



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 Max Planck Research Group “**AIming Toward the Future: Policing, Governance, and Artificial Intelligence**” is looking for highly qualified and motivated candidates for

1 Doctoral Position

starting April 2021

The project “**AIming Toward the Future**” led by Dr Maria Sapignoli examines the rapidly increasing use of digital technologies in policing and policy. The research team will investigate how these technologies are developed and applied in state and non-state policing, extending to the involvement of the private sector in governance initiatives. The study has two interconnected research foci, both ethnographically-founded and comparative in scope. The first looks at how digital and machine learning technologies employed by state and non-state actors play out on the ground. The second considers the conceptualization, creation, and implementation of those technologies. The research group seeks to shed light, both empirically and theoretically, on the effects of the employment of digital technologies and big data in policing on social inequality, decision making, and the future of governance. It also analyses how those socio-technical assemblages are thought about, created, and deployed in different contexts and for different purposes.

Candidate Profile, Essential Duties & Responsibilities

To qualify for the PhD position, applicants must have a master degree in any field, though strong preference will be given to applicants with a bachelor or master degree in any of the following areas: anthropology, sociology, socio-legal studies, computer sciences (with bachelor in social science), science and technology studies.

Candidates should be familiar with ethnographic field research methods. Integrations of other methods, such as computational social sciences, will also be considered. As the working language at the Max Planck Institute and language of publications will be mainly English, candidates also need to have a strong English language proficiency. It is also highly recommended that candidates are fluent in the language(s) of their future field sites.

Applicants should submit original research proposals, within the overall frame of the project as outlined above, grounded in ethnographic methods and relating to one or more of the following areas:

- the development, deployment and effects of machine learning and Automated Decision Making in and for global governance, with a specific focus on one or more of those areas: humanitarian interventions; human rights monitoring; Sustainable Development Goals.
- cybersecurity
- the development, deployment, and effects of machine learning in criminal justice
- the development, deployment, and effects of digital technologies in environmental governance
- digital technologies and activism
- anthropology of police
- digital ethnography
- political and legal anthropology
- critical data studies

Preference will be given to proposals that focus on Southern Africa and Europe; however, other countries and regions will also be considered. The development of the Covid19 pandemic and its impact will be taken into account in the planning and framing of the research project.

Doctoral candidates will develop their project inside the framework of the research group and together with the head of the research group. They should be willing to have their proposed projects to undergo some modification to optimize the coherence of the group project as a whole.

They are expected to be keen to collaborate in a team and develop their independent research projects within the framework of the research group and publish their outcomes in key academic venues. They are also encouraged to think of creative means toward allowing the team to communicate research outcomes to a wider public. Candidates are expected to play an active role in the organisation of international conferences and workshops and in joint publication projects.

Our Offer

The PhD position is awarded for 3 years, with the possibility of two 6-month extensions. We expect our PhD students to complete ethnographic fieldwork as part of their course of studies.

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

The Max Planck Society strives for gender equality and diversity. It is committed to increasing the number of individuals with disabilities in its workforce and therefore encourages applications from such qualified individuals.

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

If you have questions regarding this position, please contact the head of the research group Dr Maria Sapignoli (sapignoli@eth.mpg.de).

Further information on the research group *AIMing Toward the Future* is available on the website: <https://www.eth.mpg.de/AIMing>

Please submit your application materials electronically by **15 January 2021** following the link for vacancies on our homepage (under 'Career'), or by going directly to the online application form using the link below.

Applicants should send the following documentation:

- a cover letter outlining your research trajectory and interest in the position, maximum of one page (12.0 Times New Roman with a minimum of 1.5 spaces)
- a CV
- a summary of the proposed research project and plan (max. 1500 words). This will form a basis for discussion if the applicant is shortlisted.
- a writing sample
- photocopies of university degrees
- 1 letter of reference and 2 names of referees

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology
Personnel Administration
Nadine Wagenbrett (wagenbrett@eth.mpg.de)

We look forward to receiving your completed [online application](#).

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

