

Anti-Asian racism and counter-perspectives in Europe and the Americas: bridging academic research and civil society action towards racial justice

Organizers:

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Purpose of the workshop

The aim of this project is to organize a two-day workshop that brings together scholars, cultural artists, and community organizers to critically engage with anti-Asian racism (AAR) from transnational, interdisciplinary, and intersectional perspectives. Through this, the workshop seeks to:

1. map existing theoretical and empirical research on AAR in Europe and identify key gaps;
2. connect Asian diasporic actors working across different sectors who have developed practical strategies to combat racism;
3. foster collaboration by generating new project ideas and co-developing funding applications; and
4. build a sustainable network that amplifies East and Southeast Asian diasporic perspectives in Europe and the Americas, while developing shared frameworks and political strategies for racial justice.

The global outbreak of Covid-19 drew attention to anti-Asian racism (AAR) worldwide (Chen & Wu 2021). Public attitudes toward Asians shifted sharply, reviving orientalist narratives and intensifying discrimination. Stereotypes of East and Southeast Asians—oscillating between “Yellow Peril” and “model minority”—have long upheld racial hierarchies and masked structural inequalities. Media and popular culture reinforced these tropes, deepening exclusion across European societies. During the pandemic, Asians were again cast as viral threats, echoing early 20th-century anxieties, amplified by media and digital misinformation. These contradictory labels continue to marginalize Asian communities by flattening diverse experiences (Okihiro 1994; Wu 2002).

AAR, from everyday stereotyping to physical violence, remains a pressing issue for Asian diasporas in Europe (Broekroelofs & Poerwoatmodjo 2021; Köhler & Suda 2023; Suda et al. 2020). Yet it is often underrecognized and insufficiently addressed, both nationally and at the EU level (European Commission 2020; 2023). This workshop addresses the structural invisibility of AAR in academic and public discourse, especially regarding East and Southeast Asian diasporas. While attention has grown, systematic and community-based research

(CBPR; Goodman 2001) remains limited or crisis-driven, and sustained cross-border collaboration is rare.

This initiative lays the groundwork for long-term transnational dialogue and interdisciplinary knowledge production through cross-sectoral and community-engaged research. It will connect diverse methods—case studies, memory work, creative practices, and policy dialogue—and support early-career scholars and activists from racialized communities.

Participants will include researchers and practitioners from Germany, Italy, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, and the U.S., working across academic and public spheres.

The research field

Research on East and Southeast Asian diasporas in Europe and the Americas remains limited but is gradually expanding. In Sweden, existing studies—often qualitative and fragmented—focus on groups such as Vietnamese refugees, Chinese labor migrants, and Thai marriage migrants, covering themes like identity, education, entrepreneurship, and labor-market integration. Vietnamese communities are among the most studied due to longer settlement histories. Recent register-based research shows that while higher education and longer residence improve employment prospects, gender disparities persist. Southeast Asians (e.g., Vietnamese, Filipinos, Thais) tend to have higher employment rates than East Asians (e.g., Japanese, Chinese, South Koreans), suggesting racial or ethnic labor market barriers. Labor migrants fare better than student migrants, whose Swedish education often fails to translate into employment success.

In Germany, research remains largely qualitative, focusing on labor and refugee migration from countries such as Japan, South Korea, India, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka. As of 2019, over one million people in Germany have ties to the Asia-Pacific region, with recent immigration mainly from China, Vietnam, and India. Cultural self-representation studies are sparse, with limited work on Korean and Vietnamese diasporas.

Across Europe, Asian migrants face varied experiences shaped by national policies, migration pathways, and social perceptions. Studies highlight both high educational achievement and persistent discrimination, especially among second-generation Vietnamese. Chinese and Indian migrants often face challenges with credential recognition and professional integration. Themes such as marriage migration and creative resistance—especially among women—are also prominent.

Despite growing interest, systematic and longitudinal research on anti-Asian racism (AAR) remains scarce. There is an urgent need for transnational, interdisciplinary approaches that connect academic inquiry with community knowledge and policy engagement. While the U.S. has developed AsianCrit to theorize Asian American experiences, Europe lacks comparable frameworks to address racialization shaped by colonial histories and migration regimes. This workshop seeks to fill that gap by developing new theoretical approaches to racial justice for Asian diasporas in Europe. It will adopt a transnational, interdisciplinary, and intersectional lens to explore how AAR is experienced across diverse dimensions such as migration history, generation, gender, sexuality, age, adoption, and religion.

Content of the workshop

Day 1 will focus on emerging academic research, including studies on AAR, representation politics, and archival practices of marginalized communities. Panels will present comparative case studies from Europe, the U.S., and Latin America, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue across sociology, political science, migration studies, cultural studies, and memory studies.

Day 2 will highlight activist and artistic perspectives, with sessions on queer-feminist interventions, labor organizing, and Korean adoptee activism. It will emphasize creative resistance—through theater, film, literature, and community organizing—and policy engagement via anti-racist strategies within national and EU frameworks. This workshop will serve as a foundational step in developing a collaborative framework and network for a long-term international research project titled: *ARISE: Asian diasporic Research for intersectional and Structural Equity – A transnational initiative for racial justice, queer-feminist scholarship, and coalition-building across sectors in Europe and the Americas.*

The questions we explore in the two-day workshop are:

1. How can racial justice be theorized and materialized for Asian diaspora communities in Europe, especially in the context of resurging ethno-nationalism and structural racism?
2. What theoretical and empirical research exists on AAR in Europe, and how can it be expanded to inform policy and practice?
3. How do Asian diasporic communities represent themselves in ways that challenge dominant narratives and counter AAR?
4. What are the challenges and possibilities in bridging academic research with civil society action to address AAR?
5. How can we build sustainable, transnational, and interdisciplinary collaborations that center marginalized perspectives and advance Asian diasporic solidarities and racial justice?

