

## Applications invited for a post-doctoral position (SKO1352) in the project "Epidemic traces. Remains of infectious disease control in Africa"

### Post-doc position: Traces of disease control

This post-doc will conduct fieldwork in an eastern African country, conducting a case study of how traces – i.e., material remains and residuals – of past epidemics, disease control or anti-epidemic measures persist in and affect the present, and shape the future.

### Job description

Applications are invited for a three-to-four-year position as a post-doc in social anthropology, to be based at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo, and working within the above project. Upon the discretion of the department, an additional 12 months of teaching duty will be considered. The contract will commence in autumn 2022, and the place of employment is Oslo, with fieldwork in an eastern African country.

We are looking for candidates with a recent PhD degree, who have not previously held a post-doctoral position at the University of Oslo, and with ethnographic research experience, preferably from Africa. The successful applicant will work with senior and post-graduate researchers as part of the research project "Epidemic Traces. Remains of infectious disease control in Africa" [Epidemic Traces - Sosialantropologisk institutt \(SAI\)](#), led by Wenzel Geissler and Ruth Prince and funded by the Research Council of Norway.

The successful applicant will lead their own research project on an **epidemic-related subject** at the interface of **anthropology and history** (and STS, geography or archaeology), engaging with the theoretical-methodological frames of the "**anthropology of modern traces**", i.e. ethnographic studies of modernity's material remains, and how these sediment in landscapes and infrastructures, objects and bodies, affecting present and future social life and wellbeing. "**Traces**" of epidemics or disease control include anything that they leave behind, e.g., flora and fauna; landscape, architecture and infrastructures; tools and technologies; institutional practices, social collectives and professional knowledge; archives and inscriptions; routines and protocols; chemicals and pharmaceuticals; bodies, antibodies and DNA mutations.

The applicant's project will contribute, in its own way, to these **overall project questions**:

1. What remains after epidemics/anti-epidemic measures, and how do such traces survive and change over time?
2. What historical events, processes and logics do they reference, what memories do they carry?
3. What affective responses do they trigger in the present, and are they acknowledged, lived with and used, or ignored and erased, by local inhabitants?
4. What is their lasting potential to affect future human and non-human social life and wellbeing?

Examples of possible epidemic traces one could study in the above fashion are:

- Insecticide treated bed nets: an iconic global health tool that left behind, e.g., re-used nets, insecticide residuals, resistant insects, and yet unknown health effects.
- HIV control/treatment: lifesaving global campaigns leaving, e.g. NGOs and groups, clinical and lab infrastructure, pharmaceuticals, protective devices, altered DNA and bodies.
- Clinical trial/surveillance: areas designed to trial new policies, interventions or pharmaceuticals, leaving behind evidentiary infrastructures, professionals, data.
- Vaccination infrastructures: nationwide or international infrastructures, techniques and circulations that endure over time, adapt to changing policies and epidemics.

These are just examples of suitable topics; applicants are welcome to propose other ideas. Applicants can contact us with ideas and should read some publications by the project team:

Articles (available on our academia/researchgate sites)

Bannister, D. (2021). The sorcerer's apprentice. Sleeping sickness, onchocerciasis and unintended consequences in Ghana, 1930–60. The Journal of African History 62(1): 29-57.

Geissler, P. W. (2011). Parasite Lost: Remembering Modern Times with Kenyan Government Scientists. Evidence, Ethos and Ethnography. P. W. Geissler and C. Molyneux (eds). Oxford, Berghahn: 297-232.

Geissler, P. W. (2014). What future remains? Remembering an African place of science. Para-states and medical science: making global health in Africa. P. W. Geissler (ed). Durham, Duke UP:142-178.

Lachenal, G. (2016). At home in the postcolony: Ecology, empire and domesticity at the Lamto field station, Ivory Coast. Social Studies of Science 46(6): 877-893.

Prince, R. J. (2020). From Russia with love: medical modernities, development dreams, and Cold War legacies in Kenya, 1969 and 2015. Africa 90(1): 51-76.

Tousignant, N. (2013). Broken Tempos: Of Means and Memory in a Senegalese University Laboratory. Social Studies of Science 43 (5): 729-753

Books illustrating the general approach

Geissler, P. W., G. Lachenal, Manton, J, Tousignant, N (2016). Traces of the Future. Bristol, Intellect/Chicago.

Lachenal, G. (2022). The Doctor Who Would Be King. Durham, Duke.

Tousignant, N. (2017). Edges of Exposure: Toxicology and the Problem of Capacity in Postcolonial Senegal. Durham, Duke.

Kilroy-Marac, K. (2019). An Impossible Inheritance. Berkeley, University of California Press.

The successful applicant will independently design and pursue their own research project (a 4-page research idea outline is part of the application, see below). The researcher will spend 6-9 months conducting fieldwork in East Africa. They will work closely with the other researchers on the project – who work across the University of Oslo (Department of Anthropology and Institute for Health and Society), University College London, and project partners in Senegal, Ghana and Kenya – and jointly pursuing workshops, publications and other more creative forms of dissemination. Enthusiasm for group work and commitment to shared efforts, including fieldwork, and outcomes is thus a precondition for this post.

### **Qualification requirements**

Applicants must hold a degree equivalent to a Norwegian doctoral degree in Social Anthropology or a closely related discipline. A solid grounding in social anthropology and familiarity with neighbouring disciplines like history, archaeology, STS, geography and material culture studies would be useful.

Applicants should have prior research experience including ethnographic fieldwork and/or research that combined ethnographic and historical methodology. A focus on materiality will be an advantage.

In assessing the applications, emphasis will be placed on the project description, as well as the applicant's academic prerequisites to carry out the project. A good match between the candidate's proposal and the project's theoretical and methodological frames, planned activities and the requirements of this position is a main selection criterion, along with the quality of the proposal and the qualifications of the candidate.

### How to apply

The application must include:

- Cover letter (statement of motivation, summarizing scientific work and research interest)
- Project description, including progress plan (max. 4 pages, excluding references), outlining the questions to be pursued and the work to be undertaken
- CV (summarizing education, positions, pedagogical experience, administrative experience, and other qualifying activity such as relevant internships)
- Copies of educational certificates (academic transcripts only)
- A complete list of publications
- 2 pieces of academic works that illustrate the applicant's writing style and ability
- List of reference persons: 2-3 references (name, relation to candidate, e-mail and phone number)

The application with attachments must be delivered in our electronic recruiting system. Foreign applicants are advised to attach an explanation of their University's grading system. Please note that all documents should be in English or a Scandinavian language.

The best-qualified candidates will be invited to interviews.

It is expected that the successful candidate will be able to complete the project in the course of the period of employment.

The successful applicant might be offered an option of up to 12 months of teaching duty (in addition to the 36 months).