

The Department of Criminology at the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law in Freiburg i.Br., Germany is looking for a **postdoctoral researcher** (m/f/d) for the project:

Short-term mindsets and crime: Digging into the relation between risk factors and criminal behavior using unique longitudinal data

This Postdoc project is part of the interdisciplinary research program “Crime and Time: How short-term mindsets encourage crime and how the future self can prevent it”. The program is funded through an ERC Consolidator Grant and led by Prof. Jean-Louis van Gelder. The formal position will be in the Department of Criminology at the Max Planck Institute in Freiburg, Germany.

The challenge

Why are some people more likely to commit crime than others? Answers to this question can be grouped into two broad views. On the one hand, dispositional perspectives argue that stable factors within the individual, such as lack of self-control, lie at the roots of criminal conduct. Sociogenic perspectives, on the other hand, put the locus of study outside the individual and point towards external factors such as rough neighborhoods, parental unemployment, and deviant peers, as the main causes of crime. Research into both perspectives has identified hundreds of correlates of criminal behavior, yet how these are related is still largely uncharted territory. The ERC research program aims to integrate both views based on a new theoretical perspective, which draws from criminology, social psychology and evolutionary theory. This perspective is premised on the idea that short-term mindsets encourage crime and specifies how both individual dispositions and sociogenic variables can encourage such mindsets.

Insofar as short-term thinking is a major cause of crime and not fixed, as assumed by dispositional perspectives, changes in shortsightedness can be expected to produce changes in (re-) offending. Using multi-wave data, this postdoc project will address the possibly reciprocal nature of exposure to contextual risk factors, short-term mindsets, and delinquency. This will establish the extent to which observed changes in shortsightedness are consequential for offending and what factors influence these changes. The assumption to be tested argues that there is a self-reinforcing dynamic between contextual risk factors and crime that is in part explained by short-term mindsets. That is, shortsighted individuals tend to engage in activities that make it more likely that they encounter events and have experiences that, in turn, reinforce such short-term mindsets, resulting in a ‘cycle of crime’.

The project is part of a larger ERC-funded research program in which the role of short-term thinking is central. This program’s ambition is to realize ground-breaking advances in the understanding of criminal and delinquent conduct by improving our understanding what causes people to become shortsighted and also how they can learn and be motivated to take the longer term

consequences of their actions better into account and move away from (embarking on) a criminal career.

You will be working closely together with other researchers in a young and ambitious multidisciplinary research team that aims to push the boundaries of the current state of the art in crime research. PhD supervision may be a part of your tasks. You will *inter alia* be using data from a unique longitudinal project following a large sample of Swiss urban youth since age 7, The Zurich Project on the Social Development from Childhood to Adulthood (<http://www.jacobscenter.uzh.ch/en/research/zproso>) and collaborate with members of the zproso team at the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

Objectives

The project aims to fulfill the following objectives within the larger program:

1. Provide an encompassing test of the interaction between individuals and their social environments which will result in critical information on how criminal careers develop over time, a main feature of the proposed theoretical perspective.
2. Contribute to the development of a new integrative theory explaining crime and delinquency.
3. Test whether committing crime renders people more shortsighted.

Your profile

- you have obtained a PhD in a relevant field of the social sciences, preferably psychology, criminology or sociology;
- you have a strong publication record;
- experience in the supervision of PhD students is a plus;
- you have a clear and demonstrable interest in crime research;
- you have a strong background in statistics, with demonstrated experience in analyzing longitudinal data and/or complex modeling techniques (e.g., autoregressive models with cross-lagged effects and latent growth-curve modeling);
- you have excellent social and communication skills;
- you enjoy working both independently and in teams;
- you are proficient in English, both in writing and speaking;
- you are creative, critical and highly motivated.

About us

The Department of Criminology of the Max Planck Institute in Freiburg has recently been taken over by a new Director and aspires to be leading innovation in the field. You will therefore be working in a young and dynamic and highly multi-disciplinary research environment in one of the leading centers for research in public security matters in Europe. The institute is organized in three research departments: criminal law, public law, and criminology and part of the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science, one of world's most distinguished research organizations. Not only does the Max Planck Society and its institutes offer the opportunity for

trans- and interdisciplinary cooperation among its 86 institutes, it also supports its researchers in such efforts and in the development of their academic careers.

Our offer

The Institute offers excellent facilities for professional and personal development, an international and dynamic atmosphere, and is located in a beautiful city with a vibrant student life set in spectacular green surroundings. The candidate's qualifications and previous experience are the basis for calculating the salary according to the rates for German civil service employees (from approx. €3990 - €5025 gross according to TVöD Bund). The salary includes all mandatory social insurance contributions for health care, unemployment, and retirement. The initial appointment will be for two years with the possibility of extension.

The Max Planck Society strives to ensure gender equality and diversity. Furthermore, the Max Planck Society is committed to employing more persons with disabilities and explicitly encourages applications from such qualified individuals. We welcome applications from all backgrounds.

The Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law is committed to the reconciliation of family and career. There are a limited number of daycare spots at a nearby childcare facility that are available to the children of institute employees. A parent-child office can be used on-site.

Information and Application

For more information you can contact Prof. Dr. Jean-Louis van Gelder (j.vangelder@mpicc.de). To apply for this position, please submit a letter with your motivation, your resume including name, email, address, phone number, two or more references and a copy of your master thesis – indicating the reference number **K-19-02** – as **one PDF file** to:

bewerbungen@mpicc.de, Re: K-19-02 (max. 5 MB per E-Mail).

The deadline for application is 1st December 2019.

