

EUROPE-ASIA  
INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH UNIT  
(EA-IRU)

Faculty of Sociology  
University of Bielefeld/Germany

and

Department of Philosophy and Political Science  
University of Dortmund/Germany

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The Europe-Asia Interdisciplinary Research Unit (EA-IRU), founded at Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena and Justus-Liebig-University Giessen in 2008, has emerged from the Indonesia Research Unit (IRU) which, established in 2004, had a more specific geographical focus. The new EA-IRU pursues the objective to serve as an umbrella and dialogue forum for different theoretical and empirical research as well as cooperation activities and projects with a particular interest in Europe and Asia.

Teaching, research, and consulting at the Faculty of Sociology at the University of Bielefeld and the Department of Philosophy and Political Science at the University of Dortmund pay special attention to international cooperation, mutual understanding, and intercultural learning on the basis of mutual respect and pursue a policy orientation that aims at supporting knowledge and the professionalization of human potential in partner countries in general and their universities and research institutions in particular.

In this context, interdisciplinary research-cooperation with institutional and individual partners within Europe, Greater Asia, and the U.S. has acquired a special role. Promoting joint conferences and publications, staff exchange, joint teaching and professionalization, these partnerships aim at supporting research and expertise in the broader field of Social Sciences in both Europe and Asia. Simultaneously, the cooperation seeks to foster mutual interest, knowledge, and respect.

EA-IRU brings together the variety of different disciplines (Political Science, Economy, Geography, History, Law, Linguistics, Philosophy, and Sociology) and is dedicated to comprehensive theoretical, methodological, and systematic analyses. Moreover, EA-IRU is not only concerned with a thorough scientific study of Europe and Asia in general and its political development in particular but also wishes to contribute to a better and more knowledgeable cooperation between the two regions.

Being opposed to brain drain or the projection of European models to other regions, these partnerships are based on a mutual study of experiences, models, concepts, and strategies to strengthen democracy, economic growth, social justice, and gender equality in a peaceful and secure environment both in Germany and Europe as well as in Greater Asia.

In practical terms, EA-IRU activities concentrate on the following areas:

- Research on Europe and Asia, particularly with regard to regional integration, regional and interregional cooperation, transformation processes, democratic consolidation, economic and social development, the role of religion (the latter a research project funded by the *German Research Foundation* DFG), conflicts, and terrorism,
- Publications of books (e.g. supported by the *Sixth Framework Programme* (6th FP), DFG, and *Fritz-Thyssen-Foundation*), articles, and working-papers on European and Asian Issues for research, teaching, and consulting,
- Teaching activities: regular courses on Europe and Asia (history, society, domestic policies and foreign relations, role of Islam, democratization etc.) at the Universities of Bielefeld and Dortmund and courses on Germany, EU, and themes of general interest (theory of democracy, nation-building, integration etc.) at Asian Universities held by visiting lecturers from Germany (e.g. supported by the *German Academic Exchange Service* DAAD, the *Catholic Academic Exchange Service* KAAD, *Germany's Federal Foreign Office / Auswaertiges Amt*, Berlin, and *Volkswagen-Foundation*),
- Exchange of graduate and postgraduate students to contribute to the build-up of expertise on Asia in Germany,
- To support the new generation of younger political scientists in Germany in their research, teaching, and cooperation activities (e.g. through post-doctoral research fellowships granted by the DFG) in order to promote networking and international cooperation,
- Further education of Asia's political scientists in both European and Asian themes through Ph.D. fellowships (e.g. supported by DAAD, KAAD, World Bank), research fellowships (e.g. supported by DAAD and the *Alexander-von-Humboldt Foundation*) as well as further professionalization of military personal and civil society groups (the latter through projects funded by Germany's Federal Foreign Office),
- Joint European-Asian conferences (e.g. supported by 6th FP, *Fritz-Thyssen-Foundation*, and *Volkswagen-Foundation*), publication projects, and other activities on subjects of mutual interest such as modernization, good governance, democracy-building, crisis prevention, conflict resolution, regional peace and security orders etc.,
- Assistance for strengthening of European Studies in Asia and integrating Asian experts and institutions in EU-Asian networks, consortia, and other activities,
- Publication of the Book-Series "Transformation, Development, and Regionalization in Greater Asia", *Nomos-Verlag*, Baden-Baden/Germany.

All EA-IRU activities follow a policy of excellence, openness, and constructive cooperation vis-à-vis other research on Europe and Asia and invites researchers as well as experts to join its research, teaching, and consulting activities independent from political affiliation, religion, and university background.

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