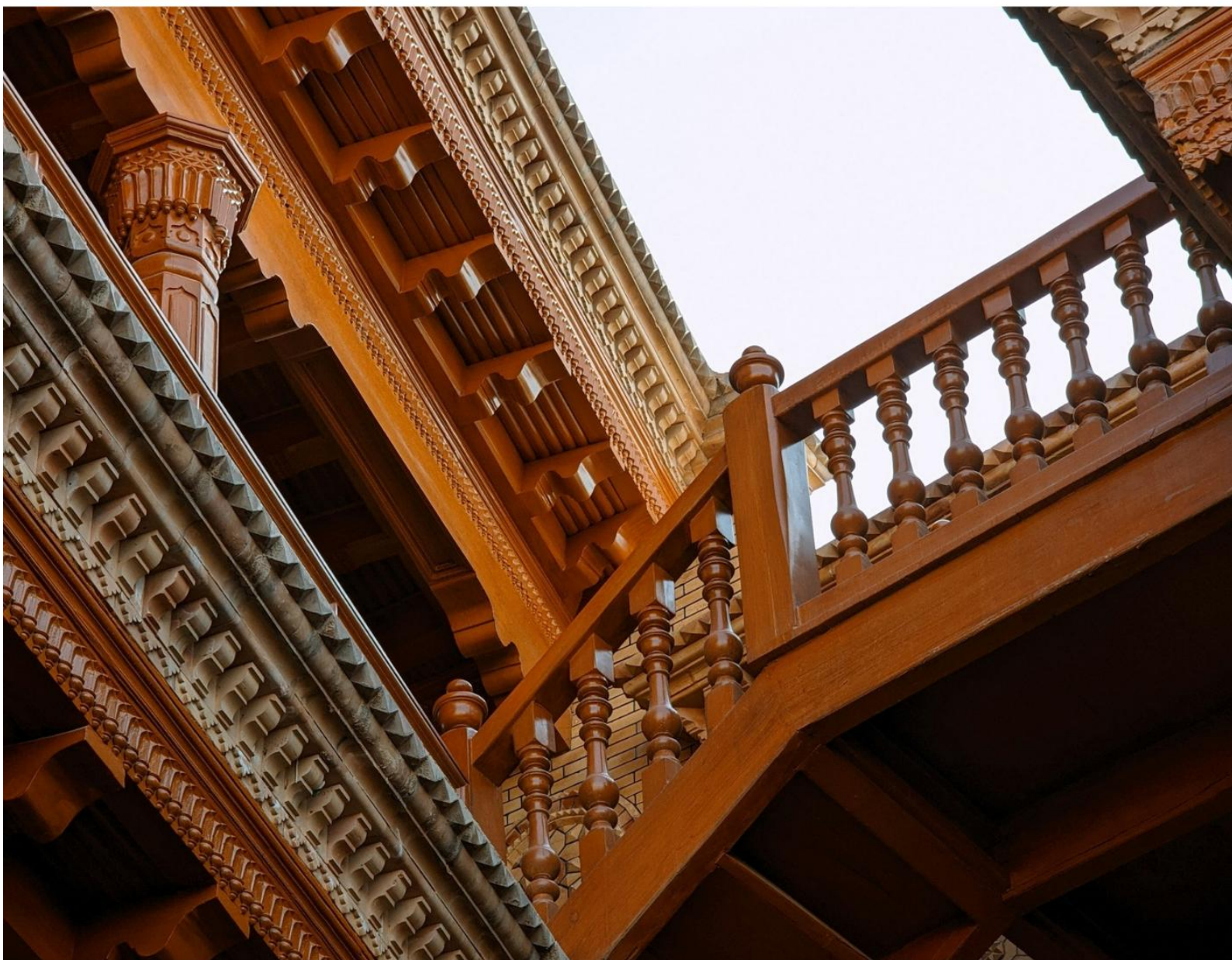


Academic Research Projects on Asia in Finland 2025



Finnish University Network for Asian Studies



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Introduction

This catalogue contains information about on-going or recently completed academic research projects on Asia in Finnish universities and research institutes. The data was collected with an e-mail form that circulated among Asia researchers in Finland during the autumn of 2025. Forthcoming academic publications as well as publications between 2023 and 2024 are also included, while Master's theses and audio publications are omitted.

An electronic version of the catalogue is available on the website of the Finnish University Network for Asian Studies at www.asianet.fi/publications .

Bangladesh

*Abdul Kadir Khan, PhD Candidate (Development Studies), University of Jyväskylä, Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy
abdul.k.khan@student.jyu.fi*

Keywords: Rohingya, Localization, triple nexus, refugee, displaced person

Publications:

1. Khan, A.K. (2025). Localization of Humanitarian Action: Exploring the Views of Organizations Involved in the Rohingya Response in Bangladesh. PhD thesis.
<https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-86-0578-2>
2. Khan, A.K. (2023). Constrained Humanitarian Space in Rohingya Response: Views from Bangladeshi NGOs. In: Biekart, K., Kontinen, T., Millstein, M. (eds) Civil Society Responses to Changing Civic Spaces. EADI Global Development Series. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

*Shahid Mallick, Doctoral Researcher, Eastern Finland University, Department of Geographical and Historical Studies
shahidul.mallick@uef.fi*

Keywords: Water, Climate change, Culture, Coastal zone, Bangladesh

Ongoing project: Doctoral research on 'Water' title of the research project is **Culture, Climate Change and Water Conservation: Water ecology and culture based adaptations in the Global South/ Bangladesh**. Expected to complete on August 2027.

China

Tiina Airaksinen, Senior Lecturer in Asian Studies, University of Helsinki
tiina.b.airaksinen@helsinki.fi

Keywords: Asia, migration, Finland, Japan, agency

Research projects:

Asian Women's Migration to Finland and Japan

Publications:

1. 2023, "Kiinan sydämessä nationalismi ja kansallinen turvallisuus", kirjassa Epävarmuuksien aika -Kuinka Venäjän hyökkäyssota muuttaa maailmaa? Gaudeamus.
2. 2023, "Kungfutselaisuus perinteiden vaalijana nyky-Kiinassa", Synsygus.

Hermann Aubié, Project Researcher, University of Eastern Finland, Law School, Faculty of Social Sciences and Business Studies
Keywords: Chinese Politics, History and Society; Human Rights; Environmental Policy; Taiwan; EU-China Relations

Publication:

Aubié, H., Paltemaa, L., & Sookari, T. (2025). China's Covid-19 Aid Diplomacy in 2020: Patterns and Motivations. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 20(1), 69–100.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/1871191x-bja10200>

Albion M. Butters, Research Fellow/PhD, University of Turku, John Morton Center
albion.butters@utu.fi

Keywords: Tibet, Buddhism

Current work:

1. Independently researching and writing on Longchenpa (14th c. Tibet) and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (19th c. Tibet)
2. Editor at *Studia Orientalia Electronica*
3. Editor at Khyentse Vision Project (<https://www.khyentsevision.org/>).

Julie Yu-Wen Chen, Professor, University of Helsinki, Department of Cultures
julie.chen@helsinki.fi

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, globalization, Russia, local agency Recent publications:

Publications:

1. Chen, Julie Yu-Wen (2023) China's Changing Image in Central Asia: Exercising Soft and Hard Power, in Anoushiravan Ehteshami, Benjamin Houghton, and Jia Liu (eds.) *China Moves West: The Evolving Strategies of the Belt and Road Initiative*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
2. Lavička, Martin; Chen, Julie Yu-Wen (2023) New Measures for Governing Religions in Xi's China. *China Report*.

*Jiaqi Feng Guo, University Lecturer in Chinese/PhD, University of Turku, Department of Chinese
jiaqi.guo@utu.fi*

Keywords: over-indebtedness, debt collection, China, corpus linguistics, online forums, contact bombing, rural revitalization, discourse, People's Daily

Title: Examining the impact of growing household over-indebtedness in China

Short description:

This project investigates how rising household debt is experienced, narrated, and socially managed by borrowers in contemporary China. We analyse a large online debt support forum where users discuss mortgages, consumer credit and personal loans, with a focus on over-indebtedness — situations where borrowers can no longer meet their repayment obligations. Using corpus linguistic methods on large-scale natural language data in Mandarin, we identify recurring themes such as harassment by debt collectors, “contact bombing” (systematic calling of borrowers’ relatives, friends, and employers to exert social pressure), and the fear of “social death”. The analysis shows how debt disrupts relationships, affects mental time horizons and decision-making, and shapes perceptions of China’s consumer protection and regulatory environment.

Publications:

Guo, J. F. & Marshall, J. (2025). Examining the impact of growing household over-indebtedness in China: A corpus linguistics analysis of a popular online debt support forum. *Applied Corpus Linguistics*, 5, 100141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acorp.2025.100141>
(Open access under CC licence).

Team members:

Dr. Jiaqi Feng Guo (University of Turku)
Dr. John Marshall (Independent Researcher)

Title: The evolving discursive construction of rural China in People's Daily, 1995–2024: A corpus-assisted discourse studies analysis

Type: Research project / Article (Full Length)

Team members:

Dr. Jiaqi Feng Guo (Corresponding Author, University of Turku)
John Marshall
Dr. Outi Luova

Short description:

This research project employed a corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) approach to conduct the first extended diachronic analysis of official Chinese rural discourse spanning three decades (1995–2024). Using all rural-focused articles from *People's Daily*, China's government newspaper of record, the study tracked systematic shifts in lexical usage patterns through corpus linguistics techniques, including Sketch Engine's 'Trends' tool. The findings reveal how the discursive framing of rural China evolved from negative portrayals designed to accelerate rural-to-urban migration to positive recalibrations promoting 'rural return'. The research challenges prevailing assumptions by demonstrating that the retreat from negative portrayals began a decade earlier than commonly claimed and that subtler linguistic patterns privileging urban over rural life persist despite the decline in overtly pejorative language.

Duration/Status: 2024–2025 (Completed)

Publications: Under review at *Applied Corpus Linguistics* (2025)

*Karoliina Hurri, PhD Candidate, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland & Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki
karoliina.hurri@helsinki.fi*

Keywords: Climate leadership, China, COPs, UNFCCC, Global South, climate responsibility

Climate responsibility as a normative cornerstone of multilateral cooperation? (Kone Foundation, 2022-2025, led by Sanna Kopra)

PhD **"Climate leadership beyond the Global North: The construction of China's international climate-leader role during the post-Paris era"** completed in 2023.

Publications:

1. (2023, with Sanna Kopra) "Applicability of Leadership Modes outside the Negotiation Framework: Insights from China." *Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change*.
2. (2023) "Climate Leadership Through Storylines: A Comparison of Developed and Emerging Countries in the Post-Paris Era." *Global Society*.
3. (2023) "The roles they play: change in China's climate leadership role during the post-Paris era." *Globalizations*.

*Anni Kajanus, Assistant Professor, University of Helsinki, Social and Cultural Anthropology
anni.kajanus@helsinki.fi*

Keywords: Child development, culture and cognition, education, cooperation, competition, hierarchy

Chinese children's social and cognitive development in comparative perspective

Broadly, this research investigates human cooperation, and the competitive and conflict behaviours that revolve around cooperation. Babies are born with basic cognitive capacities and psychological motivations to cooperate with others. As children grow up in an environment of particular social norms and cultural values, the development of their cooperative behaviours is shaped by them. This project has investigated different mechanisms of cooperation, e.g. fairness norms, competitive motivation, punishment, mutualism, and prestigious and dominant leadership, from a comparative perspective in Chinese communities, and in the UK.

Publications:

Kajanus, A. and Stafford, (2023). Cooperation and punishment, in *Cambridge Handbook of the Anthropology of Ethics and Morality*, ed. J. Laidlaw. Cambridge University Press.

Jyrki Kallio, Senior Research Fellow, PhD with Title of Docent, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Centre for Global Orders and China

jyrki.kallio@fiia.fi

Keywords: China, Confucianism, strategic narratives, soft power

Title: Probing the "Confucian" Core of Chinese Soft Power

Description: Ongoing research on the different aspects of modernizing tradition for a new-age strategic narrative for China, including the rhetorical uses of traditional values in formulating China's foreign policy goals and ambitions as a global power, as well as the related discussions on a "Chinese (Confucian) IR theory" and the "original" nature of Confucianism with regard to the rise of "Mainland New Confucianism".

Publications (monographs only):

1. 2028 (est.) forthcoming. Mestari Kongin kadonneet sanonnat.
2. 2025 (transl. & ed.). Xunzi. Valtio-oppia muinaisesta Kiinasta. Gaudeamus.
3. 2023 The Chinese worldview in flux. (Chapter in an edited volume on the impact of the May 4th Movement.) Kungl. Vitterhetsakademien.

Liisa Kauppila, Doctoral Researcher, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies; Researcher, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland

lllkan@utu.fi

Keywords: de-risking, delinking, economic security, weaponizable interdependence, Chinese trade and investment

Publication:

1. Kauppila, L., & Kopra, S. (2025). China in the Arctic Governance System in the New Cold War Era. In G. Rekvig, & M. Finger (Eds.), *GlobalArctic: The New Dynamics of Arctic Governance* (pp. 323-344). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-4868-9_12
2. Kauppila, L., Sinkkonen, E., & Söderström, I. (2025). Rethinking interdependencies: Ideal-typical worldviews on small and medium powers' economic security. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00108367251364178>
3. Kauppila, L., Sinkkonen, E. (2024). "Finland: A supply security veteran does moderate de-risking." In: Patrik Andersson, Frida Lindberg (Eds.) *National Perspectives on Europe's De-risking from China*. Swedish National China Centre.
4. Shaun, B., Kauppila, L., & Sinkkonen, E. (2024) Is "de-risking" possible? Responding to China related economic insecurities. *EuroHub4Sino Policy Paper 2024/4*. <https://doi.org/10.31175/eh4s.2014.04>
5. Kauppila, L., & Björn, C. (2023) The China dilemma in foreign direct investment screening: Comparing the Finnish and Swedish approaches. Swedish National China Centre.

Sanna Kopra, Senior Researcher, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland

sanna.kopra@ulapland.fi

Keywords: Arctic; China; climate politics; geopolitics; futures

Publications:

1. (2025, with Liisa Kauppila) "China in the Arctic Governance System in the New Cold War Era." In: Matthias Finger & Gunnar Rekvig (Eds.) *Global Arctic. The New Dynamics of Arctic Governance*. Palgrave MacMillan.
2. (2024, with Karoliina Hurri) "The futures of Sino-Russian cooperation: Implications for climate (ir)responsibility in the Arctic." In: Iselin Stansdal & Gørild Heggelund (Eds.) *China-Russia Relations in the Arctic: Friends in the Cold?* Cham: Springer.
3. (2024) "Kiinan arktinen läsnäolo Venäjän hyökkäyssodan alettua." In: Ossi Kettunen (ed.) *Arktinen alue geopolitiikan murroksessa: Suomi Nato-option jälkeen*. Helsinki: Atlasart, 55-62.

