



Position Announcement

Volkswagen Foundation “Freigeist” Fellowship Research Group
*Environing Infrastructure: Communities, Ecologies and China’s “Green”
Development in Contemporary Southeast Asia*
1 Doctoral Candidate Position (4 years)

The Volkswagen Foundation “Freigeist” Fellowship Research Group *Environing Infrastructure: Communities, Ecologies and China’s “Green” Development in Contemporary Southeast Asia* invites applications for **one funded position** for a **doctoral candidate** (salary group TV-L 13, 75%, 4 years, additional funds for field research available). **Deadline is January 15, 2020.**

The doctoral candidate will research the environmental aspects of Chinese investments in Southeast Asia from an ethnographic perspective, carrying out one year of ethnographic field research in the region. Applicants should speak at least one local language. A Master’s degree in the social sciences is required, and preference will be given to applicants with a background in social anthropology, human geography, and/or environmental studies. The successful applicant will also be expected to actively contribute to project team activities, together with the PI and the postdoc, such as reading groups and the organization of workshops. Knowledge of Mandarin is a plus.

Disciplinarily grounded in social anthropology, with methodological and analytical inputs from the environmental humanities, the research group investigates the environmental aspects of Chinese infrastructure investments in Southeast Asia from an ethnographic and comparative perspective. China’s global investments abroad are increasingly framed within the language of “green” development, a rhetoric that sits uneasily with China’s own multiple, and often conspicuous, environmental crises domestically. Scholarship on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has thus far focused on its geopolitical and fiscal aspects, while research on the ecologies of Chinese building ambition has investigated the environmental impacts of individual projects. In bridging these, this project will contribute nuanced understandings of how environmental issues surrounding Chinese infrastructure are negotiated between Chinese planners and engineers, officials, environmental NGOs and local communities. Each member of the research team will focus on one particular case study, but the project includes periods of collaborative research to foster connections, consistency and comparison.

Potential candidates are invited to suggest a specific research focus and field site within the context of Chinese investments in infrastructure in Southeast Asia. Examples of potential case studies for the doctoral candidate are the following:

- The Bangkok-Nakhon Ratchasima railway in Thailand
- The Laos section of the Kunming-Singapore Railway Project
- The Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone in Cambodia
- The Hai Phong Port in Vietnam



The Environmenting Infrastructure Research Group is based at the **Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society** (RCC), a joint initiative of Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and the Deutsches Museum. The RCC is the largest Center for Advanced Study in the environmental humanities worldwide and hosts numerous international scholars working on environmental topics. The doctoral candidate will be based in Munich and affiliated with the Doctoral Program in Environment and Society at the RCC. The doctoral candidate will engage with and profit from the RCC's lively research community, its regular Colloquia series and workshops, as well as interactions with scholars working across the environmental humanities.

Please submit your application by **15 January 2020** as a single PDF to alessandro.rippa@tlu.ee. The following documents are required:

- An academic curriculum vitae (including publications and awards, if applicable);
- A letter of motivation in which you summarise a) your experience and interests; b) why you are applying for this position; and c) why you are the best candidate (2 pages max);
- A project outline detailing the proposed regional case study as well as a sketch of how you would address the topic theoretically and methodologically (2 pages max);
- Your Master's thesis (if in a language other than English, please provide a table of contents and a summary of max. 5 pages in English)
- The names and contact information of two academic referees (NB: these will only be contacted if you are shortlisted).

We welcome candidates with experience outside of academia (e.g. working at NGOs, think tanks or in industry) and encourage applicants from Southeast Asia.

Interviews for the position will be held in February 2020. The position will begin in September 2020 at the earliest.

For applicants unfamiliar with the German academic system, a TV-L 13 75% position provides a liveable salary, full tuition, and benefits including full healthcare, pension contributions, six weeks paid vacation, and parental leave (if required). As the candidate will be a state employee, they are required to have German health insurance and to make contributions to the German tax and social welfare system. Please note that knowledge of German language is not required for this position. Working hours are flexible, and the RCC offers a family-friendly working environment. The RCC can also assist, if necessary, with work permits and visas. We especially seek applications from qualified individuals with disabilities and welcome applications from women.

For further information and questions regarding the position, please contact the PI Dr. Alessandro Rippa (alessandro.rippa@tlu.ee).