

*Small steps or a giant leap: Social science researcher development during and after the PhD*

Making the transition from the PhD to early career research employment is a notoriously difficult task, especially in the social sciences. Less of a clean-cut move from one to the other, the process is often characterised instead by periods of employment alongside the PhD, unemployment, part-time employment, or working on multiple projects at the same time, or any combination of these. This is not even to consider additional complexities owing to employments "outside" academia and personal commitments. PGRs reading person specifications for Lectureships / Assistant Professorships today will notice a significant range of competencies finding their ways into the Desirable and Essential categories, usually encompassing teaching, publishing, impact, academic citizenship and administration, amongst others. Meanwhile, opportunities for postdoctoral fellowships can be difficult to decipher, and the stresses related to developing the competencies mentioned above will inevitably limit one's time and headspace available to put together quality applications. But there are ways to manage these priorities and indeed to proactively harness opportunities to develop as a researcher. In this lecture, Dr Gilberto Algar-Faria (University of Bristol) offers reflections on his development from PGR to postdoc and shares his strategies for navigating the challenges of being an early career researcher whilst balancing the competing objectives of doing quality work, maintaining a good social life and looking ahead to further rewarding employment. This lecture is for any PGR at any stage of their journey who is considering their own researcher development.

Biography

Dr Gilberto Algar-Faria is an ESRC Postdoctoral Fellow within the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies at the University of Bristol. His research, which combines his fieldwork in post-war states such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Kosovo and Sri Lanka with critical theory, centres around representations, trust and the liberal peace project. He is particularly interested in state-society relations and local-international interactions in post-war contexts, and specifically in unpacking the complex characters behind those labels.

Prior to becoming Principal Investigator of his current project, "Local International: State-society relations and international-local interactions in post-war states" (ES/S011439/1, £101,017, January–December 2019), Gilberto was a Project Officer and Senior Research Associate for the Horizon 2020 research project "Preventing and Responding to Conflict: Developing Civilian Capabilities for a Sustainable Peace" (EU-CIVCAP) from 2016–18. He was also the Co-Investigator for an ESRC IAA impact project called "PeaceCapacity: Building capacities in civil society for inclusive peace processes in the Horn of Africa and the Western Balkans" (£20,000) from 2017–18 and for a WUN RDF project entitled "Resilient Peace: Exploring resilient peacebuilding actors, cultures and policy transfer in West Africa" (£33,663) in 2018.

Outside the University, Gilberto is a Country of Origin Information Expert at the Rights in Exile Programme. He is also listed as an Academic Friend of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, and was previously a Research Associate at the Foreign Policy Centre. He was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Sydney in 2014, a Visiting Academic at the University of Auckland in 2015 and a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University in 2016.

Gilberto was awarded BA(Hons.) and MSc degrees from the University of Leeds in 2011 and Durham University in 2013, respectively, and he received his PhD in Politics from the University of Bristol in 2018. His latest publication is entitled "EU local capacity building: ownership, complexity and agency", published in *Global Affairs* with Timothy Edmunds and Ana E. Juncos (Vol. 4, No. 2–3, 2018, pp. 227–239).