4. (2023, with Matti Puranen) "China's Arctic Strategy – a Comprehensive Approach in Times of Great Power Rivalry." *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies* 6(1).
5. (2023, with Karoliina Hurri) "Applicability of leadership modes outside the negotiation framework: insights from China." *Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change* 28(6).
6. (2023, with Nengye Liu & Jiliang Chen) "China and the Polar Regions." In: Yoshifumi Tanaka, Rachael Johnstone & Vibe Ulfbeck (Eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Polar Law*. Abington: Routledge.
7. (2023, with Matti Puranen & Ville Tiuraniemi) *Arktinen harppaus. Kiinan turvallisuusstrategia ja arktisen alueen geopolitiikka* [Arctic leap. China's security strategy and geopolitics of the Arctic region] Helsinki: National Defence University.

*Tatu-Ilari Laukkanen, Affiliated Researcher, Tampere University, Communication Sciences
tatu.laukkanen@gmail.com*

Keywords: Greater Chinese Cinema, Documentary, Sino-Russian screen culture, BRICS Cinema, Nationalist Blockbusters, Asian Cinema, Propaganda, Hong Kong. The BRICS countries, Arctic, China-Russia, Geopolitics, Jia Zhangke

Right now I research a variety of topics on Chinese cinema: War and action films that I call nationalist blockbusters, Greater Chinese documentary film, crime/gangster film, Sino-Russian cinematic connections, and thinking film through the BRICS formation.

Publications:

"A Double-edged Sword? The Nationalist Blockbusters of China and Russia" in: *The Geopolitics of Culture*, edited by Sanna Turoma, Saara Ratilainen ja Sigrid Kaasik Krogerus (Bloomsbury Academic, 2025)

*Yuchen Viveka Li, PhD Candidate, Department of Music, Art and Culture Studies
yuchen.vi.li@jyu.fi*

Keywords: feminism, posthumanism, AI, resistance, violence

Publication:

1. Li, M. & Li, Y.V. (2025). The Rejection of Beauty Servitude: Voices From Chinese Feminists. *Women's Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00497878.2025.2477263>
2. Li, Y.V. (2024). Pink Hair as a Cyberfeminist Symbol: Online Gender-Based Violence and the "PinkUp" Movement in China. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 26(7).
<https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol26/iss7/7>

*Magdalini Lionton, Doctoral Researcher, University of Jyväskylä, Centre for Applied Language Studies
magdalini.a.lionton@student.jyu.fi*

Keywords: perceptions of assessment, Chinese students, higher education, foreign language assessment

I am a PhD researcher at the Centre for Applied Language Studies (University of Jyväskylä), and I am currently finalising my doctoral thesis: "How different pedagogical approaches affect students' perceptions of assessment: a case study of Finnish and Chinese higher education institutions"

Peer-reviewed journal articles and chapters in edited books:

1. Liontou, M. & Huhta, A. (forthcoming). Paving the way for dynamic assessment through diagnostic selfassessment: a comparison of Finnish and Chinese university students. In D. Leontjev, M. Poehner & A. Huhta (Eds.), *Re-Envisioning Language Assessment to Meet the Needs of Learners in a Changing World: What Can Diagnostic and Dynamic Assessment Contribute?*. De Gruyter.
2. Liontou, M. (2023). How do Finnish and Chinese students' diverse pedagogical experiences shape feedback interpretation?. *AfinLa-Teema*, 15, 81-96.

*Outi Luova, University Lecturer, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies
outi.luova@utu.fi*

Keywords: Cities, environment, science, AI, governance, China's regional economies

EU Horizon project "ReConnect China" (consortium led by Ghent University). Co-leader of WP6. Project funding period: 11/2022–10/2026.

Publications:

1. Luova (2025) Kiina tähtää globaaliksi innovaatiomahdiksi puolueen johdolla. *Tieteessä tapahtuu* 4/2025. <https://www.tieteessatapahtuu.fi/numerot/4-2025/kiina-tahtaa-globaaliksi-innovaatiomahdiksi-puolueen-johdolla>
2. Luova & Sookari (2025) New quality productive forces “according to local conditions” – regulatory and planning aspects. *ReConnect China Policy Brief* 24. <https://www.reconnect-china.ugent.be/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/ReConnect-China-Policy-Brief-24-Local-conditions.pdf>
3. Luova (2023) Shifting Sustainable Mobility Agendas in Graz (Austria) and Hangzhou (China): The Multi-Level Process from Livable to Smart Cities. *CSID Journal of Infrastructure Development* 6:1, <https://doi.org/10.7454/jid.v6.i1.1077>
4. Book review: Luova (2023) *Governing the urban in China and India: land grabs, slum clearance, and the war on air pollution*, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, DOI: 10.1080/15387216.2023.2237038

Book editors: Outi Luova and Juuso Kaaresvirta

Kiinan talous. 2024, vastapaino.

1. Johdanto. Juuso Kaaresvirta ja Outi Luova
2. Avoimuus ja muutoskyky Kiinan taloushistoriassa. Lauri Paltemaa
3. Pääpiirteitä Kiinan taloudesta ja sen rakenteista. Juuso Kaaresvirta, Eeva Kerola ja Riikka Nuutilainen
4. Kiinan aluetaloudet – kasvua kaupungeista ja innovaatioista? Outi Luova
5. Kiinan julkinen talous haasteiden edessä. Juuso Kaaresvirta
6. Kiinan monimutkaiset rahoitusmarkkinat. Riikka Nuutilainen
7. Kiinan ulkomaankauppa. Eeva Kerola
8. Kiinan hiilineutraali talous. Lauri Myllyvirta
9. Kiinan liiketoimintaympäristö – sumea ja riskien värittävä tulevaisuus. Sari Arho-Havrén

Mikael Mattlin, Research Professor, Finnish Institute of International Affairs
mikael.mattlin@fiia.fi

Keywords: China, strategic competition, geoeconomics, investments, political system, Taiwan, games, simulations, international relations, EU, economic statecraft, pedagogy, AI, standards

Ongoing and completed research projects:

1. Academy of Finland research project ForAc, "Foreign acquisitions and political retaliation as threats to supply security in an era of strategic decoupling", <https://sites.utu.fi/forac/en/>. (project director and PI). Project funding period: 8/2020–11/2023.
2. EU Horizon 2021 research project ReConnect China. Consortium led by Ghent University (member of the UTU research team). Project funding period: 11/2022–10/2026.
3. Business Finland research project StandardEdge, "Technical standards as critical intangible capital for Finnish companies in an era of strategic competition" (PI for FIHA sub-project). Consortium led by Prof. Tuomas Mylly (Hanken/IPR UC). Other institutional collaborator: LUT. Project funding period: 9/2023–8/2025.
4. MATINE-funded research project "Kiinan murrokselliset teknologiat ja kansainvälinen turvallisuus" (project leader). Project funding period: 2023–25.
5. Use of negotiation games as pedagogical platforms (project lead). Collaborators: post-doc, Dr Elina Ketonen (UH) and Milla Kruskopf (UH). Ongoing long-term research collaboration.

Publications:

1. Breslin, Shaun & Mikael Mattlin (2025) "Bundling threats: Why dominant perceptions of China changed in Europe," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 18 (2): 196–219.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/poaf003>
2. Mattlin, Mikael & Mikko Rajavuori (2023) "Changing causal narratives and risk perceptions on foreign investment: The riskification of Chinese investments in the Nordic region," *East Asia* 40 (3), 243–263. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-023-09397-6>
3. Ferchen, Matt & Mikael Mattlin (2023) "Five modes of China's economic statecraft: Rethinking Chinese economic statecraft," *Pacific Review* 36 (5): 978–1004.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2023.2200029>

Alicia Ng, Doctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki
alicia.ng@helsinki.fi

Keywords: Electronic waste, soil pollution, bioremediation, waste, technology, microbes, nature-based solutions, multispecies, circular economy of China, ecological civilization

Doctoral thesis: Ng, A. (2024). *Microbial worlds : An interdisciplinary study on micro- to macro-scales within the more-than-human, microbial technoscience of bioremediation*. [Doctoral Thesis, University of Helsinki]. Helsingin yliopisto. <http://hdl.handle.net/10138/585957>

Publications:

Ng, A. (2023) "Polluted Histories, Clean Futures? Opposing Scenarios for an Electronic Waste Circular Economy in China" book chapter in *Waste and Discards in the Asia Pacific Region* by Pál, V. and Borowy, I. Routledge: London

Lauri Paltemaa, Professor, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies

Keywords: China, political history, internet, technology, disaster management

EU Horizon project "ReConnect China" (consortium led by Ghent University). Co-leader of WP6. Project funding period: 11/2022–10/2026.

Research Interests:

**The Internet and the politics of technology in contemporary China
Disaster management**

Publications:

1. Aubié, H., Paltemaa, L., & Sookari, T. (2025). China's Covid-19 Aid Diplomacy in 2020: Patterns and Motivations. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 20(1), 69–100.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/1871191x-bja10200>
2. Book chapter (2024) Avoimuus ja muutoskyky Kiinan taloushistoriassa. Teoksessa: Kiinan talous, toim Juuso Kaaresvirta ja Outi Luova
3. Book chapter (2023). "14. Itä-Aasian uusin historia ja nykypäivä". In *Opus 6 Maailman kulttuurit kohtaavat*. Edita Publishing Oy: Helsinki.
4. Book chapter (2023). "Varhaisista korkeakulttuureista kolonialismin aikaan". In *Opus 6 HI6 Maailman kulttuurit kohtaavat*. Edita Publishing Oy: Helsinki.

Marko Pihl, Doctoral Researcher, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies

marpih@utu.fi

Keywords: China, party-to-party diplomacy, narrative influence, strategic narratives, China-Africa relations

Current projects:

1. Doctoral research: Party-to-party diplomacy of the Communist Party of China in Africa. Expected time of completion 2025
2. China's influence and vulnerabilities in Africa

Recent publications:

1. Aukia, J., Cissé, D., Pihl, M., & Wiker, A.-M. (2025). Strings attached: China's narrative influence in Sub-Saharan Africa (Hybrid CoE Research Report 13)
<https://www.hybridcoe.fi/publications/hybrid-coe-research-report-13-strings-attached-chinas-narrative-influence-in-sub-saharan-africa/>
2. Cissé, D., Pihl, M. (2025) China's Narrative Warfare in Africa: Influence and Mechanisms. *China Observers*. <https://chinaobservers.eu/chinas-narrative-warfare-in-africa-influence-and-mechanisms/>

Suvi Rautio, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki, Social & Cultural Anthropology

suvi.rautio@helsinki.fi

Keywords: China, Anthropology, Collective Memory, Place-Making, Sino-African relations, Rural Development, Heritage, Intelligentsia in Maoist era

I am a Social and Cultural Anthropology Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Helsinki. I study how collective memory shapes the social and political landscapes and livelihoods of marginalized populations living in the People's Republic of China with an emphasis on ethnicity, gender and nationality.

RESEARCH

In my current Postdoctoral project, I draw on the histories of social mobility among Chinese intellectuals in the 1950's who returned to China at the dawn of the Mao Zedong era. The project is an intimate ethnography that starts with my own family history.

I have also conducted extensive research on how African dancers teaching “popular African dance” (liuxing feizhouwu) in Guangzhou are generating a market of Black creative labor in urban China. Working with dancers, I studied how cultural encounter within dance in a Chinese context both undoes African essentialisms and upholds them at the same time.

- (2024) Book monograph “The Invention of Tradition in China: The Story of a Village and a Nation Remade”. Palgrave Macmillan

Peer Reviewed Publications:

Rautio, S. (2023). On Self-Reliant Masculinities and Rural Returnees in Ethnic China, *Focaal: Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology*, <https://doi.org/10.3167/fcl.2022.081802>

*Dusica Ristivojevic, Senior Researcher, University of Helsinki, Department of Cultures
dusica.ristivojevic@helsinki.fi*

Keywords: China, global politics, social activism, transnational support networks, Anglophone media, post-socialist and post-decolonial histories and theories, China in Serbia, SEE

Research projects:

Iron-clad friendship and its discontents: China's presence in Serbia (Working title, ongoing)

Publications:

Chen, J. Y-W., & Ristivojevic, D. (2023). Global-Local Dynamics in the Belt and Road Initiative Projects. *The Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 21(4), 1-11. [5769].
<https://apjpf.org/2023/4/Chen-Ristivojevic.html>

*Hui Shi, Assistant professor, PhD, University of Turku, Department of Chinese
hui.shi@utu.fi*

Keywords: Chinese language, Linguistics, Digital language, Communication, Corpus linguistics, Language Teaching, Second Language Acquisition

1. Shi, H. (2023) Gender Socialization of Chinese Children: Empirical Evidence from School, Family, and Media. *Proceedings of Language, gender and sexuality: theoretical and methodological perspectives*, Helsinki, Finland (p.33-34). <https://www.helsinki.fi/assets/drupal/2023-10/LangGeSex2023%20Book%20of%20Abstracts.pdf>
2. Shi, H. (2023). Digital disinformation and rumor-busting: Diverse interpretations of ‘beidou feng’ (Nordic style) on Chinese social media. *Proceedings of the 18th International Pragmatics Conference*, Brussels, Belgium (p.1188)
https://cdn.ymaws.com/pragmatics.international/resource/collection/C57D1855-A3BB-40D8-A977-4732784F7B21/Abstracts_book.pdf

A PhD. dissertation titled “Estranging Illusions: Alienation in Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction” (ongoing, expected time of completion 2030)

In the words of science fiction author Chen Qiufan, “Contemporary China is a society in the transition stage when old illusions have collapsed but new illusions have not taken their place.” One symptom of this collapse has been wide-spread social alienation, or disconnect between individuals and the values and norms of wider society. This has also been a frequent topic of social commentary, criticism and literary exploration from the end of the Mao era onwards. In my project, I analyze how these Chinese discourses on alienation are exemplified and possibly challenged by contemporary Chinese science fiction works (by pioneering and often under-researched authors such as Chen, Han Song, and Xia Jia), and how their use of the techniques of science fiction can make visible aspects of alienation that might otherwise remain hidden.

