

## **Remembering Soviet repressions in the post-multiple colonial Russian Far East**

This project focuses on the remembering processes of the Soviet repressions in the Russian Far East (RFE); region, which is virtually unstudied in memory studies but represents a growing geopolitical importance. The project assumes that the RFE is very heterogeneous region, which has experienced multiple colonialisms: colonization by the Russian Empire, the religious and cultural colonization of the Russian Orthodox Church, the colonizations resulting from Sino-Russian wars and Russian/Soviet–Japanese wars, colonial influences provoked by Cold War and contemporary geopolitics, the influences of groups of settlers - Orthodox believers, Ukrainians, Koreans, Germans; and may be a space of different counter memories. The goal of this project is to analyse how these different pasts, different memories and various patterns of remembering the past affect the shape and texture of the Soviet repressions in selected regions of the RFE (Khabarovsk Krai, Primorsky Krai and Sakhalin Oblast). This means that the project proposes multi-disciplinary, decolonial and cross-cultural approaches to investigate the remembering processes of different national and ethnic groups living in the RFE and an understanding of their remembering practices and interconnections to establish how they commonly construct the memory of Soviet repressions in the RFE. Moreover, it looks at the way in which the contemporary memory politics of bordering with Russia China, Japan and the Koreas affect the remembering processes in the RFE.

The proposed decolonial approach means to include local researchers and other members of the local community in the research process and to use *emic* perspectives and ways of understanding to investigate the shape and texture of the memory of Soviet repressions. The proposed decolonial approach means also to include Russian, Korean, Japanese and Chinese researchers, who will analyze the collected materials together and, through discussion, establish the shape and nature of remembering processes in the RFE and their potential for reconciliation and conflict. Such approach will help to avoid a Western-centric perspective in interpreting memory processes.

The result of the project will be a detailed micro-level analysis (commemorative activities of individual memory agents and the meanings they assign), meso-level analysis (collective memories of selected groups) macro-level analysis (overall regional memory patterns) and global-level analysis (the impact of global memory politics on memory processes in the RFE); it will also determine the links and dependencies between them. The project will also establish the role of remembering practices in the creation of the contemporary identity of the RFE, and indicate whether memory conflicts between Russia, China, Japan and South Korea affect local memories. By tracing how controversies are negotiated and how regional as opposed to national memories are constructed, the project will establish whether the RFE may become a space of regional reconciliation processes or one of provocation of new memory conflicts.