

**DGA Biennial Conference “Transnational Asian Studies—Multi-level Dynamics of Identity Formation and Institution Building”, organized in cooperation with AREA Ruhr**

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Due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis the Alliance for Research on East Asia (AREA) Ruhr, a joint research and teaching alliance of the Faculty of East Asian Studies at Bochum University and the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen, hosted the 2021 DGA biennial conference as an online event, offering virtual museum tours and country trips, virtual tea rooms for private chats, as well as an online quiz on top of three keynote speeches, three roundtables and fifteen conference panels. The conference was joined by 215 participants. On the first conference day, Claudia Derichs (HU Berlin) gave a thought-provoking keynote lecture on “Transnational Asian Studies: Implementing an Agenda for our Times” in which she argued in favor of rescaling research entities when studying regions and focusing on “entities of interest” instead of on mere geographical units. With regards to transnational research methods Derichs emphasized the importance of epistemic decolonization, i.e. the inclusion of non-Western analytical concepts and methodological approaches, as well as collaboration with colleagues in and from Asia. In the subsequent panel discussion, Susanne Brandtstädter (Cologne), Matthias Middell (Leipzig), Jörg Plassen (Bochum/AREA Ruhr), and Karen Shire (Duisburg-Essen/AREA Ruhr) agreed on the need to make the voices of “global Asia” more audible in their respective fields of research and reflected on ways to do so as well as obstacles to decolonization in their own Asia-related scholarship.

The second and third conference days each started with an early keynote lecture as a joint event for all conference participants. For the rest of the two conference days, participants were then able to choose between two to three different panel sessions that were conducted at the same time. The first early keynote on the “Transnational Coproduction of Food Safety in Asia” by Cornelia Reiher (FU Berlin) aimed at illustrating how research on transnational mobilities of food, knowledge, people and related but contested concepts could contribute to a better understanding of power relations in Asia. Reiher first showed how different groups of Japanese actors were able to set up and influence shrimp production in Vietnam and across the Asian region according to their own standards and then explained how transnational protest networks organized their food-related anti-TPP campaign. The keynote revealed multifaceted power relations in the realm of transnational food production and pointed to the importance of scientific knowledge in the (regional) food safety regime. In the subsequent discussion the

audience commented and raised questions on various issues such as conflicts between culture and science in food production and safety, food justice as well as alternative food regimes.

The double panel on “Industrialization in Northeast Asia—A Long-Term Perspective 1900–Now” (organized by Christiansen and Moll-Murata) dealt with Northeast Asia’s industrial transformation under Japanese and Russian influence with a focus on Northeast Asia’s industrial dynamism and its broader relevance for global industrialization processes. In her presentation on “Industrialization of Inner-Mongolia in the Phase of Mengjiang (1937–45)”, Christine Moll-Murata (Bochum /AREA Ruhr) outlined the industrialization processes in Inner-Mongolia, highlighting and critically evaluating the speed with which Japanese enterprises and colonial institutions appeared in the region. The talk by Limin Teh (Leiden) on “Geopolitics, Coal Production, and Labor Processes in the Fushun Coalmine, 1946–48” showed how the state’s capacity for governance was weakened by the absence of industrial equipment, raw materials, and finished stock, which had been taken away by the Soviets after their withdrawal in 1946. In his presentation on “Northeast Asia—History and Conundrum of Frontiers and Margins”, Flemming Christiansen (Duisburg-Essen/AREA Ruhr) discussed the dynamics of “territorial shifting” in the region, with a particular focus on Chinese-flagged territories that were in fact more independent than had previously been assumed. The presentation by Katarzyna Golik (Polish Academy of Science) on “Dependent Development of a Post-Transition State—The Case of Mongolia” showed how China’s structural power influenced the Sino-Mongolian economic relationship at the social, political and legal levels. Golik questioned whether Mongolia could play a prominent role in the northern economic region in the future. In their presentation on “Nutaq Councils as Postsocialist Lifelines between the Steppe and the Metropolises in Mongolia”, Ines Stolpe and Tümen-Ochiryn Erdene Ochir (both Bonn) scrutinized how rural and urban spheres within Mongolia’s borders were connected via Nutaq councils (a form of self-government), and how these civil society instruments represented modern Mongolia in showing the deep connections Mongolians in the big cities and abroad have with their rural origins.

