

Introduction

The Asian Studies programme at Westminster has made significant strides since its success in RAE2001, confirming our international reputation for innovative interdisciplinary research on China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the overseas Chinese diaspora. We have organised several important academic and public events, including symposia, workshops, film screenings, and exhibitions. Acknowledging the importance of Asian Studies to Westminster's research profile, the University's Quintin Hogg Trustees have given it generous support, facilitating expansion of the programme's staffing base, postgraduate provision, and the appointment of Visiting Research Fellowships and research assistantships. Research funds have supported a PhD scholarship in Chinese Studies, and a new Trust for PhD studentships is currently being developed. Funds have also been used to encourage new research, specifically on China-Latin American relations, and on Christianity and politics in the PRC. Current research activities include individual and collaborative projects on a range of topical issues, including: women, gender and sexuality in the PRC; memory, place and urban dislocation in contemporary China; political art and visual culture; visions of the future across greater China's cities; Western media reporting of China in the lead-up to the Olympics. With such expansion, we are today a thriving programme with a sustainable and exciting future.

1. Research structure and environment

1.1 Asian Studies research is based in the Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD), in the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Languages (SSHL), and is underpinned by shared interests in the study of the politics of culture. CSD is one of the University's leading postgraduate teaching and research centres, covering international relations, political theory and cultural studies, and is also submitting in UoA39. The staff team has benefited from links with CSD through joint postgraduate supervision and a range of research activities. We have close ties with the School's expanding Chinese Section, with staff contributing to its undergraduate teaching programme, and have developed strong links with the Centre for Arts Research, Technology and Education (CARTE), and with colleagues in English Literature/Critical Studies (UoA57). These links have led to joint postgraduate teaching and PhD supervision, and a new interdisciplinary MA in Cultural and Critical Studies that includes modules from CSD's MA in International Studies (East Asia). The CSD-based research budget also supports new research of SSHL colleagues outside CSD working on China. Initiatives to develop teaching and postgraduate research links are under discussion with institutions including Goldsmiths and the University of Technology Sydney, and negotiations are currently underway with HEIs in Beijing and Guangzhou to establish a collaborative exchange MA/PhD programme in visual culture.

1.2 Research activities are coordinated at School level by the Dean and School Research Director. The Asian Studies Research Cluster manager sits on the School Research Strategy Committee, which is responsible for monitoring all research. At University level, WestmARC (Applied Research

and Consultancy) supports staff in bidding for external funding. The International Educational Office further assists in negotiating links with overseas research contacts.

1.3 CSD provides its staff and students with administrative and IT support and designated office facilities. Regent Campus Library holds a comprehensive collection of Chinese and English language materials relevant to our research students' fields of study, including CAJS. CSD holds subscriptions to, and CDRoms of, Chinese journals, some of which (specifically on women and gender) are not held in other UK universities. The School's Chinese section offers an extensive range of language training facilities (*putonghua*) to our doctoral students.

1.4 CSD provides generous teaching remission to support research, subject to clearly defined monitoring process and incentives. In conjunction with the School, it offers a rolling series of staff development workshops in, for example, the use of electronic databases and other research tools. The Asian Studies budget allocates annual funds to support the fieldwork, international travel and conference participation of staff.

1.5 CSD's fortnightly seminar series has hosted distinguished Chinese Studies scholars and public figures (including Wang Dan and Christine Loh) from the UK, Europe, America, Australia, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, with papers on issues including: local village elections in China; political transformation in Hong Kong public education campaigns and urban space; violence and politics in revolutionary China; regional politics, children and the media; the media and the rise of China's new rich; democratisation and national identity in Taiwan, and the politics of feminism in China. Asian Studies has also organised many other scholarly and public events, including international symposia on: 'Visual Culture in Contemporary China' (2003); 'Reflections on June Fourth: fifteen years on' (2004); 'Reporting Chinaweek' (2005); 'Democratisation in Taiwan' (2005); 'Was Mao a Monster?' (2006); 'Face and Place: Visibility and Invisibility in Chinese Propaganda Posters' (2007). We have held screenings of and discussions about documentary film on China and Taiwan, including a highly successful event at the Goethe Institute co-organised with the Taiwan Representative Office. CSD also organises workshops, symposia and open lectures on themes that bring together its Asian Studies and political/cultural interests. Prominent amongst these are two high profile 'encounters', co-organised by Harriet Evans, with Mary Douglas (2003) and Julia Kristeva (2007). Chantal Mouffe, a CSD Professor and internationally-renowned political theorist, gave a paper at our 2005 symposium on Democratisation in Taiwan. Such activities are a rich example of the benefits to Asian Studies and CSD of 'pooling' shared interests and resources to explore issues across standard disciplinary and area studies boundaries. Asian Studies research also features on CSD's website and in its *Bulletin*, an online quarterly publication, which has over 2,200 subscribers (UK and international), including academic institutions, policy organisations, think tanks and libraries.

