



Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies

Fulda, Andreas. "The Chinese Communist Party's Hybrid Interference and Germany's Increasingly Contentious China Debate (2018-21)". *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies*, vol. 2 (2021): 205-234.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25365/jeacs.2021.2.205-234>

SPOTLIGHT

The Chinese Communist Party's Hybrid Interference and Germany's Increasingly Contentious China Debate (2018-21)

Andreas FULDA

University of Nottingham, United Kingdom
Andreas.Fulda@nottingham.ac.uk

The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) ambition to neutralise independent academia at home and abroad is the conundrum at the heart of this article. Based on a review of the literature on sharp power, hybrid interference, the United Front system and the CCP's globalising censorship regime the author argues that the CCP's rule by fear has already induced self-censorship among many western academics. In the empirical part the author puts the spotlight on an increasingly contentious debate among China experts in Germany (2018-21). This expert debate on China takes place across websites, journals, interviews, public talks, public statements of learned societies as well as oral and written testimonies of China scholars at parliamentary committees. Seen in its entirety, Germany's public China discourse reveals an unwillingness to face up to the changed political realities of Xi's hard authoritarian China. The article concludes with recommendations on how to overcome arbitrary limitations imposed by the CCP's political censorship.

本文旨在展示和分析中國共產黨（CCP）如何開始介入國內和海外的學術界使其逐漸喪失獨立性。基於對銳實力、混合干預、統戰系統和中共全球審查機制的文獻回顧，筆者認為中共的恐懼統治已讓許多西方學者自行啟動自我審查。文章實證部分聚焦 2018-2021 年間德國漢學專家就中國問題日益激烈的論爭，相關言論發表在網站、期刊上或訪談、公開演講、學術團體的公開聲明以及漢學專家在德國議會委員會做的口頭或書面證詞中。德國就中國問題的通用表述顯示，德國不願面對習近平強硬政權下中國政治現實中發生的變化。就如何對抗中共政治審查而不受其所制，筆者在文章最後提出了建議。

Keywords: Sharp power, hybrid interference, United Front System, self-censorship, expert discourse

關鍵詞：銳實力，混合干預，統戰系統，自我審查，專家話語

The Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies (JEACS) is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by the EACS, www.chinesestudies.eu. ISSN: 2709-9946

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

On March 22, 2021 the EU, the UK, the US and Canada imposed sanctions on four Chinese officials and one Chinese entity implicated in the crimes against humanity in Xinjiang. The same day the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) retaliated with their own counter-sanctions against ten European lawmakers, two academics as well as four European entities (Reuters 2021), which included the renowned Berlin-based think tank Merics (Merics 2021). The following day the widely respected German China specialists Ohlberg and Shi-Kupfer were attacked by the CCP mouthpiece Global Times. They were labelled as ‘far-right’, ‘anti-China’ and accused of supposedly ‘[defaming] China’s human rights record’ (Global Times 2021).

The CCP’s unprecedented attack on European China specialists sent shockwaves through the world of academia. Thirty European research institute directors expressed deep concern about the “targeting (of) independent researchers and civil society institutions” (Statement by European Research Institute Directors 2021). One thousand three hundred and thirty-six scholars signed a solidarity statement and “[called] on the Chinese government to revoke these unjustified sanctions and to accept that scholarship on China, like scholarship on any country, entails scrutiny of its policies, goals and actions” (Solidarity Statement 2021). Among the signatories were eighty China experts working for German universities.

As this article will show, such rare acts of defiance against the CCP’s authoritarian overreach are an exception rather than the rule. Deep-seated epistemological problems in western academia in general and German academia in particular remain. Due to its strong political, economic, cultural and academic links to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Merkel administration’s pro-business approach (2005-21), Germany can serve as an important country case study. The research puzzle at the heart of this article is to what extent state and non-state agents under control of the CCP are undermining autonomy in German academia? And are there attempts under way to protect intellectual freedom from “exploitation and despoilment by those with incompatible agendas” (NED 2020)?

Drawing on Wigell’s concept of hybrid interference (Wigell 2019) the author explains in the conceptual part how the CCP’s globalised censorship regime aims to neutralise

independent academia at home and abroad. In the empirical part the author puts the spotlight on the increasingly contentious debate among China experts in Germany, which includes debate contributions on websites, journals, interviews, public talks, public statements of learned societies as well as oral and written testimonies of China scholars at parliamentary committees. The article concludes with recommendations on how to overcome arbitrary limitations imposed by the CCP's political censorship.

Hybrid interference

The CCP's global assault on academic freedom comes at a time of geopolitical uncertainty. Diamond has described the crisis of democracy in countries as diverse as Brazil, India, Mexico, Poland, Hungary, the Philippines, Turkey, and Venezuela as “the ‘third reverse wave’ of democratic breakdowns” (Diamond 2021). Such illiberal backsliding has coincided with and arguably been bolstered by the rise of assertive autocracies such as Russia and China (Myers 2021). Against this backdrop foreign influence and interference have become increasingly salient issues. Legitimate foreign influence can be understood as soft power, which Nye describes as “the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment” (Nye 2008). Pongratz has highlighted that “China's government has mostly relied on a more traditional toolkit to exert soft power in Germany in the last decade ... [which] includes education and research cooperation, cultural exchanges and the two governments building on already extensive economic and political relations” (Pongratz 2021). Contrarily illegal interference can be illustrated with the help of the concept of sharp power, “an approach to international affairs that typically involves efforts at censorship, or the use of manipulation to sap the integrity of independent institutions” (Walker 2018a). From this vantage point culture (C), academia (A), media (M), and publishing (P)—the CAMP sectors—are particularly vulnerable (Walker 2018b) and can be considered as “democracy's soft underbelly” (Lucas 2020).

Yet neither the concept of soft or sharp power on its own can fully explain the phenomenon of CCP interference in liberal democracies. Wigell has offered a novel way to describe the challenge at hand. He coined the term *hybrid interference* which he describes as “a ‘wedge strategy’, namely a policy of dividing a target country or coalition, thereby weakening its counterbalancing potential” (Wigell 2019). He goes on to explain that “hybrid interference draws on a panoply of state-controlled, non-kinetic means that are concealed in order to provide the divider with official deniability and manipulate targeted actors *without elevating their threat perceptions* [emphasis added]. Three main bundles of means, in particular, are central to hybrid interference: (1) clandestine diplomacy; (2) geoeconomics; and (3) disinformation” (ibid). In order to make concealed interference measures by autocratic regimes more public the Alliance for Securing Democracy (ASD) has developed an online Authoritarian Interference Tracker. This bipartisan project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) collects publicly available data related to “five interconnected asymmetric tools – information manipulation, cyber operations, malign finance, civil society subversion, and economic coercion” (The Alliance for Securing Democracy 2021). In the case of Germany ASD has logged twelve incidents of CCP interference since 2010. They range from threats to restrict the German automobile industry should Huawei be banned from 5G infrastructure building, industrial espionage, to the use of ‘friendship associations’ with links to the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the United Front Work Department (UFWD) to shape public opinion in Germany (Authoritarian Interference Tracker, 2021).