Publications:

1. Suoranta, Eero. 2025. ”Mahtuuko Kiinan kirjallisuus yhteen lampeen?” Review of Kuunkajoa lootuslammella – Kiinalaisen kirjallisuuden historiaa by Tero Tähtinen. Kiiltomato, 9.9.2025. <https://kiiltomato.net/critic/tero-tahtinen-kuunkajoa-lootuslammella/>
2. Suoranta, Eero. 2025. ”Mitä kiinalainen scifi voi opettaa luontosuhteestamme?” A popularized version of my 2023 article. Mene & tiedä, 19.2.2025. <https://menejatieda.fi/mita-kiinalainen-scifi-voi-opettaa-luontosuhteestamme/>
3. Suoranta, Eero (translator). 2024. Lu Xun: ”Leifeng-pagodin romahdus.” Translation of an essay. Parnasso, 6–7/2024.
4. Suoranta, Eero. 2024. ”The Affordances of Shanghai: Notes on Being a Visiting Researcher at the Nordic Centre, Fudan University.” University of Helsinki Chinese studies blog, 29.10.2024. <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/chinastudies/the-affordances-of-shanghai-notes-on-being-a-visiting-researcher-at-the-nordic-centre-fudan-university/>
5. Suoranta, Eero. 2023. ”I hope they really evolve into a different species from us’: Human-Nature Disconnection, Eeriness, and Social Class in Han Song’s ’Submarines.’” *Fafnir: Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*, Volume 10, Issue 2, pages 51–65. <http://journal.finfar.org/articles/i-hope-they-really-evolve-into-a-different-species-from-us/>
6. Suoranta, Eero. 2023. Book review of Hua Li’s ”Chinese Science Fiction during the Post-Mao Cultural Thaw.” *Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*, Volume 10, Issue 1, pages 33–36. <http://journal.finfar.org/articles/book-review-chinese-science-fiction/>

Destination Tibet - Finnish mission work at the Himalayas 1895-1950 (ongoing PhD research)

*Tuula Velling, Researcher, PhD Candidate, University of Turku, School of History, Culture and Arts Studies
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Keywords: Chinese calligraphy, Wang Dongling, contemporary art, semiotics, C.S. Pierce

Ph.D. research project (ongoing): Like a fleeting cloud. The Transformation of Chinese Calligraphy from a Medium of Communication to Contemporary Art. The Signs of Change in the Calligraphic Works of Wang Dongling 1981–2015.

The status of Chinese calligraphy as China's most respected art form and medium of communication has remained stable for thousands of years. As China opened rapidly to the outside world, traditional calligraphy underwent a drastic transformation under the strong influence of Western art forms. As a result, contemporary calligraphy art is divided into traditional and modern calligraphy, and has fragmented into many different phenomena, art forms and new ways of presentation. With the development of communication technologies, calligraphy's traditional function and meaning as a medium of communication have changed. The thousand-year-old writing tradition and art form now seems to be merely a part of the field of contemporary art.

My research deals with the transformation of traditional Chinese calligraphy into contemporary art. I examine the signs of change through the works of the artist Wang Dongling in the period from 1981 to 2015, utilising Charles S. Peirce's pragmatic semiotics as a theoretical framework. Other materials I examine empirically.

*Marco Volpe, PhD Candidate, University of Lapland, Faculty of Social Science
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Keywords: China's polar strategy, Science Diplomacy, scientific research, Arctic governance, Antarctic Treaty, co-production of knowledge, science-policy interface, scientific cooperation, Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement

Projects:

1. PhD research project on China's Polar Science Diplomacy. (2021-2027) The project consists of an article-based dissertation, which includes three research articles investigating China's science diplomacy practices within the Arctic and Antarctic governing mechanisms. The first article, "High seas triggering Arctic security? An analysis of Chinese domestic discourse on the Central Arctic Ocean", was published in the Arctic Yearbook 2023. p. 424-451 examined thirty-five articles in the Chinese language from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database. The findings highlight that Chinese academic discourse on the Central Arctic Ocean emphasises "cooperation over confrontation" and aligns closely with China's leadership strategies and policies. This underscores the pivotal relationship between science and governance, particularly in how increased scientific knowledge, cooperation, and specialized expertise might support China's position in Arctic governance. The second and third articles will present the two case studies addressing the intersection between science and policy and the interaction between knowledge producers and diplomats, as national interests-bearers in international fora, such as the Antarctic Treaty System and the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement. In both articles, I am conducting semi-structured interviews with polar scientists and experts who respectively took part in the negotiation and creation of the Antarctic Special Protected Area 178 under the Antarctic Treaty System and the implementation phase of the CAOFA Agreement.
2. 5-year Research Project: JSPS Core-to-Core Research Program: Re-arranging resilient Antarctic governance to reflect the Earth's interests through natural-social sciences interdisciplinary research. The project aims to establish a world-wide and world-class network of interdisciplinary research institutions and scholars to effectively address Antarctic governance challenges. The network includes the Polar Cooperation Research Centre, Kobe University

(Kobe PCRC) based in Japan, the University of Tasmania (UTAS) in Australia and the Korean Polar Research Institute (KOPRI) in the Republic of Korea.

3. 2-year Research project: The Russian invasion of Ukraine impacting actions and visions of Japan and Finland in the Arctic. This project aims to provide fresh approaches surrounding the new security paradigm, the shift in geopolitical dynamics in the Arctic, and potential joint responses from Finland and Japan. Partners include the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi and the Hokkaido University Arctic Research Centre

Publications:

1. Science at the Top of the World: Sino-Russian Cooperation and Contestation in the Arctic (2025). - (Eds) Swanström, N. & Månsson, F. P. The “New” Frontier: Sino-Russian Cooperation in the Arctic and its Geopolitical Implications.
2. Geopolitical Change and Antarctic Treaty System (2024) for The Yearbook of Polar Law. Book Review 2025 - (Eds.) Scott S.V., Stephens, T., McGee, J. Publisher: Springer 2025
3. China’s Arctic Policy: how scientific research interplays with the Arctic governance. Book Chapter in Arctic Policies of Non-Arctic States (Eds.) Kirchner S., Dervovic M. and Ulatowski L. Publisher: Brill 2025.
4. China’s domestic discourse on status building in the Arctic. Book Chapter in Asian Powerplay: decoding the chessboards of Asian geopolitics (Eds.) Debasish Nandy and Monojit Das. Publisher: Springer 2025.
5. Science Diplomacy Across the Poles. Il Polo. 2024. pp. 151-175.
6. Different scenarios, different policies: China’s engagement in the South China Sea and in the Central Arctic Ocean Current Developments in Arctic Law 2023. 10, p. 140-159

*Weiqing Wang, Doctoral Student, Centre for East Asian Studies, University of Turku
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Keywords: China-Russia relations, Ukraine War, grand strategy, foreign policy analysis, action and inaction

Title of the Ph.D. research project: The Durability of China’s Grand Strategy Amid the Ukraine War

This research plan was prompted by Russia’s full invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the ambiguous stance taken by the Chinese government. China remains an inactive actor since the outbreak of the Ukraine War. The inaction and ambiguous attitude of China on this issue has aroused concerns at home and abroad, as such inaction seems contradictory to the Grand Strategy of China in which territorial integrity and sovereignty are the fundamental norms to be obeyed in the international community. This research explores the Chinese official speech acts concerning the Ukraine War through the lens of neorealist international relations theory and foreign policy analysis theory. Additionally, this research enquires into the consistency and contradictions embedded in the Chinese Grand Strategy amid the Ukraine War and tracks the reshaping of China’s national security and its Grand Strategy in changing international relations. This research will provide valuable insight by making an up-to-date analysis of China’s security situation and its Grand Strategy and by discussing whether China’s action and/or inaction in an international war in which it plays no direct role serves or undermines its national interests.

Yan Wang, Doctoral candidate, University of Jyväskylä, Department of Education

yanwang@jyu.fi

Keywords: Comparative research, Finland, China, competence, teacher education, critical realism, culture, structure, agency

Publications:

1. Wang, Y., Nokkala, T., Moate, J. (Under review). A Critical Realist Comparative Study of Teacher Education: Interplay of Culture, Program Structure, and Teacher-Educator Agency. *Journal of Critical Realism*.
2. Wang, Y., Nokkala, T., & Moate, J. (2025). Exploring teacher-educator beliefs about teacher education: A comparative study of case programmes in Finland and China. *Cogent Education*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2494458>.
3. Wang, Y., Nokkala, T., & Moate, J. (2024). Comparing Finnish and Chinese national teacher education frameworks from the teacher competency perspective. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2024.2361108>.

Junhua Zhu, Doctoral Researcher, Centre for East Asian Studies, University of Turku

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Keywords: China, AI, policy, AI ethics, AI governance

Current projects:

1. AI Ethics with Chinese Characteristics: Concerns and Preferred Solutions
This doctoral research will include three separate articles about (1) discourses on the ethics of AI in Chinese academia, (2) the Chinese approach to AI governance, and (3) the empirical case study on how Chinese AI companies address ethical concerns. The final dissertation will combine these three articles and can be expected to come out in 2025.
2. Business Finland project, Technical standards as critical intangible capital for Finnish companies in an era of strategic competition (StandardEdge). Member of Team FIHA, work time 7.2024-12.2024. <https://standard-edge.com/>

Previous projects:

1. Academy of Finland research project, "Foreign acquisitions and political retaliation as threats to supply security in an era of strategic decoupling" (ForAc). Team Member.
<https://sites.utu.fi/forac/en/>
2. EU Horizon project "ReConnect China" (consortium led by Ghent University). Research Member. WP1. Project funding period: 11/2022–10/2026.

Publications:

1. Zhu, Junhua (2024) China's Approach to AI Standardisation: State-guided but Enterprise-led, FIHA Briefing Paper 391. <https://www.fiia.fi/en/publication/chinas-approach-to-ai-standardisation>
2. Zhu, Junhua & Mattlin, Mikael (2024) The Chinese AI Innovation Ecosystem: Spurring Innovation or Consolidating Monopolies, ReConnect China Policy Brief, https://www.reconnect-china.ugent.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/ReConnect-China_Policy-Brief-11_The-Chinese-AI-Innovation-Ecosystem.pdf
3. Xu, Wenqian, Zhu, Junhua, Xi, Wanyu & Cui, Jian (2023) Creating Age-Friendly Environments in a Smart Society in China: A Policy Review, *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08959420.2023.2284058>

Hong Kong S.A.R

Josephine Lau, Doctoral Researcher, University of Jyväskylä, Adult Education

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Keywords: teacher identity tensions, teacher professional agency, qualitative longitudinal research, teacher career, Hong Kong

Title: In search for a meaningful and sustainable teacher career: teacher Identity tensions and professional agency in the Hong Kong context

This is a doctoral research project that commenced in the fall of 2017 and is completed in 2024.

The doctoral thesis investigated teacher identity tensions and professional agency issues in Hong Kong. The region, which was a former British colony and a current special administrative region of China, features a centralised-decentralisation education governance system. Also, it represents a societal-cultural context with Confucian heritage, which was underrepresented in the teacher identity tensions and professional agency studies.

The thesis adopted the qualitative longitudinal framework in the investigation. Interview data was collected from 21 teachers in the year 2018. 14 teachers were followed up in the year 2020.

The thesis sheds light on understanding professional agency as a temporal phenomenon and underscores the close relationship between professional identity tensions issues. Also, it points out the importance of differentiated support for teachers at different career stages, recommends practical measures for teacher development specific to the Hong Kong context, and emphasizes identity and agency on teacher retention issues.

Publications:

1. Lau, J. (2024) Thesis summary - Teacher Identity tensions and professional agency in the Hong Kong context
2. Lau, J., Vähäsantanen, K., & Collin, K. (2023). The Change and Continuity of Teachers' Professional Agency: A Two-Year Longitudinal Study in the Case of Hong Kong. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Education*.

*Soma Basu, Doctoral Researcher, Tampere University, Faculty of Information Technology and Communication
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Keywords: Mediatization, Democracy, Political Communication, Communal Violence, Hate Speech, Disinformation, Misinformation, Factcheck, Islamophobia

Unending Everyday Violence: Communal Riots, Rumours and Memories in the Digital Age.

At a time when online spaces, earlier perceived as free forums for digital publics to interact and socialize, are becoming increasingly corporatized, India has emerged as the biggest source of disinformation across the globe. In the last few years, scholars have argued how online hate speech and targeting have bled into the offline world, forcing platform accountability. Meanwhile, India slipped from being the largest, emergent democracy to an electoral autocracy and the digital repression tactics by formal and informal government agents have emerged as a prominent strain of discussions. Taking Delhi riots 2020 as a model, my research employs sensory ethnography to attempt the first-ever academic exploration into why and how the digital public is trapped in a perpetual cycle of political violence which does not let fissures of caste, religion and politics heal. From Myanmar to Brazil, Social media's role as an enabler and narrator of communal and political conflict is being debated repeatedly. Many academic studies on communal riots focus on how a conflict starts and then moves on to the process of normalization after spectacular violence. My doctoral research, for the first time, questions the ending of violent conflicts and proposes that in the age of social media, such violence never ends. Instead, they play on in a loop on our mobile handsets, in digital memories, in imaginations and sutures of everyday life and the sociality of message sharing. Using Delhi riots 2020 as a case study, my doctoral research explores the role of digital rumours in memory formation and creating a base for violent collective action in the future.

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Keywords: Global Health, gender studies, health equity, occupational health

Doctoral research 2023-2027: Managing Problematic menstruation among policewomen in India: A sociological inquiry.

*Hanna Mannila, PhD Candidate, University of Helsinki, Department of Cultures
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Keywords: Guru, dance gurus, kathak, Indian classical dance, social media, mediatization

Indian Dance Gurus and Their Authority in Transformation: Changes and continuities in the perceptions of the gurus' status, role and function from text to digital media

My PhD research project explores the transformations in the figure of guru and his authority in Indian society from classical Sanskrit texts to the contemporary mediatized contexts, focusing on the gurus of Indian classical kathak dance. Gurus traditionally have a specific and highly revered position in Indian society – they can be seen as an embodiment of authority. Gurus and guru-like figures can be found everywhere in Indian society, from religions and arts to politics and business. This research focuses on kathak dance as the base of exploration, examining the changes and continuities in the authority ascribed to the guru in the transmission of dance heritage from one generation to the next. The approach combines methodological and theoretical elements from South Asian Studies, Religious Studies, Ethnology, and Communication and Media Studies.

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Keywords: Nuclear Energy, Energy strategy, India, Russia, Energy technology, Diplomacy, International Relations

Russian nuclear energy diplomacy vis-a-vis India: The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant 1&2 agreement (1979-2016).

In this research the nuclear energy sector particularly in relation to Russia-India is being studied through the social-structurationist approach which was first applied for understanding the oil and gas industry. This approach helps in understanding the nuclear energy industry and the foreign policy importance of nuclear energy export. This research aims to provide a basis for opening up discussion on nuclear energy diplomacy from social science and apply it in general to the nuclear energy technology sector to understand the reasons behind the demand and the supply of nuclear energy technology by the exporting countries and the importing countries. In a co-authored article titled Russian nuclear energy diplomacy in Finland and Hungary published in Eurasian Geography and Economics in 2017 (Aalto, P., Nyssönen, H., Kojo, M. and Pal, P) this research work was used to understand Russia's nuclear energy technology export to two EU countries, Finland and Hungary especially in the environment of EU sanctions against Russia.

I intend to provide a framework and a method of analysis which could be applied in research and development for understanding the importance of nuclear energy diplomacy as a policy imperative. The research will have policy relevance as well as can be used as a means to reach out to the society on the topic of relevance of nuclear energy.

