

The Unit of Social Anthropology at the Department of Social Sciences of the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) is inviting applications for a

PhD Position (80%) in the research project «Maintaining Relations: Community-owned Hydropower Infrastructure Through Time»

Starting date 1 February 2024 (or by agreement). The position is limited to four years.

This position is part of the research project «Maintaining Relations: Community-owned Hydropower Infrastructure Through Time» funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. The project is headed by Prof. Agnieszka Joniak-Lüthi and coordinated by Dr. Sibylle Lustenberger. The project focuses on fundamental questions of how the production and distribution of electricity can be organized more fairly and democratically. It aims at contributing to designing empirically substantiated visions for alternative energy futures. Empirically, it focuses on the experiences of communities in Central America (e.g. in rural Nicaragua or Costa Rica, PhD) and Europe (Postdoc, PI) that have managed their own electricity production for many decades. The project brings innovation to the debate on electricity infrastructure by pulling together two strands of research: anthropological research on infrastructure, and the persistent anthropological interest in kinship and gender. We ask: What kinds of labor and which relationships play a role in maintaining decentralized hydropower infrastructure over time? Which role do kinship and gender play in building and maintaining community-owned hydropower infrastructure? The project's hypothesis is that as a set of transgenerational relationships, gendered practices of care and a basis for claims to land, kinship is an important force in imagining, establishing and maintaining both 'communities of energy' and their infrastructures.

Requirements:

- M.A. (or equivalent) in Social or Cultural Anthropology, Human or Political Geography, Sociology, Science Studies or related fields
- Training in anthropological theory and experience with ethnographic research methods
- Proficiency in Spanish and English (proficiency in German is an additional advantage)
- Interest in the questions of energy governance
- Ability to work independently as well as in collaboration with the team
- For the duration of the contract, the PhD researcher must be resident in Fribourg or another place in Switzerland; weekly presence at the Department is expected.

Tasks

- Planning and realization of a PhD project in Central America, including 10-12 months fieldwork
- Collaboration with partners in the industry and in the civil society
- Organizational and administrative tasks in the framework of the project
- Active participation in Department's activities (colloquia; collaboration in media outreach; co-teaching)
- Presentation of research results at workshops and international conferences
- Publishing

We offer

- The possibility to write a PhD thesis in an innovative research team, in a vibrant academic environment of the bilingual University of Fribourg
- The opportunity to become integrated in national and international research networks, including research visits at our partner universities in St. Andrews and Houston
- A welcoming academic home in the Unit of Social Anthropology in Fribourg.

Employment conditions:

The PhD employment is limited to four years. The salary is according to the [SNF regulations](#) for PhD-students between CHF 48'680 and CHF 51'790 annually.

Applications should be submitted electronically in a single PDF-file by **15 November 2023** to agnieszka.joniak@unifr.ch and sibylle.lustenberger@unifr.ch and include a motivation letter, CV, degree certificates, contact details of at least one reference person, and a chapter of the M.A. thesis or an equivalent sample text.

Interviews with selected candidates will be held in person or online on 12 and 13 December 2023.

For more information about the Unit of Social Anthropology, see [here](#). For further information on the advertised position please contact Prof. Agnieszka Joniak-Lüthi (agnieszka.joniak@unifr.ch) and Dr. Sibylle Lustenberger (sibylle.lustenberger@unifr.ch).