The panel “Civil Society in Identity-Formation and Institution-Building Processes in Asia” (organized by Caspari, Ketels, and Szczepanska) asked how civil society actors contributed to processes of identity formation and institution building in Asia. In her talk on “Managing China’s Civil Society in the Xi Era: The Case of LGBT Activism”, Anna Caspari (Bochum) illustrated the development of civil society from the 1990s to present and scrutinized the regime’s strategy of handling LGBT-related issues and civil society activism. Anja Ketels’ (Münster) presentation on “NGOs in China’s Foreign Policy: Processes, Strategies and Objectives Behind the ‘Going Global’ of Chinese NGOs” showed China’s approach of realizing a more diversified and proactive foreign policy with the involvement of NGOs. In the presentation on “The Challenge of Building Institutional Framework for Collaboration: Development Cooperation Networking

between North East Asian NGOs in the 21st Century”, Kamila Szczepanska (Turku) examined three case studies to analyze the collaboration in international development between NGOs in Japan, South Korea, China, and Taiwan. She discussed global governance theories and research on civil society networks as well as the NGOs’ efforts to build a stable institutional framework to strengthen their mutual collaboration.

The panel on “Transnational Economies, Digital Labor and Globalization: Exploring Chinese Entrepreneurs” was organized and chaired by Béatrice Zani (Tübingen, ENS Lyon) and Tseng, Yu-Chin (Tübingen). Jaok Kwon (Heidelberg) and Jamie Coates (Sheffield) acted as discussants. The first presentation by Yong Li (ENS Lyon) on “The Development of Chinese Ethnic Food Trade in France: The Case of ‘Belleville’ and ‘Triangle de Choisy’ in Paris” focused on the transformation of the Chinese diaspora and Chinese businesses over two generations. Tang Ling (Hong Kong) continued with a talk on “Burning out in the Digital Economy on China: E-Commerce, Platform Economy and Social Networking Economy”, arguing there was a high rate of self-exploitation in the digital economy due to shared values developed in the context of guanxi-relationships. The presentation by Yong Li (ENS Lyon) on “The E-Commerce of Infant Milk Among Chinese Migrant Women in France: Morality, Gender Performance and Transnational Social Ties” shed light on the various motivations of Chinese women in France to trade infant milk to China and on their strategies to become successful entrepreneurs. In the last talk on “International Education, Digital Worlds and Entrepreneurial Awareness: A Case Study based in the Experience of Chinese Students in France”, Claudia Astarita (IAO Lyon) scrutinized how and why Chinese international students’ perspectives on China and their entrepreneurial interests were subject to change during their time abroad. The different papers all gave important insights into the complexity of Chinese immigrants’ entrepreneurial practices in multiple spaces in France.

In the panel on “Transnational Mobility in East Asia and beyond and its Institutional Actors” (organized by Hüstebeck and Kwon), five presentations introduced a wide range of ongoing or planned research projects related to transnational (im-)migration experiences and practice, with a focus on institutional actors. In her talk on “Birth of Global Nomads among Korean Youth in the IT Sector: Interactions of Institutional Actors at the Local and National Levels”, Jaok Kwon (Heidelberg) analyzed government policies on youth mobility in the IT sector. Whereas there was state support for educational programs at different levels of government to increase IT-related knowledge, institutional actors stressed self-responsibility for transnational mobility at the same time. Ruth Achenbach (Frankfurt) turned toward “Japanese Labor Market Demands vs Career Goals: The Case of Chinese Graduates in Japan”, explaining how the inconsistencies between Japan’s migration policy and Japanese companies’ actual demands for skilled workers led to high return rates of Chinese graduates in Japan in the long run. Momoyo Hüstebeck’s (Duisburg-Essen/AREA Ruhr) presentation on “Migrant

