

Alliance for Research on East Asia – AREA Ruhr

AREA Ruhr is a joint research alliance of the Faculty of East Asian Studies, Ruhr University Bochum and the Institute of East Asian Studies (IN-EAST), University of Duisburg-Essen, within the greater University Alliance Ruhr (UA Ruhr).

With more than 20 professors, about 100 researchers and more than 1600 students, AREA Ruhr has become one of Europe's largest research and teaching hubs in the field of East Asian Studies. It brings together a wide range of scholarly fields and disciplines, ranging from historical to contemporary research, from linguistics to economics, from religious studies to sociology and political science. AREA Ruhr thus creates a unique interdisciplinary research and teaching environment for the study of East Asia. Recent research includes a joint initiative of AREA participants for the study of Frontiers of Industrialisation in Northeast Asia..

East Asian Studies in the Ruhr Region: AREA's members

- The Faculty of East Asian Studies was one of the founding faculties of the Ruhr University Bochum in 1965. Research and teaching both focus on China, Japan and Korea and explore the fields of history, linguistics, literature, philology, philosophy, political economy, and religion.
- IN-EAST, established in 1994 at the University of Duisburg-Essen, is Germany's largest institute for social science research on contemporary East Asia, with research and teaching focussing on the economies, politics and societies of China, Japan and Korea.

The AREA Ruhr Doctoral Programme

Transnational Institution Building and Transnational Identities in East Asia

The structured three-year doctoral programme aims to advance knowledge on East Asian regional institution building, identity formation, and the interaction between both processes throughout history up until today.

The programme applies transnational and comparative approaches to the study of East Asia. It looks beyond national borders, seeking to unleash the potential of combining humanities and social sciences, as well as to base research projects on interdisciplinary perspectives.

Mercur (Mercator Research Center Ruhr) generously supports the doctoral programme.

Regional Institution Building

The research within this sub-theme focuses on regional institution building between East Asian states and their fledgling institutionalisation. Questions of institutional change and stability, emergence of shared interests, identities and capacity for global action stand at the centre. Research addresses how non-state actors cooperate across territorial divides against the backdrop of diverging visions of a future regional order and historical remembrance. It examines the degree to which cooperation may contribute to a changing and more consensual sense of history.

The studies in regional institution building will explore how East Asian actors interrelate with existing and build new institutions across the region. The approach is interdisciplinary, combining perspectives from among economics, political science, political economy and history.

Transcultural Identities and Institutions: The Universal and the Local

East Asian identities and institutions, in essence both local and universal, incorporate accretions of transcultural world views and cultural practices diffused across East Asia throughout history. Their local adaptations served as tools for the assertion of local distinction as well as territorial and (proto-) national claims and identities. The diffusion of Chinese script and its adaptation in distinct forms across East Asia is a case in point, as well as the rise of Buddhism in East Asia, which had wide implications both for the spread of universal cultural and political patterns and the formation of distinctively local institutions.

Studies in this sub-theme critically examine processes of identity formation and institution building in East Asia across disciplinary and territorial borders.

Transnational Labour

The research on transnational labour focuses on historical and sociological analyses of labour mobility across territorial borders in East Asia, also including related flows into and from South East Asia. The research will critically appraise any protean uses of national and ethnic categories in order to avoid "methodological nationalism."

The research within this sub-theme examines 1) individual and situational utilisation of historical (including colonial) legacies, ethnic difference and social structures in emerging patterns of migration and work in the region, and 2) the emergence of novel labour market institutions based on identity and status.

Research projects in this field may have a historical or a contemporary focus, and in addition to East Asian may also include South East Asian and global perspectives where applicable.

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Design: Anna-Maria Rau

The AREA Ruhr Doctoral Programme

Transnational Institution Building and Transnational Identities in East Asia

Poster Exhibition, Ruhr University Bochum
University Library, 4th floor

Opening presentation: Wednesday, 26 June 2019, 18:00 h

This exhibition shows the results of the fieldwork of the first group of doctoral students, who started research in October 2017, and the topics of the second group, who started in October 2018.



Photograph taken during the plenary workshop in May 2019 at the Katholische Akademie Wolfsburg in Duisburg. It shows the group of graduate students, supervisors, and workshop participants. Photograph by Dirk Brehm, AREA Ruhr

Graduate students and their research themes

Yasmin Koppen	East Asian Landscapes and Legitimation: Localizing Political and Religious Authority in China and Adjoining Empires
Jihoon Chun	Qing-Chosŏn Relations during the Period 1882-1895: The 'Public Law of All Nations' and the Collapse of the Interpolity Order of 'Serving the Great'
Marc Paschke	Advent and Growth of Christian Youth Associations in East Asia throughout the 19th and 20th Century: The YMCA of Korea and Japan
An Huy Tran	Negotiating Sexualities and Masculinities in Transnational Migration: Vietnamese Male Migrants in Japan
Aya Adachi	Regional Trade Policies in China and Japan
Anastasia Nikulina	Transplanting Institutions across Borders: The Case of Economic Development Zones in the Far East
Julia Schwerbrock	The People's Republic of China's Infrastructure Cooperation in Africa and its Relevance for the EU's Engagement in Africa: The Case of Tanzania
Miquel Salvadó Gracia	China and the Global Renewable Energy Governance. Contrasting South-South and North-South Cooperation

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