The Department of Criminology at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law, in Freiburg, Germany is seeking to recruit a

**Behavioral Scientist at the Postdoc Level (f/m/div)**

**Partners in Crime:**

**Understanding Peer Offending through Virtual Reality**

**Your profile**

We are looking for a behavioral scientist with a strong empirical background and an interest in virtual reality. You will work with an international and interdisciplinary team of researchers to help develop and co-lead a new research program on the psychological mechanisms underlying peer offending through virtual reality.

**The challenge**

The influence of peers is one of the most important drivers of juvenile delinquency. Several decades of research have taught us that having delinquent friends increases the risk of becoming delinquent oneself and that spending time with delinquent peers increases the likelihood of committing crimes of one’s own. These findings hold true across cultures, contexts, and research methods. However, prior research has principally relied on introspective and retrospective research methods, such as surveys, interviews, and panel studies. Exactly how peers influence each other, i.e., what happens at the moment of decision-making, is less well understood. Probably no more than a handful of criminological studies have addressed this question experimentally.

The Partners in Crime research program at our Institute aims to address this research gap through multi-user VR in which peer effects are studied in real-time using virtual environments. The first environment is currently being developed and will be ready for use by the end of 2023. Research for the program will be conducted in our world-class VR research facility: MAXLab Freiburg (https://csl.mpg.de/en/maxlab).

The successful candidate will help develop and co-lead the research program together with the Director of the Department of Criminology. You will supervise one or more PhD students in the research program and collaborate with leading researchers on peer influence worldwide.

**You have**

- a PhD in psychology (e.g., social, developmental), (empirical) criminology, communication science, behavioral economics, sociology, or a similar discipline;
- a strong publication record relevant to the project;
- a strong background in statistics;
• a strong interest in crime research and novel research methods;
• a highly collaborative attitude (you value teamwork, enjoy enhancing the work of others, and supporting junior scientists);
• experience in leading (small) research teams and research projects;
• excellent social and communication skills.

Ideal candidates are committed to open science and transparent research practices. Speaking German is an asset but not a prerequisite for the position.

About us

The Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law (MPI-CSL) is a growing European center for research in criminology, public security matters, and criminal law. The Institute is part of the Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science – Germany’s flagship research organization.

The Department of Criminology at the MPI-CSL offers a highly interdisciplinary and dynamic research environment in which criminologists, psychologists, sociologists, mathematicians, and computer scientists work together to understand the causes and consequences of criminal behavior and to develop effective interventions for the prevention of crime and the facilitation of offender rehabilitation. The department pushes the boundaries of crime research through the application of innovative methods, developmental theories of crime, and real-world application. It currently hosts three researchers with prestigious individual European Research Council (ERC) grants.

The Institute, with its approximately 150 employees, is located in Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany), a dynamic university city with a 900-year history. The city in the trinational border region (Germany, Switzerland, and France) impresses newcomers with its high quality of life and international flair. Freiburg ranks third on Lonely Planet’s “Best in Travel 2022” list of the top ten city destinations in the world.

Our offer

Our Institute offers unrivalled research conditions, including access to top-notch laboratory facilities as well as access to exceptional specialist libraries and databases, well-equipped workspaces, and comprehensive administrative and academic support. Collaboration with other researchers and international partners at the Institute is a key element of our work. Additionally, there are many opportunities for researchers to design, convene, or participate in workshops, seminars, and conferences.

The position is available from the earliest possible starting date and limited to four years with the possibility of extension of up to a maximum of another three years. It is a fully funded research position with no teaching obligations. The position is full-time (currently 39 hours/week). Remuneration and social benefits are based on the German Civil Service Collective Agreement (TVöD Bund), pay category 13 or 14 (entry level depending on prior experience), 100% (see https://oeffentlicher-dienst.info/tvoed/bund/). The salary includes all mandatory social insurance contributions for health care, long-term care, unemployment, and retirement. The work location is Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany). We are committed to ensuring a positive work-life balance and offer flexible work options as well as generous opportunities for personal and professional development. There are also a number of daycare spots at a nearby childcare facility.
The Max Planck Society is an equal opportunity employer and supports diversity in the workplace. Applications from disabled persons are welcome. We also aim to increase the percentage of female staff in fields in which they are underrepresented and therefore expressly encourage women to apply. Applications are particularly welcome from persons with backgrounds that have so far been underrepresented in science and research with regard to gender, age, professional and cultural background, family situation, sexual orientation, and nationality.

Your application and further information

To apply, please submit your application with the following documents:

- cover letter, including your research interests and your relevant work experience;
- your CV including a list of publications;
- up to three publications you consider your best or most relevant for the position;
- name and email address of two scholars who can serve as a reference.

Please submit your application via our online application portal: https://csl.mpg.de/en/career.

The deadline for applications is 5 November, 2023.

Applicants will be informed in the week of 6 November, 2023 whether they are invited for an interview. Interviews with shortlisted candidates are currently planned for the second half of November 2023.

Questions may be directed to Prof. Dr. Dr. Jean-Louis van Gelder (j.vangelder@csl.mpg.de) or Dr. Annika Hampel, Recruitment Officer (a.hampel@csl.mpg.de).

For information about our Institute, please visit our website: https://csl.mpg.de/en.