The Vienna Doctoral School of Social Sciences promotes innovative, excellent, problem-oriented research that aspires to contribute to societal debates and address key global challenges. The cohorts trained and supported by the VIDSS are part of the vibrant research environment at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Vienna. VIDSS aims for the highest standards in doctoral training and close supervision to ensure a mastery of social scientific debates and relevant theories and methods.

The following doctoral position(s) are announced by the VIDSS or the departments supporting the VIDSS:

Project Staff at the Department of Development Studies
under the supervision of Cornelia Staritz (“The role of commodity prices for socio-ecological transformation. Mineral extraction, trading houses and derivatives markets – The cases of cobalt, copper, lithium and nickel in Sub-Saharan Africa”)

The project aims at researching the role of price setting mechanisms in determining sustainable development outcomes in the global value chains of selected minerals central to current socio-ecological transformation strategies in the area of mobility and energy provision. Research on sustainability implications of resource extraction has focused on the physical sphere without giving due consideration to price setting mechanisms and related financial market dynamics, which this project will focus on. Price setting dynamics and their sustainability implications will be analyzed throughout the mineral global value chains of cobalt, copper, lithium and nickel, from extraction in key Sub-Saharan African producer countries via leading commodity trading houses to EU-based manufacturers of wind turbines, solar panels and batteries. A particular focus lies on critiquing the role of financial derivatives markets where ‘global prices’ are set and financialisation processes on these markets. The methodology is built on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including trade, industry and financial data analysis, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews with firm and institutional actors. The research team involves researchers at the Department of Development Studies (Dr. Cornelia Staritz, project manager) and at ÖFSE (Austrian Foundation for Development Research, Dr. Bernhard Tröster).

Job description:
The successful candidate will conduct secondary research (literature review) as well as qualitative research (document analysis, semi-structured interviews) and quantitative research (processing and analysis of trade, industry and financial data) as part of the project, and in cooperation with the two other researchers. The research also includes field trips to countries in Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. The successful candidate will co-author publications on the results of the project in peer-reviewed journals and present at national and international conferences and workshops. This position also includes the writing of a dissertation on a topic related to the research project under the supervision of Dr. Cornelia Staritz, as well as occasional support of department activities.

More information

Duration of employment: 2 years
Extent of Employment: 20 hours/week
Job grading in accordance with collective bargaining agreement: §48 VwGr. B1 Grundstufe (praedoc) with relevant work experience determining the assignment to a particular salary grade.

The candidate who is selected for this position joins the VIDSS as student member.
Applications are to be submitted through the Job Center of the University of Vienna (reference number: 11431), no later than 15.01.2021.