The CCP’s United Front approach

But what explains the CCP’s ambition to interfere in a liberal democracy like Germany in the first place? The need to protect the authority of the CCP at home and abroad can be traced back to its revolutionary history. According to Van Slyke the United Front methodology was developed as early as December 1935. He described it as “an

early stage development of a set of policies and techniques for gaining popular support, for isolating opponents, for expressing the communist programme in nationalist terms, and for deferring (but not forsaking) revolutionary objectives” (Van Sklyke 1970, 126). During the Yan’an rectification movement (1942-45) (van der Made 2020) Mao Zedong started Sinicizing Communism. According to Selden it was “a pivotal event in the creation of a cult of Mao and in crushing independent thought among intellectuals and party activists” (Selden 1995). Political control efforts were not only confined to China. Bove has pointed out that the CCP’s United Front (UF) approach of “uniting with lesser enemies to defeat greater ones” (Bowe 2018, 4) was instrumental in isolating political opponents at home *and* abroad.

When Xi Jinping took over the helm as General Secretary of the CCP in 2012 he reinvigorated the UF system. Under Xi highly illiberal censorship directives proliferated. Particularly noteworthy is the oral directive Seven Don’t Speaks from 2013, which declared universal values, freedom of expression, civil society, civil rights, the historical mistakes of the party, the independence of the judiciary taboo topics (Bandurski 2013). The written party edict Document No. 9 published in the same year furthermore banned constitutional democracy, independent journalism and the party’s history from the public discourse (ChinaFile 2013). It marked the beginning of a hard authoritarian turn of the CCP under Xi’s leadership.

Under Xi the CCP has accelerated its psychological warfare against opponents of the regime. Minority groups such as Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongolians have all been at the receiving end of CCP oppression. Chinese intellectuals—many of whom enjoyed a certain amount of licence to discuss political issues during the previous Hu Jintao era—have seen their limited autonomy further curtailed. The economist and peace activist Ilham Tohti was given a life sentence on trumped up charges of separatism. The outspoken jurist Xu Zhangrun lost his job at Tsinghua University following a scathing critique of the CCP’s handling of Covid-19. And the establishment intellectual Cai Xia was deprived of her pension after referring to the CCP as a “political zombie” and Xi as a “mafia boss” (Kuo 2020).

The CCP's sharp power at home and abroad works with the help of the simultaneous use of carrots and sticks. Party-state funding for UF work has increased significantly during the Xi era. Based on official budget documents Fedasiuk has calculated that in 2019 “(nearly) \$600 million (23 percent) [of \$2.6 billion] was set aside for offices designed to influence foreigners and overseas Chinese communities” (Fedasiuk 2020). And in early 2021 the HKSAR government set aside HK\$ 8 billion (€870 million) for national security-related work (Cheng 2021). Since the Hong Kong National Security Law includes an extraterritorial provision (Article 38) which criminalises independent research critical of the Chinese party-state at home and abroad one can safely assume that a significant portion of this funding will be used to support the central government's UF work overseas.

Psychological influence

In recent years numerous Western China specialists have been harassed, either for their critical scholarship, for publicly critiquing the CCP and its ill-guided party policies, or for both.¹ The CCP's threatening posture has led to imagined or realistic fear among members of the target audience. While not every western China expert is threatened to the same degree, the abduction of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig (Liu 2021) has instilled considerable fear among China watchers and China practitioners alike. A survey conducted by ChinaFile revealed in June 2021 that “only 44 percent said they planned to travel [to China]—27 percent definitely and 17 percent only probably. Another 16 percent were unsure, 18 percent said they probably would not visit, and

¹ Anne-Marie Brady became a prominent victim of the CCP's intimidation tactics following the publication of her article *Magic Weapons: “China's political influence activities under Xi Jinping”*. On March 2019 Antoine Bondaz, a China expert at the Paris-based Foundation for Strategic Research who had publicly defended French lawmaker's planned visit to Taiwan was insulted by the Chinese Embassy in France as a ‘small-time thug’. On 22 March Adrian Zenz and Bjoern Jerdén were singled out by the party-state in its disproportionate counter-sanctions following the sanctions by the EU, US, UK and Canada on Chinese officials. On 26 March Jo Smith Finley was sanctioned by the Chinese party-state in retaliation for Finley publicly speaking out against the perpetration of crimes against humanity and the beginnings of a slow genocide” in Xinjiang. And since December 2019 the author and three other UK-based critics of the CCP have been the victim of a cyber bullying campaign. This non-exhaustive list shows the scale of the problem.

22 percent that they definitely would not” (ChinaFile 2021). But anxiety in the field of contemporary Chinese Studies is not a new phenomenon. In their article “Repressive Experiences among China Scholars” Greitens and Truex argued that “(the) indirect effects of repressive phenomena affect a far broader community: most China scholars believe their research to be sensitive; a majority adapt their conduct to protect themselves and others; and most express concern about potential self-censorship” (Greitens and Truex 2020). While there is considerable awareness among China experts that individual and institutional self-censorship is a problem in the field, only few attempts have been made to unpack this phenomenon in relation to the CCP’s globalising censorship regime (Hamilton and Ohlberg 2020).

Dapiran has defined self-censorship as follows: “Self-censorship does not occur in isolation: it occurs within a context. We need to understand self-censorship in that context, not as an action, but as a reaction. Self-censorship is a response to an environment of fear, to implicit threats of negative consequences for acts of speech and expression that cross vague, undefined red lines. The creation of that environment of fear is the act of censorship” (Dapiran 2021). In a landmark speech in August 2017 Garnaut reminded his audience that neither under Mao nor under Xi there had been a break with Stalinism. He outlined that in 2014 Xi “[argued] for a return to the Stalinist-Maoist principle that art and literature should only exist to serve politics” (Sinocism 2019). He warned that “(the) challenge for us is that Xi’s project of total ideological control does not stop at China’s borders” (ibid).

Faced with the CCP’s psychological influence western China scholars are mostly left to their own devices. Typical concerns relate to (1) the fear of upsetting Chinese partner organisations or Chinese funders (and thus potentially being seen as a troublemaker by their home institution); (2) the fear of putting either colleagues, family or friends in China at risk by conducting politically sensitive research; or (3) the fear of losing access to China as a result of public comments which are critical of the CCP. (4) Research on the impact of the Hong Kong National Security Law on academic freedom in the UK Higher Education sector furthermore revealed heightened

concerns among China scholars about the risks that university “courses could create for mainland PRC and Hong Kong-based students and themselves” (Hoffman 2021).

