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| Job title | Research Fellow in Slavery and War (Data Science and Computational Modelling) | Job family and level | Research and Teaching Level 4 |
| School/ Department | Rights Lab, Faculty of Social Sciences | Location | Highfield House, University Park |

Purpose of role

This role is part of the Leverhulme Centre for Research on Slavery in War. The Centre is structured around four interconnected research strands—(Re)conceptualising, Understanding, Forecasting and Tackling—and aims for far-reaching insights that transform global responses to modern slavery in conflict settings.

The role is based within the Forecasting strand, which will use innovative predictive models, combinations of narrative and Earth Observation (EO) data, and ‘future-crafting’ techniques, to forecast the risks of slavery in emerging conflicts. Key research questions include: what will shape, and what can reshape, slavery in future wars? What patterns and trends in the spatio-temporal distribution of slavery in war and explanatory variables will shape the future of slavery in war? What conditions and factors can help to prevent and address slavery in future wars? How can we use satellite imagery and geospatial data to identify and address slavery in war? How can we develop methods and early-warning systems to shape future freedom and peace? By using new combinations of data sources to monitor and verify emerging risks, this Centre strand will develop an early warning system for slavery in war.

The role-holder will work collaboratively as part of an interdisciplinary team, as well as undertaking independent research. They will use approaches, methodologies, and techniques appropriate to the research. Specific projects will be identified in line with the role-holder’s expertise and skills, as well as Centre need, and are expected to include, at varying points in the role:

- Developing novel uses of AI and machine learning techniques (LLMs and NLPs) for analysis of survivor narratives, journalistic accounts and government sources
- Developing bespoke automated tools to monitor, extract and classify slavery-related themes and geographic references from news and other sources
- Creating a global data visualisation of the extent to which slavery in war can be identified through georeferenced survivor narratives and local media
- Modelling the complex operating environments in which conflict actors perpetuate slavery
- Categorising risk factors to assist predictive analysis and create evidence-based simulations
- Developing new horizon-scanning/early-warning techniques to forecast the risks of slavery in war
- Integrating narrative and other text-based data into new peace-gaming approaches for data-driven, humanitarian decision-making
- Reviewing and analysing existing evidence and data
- Writing outputs, including academic articles and regular “Emerging Findings” reports
- Contributing to workshops, conferences, and other engagement and dissemination activities
- Engaging with stakeholders and contributing to the development of strategic partnerships
- Tailoring resources for different stakeholders and contexts

The role-holder will have the opportunity to use their initiative and creativity to identify areas for research, develop research methods and extend their research portfolio within the thematic area of slavery in war. They will have a public-facing role and represent the team externally. There will be

opportunities to work collaboratively with people who have lived experience of slavery, trafficking, and exploitation in conflict settings.

This work is international in scope and covers a wide range of different substantive issues and approaches connected to slavery in war, as well as various different forms of exploitation and contexts. Applications are therefore welcome from researchers who wish to bring a particular perspective, lens, or approach to the work of the Centre.

This is a full-time role, available as a fixed-term post from September 1, 2026 (date to be negotiated) and ending August 31, 2028, with potential for continuation. Informal enquiries may be addressed to Zoe.Trodd@nottingham.ac.uk. Please note that applications sent directly to this email address will not be accepted. The University of Nottingham is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

| | Main responsibilities (Primary accountabilities and responsibilities expected to fulfil the role) | % time per year |
|---|--|------------------------|
| 1 | Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To plan and conduct research using recognised and innovative approaches, methodologies and techniques within the research area. ▪ To contribute to research in developing new methodologies. ▪ To gather, analyse, and illuminate data, evaluate and criticise texts and bring new insights to research area. ▪ To support the development of research objectives and proposals for own and/or collaborative research area. ▪ To contribute to writing up research work for publication, resulting in successful research outputs. ▪ To plan and manage own research activity and resolve problems, if required, in meeting own/team research objectives and deadlines in collaboration with others. | 75% |
| 2 | Collaborative working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To collaborate with other members of the project team and across the Rights Lab. ▪ To participate in ECR cohort-wide initiatives and professional development. ▪ To collaborate with King's ECRs who are appointed within this collaborative Centre. ▪ To lead team sessions on current developments and best practices in own research area. ▪ To be the point of contact for team queries about own research area. ▪ To contribute to collaborative decision making with colleagues. ▪ To provide guidance as required to support others, where appropriate in own area of expertise. ▪ To engage constructively and collaboratively with project partners. ▪ To identify opportunities for engagement, knowledge exchange and future, related funding opportunities. ▪ To build external contacts to develop knowledge and understanding, forming relationships for future collaborations. ▪ To represent the team at externally facing events and meetings. | 25% |

Person specification

| | Essential | Desirable |
|--|---|--|
| Skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to use machine learning techniques. ▪ Skills in performing analysis using techniques such as text mining and natural language processing. ▪ Strong oral and written communication skills, including the ability to communicate complex information with clarity. ▪ Ability to build relationships and collaborate with others, internally and externally. ▪ Ability to foster a collaborative, team-based research culture. ▪ Ability to critically analyse and illuminate data, evaluate texts and bring new insights. ▪ Ability to adapt and apply novel methods and analysis for use in research projects. ▪ Skills in conceptual thinking, innovation and creativity. ▪ Strong organisational skills. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrated ability to develop interdisciplinary approaches and research methods. ▪ Skills with designing knowledge exchange and pathways to impact. <p>Skills with integrating diverse data sources such as testimonies and government reports to forecast human rights-related events.</p> |
| Knowledge and experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experience synthesising complex systems, predictive models, and large language models (LLMs) for prediction / decision-making. ▪ Experience implementing predictive models and rigorous statistical analyses for forecasting or related purposes. ▪ A research background in slavery (including forced labour and human trafficking), human rights, war, conflict, or related subject and/or in computational / quantitative social science / data science. ▪ A track record of publication. ▪ Evidence of experience with relevant research methodologies and techniques to work in research area. ▪ Experience working across and with multiple disciplines. ▪ Experience or demonstrable interest in working as part of a research team. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experience working with individuals who have lived experience of slavery, trafficking, or exploitation. ▪ Experience working as part of multidisciplinary teams. ▪ Experience with the transfer of knowledge and methods between areas/ disciplines. ▪ Experience of developing new approaches or techniques for research area. |
| Qualifications, certification and training (relevant to role) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A PhD in a relevant field. | |



Expectations and behaviours

The University has developed a clear set of core expectations and behaviours that our people should be demonstrating in their work, and as ambassadors of the University's strategy, vision and values. The following are essential to the role:

- Valuing people** Is friendly, engaging and receptive, putting others at ease. Actively listens to others and goes out of way to ensure people feel valued, developed and supported.
- Taking ownership** Is clear on what needs to be done encouraging others to take ownership. Takes action when required, being mindful of important aspects such as Health & Safety, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, and other considerations.
- Forward thinking** Drives the development, sharing and implementation of new ideas and improvements to support strategic objectives. Engages others in the improvement process.
- Professional pride** Is professional in approach and style, setting an example to others; strives to demonstrate excellence through development of self, others and effective working practices.
- Always inclusive** Builds effective working relationships, recognising and including the contribution of others; promotes inclusion and inclusive practices within own work area.

Key relationships with others