Policies of Japanese Municipalities: Local Governments Filling the National Vacuum” showed that municipalities played an active role in integrating migrants locally despite the absence of an immigration law for low-skilled workers. As municipalities acted on an MHLW initiative, Hüstebeck did not rate their engagement as bottom-up. The talk by Julia Marrinaccio (Bergen) on “Dealing with the Absence of Absentee Voting: Voter Mobilization in Transnational Spaces in the 2020 Elections in Taiwan” asked how and why Taiwanese in Austria did (not) take part in the 2020 election in Taiwan, scrutinizing the processes, actors, and practices in transnational voter mobilization. Xiaoying Jin (Heidelberg) turned toward “Korean Migrants and the Engagement of Institutional Actors for Integration in Germany” by examining the role and activities of the Federation of Koreans in Germany and its changing role over time. After two Q&A sessions, first on inner-Asian migration, then on migration from Asia, Anja Senz (Heidelberg) reflected on the five presentations and discussed their points of similarity (such as practices of integration and exclusion).

The panel “Defenders of the Empire in Late Nineteenth Century East Asia: Ching-Chosŏn (清-朝鮮) Negotiated Sovereignty and de facto Protectorate”, organized by Jihoon Chun (Bochum/AREA Ruhr) and chaired by Marc Matten (Erlangen-Nürnberg), examined the foreign policy of the Chosŏn kingdom. The independent scholar Song Yeol Han’s presentation on “Chosŏn-Qing Envoy Brush Talk and New Framework of Informal Diplomacy towards the Opening of Korea” discussed the role of informal diplomacy in the form of two “brush talks” and concluded that Chosŏn foreign policy was not a mere result of foreign influence, but a consequence of a long tradition rooted in its own history and identity. According to the panelist, the driving force for restoring diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan was based on preexisting models of Confucian kingship. The second presentation by Jihoon Chun on “Defenders of a Confucian Empire Confronted with ‘Public Law of all Nations’ 萬國公法: Ching-Chosŏn 清-朝鮮 Negotiated Sovereignty and 屬邦體制 as Transcendent Protectorate during 1882–1895” focused on Ching-Chosŏn foreign policy and interpolity relations. Chun argued that the transcendent protectorate 皇清朝鮮 was an overarching and unifying authority with suzerain-vassal relations, a protectorate, and (con-)federal union. The two presentations were followed by detailed comments from Nianshen Song (Maryland) and Yoo Bada (Korea University).

The panel “Convergence with and Divergence from Eurocentric Regional Institutional Integration” (Joe and Cao) focused on developments in Asian regionalism and was based on reflections on classic Eurocentric frameworks and models of new regionalism theory. The presentation by Un-Hye Joe (Jena) concentrated on “correct law” (in German: richtiges Recht) by examining the European doctrine of integration principles and discussing their applicability to the East Asian experience by looking at ASEAN, for instance. In the presentation on “Never Again: Dystopian Temporality as a Normative Condition of Transnational

Asia”, Francis Cao (Frankfurt) shifted the focus to the process of the realization of law (in German: Prozess der Rechtsverwirklichung). He elaborated on the temporal formation of transnational Asia and its impact on constitutionalism operating beyond the state. Cao pointed out how dystopian temporality was evident in symbols, procedures and discourses that emphasized underdevelopment and conflicts, hampering joint regional attempts for economic prosperity.

