

Two Postdoctoral positions in the research project 'Mobilities, Imaginaries & Articulations (MIA): Revisioning the African City from the Periphery' at the Department of Anthropology, Aarhus University

The Department of Anthropology, School of Culture and Society, Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University invites applications for two 18-month Postdoctoral positions in the research project 'Mobilities, Imaginaries & Articulations (MIA): Revisioning the African City from the Periphery', financed by the Independent Research Fund Denmark 2024-2028. The project is a comparative examination of the everyday life of youth in urban peripheries in Nouakchott, Cape Town, and Nairobi, three rapidly growing African cities.

The appointments begin on September 1, 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter. The positions are based in Aarhus, Denmark, and candidates are expected to relocate for the duration of the employment.

The university is keen for its staff to reflect the diversity of society and thus welcomes applications from all qualified applicants regardless of their personal background.

Research context

We are looking for two innovative scholars with a background in social anthropology, history, cultural heritage studies, artistic research, architecture, urban studies, or related disciplines, preferably with a specialisation in multimodal/audiovisual approaches, participatory research methodologies, urban Africa, archival research, and collaboration. Experience with sound recording equipment, sound editing as well as experience with video-filming and editing, and photography is an advantage but not a prerequisite for applying. Fluency in written and spoken English is mandatory. Knowledge of local languages and areas is an advantage.

About the research project

Positing the urban periphery as a site of invention and potentiality, in which mobilities, imaginaries, and articulations constitute pivotal components, the MIA project comparatively analyses how these converge in the everyday lives of youth. Working with the same focus group through a shared methodological and analytical approach in three geographically and historically diverse African cities (Nouakchott, Cape Town, and Nairobi), we develop a new urgently needed general theoretical framework. We call this framework 'peripheral synergy'. Drawing near to and comparing young Africans' experiential histories on the urban periphery through fieldwork and collaboration, MIA fills a crucial knowledge-gap, inquiring into the following problem statement and related research questions:

How do youth in urban peripheries in Africa move in, imagine, and articulate the city, and how may multimodal anthropology contribute to a new general theory on 'peripheral synergy'?

- How does Mobility, and stuckness, configure young livelihoods on the urban periphery, and how may we draw nearer to this through collaborative, multimodal mapping?
- In what ways do audio-visual, digital media e.g. film, radio, social media, and other online fora, inform the Imaginaries of a better life for urban African youth?
- How do youth Articulate themselves through film, photography, and sound, and how can these be integrated in accountable knowledge-production and dissemination?

The contribution of this project is twofold: Firstly, it provides comparative knowledge on how young residents on the periphery in three rapidly growing cities in Africa imagine, articulate, and navigate urban life, consolidated in a theoretical framework entitled peripheral synergy. Secondly, through collaborative methodology and a multimodal research design integrating film, photography, and sound through workshops, local exhibition-making, and online dissemination, we develop new 'citizen-science' protocols for accountable knowledge-production with research participants and partners. In addition to scientific outputs (6 journal articles and an edited anthology), the project produces digital platform presenting a multimodal archive of African youth histories from the urban periphery.

Application Deadline:
31 January 2025

Faculty:
Faculty of Arts

Institute/Faculty:
School of Culture and Society

Academic contact person:
Christian Vium
Lektor
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+4529802639

Vacant positions:
2

Hours per week:
37

Number of months:
18

Expected date of accession:
01/09/2025

Read more about the project:

<https://cas.au.dk/en/currently/news/show/artikel/ny-indsigt-i-unges-liv-i-byer-i-afrika>

The position A

The successful applicant is expected to:

- contribute to the development of a comparative research design.
- conduct a total of six months of independent fieldwork in Cape Town, preferably in the Cape Flats, and more specifically in Manenberg, within the framework of the project.
- present their research at international meetings and publish results in at least two peer reviewed international scientific journals.
- teach at BA and/or MA level (maximum 20%, by agreement).
- contribute to the organization of an international conference at Aarhus University.
- co-author and publish research results in textual and multimodal formats (in particular sound, video, and photography) together with the other project members.
- coordinate and facilitate workshops and a local exhibition within the framework of the project.

Teaching

The position will involve some teaching as agreed upon with the Head of the Department and the project PI.

Knowledge exchange

The successful applicant will be expected to exchange knowledge with various sectors of society and to contribute actively to public debate in areas related to the position.

Applicants must submit:

- A concise statement of motivation for applying for the position along with a project proposal detailing intended approaches and multimodal outputs [maximum three pages].
- A maximum of two publications. Please attach one pdf-file for each publication. Only submitted publications will be assessed; a list of publications is not sufficient. As a result, applications without submitted publications will not be assessed.
- Certificates/Diplomas.
- A CV (maximum two pages).
- If available: a project portfolio/ examples of multimodal works (photographs, film, sound work, artistic products, etc.). Such audio-visual materials can be included as links to external media webpages such as Vimeo and YouTube.

Qualifications

Applicants for this position must hold a PhD degree or equal qualifications in social anthropology, history, cultural heritage studies, artistic research, architecture, urban planning, or a related field.

