

Senior Scientist (m/f/d) in the field of Social Anthropology
as Max Planck Research Group Leader
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

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Posted Aug. 22, 2025, set to expire Oct. 15, 2025

Job Title	Senior Scientist (m/f/d) in the field of Social Anthropology as Max Planck Research Group Leader
Department	'Anthropology of Politics and Governance' https://www.eth.mpg.de/politicsgovernance
Institution	Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Halle (Saale), , Germany
Date Posted	Aug. 22, 2025
Application Deadline	Oct. 15, 2025
Position Start Date	Apr. 1, 2026
Job Categories	Post-Doc
Academic Field(s)	Sociology - General Anthropology Social Sciences - General
Job Website	https://recruitingapp-5034.de.umantis.com/Vacancies/518/Description/2
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Job Description	

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The Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology is a leading centre 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' invites applications for one:

Senior Scientist (m/f/d)

in the field of Social Anthropology as

Max Planck Research Group Leader (W2 level, tenure track)

Background

The Department 'Anthropology of Politics and Governance' provides a stimulating environment for cutting-edge anthropological research and the training of research students. It brings together scholars using the tools and techniques of anthropology to explore the political arrangements, governance initiatives, and social movements that organise the contemporary world and animate future possibilities.

The Department's research responds to the sense that we live in critical times. Societies are challenged by new health scares; people fear that climate change could end human life as we know it; and many people experience war or totalitarian rule, or worry about the spread of extremism and violence. Reactions to these challenges are diverse, ranging from spectacular action and vocal protest, to attempts to reassert control through new techniques of governance, to transformative engagement at the margins of the mainstream. We examine how social action for a better life emerges within specific lifeworlds, and how people's situated action addresses global concerns and prefigures new political worlds. We focus on the key issues of *transforming bodies*, *transforming technologies*, and *transforming ecologies*.

Your Tasks and Profile

For this position we are inviting scholars who have an excellent research record, hold a PhD or doctoral degree in the field of social or cultural anthropology, and can demonstrate expertise and experience at postdoctoral level in the broad field of anthropology. Preference will be given to scholars working on topics of environment, ecology, climate, and/or anthropology of the body. The person would

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provide leadership and work collegially with researchers in the Department, in particular strengthening the work of the thematic area “transforming ecologies”.

We are looking for candidates who will establish an innovative research programme within the Department and who have a strong commitment to conducting qualitative empirical research and writing top-tier publications. Candidates should have some academic leadership experience and be committed to mentoring junior scholars and contributing to the curriculum of the International Max Planck Research School “Global Multiplicity”. The successful candidate will also be expected to contribute to theorizing across the Department’s thematic groups, and to collaborate with researchers from other Departments as well as other disciplines and institutions.

The candidate should meet the following prerequisites:

- a solid publication record with articles in peer-reviewed journals and at least one ethnographic monograph
- experience in managing research projects as well as in supervising master’s and/or doctoral students
- experience working with scholars from neighbouring disciplines
- a demonstrable track record in obtaining external funding
- excellent social and communication skills
- proficiency in written and spoken English

Our Offer

The position is to start on **1 April 2026**. It is a professorial level appointment with full academic independence and some funding provided. The position is initially limited and tenure will be granted after a positive evaluation, which, depending on seniority of the candidate, can take place between 1 to 5 years after the commencement of the position. Employment will be on a full-time contractual basis. The salary is based on remuneration group W2 Federal Civil Service Remuneration Act. In addition, we offer a job ticket (subsidized travel on public transport and regional trains), company health management, and childcare services in cooperation with local day-care centres. The workplace is Halle (Saale), a dynamic, historical town in central Germany (Saxony-Anhalt) that is home to the renowned Martin Luther University and numerous scientific institutions. Our modern campus is located in a quiet, picturesque neighbourhood near the centre of town.

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.

Furthermore, the Max Planck Society is committed to increasing the number of individuals with

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disabilities in its workforce and therefore encourages applications from such qualified individuals.

Contact

Please submit your application electronically by **15 October 2025** following the link for vacancies on our homepage. Interviews with shortlisted applicants are likely to take place in December 2025 or January 2026.

Applicants are asked to submit the following materials:

- cover letter
- curriculum vitae, including full list of publications
- a detailed project proposal (max. 5 pages) that incorporates one post-doctoral or two doctoral researchers
- photocopies of university degrees
- the names of 3 referees.

Informal enquiries concerning the position may be directed to Prof. Dr. Ursula Rao (office.rao@eth.mpg.de).

If you have any questions about the application process and formalities, 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/518/Application/New/2>

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

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

Contact Information

Please reference Academickeys in your cover letter when applying for or inquiring about this job announcement.

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