

**The Institute of Social Anthropology at the University of Bern seeks to appoint**

## **Two Full-time PhD researchers**

For the project *The Circumference of Violence - Tracing the normalisation and brutalisation of violence across Europe's shifting external borders*, for the duration of four years, starting on 1 September 2024.

Funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), and led by Prof. Dr. Charles Heller, the project explores the transformations of the modalities of border violence against migrants across the EU's external borders, and the multi-scalar political and legal processes that have shaped them.

Focusing on three key border zones – Greece-Turkey; Hungary-Serbia; Poland-Belarus, while comparing these cases to other border areas such as Italy-Libya-Tunisia and Spain-Morocco - the research will seek to analyse the practices and interactions between actors directly engaged in perpetrating or contesting border violence in the selected border zones and then trace backwards the multi-scalar (mainly national and EU) political and legal processes shaping these localized practices. The forensic reconstruction of cases of death and violations, developed in collaboration with the Border Forensics agency ([borderforensics.org](http://borderforensics.org)), will play an essential role in our research. On the one hand, these will allow us to offer fine-grained reconstruction of the practices of violence and the actors involved. On the other, by following the presentation of documented cases of violence across different policy and legal forums we will assess the effects they produce. The aim is ultimately to offer a better understanding of the practices and political and legal processes that have shaped border violence across the EU's external borders over the last years, and for this understanding to open new possibilities of transformation to prevent border violence in the future.

(see here for further details on the project:

[https://www.anthro.unibe.ch/about\\_us/people/prof\\_dr\\_heller\\_charles/index\\_eng.html](https://www.anthro.unibe.ch/about_us/people/prof_dr_heller_charles/index_eng.html)

### **The PhD candidates are expected to**

- Design and conduct an independent research project, which, while starting from the fine-grained analysis of practices of border violence in one of the selected border zones - Greece-Turkey; Hungary-Serbia; Poland-Belarus – will then trace backwards the multi-scalar (mainly national and EU) political and legal processes shaping these localized practices.
- Contribute to academic publications, as well as to the drafting of investigative reports
- Support the team with organisational and administrative tasks

### **Required qualifications**

- MA in Social Anthropology or Geography or related disciplines, with a focus on migration and border studies, as well as the study of legal and political processes.
- Experience in working with qualitative methods and ethnographic field work, as well as a demonstratable capacity to experiment with the use of a broad range of visual and spatial methods, as well as quantitative methods
- Good knowledge of the selected border zones and the actors operating there



- An interest in creative theoretical thinking
- Excellent writing skills in English
- Good communication skills the languages spoken in the border zones and/or the languages spoken by the main migrant communities transiting through them are an advantage
- Proficient organisational and communication skills
- Enthusiasm for working in a team

#### **What we offer**

- A fully funded PhD position for four years
- The opportunity to gain expertise in the fields of migration and border studies, legal and policy analysis, and critical forensic theory and practice
- Supervision by leading experts in these fields
- Working in a dynamic and interdisciplinary team at the University of Bern and with extended collaborators

Except during the period of fieldwork the candidate will work at the University of Bern. PhD supervision will be led by Prof. Dr. Charles Heller with possible second supervisors. The salary corresponds to the official rates of the SNSF. Additional funding for fieldwork and conference participation will be available.

#### **Application**

Using your surname as folder name, please upload your application to the following folder: <https://www.dropbox.com/request/NZ6DMZCzGgA1C4qSujLn> Application should include a cover letter, CV, the contact information of two academic references, degree transcripts, publications, or a writing sample (e.g. Master Thesis) relevant to the project.

The deadline for the application is **31 May 2024**. Interviews for selected candidates will be conducted in June. The PhD positions are due to begin on 1 September 2024.

For additional information about the position, please contact: [charles.heller@unibe.ch](mailto:charles.heller@unibe.ch)