While the second concern can be a legitimate reason to engage in individual self-censorship, an overly fearful attitude also means that under such conditions China scholars are afraid to ‘live in truth’ (Václav Havel). Another outcome of CCP censorship is enforced silence. Any academic or public discourse which is highly critical of the CCP or its party policies consequently is seen as a dangerous act.

In August 2021 NZZ reported that a PhD student was asked by his supervisor at St Gallen University to delete a Twitter post, which was critical of the party-state’s cover-up of Covid-19. The PhD supervisor reportedly expressed concerns about not being able to get a visa for China due to his social media comments (Büchenbacher 2021). While the conduct of the PhD supervisor was subsequently widely criticised on social media, such documented cases of individual self-censorship arguably only represent the tip of an iceberg.

One of the persistent problems with self-censorship is that it can not be easily proven with the help of social science research. While the problem certainly exists, it largely remains a black box phenomenon. It is also a taboo topic among China scholars. When in 2018 a call for abstracts for a workshop in Prague on “Censorship and Self-Censorship in Chinese Studies” was launched the organisers received 56 submissions. Strikingly not a *single* proposal was submitted to discuss the phenomenon of self-censorship in *western* academia. In the editorial for the inaugural issue of the *Journal of European for Chinese Studies (JEACS)* Klotzbücher et al had this to say: “What does it say about us and our reflectivity that not one essay was submitted on censorship and self-censorship in *our* field? How can we become more innovative if we are not aware of our position and what is missing or covered up in our academic hierarchies?” (Klotzbücher et al 2021).

Germany's increasingly contentious China debate (2018-21)

What can be observed, however, are public discourses which take place *despite* political censorship. While the CCP's threatening posture aimed to silence international critique of the Xi regime it had the opposite effect. In November 2018 the former journalist-turned-think tanker Tatlow provoked a public debate about the state of Germany's China debate which continues to this day. In an op-ed published in LibMod she critiqued German Sinologists for being "largely blind to China's expansive power politics" (Tatlow 2018). Dubbing the latter as "late Orientalists" driven by "romanticisms" she suggested that they "don't understand that a party-led China could one day become so strong, perhaps already is, that it can challenge democratic norms throughout the world, for example by interfering in an intransparent manner in open societies, changing international organizations to suit its interests, or, in the case of Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang, isolating entire countries and regions" (ibid).

In a response to Tatlow's op-ed Benner noticed that among senior Sinologists there was a tendency towards cultural relativism; a great appreciation for progress that China has made since Mao; that they harboured a general fear to generalise and portray the country in black and white terms; exhibited a strong dislike of the USA; and were often concerned with career incentives (Benner 2018). Arguing that "one can build a nice little empire for oneself in research cooperation with China (own translation from German, henceforth own translation)" Benner pointed out that "a prerequisite for this [was] to be on good terms with those in power (own translation)" (ibid). In another op-ed Benner criticised Confucius Institutes at western universities and called for "cutting financial ties to Party-state and Party-state-affiliated donors" (GPPi 2019). In her reply to Tatlow and Benner, Rudyak argued that "we really don't need an argument about the role of Sinologists. And certainly no quarrel among Sinologists. What we need is more China expertise (own translation)" (Rudyak 2019). Former German Ambassador to China, Stanzel warned that "the lively, fascinating landscape of Sinology can only be scraped over the comb of political effectiveness to its detriment (own translation)" (Stanzel 2019). Fulda responded that the "politicisation of academia

is the declared aim of the [CCP]. There can therefore be no apolitical research on China (own translation)” (Fulda 2019).

The LibMod debate of 2018-19 raised important questions: what is the state of Germany’s China debate both past and present and what kind of China understanding and skills will be required in the future? The public debate was continued in a special issue on “China(competence)” by APuZ, an open access periodical of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2021). The first contributor Hierse argued for a greater appreciation of the pluralistic character of China’s society (Hierse 2021). Reflecting on the lost bet to integrate China into the rule based order of the West Müller-Hofstede made the case for seeing China as a systemic rival, whilst simultaneously rejecting black and white narratives. Drawing on the concept of Barmé’s New Sinology he argued that as part of political education there was a need to better understand the debates of both pro- and anti-establishment Chinese intellectuals (Müller-Hofstede 2021). Rudyak defined China competence as a combination of content and linguistic competence, in particular the ability to decipher China’s highly formalised political communication (Rudyak 2021). Fulda argued that a politically understood China competence can help British universities to identify and minimise reputation risks in UK-China academic cooperation (Fulda 2021a). Frenzel and Godehardt posited that China competence needed to be built at the intersection between foreign and educational policy. They argued that China competence can help to make sense of specific problems in China policy and that intercultural competence is a necessary precondition for a dialogue, in particular under the conditions of a systemic rivalry between democracies and autocracies (Frenzel and Godehardt 2021). Huang described the unresolved tension between values and interests in German and European China policy. For the post-Merkel era she predicted an “excess of values” (Werteübermaß), which could lead to greater confrontation (Huang 2021). And Damm argued that knowing and understanding Taiwan should be part of China competence, too (Damm 2021).

The special issue offered important meta-scientific reflections about the intrinsic value of China-related research. But while all contributors valued the importance of

intercultural competence no consensus was reached how to deal with the political dimension of contemporary Chinese studies. The German debate about China competence and academic cooperation with China subsequently continued in open access opinion-editorials published in China Table. This subscription-based professional briefing was launched in January 2021 and now serves to inform German elites with a professional interest in current Chinese affairs. China scholars have also continued to actively participate in the debate about Germany's foreign and education policy in the form of written and oral testimonies for either state parliaments or the German Bundestag. The Board of the learned society German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) has also repeatedly injected itself in the debate with written public statements (DGA 2020, DGA 2021).

During the LibMod debate of 2018-19 Benner had already foreseen that Germany's China debate would become increasingly contentious. He assumed that there would be a proliferation of voices downplaying the systemic challenge posed by the CCP (Benner 2018). The development of the public debate among China experts in Germany throughout 2020-21 has proven him right. At least six public discourses can now be identified which obscure rather than illuminate how German state and society should respond to the CCP's hybrid interference. The question here is not whether these expert discourses accurately represent the state of the art of Chinese Studies in Germany. But since they are likely to shape the German public's knowledge and understanding of China they deserve greater scrutiny.

Discourse 1: Playing down valid empirical evidence of victimisation / oppression in order to appease Chinese authorities.