Expected time of completion: 2026

Pragati Parihar, Doctoral Researcher, Tampere University, Social Sciences

pragati.parihar@tuni.fi

Keywords: climate justice, indigenous rights, environmental movements, India

Title - Ethnographic research on Indigenous youth climate activism in the Global South

Duration - Jan 2025 - Dec 2029

About the project-

Climate change has caused loss & harm to both natural and human systems, with a disproportionate share of the burden being felt on the vulnerable population. This project examines the motivations of indigenous youth climate activists in India, exploring how motivations are shaped by colonial, capitalist, and extractive tendencies that are a result of social difference, including gender, race, caste, & class. I will use intersectionality theory to highlight how combinations of oppressions result in climate action. India has been chosen as it has been home to many environmental movements & has seen an active involvement of youth in climate change movements while facing the worst atrocities of climate change. The case study for this project is based in central Indian state of Chhattisgarh, a forest & mineral rich state that has seen decades of protest against mining, deforestation, & displacement. Studying the stories of young people coming into climate activism in the face of social, environmental, and cultural injustices, will help better understand the dynamics that shape mobilizations. I will conduct ethnographic research involving semi-structured interviews and participant observation. My article-based dissertation aims to (1) bring forth voices of indigenous people & contribute to building more inclusive, ecologically responsible, & rights-based sustainable policy making (2) highlight the role of youth activism in strengthening civic engagement (3) promote youth resilience strategies upholding democratic participation. By exploring grassroots strategies of environmental defense from Global South, the study encourages reflection on how Finland can strengthen its own democratic engagement, particularly with youth & marginalized communities, in shaping environmental policy. It is strongly

aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land) & SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

*Shailendra Rai, Doctoral Researcher, University of Jyväskylä, Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy
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Keywords: nature-based integration, social inclusion, migration, ecosocial work

Project title: Use of public natural environment as a means of inclusion for people with a migration background.

The project focuses on environmental and social sustainability transition applied in Social Work to include people with a migration background. The project will deepen the research-based knowledge of the cultural differences in perception of nature perceptions and preferred nature-based activities by different nationalities. The project also focuses on hindrances in the nature-based integration of migrants in a host society. The project analyses the dynamics of sustainability transition and strengthens the social-ecological systems perspective.

Publications and other outputs

1. Administrative Response to Cyclone Nilam : A Case Study of Tiruvallur District Administration (2025) Rai, Shailendra; A3; 978-3-031-77189-7
2. Impact of Climate Variability on Fishermen Livelihood : Evidence from the Western Coast of India (2025) Rai, Shailendra; et al.; A3; 978-3-031-77189-7
3. Nature-based integration of migrants : A cross-national systematic literature review (2023) Rai, Shailendra; et al.; A2; OA

Author of research datasets

1. Survey data: Use of public natural environment as a means of inclusion for people with a migration background; Rai, Shailendra; et al.
2. Use of public natural environment as a means of inclusion for people with a migration background: PPGIS survey data; Rai, Shailendra; et al.
3. Use of public natural environment as a means of inclusion for people with a migration background: Survey data for intervention study; Rai, Shailendra; et al.

Xenia Zeiler, Prof. Dr. University of Helsinki

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Keywords: India, digital culture India, video games, cultural heritage India, festival cultures India, Durgapuja

1. Indian Video Games and Cultural Heritage, ongoing research

Publications:

- i. Zeiler, X. (2025). Games for Education: The Art and Design of Two Games on Durga Puja. *Marg*, 76(3), 48-55.
- ii. Zeiler, X., & Mukherjee, S. (2024). New Books Network podcast: Videogames in the Indian Subcontinent. Development, Culture(s) and Representations by Souvik Mukherjee, hosted by Xenia Zeiler. <https://newbooksnetwork.com/videogames-in-the-indian-subcontinent-2>.
- iii. Zeiler, X. (2024). The Avatar Faculty: Ecstatic Transformations in Religion and Video Games [Book Review]. *Reading religion: RR : a publication of the American Academy of Religion*.
- iv. Zeiler, X (2023). This is her game. Video games and gender. *Digital Asia, Asiascape* 1-2, p. 96-107, 2023 anniversary special issue, "The Shape of the Asiascape: Ten Years of Digital Asia Research.

2. Mediatized Festival Cultures - Durgapuja in India and in the Indian Diaspora, ongoing research

- i. Zeiler, X. (2025 forthc.). Communication, Social Media Use and Selfie Sharing of Durgapuja Festival Visitors in India and in the Indian diaspora context of Finland. In *A Media Anthropology of India*, Raghunath, P. and Narasimhan, H. (Eds.), Routledge.
- ii. Zeiler, X. (2025). Digital Residues: Durga Puja and the Corona Pandemic. coronAsur - a Research blog. <https://ari.nus.edu.sg/20331-122/>
- iii. Zeiler, X. (2025). Cultural festival heritage, diaspora communities and urban peripheries: Durgāpūjā in Finland. In M. Gravari-Barbas, & M. Garcia Hernandez (Eds.), *Cultural Heritage at the Urban and Metropolitan peripheries* (pp. 296-308). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003477884-21>
- iv. Zeiler, X. (2025). Festliche Photos. Selfie- und Social-Media-Praktiken bei Besuchern des Festes Durgapuja. In *Photographic Practices and the Making of Religion*, de Gruyter.
- v. Zeiler, X., & Chakraborti, S. (2024). Durga Puja -opetuspelit: kehitysprosessi ja jälkipelit (post mortem). *Uskonnotutkija*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.24291/uskonnotutkija.145044>.

3. Digital Culture and Religion, ongoing research

- i. Zeiler, X. (2025). Educational Video Games and Embodied Pedagogies. In S. Borkatakya-Varma & S. Levy-Brightman (Eds.), *Embodied Pedagogies in the Study of Religion: Transforming the Classroom*. Routledge.
- ii. Zeiler, X. (2024). Cultural Heritage, Video Games and Video Gaming: Researching Global Actants with Gamevironments. *Gamevironments*, 2024(21), 60-83. <https://doi.org/10.48783/gameviron.v21.i21.259>
- iii. Grieve, G. P., Radde-Antweiler, K., & Zeiler, X. (2023). Value Formations through Digital Gaming. In H. A. Campbell, & P. H. Cheong (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Digital Religion* (pp. C20.S1–C20.N1). Oxford University Press.

4. Others

- i. Allocco, A. L., & Zeiler, X. (Eds.) (2025). *Sweetening and Intensification: Currents Shaping Hindu Practices*. State University of New York Press.
- ii. Zeiler, X., & Allocco, A. L. (2025). Sweetening and Intensification Processes in Hindu Traditions. In A. L. Allocco & X. Zeiler (Eds.), *Sweetening and Intensification: Currents Shaping Hindu Practices* State University of New York Press.

Indonesia

Ratih D. Adiputri, Postdoc Researcher, University of Jyväskylä, Social Sciences and Philosophy (political science)/ Faculty of Law, University of Lapland

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Keywords: sustainability, green energy transition, battery, critical minerals and non-Western perspectives (Global South) notably from Southeast Asian region

Research project:

1. Book "Political Language of Multilateralism in the United Nations" (forthcoming by Routledge) with Anna Kronlund and Teemu Häkkinen. Based on project "Legitimacy of the UN and transnational challenges 1990-2019" (funded by Kone Foundation)
2. LOST project (battery team), Faculty of Law, University of Lapland (2025 onwards)
3. "Good and bad palm oil", Turku School of Economics, University of Turku (2023-2027)
4. Research group on critical approaches to sustainability, global education, and development (CritED)
5. United Nations Legitimacy and Transnational Challenges 1990-2019" funded by the Kone Foundation (2023-2025), Dept. History and Ethnology, University of Jyväskylä
<https://www.jyu.fi/en/projects/legitimacy-of-the-united-nations-and-transnational-challenges-1990-2019>

I am still affiliated in both University of Lapland and University of Jyväskylä (see www.ratihadiputri.com)

Journal Articles:

1. Adiputri, Ratih D. (2023). "The influence of global education in Indonesia: PISA tests, different conceptions of national assessment, and the policymaking process", in *Education and Power in Contemporary Southeast Asia*, edited by Azmil Tayeb, Rosalie Metro, and Will Brehm. London and New York: Routledge Contemporary Southeast Asia Series, pp. 31-44.
2. Adiputri, Ratih (2023) "Memahami Keterwakilan Politik". Kompas 12.4.2023
3. Adiputri, Ratih (2023) "Multilateralism in Southeast Asia. Poliitikasta, 4.4. 2023 Multilateralism from Southeast Asia –<https://politiikasta.fi/en/multilateralism-from-southeast-asia/>
4. Adiputri, Ratih (2023) "Mengurangi Kesenjangan Pendidikan". Kompas 11.1.2023.
<https://www.kompas.id/baca/opini/2023/01/10/mengurangi-kesenjangan-pendidikan>

Erja Kettunen-Matilainen, Senior Research Fellow, Adjunct Professor, Turku School of Economics, University of Turku, Economic Geography; Dept. of Marketing and International Business

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Keywords: Indonesia, EU, palm oil, bargaining, policy

"Good and bad palm oil. Food security, paradigm shift and stakeholder negotiations in Indonesia and the EU", KONE Foundation, 2023-2028.

This multidisciplinary project examines the opinions, negotiations and policies on palm oil in Indonesia and the EU from a multi-stakeholder perspective, including smallholders, industry, NGOs and policymakers at various scales. Research questions include: What kinds of views do

different stakeholders have on palm oil, and how are the views negotiated and narrated? How do the arguments and narratives reflect the stakeholders' values, the "good and bad" and the ethics of palm oil cultivation and use? Who influences whom and what kind of power relations can we discern in the multi-level palm oil negotiations and debates? How can disputes be resolved to ensure food security and find a solution in line with the 2030 Agenda?

By exploring these questions, this research aims to: (1) Contextualize the paradigm shift in the palm oil narrative, (2) Understand its effects on the power relations and negotiations among palm oil stakeholders, (3) Analyze the effects on primary producers in Indonesia and more broadly on global food security.

Team members: Erja Kettunen-Matilainen (PI, UTU), Ayu Pratiwi (postdoc, UTU), Ratih Adiputri (postdoc, JYU).

Publications:

1. Kettunen, Erja & Ayu Pratiwi (2025) Towards collaborative EU-Indonesia bargaining on palm oil policy: deconstructing the public discourse. *Asia Europe Journal*, published online 18 June. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-025-00732-5>
2. Pratiwi, Ayu & Petr Matous (2025) Local information networks and coffee-agroforestry practices: evidence from a randomized controlled-trial from Indonesia. In: *Handbook of Social Networks and the Environment*, edited by M. L. Barnes and Örjan Bodin. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035318759.00019>
3. Pratiwi, Ayu, Guenwoo Lee, Farikhah & Erja Kettunen (2025) The adoption of green technologies in Indonesia: Shrimp farmers' Facebook group as an Online Community of Practice. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 29: 3, 280-298. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijtd.12362>
4. Kettunen-Matilainen, Erja (2024) The palm oil debate. Invited Blog post, The Sustainable Palm Oil Choice SPOC, 13 September.
5. Kettunen-Matilainen, Erja (2023) The multifaceted question of palm oil. Invited Blog post, The Sustainable Palm Oil Choice SPOC, 16 August.

*Ayu Pratiwi, Docent, Senior Researcher, University of Turku, Economic Geography unit; Biodiversity unit
ayprat@utu.fi*

Keywords: innovation diffusion, rural innovation, agriculture, aquaculture, Indonesia

Ongoing project (2023-2028):

Title: Good and bad palm oil, Food security, paradigm shift and stakeholder negotiations in Indonesia and the EU (funded by KONE Foundation, PI: Erja Kettunen-Matilainen)

Description: This project seeks to understand how the recent war and global food crisis changed the opinions, context, and discourse on palm oil, and how these narratives affect the power relation among the stakeholders. This multidisciplinary project takes a broader approach going beyond existing standalone case studies to examine palm oil negotiations and policies from the perspective of small producers in Indonesia, and policymakers and NGOs in the EU and Indonesia.

Publication:

Pratiwi, A., & Matous, P. (2025). Local information networks and coffee-agroforestry practices: evidence from a randomized controlled-trial from Indonesia. In *Handbook of Social Networks and the Environment* (pp. 130-153). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Completed project (2023):

Title: Heterogeneous effects of migrants and women upon sustainable production and consumption in Finland and Indonesia (funded by Maj and Tor Nessling Foundation, as Principal Investigator)

Description: This study examines two groups that are important for climate change adaptation and mitigation, but have been neglected in most studies: migrants and women. The aim is to explore alternative adaptation and mitigation strategies from the perspectives of women and migrants, and to propose recommendations for improving current adaptation and mitigation mechanisms from the perspectives of producers and consumers in Finland and Indonesia.

Publications:

1. Pratiwi, A., Lee, G., Farikhah, & Kettunen, E. (2025). The adoption of green technologies in Indonesia: Shrimp farmers' Facebook group as an Online Community of Practice. *International Journal of Training and Development*.
2. Lee, G., Pratiwi, A., Farikhah, Suzuki, A., & Kurosaki, T. (2025). Online Communities of Practice as Agricultural information Platforms: A Case Study of Indonesian Shrimp Farmers During the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 61(1), 123-158.
3. Pratiwi, A., Lee, G., Marjanen, H., & Kettunen, E. Global Disruptions in Seafood Trade during COVID-19: The Effects of Mobility Restrictions on Crustacean Exports from Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam. In *Geoeconomics of the Sustainable Development Goals* (pp. 262-293). Routledge.
4. Adiputra, Y. T., Pratiwi, A., & Tonralipu, A. S. A. T. (2024). Caught in the net: Unravelling policy challenges and smuggling dynamics in Indonesia's puerulus exploitation. *Marine Policy*, 169, 106336.
5. Lee, G., Pratiwi, A., Suzuki, A., & Kurosaki, T. (2023). Do online communities of practice complement or substitute conventional agricultural extension services? Evidence from Indonesian shrimp farmers' participation in a Facebook group. *Tokyo Center for Economic Research Working Paper* (No. e183).

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Keywords: content marketing, social media marketing, digital marketing, emerging markets, Indonesia

Researcher profile:

1. Doctoral Degree in Business Studies (Specialization in Marketing), expected to defend in October 2025
2. My research explores digital and social media marketing, with a particular emphasis on content marketing, consumer behavior on social media platforms, and AI in marketing
3. I collect data mostly from consumers and companies operating in Indonesia

Ongoing projects:

1. Generative AI for International Content Marketing, funded by Marcus Wallenberg Foundation, 2025

2. AI-Generated Memes: Consumer Evaluations in Indonesia
3. Impact of Generative AI on Content Marketing Agencies

Publications:

1. Wahid, R., Karjalainen, H., Taiminen, K., & Asiati, D. I. (2023). Becoming TikTok Famous: Strategies for Global Brands to Engage Consumers in an Emerging Market. *Journal of International Marketing*, 31(1), 106–123.
2. Wahid, R., Karjalainen, H., Ukpabi, D., & Taiminen, K. (2023). Can TikTok Sound Enhance Tourism SMEs' Engagement?. In: Ferrer-Rosell, B., Massimo, D., Berezina, K. (eds) *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2023. ENTER 2023. Springer Proceedings in Business and Economics*. Springer, Cham.

