Industrialization and its Consequences in Transborder Northeast Asia

From the early 1930s to the late 1950s, northern Korea and Northeast China shared a common path of interconnected industrial development, first under the Japanese Empire and then as part of a Soviet-led socialist regional order. The state-led, heavy industry-oriented economic development of this period created lasting consequences on both sides of the Sino-Korean border: by the 1980s, Northeast China had become a deindustrialized rust belt, and in the 1990s North Korea collapsed into famine. The harsh environmental legacies of this industrialization are still felt today. This talk explores the intertwined histories of industrialization, de-industrialization, and nascent re-integration between North Korea and Northeast China from the 1930s to the present, with a focus on the middle decades of the twentieth century.