

PhD research projects

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Biotechnology regulation and governance in China

China's role as a source of innovation in the biosciences has changed dramatically in the past decade, with internationally-recognised firms emerging in genomics, transgenic seeds/ food and stem cell research and therapies. At the same time social media and other channels are for the first time enabling societal debate around these and other directions for innovation, and citizens and stakeholders are voicing conflicting views around their implications for China and the world. In response, policy is in some cases shifting away from narrow technocratic decision-making to broader approaches to innovation governance, whilst regulatory implementation at different levels remains a challenge. I would welcome PhD applications from Mandarin-speaking students wishing to research these phenomena and/ or to compare them with recent trends in Europe.

The role of innovation in pathways towards sustainable food security

Trends in crop productivity, inequitable distribution (for food and fuel) and the clear links between industrial agriculture and the transgression of various 'planetary boundaries' point to the need for radical transformations in global and local agri-food systems. Proponents varyingly point towards agro-ecological, biotechnological and social innovations - either as silver bullets or more realistically as contributions to wider systemic change. The policy challenges associated with supporting, co-ordinating and steering these different directions of innovation are embedded within political struggles for control and ownership. I would be interested in supervising well-qualified students wishing to examine some of these policy challenges, in particular with respect to the contested role of emerging biotechnologies in Europe, China or East Africa.