

tering the local doughnut effect. She further highlighted the need of compact settlement development. Among the aspects of lively discussion among the international participants were the Austrian concept of owning an own house with garden, and the ratio of state-owned and private property in China.

The third speech on “Fangding’s Experiment — a sustainable upgrading process in a traditional village” was given by the Chinese architect Tang Li. Concentrating on the reorganization of rural living structures, the technological optimization of traditional construction materials, and the remodeling of the surrounding environment as a means of incorporating it in the overall upgrading-process of agricultural dwellings, Tang Li and her team chose the village of Fangding in Henan province as the venue for their case study. The ensuing points of debate comprised the suitability of different types of toilets — such as the dry toilets in Mexico (Heidi Dumreicher) and the composting toilets in Tibet (Ute Wallenböck) — and sewage disposal systems according to the geographical circumstances, and the significance of various forms of windows for insulation purposes.

Next in turn was Benjamin Steuer, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna. Based on in-depth research in several Chinese metropolises, he outlined China’s informal garbage collecting system, paying special attention to one of its key components, the waste pickers. Subsequently, mainly questions by the Chinese participants came up, centered on the process of the field study, e.g. the methods of conducting interviews and calculation or the reliability of the interviewees.

The final presentation was jointly held by Yang Xiaolin and Li Jiandong from the Department of Urban and Rural Planning of Zhengzhou University. Introducing a traditional village in rural Henan, they illustrated their main concerns about the preservation of local custom in pace with modernization by making use of the venue’s cultural heritage in promoting tourism, and the upgrading of public space and agricultural production systems by taking advantage of the region’s rich natural resources.

To summarize, the conference offered interesting refreshing perspectives on the status of in/tangible cultural heritage, vernacular architecture, as well as sustainable urban and rural development in Austria and China. In fact, the conference was an enriching event. And since almost two third of the presentations and the discussions were held in Chinese, Heidi Dumreicher asked in her closing remarks to keep working on a Chinese-English Thesaurus to avoid possible misunderstandings.

Ute Wallenböck and David Emminger

Conference on the 50th Anniversary of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: New Perspectives on Provincial and Local Histories

University of Cologne, April 22–24, 2016 (Organized: Prof. Felix Wemheuer, Chair for Modern China Studies, Seminar of East Asian Studies)

While most of the existing scholarship on the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) is focused on Beijing and Shanghai, little is known about developments in the provinces and the countryside. The Chinese and English memory literature also has a strong bias toward the urban elites and the Beijing Red Guard Movement in August 1966. However, few academic studies have been published regarding the civil war in 1967 and the role of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). For decades, Western research on Maoist China was dominated by political scientists. But since the early 2000s, a new generation of scholars have gained greater access to archives than previously possible. As a result, doing research on local histories the Mao era is an

emerging trend among China historians in the Anglo-American academic community. In mainland China, a limited number of senior university professors, non-professional historians and private collectors are studying local and provincial histories of the Cultural Revolution.

At the conference, Chinese, Japanese, European and North American scholars presented and discussed their research. We were thrilled that all 12 scholars who were invited from Mainland China were able to participate in the conference. The range of topics that were presented varied from the early Cultural Revolution in Qingdao, ethnic conflicts in Inner Mongolia, the escape of Guangxi's rebels to Beijing, the role of the PLA in Hebei, to the 1975 massacre in Shadian. Keynote lectures were given in Chinese by Michael Schoenhals (Lund University), Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (University of Vienna) and Wu Yiching (University of Toronto). We showed the documentary "The Story of the Corps Collector" (尸长的故事), by Chi Miao (University of Lorraine), about memories of the deadly armed struggle in Chongqing in 1967. Furthermore, a public roundtable titled "The 50th Anniversary of the Cultural Revolutions: Legacies and Continuities" was held with Andrew Walder (Stanford University), Barbara Mittler (University of Heidelberg), Wu Di (China Film Research Center), Yin Hongbiao (Beijing University), Dong Guoqiang (Nanjing University) and Qin Hui (Qinghua University). The roundtable was financially supported by the GSSC (Global South Studies Center Cologne).

Some topics and debates came up several times throughout the conference. First, did China experience "10,000" different Cultural Revolutions or is there some value in promoting one central national narrative? In other words, should we support the right of every eyewitness to promote his or her own version of the Cultural Revolution or is it the duty of scholars to contribute to a consensus on the evaluation of the movement to avoid continued factional struggles on the battlefield of memory? Furthermore, the roles of central and provincial actors in local conflicts were also frequently discussed. Provincial histories of factionalism are complicated. Local actors often tried to get support from Beijing and interventions from the center could curb or escalate local conflicts. As a result, to write a purely local history of the Cultural Revolution seems to be impossible. Is it useful at this moment to work out national patterns of conflicts or do we still lack knowledge about the events in many provinces? Last but not least, some of the Chinese scholars themselves participated in the Cultural Revolution. The question was raised how an eyewitness can be a historian and how he or she can deal with the great challenges that arise from fulfilling these two different roles.

Felix Wemheuer

CHES Young Scholars Conference 2015 — Responding to China's Environmental Crisis: Interdisciplinary Approaches

University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria, February 27–28, 2015

The research network on China and the Environment in the Social Sciences (CHES) was founded at the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Vienna, in 2013 as a forum for postgraduate students with research interests relating to the environment in China. As the group's inaugural event, the CHES Young Scholars Conference 2015 took place on February 27–28 at the University of Vienna. Altogether 37 young scholars and academics from across the globe took part in the conference. The two conference days featured five panel sessions and two keynote speeches. Each panel was also provided with a highly-qualified discussant who offered individual feedback to every panellist. The detailed conference programme can be accessed at <http://chess.univie.ac.at/chess-young-scholars-conference->