



Job Advertisement

The Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS) in Erkner near Berlin, a non-university research institute and member of the Leibniz Association, in cooperation with Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg (BTU), is seeking, for the Junior Research Group “Value and Valuation in Structural Change” within the research area “[Economy and Civil Society](#)” (IRS) and the Chair of Urban and Regional Sociology in Faculty 6 (BTU), at the earliest possible date,

up to Three Doctoral Researchers (m/f/d, 65%, TV-L E13).

Within the Junior Research Group (JRG) “Value and Valuation in Structural Change,” we investigate how the “new” and the “old” are negotiated, valued, and gain influence in regional transformation processes. Transformation processes, such as those associated with the coal phase-out, industrial decarbonization, or technological change, bring profound shifts and challenges for regions. On the one hand, new technologies, industries, and organizational forms emerge and are enacted regionally; on the other hand, existing practices and structures may need to be unmade or unlearned. The JRG addresses the tensions and negotiation processes associated with these developments and aims to explore their spatial implications.

The JRG is jointly based at IRS Erkner and BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg at the newly established Chair of Urban and Regional Sociology. The doctoral positions are embedded in a joint qualification framework of IRS and BTU. The qualification is designed to span a total of four years. The structure of the contract is aligned with the requirements of this collaborative qualification framework. Successful candidates are expected to actively contribute to the overarching research agenda of the Junior Research Group and to undertake teaching responsibilities at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg amounting to 2 semester hours per week (2 SWS).

Specific topics for PhD projects will be developed in close coordination with the doctoral researchers. However, they should be situated within the thematic scope of the JRG to encourage exchange and collaboration across the projects. Each project should investigate how the old and the new are negotiated within a particular region. A geographical focus of the group is Lusatia, a region strongly shaped by the coal phase-out and currently undergoing far-reaching transformation processes. In addition, complementary and contrasting cases of regional transformation processes (national, international, and historical) are envisaged (e.g., the Stuttgart automotive region). Possible starting points for PhD projects include negotiations and valuation processes in different contexts, such as regional planning, companies, or civil society, where ideas, and directions of regional transformation processes are debated. In this context, it is particularly interesting to examine how new ideas are generated and selected, how established systems of valuation and judgment are transformed or replaced, and how experiences of loss and devaluation emerge, are negotiated, and shape regional transformation. This explicitly includes a focus on socially innovative contexts within regional transformation processes.

Your tasks:

- Theoretical, conceptual, and empirical contributions to the Junior Research Group “Value and Valuation in Structural Change”

- Preparation, planning, implementation, and analysis of empirical research within the framework of the group outlined above
- Participation in organizational tasks throughout the research process of the Junior Research Group
- Development of a dissertation proposal within the scope of the JRG within the first 12 months
- Publication of research findings in reputable peer-reviewed international journals
- Presentation of research findings at national and international conferences and events
- Communication of research results to broader audiences (including science communication and engagement with practitioners)
- Teaching responsibilities at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg equivalent to 2 contact hours per week during the semester (2 SWS)

Your profile:

- Strong interest in academic research and societal transformation processes
- Excellent academic degree (Master's level) in a social science discipline, preferably with a spatial or regional focus, such as human geography, economic geography, sociology, science and technology studies, or political science
- Demonstrated expertise in (qualitative) empirical social research
- Theoretical knowledge in at least two of the following areas:
 - Regional development
 - Innovation and transformation studies
 - Valuation studies
 - Sociology of futures and expectations
- Excellent written and spoken German and English skills *or* excellent English skills and proficiency in another European language (e.g., Spanish, Swedish)
- Ability to work independently, strong interest in interdisciplinary collaboration, and excellent communication and writing skills
- Initial experience and/or interest in participatory and transdisciplinary research formats

Our offer:

IRS offers an exciting position within an innovative and interdisciplinary team in a dynamic academic environment. Working at IRS provides considerable freedom to develop and conduct an independent doctoral project aligned with the research agenda of the JRG and the research topics of the research area "Economy and Civil Society". A self-organized doctoral researcher group holds regular meetings, provides opportunities for scholarly discussion and peer exchange, and organizes an annual retreat. Through various national and international collaborations with researchers and research institutions, as well as IRS event series, there are excellent networking opportunities and possibilities for research stays abroad. The institute also offers a wide range of opportunities for continuous professional development and is committed to promoting the health and well-being of its employees.

Additional benefits include:

- Salary and social benefits according to the TV-L collective agreement
- Flexible working hours and the possibility of remote work
- Family-friendly working conditions. Since 2015, IRS has been certified as a family-friendly employer through the *berufundfamilie* certification
- Employer subsidy for a public transportation job ticket

IRS guarantees equal employment opportunities for all individuals in accordance with the German Federal Equality Act (BGleG) and strives to maintain an open and discrimination-free work culture. Applications from women are particularly welcome. Where qualifications are equal, applicants with severe disabilities will be given preference.

Application procedure:

If you are interested in this position, please submit the following application documents, quoting Reference Number: 1226 in a **single PDF file** by email no later than **20 September 2026** to: bewerbung@leibniz-irs.de.

Required application documents:

- A letter of motivation (maximum 300 words) introducing yourself and describing your qualifications in relation to the advertised position
- An outline of a possible dissertation topic within the JRG, covering the following aspects: (a) societal relevance, (b) research problem, (c) conceptual approach, (d) methodological approach, (e) potential scientific contribution (*maximum 200 words for each aspect*)
- Curriculum vitae
- Degree certificates
- Two references (name and contact details) whom we may contact
- A writing sample representing independent scholarly work (e.g., Master's thesis or co-authored academic publications)

Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS)
Human Resources
Flakenstr. 29-31
15537 Erkner
www.leibniz-irs.de

Informal requests are welcome and can be directed to **Prof. Dr. Jonathan Friedrich**
(jonathan.friedrich@leibniz-irs.de)

The Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space takes the protection of personal data seriously. We collect, use and store your personal data exclusively within the framework of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Visit the IRS website for more information.