A particularly egregious example was the testimony of Leutner in front of the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid of the German Bundestag in November 2020. By referring to internment camps for Uyghurs as "vocational training and further education centers" and "deradicalization centers" she adopted CCP rhetoric (Deutscher Bundestag 2020). The German journalist Kalkhof criticised her

for “reversing the perpetrator-victim relationship: according to her it is not the Uyghurs who are the victims of human rights violations - but the Chinese state (own translation)” (Kalkhof 2020). In a tweet the then incumbent Chairwoman of the DGA Fischer wrote that “Mechthild Leutner should have pointed out that she explains the Chinese official view on the issue. That is important to take into account for all further steps to be taken, even if it is not a perspective one shares. In any case, judging all Sinologists by her statement is unfair (own translation)” (Fischer 2020).

Leutner was one of thirteen signatories of a position paper by Directors of Confucius Institutes affiliated with German universities published in August 2020. This statement posited that Confucius Institutes “significantly contribute to broaden China competence and to promote in-depth knowledge about China, above all through public events (own translation)” (Konfuzius-Institut an der Freien Universität Berlin 2020). According to Heberer, one of the statement’s co-signatories, this open letter was shared with more than two hundred members of the German Bundestag (Die Linke 2020). In May 2021, Leutner, who was also founding director of Germany’s first CI at Free University since 2006, doubled down on her controversial testimony from November 2020 during the 66th meeting of the Committee on Science and Research of the Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, the Berlin state parliament. She said that “I made this expertise on the basis of all available sources (...) and found that there are many inconsistencies and also factual ambiguities (...) I did exactly what I always do, namely presented a differentiated analysis (own translation)” (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2021).

Discourse 2: Trivialising the significance of anti-democratic CCP edicts and/or antiliberal CCP policies.

A second discourse is the trivialisation of anti-democratic party edicts. In a public talk at a Confucius Institute in Bremen on September 2020 Schmidt-Glintzer had this to say about the role of the CCP’s censorship instruction Document No 9: “China is increasingly becoming a rule maker, that is, a rule maker, and is leaving the role of the rule recipient behind. The process of change in the People’s Republic of China from

being a recipient of standards to being a co-creator or even an international standard-setter is now evident in many areas. I am addressing this specifically because this is now often understood as fear-inducing news. It is perfectly normal for a culture to want to bring its own traditions into world culture and not just want to be a copy of America (own translation)” (Konfuzius-Institute Bremen 2020). He then asserted that “against this background one must understand the often cited Document No 9 and the attempts to pursue China’s interests with soft power. So I think that’s not a reason to be afraid, but rather exciting when we get involved in processes and study the philosophy of the Chinese tradition as well as looking at the English, the American and the French and maybe at some point also African figures of thought and get into conversation with it. So I want to leave it at this appeal (own translation)” (ibid).

What can explain Schmidt-Glitzner’s willingness to trivialise Document No 9, which considers independent academia a threat to the political survival of the CCP? Roetz has explained “why parts of Chinese Studies hesitate to openly take sides with the Chinese civil rights movement” (Roetz 2016). He outlines that the “the reasons can be found above all in a syndrome of culturalistic, relativist, and exotic convictions according to which (a) the question of dissidence has to be posed as a question concerning the cultural identity of China and thus as a pre-political instead of a political question, (b) dissidence is something like a foreign body in Chinese culture, and (c) this is due to the absence of or, in contrast to the West, weak development of transcendence. Part of the syndrome is in many instances an understanding of the legitimacy of governance oriented not according to principles of participation, but, in a Hobbesian manner, to the preservation of stability. The image of a China that is opposed to dissent, a China that is addicted to harmony and devoted to order, is thereby created. This image is reminiscent of the World State in Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* which likewise promotes ‘stability, identity and community’ and is indeed at odds with a modern democratic culture of debate (*Streitkultur*). The consequence of this view is the direct or indirect, even if rarely ever outright, partisanship in favor of the authoritarian dictatorship of the People’s Republic and a form of benign lack of understanding for its critics” (ibid). Schmidt-Glitzner sugar-

coating of Document No 9 is highly problematic as it signals to the German public that the CCP's political censorship at home and abroad is not only *not a problem*, but supposedly *an opportunity* for inter-cultural dialogue. As research on China's draconian Overseas NGO Law (2017) demonstrates, the scope for dialogue between Europe and Chinese civil societies has been highly restricted and now excludes all relevant but political sensitive issues from a democratic perspective, thus deforming the dialogue and turning it into a monologue of the Chinese party-state (University of Nottingham 2021).

Discourse 3: Recommending “silent diplomacy” whilst keeping tight-lipped about obstacles to dialogue.

An op-ed for China.Table by Sandschneider from March 2021 exemplifies this third discourse. He criticised western sanctions against Chinese officials, which would only lead to “defiance and ensure that even the last remaining dialogue channel is also blocked (own translation)” (Sandschneider 2021). The author responded with his own op-ed on China.Table in April 2021 and pointed out that while Sandschneider castigated the supposed “megalomania” of all those who believed they could “manage” the rise of China, surprisingly he later called himself “China policy in the West a permanent management task (own translation)” (Fulda 2021b). The author also highlighted that Sandschneider described any criticism of the political situation in the PRC as “China bashing”. Instead Sandschneider demanded “that one has to talk, negotiate, perhaps even argue with this country and its government in order to find solutions that are acceptable to all sides (own translation)” (ibid). And while his calls for dialogue may sound plausible but in fact completely ignored existing political and practical obstacles. With Document No 9 the CCP declared constitutional democracy, universal values, civil society, independent journalism and criticism of the party to be absolute taboo topics. They are taboos both in the domestic discourse and international dialogue with China. This document marked the end of the semi-liberal era under General Secretary Hu Jintao (2002-2012). Sandschneider thus failed to

address the question what possibilities for fruitful cooperation are based on mutual recognition and reciprocity or for intercultural dialogue if said dialogue systematically excludes democratic values and the speech code of the Xi discourse is binding on the Chinese side.

What is particularly perplexing is that in an interview with *NZZ Standpunkte* in 2019 Sandschneider himself admitted that a free and open-ended dialogue with the CCP was practically impossible. When asked about the unforgiving attitude of the CCP towards dissent Sandschneider referred to it as “a hard autocracy that uses any form of political control to maintain stability (own translation)” (*NZZ Standpunkte* 2019). He then elaborated that “we in the West must also be aware that there are a number of strategic goals that go a bit beyond your question now. One of them is sovereignty. Maintaining sovereignty is deeply embedded in their experience. That includes stability. And when dissidents start making strange demands, the government reacts, and it reacts sooner rather than later because it has had the experience if it has been waiting too long it can get extremely dangerous. So if you want to talk to China about dissidents and human rights, you have to know that you are dealing with a government that is actually not willing or able to compromise. This also applies to the question of sovereignty. If you want to talk with China about the South China Sea, there is no compromise from the Chinese government’s point of view. This makes it sometimes extremely difficult for western governments (own translation).” (*ibid*) But given what Sandschneider told the *NZZ* interviewers in Spring 2019 the rather vague recommendation in his op-ed from Spring 2021 to “talk, negotiate, perhaps even argue with this country and its government (own translation)” (*ibid*) fails to convince.

