



Vacancies: 3 PhD Positions in Social Anthropology

Zurich, 21 October 2024

Research project

The Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies (ISEK) at the University of Zurich is offering three PhD positions within a 4-year research project titled “Dealing with Institutional Volatility: Food Production, Processing and Trade in South-Eastern Qazaqstan”. The project is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and led by Prof. Dr. Peter Finke. Its objective is to study the food industry in South-Eastern Qazaqstan as an interlinked system of production, processing, distribution, and consumption. Rural households and petty entrepreneurs hereby see themselves confronted with a volatile ecological as well as political environment. The project aims to shed light on the institutional challenges and corresponding strategies of the actors involved as well as the impacts on the social fabric in the region.

The PhD projects will focus on three different interrelated sectors within the local and regional food complex by way of a distributed and shared multi-sited approach. Project 1 will focus on agricultural production, looking at individual households and farming enterprises. Project 2 will research in small- and mid-scale food processing factories, primarily in the dairy and meat sector, while project 3 will investigate the gastronomy sector and its socio-economic embeddedness in the regional setting. In addition to that, a postdoctoral researcher will study trade with food products within the region and beyond. She or he will, together with Prof. Finke, also serve as a project coordinator.

Your responsibilities

As a PhD researcher you will be working on one of the three above-mentioned research projects, the objective of which is to earn a doctorate in Social Anthropology. You are expected to conduct at least one year of ethnographic fieldwork in South-Eastern Qazaqstan. The rest of the time you will be based in Zurich at ISEK, where you will be able to benefit from regular project meetings, participate in the Social Anthropology Colloquium Series and write your PhD dissertation. You will have the opportunity to present your work at international workshops and conferences, and participate in the organization of an international workshop to be held at the University of Zurich.

Your profile

We are looking for a PhD candidate who:

- has graduated with excellent results on a research-based MA thesis in Social Anthropology or a related discipline
- has fieldwork experience, ideally in Central Asia
- has excellent written and spoken English language skills; Qazaq or other relevant language skills are also a major advantage
- is able and willing to work individually as well as in a team
- takes initiative and enjoys organizing and engaging in (international) academic exchange
- has a keen interest in exploring ideas and practices
- is open to methodological diversity, including qualitative and quantitative approaches

Our offer

The full-time appointment will be for a period of 4 years, starting on the 1st of February 2025. The salary is based on rates set by the Swiss National Science Foundation (http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/allg_doktorierende_e.pdf).

As an ISEK doctoral student, you will become part of a dynamic, innovative and stimulating research and teaching environment, with excellent opportunities for further qualifications, and a motivated faculty interested in academic exchange. As a PhD student at a Swiss university, you will also have the opportunity to join the “Swiss Graduate Program in Anthropology” (<http://anthropology.cuso.ch>).

Your application

We look forward to receiving your application. Please enclose the following documents:

- Motivation letter, stating clearly why you are interested in this project and pursuing a PhD in anthropology at UZH
- An indication of which project you would like to work on with a short description of your research interests
- Curriculum Vitae
- An electronic copy of your MA Thesis
- Copies of your academic degrees
- Names and contact details of two referees

Please send your electronic application by November 15th, 2024, to: miriam.wohlgemuth@uzh.ch

Contact

For inquiries regarding the project, please contact Prof. Dr. Peter Finke: peter.finke@uzh.ch