

Job Description

Job title	Research Fellow 1 Brazil (2yr fixed term)
Department	Department of Sociology
Grade	6

Job purpose (a brief summary of the role)	We are seeking to appoint a Research Fellow to work on the Brazil element of the ERC-funded project RAIDS: Religious Authority in Extractive Industry Struggles, led by Professor Claire Blencowe in the Department of Sociology, University of Warwick. RAIDS will explore the role of religion as a 'weapon' of both powerful corporations and marginalised communities involved in 'extractive industry struggles' (social or ecological disputes associated with mines or mining infrastructure). The project advances understanding of the range of authority and soft-power mechanisms at play in the contemporary social and ecological struggles. It investigates whether and how extractive industries and religious nationalisms support each other today. Working in partnership with communities engaged in existing struggles the project will also amplify the knowledge and experience of marginalised front-line communities. This includes taking seriously forms of religious or spiritual activism that have too often been dismissed by modern social science; and supporting knowledge exchange and solidarity between disparate communities engaged in struggles. The research fellow will be employed for two years to conduct research on religion in extractive industry struggles in Brazil, focusing on two case study struggles. We are looking for an engaged activist-scholar who is able to work closely and respectfully with mine-affected communities in Brazil, participating with and supporting the case study communities' existing activism. As part of your application, you are invited to propose two communities that are engaged in extractive industry struggles in Brazil, with whom you would be able to carry out participatory research in line with the project design. Once appointed, we will work together as a team to finalise the case study design and carry out the research encompassing: critical cultural/authority studies investigation of the 'soft' power backing contemporary mining corporations; participatory research with mine affected communities exploring the ways that they can and do engage religious or spiritual practice, organisation or wisdom in their struggles; and co-producing analysis and outputs with the mine-affected communities. The post is a full-time, fixed-term appointment for 24 months commencing January 2027. For a full description of the project design to consider when proposing case study communities please see the project website: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/staff/blencowe/raids/ For informal enquiries, please contact Professor Claire Blencowe (C.Blencowe@warwick.ac.uk).
Duties and responsibilities	Research and scholarship • Help establish a sound research base within the department in order to assist the development of research objectives of the RAIDS project. • Conduct individual and collaborative research including critical qualitative analysis and participatory research with communities.

- Write up research into data packages for the project team and for publications.
- Keep up to date with literature in the field and translate knowledge of advances in the subject area into research activity.
- May contribute to preparing proposals and applications to external bodies, e.g. for funding and contractual purposes, to support a developing research agenda.
- Present information on research progress and outcomes to bodies supervising research, e.g. steering groups.
- May contribute to the preparation of papers for steering groups and other bodies.
- Communicate complex information (orally and in writing) and material of a specialist or highly technical nature for a range of audiences (case study community, research team, academic journals, media).
- Continually update own knowledge and understanding in field or specialism.

Administration and Other Activities

- Attend weekly project meetings and to participate (where necessary) in other committees and working groups within the department, the faculty and the University.
- Ensure compliance with health and safety in all aspects of work.
- Work within budget constraints.

Knowledge, Skills, and Experience Required

- Understanding of issues of social and ecological justice that are raised by mining and mining infrastructure projects.
- Existing connections, or affinities that will enable the quick establishment of connections, with communities engaged in struggles with extractive corporations.
- Good honours degree and postgraduate degree in relevant discipline.
- Evidence of advanced ability for independent project work such as a PhD in a relevant discipline or project leadership for NGO, governmental, media organisation or similar.
- Proven ability in research and evidence of quality research output in relevant field.
- Sufficient breadth or depth of specialist knowledge in the discipline and of research methods and techniques to work within the RAIDS project.
- Ability or potential to contribute to the development of funding proposals in order to generate external funding to support future research projects.
- An understanding of research ethics and equal opportunity issues as they impact on areas of research content.
- An understanding of and affinity with the values of decolonial-feminist participatory research.

Post-Specific Responsibilities

Research Fellow 1 Brazil

The Brazil Research Fellow will lead day-to-day research activity for the Brazil strand of the RAIDS project, under the supervision of the PI.

The postholder will be expected to:

- Support the design and refinement of Brazil case study sites in line with the project's research design, participatory methodology and ethical commitments.
- Conduct a country-specific literature review on extractive industries and religion in Brazil, which might touch on themes of religious authority, environmental justice, Indigenous and community struggles, racial capitalism, colonial histories, and/or contemporary political and religious landscapes.

	• Develop detailed knowledge of case study on extractive industry struggles, and related struggles in Brazil. • Undertake site visits to conduct participatory research with case-study communities in Brazil. • Establish and maintain relationships with Brazil-based community partners, researchers, activists, religious groups, civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders. • Work with Portuguese-language materials and, where required, communicate with research participants, collaborators and community partners in Portuguese or other relevant languages. • Produce Brazil case study reports, data packages, annotated archives, workshop materials, public-facing outputs and academic publications. • Contribute to comparative analysis across the RAIDS project, particularly in relation to religion, political authority, extractivism, coloniality, race, environmental justice and community resistance in the Americas.
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Person Specification

The Person Specification focuses on the essential and desirable knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications required to undertake the role effectively. This is measured by (a) Application Form, (b) Test/Exercise, (c) Interview, (d) Presentation.

Essential Criterion No.	Essential Criterion Description	Measured by
E1	Postgraduate degree in sociology or relevant field (e.g. human geography, anthropology, religious studies, political ecology, religious studies, Indigenous studies, politics, social work etc.)	A
E2	PhD in relevant field (see above) OR equivalent evidence of advanced ability for independent working – such as independent research or project delivery in NGO, governmental or journalistic context.	A
E3	Research expertise relevant to the role	A & C
E4	Experience of qualitative research methods such as interviewing, ethnography, participant observation, documentary analysis, participatory methods, archival work, digital methods or community-based research.	A & C
E5	Understanding of ethical issues involved in research with communities experiencing environmental harm, displacement, marginalisation, political conflict or other forms of vulnerability.	A & C
E6	Brazil post only – Ability to communicate effectively in Portuguese	A
E7	Understanding of issues of social and ecological justice that are raised by mining and mining infrastructure projects.	A & C
E8	Ability to propose case studies that will enable the investigation of the research questions and objectives of RAIDS.	A & C
E9	Existing connections, or affinities, cultural and linguistic competence that will enable the quick establishment of connections, with communities engaged in the case study struggles.	A & C
E10	Ability to hold space and facilitate collaborative conversations in community contexts.	A & C
E11	Ability and willingness to travel to Brazil to conduct field research related to the project.	A & C
E12	Good IT skills with the ability to learn and use new systems and technologies as required.	A

Desirable Criterion No.	Desirable Criterion Description	Measured by
D1	Experience of conducting participatory research or similar community work.	A & C
D2	Experience of research or activism associated with mining, political ecology, or land disputes.	A & C