

## PhD-Position in humanities and social sciences, 3 years (Cultural Anthropology/Ethnography)

The ERC Research Group “Minor Universality” based at the philosophical faculty of Saarland University (Germany) is inviting applications for a PhD position – Wissenschaftliche/r MitarbeiterIn – (3 years) starting at the latest on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.



Saarland University is a campus university with international reputation for research excellence. Fostering young academic talent and creating ideal conditions for teaching and research are a core part of the university’s mission. As part of the “University of the Greater Region” (Germany, France, Luxemburg and Belgium), Saarland University enables students and staff to share and exchange knowledge and ideas between disciplines, between universities and across borders. With over 17,000 national and international students, studying more than a hundred different academic disciplines, Saarland University is a diverse and dynamic learning environment.

Reference number **W1664**, salary in accordance with the German TV-L salary scale<sup>1</sup>, pay grade: E13, employment: 50 % of standard working time, duration: 3 years.

### **The ERC Research Group “Minor Universality”:**

“Minor Universality: Narrative World Productions After Western Universalism” is a transdisciplinary research project funded by the European Research Council through a highly prestigious ERC Consolidator Grant. It offers an excellent academic environment both locally and through its worldwide cooperation network associating institutional partners from Berlin, Paris, Mexico, Tunis, and Hong Kong. The research group led by Professor Markus Messling wants to make a substantial contribution to the actual debate on the problem of universality after the era of Western universalism. If we live in times of a double relativistic signature – the necessary political

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<sup>1</sup> TV-L = collective agreement on remuneration of public sector employees in the German *Länder*



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and epistemic critique of Occidental Universalism, and diverse identitarian claims –, it is of prime importance to understand an emerging new global awareness that provides a background for the ethical and institutional standards of a world-society. But how can this new universality be addressed? Our research group takes a narratological approach to this issue, starting from the presupposition that narrations materialise in society according to political realities, and are capable of putting these into question. “Minor Universality” investigates how a new consciousness of universality is under way of *being produced*: How do contemporary cultural and social practices such as oral transmissions, narrations of the self and literatures, films, photography, and social media, self-organized spaces and cultural festivals, architectures and museums, open up local settings so as to create a new embodied awareness of humanity.

### **Job requirements and responsibilities:**

The ERC Research Group “Minor Universality” is looking for an outstanding doctoral student with strong interest in committed research and high motivation to complete her/his thesis from a theory-based perspective within a transdisciplinary group dynamic.

The successful candidate will have the opportunity to develop her/his own research project in the area of cultural anthropology, engaging with contemporary refugees’ life stories and the question of how a global awareness might emerge from concrete experiences of radical loss, flight and migration. Flight is a moment in which one has to reset her/his entire world-relations: How do refugees and migrants manage to merge their connections to diverse places and people both practically and emotionally? Here the role of self-narration can be to allow simultaneity and dehierarchization, supported by the possibilities of Social Media. What is the role of narrative imagination when it comes to finding a new “place” in the “world”, staying connected, and establishing a new social life? Does a form of “citizenship of the world” emerge from this condition “in-between” that differs from normative cosmopolitanism? How can migrants and refugees make concrete claims about social acceptances and rights out of this very position? As part of an oral history of the present the project should not only constitute a corpus of relevant cultural productions and analyse documentary texts, photography and films dealing with circulation of people and migration; the doctoral candidate could also pursue interviews with persons starting to organize their social life after arriving in Europe, using methods of qualitative research based on biographical analysis.

First contacts have been established with several civil right organisations. The candidate can also count on the generous support of our ethics committee so as to conform with ethical research standards and legislation. The funding from the European Research Council includes a full package covering travel allowance for field research and interviews, as well as the publication fee for the thesis. The PhD position does not entail mandatory teaching.

### **Your qualifications:**

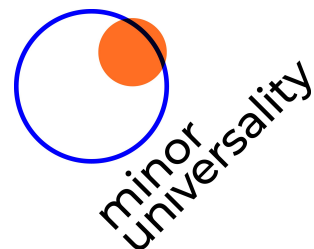
- Holding a MA or equivalent degree obtained with honours qualifying for doctoral studies in the field of humanities and/or social sciences
- Excellent command of English both spoken and written

### **Would be an appreciated asset:**

- Good comprehension skills in German or French. If otherwise, the candidate should be willing to



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learn one of these languages during her/his stay. As language diversity is a key topic within the research group Minor Universality, we highly recommend the candidates to mention any skills they could have in other languages.

- A first experience in social research and/or qualitative interview

#### **The Saarland University can also offer you:**

- A flexible work schedule allowing you to balance work and family
- A broad range of further education and professional development programmes
- An occupational health management model with numerous attractive options, such as our university sports programme
- Supplementary pension scheme (RZVK)
- Discounted tickets on local public transport services ('Jobticket')

Applications are requested exclusively in electronic form quoting the reference number **W1664** and are to be addressed in English, French or German by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 to Prof. Dr. Markus Messling ([minor.universality@uni-saarland.de](mailto:minor.universality@uni-saarland.de)).

One single PDF file including following documents:

- letter of motivation
- research proposal (max. 3 pages)
- copy of your academic degrees
- CV, with publication list if applicable
- letter of reference

Interviews will be held in April 2020. If you have any questions on the application process, please contact Dr H el ene Thierard ([helene.thierard@uni-saarland.de](mailto:helene.thierard@uni-saarland.de)).

For further information on the ERC-project Minor Universality, please visit our website:

<https://www.uni-saarland.de/lehrstuhl/messling/forschungerc-projekt.html>

In accordance with the objectives of its equal opportunities plan, Saarland University seeks to increase the proportion of women in this field. Qualified women candidates are therefore strongly encouraged to apply. Preferential consideration will be given to applications from disabled candidates of equal eligibility. The successful candidate has the option of choosing to work part-time in this position.

Pay grade classification is based on the particular details of the position held and the extent to which the applicant meets the requirements of the pay grade within the TV-L salary scale.

When you submit a job application to Saarland University you will be transmitting personal data. Please refer to our privacy notice for information on how we collect and process personal data in accordance with Art. 13 of the Datenschutz-Grundverordnung. By submitting your application you confirm that you have taken note of the information in the Saarland University privacy notice.