Discourse 4: Prescribing academic cooperation with China without addressing the issue of access.

An example of the fourth discourse is another op-ed for *China.Table* from June 2021 in which Levy argued that one can not study China exclusively through the internet or by travelling to Taiwan. She underscored the need for empirical field research in

China and emphasised the need for exchanges with Chinese academics (Levy 2021). What she did not address was the question how to deal with the CCP's selective academic decoupling. Sanctioned China scholars like Smith Finley, Jerdén and Zenz can no longer conduct research in China. While the blacklisting of western scholars itself is not a new phenomenon (Business Insider, 2011) the highly public nature of the CCP sanctions nevertheless signifies a step change. Abstract calls for academic cooperation with China on their own will not solve their problem of lack of access. And in terms of the censorship of Chinese academia Levy had this to say about Chinese academics: "These may be subject to their own political and social constraints, but they are still interested in exchanging ideas with other countries and are open to new ideas, especially in times of restricted internet and media access (own translation)" (ibid). And while the value of interpersonal contacts between Chinese and western academics is indisputable, Levy did not address the fact that the CCP "has greatly restricted the number of academics and researchers allowed to physically attend conferences overseas" (Leung 2020) and that "(the) rules have now been extended to online conferences, with all applications to attend having to be submitted for approval at least 15 days before the event starts. The application should include an invitation letter and a clear agenda and participants must undertake to 'keep secrets' and not jeopardise the reputation of Chinese institutions" (ibid).

Levy's op-ed was reminiscent of the political slogan of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) which has frequently described German-Chinese academic exchanges as a "cooperation on an equal footing" (BMBF 2021). The problem, however, lies in the fact that the actual terms of engagement have become unequal, not just for German academics keen on cooperating with their Chinese counterparts, but also for their Chinese academics who wish to do the same. Abstract calls for continued Sino-German academic collaboration which ignore the issue of access run the danger of being perceived as mere virtue signalling.

Discourse 5: Extolling the virtues of neutrality in Asian Studies and discouraging positionality.

In the statement “Beware the Polarisation” of the German Association for Asian Studies (DGA) from June 2020 the DGA board suggested that geopolitical US-China rivalry was to blame for forcing Asian scholars to take sides. They complained that “the attempt to stay neutral and contribute to understanding rather than fuelling the conflict is either interpreted as weakness or even as moral decay” (DGA 2020). Invoking the neutrality principle is highly problematic in this context as it suggests that Asian Studies scholars with a clearly defined political position (e.g. pre-scientific preference for democracy) could be considered politically partisan (e.g. seen as activists rather than dispassionate scholars). It should be noted that while the DGA ostensibly covers the entirety of Asian Studies it has a very strong China focus. Its current Chairwoman is Professor Nele Noesselt, a trained political scientist and China specialist. Her predecessor Professor Doris Fischer is a trained economist and also a China specialist. China and Covid-19 was also at the heart of the 2020 DGA board statement. Last but not least the DGA also hosts the Arbeitskreis Sozialwissenschaftliche Chinaforschung (ASC), an influential working group with close to one hundred members specialising in the empirical study of China.

The DGA board's statement echoed misguided developments in the German academic field of International Relations (IR). In his landmark essay “IB-Professionalität als Praxisferne? Ein Plädoyer für Wandel” Terhalle has critiqued the widespread anti-praxeological culture, where according to Daase the “self-image and image of others in political science professionalism [...] [implies] a proximity to theory and a distance from political practice” (Terhalle 2016). According to Murphy and Fulda the reluctance among IR specialists to engage in applied political science research is primarily related to perceived and real risks. They write “practical policy work can pose a series of risks for a scholarly career. Maintaining academic integrity and scholarly independence may be tough when conducting service in a field that is often intensely partisan” (Murphy and Fulda 2011). They further argue that “publicly taking sides may lead others to question the integrity of your scholarship, which can have potentially deleterious consequences both on and off campus. In particular, opponents may examine your scholarship closely to uncover flaws or try to discredit a

scholar's work for spurious but politically significant reasons" (ibid). It is concerning that a German learned society for Asian Studies discussed the systemic rivalry between democracies and autocracies with reference to "Cold war rhetoric and de-coupling fantasies" (DGA 2020). While the DGA board is tasked to promote the academic field of Asian Studies in Germany, it arguably exceeds its mandate by decreeing what supposedly is or isn't an acceptable position in terms of desirable goals and modalities of western China engagement.

Discourse 6: Acknowledging political censorship without offering practical and applicable solutions.

In another public comment about the state of Asian Studies in Germany from June 2021 the DGA Board issued "concern about tendencies towards self-censorship and politically motivated influence on the orientation of academic work and on the diversity of opinion in Germany (own translation)" (DGA 2021). The remedy was once again seen in counteracting "polarization tendencies (own translation)" coupled with an advocacy of "open, critical-analytical exchange and research cooperation with scientists and research institutions in Asia - and for theory-led, empirically founded research that is not politically opportune and which aligns with short-term moods, but which is committed to the principles of basic research (own translation)" (ibid).

Rather worryingly, the DGA Board again advised against applied research by suggesting that "no application-related recommendations for action should be communicated, rather it is a matter of thinking in long-term dimensions and presenting knowledge from and about the region in a systematically structured and theory-based manner (own translation)" (ibid). As outlined under Discourse 3 and 4 it is not enough to simply emphasise the normative desire for academic dialogue and cooperation. It is particularly concerning that the DGA Board has so far refrained from publicly critiquing the CCP counter-sanctions on China scholars in March 2021. Its silence runs counter its professed 'concern about tendencies towards self-censorship' and stands in great contrast to the public statement by thirty European research institute

directors. Other learned societies like the Deutsche Vereinigung für Chinastudien (DVCS) as well as the European Association for Chinese Studies (EACS) have been unequivocal in their public critique of the CCP sanctions. It is also hard to see the merits of a field of German Asian Studies which excludes socially- and politically-engaged research. If such recommendations by the DGA Board were heeded by Asian Studies scholars in Germany this would run the danger of further marginalising the field both domestically and internationally.

Quo vadis?

Seen in their entirety the six public expert discourses reveal a great reluctance to address the question how to best respond to the hard authoritarian turn under Xi Jinping. They also reveal a lack of concern for protecting the ecology of knowledge production. When individuals or learned societies participate in the public discourse they have a moral obligation to uphold academic freedom. Albert Einstein once pointed out that “(by) academic freedom I understand the right to search for truth and to publish and teach what one holds to be true. This right implies also a duty: one must not conceal any part of what one has recognized to be true” (Academe Blog 2017). Discourse participants need to avoid a situation where “professional knowledge is mismatched to the changing character of the situations of practice—the complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflicts which are increasingly perceived as central to the world of professional practice” (Schoen 1983).

