

# 3 PhD positions for ERC project on land politics in Colombia, Ethiopia and Myanmar

16 Aug 29 Sep

## JOB DESCRIPTION

Recent global commodity rushes have profoundly influenced societies across the globe. At least a quarter of a billion hectares of land have been affected, reshaping livelihoods and social and political relations. Contemporary commodity rushes are more complex and far-reaching than those we have seen before, requiring new thinking and practice in order to respond to such unprecedented challenges. This project aims to explore contemporary commodity rushes, centred on the reconfiguration of land use and ownership, examining the implications for five spheres of global social life. We will ask: How do contemporary global commodity rushes reshape the politics of food, climate, labour and citizenship, as well as geopolitics in different contexts? To answer this, we will look into the possible structural, institutional and political shifts caused by commodity rushes within commodity and land regimes and in the five spheres of global social life. Guided by a multi-disciplinary theoretical framework and grounded empirical work, we will engage in practical policy questions aimed at probing the potential for socially just and ecologically sustainable reforms. These reforms will be anchored in the social justice principles of redistribution, recognition and restitution of wealth and power, and the regeneration and recalibration of human–nature relations. We will study global, regional and national dynamics around commodity rushes and regimes, and the five spheres of global social life in Africa (Ethiopia), Asia (Myanmar), and Latin America (Colombia). The role of Chinese investments in the global land rush will be of central interest. This project will change the way we study the recent commodity and land rushes, demonstrating why and how they concern not only the 3.5 billion people who live in rural areas, but the entire world population. Conversely, it will demonstrate why it is not possible to understand what happens in the five spheres of global social life without comprehending how these, separately and together, interact with commodity and land rushes.

The [International Institute of Social Studies](#) (ISS, The Hague) of Erasmus University Rotterdam invites high-quality applications for three 4-year full-time PhD positions to start in January 2020. The positions are part of a European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant awarded project “Commodity & Land Rushes and Regimes: Reshaping Five Spheres of Global Social Life (RRUSHES-5)”. This research project – hosted in the [Political Ecology \(PE\) Research Group](#) – will study recent transactions in land and land use change and how these impact the general situation around the issues of food, climate change politics, geopolitics, labour and migration, and state–citizen relations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The project will mainly focus on Colombia, Ethiopia and Myanmar. Applicants from these regions are particularly encouraged to apply. All applicants must have a strong demonstrable interest in the thematic areas of land politics and policies (including contemporary ‘global resource rush’), climate change politics, resource conflict, global agrarian transformations and other topics relevant to the themes of the project. The successful PhD researchers will carry out their study through the regular [PhD programme of ISS](#). Each of the successful PhD researchers will develop a PhD project that supports the intellectual aims of the broader RRUSHES-5 project in either one of the countries specified above.

## Specifications

max. 40 hours per week

Den Haag [View on Google Maps](#)

**Erasmus  
University  
Rotterdam**



Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR)

## REQUIREMENTS

- Very good MA/MSc in social sciences and professional experience in rural politics and development.

- Conceptual and practical interest in themes of the project, and the ability to articulate how the project themes can be developed into a PhD project.
- Close association with the study region, including knowledge of local languages.
- Commitment to extended periods of fieldwork in remote rural areas.
- Willingness to work as part of a diverse international research team and to contribute to the broader project.

## CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

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**Fixed-term contract:** An appointment for 4 years.

We offer an appointment as PhD student for a period of 1.5 year, which will be extended with a second term of 2.5 years if the candidate performs well. Remuneration will be according to the PhD scales set by the Collective Labor Agreement for Dutch Universities (CAO NU), and will range from € 2.325 per month in the first year to € 2.972 per month in the fourth year (gross amounts, in case of fulltime employment). The EUR has attractive employment conditions, which include a holiday allowance of 8.0%, an end-of-year bonus of 8.3% and up to 41 days paid time off.

## EMPLOYER

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### **Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR)**

[Erasmus University Rotterdam \(EUR\)](#), named after the 15th century Rotterdam-born humanist and theologian Desiderius Erasmus, is a research university with a strong international orientation and a pronounced social focus, both in its education and research activities. The expertise of Erasmus University Rotterdam is concentrated in eight faculties or institutes focusing on Economics, Medicine and Health Sciences, Law, Social Sciences, History and Arts, Business Administration, Philosophy and Development Studies. In addition to initial degree programmes and scientific research, the University offers specific postgraduate study programmes and courses. Erasmus University has around 25,000 students and approximately 2,800 staff members comprising more than 100 nationalities.

## DEPARTMENT

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### **International Institute of Social Studies (ISS)**

The [International Institute of Social Studies \(ISS\)](#) is a leading academic centre for international development studies. While based in The Hague, the ISS is part of Erasmus University Rotterdam. ISS was established in 1952 as a post-graduate institute of policy-oriented critical social science and development-oriented research. ISS offers a PhD in Development Studies, a 15,5 month MA in Development Studies, a joint MA in Public Policy (Mundus MAPP), a MPA in Governance delivered in Suriname, and post-graduate Diploma courses.

ISS brings together a highly diverse international community of scholars and students from both the global South and the global North, on average originating from over 50 different countries. The Institute brings together people, ideas and insights in a multi-disciplinary setting which nurtures, fosters and promotes critical thinking and innovative research on fundamental social problems. The strong partnerships with organizations and individuals in developing countries make up a vibrant network where we co-create knowledge so that teaching and research remain socially relevant. Key to the ISS philosophy and practices is the wish to contribute to achieving social justice and equity on a global level.

As part of its Research Strategy, the Institute currently pursues four multidisciplinary, cross-cutting research themes: environment and climate change; conflict and peace; social protection and inequality; and migration and diversity.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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For inquiries, you may contact Jun Borrás at [borras@iss.nl](mailto:borras@iss.nl) or Erika Marques (ERC project officer, [marques@iss.nl](mailto:marques@iss.nl)).

**Apply now** (40 days remaining)

### **Specifications**

PhD positions

## Employer

**Erasmus  
University  
Rotterdam**



Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR)

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## Location

[Kortenaerkade 12, 2518 AX, Den Haag](#)

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