MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR EVOLUTIONARY ANTHROPOLOGY
Human Behavior, Ecology and Culture
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The Department of Human Behavior, Ecology and Culture at the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig is seeking qualified applicants for a three-year doctoral project on the topic of the reproducibility and refinement of quantitative scientific methods in evolutionary anthropology.

Background

The Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology unites scientists in the natural sciences and humanities to investigate the history of humankind from an interdisciplinary perspective, with the help of comparative analyses of genes, cultures, cognitive abilities, languages and social systems of past and present human populations as well as those of primates closely related to human beings. The Department of Human Behavior, Ecology, and Culture focuses on the various forms of human behavioral, cultural, and cognitive adaptation.

Recent work in many fields has focused on problems of scientific communication and of the reproducibility and replicability of scientific discoveries. Improvements in the effectiveness of research into human evolution and behavior can be realized through improving the institutions and methods by which we conduct, analyze, and report research.

Aims

The main aim of this project is to understand and refine processes of scientific knowledge transmission within the study of the evolution of human behavior and adaptation. Topical focuses may include: life history theory, kin selection, social exchange, kinship systems and inheritance, foraging, cultural transmission and social learning, ethnobiological knowledge, or others. Approaches may involve studies of reproducibility, meta-analyses, and the survey and refinement of analytical approaches to specific theoretically motivated questions.

Because department personnel maintain active field sites across the globe, opportunities for direct fieldwork are also available.

Requirements

Essential

- M.A. or M.Sc. in a relevant science with excellent course records at the start of position
- experience working with quantitative data in a research computing context
- excellent communication skills and ability to work with a team
- demonstrated ability to learn new skills

Desirable

- experience with a computing language such as Python or R
- experience with data manipulation and statistical programming
- knowledge of relevant evolutionary and anthropological theory

Funding

Department doctoral candidates are funded by the Institute, and allocate their time between individual research projects and collaborative departmental work. Salaries are determined according to the German public service pay scale (TVöD).

Applications

Please address questions and completed applications electronically to Dr. Bret Beheim (bret_beheim@eva.mpg.de). Applications should include:

1. cover letter describing how you meet the essential and desired requirements
2. curriculum vitae, including the names of three professional references
3. research proposals consisting of:
    a. an outline of a comparative project investigating reproducibility in a research discipline
    b. an outline of a complimentary research question that can feasibly be answered

All electronic applications received by 1 March 2017 will be considered. Suitable candidates will be invited for interview (in person, or via Internet) in late March 2017, with a view to offering positions in April 2017.

The Max Planck Society is committed to equal opportunities and to employing individuals with disabilities and explicitly encourages them to apply. Additionally, the Max Planck Society wishes to increase the proportion of women in areas in which they are underrepresented; women are therefore explicitly encouraged to apply.