Workshop schedule

Date: August 27-28 2026,

Location: Auditorium, Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum, HU Berlin

Geschwister-Scholl-Straße 1, 10117 Berlin

DAY 0, August 26, 2026

Pre-Workshop program

Film screening in evening (time:TBD) at SINEMA TRANSTOPIA

Organized by Sun-ju Choi, Feng-mei Heberer & Yi Luo

DAY 1, August 27, 2026

“New East and Southeast Asian diasporic perspectives in research and on public discourse”

Time	Topic	Participants and moderator
9:00	Welcome & organizational remarks	Sayaka Osanami Törngren, Malmö University
9:10 -9:50	Keynote “TBD”	Nadine Nakamura, California School of Professional Psychology, Alliant University, San Diego
9:50 -10:15	Q&A	Linda Juang, University of Potsdam
10:15 - 10:30	Short break	
10:30 -11:30	Panel 1: AAR in quantitative research in Europe and the USA	Linda Juang, University of Potsdam Dawn Cheong, Asian Voices Europe Tae Jun Kim, Dezim e.V. Richard M. Lee, University of Minnesota Twin cities
11:30 - 12:00	Q&A	Hyunjung Lee, Asian Voices Europe
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch break	
13:00 -14:00	Panel 2: Qualitative case studies on AAR and counter-narratives (self-representation)	Simeng Wang, French National Centre for Scientific Research, Paris Grazia Ting Deng, Brandeis University, Massachusetts Shujianing Li, University of Minnesota Twin cities Aya Ezawa, Leiden University
14:00-14:30	Q&A	Teresa Schwarz, University of Minnesota Twin cities
14:30 -15:30	Panel 3: Young scholars’ panel	Danila Tran Thuy Duong, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg Somi Dubuque, Berlin

		Zhilin Wu, University of Groningen Veronica, Brussels Pei Li, University of Frankfurt
15:30 - 16:00	Q&A	Feng-mei Heberer, New York University
16:00 - 16:15	Coffee break	
16:15 - 17:15	Roundtable 1: Transpacific perspectives on public memory and Asian diasporic archive(s)	Ly Cam Le & Sina Schindler, Initiative for the memory of Phan Văn Toàn, Natalie Han, Korea verband e.V., Ye Charlotte Ming, artist and journalist, Qingdao & Berlin Iris Rajanayagam, Federal Agency for Civic Education Sun-ju Choi / korientation e.V. Berlin, Koreanische Frauengruppe
17:15 - 17:45	Q&A	Kimiko Suda
17:45 - 18:00	Wrapping up and information about DAY 2: Share digital canvas for thoughts/ideas	
19:00 - 21:00	Dinner for workshop participants	

DAY 2, August 28, 2026

“East and Southeast Asian diasporic perspectives in politics, culture and civil society”

Time	Topic	Participant(s)
9:30	Welcome & introduction	Hyunjung Lee, Asian Voices Europe
09:40 - 10:30	Roundtable 2: Asian diasporic representation in labor politics / trade union organization	Ongoo Buyanjargal, organizer, Berlin Haelin Choi, Communications Workers of America, New York Anjannine Kyle Untalan, Filipino Women's Council
10:30 - 11:00	Q&A	Romin Khan, ver.di, Berlin
11:00 - 11:30	Short break	
11:30 - 13:00	Roundtable 3 Queer-feminist self-representation in culture & arts	Olivia hyunsin Kim, artist, Berlin Ing Lee, illustrator, Sao Paulo, Brasil Phường Thúy Nguyễn, artist and writer, Berlin Feng-mei Heberer, New York University Popo Fan, filmmaker, Berlin
	Q&A	Sung Un Gang (TU Köln)
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch	

14:00 - 15:00	Roundtable 4: Korean Adoptee Activism	Miraekh Rhee, artist and activist, Berlin, California, South Korea Anna Jin Hwa Borstam, Lund, Sweden Anja Sunhyun Michaelsen, Humboldt-University Berlin
15:00 - 15:30	Q&A	Richard M. Lee, University of Minnesota
15:30 - 15:45	Coffee break	
15:45 - 16:30	Panel 4: Asian diasporic perspectives on political institutions and counter-measures to racism "How to fight racism in local politics" in national level Strategies for the inclusion of AAR in the European Union Framework Strategies to fight anti-Asian racism through self-organisation	Leyao Rovira López, nomellameschinita, Hyunjung Lee, Asian Voices Europe Ann Li, Untold Asian Stories Jee-Un Kim, korientation e.V.
16:30 - 17:00	Q&A	Lilly Seongmoon Shim, Asian Voices Europe & Puo-an Wu Fu, FU Berlin
17:00 - 17:30	How to continue the network? Communication channel (incl. digital), who wants to host the next meeting?	Kimiko Suda, Humboldt-University Berlin Hyunjung Lee, Asian Voices Europe
17:30 - 17:45	Preparation / coffee-break	
17:45 - 18:15	Celebrate the diversity of Asian talent in art and culture (musical contribution)	Joni Sheila and Christopher D'havé Asian Persuasion