The panel on “Transnational Migration and Contemporary Japan: Flows and Realities” was organized by Muranaka and Tran. Eline Delmarcelle’s (Waseda) presentation on “Renouncing the Past, Becoming ‘One of Them’: Naturalized Japanese Citizens’ Negotiation of the Single-Citizenship System” asked why there were not more immigrants who applied for Japanese citizenship and scrutinized the reasons of those who accepted single Japanese citizenship. Panel discussant Ruth Achenbach (Frankfurt) subsequently commented on the theoretical concept of identity used in the talk. In “Differentiating between ‘I’m a Chinese’ and ‘I am a Chinese Newcomer in Japan’—A Discussion on Chinese Immigrants’ Ethnic Identity and National Belonging”, Bin Li (FU Berlin) analyzed Chinese immigrants’ ideas of belonging depending on context. The subsequent discussion focused on the research approach and methodology and the challenges they posed. The talk by Aimi Muranaka (Duisburg-Essen) on “Sourcing Foreign Skilled Labor via Cross-Border Training: Study of Japanese Temporary Staffing Firms’ Recruitment and Training of Vietnamese IT-Skilled Workers” explored how the Japanese private sector has shaped the cross-border labor market by training Vietnamese workers for employment in Japan. She also highlighted the long-term prospects of these specially trained Vietnamese workers. Helena Hof’s presentation on “The Gendered Migration Trajectories of European Labor Migrants in Tokyo” examined the different experiences of a sample of European labor migrants in Japan over several years, highlighting the differences in the workers’ trajectories depending on their gender. Hof’s hypothesis that female migrants met more challenges in the male-dominated environment of Japanese firms contrasted with Achenbach’s own findings on the subject. This led to a lively discussion as well as inquiries about the migrant women’s strategies of coping with the male domination. In “Japanese Do not Like Vietnamese Men—Negotiating Sexualities among Male Vietnamese Migrants in Japan”, Huy An Tran (Duisburg-Essen/AREA Ruhr) raised the question of how Vietnamese men negotiate their sexualities in an environment that generally does not view them as sexually desirable. The audience was specifically interested in the Japanese perspective on the topic and in whether sexual desirability could be viewed as a kind of sociological capital.

The panel on “Die ‘Manzhouguo-Identität’—Akteure, Institutionen und Diskurse zur Schaffung einer transnationalen Identität für die Bewohner des Staates Manzhouguo (1932–45)” was one of the few meetings conducted in German. The panel organizer Anke Scherer’s (Bochum/AREA Ruhr) presentation on “Die ‘Manzhouguo-Identität’ und der Plan zur Schaffung einer neuen ostasiatischen

Moderne” discussed how Japanese political actors avoided to officially create a joint citizenship/nationality in the multiethnic state on the one hand but sought to establish a common Manzhouguo identity for its citizens on the other, e.g., through its welfare policies, attempting to grant its colonialist action a high degree of legitimacy. In her talk on “Kolonialarchäologie in der Mandchurei—Die Schaffung einer ‘Manzhouguo-Identität’ durch archäologische Konzepte?”, Aline Dreher (Bochum) addressed how Japanese archeologists sought to scientifically justify their government’s attempt to legitimize Manzhouguo by stressing culture-theoretical approaches instead of racist-hegemonic theories. This new approach argued that novel transnational identities such as that in Manzhouguo would be naturally established through cultural exchange. In the final presentation on “‘Manzhouguo-Identität’ im und durch Film?”, Shiro Yukawa (Bonn) examined whether and how the film industry was able to support efforts to establish a common transnational Manzhouguo identity as film seemed to be a useful propagandistic tool to that end. Yet as people of different ethnic backgrounds would understand and interpret films differently, this attempt did not fully succeed. In the general discussion, discussant Katja Schmidtppott (Bochum/AREA Ruhr) and the speakers reflected on the successes and failures of identity politics in Manzhouguo and deliberated over relevant reasons.