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Keywords: Teacher education, teacher identity, international teacher programme, positioning, narrative

Doctoral Dissertation Title (2023): Dynamics of Teacher Identity Construction : Indonesian Teachers in Finnish International Teacher Programme

The aim of the study is to explore teacher identity reconstruction process during learning and after graduation that reflect negotiation process through identity positioning. The findings highlights the significance of teacher identity work that support negotiation between diverse contexts in ITP. Furthermore, the findings also describe temporal and spatial dynamics of this process. The study is conducted in an international Teacher Programme (ITP) between Indonesia and Finland from 2015-2017. The site of this study is located in Aceh, Indonesia and Tampere, Finland. Aceh as a post-conflict and post-tsunami area provide additional dimension to the learning and post-graduation experience. The study use participants' narratives as data which describe the subjective impacts of participating in ITP. The study may support contextual understanding about learning in ITP and how individual teachers make sense and integrate insights from their learning in ITP that may influence future practices. Furthermore, the study also highlights the negotiation process after graduation and challenges in implementing different practices in the local context.

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Keywords: Japan, Zainichi Koreans, diversity, sustainability, community, gender, civil society, vaccine hesitancy, spirituality, digital vigilantism, YouTuber, attention economy, technologies of the self, masculinity, Japan, conspiracy theories, QAnon, anti-vaccination activism, YamatoQ-kai, COVID-19, authenticity, far-right movement, hate speech, Ikigai, Japan, psychosocial studies

Conspiracy theories and the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan: The rise, radicalization, and fall (?) of YamatoQ-kai

Project conducted with Dr. Kamila Szczepanska (UTU, Centre for East Asian Studies)

This article investigates how conspiracy theories, spirituality, and resistance against pandemic-mitigation measures became intertwined during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis in Japan. Utilizing selected concepts from social movement theories (SMT), this case study-driven exploratory analysis focuses on the activities of YamatoQ-kai, a civil society organization that originated in a group of conspiracy-theory influencers and whose activities included the dissemination of an anti-immunization agenda. By analysing online posts on the organization's homepage and journalistic reports on the organization, the article illuminates the underlying implications of the conspiracy theorists' activism and demonstrates how the group adopted QAnon's conspiracy rhetoric whilst taking a Japanized form. Second, it explains YamatoQ's pivotal place amongst the Japanese societal actors espousing vaccine-hesitant attitudes. Finally, it shows how the group—as an unconventional case of conspirituality—created tangible experiences for followers and demonstrates the affective impact of group solidarity. In this way, the article's findings contribute to closing the research gaps in scholarship on conspiracy theories, vaccine scepticism, and conspirituality.

Social Science Japan Journal, jyae003, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ssj/jyae003>

Seduction of far-right actions: A pathway to an authentic self?

Far-right civil movements have emerged as a significant predicament in numerous regions worldwide. Despite abundant research on the tactics employed by far-right groups to instil ideologies, behaviours and sentiments in their followers, such as street demonstrations, investigations into the meaning-making of far-right actions in relation to the trajectories of the participants' lives remain scarce. The present study uses the analytical tool proposed by Katz to explore how far-right activists obtain a sense of moral transcendence through their activism, including participating in the liminal moments of far-right rallies, revelling in unrestricted speech, discovering new abilities, acquiring knowledge and engaging in self-expression. We contend that these experiences engender in participants the sense that they are acquiring that which is absent from their lives and recovering their 'true selves'. The study maintains that to comprehend the allure of the far right, it is essential to contextualise far-right actions within the participants' lives, the societies that they inhabit, and the circumstances that surround them. In short, the sensation that one is rediscovering one's 'true self' may encourage activists to pursue the more remote objective of reclaiming what they perceive as their nations' lost ideals.

Crime, Media, Culture

<https://doi.org/10.1177/17416590241245380>

(Projected conducted with Dr. Yutaka Yoshida, Cardiff University, UK)

Technologies of the YouTuber Self: Digital Vigilantism, Masculinities and Attention Economy in Neoliberal Japan

Completed projects:

"The Presentation of the Korean Self with Everyday Food: Negotiating "Koreanness" through Kimchi Diplomacy in Contemporary Japan." *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies*, vol. 36 no. 1, 2023, p. 87-116. Project MUSE, <https://doi.org/10.1353/seo.2023.a902135>.

Publications:

1. Demelius, Yoko and Kamila Szczepanska. 2025. "Inbōron: Minshushugi o Yurugasu Mekanizumu (Conspiracy Theories: The Mechanism That Shakes Democracy)" by Hata Masaki. Tokyo: Chūōkōron Shinsha, 2022, 272 pp., Social Science Japan Journal, 28 (2) Summer 2025, jyaf018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ssjj/jyaf018>
2. Demelius, Yoko and Yutaka Yoshida. (2025). "Technologies of the YouTuber Self: Digital Vigilantism, Masculinities and Attention Economy in Neoliberal Japan", Global Crime. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17440572.2025.2451833> (peer-reviewed journal article)

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Keywords: Japanese language education, language and identity, collaborative learning, media and consumer culture in Japan

Publications:

1. Ito-Morales, K., & Fuse, R. (2025). Telecollaboration In Japanese Among Spanish and Finnish Students: Its Potential For Motivation And Mediation. Journal of Intercultural Communication, 25(1), 107-120. <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v25i1.1055>
2. Hata, Y., & Fuse, R. (2025). フィンランドでのセミナー「日本の物語と食」開催を通じた PBL 型日本学教育の実践. 新潟大学高等教育研究, 12, 17–22. <https://nii.ac.jp/records/2001632>
3. Fuse, R., & Park, S. (2024). Uskaltaisinko käyttää suomea opetuskielenä? Tapausesimerkki monikielisistä käytännöistä Helsingin yliopiston kokeilukurssilla. Kieli, koulutus ja yhteiskunta: Kieliverkoston verkkolehti, 15(6). <https://www.kieliverkosto.fi/fi/journals/kieli-koulutus-ja-yhteiskunta-marraskuu-2024/uskaltaisinko-kayttaa-suomea-opetuskielena-tapausesimerkki-monikielisista-kaytannoista-helsingin-yliopiston-kokeilukurssilla>
4. Costantini, H., Costantini, R., & Fuse, R. (2024). Changing Health Information on COVID-19 Vaccination in Asia. Journalism and Media, 5(2), 526-536. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia5020035>
5. Hata, Y. & Fuse, R. (2023). 日本とフィンランドの異分野協働によるくずし字セミナーの実践. 新潟大学高等教育研究 10, 16–21.

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Keywords: The West, Japan, interaction, globalization, interdependence, transcultural information, image

The West and Japan: interaction, globalization and transcultural information, image

Publications:

1. Keskustelu kansainvälisestä maineesta ja turvallisuudesta: Suomi ja Japanin ero Kansainliitosta 1933. (Discussion about International Reputation and Security: Finland and Japan's Departure from The League of Nations in 1933). Historian ja arkeologian tutkimuksen aikakauskirja 55/2024. Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys: Rovaniemi 2024, 219–226.
2. Salaisesta yhteistyöstä strategiseen kumppanuuteen: Suomen ja Japani turvallisuuspoliittiset suhteet 1904–2023. (From Secret Cooperation to Strategic Partnership: Finnish and Japanese Security Policy Relations 1904–2023) Historian ja arkeologian tutkimuksen aikakauskirja 55/2024. Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys: Rovaniemi 2024, 177–194.

3. A Message From 1870s Japan: The Education of Women Is Important. Faravid. Historian ja arkeologian tutkimuksen aikakauskirja 54/2023. Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys: Rovaniemi 2023, 69–75.
4. How Global Was Global? The Regional Prevalence of the Corona Pandemic in the Spring of 2020 – Perspectives on Finland and Japan. Transcultural Encounters III. Debate! Language, Culture and Information in Interaction. Pekka Kuusisto, Kari Alenius & Maria Julku (eds.) Studia Historica Septentrionalia 90. Pohjois-Suomen Historiallinen Yhdistys, Rovaniemi 2024, 253–262.
5. Views of the Western Newspapers Published in Japan on the Opening up of Korea in 1876. Proceedings from NAJAKS 2022. Edited by Leong-Young Kim & Lasse Lehtonen. Studia Orientalia 124. The Finnish Oriental Society, Helsinki 2023, 21–33.

*Silja Keva, Dr. Soc. Sci (Asian Studies), University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies
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Keywords: Japan's foreign policy, Diet of Japan, parliamentary diplomacy, norms, norm diffusion in international relations

Publications:

1. Kähkönen, T. and Keva, S. (2024) Developing a sustainable campus in international collaboration. CEAS Insights 2/2024. [https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN: 978-951-29-9791-6](https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-29-9791-6).
2. Keva, S. Remembering the war in Japan's political rhetoric - focus on contemporary parliamentary narratives during war anniversaries (ongoing research).
3. Keva, S. (2023). Parliamentarians and Normative Power Diffusion: A Case Study of Japan. International Journal of Parliamentary Studies, 3(2), 284-308.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/26668912-bja10065>

*Lasse Lehtonen, PhD, Associate Professor (Title of Docent), Academy of Finland Research Fellow, University of Helsinki
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Keywords: Japanese culture, Japanese society, music in Japan, nationalism, modernism, gender, video game music, Finnish-Japanese cultural exchange

Peer reviewed monographs:

2025: 『ユーミンと「14番目の月」——荒井由実と女性シンガー・ソングライターの時代』 [Yuming and The 14th Moon: Arai Yumi and the Era of Female Singer-Songwriters]. A translated, revised, and expanded edition of Yuming's The 14th Moon, featuring a new author's foreword and a translators' essay. Translated by Ken Katō and Anita Drexler. Tokyo: Heibonsha (2025). 224 p.

Edited peer-reviewed anthologies and journal issues:

2023: Kim, Jeong-Young and Lasse Lehtonen (eds.). Proceedings from NAJAKS 2022. Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society.

Peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters:

1. 2026 (forthcoming): "Sonic Allegories of Ecological Crisis in Chrono Trigger: An Ecogame Perspective." In Soundtracks of Climate Change, edited by Alexis Bennett, Annette Davison, and John Richardson. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
2. 2026 (forthcoming): 「モダニティ（近代）の多様性——橋本國彦の戦前の歌曲と『舞』」 [The Diversity of Modernity: Hashimoto Kunihiko's Prewar Songs and Mai]. Translated

by Tomoko Yasukawa. In 『20 世紀日本と西洋音楽理論』 [Twentieth-Century Japan and Theory of Western Music], edited by Tomoko Yasukawa and Shigeru Fujita. Tokyo: Ongaku no tomo sha.

3. 2025 (forthcoming): "Sibelius sotienvälisessä Japanissa: Fantasioita Suomesta, länsimaista ja kansallisesta samuudesta" [Sibelius in Interwar Japan: Fantasies of Finland, the West, and National Sameness]. In *Sivuutetut soinnit* [Overlooked Resonances], edited by Kaarina Kilpiö and Saijaleena Rantanen. Turku: Turun Historiallinen Yhdistys.
4. 2025: "Histories of Video Game Music in Japan: Technological Change, Creativity Under Constraints, and Revaluation of Early Game Music." In *Global Histories of Video Game Music Technology*, edited by Karen M. Cook, William Gibbons, and Fanny Rebillard. Turnhout: Brepols, 127–149.
5. 2024: "Early discourse about video game music in Japan: Children's music, electronic bleeps, and the legitimization of a genre." *Journal of Sound and Music in Games* 5 (2): 86–111.
6. 2023: "Sibelius in Japan: Cultural Domestication and Images of Sameness." *Journal of Musicology* 40 (4).
7. 2023: "Conflict and Synthesis of Traditional and Modern Japan in Hashimoto Kunihiro's Art Songs." In *The Art Song and Lyrical Modernity in East Asia and Australia*, ed. Joys H.K. Cheung and Alison Tokita. London and New York: Routledge, 56–72.
8. 2023: "'My music cannot be compared to anything done in the past': Female singer-songwriters and the 'new' in New Music in 1970s Japan." In *Proceedings from NAJAKS 2022*, edited by Kim Jeong-Young and Lasse Lehtonen. Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, 163–176.

More information: <http://lasselehtonen.wordpress.com/>

Riikka Länsisalmi, Senior University Lecturer, Docent of Japanese Studies, D. Lit., University of Helsinki, Department of Languages

Keywords: Japanese language, language policy, language education, sociolinguistics, discourse studies, minority languages

Ongoing projects:

1. Japan Past & Present (JPP) Project: The Jumble of the Senses: The Language of Food in Contemporary Japan / 感覚のごた混ぜ：現代日本における食と言語
Members: Länsisalmi, Riikka; from Leiden University: Cwierka, Katarzyna (Project leader); Yoshioka, Keiko; Giolai, Andrea
2. Japanese as Mother Tongue and Home & Heritage Language in the Metropolitan Area Language Reserve
Members: Länsisalmi, Riikka; Sosa Sachiko

Edited book:

Autere, Mikko & Länsisalmi, Riikka: *Nationalismi ja kieli* (Nationalism and language). Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura 2024: <https://kirjat.finlit.fi/sivu/tuote/nationalismi-ja-kieli/5213153>

Articles:

1. Constructing the "seikatsusha" through Japanese as a Second Language: Ideologies of Communication in Language Education Policy and Locally Produced Learning Materials. In: *Ideologies of Communication in Japan: Speakers, Interaction and the Creation of Difference*. Heinrich, P., Grosser, F. & Santalahti, S. (eds). Bristol: Multilingual matters, 2025, 19–33.

2. Länsisalmi, Riikka & Santalahti, Saana: Ainukulttuurin museo opastajana ainun kieleen: Aineettomia matkamuistoja ja etnolingvististä elinvoimaa? In: N'ying-dyuumgu, n'ying-ngafq: Festschrift for Ekaterina Gruzdeva. Sorjonen, J., Grünthal, R., Honkasalo, S., Kaheinen, K., Kittilä, S., Länsisalmi, R., Miestamo, M., Sandman, E., Santalahti, S. & Yurayoung, C. (eds). Helsinki: Suomen itämainen seura, 126: 379–410 (Studia Orientalia 126), 2025.

For a complete list of publications and projects, see:

<https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/fi/persons/riikka-lansisalmi/publications/>

Oshie Nishimura-Sahi, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Tampere University, Faculty of Education and Culture
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Keywords: Comparative and International Education; global education policy; decoloniality; Actor-Network Theory; autoethnography; Japan

Doctoral thesis:

Nishimura-Sahi, O. (2024). Reimagining global education policy research: The case of the European language framework (CEFR) transfer to Japan [Doctoral dissertation, Tampere University]. Trepo..

