

**Alliance for Research on East Asia (AREA) Ruhr
– Center for Global Cooperation Research (CGCR)
Roundtable Discussion**

Date: 27. October 2026

Time: 18.15 – 20.00

Location: [College for Social Sciences and Humanities](#), Essen

The Roundtable Discussion takes place in context of the Research Day of the Strategic Research Area (PSP) "[Transformation of Contemporary Societies](#)".

A Postcolonial Critique of Mnemonic Eurocentrism – Memories from the Margin

Participants

- [Prof. Jie-Hyun Lim](#) (Sogang University/Seoul, Transnational History)
- [Prof. Eveline Bouwers](#) (UDE, European Regional History)
- [Dr. Patricia Rinck](#) (UDE, Political Science/International Relations)
- [Sen. Prof. Florian Coulmas](#) (UDE, Japanese Society)
- [Prof. Hannes Mosler](#) – moderator (UDE, Social Sciences/Korea)



Prof. Jie-Hyun Lim

Abstract

The global mnemoscape in the third millennium has shown an exceedingly dynamic picture — the Holocaust became a reminder of the transatlantic slave trade and colonial genocide, and the memory of colonial violence reciprocally evoked the Holocaust and other genocides. With the globalization of memory, the postcolonial memory regime challenged mnemonic Eurocentrism. Understandably, the word "Relativization" belonged to the Index Expurgatorius of German historiography and memory, especially after the Historikerstreit in the 1980s.

However, the historical singularity of the Holocaust is not the same as its incomparability. Even the recognition of incomparability comes to light through a tacit comparison. Under the title "A Postcolonial Critique of Mnemonic Eurocentrism," history scholar Jie-Hyun Lim suggests an "uncanny juxtaposition" of the Holocaust and other colonial and political genocides to bypass the ethical and methodological minefield of the (in)comparability question. Comparing historical traumas often accidentally invites a hierarchy of suffering, or a simplified reductionism of one history to a mere reflection of the other. In contrast, uncanny juxtaposition stages a disruptive encounter to subvert the hierarchy of global memory culture.

Taking this proposition as its starting point, the roundtable opens Lim's uncanny juxtaposition toward adjacent fields and vantage points. It asks how European and regional remembrance cultures have themselves been made and unmade through comparison; how the vocabulary and taboos of memory — words such as "Relativization" — travel between East Asian and European mnemoscapes, and how they bear on questions of identity and belonging; and how the hierarchy of suffering is contested not only in historiography but in the present-day politics of transitional justice, reconciliation, and a world order increasingly reordered "from the margins." Bringing historians, political scientists, and scholars of East Asia into conversation, the roundtable seeks to broaden our perspective on the postcolonial nexus of global memory culture and its implications for the German debates of a Historikerstreit 2.0.