



Building an Africa-identified and Africa-led Research Agenda

Institute #1 | Concept Note

Global Health Histories, Contagion & Migration: (Bio)Citizenship in Africa

This institute will draw on conceptual and empirical scholarship to explore global health histories, contemporary migration dynamics, imaginaries of contagion and the influence of the 'outbreak narrative' (Wald, 2008) on notions of 'biocitizenship' (Happe et al., 2018; Petryna, 2013) in Africa.

Emerging in response to the racist and separatist legacies of colonial, tropical and missionary medicine (Greene et al., 2013) and in recognition of the limitations of international health – which focuses on the (poor) health of people and places 'elsewhere' – the field of global health sets out to achieve 'equity in health for all people worldwide' (Koplan et al., 2009). But 'global health' as a concept remains messy (Peters, 2017). Efforts to define its mandate or determine who is responsible for implementing its agenda risk reproducing the very inequities the field sets out to address – a concern increasingly recognised across the African continent and elsewhere (e.g. Abimbola et al., 2021; Bhakuni and Abimbola, 2021; Fofana, 2021). These critiques provide an entry point for analysing the nexus between migration and health. Participants in this institute will engage critically with theories of (bio)citizenship by interrogating their evolution on the African continent and by examining their historical and contemporary manifestations.

Fears over the 'diseased' foreigner whose movements must be restricted to 'protect' the body politic are not new. However, the measures put in place to reduce the 'threat' of contagion, as well the rhetoric used to justify said measures, have changed over time. Public anxieties over 'the contamination of space itself by mobile bodies' (King, 2002) have generated increasingly punitive actions to prevent or restrict the movement of certain migrant bodies. These in turn have influenced international security and sovereignty debates – including in the context of HIV (e.g. Chávez, 2018) and, most recently, Covid-19 (e.g. Lorenzini, 2021; Ormond, 2021).

Recognising the need to support the development of Africa-led methodological, theoretical and pedagogical processes for exploring the complex and contested relationship between migration and health, this institute provides an opportunity for critical engagement with both conceptual and empirical scholarship. Questions we aim to explore include:

- How do the concepts of biopower and (bio)citizenship assist us in understanding approaches to the governance of migration?
- Can a historical understanding of 'global health' assist contemporary African scholarship on migration and health?
- In what ways do nationality, class, gender, sexuality and other intersecting identities affect health and impact the policing of migrant bodies in African states?
- What would a 'migration-aware' (Vearey et al., 2017) health system look like? Is mainstreaming migration a helpful framing?
- What is the state of global scholarship on migration and health, associated research agendas and the geopolitics of such knowledge production? Are there forms of epistemic injustice that we need to address in the field of migration and health?
- What does an African-driven and internationally relevant migration and health research agenda look like?

Information for applicants can be found online | <https://tinyurl.com/n9dyupna>

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