

Job advertisement

The Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography in Leipzig, Germany, currently looks for a

Doctoral Researcher (75% [equiv. of 30 h/week] TV-L E13) (f/m/d)

within the research project *"Unlearning the Soviet. De-colonisation of Soviet Spatial Imaginaries"* funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The project, based at Department of Cartography and Visual Communication, investigates how Soviet spatial imaginaries – produced through textbooks, maps, and educational media – persist or are contested in the post-Soviet republics. Focusing on Georgia and Tajikistan, and on the representation of the Soviet/Russian North (Arctic), the project examines how de-sovietisation and decolonisation strategies affect national identity formation and epistemological independence. The doctoral candidate will primarily work on persistence of the spatial imaginations of the Soviet North, and focus on analysis of how Soviet constructions of Russia's northern peripheries circulated in Georgian educational and public geography, and how these representations have been challenged or reimagined in post-Soviet Georgia.

The IfL's mission is to conduct basic geographical research in order to make social and spatial change visible and to provide knowledge for sustainable and regionally balanced development. As a member of the Leibniz Association and the only non-university research institute for geography in Germany, it combines research and knowledge transfer. The IfL consists of five departments: Theory, Methodology, and History of Geography; Regional Geography of Europe, Cartography and Visual Communication; Central Library of Geography and Archive for Geography and Administration.

Job description

- pursuing research towards a PhD dissertation within the framework of the project
- critical analysis of Soviet-era and post-Soviet Georgian textbooks, maps, atlases, and other visual educational media using methods from critical cartography and visual studies
- archival research in Georgia (National Archives, National Library, Academy of Sciences) and international collections (e.g. David Rumsey Map Collection)
- conduct semi-structured interviews with Georgian schoolteachers, textbook authors, and curriculum developers
- contribution to joint project outputs (co-authored articles, conferences, edited volume, international workshop in Tbilisi)
- close collaboration with the team members at IfL and partner institutions in Georgia and Tajikistan

We offer

- a part-time (75 %) doctoral position, funded for 3 years with the earliest starting date in February 2026
- an employment contract based on the regulations of the collective agreement for the public sector of the Federal States (TV-L) with a special annual payment, capital-forming benefits and a company pension scheme (VBL)
- a supplementary payment for the public transportation job ticket
- opportunities for mobility, including research stays in Georgia and possible archival visits abroad
- supervision within the project and support with career development and networks to universities and doctoral training offers
- family-friendly working environment with flexible working hours as well as the possibility of mobile working within the framework of a company agreement on the compatibility of family and career
- a salary/remuneration according to the provisions of the TV-L in line with personal qualifications up to pay group 13

Our expectations

- Completed Master's degree (or equivalent) in Human Geography, Area Studies, or related disciplines
- Experience in the research in/of post-Soviet spaces, post-/decolonial studies, critical cartography, and visual culture
- Experience in working with textual, cartographic, and visual sources; familiarity with content/discourse analysis is desirable
- Very good English (working language of the project), and of Georgian or Russian; German skills are an advantage but not required

What else do we look for

We are looking for a person who is able to work independently, with a high level of initiative, but within an interdisciplinary international team.

Application

The IfL advocates professional equality for all genders. We value diversity and welcome all applications – regardless of gender, nationality, ethnic or social origin, religion, disability, age and sexual orientation. Severely disabled applicants are given preference in case of equal suitability.

Please send your application package as a single pdf document via e-mail with the keyword “Unlearning the Soviet” to: personal@leibniz-ifl.de

Please include the following documents:

- one page as cover letter indicating candidate's motivation to work within the “Unlearning the Soviet” and explaining how a candidate fit into the aforementioned profile
- a PhD proposal (1500 words max.) within the frame of the above mentioned project aims
- a writing sample (e.g. MA thesis chapter or academic article)
- curriculum vitae, including academic achievements and publications (if any)
- copies of degree certificates

We kindly ask you to refrain from sending a photo as part of the application. Information on how we handle your personal data can be found on our [website](#).

Contact and questions

Dr. Sofia Gavrilova | s_gavrilova@leibniz-ifl.de

Application deadline

15 November 2025

Expected interview dates

10-15 December 2025

