



Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

The Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology is one of the leading centres for research in social anthropology. Common to all research projects at the Max Planck Institute is the comparative analysis of social change; it is primarily in this domain that its researchers contribute to anthropological theory, though many programmes also have applied significance and political topicality.

The DFG Emmy Noether Research Group “Peripheral Debt: Money, Risk and Politics in Eastern Europe” is looking for highly qualified and motivated candidates for

2 PhD positions

starting 1 October 2020

“Peripheral Debt” is a research group project led by Dr. Marek Mikuš that combines ethnography and a historical anthropological approach to study social relations and practices of household debt in the context of peripheral financialization in Eastern Europe. The guiding question of the project is how various actors relate to household debt in Croatia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia and at the EU level. This encompasses the ways in which households use and cope with debt; contestations of debt ranging from litigation to activism to party politics; and the efforts of governments, the EU, lenders, courts, NGOs and other actors to manage problems with debt, for example through financial education or personal insolvency procedures. The objective is to provide layered and fine-grained ethnographic accounts of household debt – from everyday life of the household to creditor-debtor relations to the public sphere – while analyzing it in the specific historical and geographical contexts of recent Eastern European debt booms. Straddling economic anthropology, political anthropology and the interdisciplinary literature on debt and financialization, the project further lays a special focus on three sets of issues: the role of money in household lending; the relationships between household debt and risk; and the full range of efforts to contest and manage debt, from counter-hegemonic to hegemonic.

Essential Duties & Responsibilities

The essential duty of each PhD student will be to develop, write and submit a PhD dissertation on a subject of relevance to the research group project. This should include 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork. **PhD Student 1** will be expected to complete fieldwork in **Hungary** (with Budapest as the main field site) and **PhD Student 2** in **Poland** (with Warsaw as the main field site). While the PhD students will be generally expected to engage with the various above mentioned aspects of household debt to enable comparative analysis of the cases, they will be encouraged to develop their distinctive foci and approaches such as to reflect their research interests and the specificities of their field sites. In addition to writing their theses, in the post-fieldwork stage the PhD students will be expected to contribute to project outputs (an edited collection and open-access reports for general audience) and prepare other publications appropriate to their career stage.

Your Profile

Candidates have to hold a Master’s degree in social/cultural anthropology, ethnology, sociology, geography or other relevant discipline. Candidates with a background outside anthropology should demonstrate an intention to integrate anthropological methods and questions into their projects. Prior engagement with the issues of household debt, finance etc. will be an asset. Candidates have to be willing and able to conduct one year of ethnographic fieldwork in Hungary and Poland, respectively. As such, PhD Student 1 has to be fluent/advanced in Hungarian and PhD Student 2 in Polish. Both candidates also need to be fluent/advanced in English as the working language at the Max Planck Institute is English and they will write their PhD theses and other outputs in English. The PhD students will be expected to develop their independent research projects within the framework of the research group and publish their outcomes in appropriate academic venues. They will therefore need to be able to work both independently and in team and to be highly motivated in order to meet their various duties.

Our Offer

The PhD positions are awarded as full-time for three years with the possibility of two six-month extensions. We expect the PhD students to complete 12 months of fieldwork during the second year of their studies in Hungary and Poland, respectively. The PhD students will be enrolled into a PhD degree programme at the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Martin-Luther-University in Halle-Wittenberg.

The PhD students will receive a PhD funding contract equivalent in remuneration to pay group E13 (50%-65%) of the Collective Wage Agreement for the Public Service (TVöD Bund). They will also receive allowances for their maintenance during fieldwork and funding for fieldwork expenses.

The workplace is Halle/Saale (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany), except when undertaking field research.

The Max Planck Society is committed to increasing the number of individuals with disabilities in its workforce and therefore encourages applications from such qualified individuals. It endeavours to achieve gender equality and diversity. Furthermore, the Max Planck Society seeks to increase the number of women in those areas where they are underrepresented and therefore explicitly encourages women to apply.

The Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology offers a diverse, international, flexible and stimulating work environment, with support for training and professional development opportunities.

Contact

Please submit your application electronically by **15 May 2020** following the link for vacancies on our homepage.

Applicants should submit the following documentation:

- cover letter explaining their professional background and interest in the project (1-2 pages)
- CV including list of publications
- outline of their individual research projects (up to 2,000 words)
- one writing sample (e.g. published article or thesis chapter)
- photocopies of university degrees
- names and contact details of two academic referees

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology
Personnel Administration
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Informal enquiries concerning the positions may be directed to Dr. Marek Mikuš (mikus@eth.mpg.de). Interviews are envisaged to take place in June 2020 (probably via skype).

We look forward to receiving your completed online application under:
<https://recruitingapp-5034.de.umantis.com/Vacancies/386/Application/New/2>

Further information on the research agenda of the Max Planck Institute is available on our website:
<http://www.eth.mpg.de>