In order to enhance public trust in experts commenting on current Chinese affairs discourse participants should disclose any special interests. It is in their own interest for China scholars to create transparency about consultancy work and sources of supplementary income. Media outlets which interview experts or publish their op-eds should follow the good practice of *The Conversation*, which requires authors to provide a disclosure statement and answer questions about potential conflicts of interests or affiliations. Learned societies have an important role to play in this process. Given its influence on the field of Chinese studies in Germany, the DGA board should

lead by example and advocate for greater transparency and accountability, e.g. by critiquing intransparent third party funding from China to German universities. The DGA could also help develop ethical guidelines for China scholars providing consultancy work for funders from autocratic countries.

Conclusion

In the conceptual part of this article the author addressed the research puzzle how the CCP is undermining autonomy in German academia. Based on a review of the literature on sharp power, hybrid interference, the UF system and the CCP's globalising censorship regime the author argued that the CCP's rule by fear has already induced self-censorship among many western academics. The Serbian writer and translator Danilo Kiš has described the corrosive nature of censorship and self-censorship in particularly captivating ways: "Whichever way you look at it, censorship is the tangible manifestation of a pathological state, the symptom of a chronic illness which develops side by side with it: self-censorship. Invisible but present, far from the eyes of the public, buried deep down in the most secret parts of the spirit, it is far more efficient than censorship. While both of them induce (or are induced?) by the same means—threats, fear blackmail—this second ill camouflages, or at any rate does not denounce, the existence of any outside restraint. The fight against censorship is open and dangerous, therefore heroic, while the battle against self-censorship is anonymous, lonely and unwitnessed, and it makes its subject feel humiliated and ashamed of collaborating" (Kiš 1986). While individual self-censorship which aims to protect family and research partners in China can be justified, a sector-wide tacit acceptance of the CCP's political censorship regime would neutralise German academia as a realm of critical inquiry.

In the empirical part the author offered a critique of the evolving China discourse in Germany. Drawing on the LibMod debate, the APuZ Special Issue on "China(competence)", as well as numerous op-eds in China.Table, public talks, media

interviews and oral testimonies submitted to parliamentary sub-committees between 2018 and 2021 an increasingly acrimonious public debate on China became visible. The six discourses revealed a general unwillingness to face up to the changed political realities of Xi's hard authoritarian China. This epistemological development is highly problematic, since in a democratic society a consensus should exist that authentic and free knowledge production is only possible if academics at German universities can research and debate current Chinese affairs free from fear or favour.

Inaction is not an option since the political and psychological costs of the CCP's censorship regime are unacceptably high. Any acceptance of CCP censorship would mean normalising the Chinese party-state. Whenever this happens there is subsequently also insufficient empathy and solidarity with the many victims of CCP rule. Acceptance of the CCP's political censorship would also lead to a denial of the values of one's own socialisation process and the lowering of one's own standards. Another impact of not mounting resistance to political censorship would be that one loses the respect of the CCP, which leads to an encouragement for even more aggressive behaviour.

None of these potential outcomes are in the enlightened interest of German academia. All China scholars—regardless of their respective world-views and ideologies—are arguably victims of the CCP's totalitarian rule. But they do not have to accept this predicament. Instead of turning their anger inwards—or worse, against each other—they can also choose to work together in order to overcome arbitrary limitations on free speech. Like-minded colleagues should raise first order questions about the intrinsic and extrinsic value of their China scholarship. A step towards emancipation from the CCP's psychological control would be a recognition that Contemporary Chinese Studies are a post-normal studies, since the field deals with issues which “[involves] risk” and is marked by an environment “where facts are uncertain, values in dispute, stakes high and decisions urgent” (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993). This requires China scholars to begin questioning rule-stabilizing, culturally relativistic and culturally essentialist as well as anti-praxeological traditions in Chinese studies.

And to counter the six harmonizing discourses—all of which run the danger of reducing democratic resilience—there is a need for a value-based public debate about what kind of China-related knowledge and understanding is required which prevents professional deformations, defends the integrity of democratic institutions in Germany and also helps to build bridges to both ‘official China’ (represented by the CCP and organisations under its control) and ‘unofficial China’ (which includes autonomy seeking Chinese citizens and their organisations). Progress on this front will depend on the next generation of China scholars willingness to make their voice heard in the public discourse. Young China scholars should feel empowered to speak up, even if their viewpoints differ substantially from senior academics who are currently occupying positions of power in German academia.

Universities should respond to the most recent **BMBF** initiative to develop more independent China expertise in Germany. They should heed the advice of the Global Public Policy Institute and “apply the [Academic Freedom Index] to protect and promote academic freedom worldwide” (GPPi 2021). Fulda and Missal have argued that German universities need to engage in ethical due diligence and create greater transparency and accountability about Chinese party-state funding (Fulda and Missal 2021). It is also about time that German universities terminate their cooperation agreements with Confucius Institutes (Fulda 2021c). As Wietholz has rightly pointed out that “(in) the field of international research cooperation, we in Germany (and ideally in Europe) therefore have foreseeable complex, collaborative, professional weighing up processes with the aim of sustainable and self-confident research cooperation in a well-understood self-interest. At the beginning, however, there must be a clear definition of our own long-term interests and values (own translation)” (Wietholz 2021).

The unprincipled China policy of the former Merkel administration arguably has contributed to today’s conundrum. For sixteen years the German federal government has signalled to the private sector—and by extension the **CAMP** sector, too— that the bottom line always trumps any other enlightened German material or ideational interests. Following the federal election in Autumn 2021 a new government should

heed the advice of Nils Schmid, the spokesperson for foreign affairs of the Social Democratic Party. In an interview with the Financial Times he argued that Germany needs “a real foreign policy for China – not just a business-oriented policy” and that there was a “need to decouple our foreign policy from the commercial interests of big business” (Solomon and Chazan 2021). Furthermore a whole-of-government task force should be established which critically examines the systemic challenge of the CCP to German state, industry and society. It should involve representatives from the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the Federation of German Industries, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research etc. To maximise its effectiveness this task force should come under the German Chancellery. It should be entrusted to develop suggestions for actionable counter-measures against hybrid interference from autocracies for key stakeholders on the federal and state level. This way the government could overcome the current lack or misuse of China competence in German politics, business and academia.

