



**Universiteit  
Leiden**

## **Environmental Policy Towards the Brazilian Amazon, Past and Present**

### **Applicants**

*Eligible proposals must have at least two applicants from Humanities, preferably with an interdisciplinary approach.*

Supervisor Name	Discipline
Edmund Amann	Economics/Political Economy Brazilian Studies
Jeroen Touwen	History/Economic and Social History

### **Project description**

*Provide a brief description of the project (max. 300 words)*

This project concerns one of the most important issues facing the world today: the threats to the Brazilian Amazonian rainforest and the role of public policy in countering them. Our research comprises a multidisciplinary attempt to understand this critical issue in historical context, starting in 1985 when Brazil returned to civilian rule. In particular, we propose to examine contemporary policy initiatives in the light of past efforts to reconcile economic development with protection of one of the world's most vital sources of biodiversity and carbon capture. Our project involves archival research in Brazil and this is where the two trainees would be vital, while it will add to their research experience.

In more specific terms our project embraces the following core research questions. The first question centers on the degree to which environmental policy objectives have changed between 1985 and the present. In particular, to what extent has the focus of environmental policy towards the Amazon shifted from "sustainable development" to "preservation"? Within this context, have the policy roles ascribed to indigenous people and other local inhabitants significantly altered?

Our second core question concerns the drivers of policy and the extent to which these may have changed over the past 35 years. Distinguishing between internal and external influencing factors we propose to investigate the degree to which the evolution of policy towards the Amazon has been shaped by domestic political actors, local people and Brazil-based NGOs as opposed to international factors, in particular multinational corporations, multilateral organizations, global NGOs and the international media. Is it the case that, like the Brazilian economy itself, the policy space surrounding the Amazon rainforest has become globalized? If this is so, could this help

explain the nationalist backlash which currently appears to be shaping the new Brazilian administration's approach to policy in this area?

### **Research Trainee Profile**

*Each proposal requests two Research Trainees. Describe the general tasks of the research trainees, how these tasks are academically challenging to the research trainees, whether they need any preliminary knowledge (regarding the topic and/or research methods) and which skills the research trainees should have. Also specify which type of students are eligible to apply (3<sup>rd</sup> year Ba, Ma, ResMa).*

The research trainee role would be particularly suitable for first-year ResMA students (or outstanding BA students) interested in sustainability and environmental policy. Students will not need to have preliminary knowledge of the topic but one of them should be able to read Portuguese. The traineeship will provide ResMA students with research skills and access to primary sources for their theses. Involvement in the conception of an academic article will also give them a head-start on a possible PhD proposal. The supervisors will be on hand to assist with the collection of materials.

Since much of the relevant archive material is in Portuguese, at least one of our student assistants will be obliged to deploy the language skills acquired while studying at Leiden

The search will begin with an inventory of reports by international institutions, such as IMF and OECD (in English).<sup>1</sup> The students will simultaneously work on the international perspective and the domestic perspective. The two assistants would then perform complementary archival research in Brazil. This research would take place in Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia during the Spring or Summer at the Brazilian National Archives, the library of the Brazilian Statistical and Geographical Institute (IBGE) and the library of the Ministry of the Environment. The material to be examined as part of the archival phase of the project would include official reports and policy documents, statistical publications, relevant newspaper and magazine articles and NGO documentation. The research assistants would write a preliminary report about their findings prior to the preparation of the first draft of the article (which would be the primary task of the project leaders)

### **Collaboration**

*If applicable: Describe how your research improves collaboration and cross-pollination between the disciplines involved (max. 300 words)*

Our research proposal at its core represents a strongly cross-disciplinary venture. In order to understand fully the dynamics at the core of Brazil's evolving environmental policy framework we propose to draw on a range of disciplines, specifically History, Economics, Economic History, Environmental Studies and Public Policy. This range of approaches is facilitated by the research background of the two principal investigators, Edmund Amann and Jeroen Touwen. Prof. Amann, an applied economist by training, has also acquired research experience in the public policy sphere and is now branching out into environmental studies (and science) in the course of research being conducted for a new monograph. He is also very familiar with Brazil's development experience and related data/archive sources. Dr. Touwen brings to the project his own particular disciplinary strengths, centring on history and economic history. Having conducted research in South East Asia he also offers a valuable extra-regional perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> For example OECD: [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-economic-surveys-brazil\\_19990820](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-economic-surveys-brazil_19990820)

Taking advantage of the range of disciplinary perspectives at the disposal of the researchers it will be possible to offer a much richer account of the evolution of environmental policy in Brazil than has hitherto been typical in the literature. In particular, our project will be able to analyse the ways in which the policy debate has been shaped by a constellation of actors, themselves influenced by different narratives and contrasting disciplinary reference points. Thus, for example, we will be able to show how the economic development discourse which had previously proved dominant in shaping policy came to be challenged and arguably supplanted, by perspectives which drew on environmental science, identity politics (especially indigenous rights) and, more recently, nationalism. A traditional single disciplinary study would simply be incapable of capturing this nuance and complexity.

### **Deliverables**

*Enumerate intended project results: papers, research proposals or otherwise. (max 200 words)*

The outputs envisaged include:

- One report comprising the draft initial findings of the project from the archival research
- One working paper, representing the initial draft of the journal paper to be eventually submitted
- A presentation deriving from this paper which would be co-presented by the student(s) and the principal investigators (s) at a relevant conference (e.g. LASA- Latin America Studies Association, ABRE – European Brazilian Studies Association)
- A journal article to be submitted to a leading journal in the field, for example Journal of Latin American Studies or Journal of Development Studies
- Depending on the material uncovered, a further research proposal aimed at securing a larger grant to push the research further forward

### **Planning**

*Provide a breakdown of the project into phases with tentative timing (max 150 words)*

Both research trainees will be appointed on 1 February 2020, and will be employed (0,15 fte; 5.7 hours per week) for a period of seven months.

February-June 2020:

- Reading secondary literature on environmental policy objectives in Brazil
- Surveying materials on NGO's and multinational corporations
- Surveying OECD reports, environmental impact assessments (EIA)
- From the secondary literature, characterizing the views of international and domestic political actors

July-August 2020:

- Visit to Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia
- Writing a research report

Regarding the travel funds: we will look for funding (for example from LUF) and have the possibility of providing some support from our BSF funds.

The trainees will be encouraged to integrate their research into a (Res)MA-thesis on a related subject. We plan to have joint meetings every three weeks and have intermediate contact by e-mail when needed.

September-December 2020

- *Applicants (Amann/Touwen)*: Completion of working paper  
January-February 2021
- *Applicants (Amann/Touwen)*: Completion and submission of journal article

### **Student Application**

*Provide information on how to apply e.g. required documents for application (resume, motivation letter etc.) and an email address where student applications should be sent to.*

Applications should be sent to: [e.amann@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:e.amann@hum.leidenuniv.nl) and [l.j.touwen@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:l.j.touwen@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Include a cv and a motivation letter (max. 750 words) reflecting on the relevance of environmental policy in general and preserving the Amazon in particular, or on the political economy of sustainability and forest preservation. Indicate proficiency in Portuguese and willingness to travel.