



Ausschreibung: 2 Masterarbeiten in der A&O-Psychologie (ab sofort!)

Research topic: Workplace gossip in groups

Almost all of us gossip – that is, exchanging information about an absent third party (gossip target) in an evaluative way (positive or negative; Foster, 2004). As we are spending a significant amount of our time at work, we can frequently catch ourselves engaging in workplace gossip (Brady, Brown, & Liang, 2017; Kurland & Pelled, 2000). Despite its mostly negative reputation, workplace gossip fulfils important social functions such as information exchange, social bonding, or emotion venting (Foster, 2004; Ellwardt et al., 2012). The aim of this study is to explore the dynamics of gossip behaviour in groups, and to further investigate its effects on social bonding and mood.

Possible research questions:

- How does gossip behaviour influence social bonding in groups?
- Does negative and positive gossip influence social bonding in groups differently?
- How does gossip behaviour influence group and individual mood?
- Does negative and positive gossip influence group and individual mood differently?
- Does negative and positive mood influence gossip behaviour?

Methods: You will collect video-taped behavioral data of group interactions by conducting an online study using a videoconference programme. To capture the dynamics of gossip behaviour, you will then analyse the video with the help of a gossip coding scheme and using INTERACT software, and, depending on your research question, the *Lingustic Inquiry and Word Count* (LIWC).

Note: You may also write your thesis in German.

Please write a **short** application letter on why you find this topic interesting and which previous experiences and skills equip you to work on this project. You may email your application to the contact detailed below.

Contact details: Vanessa Begemann (vanessa.begemann@uni-hamburg.de)

Selected Literature:

Brady, D. L., Brown, D. J., & Liang, L. H. (2017). Moving beyond assumptions of deviance: The reconceptualization and measurement of workplace gossip. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(1), 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000164>

Ellwardt, L., Steglich, C., & Wittek, R. (2012). The co-evolution of gossip and friendship in workplace social networks. *Social Networks*, 34(4), 623-633. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2012.07.002>

Foster, E. K. (2004). Research on gossip: Taxonomy, methods, and future directions. *Review of General Psychology*, 8(2), 78-99. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.8.2.78>

Kurland, N. B., & Pelled, L. H. (2000). Passing the Word: Toward a model of gossip and power in the workplace. *The Academy of Management Review*, 25(2), 428. <https://doi.org/10.2307/259023>

