

EVALUATION

POSITIONS AS POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW (SKO 1352) «EPIDEMIC TRACES», DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The applicant was evaluated by the following committee: Professor Paul Wenzel Geissler, Lecturer in Science and Technology Studies Noemi Tousignant, and Advisor Hilde Kveseth

The interview was carried out on Zoom on 20 April 2022.

2. ANNOUNCEMENT

Applications were 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 research project "Epidemic Traces", led by Professors Paul Wenzel Geissler and Ruth Prince, and funded by the Norwegian Research Council. For the right candidate an additional 12 month of teaching duty will be considered. The planned starting date is June 2022, and the place of employment is Oslo, with fieldwork in Senegal.

3. REQUIREMENT FOR THE POSITIONS

These are the criteria for evaluation of candidates according to the announcement:

- Applicants must hold a degree equivalent to a Norwegian doctoral degree in Social Anthropology. Applicants with a PhD earlier than 2018 will not be considered (additional time may be allowed for leave relating to childbirth or adoption). A solid grounding in social anthropology and familiarity with neighbouring disciplines like STS, geography and material culture studies would be useful.
- Applicants must have extensive prior research experience including long-term rural and urban ethnographic fieldwork in Senegal and neighbouring countries and must have familiarity with border regions and border control management. Previous research that has dealt with issues of mobility and infrastructure, and/or research that combined ethnographic and historical methodology, as well as a focus on materiality will be a distinct advantage. Fluent oral and written communication skills in French and English are required; knowledge of another local language spoken in Senegal will be an advantage.
- In assessing the applications, emphasis will be placed on the project description, as well as the applicant's academic and personal prerequisites to carry out the project. A good match

between the candidate's proposal and the project's 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.

4. SELECTION

There was 1 candidate for 1 position.

The one candidate was highly qualified, and the committee therefore decided to continue despite no other applications.

The candidate was Charline Kopf, who was invited for an interview.

5. EVALUATION

The shortlisted candidate had a well-conceived and feasible project proposal, and her academic credentials and scholarly achievements are both excellent and compatible with the project.

Charline Kopf

Facts: The candidate submitted her PhD dissertation in Social Anthropology at the University of Oslo and KU Leuven in March 2022, as a part of the joint-doctorate degree programme ANTHUSIA. The PhD is titled "Dakar-Bamako: Waiting for a train ride back to the future". The candidate holds an MPhil in Social Anthropology from the University of Oxford.

The quality of the PhD/MA thesis, project description and the relevance for "Epidemic Traces": the submitted PhD thesis, as well as the first publications derive from it are of very high quality and reveal both scholarly rigour and the ability to communicate effectively. The submitted materials draw upon long-term fieldwork in Senegal and surrounding countries (Mali) and deal with transport infrastructures, as well as social change and political economic conditions. The PhD documents a very wide-ranging anthropological expertise, including theoretical influences from "STS" and "new materialism", as well as classic Africanist anthropology, and the anthropology of infrastructure, transport and modernity.

Overall, the submitted materials suggest an exceptionally well suited candidate for the position as it was advertised. A lot of the scholarly groundwork in terms of regional literature and some areas of thematic interest has been done for the PhD research.

The job interview: Charline did a very good interview, and came across as highly motivated for the position. She seems extremely eager to continue to work at SAI, and appears genuinely excited about the possibility of teaching and helping to develop courses. Charline is dedicated to learning Norwegian, and would like to continue taking language classes.

Charline has already conducted fieldwork in her proposed sites, and will use her networks and experience to gain the necessary access. She discusses the challenges and different aspects to her proposed research project well, and comes across as both realistic and knowledgeable.

Charline has five peer-reviewed publications in recognised journals. In addition, she is currently working on a book proposal, based on her thesis, an edited volume together with Lotte Meinert, Aïssatou Mbodj-Pouye, and Paul Wenzel Geissler, and a special issue together with Sarah-Jane Phelan. It is therefore very likely that she will continue to publish extensively during her postdoc period.

References: the references provided by Charline, professor Filip de Boeck and Dr Jose Maria Munoz, who were co-supervisors of her PhD, spoke very highly of the applicants academic skill and qualities as researcher and colleague. She was described as an exceptionally good scholar that will have a brilliant academic future. None of them raised any particular issues concerning Charline's qualifications for the postdoc.

Conclusion: Charline Kopf came across as an ambitious candidate who the committee finds highly qualified for the position.