

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Pentecostal Connections

**Australian Research Council Future Fellow, Dr Cristina Rocha of the Religion and Society Research Centre is examining how Pentecostal churches impact on the everyday lives of Brazilian international students and migrants in Australia. This project is funded by the Australian Research Council.**

'Brazil is set to become the world's fifth largest economy', says Dr Rocha. 'It is a very important trading partner for Australia and is a high priority for bi-lateral relationship strengthening. For young middle-class Brazilians, Australia is seen as a "cool" place to study and migrate to. Many, however, are leaving their families and home for the first time and struggle to find belonging in their new country. This can lead to drug and alcohol use in an attempt to cope. Australian Pentecostal mega-churches assist Brazilian migrants and students by helping provide a sense of belonging and community. Websites, blogs and social network sites are extensively used by young adherents, blurring the boundaries between traditional private worship and more public spheres. While government policy focuses on trade and political relations with Brazil, little policy attention has been given to migrant welfare, transnational connections and the very important role that religion plays in the migration process. This project will examine these areas, making new policy recommendations to government bodies.'

Mixed methods will be used to explore four areas by which this transnational cultural and religious exchange takes place: missionaries, migrants, mobilities (tourists, students) and the media. A combination of participant observation, in-depth interviews, text and visual analyses will be used to gain a comprehensive understanding of Brazilian migrant experience and their religious practices.



This research will contribute to understanding ways in which religion is globalised and localised in everyday life and clarify the role of religion in assisting migrant integration into multicultural Australia. It will enable policy to extend beyond the economic and political to include the cultural and social, and will broaden the official vision of Brazil-Australia relations.

**Project Title:** Pentecostal Connections: Migration, Missionaries, Mobility and Media between Australia and Brazil.

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