



Position Announcement Volkswagen Foundation “Freigeist” Research Group

2 Doctoral Candidate Positions (4 years)

The Volkswagen Foundation “Freigeist” Research Group “Learning ‘Nature’: A Cross-Cultural Ethnography of Children’s Relationships to the Non-Human World” invites applications for **two funded doctoral positions** (salary group TV-L 13, 65%, 4 years, additional funds for field research available). **Deadline is 15 May 2022.**

The doctoral candidate will research how cultural practices of socialization shape children’s understandings of the nonhuman world and reproduce specific modes of interacting with the environment. Possible research focuses include children’s morality, children’s relationship with “nature”, children interactions with nonhumans, ecological pedagogies, etc. Preference will be given to candidates who plan to undertake their fieldwork in intentional/utopian communities with a strong focus on ecological or pedagogical issues. The candidate is expected to carry out one year of ethnographic field research and to be fluent in the language of the field site. The candidate is also expected to conduct independently their original research project within the general themes of the project. A master’s degree in the social sciences is required (social anthropology, psychology, education, environmental studies, etc.), The successful applicant will actively contribute to project team activities, together with the PI and the postdoc, such as reading groups and the organization of workshops. Experience in interdisciplinary research is a plus.

Disciplinarily grounded in anthropology, with methodological and analytical inputs from developmental psychology and linguistic anthropology, the research group investigates how understandings of and interactions with the nonhuman world are shaped by early, culturally-specific socialization practices. The project looks at how different socialization practices give rise to distinctive phenomenological and moral experiences of nature and the nonhuman world and how such experiences have an impact on the ways in which the environment is conceptualized and lived. The broader scope of this project is to lay the groundwork for a better appreciation of culturally-specific processes of learning about the nonhuman world and to gain practical insights which can inform educational interventions. Each member of the research team will focus on one particular case study and will independently conduct research, but the project includes periods of collaboration to foster connections, consistency, and comparison. Potential candidates are invited to suggest a specific research focus and field site that can contribute to the overall goals of the project.

The “Learning ‘Nature’” Research Group is based at the **Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society** (RCC), a joint initiative of Ludwig Maximilian University Munich and the Deutsches Museum. The RCC is the largest Center for Advanced Study in the environmental humanities worldwide and hosts numerous international scholars working on environmental topics. The doctoral candidate will be based in Munich and affiliated with the [doctoral program in Environment and Society](#) at the RCC. The doctoral candidate will engage with and profit from the RCC’s lively research community, its



regular Colloquia series and workshops, as well as interactions with scholars working across the environmental humanities.

Please submit your application by **15 May 2022** as a single PDF to francesca.mezzenzana@rcc.lmu.de with the subject: Freigeist PhD position.

The following documents are required:

- An academic curriculum vitae (including publications and awards, if applicable);
- A letter of motivation in which you summarize a) your experience and interests; b) why you are applying for this position; and c) why you are the best candidate (2 pages max);
- A project outline detailing the proposed regional case study as well as a sketch of how you would address the topic theoretically and methodologically (2 pages max);
- Your Master's thesis (if in a language other than English, please provide a table of contents and a summary of max. 5 pages in English)
- The names and contact information of two academic referees (NB: these will only be contacted if you are shortlisted).

Interviews for the position will be held in late May/June 2022. The position will begin in October 2022 at the earliest.

For applicants unfamiliar with the German academic system, a TV-L 13 65% position provides a liveable salary, full tuition, and benefits including full healthcare, pension contributions, six weeks paid vacation, and parental leave (if required). As the candidate will be a state employee, they are required to have German health insurance and to make contributions to the German tax and social welfare system. Please note that knowledge of German language is not required for this position. Working hours are flexible, and the RCC offers a family-friendly working environment. The RCC can also assist, if necessary, with work permits and visas. We especially seek applications from qualified individuals with disabilities and welcome applications from women.

For further information and questions regarding the position, please contact the PI Dr. Francesca Mezzenzana (francesca.mezzenzana@rcc.lmu.de).