Peer-reviewed journal articles and chapters in research books:

1. Nishimura-Sahi, O. & Piattoeva, N. (2024). 'Global' as co-construction: Socio-material analysis of global education policy. In D. B. Edwards, T. Verger, K. Takayama and M. McKenzie (Eds.), *Researching global education policy: Diverse approaches to policy movement* (pp. 232–252). Policy Press.
2. Nishimura-Sahi, O. (2023). Assembling educational standards: Following the actors of the CEFR-J project. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. DOI: 10.1080/14767724.2022.2037071 (open access)
3. Nishimura-Sahi, O. (2023). Fūdo in foreign language learning in Japan and Finland: An autoethnographic study of a PhD Journey. *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 41(1), 62-83. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v41i1.6886>

Non-refereed scientific articles:

Nishimura-Sahi, O. (2024). Travelling stones. In Z. Millei, N. Piattoeva., & I. Silova (Mnemo ZIN) (Eds.), *(An)Archive childhood, memory, and the Cold War* (p. 370). Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers.

Eija Niskanen, Researcher, adjunct teacher, University of Helsinki, East Asian Studies
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Keywords: Japan, South Korea, East Asia, cinema, anime, J-pop, K-pop, TV drama

Research on Moomin animations animated in Japan (21969-72 and 1990-92); Japanese contemporary cinema, Japanese TV drama, relationship of popular culture and society in Japan, Korean cinema

Currently writing an article on the crossing of J-pop and K-pop industries and practice

Publication:

"Re-written Songs, Musics and Dubbing for Anime / 7: Finland". *The Palgrave Handbook of Music and Sound in Japanese Anime*. UK: 2024.

*Sofi Perikangas / Sanna Tuurnas, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Tampere University, Faculty of Management and Business
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Keywords: co-production; social enterprises; community-based social enterprises; collaborative governance; japan; public services; public management; rural development

Project title: Integration of rural communities into public-service delivery: navigating power dynamics, reciprocity, and accountability in community co-production (RURAL COPE)

Duration of project: 1.9.2025–31.8.2029

Funding: Research Council of Finland

Project number: 3121370731

Team:

Sanna Tuurnas, PI, Tampere University

Sofi Perikangas, Tampere University

Merja Lähdesmäki, Helsinki University Ruralia Institute

Katja Rinne-Koski, Helsinki University Ruralia Institute

Ryo Umeda, Helsinki University Ruralia Institute

Partner: Osaka University

The RURAL COPE project, led by Tampere University and the University of Helsinki, aims to address the challenges of providing public services in sparsely populated areas.

Rural service provision is changing, and new methods for service production are needed. The project investigates community-based social enterprises as actors that can offer innovative service models for rural areas and reshape traditional public administration practices.

Data collection methods include policy analysis, interviews, and Living Labs. The research focuses on Finnish municipalities, but comparative studies are also conducted in Finland and Japan.

By examining power relations, accountability, and reciprocity among actors, RURAL COPE promotes discussions on the future of welfare states, collaborative governance, democracy, equality, and rural development. The project challenges policymakers to design more effective and inclusive policies for rural development.

*Sara Park, Lecturer/PHD, University of Helsinki, Department of Cultures, Asian Studies.
sara.park@helsinki.fi*

Keywords: nationalism, racism, migration policy

Publications:

1. Monograph: *Kioku wo kataru, Rekishi wo kaku: oraru hisutori to shakai chosa* (Between Telling the Past and Writing History: Methodology of Oral History on Sociology), Yuhikaku, March 2023.
2. Chapter Contribution: "Questioning Xenophobia in Japan: Racism, Decolonization, and Human Rights", Pp.327-342, in *Sustainability, Diversity, and Equality: Key Challenges for Japan*, 2023.

Pilvi Posio, PhD Candidate, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies

phabon@utu.fi

Keywords: Community, disaster recovery, reconstruction, the Great East Japan Earthquake, collective aspiring, future orientation, sustainability, social practices, policy transfer

My research focus is the dynamics of community, social practices, sustainability and future. Currently, I'm preparing a research project on inter-city climate collaboration of the city of Turku and its Japanese partner cities.

Publications:

1. Posio, Pilvi. (2024). Aspired communities: Reconsidering community in light of the temporal dimensionality of social life. *Anthropological Theory*. Online first.
2. Posio, Pilvi. (2023). Theme issue editorial: How to Align Global Concerns and Local Issues?. *The Journal of Management for Global Sustainability*. 11(2).
3. Posio, P. (2023). Lectio Praecursoria: Aspired Communities—The communities of long-term recovery after the 3.11 disaster in the town of Yamamoto. *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society*, 47(2), 86–89. <https://doi.org/10.30676/jfas.121411>

Ville Sava, Doctoral Researcher, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies

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Keywords: Asian studies; Japanese studies; contemporary history; politics of memory; politics of history.

Commemorating Defeat: Remembering the Boshin War in Aizuwakamatsu City in Japan -
Doctoral degree, ongoing, estimated time of completion: 2027.

Kamila Szczepanska, University Lecturer, PhD, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies

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Keywords: Japanese NGOs in regional and global governance, development assistance and Japanese NGOs, disaster risk management and Japanese NGOs, Japanese civil society, Japanese social movements, war memory and commemoration in Japan and East Asia, reconciliation processes in East Asia

Japanese Civil Society in Global Governance: Focus on International Cooperation, Development and Humanitarian Assistance (ongoing)

My research explores experiences of Japanese NGOs/NPOs working in the international cooperation, development, and humanitarian assistance sectors. In my research I focus on identifying their involvement and participation in global governance processes and examining their roles in global politics and addressing trans-boundary challenges. Furthermore, I investigate domestic determinants of Japanese NGOs/NPOs' participation in processes intended to tackle trans-boundary problems and challenges.

Publication:

Demelius, Yoko and Kamila Szczepanska. 2025. "Inbōron: Minshushugi o Yurugasu Mekanizumu (Conspiracy Theories: The Mechanism That Shakes Democracy)" by Hata Masaki. Tokyo: Chūōkōron Shinsha, 2022, 272 pp., *Social Science Japan Journal*, 28 (2) Summer 2025, jyaf018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ssjj/jyaf018>

Korea (North Korea and South Korea)

Sabine Burghart, University Lecturer and Academic Director of EAST Programme/Dr., University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies, Department of Philosophy, Contemporary History and Political Science

Keywords: South Korea, North Korea, foreign aid, ODA, humanitarian assistance, Saemaul Undong, Finland-DPRK relations

Projects:

South Korea's official development assistance in East Africa (2018-)

This project concerns South Korea's role in its development partnership with Tanzania with a focus on the Global Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement, SMU) programme. South Korea claims to pursue a new way of providing development assistance characterized by its own experience as a former aid recipient. The official donor rhetoric points towards more symmetric aid relationships: emphasis on national ownership, request-based approach, notions of self-reliance and non-hierarchical relationships. Tanzania's experience with the SMU programme has been selected for an in-depth case study (Collaboration with the Korean Studies unit / Goethe University Frankfurt: AKS-2018-INC-2230006).

Engagement and Encounters with the Global South through *Saemaul Undong*, In YS. Ahn (Eds.) *Korea and the Global Society: Engagement, Reciprocity, and Tension*. Routledge: London. 2023. 37-58.

North Korea: Socioeconomic transformation and the role of external actors (2008-)

This research concerns the socioeconomic transformation in North Korea with a focus on the role of external actors. Since the 1990s and spurred by an economic crisis, the country has experienced a 'dramatic transformation' (Kim BY 2017). During this time period that also saw humanitarian emergencies, various international aid actors – multilateral, bilateral, international and non-governmental – entered the country resulting in new arrangements, structures and policies (Collaboration with California State University: AKS-2020-C11; Northeast Asia Council Project).

1. Kwon, S.D. et al. [2023] 2023 Understanding North Korea, Seoul: Institute of Unification Education. North Korean Review 21: 1, 2025, 109-111.
2. (with L. Zakharova) 'Russia – A Re-emerging Donor in North Korea: Aid Volumes, Allocation Patterns and Interests', *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 22 (2023) 1–29. doi:10.1163/15700615-02202001.

The Nordic Countries' Relations with North Korea

This research project concerns the Nordic countries' relations with North Korea and is a collaboration with colleagues in other Nordic countries. A first webinar 'Exploring the Nordic Countries' Relations with the DPRK' was organized by CEAS in 24 November 2023. Compared to other Nordic countries, Finland is considered a special case due to its neutrality policy and its doctrine of non-recognition of divided states. To Finland, relations with divided Korea during the Cold War and the Korea question were a politically sensitive issue. The study on Finland is based on an analysis of archival material from e.g. the Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland / Ulkomministeriön arkisto.

(with V. Sava) 'We are realists': Finland's role conceptions, neutrality policy and North Korea, In Kumar, S. (Eds.) *Bridging Asia-Europe Relations - Exploring Shared Challenges and Opportunities*. Singapore: Springer Nature (2025).

Young Joo Hong, Doctoral Researcher, University of Turku, Cultural History and European World History
yjhong@utu.fi
Keywords: Cultural history, South Korea, depression, history of emotions, emotional culture

On-going doctoral research: "Emotions and Depression Discourses in Modern South Korea (1980s-2010s)"

Suik Jung, PhD Candidate, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies
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Keywords: North Korean refugees, social integration, social capital, South Korea

Title: Integration of North Koreans in South Korea: The Role of Social Capital in North Korean Refugees' Employment Outcomes and Mental Health

This doctoral project explores the association of social capital with North Korean refugees' employment outcomes and mental health. The number of North Korean refugees has dramatically increased in South Korea since the mid-1990s. Along with the increase, it was reported that many of the refugees failed to adapt to South Korean society. This failed integration has posed a serious social problem in recent years. Early studies of North Korean refugees discovered that poor employment outcomes and mental health were the main obstacles to the North Koreans' successful integration. Some studies showed that social capital plays a crucial role in the integration processes of refugees. Therefore, this project attempts to investigate the detailed information about North Korean refugees' social capital and its relationships with employment and health. Ultimately, the project would contribute to the better integration of North Korean refugees into South Korea.

Jingoo Kang, Researcher, Assistant Professor, University of Eastern Finland, School of Applied Educational Science and Teacher Education
jink@uef.fi
Keywords: science education, teacher education, gender equity

Kang, J., Kim, H., Lee, B., Tolppanen, S., Viljaranta, J., & George, S. (2023). Career entry motivations and teaching perceptions of science preservice teachers: a comparison of trends between Finland and South Korea. *International Journal of Science Education*, 46(15), 1559–1577.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09500693.2023.2291690>

Il-Gyu Lee, Doctoral Researcher, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies
ilglee@utu.fi
Keywords: Korean Studies, North Korea, South Korea, Nuclear policy, Inter-Korean relations, East Asian security

Title of the PhD research project: Leadership, Identity, and Nuclear Power: Analysing North Korea's Nuclear Trajectory Across Three Regimes (2025 - 2028)

International society's isolation strategy has failed to halt North Korea's nuclear development, culminating in Kim Jong-un's 2022 declaration that the country is a nuclear power state. This research asks: How have leadership transitions shaped North Korea's nuclear trajectory and its responses to international denuclearisation strategies from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-sun (1945-2024)? The project applies National Role Conceptions (NRCs) as its main theoretical framework and combines Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis (CFPA) with process-tracing. Primary sources

will be collected in Korean, including Rodong Sinmun, leaders' speeches and open-source intelligence. These will be analysed through structured discourse analysis and qualitative coding to identify NRCs across the three regimes. The study aims to explain the gap between international denuclearisation policies and North Korea's identity-driven objectives, which have enabled it to sustain its nuclear programme despite diplomatic and economic pressures. It contributes by (1) clarifying the role of leadership identity in nuclear policy, (2) explaining why conventional denuclearisation approaches have repeatedly failed, and (3) providing identity-sensitive recommendations for future international strategies.

Veli-Matti Karhulahti, PhD / Title of Docent, University of Jyväskylä, Department of Music, Art and Culture Studies
Keywords: history, games, technology, media, qualitative research

From Claw Crane to Toy Crane: Catching, Courting, and Gambling in South Korea
 Authors: Veli-Matti Karhulahti, Katriina Heljakka, and Dongwon Jo. 2023

The claw crane—an arcade game that invites its players to remotely grab a prize with a “claw”—has undergone a long process of development from an eye-catching “steam shovel” to a calculated gambling machine across amusement arcades, train stations, and traveling carnivals. Recently, the claw crane has become a common transmedia object in various consumer outlets around the world, serving today’s “kidults” who are willing to play and be playful with toys as grownups. Especially in South Korea, the claw crane now rewards its players with cutified character plushies, which arguably reflects and resonates with the local sociocultural conventions. In this mixed-methods study, we deconstruct the claw crane as a historical artifact that promotes diverse forms of human interaction and engagement in the techno-cultural and social context of South Korea. The claw crane (or in South Korea, rather the “toy crane”) is investigated by means of historical design analysis, a review of contemporary South Korean media texts, and field observations in Seoul. We suggest the claw crane to serve as a multipurpose medium for playful interactions beyond the act of play itself—and in South Korea, having become a means for playful courting and emotional support, which at times of anxiety, stress, and uncertainty may contribute to one’s confidence and belief in the future.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/ks.2018.0037>

Katri Kauhanen, PhD, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies
katri.kauhanen@gmail.com
Keywords: South Korea, history, women’s movement, equality, feminism, authoritarian regime

Doctoral dissertation **Re-examining the Women’s Movement in Cold War South Korea and Beyond: The History of the Korean National Council of Women**, completed in 2025.
<https://www.utupub.fi/handle/10024/194075>

Jeong-Young Kim, University Lecturer, PhD, University of Helsinki, Department of Languages
Keywords: Korean language, linguistics, University of Helsinki

"Korean speech styles and Finnish terms of address from the perspective of KFL learners",
Korean Linguistics 19:1 (2023), pp. 31-58

Korean speech styles (hapsyo-chey and hayyo-chey in particular) are compared with Finnish terms of address from the perspective of KFL learners, focusing on three variables, namely “power”, “distance”, and “imposition” (Brown and Levinson 1987). The comparison is based on Peterson (2010), which the current study replicates. The data was collected during a Discourse Completion

Task: seventy-eight native speakers of Korean were provided with seven scenarios depicting everyday situations. The results underpin the common belief that hayyo-chey is the most common speech style in Korean society. On the pedagogical level, therefore, it should be considered unmarked, meaning that no explication such as “informal polite” is required. However, hapsyo-chey should be introduced as a speech style that may be mixed with hayyo-chey, but also as the norm exclusively used in some restricted formal and writing contexts. Other speech styles may be explained in a similar manner in the KFL classroom.

