

Master`s thesis:

Laughing Together – Coding Laughter

in Developmental Psychology

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The aim of this project is to better understand the mechanism of how laughing together leads to prosocial behavior and cooperation in adults and/or children. In this project the hypothesis is that laughing together synchronizes brain activity, heart rhythm and behavior between interaction partners, which supports bonding and prosocial behavior. In this study, participants first laugh together and then perform cooperative tasks in games. We measure the mechanism of interpersonal synchrony through ECG, behavioural observation and functional near infrared spectroscopy. We also collect data about bonding and prosociality towards the other interaction partner with questionnaires, and cooperation through behavioral observation.

To measure laughter (its occurrence, types, and causes) we will manually code it from videos of the measurements with the coding program ELAN. Coding laughter occurrences would be the main task for this thesis.

We are looking for a master`s student who joins our team from the winter semester onwards, is interested in social cognition and/or developmental research, and would like to learn how to code behavioral data.

Potential topics include but are not limited to

How does laughter influence interpersonal synchrony, cooperation, liking or bonding.

We offer:

- Very flexible working hours
- Data which have already been collected
- The possibility of choosing whether to work from the lab or from home.
- Gaining experience in neuroscientific developmental research
- Learning how to quantify behavioral data by coding it from videos
- Learning how to use the coding program ELAN
- Close supervision in German and English

Requirements

- Study of psychology, neuroscience or related field of study
- Organizational skills, responsibility, and high motivation
- Advanced English skills
- Experience in developmental research/behavioral coding is preferred but not necessary

If you are interested, please contact us at carolina.pletti@univie.ac.at and send your CV, short motivational letter, transcript of records and, if applicable, references.