

## POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW IN THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF AFRICAN CRITICAL MINERALS

Job Information	
Position Title	Postdoctoral Fellow in the <i>Political Economy of African Critical Minerals</i>
Category	Postdoctoral Visitor
Supervisor(s)	Prof. Richard Saunders
Unit	Department of Politics
Location	Keele Campus, York University (Toronto, Canada)
Background	
<p>Surging global demand for 'critical minerals' used in renewable energy technologies represents unprecedented opportunities and challenges for Southern Africa, home to substantial concentrations of these materials. Experts anticipate that rising international consumption will sustain demand and prices until mid-century due to the impact of the 'Green Transition', the strategic shift led by industrialized countries towards the replacement of carbon-based fuels and energy generation with renewable energy sources and technologies.</p> <p>Yet as Southern Africa emerges as a priority destination for miners and traders of these critical minerals, there are growing concerns in the region about the capacity of local governments to regulate the foreign-dominated industry and ensure their countries' equitable share in the benefits of the sector's rapid growth. Recent African iterations of 'extractivism' –national development strategies which rely heavily on revenues derived from mineral exports – produced disappointing results in the 2000s and 2010s, delivering weak economic growth, few opportunities for local miners, businesses and workers, and poor fiscal support for the strengthening of state social services.</p> <p><i>African Extractivism and the Green Transition</i> is a six-year (2023-2029) project funded by a Partnership Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The project studies the dynamics of critical minerals' extraction, beneficiation and regulatory innovations in four leading African mineral exporters – the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The project includes political economists, anthropologists and sociologists, legal scholars, historians, and policy analysts and advocates from a diverse collection of research organizations across Canada, Europe and Southern Africa, with the aim of addressing key research and knowledge gaps and supporting public debates and policy-making initiatives in Southern Africa, and beyond.</p>	
Overall Purpose of Postdoctoral Position	
<p>As a Postdoctoral Visitor affiliated with the <i>African Extractivism and the Green Transition</i> project, under the guidance of the Project Director Prof. Richard Saunders, the successful candidate will pursue a research agenda aligned with the project's research priorities (see attachment) and including a focus on one or more of the project's four case study countries. In addition to pursuing their own research, the Post Doctoral Visitor is expected to contribute to and collaborate with the project's researchers where possible, and contribute to the intellectual life of the Department of Politics at York University.</p>	
Key Responsibilities	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct research aligned with the project's research priorities and region of study.</li> <li>2. Draft and submit manuscripts for publication in a peer-reviewed journal related to their research agenda.</li> <li>3. Write a project policy briefing on their research, for publication on the project website.</li> <li>4. Participate in and assist with organizing project-sponsored seminars, public lectures, conference panels and workshops.</li> <li>5. Contribute to the intellectual life of the Department of Politics at York University by presenting their research and participating in departmental seminars.</li> <li>6. Mentor and teach undergraduate and graduate students in the Department of Politics, by working with the project's Research Assistants and possibly teaching one full semester undergraduate course (subject to availability).</li> </ol>	

Skills and Qualifications	
Educational Qualifications	Applicants must have completed their PhD by the position start date. Preference will be given to applicants who completed their PhD in the previous 4 years (2021-2024).
Experience and Skills Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3-4 years' experience conducting research on the extractive industries;</li> <li>• experience in research and/or advocacy related to the projects' 4 research clusters (see attachment);</li> <li>• evidence of an active research program and publication record;</li> <li>• experience in designing and executing fieldwork research in Southern, Central or East Africa (and notably in the DRC, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) would be a strong asset</li> <li>• 1-2 years' experience in post-secondary teaching (can include Teaching Assistantships and Tutoring experience);</li> <li>• Ability to teach classes in political economy, international development studies, or on related topics;</li> <li>• Academic proficiency in the English language.</li> </ul>
Terms and Conditions	
<p>The position is one year in duration (March 1, 2025-February 28, 2026), with the possibility of renewal for an additional year.</p> <p>International applicants may apply; however, successful international applicants will require a work permit and Canadian Social Insurance Number in order to take up the position.</p> <p>The Postdoctoral Visitor will receive the following support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An annual salary of \$60,000 CAD.</li> <li>• All benefits, including a Health Care Spending Account, accorded to Postdoctoral Visitors as outlined in the <a href="#">YUFA Collective Agreement</a>.</li> <li>• The possibility of teaching up to 0.5 FCE in undergraduate courses, subject to availability and confirmation with the Chair of the Supervisor's Home unit.</li> <li>• Research space provided by the Faculty of Liberal Arts &amp; Professional Studies.</li> <li>• Access to support for any External or Internal Funding opportunities for which Postdoctoral Visitors are eligible.</li> </ul> <p><b>Salary:</b> \$60,000 CAD/year</p>	
How to Apply	
<p>To apply for this position, please submit the following documents as <b><u>a single application package</u></b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Research Statement: a detailed (1500 words maximum) description of the research and writing project the applicant plans to pursue during their tenure of the postdoctoral fellowship.</li> <li>• A detailed Curriculum Vitae</li> <li>• Two letters of reference</li> <li>• A writing sample (preferably from a peer-reviewed publication)</li> </ul> <p>Please submit all the above listed documentation by email to Project Director <b>Prof. Richard Saunders</b> at <b>rsaunder@yorku.ca</b> and Project Manager <b>Alex Caramento</b> at <b>alexcara@yorku.ca</b> by no later than <b>January 31, 2025</b>. Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an interview to be conducted in-person and/or by Zoom. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.</p>	

## Research Clusters

1. Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM)	2. Productive Linkages and the 'Infrastructures' of Extraction
3. Revenue, Equity and State Services	4. Regulating Critical Minerals in Regional and Transnational Contexts