Bibliography

- Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin. 2021. “Wortprotokoll. Öffentliche Sitzung. Ausschuss für Wissenschaft und Forschung.” May 17, 2021. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3kmoEMj>.
- Academe Blog. 2017. “Einstein on Academic Freedom and Political Inquisitions.” Accessed August 28, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3mGZhWG>.
- Authoritarian Interference Tracker. 2021. “Explore All Incidents on the Tracker.” Accessed September 22, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3zuRLAR>.
- Bandurski, David. 2013. “Control, on the shores of China’s dream.” China Media Project. May 22, 2013. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/2MquM7C>.
- Benner, Thorsten. 2018. “Die romantischen Jahre sind vorbei.” LibMod. December 18, 2018. Accessed July 11. <https://bit.ly/3AU6QO3>.

- BMBF. 2021. "China - Kooperation auf Augenhöhe." Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3AP0M9T>.
- Bowe, Alexander. 2018. "China's Overseas United Front Work." *U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission*, August 24, 2018. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3hg14Pc>.
- Brady, Anne-Marie. 2017. "Magic Weapons: China's political influence activities under Xi Jinping." September 18, 2017. Accessed 22 October 2021. <https://bit.ly/3CaFLXh>.
- Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. 2021. "China(kompetenz)." *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*. February 2021. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3i40e7v>.
- Business Insider. 2011. "The Xinjiang 13 and Chinese Appeasement." August 15, 2011. Accessed September 22, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3zuVr5D>.
- Büchenbacher, Katrin. 2021. "Die HSG und China als Lehrstück - wo die Angst regiert, stirbt die Freiheit." *NZZ*. 4. August 2021. Accessed 1 September 2021. <https://bit.ly/3kFZeaV>.
- Cheng, Selina. 2021. "Hong Kong Budget 2021: HK\$8 billion earmarked for national security spending despite city facing record deficit." *Hong Kong Free Press*. February 24, 2020. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3xgeRLb>.
- ChinaFile. 2013. "Document 9: A ChinaFile Translation." November 8, 2013. Accessed July 7, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3qKIH8t>.
- ChinaFile. 2021. "Will I Return to China?" A ChinaFile Conversation. June 21, 2021. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3hlnwGC>.
- Damm, Jens. 2021. "Das 'andere China'? Was wir über Taiwan wissen sollten." *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*. February 12, 2021. Accessed September 2021. <https://bit.ly/39rM2Bc>.
- Dapiran, Anthony. 2021. "A 20th Procrastination: On Censorship." June 15, 2021. Accessed July 7, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3yw78J2>.
- Deutscher Bundestag. 2020. "Anhörung zur Lage der Menschenrechte in China." November 19, 2020. Accessed July 7, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3ulY9ca>.

- DGA. 2020. "Ein Plädoyer gegen Polarisierung." June 12, 2020. Accessed July 8, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3vDufBJ>.
- DGA. 2021. "Stellungnahme des DGA-Vorstands zur Lage der Asienforschung in Deutschland." June 19, 2021. Accessed July 7, 2021. <https://bit.ly/2UsS7t1>.
- Diamond, Larry. 2021. "A World Without American Democracy?" *Foreign Affairs*, July 2, 2021. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://fam.ag/3dIbzbV>.
- Die Linke. 2020. "Fachgespräch: Konfuzius-Institute in Deutschland." September 8, 2020. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/36uu3Zp>.
- Fedasiuk, Ryan. 2020. "Putting Money in the Party's Mouth: How China Mobilizes Funding for United Front Work." *China Brief*. Volume: 20 Issue:16, September 16, 2020. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3pVLFos>.
- Fischer, Doris. 2020. Tweet on November 21, 2020, 5:17 pm. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3r7vF4W>.
- Fulda, Andreas. 2019. "Wie die Kommunistische Partei die Wissenschaft gefährdet." *LibMod*. June 12, 2019. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3wzzdxI>.
- Fulda, Andreas. 2021a. "Wissenschaftsautonomie wahren. China und die Wissenschaft in Großbritannien." *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*. February 12, 2021. Accessed September 2021. <https://bit.ly/2ZL1fs9>.
- Fulda, Andreas. 2021b. "Für einen Paradigmenwechsel in der deutschen Chinapolitik." *China.Table*. April 6, 2021. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3B3qiID>.
- Fulda, Andreas. 2021c. "Rote Linien längst überschritten." *Forschung & Lehre*. September 13, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3ksKpJF>.
- Fulda, Andreas and David Missal. 2021. "Mitigating threats to academic freedom in Germany: the role of the state, universities, learned societies and China." *International Journal of Human Rights*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2021.1989412>.
- Funtowicz, Silvio O, and Ravetz, Jerome. 1993. "Science for the Post-normal Age." *Futures: The Journal of Policy, Planning and Futures Studies* 25.7: 739-55.
- Frenzel, Andrea and Nadine Godehardt. 2021. "Mehr Chinakompetenz für eine strategische Chinapolitik. Ein systemischer Ansatz beginnt bereits in der Schule."

- Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*. February 12, 2021. Accessed September 2021. <https://bit.ly/3hVzNBx>.
- Global Times. 2021. "Who are those on China's sanctions list against EU, and why these sanctions are justified?" March 23, 2021. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/36dUmCP>.
- GPPi. 2019. "How Should Universities Respond to China's Growing Presence on Their Campuses?" November 4, 2019. Accessed September 22, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3lOyEwB>.
- GPPi. 2021. "Free Universities: Putting the Academic Freedom Index Into Action." March 21, 2011. Accessed July 9, 2021. <https://bit.ly/2UwKGAU>.
- Greitens, Sheena Chestnut, and Truex, Rory. 2020. "Repressive Experiences among China Scholars: New Evidence from Survey Data." *The China Quarterly* 242: 349–375. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741019000365>.
- Hamilton, Clive and Mareike Ohlberg. 2020. *Hidden Hand: Exposing How the Chinese Communist Party is Reshaping the World*. London, OneWorld Publications.
- Hierse, Lin. 2021. "Hier könnte ein Satz über einen Drachen stehen – Essay." *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*. February 12, 2021. Accessed September 2021. <https://bit.ly/3CwvbWP>.
- Hoffman, Samantha. 2021. "The Hong Kong National Security Law and UK Academic Freedom." July 2021. Accessed October 22, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3B53xCS>.
- Huang, Ying. 2021. "Werte oder Interessen? Maximen deutscher und europäischer Chinapolitik." *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*. February 12, 2021. Accessed September 2021. <https://bit.ly/3zvdvfO>.
- Kalkhof, Maximilian. 2020. "China-Expertin der Linkspartei verharmlost Repressionen gegen Uiguren im Bundestag." November 21, 2020. Accessed July 7, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3hlRU3B>.
- Kiš, Danilo. 1986. "Censorship/self censorship." Index on censorship 1/86. Accessed July 9, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3xGR6fH>.

