn) organisiert. In mehreren Panels und einem Open Space wurden die besonderen Herausforderungen diskutiert, die sich bei der chinabezogenen Sozialforschung ergeben.

Das erste Panel befasste sich mit „Chinese Politics and Policy Change“. Antonia Enßner (Univ. Würzburg) stellte in einem Vortrag ihre Forschung zu Arbeitsbeziehungen aus Angestelltensicht in China vor. Sie verdeutlichte, wie *Grounded Theory* helfen kann, Konfliktlösungsstrategien in Unternehmen als Ausdruck von Arbeitsbeziehungen aus der Sicht chinesischer Angestellter zu verstehen. Marina Rudyak befasste sich in ihrem Beitrag mit den wechselseitigen Beziehungen von Entwicklungshilfe, Handels- und Investitionsbeziehungen. Am Beispiel eines durch China geförderten Wasserkraftprojekts in Kambodscha erklärte sie, wie die Analyse politischer Kommunikation hilft, diese wechselseitigen Beziehungen besser zu verstehen. Gleichzeitig zeigte sie, welche Macht AktivistInnen haben und wie durch NGOs organisierte Proteste zu einem policy change führen können.

Das zweite Panel, „Research Methods and Theories Applied to China“, widmete sich den besonderen Herausforderungen, die bei der Anwendung von in einem europäischen bzw. amerikanischen Kontext entstandenen Methoden und Theorien auf China entstehen. Grete Schönebeck (Univ. Frankfurt) zeigte die besonderen Herausforderungen der Erforschung von Gräbern und Friedhöfen in China auf. Sie betonte insbesondere den schwierigen Zugang zu InformantInnen, Archiven und lokalen Bestimmungen während der Phase der Materialsammlung. Eefje Aarmoudse (IAMO) beschäftigte sich in ihrer Präsentation mit der Frage, wie der begrenzte Zugang zu Daten die Forschung zu China beeinflusst. Sie unterstrich anhand eines Projekts zur Wassernutzung durch Landwirte im Kreis Minqin in der Provinz Gansu die Bedeutung guter Beziehungen zu lokalen Behörden als Voraussetzung erfolgreicher Forschung.

Das dritte Panel beschäftigte sich mit dem Thema „Chinese Economy and Consumption“. Marius Meinhof (Univ. Bielefeld) präsentierte seine Forschung zu Shoppingpraktiken in China. Ausgehend von Subjektivierungstheorien in Kombination mit einem ethnomethodologischen Ansatz geht er der Frage nach, wie in China Subjektivierung durch Shopping stattfindet.

Im Rahmen des Open Space am Samstagabend wurden in entspannter Runde zwei übergreifende Themen aufgegriffen, die sich während der Vorträge des ersten Tages herauskristallisiert hatten. Jing Lin (Univ. Bochum/Volkswagen) moderierte die Diskussion zur Frage,