"Demonstration of Korean Grammar in Finnish" *Studia Orientalia* 124 (2023), pp.137-244

Using the learners' native language in a foreign language classroom may be a controversial issue. Nevertheless, it is typical for the learner to study a new foreign language with materials written in a language he or she understands. The Korean language has been taught using textbooks produced in English for classes in Finland. Even the first book on the Korean language published in Finland was written in English, the title of which is *A Korean Grammar*. After the book written by G.J. Ramstedt in 1939, a Korean learner's book '*Korea Alku! Korean Perusteet*' was subsequently published in Finnish, in 2022. This paper describes how Korean verbs and adjectives, including the copula, are presented to Finnish-speaking learners in particular. *Korea Alku! Korean Perusteet* takes radical approaches in order to simplify the descriptive explanation of conjugation rules for the two word classes (i.e. adjectives and verbs), abandoning the traditional view of them. Instead of obeying the conventional perspective, it introduces grammatical terms tailored for the new approaches, which are examined in the following sections.

Publications:

1. "Korean speech styles and Finnish terms of address from the perspective of KFL learners" Kim, J.-Y. 2023, In *Korean Linguistics* 19, 1, p. 31-58.
2. "Demonstration of Korean Grammar in Finnish". Kim, J.-Y. 2023, In *Proceedings from Najaks 2022*. Kim, J.-Y. & Lehtonen, L. (eds.). Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society, p. 137-144. (*Studia Orientalia*; vol. 124).
3. *Proceedings from NAJAKS 2022*. Kim, J.-Y. (Editor) & Lehtonen, L. (Editor), 2023, Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society. 220 p. (*Studia Orientalia*; vol. 124)
4. "Preface." With Lehtonen, Lasse. In *Studia Orientalia Special Issue: proceedings from NAJAKS 2022*. Kim, Jeong-Young and Lehtonen, Lasse (Eds.) 2023, Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society.
5. *Studia Orientalia Special Issue: proceedings from NAJAKS 2022*. Kim, Jeong-Young and Lehtonen, Lasse (Eds.) 2023, Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society.

Yuchen Viveka Li, PhD Candidate, Department of Music, Art and Culture Studies
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Keywords: feminism, posthumanism, AI, resistance, violence

Publication:

Li, Y.V. (2024). *Fluid Life and Sympoietic Death: The Posthuman Perspective in Korean Sci-Fi Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*.

*Solip Park, Doctoral Researcher, Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Department of Art and Media
solip.park@aalto.fi*

Key: Immigration, expatriation, video game industry, specialists in Finland, South Korea, Korean games, Finnish games, game design praxeology, game production, game development culture, work transition, qualitative research, longitudinal research, interview study.

Understanding Game Work Migration: Game Expats in Finland

My doctoral dissertation (Ph.D. thesis) project, completed in 2024, reports the migration experiences of immigrant and expatriate game development workers (henceforth “game expats”) in the Finnish game industry using multi-model Qualitative Longitudinal Research (“QLR”) 2020-2024. I have traced nine South Korean game expats in Finland, spanning years of semi-structured interviews from 2020 until 2023, regularly twice a year, which were transcribed and anonymized (n=44). The participants reported their cultural encounters, similarities or differences in game development practices, communication style, aesthetics, and design preferences between Finland and South Korea, and their integration experience into the Finnish organization culture. My cultural background — also being a South Korean migrant in Finland, allowed engaging with the participants acknowledging their native language, cultural background, and the exact immigration procedures that they face. The similarities in game platforms (e.g., Mobile games) between the Finnish and Korean game industries also enabled rich data that pinpoints distinctive cultural localities within Finnish and South Korean game studios besides similar technicalities (e.g., Google Play, Unity). Game expats from various regions (e.g., America, Middle East, Asia-Pacific, etc) were also interviewed (n=22) as supplementary data.

Park, S., Denoo, M., Grosemans, E., Petrovskaya, E., Jin, Y., & Xiao, L. Y. (2023). **Learnings From The Case of Maple Refugees: A Story of Loot Boxes, Probability Disclosures, and Gamer Consumer Activism.**

The article synthesises what we learned from reviewing the player activism of the “Maple refugee” incident and applies the insights to the European video game industry and commercial context. The Maple Refugee incident was perhaps one of the most disruptive video game incidents that occurred in South Korea in recent years. It saw tens of thousands of Korean players from the game Maple Story (Nexon, 2003) mobilised in unprecedented online and offline protests in Spring 2021. Together with players from other free-to-play (F2P) games, Maple Story players rallied against the industry norms of monetising with loot boxes and the industry self-regulatory approach to probability disclosures to address potential harms. This culminated in the social phenomenon of the proxy activism method of ‘truck protests,’ rallies of crowd-funded rented trucks displaying protest messages instead of people mass-gathering in public during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the English timeline of the incident collated by Park et al. (2023), we dive deeper into the case with a multidisciplinary group of experts from game studies, law, and human-computer interaction and highlight various issues present in this case: the regulation of loot boxes and probability disclosures, the social pillars of player activism, player trust and theorycrafting, and game production. The paper contributes to the deepening of the industry’s understanding of F2P game business while diversifying the Western-centric discourse of the game research landscape by calling for further cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary inquiries into current video game issues.

Publications:

Park, S., Denoo, M., Grosemans, E., Petrovskaya, E., Jin, Y., & Xiao, L. Y. (2023). Learnings From The Case of Maple Refugees: A Story of Loot Boxes, Probability Disclosures, and Gamer Consumer Activism. Proceeding of the 26th International Academic Mindtrek Conference. Mindtrek ’23, Tampere, Finland. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3616961.3616963>

Sungju Park-Kang, Adjunct Professor, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies / Senior Fellow, KIMEP University, DPRK Strategic Research Center (North Korea)

Keywords: Korea, international relations, narrative, security, gender, methodology, transitional justice

Research interests: international relations, narrative, security, gender, methodology, transitional justice, Korea

Publications:

1. Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: Legitimacy and Denuclearization', *The Geopolitics*, 19 August.
2. Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'What North Korea Wants: A Response to Victor Cha', *The Geopolitics*, 22 July.
3. Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'North Korea and Denuclearization: Regime Survival and Nuclear Weapons', *The Geopolitics*, 6 July.
4. Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'China Style: Denuclearizing North Korea', *Tsinghua Area Studies Forum*, 2 July.
5. Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'Chairman Kim Jong Un's Children: North Korea's Nuclear Weapons', *The Geopolitics*, 20 June.
6. Bang, Chan Young and Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'China's BRI, Kazakhstan, and KIMEP University: The Second Central Asia-China Summit', *The Geopolitics*, 5 June.
7. Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'Denuclearizing North Korea: Dr. Chan Young Bang's Unique Contributions', *The Geopolitics*, 26 May.
8. Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'Kim Jong Un's Next Deal Should Be With Trump', *The Geopolitics*, 30 April.
9. Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'For and Against "Trump 2.0": North Korea and Donald Trump', *The Geopolitics*, 15 April.
10. Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'North Korea, and Why South Korean President Should Be Dismissed', *The Geopolitics*, 9 March.
11. Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'President Trump and the Mistaken Roots of South Korea's Crisis', *The Geopolitics*, 4 March.
12. Park-Kang, Sungju (2025) 'Donald Trump and Two Koreas: Unexpectedly Great Expectations', *The Geopolitics*, 8 February.
13. Park-Kang, Sungju (2024) "Neighbours under the North Star: Civil wars in Finland and Korea", *Asia Europe Journal*, 22(2), 185-200.
14. Park-Kang, Sungju (2023) "A (Voluntary) Prisoner of Research: Mystery, Destiny and Narrative" in: Masters, Cristina et al (eds) *Writing Saved Me*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 79-86.

Bokyoung Shin, Postdoctoral researcher, University of Helsinki, Centre for Consumer Society Research

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Keywords: e-participation, e-government, democratic innovation, social innovation, Big Data, Artificial intelligence

Projects:

1. Collective Intelligence through Digital Tools (COLDIGIT; 2020-2023) funded by NordForsk: <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/collective-intelligence-through-digital-tools-coldigit/>

2. Co-creation Radar Research to Business project (2023-2024) funded by Business Finland
3. Understanding the voice of residents in digital participatory platforms (2024-2025) funded by Finnish Foundation for Economic Education

Publications:

1. Shin, B. (2023). Residents' voices on proposals: Analysing a participatory budgeting project in Seoul using topic modelling. In IFIP EGOV 2023, Budapest, Hungary, September 5-7, 2023, Springer Nature.
2. Shin, B., Rask, M., & Kahma, N. (2023). Measuring the Quadruple Helix in social media: A case study of university–industry collaboration. *Technological Forecasting & Social Change*, 194, 122711.

Myanmar

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Keywords: Diaspora, Long-Distance Activism, Myanmar, Netherlands

“Myanmar Diaspora's Long-Distance Activism in the Netherlands after the 2021 Military Coup”

This research examines the Myanmar diaspora's long-distance activism in the Netherlands following the 2021 military coup. Through ethnographic fieldwork (2022–2023), it explores diverse forms of activism emerging from the diaspora's expressions of solidarity and responsibility for populations back home. Analysed through an intergenerational and interethnic lens, the framework of long-distance activism helps to understand that their activism is not solely tied to nation-building or the state but instead is driven by multiple, often competing visions of what homeland and support for the homeland means. While these divisions remain unresolved, long-distance activism creates space for collaboration across ethnic and generational faultlines.

Publication:

Bu, S., & Matelski, M. (2025). Myanmar Diaspora's Long-Distance Activism in the Netherlands after the 2021 Military Coup. *Ethnopolitics*, 1–22.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2025.2512665>

Jagannath Kafle, Doctoral Researcher, University of Turku, Turku School of Economics, Marketing and International Business (Economic Geography Unit)

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Keywords: Official Development Assistance (ODA), Policy Intervention, Commercialization of Local Resources, Agriculture Productivities Udayapur, Enhancing Local Livelihoods, Trade Linkage

Ongoing research project: "Impacts of Official Development Assistance on Sustainable Management and Commercialization of Local Resources in the Udayapur District of Nepal"

The research examines the mechanism of ODA and corresponding appropriate policy measures in developing countries that can improve commercial agriculture farming and local livelihoods through an improved value chain and trade linkages to local, national, and international markets. The study empirically explores the impacts of the agriculture and trade policies on sustainable management and commercialization of local and indigenous products, thus enhancing the local livelihoods in recipient countries. An empirical case study will be conducted within the Udayapur district of Nepal as a representative community of ODA recipients. A mixed-method approach will be applied to the analysis. Agricultural productivity, trade linkages/facilitation, and welfare impacts are examined as outcome variables.

The research adds novelty value to the sustainable utilization of resources, commercialization of local and indigenous products, international trade relations, and aid-development literature. I am working to produce a monograph for my Ph.D. and expect to complete it by the end of 2025.

Publications:

1. Kafle, J. (2023). Nepal, India and China Economic Diplomatic (NICED) Relationship, NECS Publication, <https://necs.org.np/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/014.pdf>. (Seminar Paper)
2. Kafle, J. (2023). Does foreign aid work for economic development or not? ClicNepal, <https://clicknepal.com/2023/02/1765/> (Blog Article)

Pakistan

*Muhammad Hassan Qadeer Butt, Doctoral Researcher, Abo Akademy University, Department of English Language and Literature
hassan.butt@abo.fi*

Keywords: South Asian Literature, Literary Urban Studies, Postcolonial Literature.

PhD English Language and Literature (2023-27): The Politics of Safety and Trauma in Post 9/11
Pakistani Urban Fiction.

Singapore

*Erkki Viitasari, PhD, University of Helsinki, Department of Cultures
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Keywords: Southeast Asia, Nationalism, Museology, Brunei, Singapore, Taiwan, Palau

PhD thesis "Legitimizing an Existence among Giants: National Museums in Singapore, Brunei,
Taiwan, and Palau". (2023)

Taiwan

*Julie Yu-Wen Chen, Professor, University of Helsinki, Department of Cultures
julie.chen@helsinki.fi*

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, globalization, Russia, local agency

Publications:

Julie Yu-Wen Chen and Torbjörn Lodén (eds.) (2023) *Slowly Taking Off: Nordic-Taiwan Relations*, p. 27-45. Stockholm: Institute for Security & Development Policy.

Ari-Joonas Pitkänen, Doctoral Researcher, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies

ajrpit@utu.fi

Keywords: Taiwan, China, geography, ecology, outdoor activities

Doctoral dissertation project: “Through case studies focusing on outdoor activities in Taiwan, the project examines the role of people's interaction with the island environment in the process of "Taiwanisation". (planned completion 2026)

Publications:

Pitkänen, Ari-Joonas (2024). Is Taiwan a Small Island? Relational and Representational Perceptions. *International Journal of Taiwan Studies* 8(1): 5–33. <https://doi.org/10.1163/24688800-20241353>.

Vietnam

Tomi Särkioja, PhD Candidate, Tampere University, Faculty of Management and Business

Tomi.Sarkioja@tuni.fi

Keywords: Innovative entrepreneurship, institutional change, Vietnam

A study on the development of innovative entrepreneurship and institutional change in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Regional Issues and Comparisons within Asia

Julie Yu-Wen Chen, Professor, University of Helsinki, Department of Cultures

julie.chen@helsinki.fi

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, globalization, Russia, local agency

Publications:

1. Chen, Julie Yu-Wen; Ristivojević, Dušica (2023) Global-Local Dynamics in the Belt and Road Initiative Projects. *The Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 21 (4): 1-11.
2. Chen, Yu-Wen (2023) Glocalization of Belt and Road Initiatives: The Importance of Local Agency, in Paulo Afonso B. Duarte, Francisco B.S. José Leandro and Enrique Martínez Galán (eds.) *Palgrave Handbook of Globalization with Chinese Characteristics: The Case of the Belt and Road Initiative*, p.125-137. Singapore: Palgrave-Macmillan.
3. Chen, Yu-Wen (2023) A Transnational Approach to Understanding Japanese Colonial Influence on Taiwan: Manifestations in Taiwan's Cinema and Popular Music, in Kevin Cawley and Julia Schneider (eds.) *Transnational East Asian Studies*, p. 199-213. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Bart Gaens, Leading Research Fellow (PhD), Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA), Global Security Research program

bart.gaens@fii.fi

Keywords: Connectivity, great-power competition, infrastructure development, Indo-Pacific

Title: “Superregionalism and Contentious Connectivity in Asia”

Duration: May 2021-April 2023

This research project examined connectivity as a key area of global power competition. The focus was on Asia, broadly the Indo-Pacific, as a superregion, i.e., a region defined by various functional and connective links rather than by geographical borders. The project explored linkages between connectivity and security, economy and (sustainable) development, and contrasted and compared connectivity strategies of key actors including China, the US, Japan, Russia, and the EU. The project was premised on the idea that the infrastructures of connectivity do not only serve as a major site of contestation, but also provide opportunities for cooperation in the decades to come.

