



## **Research Associate in Scientific Study of Religion (domains: sociology, demography, social psychology, computational social science)**

### **Organization Description**

The Center for Mind and Culture (CMAC) is a non-profit research center that innovates creative solutions for pressing social problems. Committed to a radically interdisciplinary, non-partisan approach, CMAC mobilizes an international network of experts to develop and disseminate visionary insights to relevant stakeholders. CMAC uses high-tech methods (computational modeling and simulation, network analysis and big-data analytics, machine learning, virtual-reality) and whatever university disciplines are relevant (from humanities to sciences and from public health to engineering) to pursue research on a wide variety of pressing social issues, from religious radicalization to public health challenges. We aim to deepen understanding of complex adaptive social systems in order to help change agents be more effective.

### **Position Description**

CMAC is seeking a Research Associate in Scientific Study of Religion to support work on the Modeling Religious Change (MRC) project. MRC is (1) generating a proof of concept for a new kind of religious-demographic forecasting using techniques from computational modeling and simulation (i.e. measuring religious change in five dimensions within AI agents inhabiting somewhat realistic artificial societies); (2) blending simulated data from artificial societies with best-practices demographic methods (multi-state cohort component projection models built with data on the differential age structure/fertility/migration characteristics of religious groups); (3) incorporating mathematically expressed measurement assumptions that can be evaluated for their effects on projections; and (4) creating a web-based app to permit exploration of the resulting assumption-relative demographic forecasting system. MRC pushes traditional demographics in several new directions but intends to be fully accountable to traditional demographic standards of rigor and transparency. MRC also pushes the envelope in computer engineering and scientific study of religious change. The Research Associate will use CMAC as a base to work with a large group of researchers from diverse disciplines in multiple sites.

The Research Associate will lead the team in the understanding and implementation of formal demographic projection methods; will be responsible for compiling and collecting datasets in demographics and social-psychology of religious change, for coordinating data compilation among project teams, for training teams in demographic and statistical methods, and for advising the MRC team on best practices in demographics and sociology of religion; will ensure the quality of demographic and statistical analyses; and will contribute data analysis and writeups for research reporting and publications. The Research Associate will be comfortable working both inside and outside traditional disciplinary containers; will love data and analyzing data; will be skillful at constructing interpretative stories that good datasets allow us to tell; and will be imaginative about the multidisciplinary future of demographics and the academic study of religion. Candidates may be postdoctoral researchers, experienced demographic researchers, or experts in the academic study of religion with established expertise in data analysis.

The position will run for two years with a salary up to of US\$56,000 in the first year, depending on experience, as well as a good benefits package and an exciting and friendly work environment. Postdoctoral researchers in a range of fields could be suitable and would be expected to exercise a mentoring role with graduate students at CMAC. Experienced demographers with some knowledge of religion and religious change could also fit the position.

### **Required and Desirable Skills and Qualifications**

- For *postdoctoral researchers*: PhD in a suitable social science with experience in formal demographic projection is required; expertise in scientific study of religion or social-psychological dynamics of religious change is preferred.
- For *experienced demographers*: an undergraduate degree in a suitable social science (preference for demography, sociology, political science) is required; an advanced degree is preferred; 5-9 years of research experience, with at least 3-5 years of specialized research and analysis, is expected.
- Required: knowledge of and experience in formal demographic projection methods. Preferred: experience in demographic projection related specifically to religion.
- Required: strong quantitative skills, including proven ability to conduct data analysis and substantial experience with SPSS, Stata, R, or similar software. Required: familiarity and experience with a range of statistical techniques, including multiple regression analysis. Preferred: familiarity with computational simulation and high-dimension datasets.
- Required: attention to detail and maintaining exacting standards to preserve accuracy and impartiality required. Preferred: demonstrated skills in project development and management.
- Required: editorial judgement and proven ability to communicate research results clearly and concisely in both verbal and written form.

To apply, email a resume and a list of references to [admin@mindandculture.org](mailto:admin@mindandculture.org), along with a package containing a cover letter, a description of your approach to research, and links to any materials that you have created or co-created. Review of applications begins February 1, 2020 and continues until a suitable candidate is hired. The [Center for Mind and Culture](#) is an Equal Opportunity Employer.