The panel “Post-Imperium Identity Formation and Institution Building: Taiwan, Hong Kong and Central/Eastern Europe Compared”, organized by Thomas Gold (Berkeley), sought to contrast social changes in in post-colonial Hong Kong and Taiwan and post-imperial states in Central and Eastern Europe. Tana Dluhosova (Czech Academy of Science) compared democratization in the Czech Republic and Taiwan at the level of social elites. In Czechoslovakia, the political elites became high-level businessmen, building on networks they could rely on from the communist past. In contrast, the situation did not change much in Taiwan during the 1980s. The reasons for this divergence could be seen in marital networks, which were mainly based on academic and cultural capital and closely intertwined with economic success. In his talk “Sleeping Dogs Won’t Lie Long”, Felix Brender (LSE) discussed the establishment of transitional justice (TJ) in Taiwan as an identity-building project. The mechanisms of TJ were accompanied by a performative process that led Taiwan to economic prosperity and liberal democracy: as Taiwan demonstrated that it was clearly different from the PRC and Chinese narratives of Taiwan, it was able to create a collective memory on its own. The talk by Miroslav Sadowski (McGill) on “(Over) 30 and 20 Years Post-Transition: End of the Process, Revolution or Evolution of the System? The Cases of Poland and Hong Kong” discussed Poland’s and Hong Kong’s transition to democracy between the late 1980s and the late 2010s and commented on the political future of both countries, which are currently confronted with strong illiberal currents. Sadowski saw some ability to cope with the situation in Poland but assessed that people in Hong Kong had lost optimism and felt increasingly powerless vis-à-vis Beijing. In sum, the panel focused on current developments

taking place near the PRC. While Beijing's direct intervention was highly visible in the case of Hong Kong, the Taiwanese case revealed only indirect involvement. The panelists deemed both cases important for social studies and for the testing of theories on discursive power.

The panel "Transregional Connections Across the Indian Ocean: Muslim Identities in Indonesia and Beyond", organized by Miriam Lücking (Hebrew University, Jerusalem), started with Sylvia Wolf's (FU Berlin) presentation on "Learning Islam 'ala Gaza': Palestinian Sheikhs and their Newly Acquired Role as Figures of Religious Authority among Indonesian Muslim Communities". Wolf showed that Indonesian Muslims turned to focus on Gaza as their leading religious authority due to a range of Palestine-themed activities in Indonesia, including visits by sheikhs and the organization of Palestine solidarity concerts, creating a connection between the two countries and their communities. In his talk entitled "From Dutch East Indies to Cape Colony: Diasporic Lives and the Creation of a New Muslim Society at the Edge of the Indian Ocean", Ariff Hafizi (Hamburg) discussed the creation of an Islamic identity in the Cape, based on the Malay community that was forced to migrate there by Dutch colonial powers in the past, with many traditions living up to this day within the community in the area. Amanda tho Seeth (EHESS, Paris) spoke on "'The Indonesian Cosmopolitan Islamic Intellectual' Revisited" by introducing the elitist discourse on cosmopolitanism in Indonesia, the historical background of the concept and its modern-day version being shaped through the influence of Japanese and Western thought, but also on the modern Indonesian branding of progressive Islam. The discussion led by Claudia Derichs (HU Berlin) touched on the links between the three topics, e.g., the export and import of thoughts and power and the connections between the global ummah.

The last conference day started with Sabine Burghart's (Turku) keynote on "Researching and Teaching the 'Peripheries' in Transnational Asian Studies: The Case of North Korea". Based on her analysis of the body of research published on North Korea (as displayed in the Web of Science database) since the early 1990s, Burghart showed that security-related topics such as the nuclear and missile program as well as human rights issues loomed specifically large in the literature and were primarily produced in the fields of IR, social sciences/law and in area studies and in English-speaking countries. In her view, knowledge production seemed to follow broader political trends and interests. When it came to genuine transnational research on North Korea, security, migration, and transnational history were the key topics in publications, but research questions were again often approached through a securitization lens. According to Burghart this pointed to a somehow narrow research scope, while reflecting dominant frames in the discourse. She called for the broadening of research topics on North Korea, e.g., by focusing on its connectedness with the Asian region and beyond. Similar to Claudia Derichs, Burghart suggested research should be conducted in research teams via cross-border networks with scholars of diverse backgrounds (disciplinary orientation, country of origin, gender, ethnicity, and stage of academic career, etc.).

