



## 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 “Sand – The Future of Coastal Cities in the Indian Ocean” is looking for highly qualified and motivated candidates for

### **3 PhD positions** starting 1 January 2023

“Sand – The Future of Coastal Cities in the Indian Ocean” is a research group project led by Dr. Lukas Ley at the Max Planck Institute. As central component in seabed systems, port facilities, and land ‘reclaimed’ from the sea, sand is a constitutive ingredient of urban infrastructure. The importance of sand for fortifying urban shorelines is growing – the construction industry and developers require sand to build ‘resilient’ cities, while communities need it to protect settlements and livelihoods against rising tides. Despite this trend, little is known about the urban metabolisms, social practices, and political configurations that rely on sand, not just in the Indian Ocean but in the Mediterranean or Pacific, as well. The research project attempts to fill this gap by showing how sand relates to social organization and governance. The project will conduct ethnographic research on practices of coastal protection in four port cities of the Indian Ocean. Ethnographic research will center on actors inhabiting, frequenting, or maintaining coastal infrastructures, such as beaches, shorelines, estuaries, and reclaimed land to capture the material affordances of sand in working coasts. Researchers will record local taxonomies and meanings of sand; examine the politics of coastal infrastructuring; map sand-based infrastructures and locations of sand use; and identify objects (maps, drawings, photography, etc.) for an exhibition.

More information here: <https://www.eth.mpg.de/6008586/>

### **Essential Duties & Responsibilities**

The primary duty of each PhD student will be to develop and conduct a PhD research project on a subject of relevance to the research group and defend a doctoral dissertation. Candidates are expected to conduct 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork. All project members carry out fieldwork in port cities of the Indian Ocean. While the PhD students will be expected to engage with the core conceptual and theoretical ideas of the research project to enable comparative analysis of the cases, they will be encouraged to develop own foci and research methods that reflect their research interests and the specificities of their field sites. In addition to writing their theses, project members are expected to contribute to project outputs (blog posts, edited volume, and open-access publications) and help conceptualize and prepare the final exhibition of project insights in cooperation with artists.

### **Your Profile**

Candidates have to hold a Master’s degree in social/cultural anthropology, ethnology, sociology, human geography or other relevant disciplines. Candidates with a background outside anthropology should demonstrate an intention to integrate anthropological methods and concepts into their projects and willingness to take supplementary courses. Prior engagement with the issues of coastal infrastructure, materiality, posthumanism, and/or urban governance will be an asset. Candidates commit to conducting at least one year of ethnographic fieldwork in a coastal city of the Indian Ocean. As such, applicants must demonstrate the linguistic ability to carry out in-depth qualitative research. All candidates also need to be fluent in English, as the working language at the Max Planck Institute is English and they will write their dissertations and other outputs in English. Interest in as well as experiences with visual anthropology methods and artistic approaches to documentation are welcome.

## Our Offer

The PhD positions are awarded for three years, with the possibility of two six-months extensions. Employment will be on a full-time contractual basis. The workplace is Halle (Saale) (Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany). The MPI Halle is a thriving research hub that offers a unique work environment for anthropologists. It is home to an international, diverse, and thriving academic community. Regular workshops, conferences, and colloquia with staff and international guests provide opportunities to exchange with other experts and network. In addition to library services, the MPI offers copyediting and writing support.

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.

The Max Planck Society strives to ensure 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.

## Contact

Please submit your application electronically by **15 September 2022** 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
- CV including linguistic skills, list of publications (if any), and relevant professional experience
- a summary of the proposed doctoral project (max. 3 pages), which should demonstrate clear links to the applicant's previous work and qualifications and to the respective research field
- writing sample (e.g., published article or thesis chapter)
- copies of university degrees
- names of two referees whom we may contact

If you have further questions regarding the application procedure, please contact:

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

Informal enquiries concerning the positions may be directed to Dr. Lukas Ley ([ley@eth.mpg.de](mailto:ley@eth.mpg.de)). Interviews are envisaged to take place in the second half of October 2022 (via WebEx).

We look forward to receiving your completed online application under:

<https://recruitingapp-5034.de.umantis.com/Vacancies/440/Application/New/2>

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

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

