



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 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 Department 'Anthropology of Politics and Governance' is offering a position for

Doctoral Student (m/f/d) for “an ethnographic study of digital healthcare in Saxony-Anhalt”

(starting as early as possible after 1 September 2025)

Background

The Department 'Anthropology of Politics and Governance' is looking for a doctoral student who will conduct an ethnographic study on digital transformations in health and geriatric care in the *Strukturwandelregion* (former coal-mining region) of Saxony-Anhalt. The successful candidate will observe, follow, and engage various stakeholders (tech companies, care workers, local politicians and patients/ elderly members of the community) who are currently involved in a large-scale attempt to develop and test new digital care technologies in the region. These technologies (including delivery drones, care robots, online health communities, AI-driven tools for communication and story-telling etc.) are being designed to overcome the current care crisis (aging population, shortage of care workers, high costs of care, marginalization of rural areas etc.), but it is yet to be seen how these technologies are imagined, negotiated, enacted, adapted or rejected by different stakeholders and what happens when they enter local life worlds. Based on multi-sited fieldwork in Saxony-Anhalt, and drawing on comparative research of similar developments in other worlds regions, the aim of the study is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the various needs and interests that become inscribed in, or are left out of, technology-centred imaginations of future-care. While speaking to practical concerns, the research should also contribute to contemporary debates and theory-building in anthropology, sociology, and science and technology studies (STS) on themes such as digital health, health governance, and the politics of care.

Tasks and Profile

The essential duty of the PhD student will be to develop, write and submit a PhD dissertation on a subject of relevance to this project. This should include a substantial period of ethnographic field research.

The candidate should meet the following prerequisites:

- excellent master's degree or equivalent at a German university or international university of similar standing, either in social anthropology, science and technology studies (STS), sociology or a closely related discipline (required)
- experience with qualitative ethnographic methods (required)
- proficiency in written and spoken German and English (required)
- excellent social and communication skills (required)
- topical expertise in the areas of health, digital technologies, or elderly care (desired)
- experience of working in interdisciplinary contexts (desired)

Our Offer

The PhD position is awarded for three years, with the possibility of an extension of 12 months (pending a positive evaluation). Employment will be on a full-time, contractual basis, with sufficient additional funding for fieldwork. The workplace is Halle (Saale), a dynamic, historical town in central Germany (Sachsen-Anhalt) that is home to the renowned Martin Luther University and numerous scientific institutions. The MPI offers a job ticket, company health management, and childcare services in cooperation with local day-care centres.

The successful candidate will be integrated into the Institute's International Max Planck Research School "Global Multiplicities" (<https://www.imprs-gm.mpg.de>), which offers comprehensive structured doctoral training and scientific exchange with doctoral students from our partner universities (MLU, Leipzig University and FAU).

The Max Planck Society is committed to raising the proportion of women in science; we thus explicitly encourage applications from female researchers. Individuals with disabilities will be given priority, assuming equal qualifications.

Contact

Please submit your application electronically by **15 June 2025** following the link for vacancies on our homepage (under 'Career'), or by going directly to the online application form using the link below.

- Signed cover letter explaining your interest in, and suitability for, the positions
- Curriculum vitae including a list of publications
- Three-page proposal for a dissertation project, including details about the state of preparation, methodology, and a possible timeline
- Writing sample (e.g., a publication or chapter from master's thesis)
- Copies of all relevant degree certificates and academic transcripts from both the bachelor's and master's level

Informal enquiries concerning the positions may be directed to Julia Vorhölder (vorhoelter@eth.mpg.de).

If you have any questions about the application, please contact:

Human resources management

Nadine Wagenbrett (wagenbrett@eth.mpg.de)

We look forward to receiving your completed online application under:

<https://recruitingapp-5034.de.umantis.com/Vacancies/512/Application/New/2>

Further information on the research agenda of the Max Planck Institute is available on our website:

<https://www.eth.mpg.de>



[Link to vacancy](#)