The panel on “Populism in North- and Southeast Asia—in Search of a Phenomenon” examined four case studies in order to identify common characteristics as well as the region’s understanding of populism. The panel organizer Axel Klein (Duisburg-Essen/AREA Ruhr) gave an introduction to the theoretical concepts on populism as well as into the Japanese case, where he mostly saw PINO (populism in name only). Frédéric Krumbein (Institut für Europäische Politik, Berlin) focused on Taiwan, scrutinizing two case studies: the anti-LGBT movement and the politician Han Guo-yu. Based on his analysis, Krumbein argued that populism was weak in Taiwan and discussed possible reasons. Hannes Mosler (Duisburg-Essen/AREA Ruhr) examined the discourse on “populist” politicians in South Korea such as Jae-in Moon, and examined particular language use and discourse topics utilized as evidence for labeling someone a populist. Finally, Andreas Ufen (GIGA, Hamburg) drew attention to three allegedly populist politicians from Southeast Asia, Thaksin in Thailand, Duterte in the Philippines, and Prabowo in Indonesia, focusing on the reasons why the last of these in particular could be assessed as populist in accordance with various definitions. The discussion focused on methodological questions such as how to measure populism or how to identify variables that foster it.

The German-language roundtable on “Asienwissenschaften in der Relevanzfalle? Wege zu größerer gesellschaftlicher Wirksamkeit”, organized by Marina Rudyak (Heidelberg) and Bertram Lang (Frankfurt), took up the “plea against polarization”—as formulated by the DGA board—and provided a platform for discussing ways to achieve greater social visibility and effectiveness of Asian studies. Panelists exchanged ideas on how academic studies could possibly contribute to sustainably strengthening their societal resonance on the individual, institutional, and structural levels. The discussion did not focus on science communication, but on the socio-political relevance of transdisciplinary knowledge transfer, suggesting the need for an institutionalized exchange beyond academia. Moreover, roundtable participants reflected on scientific practices, research processes and incentives for transdisciplinary knowledge transfer as well as scientific contributions and research projects on socio-political issues in Asia that highlighted innovative forms of communication and the application of their results. The discussion was very lively; during a short breakout session participants focused on specific issues in small groups and deliberated on ideas for their future implementation.

The Young Scholars’ Group (DGA YSG), organized and chaired by Anna Caspari (Bochum), Silke Hasper (Heidelberg), Anja Ketels (Münster), and Sophie Veauthier (Tübingen), updated participants on the upcoming DGA YSG board elections as well as on the conference program for the Nachwuchstagung to be held in May. The goal of the panel discussion was twofold: to find ways to attract new members, especially young students and scholars, and to diversify the focus of the DGA, which is currently on China and contemporary studies, to involve further countries of the Asian region as well as to foster the inclusion of research on



historical topics. To address these issues, regular virtual meetings were proposed to provide a platform for exchange that was specifically tailored for young researchers. Several participants furthermore offered to introduce the YSG to their students.

The panel “Beyond National Borders—Citizenship and Belonging in Southeast Asia in the 21st Century”, organized by Mirjam Le and Mandy Fox (both at Passau), focused on questions of identity and belonging in Southeast Asia beyond national frameworks and thus on shifting the debate towards a transnational perspective. In three presentations the contributors provided thought-provoking input. In her talk “Ethnic Trauma in Indonesia and the Cosmopolitan Novels of Empathy”, Silvia Mayasari-Hoffert (Frankfurt) addressed how cosmopolitan literature could help to defuse the tensions between the ethnic majority and minorities in Indonesia. In the talk “Legitimation of the War on Drugs and the Role of Public Space in an Alternative Grassroots Strategy in Indonesia and the Philippines in Comparison”, Luzile Satur (Passau) discussed how the legitimization of the “War on Drugs” in Indonesia and the Philippines was intended to be implemented and stressed possible alternative strategies to combat the drug problem. Finally, in “Transnational Mobilities and Knowledge Carriers in Southeast Asia: Debating Knowledge, Ideas, Values and Practices”, Friederike Trotier (Passau) and Patrick Keilbart (Frankfurt) scrutinized whether transnational knowledge mobilities and knowledge carriers were appropriate frameworks to understand South East Asian interactions, relations and connectivities across national borders. All three presentations were followed by lively debates characterized by great expert knowledge.

