

Faculty of Psychology

The Fakultät Mathematik und Naturwissenschaften, Institut für Allgemeine Psychologie, Biopsychologie und Methoden der Psychologie offers a position as

PhD Student

(if the personal requirements meet E 13 TV-L)

limited for three years starting as of **1.1.2022**. The position entails 75 % of the fulltime weekly hours and offers the chance to obtain further academic qualification (PhD). The period of employment is governed by Fixed Term Research Contracts Act (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz-WissZeitVG).

The successful applicant will work in the DFG project “Reconstructing the naïve theory of the self”, which is a collaboration of the TU Dresden and Jacobs University Bremen. The applicant will be supervised by Prof. Dr. Bernhard Hommel, who is leading the behavioral studies of the project, and collaborate with Prof. Arvid Kappas and Prof. Dr. Francesco Maurelli at JU Bremen, and their research teams.

The project investigates how humans conceptualize a “self”. People attribute a self to other humans, but also to non-human animals or technical systems, and they treat them accordingly—more or less carefully, politely, or empathetic. But what are the criteria for attributing a self to another agent? This project aims to tackle this question by using a “synthetic” approach. We will program small, very simple robots in such a way that they show behavioral characteristics that are likely to solicit the attribution of a self—such as causality, human-like movement speed, behavioral efficiency, learning ability, and social sensitivity. In Turing-tests, human participants will be confronted with videos of behavior of otherwise identical robots showing or not showing these characteristics, and participants will be asked to assess both robots on a number of self-relevant scales. Those behavioral characteristics that lead to a significant increase in the attribution of a self will be combined and implemented in a robot. Participants will be presented with the behavior of this robot and with an otherwise identical robot that is controlled by another human. To the degree that participants will no longer be able to tell these robots from each other, we assume to have identified the criteria for attributing a human-like self. We will then investigate in which ways the attribution of a human-like self will affect how humans treat a robot: whether they show more empathy, trust it more, conform more to its behavior, and treat it less aggressively.

Tasks: Tasks include participant recruitment, implementation of the experiments, guidance of the student assistants, data analysis, publication, and presentation of the results in scientific journals and at conferences.

Requirements: We are looking for a highly motivated person with a university degree (MSc or diploma) in Psychology, Cognitive Neuroscience, Cognitive Sciences, or a similar discipline, a strong interest in theoretical and empirical psychological topics, excellent statistical and methodological skills, excellent proficiency in English and high levels of commitment, initiative and scientific curiosity. Prior experience with scientific publishing as well as programming skills are advantageous.

Applications from women are particularly welcome. The same applies to people with disabilities.

Please submit your comprehensive application (including a cover letter describing your research interests and qualifications, your CV, relevant certificates, and the names and contact information for two referees) by **1.10.2021**, preferably as one PDF file, to **Bianca.Fricke@tu-dresden.de** (Please note: We are currently not able to receive electronically signed and encrypted data.). Expenses incurred in attending interviews cannot be reimbursed.

Reference to data protection: Your data protection rights, the purpose for which your data will be processed, as well as further information about data protection is available to you on the website: <https://tu-dresden.de/karriere/datenschutzhinweis>