

The Institute of Social Anthropology at the University of Bern seeks to appoint a

Full-time PhD researcher (4 years): East Asia case-study

Social Ocean Energy

A Social Learning Approach to Global Marine Renewable Infrastructures

Funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), a full doctoral position is available from June 2024 in an international team studying environmental justice issues around wave and tidal power in East Asia, Southeast Asia and Canada.

New marine energy technologies are unlocking the ocean as a major green energy source. Who will these new blue industries really benefit? How can we produce sustainable energy while ensuring a fair deal for local residents, and care for vulnerable coastlines? The Social Ocean Energy team is setting up collaborative work on these questions in Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Indonesia and Canada.

Decades of experience with solar and wind parks have shown that green energy technologies are often beset with social and environmental justice concerns. Social Ocean Energy (SOCEAN) pioneers the first ethnographic study of marine renewable energy between coastal development hotspots in Asia and North America. Which socio-political legacies, forms of knowledge-production and livelihood positions shape these fledgling ocean industries? How are these renewable energy systems impacting human relations with the sea and how can social research facilitate responsible green technology?

To address this challenging research gap, we will employ qualitative methods to collaborate with MRE communities of practice at development sites. Grounded in political ecology, SOCEAN uses the strengths of long-term ethnographic fieldwork to highlight the experiences of coastal residents. Our methodology combines a collaborative ethnography with on- and offline social learning platforms to connect MRE coasts and project collaborators. The social learning design will create transferable lessons for a broad range of engaged research, policy and activism on environmental issues, industrial innovation and social justice.

For more information, please visit <https://data.snf.ch/grants/grant/208464>

This research group is integrated with the Institute of Social Anthropology at Bern University and Department of Anthropology at the National Taiwan University. These partner institutions teach social anthropology in its full diversity, including the anthropology of the state, economy, migration, media and the environment.

The PhD candidate is expected to

- Design and conduct an independent research project on the social and environmental effects of marine renewables in East Asia
- Conduct ethnographic fieldwork in the region
- Contribute to academic publications
- Support the team with organisational and administrative tasks

Required qualifications

- Masters in anthropology or a closely related qualitative social science
- Relevant language skills for field-sites such as Taiwan, Korea and Japan
- Very good knowledge of spoken and written English
- Very good organisational and communication skills
- Openness to interdisciplinary team-work
- Experience of transdisciplinary and collaborative research methods is desirable

What we offer

- A fully funded PhD position for four years
- The opportunity to gain expertise in the fields of collaborative and environmental anthropology, East Asian Studies and Marine Social Sciences
- Supervision by leading experts on environmental justice and anthropology
- Working in a dynamic and interdisciplinary team
- The possibility to gain teaching experience in year three or four

The salary corresponds to the official rates of the SNSF (approx. EUR 48.000 / annum). Funds for start-up IT equipment, travel and research expenses are available. The team expects to collaborate on hosting international events as well as other formats such as civic science projects. PhD candidates will be given the opportunity to publish widely and become a part of a global network of scholars focusing on coastal technologies and justice issues.

How to apply

Applicants interested in pursuing a PhD with us should submit a cover letter, a research proposal (max. 3 pages), CV, a writing sample (e.g. MA thesis) and the contact details of two references. All documents should be submitted electronically as one pdf to Hsin-yi Lu (hsinyi15@ntu.edu.tw) and Jeanne Féaux de la Croix (jfeaux@posteo.net) by 28th April, 2024. We welcome informal enquiries.