The roundtable on “Climate Change, Pandemic, Authoritarianism, De-Globalization and Response Options for Regional Studies” started with short statements by Anna-Katharina Hornidge (German Development Institute, Bonn), Christoph Antweiler (Bonn), and Karen Shire (Duisburg Essen/AREA Ruhr) on current challenges for regional studies, its self-image as well as its role for society and science, and on how regional studies could be conducted in difficult working environments in times of crises (chair: Markus Taube, Duisburg-Essen/AREA Ruhr). The panelists entered into a lively debate on issues such as the global imbalance in the provision of vaccinations against Covid-19 in favor of Western industrialized countries, the impact of climate change in the Anthropocene on Asian rice cultivation as an example of a non-Western experience of global warming, or the many challenges the current pandemic posed to researchers in area studies. In the context of the last of these aspects, the discussion showed that researchers needed adaption strategies for the pandemic situation (e.g. travel bans circumventing fieldwork) which could lead to the creation of new research setups and to the application of new research methodologies in projects that had been originally designed pre-Covid. The digitalization of communication (e.g., online interviews) was seen as one way to stay connected to the research field, if research topics allowed for it. The panelists agreed with keynote speaker Claudia Derichs

that research should not be conducted about Asia, but rather in cooperation with Asian scientists to level out existing power asymmetries. Such asymmetries were also seen in the practices of academic publishing, thus the need to change the status quo in favor of more publication diversification to include European as well as Asian journals and editors was stressed.

The double panel “Sustainable Urban Regions Synthesizing Current Research Endeavors in East and South East” was organized by Borgmann. All panelists but one presented research projects from the same BMBF-funded project Sustainable Urban Regions. The first part of the panel was moderated by Katharina Borgmann and Lisa Reudenbach (both at HafenCity University Hamburg; HCU) and started with a presentation by Michael Waibel (Hamburg) on the “Build4 People Project Enhancing Quality of Life through Sustainable Urban Transformation”, pointing out how successful transdisciplinary research was a matter of intensive exchange and of the personal dedication of all parties involved. The presentation by Frauke Kraas (Köln) and her partners on “Multiple Risk Management in Fast Growing Megacities: Impacts of the Pandemic and Strategies for Combating Covid-19 in Yangon, Myanmar” emphasized one important lesson learned: the need for a holistic, people-oriented approach and a shift from urban planning to urban development. Stefan Greiving (Dortmund) presented on the LIRAP project “Linking Disaster Risk Governance and Land-Use Planning” and stressed that the lower the disturbance to the livelihoods of the ISF (informal settler families), the better is the effect of resettlement. The second part of the panel was moderated by Anika Slawski (TH Lübeck) and Kai Michael Dietrich (Manufacturing Cities). Matthias Falke (Bochum) gave a presentation on “Green Infrastructure Planning in Shanghai and the Role of Ecosystem Services—Insights from the BMBF Research Project IMECOGIP”, outlining the results from project phase 1 as well as the plan for the upcoming phase 2. Oliver Assman (AT-Versand) introduced the emplement! project on “Empowering Urban Regions for Cooperative Synergistic and Practical Implementation of Sustainability and Resilience Strategies Considering the Urban-Rural Nexus”, in which he analyzed various synergetic effects. Finally, David Meschede (Köln) talked about “Hopes for Economic Development, Fears of Ecological Devastation. Indonesia’s New ‘Green’ Capital and its Influence on the East Kalimantan Hinterland”. Meschede concentrated on people’s responses in Kalimantan to the newly planned capital of Indonesia, which is most likely not going to be very green in an ecological sense. The panel discussion was very lively, focusing mainly on the project plans as well as on the conventionalization of risk.

