



Developing Belief Network

Dissertation Fellowship Announcement

The Developing Belief Network (developingbelief.com; Project Directors: Rebekah Richert and Kathleen Corriveau) is pleased to invite dissertation-level scholars to apply to be part of a five-year research project: *Developing Belief: The Development and Diversity of Religious Cognition and Behavior: Phase 1*. Funded by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation, this research initiative is designed to bring together a network of scholars interested in cross-cultural study of the development of religious cognition and behavior. We seek proposals from Ph.D. candidates interested in being affiliated with this network. The program of research explores the development of religious cognition broadly, as well as focuses on topics of interest to the global developmental science community. The network activities are coordinated to investigate two general research questions:

1. How does the *acquisition* of religious cognition and behavior vary within and between populations? How is the acquisition of religious beliefs and practices facilitated and constrained by child-level developmental factors?
2. How does the *transmission* of religious cognition and behavior vary within and between populations? How do processes of social learning (e.g., testimony, text, instruction, imitation) support the development of religious cognition and behavior?

1. What is the Developing Belief Network?

The Developing Belief Network consists of 10 research teams collaboratively developing a cross-cultural methodology to contribute to a shared dataset on the development of religious cognition and behavior from children and families in approximately 30 field sites around the world. The Developing Belief Network partners with Databrary (nyu.databrary.org) to provide access to our forthcoming datasets to the developmental science community broadly. The inaugural instantiation of the Developing Belief Network was constructed through an open and invited RFP solicitation (now closed). Research teams were selected for their (a) demonstrated ability to collect developmental data and (b) representation of important dimensions of religious belief (e.g., supernatural agents, animism, atheism). Upon successful building of the research network and completion of the first round of data collection, we will apply for funding to expand the network to include multi-time point data collection (expanding the data set to be a semi-longitudinal data set on patterns of individual development over time) and new teams of researchers (expanding the cultural data set to incorporate even greater cultural variation).

2. What are the specific research questions of interest?

Together, the inaugural members of the Developing Belief Network have developed a set of research questions that the collaborative network is addressing in our first wave of data collection. Some specific processes and research questions of interest to the network and the John Templeton Foundation include:

- **Entities, Agents, Forces, and Causes:** What are the supernatural, spiritual and religious concepts present in children's contexts? How do children develop an understanding of those concepts?
- **Religious Identity:** What aspects of religious identity (e.g., group membership, normative behaviors) are children aware of and at which ages? How do children develop an understanding of religious identity?
- **Transmission:** How are religious and supernatural beliefs transmitted? What are the sources of information and practices associated with the transmission of religious and supernatural beliefs?

Graduate students working on similar or related topics are the primary focus of this call.

3. What is the purpose of the Dissertation Fellowships?

The Developing Belief Network will support up to 2 Ph.D. candidates, with a focus on supporting students completing their dissertation writing and submitting a manuscript from their dissertation. The purpose of these Dissertation Fellowships is to build the field of researchers studying the above topics, regardless of whether or not an individual's dissertation advisor(s) focus(es) on this topic. Recipients of the Dissertation Fellowships will not be expected to collect data for the collaborative dataset described above. Instead, awardees will be expected to be focusing their dissertations on questions related to the goals of the Developing Belief Network.

4. What is expected of Dissertation Fellowship Recipients?

- a. Dissertation fellowship recipients are expected to be writing a dissertation to be submitted in the 2021-2022 academic year. Dissertation topics should be related to the research topics of interest to the Developing Belief Network (see Section 2), and are likely to utilize data collected with children and parents at a location outside of the United States or with an understudied population within the United States.
- b. All dissertation grant fellowship recipients must commit to attending a collaborative site meeting during the year of their dissertation fellowship to present their preliminary or completed research. Dissertation fellowship recipients will be asked to submit regular progress reports.
- c. Dissertation fellowship recipients will be expected to actively engage in dissemination of their findings, through conference presentations and manuscript submissions.
- d. Dissertation fellowship recipients will be asked to contribute content to a website devoted to this project. Content may include descriptions of their field site and lay summaries of key findings.

5. Who Can Apply?

Dissertation fellowship proposals are invited from students (either US or non-US citizens) who are PhD candidates (or the equivalent). Fellowships are unavailable for students who currently reside in a country on an US OFAC Sanctions List. Fellowships will not be given to students working with the project leaders (Drs. Rebekah Richert and Kathleen Corriveau) or with PIs who have been selected to lead research teams in the Developing Belief Network (i.e., are receiving a Full Award from the initial RFP).

6. Subgrant Budgets:

Funding is available for 2 \$30,000 Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship. The budget cap for all fellowships is \$30,000 and inclusive of overhead (indirect costs). The Templeton Foundation's maximum overhead allowable for these fellowships is 10%. Note that funding will be contingent upon appropriate documentation of IRB approval and the dissertation committee's approval of the dissertation proposal.

7. What are Required Expenses?

Dissertation fellowship applicants are required to allocate some of their budget toward travel (e.g., flights or train tickets) to attend one DBN collaborative site meeting. [Lodging and meal costs will be covered by the large project grant.]

8. What Are Allowable Expenses?

Dissertation fellowships can only be used for stipends and associated living costs (e.g., health insurance).

9. Who Will Review My Proposal?

Proposals will be reviewed by the Project Directors Dr. Rebekah Richert (University of California Riverside) and Dr. Kathleen Corriveau (Boston University), and current Postdoctoral Researchers who are members of the core leadership team of the Developing Belief Network (Dr. Kirsten Lesage, Dr. Kara Weisman, Dr. Bolivar Reyes-Jaquez, Dr. Maliki Ghossainy).

10. What should I include in my proposal?

Proposals should include a 5-page narrative of the dissertation, including (1) fit between the dissertation research and the Developing Belief Network's primary research questions, (2) a description of the research sites for participants in the dissertation, with an explanation for why that site and population would be particularly informative for the study of the development of religious cognition, and (3) a timeline for the dissertation project. In addition, all proposals should include (4) a CV for the PhD candidate, (5) a brief budget and budget justification, (6) proof of IRB approval for the dissertation (or timeline for securing this - funding will not be dispersed prior to IRB approval), and (7) a letter from the Dissertation Committee Chair indicating the dissertation proposal has been approved by the Dissertation Committee. Dissertation Fellowship proposals should be submitted as a single pdf document emailed to Dr. Rebekah Richert (rebekah.richert@ucr.edu).

Proposals are due by 11:59pm PT on August 1, 2021. Notifications will be sent by September 1, 2021.

Please send questions to Dr. Rebekah Richert (rebekah.richert@ucr.edu).