

Mise au Concours

Deux postes de doctorant-e à 80% sur une durée de 4 ans dès le 1.3.2027

Pour le projet de recherche: "Roles and meanings of reterritorialized military bunkers in contemporary everyday life in Switzerland" (Fonds National Suisse)

L'Institut de Géographie de l'Université de Neuchâtel met au concours deux postes de doctorant-e dans le cadre du projet « Roles and meanings of reterritorialized military bunkers in contemporary everyday life in Switzerland » financé par le FNS (1.3.2027-28.2.2031). Cette recherche vise à mieux comprendre la seconde vie des bunkers militaires suisses désaffectés, leur remilitarisation actuelle et leur pertinence continue pour l'identité nationale (voir résumé ci-dessous).

Le ou la candidat-e sera détenteur/trice d'un titre de Master en géographie humaine (ou éventuellement dans une autre discipline des sciences sociales, telles que l'anthropologie sociale ou la sociologie). Il/elle doit - pour effectuer le travail de terrain - parler le français et/ou l'allemand couramment et avoir une bonne maîtrise de l'anglais (oral et écrit). Il/elle dispose également d'une solide formation en méthodes qualitatives et (si possible) quantitatives.

Nous recherchons une personne scientifiquement ambitieuse, autonome, appréciant le travail interdisciplinaire et capable de présenter ses recherches à un public international par la participation à des conférences et à des publications internationales.

L'entrée en fonction est au 1^{er} mars 2027. Le salaire varie entre 50'000 et 53'000 CHF/an entre la 1^e et la 4^e année de projet. Si ce poste vous intéresse, veuillez envoyer un dossier de postulation (**un seul document PDF**) contenant :

- Votre CV
- Des copies de vos diplôme(s) avec les notes obtenues
- Une lettre de motivation incluant vos objectifs scientifiques et personnels en lien avec la réalisation d'une thèse de doctorat sur ce sujet
- Les noms et adresses emails de deux personnes prêtes à agir comme référents

Le dossier est à envoyer **jusqu'au 5 octobre** au secrétariat de géographie de l'université de Neuchâtel (secretariat.geographie@unine.ch). (A noter : Les entretiens d'embauche auront lieu mi-octobre). Des informations complémentaires peuvent être demandées au responsable du projet : Prof. Francisco Klauser (francisco.klauser@unine.ch)

Job offer

Two PhD scholarships at 80% for 4 years starting 1.3.2027

For the research project: “Roles and meanings of reterritorialized military bunkers in contemporary everyday life in Switzerland” (Swiss National Science Foundation)

The Institute of Geography at Neuchâtel University (Switzerland) offers two PhD scholarships for the research project “Roles and meanings of reterritorialized military bunkers in contemporary everyday life in Switzerland”, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (1.3.2027-28.2.2031). The research aims to better understand the second life of repurposed Swiss military bunkers, their current re-militarization as well as their ongoing relevance for national identity (see summary below).

The applicant should have a Master’s degree in human geography (or, possibly, in social and cultural psychology, social anthropology, sociology). She/he should be fluent in French and/or German (required for fieldwork) and have a good level in spoken as well as written English. Skills in qualitative methodologies as well as (possibly) in quantitative methodologies are necessary.

We expect the applicant to be scientifically ambitious, to have a strong interest in interdisciplinary research and to be autonomous in her/his work. We also expect her/him to present the results of the research in international conferences and publications.

The appointment date is the 1st of March 2027. The yearly salary varies between 50’000 and 53’000CHF between year one and four. Interested candidates are asked to send a **single pdf-file** containing:

- Your CV
- Copies of your diplomas with your grades
- A letter of application in which you state your motivation as well as your scientific and personal aims in relation with a PhD on this theme
- The names and emails of two referees

It must be sent until **5th October 2026** to secretariat.geographie@unine.ch. (Please note: The job interviews are expected to be held in mid-October). Further information can be obtained by contacting the project leader Prof. Francisco Klauser (Francisco.klauser@unine.ch).

Summary

Following the 1995 reform of the Swiss Armed Forces, approximately 13,500 military objects were liquidated, including around 8,000 defensive structures. These included myriad underground facilities, ranging from one-man bunkers to kilometre-long artillery bunkers with subterranean factories, army hospitals and warehouses. Most of the subterranean military structures had been built during World War II and the subsequent Cold War, as a part of the 'Swiss Réduit', announced by General Henri Guisan in 1940. The reform thus led to a substantial process of de- and reterritorialization of Switzerland's military underground, with more than 2000 military bunkers sold to public or private parties to be repurposed for novel usage, from bunker museums and hotels to data centres, cellars for storing wine or cheese, mushroom farms, fireworks depots and social clubs. The war in Ukraine, however, brought this evolution to a halt in 2023, when the Swiss Army stopped selling former military bunkers and suggested rearming some of them for mortar fire.

This research project aims **to analyse the roles and meanings of reterritorialized military bunkers in contemporary everyday life in Switzerland**. This provides a deepened understanding of the social, economic, legal, ecological, cultural, architectural and military-related opportunities, limits and issues which arise from the reterritorialization of former military bunkers. On a theoretical level, the bunker problematic is taken as a prism through which to develop a truly volumetric human geography and socio-spatial theory, focused on the spaces of everyday life as multidimensional volumes rather than as planar surfaces.

Empirically speaking, the project comprises several case studies, assigned to two PhD students. PhD 1 focuses on bunker reterritorializations that are still anchored in the sites' initial military purpose, as we see in the case of bunker museums as sites of commemoration and heritagization and of bunkers that are reterritorialized for novel military meanings and practices. PhD 2 focuses on bunkers that are re-territorialized for civil purposes such as arts and accommodation, ecological preservation, and entertainment. Each case study follows three methodological pathways: (1) textual analysis of literature and reports, (2) ethnographic non-participant observation and (3) semi-structured qualitative interviews.