Team members: Bart Gaens, Ville Sinkkonen, Katja Creutz, Kristiina Silvan, Anu Ruokamo, Tyyne Karjalainen, Jyrki Kallio

Publications:

1. Gaens, B., Sinkkonen, V. & Ruokamo, A. Introduction to the Special Issue: Theory and Practice of Connectivity in the Indo-Pacific—Spheres, Logics, and Regional Dynamics. *East Asia* 40, 195–207 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-023-09411-x>
2. Gaens, B., Sinkkonen, V. & Vogt, H. Connectivity and Order: an Analytical Framework. *East Asia* 40, 209–228 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-023-09401-z>
3. Gaens, B., Sinkkonen, V. Contentious Connectivity—the USA, Japan, and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific. *East Asia* 40, 265–291 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-023-09407-7>
4. Special Issue: Theory and Practice of Connectivity in the Indo-Pacific: Spheres, Logics, and Regional Dynamics. *East Asia*, Vol. 40, issue 3, September 2023. Issue Editors: Gaens, Bart and Sinkkonen, Ville. <https://link.springer.com/journal/12140/volumes-and-issues/40-3>

*Karoliina Hurri, PhD Candidate, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland & Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki
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Keywords: Climate leadership, China, COPs, UNFCCC, Global South, climate responsibility

Ongoing project:

Climate responsibility as a normative cornerstone of multilateral cooperation? (Kone Foundation, 2022-2025, led by Sanna Kopra)

Erja Kettunen-Matilainen, Adjunct Professor, Turku School of Economics, University of Turku, Economic Geography; Dept. of Marketing and International Business

erja.kettunen-matilainen@utu.fi

Keywords: , trade, trade policy, Free trade agreements, sustainable development

Free Trade Agreements and Sustainable Development

This research explores the EU's free trade agreements (FTA) in Asia and focuses on sustainable development commitments in FTAs to protect the environment and labour force. The research covers the EU's recent FTAs with Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, and Japan. Funded by the Foundation for Economic Education.

Publications:

1. Kettunen, Erja & Claes G. Alvstam (2023) The EU-Japan EPA and the question of formal and informal trade barriers for European businesses in Japan. *TRAMES Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, Special Issue "The multifaceted relations between Europe and Japan – taking stock and building the future" 27: 3, 219-242. DOI: 10.3176/tr.2023.3.03.
2. Kettunen, Erja (2023) Competing Regionalisms in the Asia-Pacific? Versatile Sustainable Development issues in FTAs. *Peace Review*, Special Issue "Geo-economics and geopolitics of peace and conflict", 35: 4, 672-682. DOI: 10.1080/10402659.2023.2268020

The internationalization of Finnish architectural and urban planning offices in Asia

This research project focuses on the impact of professional ethos of architects in their internationalization motives as to the locations and types of architecture and urban planning they carry out. We find that Finnish architectural offices have been active in designing cultural buildings, eco-cities, and commercial buildings in different parts of China, as well as humanitarian architecture projects e.g. in Cambodia and India in the Global South. These choices emphasize their value-based choices that balance between the responsibility, aesthetics, and business elements in their professional ethos.

*Sina Krämer, Doctoral Researcher, Tampere University, Tampere Peace Research Institute
sina.kramer@tuni.fi*

Keywords: Conflict trauma, gender, Southeast Asia

Gendered conflict trauma and transgenerational transmission in post-conflict societies/protracted conflicts in Southeast Asia.

This doctoral research will explore the gendered dimension of transgenerational conflict trauma and its transmission in a case study context of Southeast Asia. The final dissertation will be a monograph and can be expected to be completed in 2027.

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Keywords: Sino-Japanese Children, Second Sino-Japanese War, Children Born of War, Identity, Belonging

Title: Sino-Japanese Children Born of the Second Sino-Japanese War Who “Returned” to Their “Homeland”: Experiences, Identities, and Belonging

Abstract: This article examines the little-known experiences of children born of Chinese mothers and Japanese fathers who had consensual relationships during and after the Second Sino-Japanese War in China, with a specific focus on those who migrated to Japan after 1972. To understand how and why they—in their own words—“returned” to their “homeland,” this article analyzes historical circumstances as well as Sino-Japanese children’s experiences, identities, and belonging in comparison with other groups of “children born of war” in different historical and geopolitical settings. Their long-neglected stories point to a missing part in narratives of the 8-year war.

Information: Asia-Pacific Journal , Volume 23 , 2025 , e13

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/apj.2025.10012>

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Keywords: feminism, posthumanism, AI, resistance, violence

Publication:

Li, Y.V. (2024). Imagination of Humanity’s Future: Representation and Comparison of Female Cyborg Images in Generative AI Paintings. *Feminist Media Studies*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2024.2434639>

Mikael Mattlin, Research Professor, Finnish Institute of International Affairs

Keywords: China, investments, political system, jui, games, simulations, international relations, EU, economic statecraft, pedagogy

Projects:

1. University textbook on China's political system for Brill (project lead). Collaborators: Prof. Lauri Paltemaa (UTU) and Senior Lecturer Juha Vuori (UTU). Project completed in 2026.
2. Use of negotiation games as pedagogical platforms (project lead). Collaborators: Dr Elina Ketonen (UH), Professor Kirsti Lonka (UH) and Milla Kruskopf (UH). Ongoing long-term research collaboration.
3. MATINE-funded research project "Kiinan murrokselliset teknologiat ja kansainvälinen turvallisuus" (project leader). Project funding period: 2023–25.
4. Business Finland research project StandardEdge, "Technical standards as critical intangible capital for Finnish companies in an era of strategic competition" (PI for FIIA sub-project). Consortium led by Prof. Tuomas Mylly (Hanken/IPR UC). Other institutional collaborator: LUT. Project funding period: 2023–25.

5. EU Horizon 2021 research project ReConnect China. Consortium led by Ghent University (member of the UTU research team). Project funding period: 2022–26.
6. Academy of Finland research project ForAc, "Foreign acquisitions and political retaliation as threats to supply security in an era of strategic decoupling", <https://sites.utu.fi/forac/en/> (project director and PI). Project funding period: 2020–23.

Selected recent publications:

1. Breslin, Shaun & Mikael Mattlin (2025) "Bundling threats: Why dominant perceptions of China changed in Europe," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 18 (2): 196–219. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/poaf003>
2. Mattlin, Mikael & Mikko Rajavuori (2023) "Changing causal narratives and risk perceptions on foreign investment: The riskification of Chinese investments in the Nordic region," *East Asia* 40 (3), 243–263. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-023-09397-6>
3. Ferchen, Matt & Mikael Mattlin (2023) "Five modes of China's economic statecraft: Rethinking Chinese economic statecraft," *Pacific Review* 36 (5): 978–1004. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2023.2200029>
4. Mattlin, Mikael, Shaun Breslin, Elina Sinkkonen, Liisa Kauppila, Björn Cappelin, Ines Söderström & Matt Ferchen (2023) "Enhancing small state preparedness: Risks of foreign ownership, supply disruptions and technological dependencies," FIIA Report 74. Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 206 p. <https://www.fia.fi/en/publication/enhancing-small-state-preparedness>

*Stephen Ranger, PhD, Doctoral Researcher, University of Turku, Centre for East Asian Studies
stephen.ranger@utu.fi*

Keywords: Anglo-Japanese alliance, Sino-Japanese War, Russo-Japanese War, Korea, Manchuria, Weibaimai, Warlord period

Current doctoral research (6th year): "Understanding the process of British foreign policy toward Korea and China during the period of Japan's Rise (1894 to 1911)"

Publications:

1. Parc, Jimmyn and Stephen Ranger. (2026). *International Relations and the Development of Korea's Film Industry*. Abingdon: Routledge.
2. Ranger, Stephen. (forthcoming, 2026) "Turning to a 'new chapter'? The challenges of redefining UK-China relations in the post-handover period, 1997-1999". *Diplomacy and Statecraft*.
3. Ranger, Stephen. (2023). "Are We Under Siege? US Popular Perceptions of Japan and China in the Post-Cold War". *Asia in Focus*, 9 (9): pp. 4-13. <https://journals.lub.lu.se/asiainfocus/article/view/25427/22379>

*Veera Rosendahl, Doctoral Researcher, University of Vaasa, School of Management, Department of Public Law
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Keywords: Renewable Energy, Sustainable Energy, Climate Change, Energy Policy, International Perspective, Indonesia, Finland, Asia European Union, Legal Framework

Project: Renewable energy in a new complex world – Societal resilience capacity in the context of climate change

Duration: 2025–2029

My doctoral research examines how renewable energy projects, can be implemented more effectively to combat climate change. The study compares regulatory frameworks and permit processes in Finland, the EU, and Indonesia. Indonesia is a key case study due to its status as the most populous country in Southeast Asia, a major fossil energy producer and consumer, and a rapidly growing renewable energy market. The research investigates how regulations and digitalization can facilitate sustainable energy investments.

The research includes a doctrinal legal perspective: analyzing legislation and administrative procedures, interpreting decisions, and comparing regulatory frameworks. The aim is to understand how legal procedures and regulations either facilitate or hinder investments and project implementation. The empirical data consist of expert interviews and document analyses conducted in Europe and Indonesia.

Background and experience in Indonesia:

I have prior academic and work experience in Indonesia: I was an exchange student at BINUS University in 2023 and completed an internship at the Nordic Chamber of Commerce in 2024. I speak Indonesian fluently and hold a BIPA certificate. Consequently, I have strong local contacts and access to regional information sources that I can utilize in my doctoral research.

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Keywords: South Asian Studies, India, India & China, contemporary foreign policy, history

On-going research project (doctoral dissertation):

Indian foreign policy towards Africa in comparison to China

Supervisor: professor Lauri Paltemaa, Centre for East Asian Studies

The research focuses on India's foreign policy towards Africa. Africa has always caught attention of developed and developing countries as the continent possesses abundant resources and has connections to commercial maritime routes – the Red sea, the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean. Today India spares no efforts not only to become a trusted trade and political partner for African states, but to win their heartfelt sympathies. For example, Indian leaders never tire of reminding that India – just like Africa – fought against colonialism, thereby opposing itself to the former colonial empires and emphasizing its common historical and cultural background with Africa. The paper will review the institutions of Indian and Chinese foreign policy, diaspora influence and military presence on the continent. Meanwhile many countries remain wary of the widespread influence of China, especially in Africa, where a new Chinese military base has been recently built. Accordingly, new alliances are forming and the balance of power is shifting.

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Keywords: culinary identity, local identity, national identity, cultural institutions, museum, culture centre, UNESCO Creative Cities of Gastronomy, creative city, culinary nationalism, gastronomic tradition, Chengdu, China, Tsuruoka, Japan, Jeonju, South Korea, Chinese food, Japanese food, Korean food

Gastronomy tourism has grown rapidly in East Asia. Destination cities introduce their gastronomic compositions not only in restaurants but also in museums and culture centres. Although these cultural institutions represent gastronomic traditions as authentic, they are intently planned cultural policies. My doctoral research will study this relation between representations of

gastronomic tradition in cultural institutions and actual culinary practice at the street-level consumption of food through case studies in three UNESCO Creative Cities of Gastronomy in East Asia: Chengdu, mainland China, Jeonju, South Korea, and Tsuruoka, Japan. Through ethnographic interviews with informants related in museums and culture centres and participant observations in these cultural institutions, I will discuss culinary identities created by cultural organisations as a heritage building on food and culinary nationalism in the name of a global UNESCO project. Furthermore, this study will contribute to shed light on how socially constructed authenticity of gastronomic tradition plays a role through institutions. This study will endeavour to reconsider roles of local cultural institutions and global policy implementing organisations by dissecting East Asian societies through food.

Minna Valjakka, Senior Researcher, Associate Professor, University of Helsinki, Art History and Asian Studies, Department of Cultures

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Keywords: transcultural, contemporary arts, graffiti and street art, public space, civil society formation, environmentally engaged art, sustainability, art-science collaborations, Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia

Transcultural flows in arts and civic sphere; independent research project, 2021 – on going

Publications:

1. Valjakka, M. 2026 (in press). “Theorizing Transcultural Confluences in Contemporary Art: The Pursuit of Inclusive Encounters by Artists of Japanese Descent in Europe.” In *Rethinking Transcultural Interactions in Visual Art*, eds. by Gunhild Borggreen, Gunhild Borggreen, Mette Højsgaard, and Kristine Sandal Hansen. Berlin: De Gruyter/Brill.
2. Valjakka, M. 2023. ‘Transcribed Flows and Arrhythmias: ‘Graffiti’ in Relation to Epigraphic and Artistic Trajectories in Today’s Mainland China. In *Scratched, Scrawled, Sprayed. Towards a Cross-Cultural Research on Graffiti*, edited by L. Mascia, A. Osthof, M. Ratzke, M. and O. Škrabal, 233-263. Berlin: De Gruyter [open access].
3. Valjakka, M. 2023. Contemporary Arts in and for Civil Society. In E. Hansson and M. L. Weiss (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Civil and Uncivil Society in Southeast Asia*. London: Routledge, 45–64. [open access].

Ecological Conjunctions: Contemporary Arts and Natural Science Collaborations for Civil Society Formation (EcoConjunctions) 9/2024-8/2028.

Team members: Doctoral Researcher Mika Nousiainen and Postdoctoral Researcher Frans Autio (starting in 2026)

Funded by the Research Council of Finland.

EcoConjunctions is an innovative project that explores the dynamic relationship between contemporary arts, natural sciences, sustainability and civil society from an ecocritical perspective. Its interdisciplinary approach draws on art history, sociology of art and civil society studies. Through selected case studies from Finland, Singapore, Indonesia and Japan, it aims to contribute and to decolonise research on art-science collaborations by formulating non-Euro-American-centric frameworks. The main objectives include: tracing local and transcultural genealogies of art-science collaborations, identifying their strategies for translating, producing and contributing to scientific knowledge, and critically analysing the possible societal impacts. With national and international collaborators from the arts, natural sciences, humanities and social sciences, the project aims to establish a new field of interdisciplinary research in Finland and offer new perspectives for international research.

Publications:

1. Valjakka, M. 2027. (forthcoming). “Botanical Remediations: Redefining Relationships between Contemporary Arts and Plants.” In *A Cultural History of Asian Art* (Vol. 6): 1920s – present, edited by Wulan Dirgantoro and Pamela Karimi. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
2. Valjakka, M. 2026 [forthcoming, accepted]. Botanical Engagements of Contemporary Art in Singapore. In *Garden City: Plants, Botany and the Environment in Singaporean History*, edited by Timothy. P. Barnard. Singapore: National University Press.
3. Valjakka, M. 2026 [forthcoming, accepted]. Transcultural Confluences: Contemporary Artists of Japanese Descent in Europe. In *Rethinking Transcultural Interactions in Visual Art*, edited by Gunhild Borggreen, Mette Højsgaard, and Kristine Sandal Hansen. Berlin: De Gruyter/Brill.