

## **Post doc M/F ANR Debtchains - Financialization and illicit economies**

Application Deadline: 11 December 2025 23:59:00 Paris time

<https://emploi.cnrs.fr/Offres/CDD/UMR7186-DAVPIC-002/Default.aspx?lang=EN>

Ensure that your [candidate profile](#) is correct before applying.

### **General information**

**Offer title : Post doc M/F ANR Debtchains - Financiarisation and illicit economies (H/F)**

Reference : UMR7186-DAVPIC-002

Number of position : 1

Workplace : NANTERRE

Date of publication : 20 November 2025

Type of Contract : Researcher in FTC

Contract Period : 12 months

Expected date of employment : 2 February 2026

Proportion of work : Full Time

Remuneration : between €3 131.32 and €4 341.70 gross per month, depending on experience.

Desired level of education : Doctorate

Experience required : 1 to 4 years

Section(s) CN : 38 - Anthropology and comparative study of contemporary societies

### **Missions**

The postdoctoral researcher will contribute to the DEBTCHAINS project, which investigates the financialization of capitalism through a transnational study of debt chains across legal and illegal markets. While there has been growing concern about the financialization of capitalism, it often neglects the extremely profitable informal, illegal, and illicit financial markets, which are increasingly connected to formal global finance. The project moves beyond abstract, disembodied, and technical approaches to financialization by turning it into a tangible object of empirical investigation through the prism of debt chains. These chains are constructed by a multitude of concrete actors, such as lawyers, bankers, moneylenders, politicians, dealers, state officers and others.

DEBTCHAINS assume that the financialization of capital is socially grounded, embedded in practices, and embodied in various figures who build up those chains of debts (enforcers, guarantors, sureties, police, lawyers, moneylenders, bankers, politicians, etc.). At every stage of these chains, from microcredit to mafia organizations and sovereign and bank debts, actors mobilize institutional resources (bureaucracy, law, and regulation), politicians, social ties (family, caste, gender, friendship), moral norms (honor, reputation, fear), exchange of goods (from land, cows, gold, weapons, private digital data to state assets such as aircraft, ships, and satellites that might be seized by financiers to enforce public debt payment), violence (police, henchmen), or even bodies (rape, murder, sexual services) to guarantee the payment of a debt. Considering financialization through these actors makes debt chains a concrete tool for the study of financialization across licit and illicit markets.

We will follow actors tied together by debts at different nodes of three markets spanning the Global South and North: one illegal product, cocaine, between Brazil and France; and two legal products (precious wood and pesticides) in India embedded within regional and global criminal political economies.

The project focuses on three main processes operating across the segmented chains of debts and flows of money and goods:

Assembling: How do actors concretely assemble licit and illicit actors and institutions to craft socio-political environments conducive to their activities?

Guaranteeing: How are the pluri-legal and illegal methods of regulation and guarantees for enforcement of debt (such as law, violence, and threats) articulated?

Converting money, goods, ethics, and documents: How do actors move between visibility and invisibility, legalities and illegalities, anonymity and denunciations, secrecy and public displays of fortunes?

The project brings together anthropologists, sociologists, socio-economists, and political sociologists interested in banking, finance, debt, and informal and criminal economies. It also aims to develop original methodological tools.

Under the scientific supervision of David Picherit and in cooperation with the project members, the successful candidate will design a research framework and propose an approach tailored to the subject of

study: they will conduct a multi-site field study (lasting at least four months) in India (and potentially in Brazil and France), covering these various illicit markets. The preferred empirical approach will be to study the institutions responsible for regulating these points of conversion, circulation, and transmission of money (central banks, supervisory institutions, law firms, consulting firms, auditing firms, and accounting firms). The cases studied will be alternative and/or informal and/or emerging institutions and mechanisms for remittances such as Hundi and Hawala, cryptocurrencies, Fintech, etc., or methods of financial accumulation, conversion, and management (on different scales) linked, for example, to gold. The work will contribute to the theoretical study of the three processes mentioned above.

### **Activities**

Under the scientific supervision of David Picherit and in cooperation with the project members, the successful candidate will design a research framework and propose an approach tailored to the subject of study: they will conduct a multi-site field study (lasting at least four months) in India (and potentially in Brazil and France), covering these various illicit markets. The preferred empirical approach will be to study the institutions responsible for regulating these points of conversion, circulation, and transmission of money (central banks, supervisory institutions, law firms, consulting firms, auditing firms, and accounting firms). The cases studied will be alternative and/or informal and/or emerging institutions and mechanisms for remittances such as Hundi and Hawala, cryptocurrencies, Fintech, etc., or methods of financial accumulation, conversion, and management (on different scales) linked, for example, to gold. The work will contribute to the theoretical study of the three processes mentioned above.

Design a research framework, conduct a literature review, and propose an appropriate approach to the research object. Attention to the soundscape is welcome (50%)

Disseminate findings through academic publications, reports, and presentations (20%)

Provide scientific and administrative support: co-organize/participate in team meetings, conferences, monthly seminars, writing residencies, and assist with minutes and deliverables for ANR (10%)

Develop your own career: build on previous work, prepare applications, etc. (20%)

### **Skills**

- PhD in political science, sociology, anthropology, economics, geography.
- Ability to work in an international, interdisciplinary context; interest in collaborative work, fieldwork, and mixed methods.
- Significant fieldwork experience in India (and potentially Brazil and France).
- Compliance with ethical and deontological standards.
- Strong knowledge of relevant academic literature: debt, financialization, illicit economies, and political violence.
- Proficiency in English; French language appreciated. And proficiency in a local language spoken in Brazil, India, or France for autonomous long-term fieldwork appreciated.
- Demonstrated skills: strong writing and analytical abilities; autonomy and organizational capacity; adaptability and initiative.

### **Work Context**

The postdoctoral researcher will be based at LESC (Laboratoire d'Ethnologie et de Sociologie Comparative, Université de Paris Nanterre/CNRS). The person recruited will report to David Picherit (CNRS- Lesc) and will be part of the ANR-funded project DEBTCHAINS: The Financialization Iceberg — A Transnational and Trans-scalar Ethnography of Debt Chains across Il/legal Markets (Brazil, India, and France).

Project link: <https://lesc-cnrs.fr/fr/projets/743-debtchains>

This project is also supported by CESSMA — the Centre d'Études en Sciences Sociales sur les Mondes Africains, Américains et Asiatiques (UMR 245) - and CMH (Centre Maurice Halbwachs, ENS/CNRS). The recruited researcher will interact regularly with both laboratories.

Applications, including CV, cover letter and project proposal, must be submitted by 11/12/2025 at the latest.

### **Constraints and risks**

Spatial mobility.