

## **Developing Belief Network**

### Postdoctoral Awards Announcement

The University of California, Riverside is pleased to invite Postdoctoral 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* (Project Directors: Rebekah Richert and Kathleen Corriveau). This John Templeton Foundation grant funds the development of the Developing Belief Network, a research initiative 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 postdoctoral-level scholars interested in being affiliated with this network. The program of research will explore the development of religious cognition broadly, as well as focus on topics of interest to the global developmental science community. The network activities will be 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 initial formation of the Developing Belief Network will involve 8-10 investigators working across 10-16 research sites working over 5 years to develop a collaborative cross-cultural methodology, create culturally-validated measures, and collect data to contribute to a shared dataset on the development of religious cognition and behavior from children and families around the world. The Developing Belief Network will partner with Databrary to provide access to this rich dataset to the developmental science community broadly. The inaugural instantiation of the Developing Belief Network is currently being constructed through an open and invited RFP solicitation (now closed). Sites have been 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?**

Inaugural members of the Developing Belief Network will have the opportunity to shape the specific research questions that the collaborative network will address. Some specific processes and research questions of interest to the PIs and the John Templeton Foundation include:

- What are cultural variations in the development of folk theories? Do children need to have a foundational folk theory of humans or the physical world before they can develop concepts of supernatural agents or causes?
- How do cultural variations in religious concepts (e.g., beliefs about animism, the properties and functioning of spirit/life force/soul) relate to the development of ontological boundaries and the extent to which religious concepts are or are not minimally counterintuitive?
- How do natural and supernatural explanations develop to (co)exist in individual minds?
- How do cross-cultural and within-cultural variations in verbal, non-verbal, and textual information provided to children relate to children's concepts about and belief in natural and supernatural agents and causes?

### **3. What is the purpose of the Postdoctoral Awards?**

The Developing Belief Network will support up to 2 postdoctoral scholars, with a focus on supporting researchers who are beginning their careers in this field of study. The purpose of these awards is to build the field of researchers studying religious cognitions and behaviors, beyond those researchers formally involved in the collaborative data collection effort. As such, the Developing Belief Network of investigators will provide mentorship to emerging scholars by involving them in the Developing Belief Network. Recipients of the Postdoctoral Awards will not be expected to collect data for the collaborative dataset. Instead, awardees will be expected to be focusing their research on questions related to the goals of the Developing Belief Network. Awardees will be expected to attend the annual workshop of the Developing Belief Network held during the year of their award and to present their research at this workshop.

### **4. What is expected of Postdoctoral Awardees?**

- a. Postdoctoral Awardees are expected to have completed their dissertation by December 31, 2020 and to have a Postdoctoral Mentor outside of the Developing Belief Network. Research topics should be related to the research questions outlined above, 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. Postdoctoral Awardees will have the opportunity to work with Developing Belief Network members, the project leaders, and an advisory board to develop a collaborative methodology that can be used across the sites, although award winners will not be expected to collect data for the collaborative dataset.
- c. All Postdoctoral Awardees must commit to attending a collaborative site meeting during the year of their award to present their preliminary or completed research. Postdoctoral Awardees will be asked to submit regular progress reports.
- d. Postdoctoral Awardees will be expected to actively engage in dissemination of findings, through conference presentations and manuscript submissions.
- e. Postdoctoral Awardees 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?**

Postdoctoral award proposals are invited from scholars who have completed their dissertation by December 31, 2020. Scholars will need to have a mentor with a university affiliation who will supervise the postdoctoral scholar. Awards will not be given to postdoctoral scholars working with the project leaders (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 up to 2 Postdoctoral Awards. The funds can only be used for stipend and to cover travel costs to the required meetings. The budget cap for all awards is \$55,000 and inclusive of overhead (indirect costs). The Templeton Foundation's maximum overhead allowable for these awards is 15%.

## **7. What are Required Expenses?**

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

## **8. What Are Allowable Expenses?**

Postdoctoral Awards 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).

## **10. What should I include in my proposal?**

Proposals should include a 5-page narrative of the postdoctoral research plan, including (1) fit between the research and the Developing Belief Network, (2) a description of the research site(s) for participants with an explanation for why that site would be particularly informative for the study of the development of religious cognition, and (3) a timeline for the project. In addition, all proposals should include (4) a CV for the applicant, (5) a brief budget and budget justification, (6) proof of IRB approval for the research (or timeline for securing this - funding will not be dispersed prior to IRB approval), and (7) a letter from the Postdoctoral Mentor indicating support for the applicant and the research. All materials should be emailed to Rebekah Richert (rebekah.richert@ucr.edu) in a single email.

Proposals will be due by 11:59pm on November 15, 2020. Notifications will be sent by December 1, 2020. The start date is anticipated to be January 1, 2021, but this date is somewhat flexible.

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