Applicants must document:

- an international research profile.
- fluency in written and spoken English.
- qualitative research experience in Cape Town or a comparable urban area.
- familiarity with relevant methods, theories and critical texts related to e.g. multimodal/audiovisual approaches, participatory research methodologies, urban Africa, African youth, archival research, and collaboration.

Experience with sound recording equipment, sound editing, and podcast production as well as experience with video-filming and editing, as well as photography is an advantage but not a prerequisite for applying.

The position B

The successful applicant is expected to:

- contribute to the development of a comparative research design.
- conduct a total of six months of independent fieldwork in Nairobi, preferably Mathare, within the framework of the project.
- present their research at international meetings and publish results in at least two peer reviewed articles in international scientific journals.
- teach at BA and/or MA level (maximum 20%, by agreement).
- contribute to the organization of an international conference at Aarhus University.
- co-author and publish research results in textual and multimodal formats (in particular sound, video, and photography) together with the other project members.
- coordinate and facilitate workshops and a local exhibition within the framework of the project.

Teaching

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Experience with sound recording equipment, sound editing, and podcast production as well as experience with video-filming, and photography is an advantage but not a prerequisite for applying.

Professional references or recommendations should not be included. Applicants who are selected for an interview may be asked to provide professional references.

The application must be submitted in English.

For further information about the position, please contact: Christian Vium, cvium@cas.au.dk.

For more information about the application and the employment procedure, please contact HR supporter Rie Nørgaard, e-mail rien@au.dk.

International applicants

International applicants are encouraged to check [Family and work-life balance](#) and [Attractive working conditions](#) for further information about the benefits of working at Aarhus University and in Denmark, including healthcare, paid holidays and, if relevant, maternity/paternity leave, childcare and schooling. Aarhus University offers a broad variety of services for international researchers and accompanying families, including a relocation service and career counselling for expat partners. For information about taxation, see [Taxation aspects of international researchers' employment by AU](#).

The work environment

The key research environments related to the project are at the Department of Anthropology, and the Eye and Mind Lab.

Read about Department of Anthropology here:

<https://cas.au.dk/en/about-the-school/departments/anthropology>

Read about the Eye and Mind Laboratory here:

<https://eyeandmind.dk/about/>

School of Culture and Society

At the School of Culture and Society the object of research and teaching is the interplay between culture and society in time and space:

- From the traditional disciplines of the humanities and theology to applied social research
- From Antiquity to the issues facing contemporary societies
- From local questions to global challenges.

The school's goal is to produce compelling research with an international resonance, as well as offering teaching and talent development of high quality. The school has a broad cooperative interface with society, both in Denmark and abroad, and contributes to social innovation, research communication and further and continuing education.

Qualification requirements

Applicants should hold a PhD or equivalent academic qualifications.

Formalities

The Faculty of Arts refers to the Ministerial Order on the Appointment of Academic Staff at Danish Universities ([the Appointment Order](#)).

- Appointments shall be in accordance with the [collective labour agreement between the Danish Ministry of Taxation and the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations](#).
- Further information on qualification requirements and job content may be found in the [Memorandum on Job Structure for Academic Staff at Danish Universities](#).
- Further information on the application and supplementary materials may be found in [Application Guidelines](#).
- The application must outline the applicant's motivation for applying for the position, attaching a curriculum vitae, a teaching portfolio, a complete list of published works, copies of degree certificates and examples of academic production (**mandatory, but no more than five examples**). Please upload this material electronically along with your application.

Aarhus University also offers a junior researcher development programme targeted at career development for postdocs at AU. You can read more about it here:

<https://talent.au.dk/junior-researcher-development-programme/>

If nothing else is noted, applications must be submitted in English. The application deadline is at 11.59 pm Danish time (same as Central European Time) on the deadline day.

Aarhus University's ambition is to be an attractive and inspiring workplace for all and to foster a culture in which each individual has opportunities to thrive, achieve and develop. We view equality and diversity as assets, and we welcome all applicants.

Shortlists may be prepared with the candidates that have been selected for a detailed academic assessment. A committee set up by the head of school is responsible for selecting the most qualified candidates. See this link for further information about shortlisting at the Faculty of Arts: [shortlisting](#)

Faculty of Arts

The Faculty of Arts is one of five main academic areas at Aarhus University.

The faculty contributes to Aarhus University's research, talent development, knowledge exchange and degree programmes.

With its 700 academic staff members, 200 PhD students, 9,000 BA and MA students, and 1,500 students following continuing/further education programmes, the faculty constitutes a strong and diverse research and teaching environment.

The Faculty of Arts consists of the School of Communication and Culture, the School of Culture and Society and the Danish School of Education. Each of these units has strong academic environments and forms the basis for interdisciplinary research and education.

The faculty's academic environments and degree programmes engage in international collaboration and share the common goal of contributing to the development of knowledge, welfare and culture in interaction with society.

Read more at arts.au.dk/en

The application must be submitted via Aarhus University's recruitment system, which can be accessed under the job advertisement on Aarhus University's website.

Aarhus University

Aarhus University is an academically diverse and research-intensive university with a strong commitment to high-quality research and education and the development of society nationally and globally. The university offers an inspiring research and teaching environment to its 38,000 students (FTEs) and 8,300 employees, and has an annual revenues of EUR 935 million. Learn more at www.international.au.dk/