

## Vortragsprogramm Winterhalbjahr 2018/19

Die GEGZ-Vorträge finden jeweils am Abend um 18.15 Uhr im Auditorium D 7.2 des Hauptgebäudes der ETH Zürich (Rämistrasse 101) statt.

# GRENZEN und GRENZRÄUME

Mittwoch, 23. Januar 2019



## Fragile connectivity: The New Silk Road and the fluid landscapes of Sino-Inner Asian borderlands

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In 2013, President Xi Jinping formulated China's vision of Eurasian connectivity: The Silk Road Economic Belt. The strategy envisages the construction of infrastructure networks that will engulf the Eurasian continent and form an interconnected space of exchange. Since the plan was announced, the Economic Belt has attracted much academic and media attention on the infrastructure being constructed and its future potentialities. At the same time, questions about the sustainability of this infrastructure in a dynamic Sino-Inner Asian borderland with a highly «fluid» terrain and socio-political geography has been virtually absent from the debate.

The inevitable decay, maintenance and social ambiguity surrounding transport infrastructure lack the appeal associated with new construction projects; yet discussing them is crucial in the context of the Silk Road Economic Belt. It is important to bring this mega-project back down «to the ground» and into more mundane terms. By zooming in on a single «desert road» in northwest China designated as a crucial conduit in the westward arc of the Economic Belt, this article draws attention to the social complexity and ecological vulnerability of transport infrastructure in the Sino-Inner Asian borderlands. At one scale, this infrastructure is part of China's vision of globalisation, at another scale, however, it is firmly embedded in local contexts. By pushing the political, ecological and material complexity of roads in northwest China to the centre of our inquiry, the article offers a radically new perspective on the current construction boom and its sustainability.

Vorgängig um 16.30 Uhr:  
Im Anschluss an das Referat:

**GEGZ Hauptversammlung 2019**  
**GEGZ-Jahresabschluss-Apéro**

Wir heissen Mitarbeitende des GIUZ, Studierende, Lehrpersonen (zusammen mit ihren Schul-  
klassen) sowie auch weitere interessierte Personen als Gäste an unseren GEGZ-Vorträgen  
herzlich willkommen!

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