1.6 A considerable aspect of our work has focused on the development and dissemination of research resources. The expansion of the Chinese Poster Collection, as part of our visual culture programme, has created an internationally-acknowledged research resource, and interest in the project has led to exhibitions supported by the AHRC (London 2004) and international institutions (New York 2005), and invitations to Asian Studies staff to give talks to a range of public bodies (Tate Modern, Serpentine, British Museum, Victoria and Albert). The Trustees have financed the purchase of many unique items, and the curator Dr. Katie Hill has, together with a research assistant, developed the poster website into an electronic database in English and Chinese. As part of her curatorial work, Hill has also produced a hard-copy colour catalogue of the AHRC-funded exhibition. Professor Ai Xiaoming (Zhongshan University) and Hu Jie, arguably China's most important independent documentary filmmaker, came to CSD as Visiting Research Fellows in 2005 and 2006 respectively. These fellowships resulted in two documentary films: 'Painting for the Revolution' and 'The Cultural Revolution: Posters and Propaganda', directed by Ai and Hu, and based on interviews with poster artists and collectors. A junior Visiting Research Fellow, Giovanna Puppi (Venice), joined CSD in 2007 to work on 1990s posters and public education campaigns in China. Professor Stephanie Hemelryk Donald (UTS) joined CSD as Visiting Research Fellow in late 2007, to launch the first phase of a three-year joint research programme on Posters of the Cultural Revolution. We have also developed, since 2001, a unique project on 'Reporting China'. Supported by a fixed-term research assistant, Mark Harrison has compiled a catalogue of a large collection of documentary films on China and Taiwan, and is creating an ongoing digital database of documentary and TV news items on China in the lead-up to the Beijing Olympics.

2. Research students and research studentships

2.1 Since 2001, Asian Studies has strengthened its monitoring and training of PhD students through two major developments: 1) the compilation of supervision logbooks and an annual monitoring system, incorporating a viva voce examination for the MPhil/PhD transferral stage; 2) a comprehensive research training programme, incorporating expertise from CSD and other relevant departments. This offers training in a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods in line with the requirements of the funding councils. CSD PhD students additionally convene their own seminar series.

2.2 In 2004 CSD established a fund specifically to support PhD students' participation at national and international conferences. With this support, our students have delivered papers at various international conferences in the UK, Europe, China and Taiwan. Two have also published research papers in academic journals. One of our PhD students was the UK's China Postgraduate Network convenor for two years.

2.3 Increasing recruitment of high quality PhD students has been a priority of the Asian Studies programme since RAE2001. Six new students have joined us, conducting research on: visual culture (China, Hong Kong and Taiwan),

media and communication (China), and gender, sexuality and health (China). Two of these joined CSD as PhD students through its MA routes. Asian Studies staff also supervise other students working in the fields of politics, critical theory and visual culture. As early-career researchers when they joined CSD in 2002, Harrison and Hill have only recently begun to supervise research students, but with increasing numbers of applicants, and stronger supervisory expertise, we look forward to further increasing our recruitment in the next few years. New MA modules currently under development (in urban studies and visual culture) will also expand the 'feeder' route into our PhD programme.

2.4 The Asian Studies QR budget has, since 2005, financed a three-year PhD scholarship, and a number of short-term research assistantships to help finance doctoral students. We are currently working with CSD's Director to establish a Scholarship Trust Fund to support the expansion of our PhD programme. As Asian Studies PhD students form part of an interdisciplinary programme with interests in diverse fields that do not easily correspond with the disciplinary definitions of the funding councils, it is to their credit that they have been able to sustain their research programmes. One, awarded her PhD for work on 'Healthy in Body and Mind: Sex Education in Urban China' (2006), obtained scholarships from the Italian government and Milan's City Council. A second, also awarded her PhD in 2006 (A Cultural Study of People Living with HIV/AIDS in China), obtained a three year scholarship from the Universities' China Committee in London (UCCL). A third, due to complete in early 2008, was awarded a scholarship by the Scottish Education Council. Two more, working on the posters, and on the Shanghai and Taipei Art Biennales, are due to complete their dissertations in early-mid 2008. Five of our students have received funds from UCCL to support their fieldwork in China.

3. Research income

3.1 UCCL has supported the research work of Evans, Harrison and Hill. AHRC funds were awarded for a 2004 exhibition of our poster collection: *The Political Body*. The Taiwan Representative Office supported Harrison's research in Taiwan in 2004-5. Harrison was also instrumental in securing funds from the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy to support Gerda Wielander, who works in the School's Chinese Section, for her research on Christianity and political dissent in China. Seed fund support of Celia Szusterman's work (in Languages) on China-Latin American relations led to a British Academy award to support a research visit to China. The British Academy funded an international conference at Westminster (October 2007) on posters and visual culture. As President of BACS, Evans made successful applications to the British Academy to support three annual conferences, to which eminent international scholars (including Professor Gail Hershatter, UC Santa Cruz, and Professor Jing Jun, Tsinghua, Beijing) gave keynote lectures.