The double panel on “East Asian Futures Past and Present”, organized by Moll-Murata, focused on projecting past and present issues and topics into the future of the East Asian region. China’s past was discussed at length in three of the presentations with a focus on economic development during different historical periods, their specific features and the lessons modern China had learned from them. In his talk on “From Economic Moderation to Sustainability? Managing

Resources and Planning for the Future in Ancient Chinese Economic Thought. Past and Present Narratives”, Christian Schwermann (Bochum/AREA Ruhr) addressed the concepts of harmonizing benefits, conservation of natural resources and sustainability, which were popular in ancient China and have recently reappeared in Chinese writings. In her deliberations on “Concepts of Future in the Chinese Economy and Society, Late Qing to Republic of China, 1900–1950”, Christine Moll-Murata (Bochum/AREA Ruhr) discussed the post-Boxer Rebellion reforms of the Qing government that aimed at the introduction of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, modeled after Japanese and Western examples, as well as the concept of future through the changing use of the terms “weilai” and “jianglai.” Markus Taube’s (Duisburg-Essen/AREA Ruhr) presentation on “Economic Development in Challenging Domestic and International Environments” concentrated on the more recent stages of China’s economic development, i.e. from the “lazy growth” of catching-up to developed countries to the current stage of even or decreasing growth rates, as well as on the future of the US-China competition and creating the new “rules of the game.” With a talk on “Artificial Intelligence, Leadership Claims and Power Politics in China”, Nele Noesselt (Duisburg-Essen/AREA Ruhr) turned the debate to modern-day China and focused on China’s change from a passive observer of global innovation to a rule-generator due to its development of AI and technology, but also due to tackling the issues of rising energy consumption. With “What Happens to Future as Trust-Based Interacting Experience? Empirical Results of Digital Temporal Change from Germany and China”, Maria Faust (Leipzig/Chemnitz) introduced a comparative analysis of the understanding of time in Germany and China based on the internet consumption of selected groups in order to develop a Chinese time dimension of past, present, and future. Two further presentations shifted attention to other major East Asian countries, i.e. South Korea and Japan. Marion Eggert (Bochum/AREA Ruhr) introduced “Korean Projections of a Confucian Future” through means of accumulating and transferring knowledge from Chinese and Western sources by translating them into Korean and the eventual return to Confucianism in the 21st century with a well-developed Korean identity. In her lecture on “Japanese Futures for Euroamerican Cities (1950s/60s)”, Katja Schmidtpott (Bochum/AREA Ruhr) gave insights into the development of Japanese architecture from its roots in the imperial period, its struggle to define its own identity to its eventual ascension to influence Western architecture through the works of individuals like Tange Kenzo. In the final discussion, panelists and participants deliberated on the future of the region.

The third roundtable on “Current Developments (and Challenges Ahead) in the Fields of Chinese Political Science” was hosted by the Association of Chinese Political Studies (ACPS). The ACPS board members (Gregory Moore, Nele Noesselt, James Paradise, Yumin Sheng, Xi Chen) first introduced their academic backgrounds and fields of expertise. Second, they discussed how US–China relations would probably continue to develop negatively under the Biden administration and what could be done to ease bilateral tensions. Third, they shared

their views on the extent to which free and independent research could be conducted in the PRC. The ACPS board members argued that most research questions could still be posed (research on big data seemed an exception), though controversial topics required cautious field research approaches and/or domestic partners. They agreed that their students of political science needed counseling on what could or should (not) be asked before going on field trips to the PRC. The DGA will also get the chance to host a panel at ACPS' next annual conference.

At the closing ceremony, the newly elected DGA chairwoman Nele Noesselt (Duisburg-Essen/AREA Ruhr) introduced the current members of the DGA board and announced the three winners of the Asia-related DGA 2021 conference quiz. She encouraged conference participants to contribute their papers to the planned special conference issue of the journal "ASIEN" and thanked everyone for the inspiring 2.5-day online conference, which had proceeded smoothly without technical problems.

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