

EXTRACTIVISM

Call for Fellows

Extractivism is a collaborative research project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The project is based at the University of Kassel and the Philipps University of Marburg, and its primary purpose is to research natural resource extractivism in Latin America and the Maghreb.

We are accepting applications for **short-term fellowships** for highly qualified researchers. Fellowships are funded for up to three months in Marburg and/or Kassel in 2024. Applicants are expected to contribute to theory building and develop new approaches to tackle the conceptualization and broader investigation of extractivism and rent societies, with an empirical focus on Latin America and/or North Africa and the Middle East.

The Extractivism.de Project

Many countries in the Global South rely on extracting and exporting natural resources for their social-economic development. Focusing on **Latin America** and the **Maghreb**, we explore and conceptualize extractivism as a development model with its own social, cultural, political, and economic patterns. Avoiding the pitfalls of traditional literature, the project aims to understand extractivist societies not as deviants from the Western development path but in their own logic and particularities. Likewise, it seeks analytical frameworks that grasp the multifactorial ramifications of extractivism in society that enable the emergence of different cultural processes, social practices, and habitual routines that work to reinforce, legitimate, or even contest the extractivist model.

Moreover, the project aims to insert extractivist societies into the context of the climate crisis, geopolitical reshiftings, growing global inequalities, and energy transitions. It is crucial to grasp what sustainability and decarbonization mean for countries whose development depends on exploiting and exporting raw materials and natural resources. *Extractivism.de* explores the “**dark sides of sustainability**” concerning the Global South alternatives of international (re)insertion in a global scenario of multiple transformations. It aims to grasp how and under which conditions North-South and South-South relations will transform in a scenario in which energy security and the geopolitics of raw materials will take precedence.

We combine a solid empirical focus with theoretical work, linking field research and primary data with qualitative and quantitative analysis – offering much-needed transregional comparisons. We aim to develop new theories and methods in cross-area studies, investigating whether and why similar social, cultural, and political patterns emerge in different world regions.

Thematic Scope of the Fellowships

In the project’s third year (2024), we will concentrate on the **cultural processes, social practices, and habitus formation within extractivist societies**.

The goal is to grasp how the extractivist development model permeates the people’s everyday lives – both for those working on the extractivist sites and those detached from the activity – shaping how citizens relate to cultural and (sub)national symbols, manifestations and institutions. As extractivism can adapt to different political contexts, we look for research that explores how it manifests itself in what, when, and how society produces and consumes culture, arts, literature, and media, among others. Moreover, grasping extractivism as a persistent feature, we welcome discussions on how extractivist mentalities and myths of development

emerge and persuade different populations, normalizing expectations about the future, consumption patterns, and status-building mechanisms that are not dominant in industrial societies. We are interested in how their habitus legitimizes, sustains and reinforces the extractivist model while weakening alternatives. Equally important is research that explores how cultural processes can work as transgressive forces that challenge the extractivism model and how anti-extractivist movements manifest themselves through artistic and cultural strategies.

In this context, we are particularly interested in the mechanisms by which extractivism is presented to society as a viable development pathway in the Global South. Which are the institutions operating in the processes that persuade people about modernity imaginaries, and how do these processes feedback themselves and adapt over the years? Likewise, we welcome research that explores the links between energy transition and mentality changes concerning environmental protection, consumption and production patterns, and perceptions about the future. Finally, the question of how culture can be a venue for advancing progressive or transgressive ideas that go against the extractivist status quo is essential for our research agenda. Thus, we seek fellows who can bring light to these issues and more during their stay in Kassel or in Marburg, working collectively with the team and producing innovative research on the multifaceted ways in which culture links to the extractivist development model.

Therefore, the following questions are relevant:

- How do culture, social practices, and social habitus reflect and legitimize the extractivist model's promises about the future, myths of development, modernization, aggrandizement, and development? How does the extractivist habitus diverge from other industrial or peasant societies, and what are its main characteristics?
- Under which conditions do cultural venues – like media, literature, arts, audiovisual, and architecture – reproduce dominant development narratives, and when can it be expected that they will have a transgressive effect on society? Does mainstream cultural production legitimize the extractivist myths of development, welfare improvement, and modernization? Are there circumstances in which they can instigate and promote change?
- How do cultural practices reflect alterations concerning people's satisfaction with the rent-based social contract and the mechanisms of rent redistribution? Which cultural manifestations (and the venues) represent those included and excluded from the extractivist political settlement/coalition, and how?
- Which are the habitus markers of an extractivist society? Which structures of perception, conception, and action are created, replicated, and maintained in extractivist societies? Do distinct social groups have different sets of preferences and dispositions that reflect how they are included in the development model?
- What is the relationship between extractivist companies and cultural processes, social practices, and habitus formation? How do companies – nationals and multinationals – adapt their image and practice to what they grasp as socially expected from them? What are the cultural symbols linking these companies with the overall aspirations and status markers of an extractivist society?
- How can we discuss the practices of adaptation towards climate change and energy transition concerning these themes? How will the global sustainability endeavor challenge and transform existing extractivist mentalities? Are social practices and habitus processes willing and capable of adapting to the global pressures of abandoning the so-called carbon culture? Are the outlooks about the future changing and, this way, changing patterns of consumption and production?
- As the leading importers of some raw materials change, do cultural and social values of the classes included in the extractivist distribution mechanisms change also? How do shifts in the geopolitics of

raw material influence the extractivist society's ideals and imaginaries concerning international relations? In this sense, in places where there is a realignment towards China, India, and other emerging countries, will people shift their perceptions and orientations accordingly?

Thus, fellowship proposals must address one or more of these research questions involving the links between social habitus, culture, and extractivism. The applicants are expected to contribute to theory or conceptual building and develop innovative approaches. Most importantly, they should show an empirical focus on Latin American and/or MENA countries.

Requirements and Conditions

The fellowship is open to outstanding scholars in Social Sciences and the Humanities, including Economics, Sociology, Political Science, Culture Studies, International Relations, Anthropology, and History. The scientific committee will base its selection on academic excellence and reputation, publications, experience in the research field, and the submitted project's quality.

In addition, applicants should be familiar with at least one of the project's languages: **English, German, Spanish, or French**. It is also strongly recommended that the applicants have an intermediate communication level of English.

Fellows will receive financial compensation of up to **3.000€ per month**. Costs for travel to and from the stay in Kassel or Marburg will be covered.

Finally, *Extractivism* provides family support and is committed to gender equality, social inclusion, diversity, and affirmative action policies. Applicants from the Global South or belonging to any minorities are particularly welcome.

Application

The following documents are required in English, French or Spanish:

- **Application form** ([download here](#)) in which you state your available dates,
- A **motivational letter** stating why the candidate is a good fit,
- **Short CV** (max. five pages), including a list of project-related publications,
- Copy of the **doctoral certificate**,
- **Research proposal** with research schedule, work plan, and expected outcomes (max. 2.500 words).

Applications must be sent until **15.01.2024** electronically as a single PDF to fellows@extractivism.de

For more information about the project, please access www.extractivism.de