

This project is a **study of cultural memory in Indonesia**, with a focus on Buru, a small island in the Moluccas used as a prison for 10,000 political prisoners following the mass killings of an estimated half a million real or suspected Communists in the mid-1960s. The site of numerous atrocities, this study will examine the cultural landscape of traumatic memories on Buru as a microcosm of Indonesia's cultural memory of these killings. This study will use an innovative, **interdisciplinary approach, which combines human and non-human elements**. Specifically, I take up the 'more-than-human' approach to examine the memories and experiences of people within, and as one part of their environment. As such, the whole island of Buru will be the subject of this study, including its inhabitants from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, as well as material and other phenomena, such as its natural and memory landscapes.

Based on Buru, the proposed project will produce **critical new understandings of Indonesia's contentious cultural memory landscapes**. Even though more than 50 years have passed, the 1965 killings remain at the heart of Indonesia's memory wars. The mass killings of Communists in 1965-66 were carried out primarily by Indonesia's military as part of its takeover of the state. This military government, which lasted until 1998, created and policed a hegemonic official narrative of these events, in which the eradication of Communists was necessary to save the nation from their treachery. To this day, the remaining victims, perpetrators and witnesses to the mass killings live side-by-side, and the silence surrounding these atrocities remains strong.

Buru has been selected as the site for this study because it was the principal place of deportation, starting from 1969, of the many political prisoners rounded up during the 1965-66 mass violence. The island's past is connected not only with the history of thousands of these political prisoners (known as 'Tapol'), but also its indigenous people, its new migrants who arrived through the Transmigrasi program, members of the army and other security services. Some of them the (Tapol and other 'new on the island') still live there with their families. In many ways, Buru's history reflects the broad spectrum of problems faced by Indonesian society since independence.

Based on an analysis of existing literature, previous research and my pilot studies which I carried out on Java and Buru islands (January-May 2018), during a three-month research trip on Buru I will find answers to **three main research questions**:

1. What are the human and non-human entities present on the island, constituting carriers of memory?
2. How does human and non-human memory shape Buru's memory landscape?
3. How does Buru's memory landscape reflect contemporary Indonesia's cultural memory of the 1965 killings?

This project builds on recent developments within memory studies to examine how a culture of remembrance is connected with natural space, in which the landscape acquires the meaning of the multifaceted frames of memory expressed in symbols and artefacts. In this sense, the natural world participates in the discourse of memory and can be read as a palimpsest, revealing successive layers of meaning. For this study, I, therefore, take a reversed perspective from more traditional ethnographic approaches that place the human at the centre of the frame for analysis; rather, I assume that **the island, as a non-human memory agent, is in the centre, and which adopts non-indigenous elements**. I understand non-human in a broad sense, as material objects, and the world of nature, including animals, plants, insects and natural phenomena. To examine the memory landscape of Buru, I, therefore, examine both human and non-human subjects; through interviews and observation with a range of the island's inhabitants, but also a study of the changes and impacts on the natural landscape, and the creation and situation of natural and human-made material objects.

The project is located in the field of memory studies and in this context, the importance of the research results for the field lies primarily in **1.** strengthening the empirical basis of knowledge about collective memory in Indonesia, and thus contributing to the development of memory studies; **2.** constructing of a new conceptual apparatus in the field of memory studies, beyond Eurocentric paradigms and embracing the use of non-anthropocentric methodologies; and **3.** contribution to the theory of more-than-human geographies (which is still in its early stages of development), going beyond the traditional research of cultural memory.

You can read about the results of my work on the scientific blog 'More-Than-Human-Whisperer' (in English) and find a digital human and non-human memory map of Buru. Moreover, the final stage of the project implementation will be the preparation of my scientific monograph in English, devoted entirely to the problems of remembrance and reconciliation in post-authoritarian Indonesia.