

Two full-time PhD positions in the Institute of Area and Global Studies at École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland

The Institute of Area and Global Studies (IAGS) at EPFL invites applications for [two full-time PhD positions](#) in the Anthropology of Cultural Heritage. The successful candidates will develop their own research project in the anthropology of cultural heritage, anthropology of new lifestyle and cultural consumption or in economic geography and urban studies related to the Beijing Winter Olympic Games of 2022. The two PhD theses will be part of the research project “Uses of cultural heritage at the Beijing Winter Olympic Games of 2022” funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and led by Florence Graezer Bideau with Thierry Theurillat.

Profile:

- Applicants should hold a master’s degree in anthropology, ethnology, geography, architecture or urban planning relevant to research in the cultural transformation of the Chinese society crossing urban studies, political and economic issues.
- Prior first-hand practical experience with qualitative research methods (particularly ethnographic methods) in China is mandatory. Some familiarity with basic quantitative research methods is desirable. PhD candidates will further develop their analytical and methodological skills by attending the EDAR doctoral school.
- Fluent English; Good notions of Mandarin Chinese with potential of improvement; French is an asset. The dissertation can be written in English or French.
- Applicants should demonstrate high writing skills, a strong commitment to teamwork and be willing to position their individual research within the shared comparative framework of the above-mentioned SNSF project.
- Interest in working in a multidisciplinary and international environment.
- Candidates of all nationalities are invited to apply; applications from women are especially welcome.

What we offer:

- IAGS is a dynamic institute with an interdisciplinary perspective (anthropology, geography, economy, political sciences) and an interest in experimenting with innovative methods in the area studies.
- The workplace is Lausanne (Switzerland), except when undertaking field research. The researchers will be expected to complete a 12-14 months period of fieldwork in Beijing/China (mostly in 2022).
- EPFL provides an excellent and stimulating research and teaching environment as well as a dynamic and lively international campus with a vibrant student life.
- Located on Lake Geneva, Lausanne is a picturesque city with various possibilities for recreational and cultural activities.

Starting date: April 1, 2020.

Duration: 4 years.

Terms of employment: Fixed-term at 100% work rate. EPFL offers internationally competitive salaries and generous research support.

Deadline for application: January 31, 2020.

Contact: Applicants should submit their file [online](#) , and select the [EDAR doctoral school](#) by ticking the dedicated box. Applicants have to provide a CV, including publications, and a statement of objectives that describes in two or three paragraphs the candidate’s research proposal related to the SNSF research project (see lay summary below). Please note that the names and contact details of 2 referees and a letter of recommendation from one of them are also due on January 31, 2020. For more information about the positions, please contact florence.graezerbideau@epfl.ch and thierry.theurillat@he-arc.ch.

SNSF lay summary of the “Uses of cultural heritage at the Beijing Winter Olympic Games of 2022”

Beijing is the first city to host both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games. For Beijing 2022, the keyword being promoted is “sustainability” alongside the International Olympic Committee’s motto of “legacy”. At the forefront of this sustainable legacy approach are post-games issues as well as potential re-use in the design and the building at the three main locations: Beijing, Yanqing in the Municipality of Beijing and Zhangjiakou-Chongli in Hebei province. Notably, in this context, cultural heritage refers broadly to the Imperial era and to the more recent industrial period. This notion of legacy underpins the main real estate megaprojects and their post-games legacy, backed up via various national and regional sports, health and cultural policies being promoted through the Beijing 2022 Games. Moreover, integrated in the Beijing Masterplan (2016–2035) as well as in the regional planning of the capital city-region (Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei), the Beijing 2022 Games are expected to accelerate urban and regional development arising from new forms of economic sports and health activity inspired by the Games in tourism, leisure and new lifestyles in and beyond Beijing.

It is therefore important to ask how and to what extent cultural heritage plays a role in the legacies of Beijing 2022 Games and in the city-region’s economic and social transformation. This research question arises from the assumption that the Beijing 2022 Games are emblematic of the economic and societal transition of Beijing into a post-industrial city-region, where urban re-development is increasingly focused on new types of residential, tourism, leisure and cultural activities. Cultural anthropologists in China have already highlighted the social engineering dimensions of urban transformations, and that such transformations have accompanied civilization operations from the last imperial era to now. Following the Beijing 2008 Games, scholars extensively documented the various and often confrontational societal impacts of the uses of cultural heritage associated with the creation of a harmonious society in urban transformation. Yet, the economic dimensions of urban and societal transformations have not been fully addressed in cultural studies. This research thus proposes a first analytical framework to address the role and impact of cultural heritage and its use to induce new sites of consumption that function both as an economic driver for urban growth and as social tool to enhance a consumption-based society. Literature in geography on land-driven growth foreground the role of large real estate megaprojects, infrastructure and mega-events in the current phase of urban post-industrial growth in China. Linking both the macro- and micro economic and societal dimensions, this research will provide new crucial understanding of the issues surrounding the post-games legacy of sports mega-events.

The methodology for this research mobilizes a comparative investigation of three sites, via six in-depth case studies, which exemplify the use of cultural heritage in the development of new consumption-based places and practices: 1) the ongoing rehabilitation of the two historical neighborhoods of Qianmen and Dashilar in Beijing highlights the remodeling of the city core as a high-end residential and mass tourism site; 2) the continued rehabilitation of the huge steel plant site at Shougang emphasizes the focus of post-games revival in making cultural and leisure parks for young and families; 3) the city of Chongli and the two new resorts of Genting and Thaiwoo feature the rapid transformation of a rural and mountainous zone into a leisure destination for Beijing and Northern China consumers. The research team gathers six international interdisciplinary scholars (EPFL, Tsinghua, PoliTO, ETHZ and UCL) and two PhD students. This collaboration will result in an international conference at EPFL, a series of public talks and exhibitions with local civil society partners (i.e. architecture offices and local cultural associations), alongside two PhD theses and three scientific journal articles.