- Klotzbücher, Sascha, Frank Kraushaar, Alexis Lycas and Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik. 2021. "Editorial. Censorship and Self-censorship in Chinese Contexts." *Journal of the European Association for Chinese Studies* 1: 9-18. <https://doi.org/10.25365/jeacs.2020.1.9-18>.
- Konfuzius-Institut Bremen. 2020. "Wohlstand in Eurasien. Die alten und die neuen Seidenstraßen als Grundlage für eine Moderne mit menschlichem Antlitz." September 30, 2020. No official vid-eo or recording available. The author transcribed and translated a recording of the online lecture provided by David Missal. <https://bit.ly/3yyYARY>
- Konfuzius-Institut an der Freien Universität Berlin. 2020. "Konfuzius-Institute stärken - deutsch-chinesischen Wissenschaftsaustausch ausbauen." August 14, 2020. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3pTpKxY>.
- Kuo, Lily. 2020. "'He killed a party and a country': a Chinese insider hits out at Xi Jinping." *The Guardian*. August 18, 2000. Accessed September 22, 2021. <https://bit.ly/2XO7RZl>.
- Leung, Mimi. 2020. "New online conference rules raise academic freedom fears." *University World News*. September 1, 2020. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3k8GphH>.
- Levy, Katja. 2021. "Die deutsche China-Forschung darf sich nicht isolieren." *China.Table*. June 16, 2021. Accessed July 7, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3dSh8EN>.
- Liu, Natalie. 2021. "For Canadians, Two Michaels' Ordeal Exposed 'Dark Side of China'." *Voice of America*. 24 March 2021. Accessed July, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3hnptm5>.
- Lucas, Ed. 2020. "Firming Up Democracy's Soft Underbelly." *NED*, February 2020. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3wkcZ2K>.
- Merics. 2021. "Statement on the sanctions imposed by China that also affect MERICS." March 22, 2021. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3qX5NbS>.
- Murphy, Ann Marie and Andreas Fulda. 2011. "Bridging the gap: pracademics in foreign policy." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44.2: 279-283.
- Müller-Hofstede, Christoph. 2021. "Zwischen Systemkonkurrenz und Dialogbereitschaft. China(kompetenz) in der politischen Bildung." *Aus Politik und*

- Zeitgeschichte*. February 12, 2021. Accessed September 2021. <https://bit.ly/3AwXF5O>.
- Myers, Steven Lee. 2021. "An Alliance of Autocracies? China Wants to Lead a New World Order." *New York Times*. March 29, 2021. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://nyti.ms/3AvDbuw>.
- NED. 2020. Compromising the Knowledge Economy. Authoritarian Challenges to Independent Intellectual Inquiry. <https://bit.ly/37KwBnb>.
- Nye, Joseph S. 2008. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616.1: 94-109.
- NZZ Standpunkte. 2019. "Eberhard Sandschneider | Go oder Schach? - China und der Westen (NZZ Standpunkte 2019)." March 4, 2019. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3wAlc2M>.
- Pongratz, Barbara. 2021. "Germany: strong economic appeal and competing values", in: Dams et al. 2021. "China's soft power in Europe: falling on hard times." European Think-tank Network on China, April 2021, 36. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3qOfM2Y>.
- Reuters. 2021. "China hits back at EU with sanctions on 10 people, four entities over Xinjiang." March 22, 2021. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://reut.rs/3dNSYuR>.
- Roetz, Heiner. 2016. "Who Is Engaged in the 'Complicity with Power'? On the Difficulties Sinology Has with Dissent and Transcendence." in Brown, Nahum and William Franke (Eds.), *Transcendence, Immanence, and Intercultural Philosophy*. Palgrave Macmillan: Cham. 307.
- Rudyak, Marina. 2019. "Die Große Mauer in den Köpfen." *LibMod*. February, 11, 2019. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3vPXpgK>.
- Rudyak, Marina. 2021. "Keine Orchidee. Über Chinakompetenz und Sinologie." *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*. February 12, 2021. Accessed September 2021. <https://bit.ly/3bDKx3q>.
- Sandschneider, Eberhard. 2021. "China-Bashing hat Hochkonjunktur." *China.Table*. March 31, 2021. Accessed July 7, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3dSN63x>.

- Schoen, Donald. 1983. *The Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Action*. New York, Basic Books.
- Selden, Mark. 1995. "Yan'an Communism Reconsidered." *Modern China* 21.1: 8-44.
- Sinocism. 2019. "Engineers of the Soul: Ideology in Xi Jinping's China by John Garnaut." January 17, 2019. Accessed July 14, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3i6FL1B>.
- Solidarity statement on behalf of scholars sanctioned for their work on China. 2021. April 14, 2021. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3jOaxPe>.
- Solomon, Erika and Guy Chazan. 2021. "We need a real policy for China': Germany ponders post-Merkel shift." *Financial Times*, January 5, 2021. Accessed July 8, 2021. <https://on.ft.com/3jV0Leo>.
- Statement by European Research Institute Directors. 2021. 22 March 2021. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3ytDrby>.
- Stanzel, Volker. 2019. "Was Brecht mit China-Politik zu tun hat." *LibMod*. May 24, 2019. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3r1r2sW>.
- Tatlow, Didi Kirsten. 2018. "Cultural Relativism and Power Blindness: Some critical observations on the state of Germany's China debate." *LibMod*. November 22, 2018. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3APBaJP>.
- Terhalle, Maximilian. 2016. "IB-Professionalität als Praxisferne? Ein Plädoyer für Wandel." *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* Vol.9 (1): 122.
- The Alliance for Securing Democracy. 2021. "Threat Actor: China." Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/36hpyRW>.
- University of Nottingham. 2021. "Ford Foundation Project." Asia Research Institute. Accessed July 14, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3kf67kG>.
- van der Made, Jan. 2020. "China's Communist Party plans Stalinist-style purge ahead of Congress." *RFI*, 14 July 2020. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3xmGDFN>.
- Van Slyke, Lyman. 1970. "The United Front in China." *Journal of Contemporary History* 5.3: 119-135.
- Walker, Christopher. 2018a. "What is 'Sharp Power'?" *Journal of Democracy*, July 2018. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3jNHj3i>.

- Walker, Christopher. 2018b. "The 'CAMP' sectors and the threat from sharp power." *Power 3.0 Understanding Modern Authoritarian Influence*, July 24, 2018. Accessed July 6, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3yrbwsL>.
- Wietholz, Almuth. 2021. "Dornröschen schlägt die Augen auf." *leibniz*, June 8, 2021. Accessed July 11, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3yREHFx>.
- Wigell, Mikael. 2019. "Hybrid Interference as a Wedge Strategy: A Theory of External Interference in Liberal Democracy." *International Affairs* (London) 95.3: 255-275.