Research Priorities sketched for each project Research Cluster:

### 1. Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining

- *Mapping of Critical Minerals ASM*
  - ❖ Ownership Structures/Capital Intensity
  - ❖ Legal codes and formalization
  - ❖ Tracking of ASM CMs' intersections with international value chains
  - ❖ Intersections with health and its determinants, gender and local livelihoods
- *Understanding distributional outcomes as ASM/community level*
  - ❖ Impacts of CM extraction on rural livelihoods, integrated rural production
  - ❖ Tracking institutional innovations and outcomes at different institutional levels of the State
- *Understanding CM extraction by Small-Scale Mechanised mines*
  - ❖ Challenges faced involving State services, value chain access, processing, pricing, labour management, etc.
  - ❖ Implications of renewed State emphasis on 'domestic resource mobilization' and 'mining diversification' across the region

### 2. Productive Linkages and the 'Infrastructures' of Extraction

- *National and Regional Value Chains*
  - ❖ Mineral processing and beneficiation of CMs (e.g. EV battery agreement between Zambia and DRC, and its spillover into other industries)
  - ❖ 'Local Content' utilised in the extraction of 'critical minerals'; technologies, Inputs, Services, Intermediate goods, skills, etc.
- *Industrial policy recalibration involving CM extraction*
  - ❖ Issues of labour, mining-affected community and other social inclusion in evidence generation, policy formulation and implementation
  - ❖ Trade-offs and alternatives in new policy strategies (e.g. health, environment, ESG)
- *Transportation Corridors enabling the export of CMs to global markets*
  - ❖ Mapping of diverse Interests (multilateral/bilateral donors, governments, etc)
  - ❖ Investment and technical assistance: geopolitical rivalries and implications
  - ❖ Tracking strategies for incorporating secondary industrial spillovers in transportation corridors beyond the export of CMs
- *Energy infrastructure implications for CMs extraction*
  - ❖ Trade-off strategies and implications: using coal/LNG for mineral extraction processes to feed a global green transition
  - ❖ Mining consumption implications for national/regional economies
  - ❖ Potential ESG demands on energy for extractive purposes
  - ❖ Options and contestations around renewables/CM extraction strategies

### **3. Revenue, Equity and State Services**

- *Contract Negotiation and Bargaining Power*
  - ❖ Transparency/oversight of contract negotiations
  - ❖ Distortion/deflection of policy intentions by politicians and foreign investors
  - ❖ Involvement of non-state actors/stakeholders
  - ❖ Inclusion of/negotiations surrounding HIAs and EIAs
  - ❖ 'Trade-offs' of new mining investments: experiences and alternatives
- *Ownership structure: trends, innovations and development outcomes*
  - ❖ Tracking new investment and ownership patterns in CM extraction and processing, and comparative differences in revenue and distributional outcomes
  - ❖ Dynamics and outcomes of state regulation of CM ownership in comparative perspective; including issues of local inclusion/participation, rent-seeking, geopolitical impacts, financing and technical contingencies, commodity form, etc.
- *Revenue Sharing Mechanisms and Funding Social Services*
  - ❖ CM/mining taxation and health: assessing impacts and strategies, including through Health Impact Assessments of CM extraction
  - ❖ Comparing and assessing legal frameworks around health/ social revenue/fiscal duties and integrating implications of global tax rule changes
  - ❖ Early inclusion of beneficiation in planning/policy formulation and mine lifecycle
- *Institutional innovation around taxation*
  - ❖ Tax decentralisation and revenue distribution: practices and alternative strategies
  - ❖ Cost-benefit analysis of green technology and revenue and economic impacts
  - ❖ Changing international taxation codes and local impacts and opportunities
- *Community Impacts and Community Interest Representation*
  - ❖ Understanding the impact of CM extraction on local communities: social, economic, environmental
  - ❖ FPIC and CM extraction
  - ❖ Representation, awareness and effectiveness of community interests around CM development

### **4. Regulating Critical Minerals in Regional and Transnational Contexts**

- *Conceptualising 'Critical Minerals'*
  - ❖ How does the framing of critical minerals influence policy?
  - ❖ Tracking the trajectory of CM consensus definitions in policy making, and regulatory impacts
  - ❖ Which interests are contesting and shaping the designation of which minerals are 'critical', and what are the wider implications of these contestations and their outcomes
- *Regional Policy Initiatives and Harmonisation Efforts*
  - ❖ Tracking innovations regarding CMs, including shortcomings of existing codes and implementation, and challenges facing CM-focused interventions
  - ❖ Strategies for regional definitions and modelling regulatory codes around CMs

- *Transnational Influences on Dispute Settlement between States and Foreign Mining Companies*
  - ❖ How are countries in the research area managing their disputes with mining companies over CMs and what role do transnational investment protection mechanisms play in these disputes?
  - ❖ What opportunities exist to counter the problematic and anti-democratic effects of transnational investment protection mechanisms?
- *Implications of Transnational Governance Initiatives for Mining Affected Communities*
  - ❖ ESG Implications for ASM extraction of CMs
  - ❖ Drivers of international regulatory code reforms
  - ❖ Measuring and assessing outcomes of code reforms and reform processes
- *State Capacity/Institutional Fragility around CMs*
  - ❖ *Conflict surrounding CMs and questions of 'State Monopoly of Violence'*
  - ❖ *CM inflections on State institutional and legal frameworks*
  - ❖ *Understanding CM policy processes via 'Political Settlements' approach (i.e. focused on underpinning and shifting socio-political coalitions, and constraints)*