3.2 A number of collaborative research proposals submitted in recent years to the Research Councils and to the Leverhulme, with the LSE, SOAS, and Goldsmiths, are currently being followed up with new collaborative projects.

Evans is a key participant in an ESRC funded project (LSE Anthropology) to run a series of collaborative workshops on abandoned pasts and urban regeneration. She is also a named collaborator in an LSE (anthropology and journalism) application shortlisted by the Leverhulme, on media reporting of China and Beijing in the run-up to the Olympics. In October 2007, the Australian Research Council awarded funds for a joint three-year research project (with Stephanie Hemelryk Donald, UTS, \$312,000 AUS) on cultural memory and propaganda posters in Mao's China. This project includes funding for two PhD students.

4. Staffing policy

4.1 Asian Studies at CSD is now firmly established in the University's strategic plans for future research. In response to RAE2001 recommendations, and in recognition of our distinctive profile, the Quintin Hogg Trustees made a substantial contribution to financing the posts of Harrison and Hill. Initially appointed as Research Fellows, the School promoted both to lectureships in mid-2007. Evans was given a professorship, through the university's internal promotion process, in 2005. A new Senior Lecturer appointment in Chinese Studies, Cangbai Wang, who joins us from Hong Kong University, has been made for December 2007 (unfortunately just missing the census date). CSD also runs a successful Visiting Research Fellow programme, through which a number of internationally known scholars and documentary filmmakers from China, Europe, and Australia have visited CSD for periods of one-three months.

4.2 Asian Studies research funds have in the past two years supported the appointment of three short-term research assistants to work with Evans, Hill and Harrison. Zhou Xun has been conducting interviews and archival research in Beijing, for Evans' collaborative oral history project on memory and urban dislocation in Beijing. Zhang Gehao has been assisting Hill with the technical side of updating the poster collection web-based database. Alice Lim helped Harrison to compile a catalogue of the Asian Studies' documentary film and video collection, now available on our website.

4.3 The steady expansion of Asian Studies research corresponds with the decision made by the University in 2005 to include China (as part of international studies) within its research priorities. With the appointment of Wang, whose recent work includes a collection of life histories of Chinese-Indonesian residents of Hong Kong. We look forward to being able to expand our research interests into new fields and to develop further collaborative postgraduate teaching with other Schools and institutions.

5. Research strategy

5.1 In line with the priorities set out in 2001, and in response to the panel feedback, our strategy has focussed on fostering new research through PhD recruitment; supporting the research and career prospects of junior academics; establishing collaborative links with other scholars within and outside the university; and fostering new research ties with academic

institutions in China. Our priorities for the years to come are to build on these developments to further broaden the programme's thriving interdisciplinary research culture. Within the context of CSD, Asian Studies is currently developing a new funding application strategy. With recent successes (British Academy, Australian Research Council), and a stronger critical mass, we are confident of our growing capacity to secure further external funding, to the benefit of our individual and collaborative research as well as our PhD programme.

5.2 **Evans's** new research examines the temporalities of revolution and change that emerge from the personal histories of local residents of Dashiannan, Beijing. Based on collaboration with the historian Dr Zhou Xun and the independent Beijing photographer, Zhao Tielin, and supported by Tsinghua University's Sociology Department, this project combines archival research, oral histories and photography, and will result in a monograph, scholarly papers, a photographic exhibition in London (2009-10), and a conference (2009). Materials from the project will be included in the Harvard-based digital resource on local histories; the interview materials will be placed in a UK-based oral history archive. This work has been included in a number of funding applications made by Professor Stephan Feuchtwang (LSE) to the Leverhulme and the ESRC, results of which are pending. (A further application is currently being prepared for the AHRC's Beyond Text programme.) Together with Donald (UTS), Evans will continue to work on visual culture and the Cultural Revolution, in collaboration with Zhongshan University. Combining oral history, communications, visual culture and documentary film, this will produce an analysis of the Cultural Revolution based on collections of posters, photographs and material artefacts, and personal histories, forming an invaluable research resource, and making an innovative contribution to scholarship on the politics of culture in China. **Harrison** will continue to work on visions of China's futures, focussing on the interplay between global and local forces in urban development and its media representations. He will also continue to develop his Reporting China project. The research resource created by his web-based database will be the focus of a symposium in mid-2008, and will produce scholarly publications examining changing constructions of China as a global powerhouse. Through Hill's work, our visual culture research is now expanding to include performance art in China. **Hill** has been contracted to publish a monograph on contemporary Chinese art, and through her curatorial work on the Chinese poster collection and contemporary Chinese art she will continue to develop the visual resources available online for scholarly purposes. With the appointment of **Wang**, Asian Studies will move into the cultural and political analysis of transnational and migrant Chinese identities, covering mainland cities, Hong Kong and the overseas diaspora.

