



Tübingen Korean Studies Lecture Series

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Confronting Korean Identities among the Korean diaspora in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan

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Since the late 1980s, ethnic Koreans in post-Soviet Kazakhstan have been caught in a struggle for influence between North and South Korea. South Korea's prominent presence in the post-Soviet region has somewhat overshadowed North Korea, leading to claims that their confrontation is no longer a relevant paradigm. This could be explained by two key factors: 1) The conflict exists in a specific social space where various categories of actor are involved in a struggle over the legitimate definition of the collective identity of the ethnic Koreans, and 2) The positions taken by these "identity entrepreneurs" continually shift with changing power relations. In this relational and dynamic space, North and South Korea deploy their strategies to exert influence. Thus, understanding the issue of identity today facing the Korean minority in Kazakhstan requires considering the impact of the North/South confrontation within this community.