5.3 With the growing reputation of younger staff, an ongoing scholarship fund, and continued public dissemination of its work, we shall be in a position to strengthen our interdisciplinary work in China Studies as part of our PhD programme. We have already begun to develop media and urban studies strands, and with recent academic appointments to CSD (including Dr

Dibyesh Anand, working on politics and international relations in India and Tibet), we look forward to developing a greater cross-cultural spread.

5.4 We shall continue to allocate seed funds to encourage new research in Asian Studies elsewhere in the School, including China-Latin American relations. With more staff in place, and the recent establishment of a School-based China Group, negotiating collaborative links with other programmes and interests (Cultural and Critical Studies, English, CARTE, History, Languages) will continue as part of Asian Studies strategic development. Such collaborations include current initiatives to develop a Forum for the Study of Urban Cultures at Westminster, incorporating research on Chinese urban diaspora with a colleague in the English Department.

5.5 We shall continue to emphasise the importance of media, photographic and other visual materials both as research resource and subject of research in the study of contemporary China. We are organising a three-day event in June 2008, on international narratives of China through public TV broadcasting, based on the Reporting China materials, and personal narratives about the impact of the Olympics on local Beijing life. A further day will be devoted to a workshop on contemporary Chinese art. A conference and photographic exhibition is being planned for 2009 on abandoned pasts, disappearing presents and urban space in China and Taiwan.

Esteem indicators

Harriet Evans's professorial promotion in 2005 brought invitations as Visiting Professor to Tsinghua University (2005), UTS, (2006) and Zhongshan University, (2007). She has regularly been invited to participate in consultative discussions on human rights in China at the UK Foreign Office, and to attend high-profile events on China hosted by the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and Foreign Secretary. She has given numerous invited lectures and keynote presentations in the UK and Europe, China, Australia, and the USA; has been external examiner (in anthropology, history, visual culture and cultural studies) for many PhDs at LSE, SOAS, UCL and Sussex, and was external examiner for Edinburgh (MA and MSc in Chinese 2000-3) and SOAS (MA in Chinese Studies 2004-7). She is on the editorial boards of *Estudios Orientales* (El Colegio de Mexico) and *Intersections* (Murdoch, Australia), is External Assessor for the Hong Kong Research Council and the Australian Research Council, and assesses research applications to the AHRC and ESRC. She is a frequent reviewer and reader for journals (*China Information*, *The China Journal*, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Society*, *Feminist Review*, *Visual Culture*, *China Quarterly*, *American Historical Review*), and publishers (Chicago, Duke, California, Routledge, Polity, CUP). As President of the British Association for Chinese Studies (2002-5), Evans organised three annual conferences with prominent international speakers. Her main contribution to BACS's work was in outreach, lobbying government, the civil service and non-governmental organisations to promote the study of China in schools. She was member of the University's China Committee Executive Council (1999-2003), during which time she initiated its PhD scholarship programme, and was convenor of its Experts Committee (2005-6). Two of her

recent articles have been published in Chinese, and *Social Sciences in China* published a lengthy interview (hard copy and online) between her and Li Yinhe, China's most prominent theorist of gender and sexuality. Evans' *Women and Sexuality* will soon be published in Chinese (Jiangsu renmin chubanshe), after years during which its publication in translation was not allowed. She is a regular consultant and interviewee for BBC radio (World Service, Radio 3, Radio 4), and writes 'experts' reports on asylum cases to the UK.

Mark Harrison was an invited member of the European Academic Observer delegation to Taiwan for the Legislative elections in December 2004, and, with financial support from the Taiwan Representative Office and the Goethe Institute, has organized a number of public film screenings, raising public interest in Taiwan in the UK. He has given papers at Academia Sinica (2006), UC Santa Cruz (2006), Institute for National Policy Research, Taipei (2004), Monash University, Melbourne (2007), and the University of Leiden (2007). He was appointed committee member of the LSE Taiwan Culture Research Programme in 2005, and is member of the advisory committee for the new East Asian Media Centre at Leiden. He was external examiner for MPhil and DPhil degrees at the University of London and Warwick, and external reviewer for the new MA in Japanese Cultural Studies at Birkbeck. He regularly writes for the Canberra Times, and has been a reviewer for *China Quarterly*, *Anthropology Today*, *SOAS China Bulletin*, and *Social Identities*.