

Authoritarian Competition States Global Perspectives from the South

A call for applications for short-term postdoctoral fellowships from the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung and the International Center for Development and Decent Work, Kassel, Germany

Application deadline is 24 April 2020

Eligibility: Postdoctoral researchers from [ODA-recipient countries](#) based at research institutions in countries of the “Global South”.

The Global Scholarly Dialogue Programme is an initiative of the [Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung](#) (RLS) aimed at supporting critical research in and from countries of the Global South, and strengthening dialogue between critical research on authoritarian capitalism from the Global North and South. To achieve this, together with the [International Center for Development and Decent Work](#) (ICDD), the RLS is inviting applications from postdoctoral researchers for a **visiting fellowship of up to six months, with a starting date in October 2020.**

As a visiting scholar in Kassel, Germany, the fellow will be able to establish a dialogue with local researchers and explore possibilities of collaborative research and projects. She or he will be able to use all ICDD facilities, such as the library, as well as enjoy the academic environment at the University of Kassel. We also strongly encourage applicants to engage in teaching and outreach activities at the ICDD (details can be discussed at a later stage). The ICDD hosts two Master’s programs, the academically oriented MA in Global Political Economy and Development and the MA in Labour Policies and Globalisation. The latter is part of the [Global Labour University network](#), which trains trade unionists and labour activists from around the world on labour-related policy issues. The core of the ICDD is its Graduate School of Socio-Ecological Research for Development.

The fellow will be part of the RLS’s [International Research Group on Authoritarianism & Counter-Strategies](#). As such, she/he will have the chance to collaborate with the RLS and participate in the group’s activities. The fellowship explicitly aims to contribute to a global dialogue between scholars seeking to better understand the rising and seemingly global spread of authoritarianism and advance a path towards a just, democratic society.

We are particularly interested in approaches that propose a global perspective for and from the Global South on this issue. To what degree can (historical and contemporary) experiences of authoritarian practices in the Global South contribute to a global understanding of the phenomenon today?

Key countries of the Global South such as Brazil, India, and Turkey took a turn to authoritarian divisive politics that not only suppress dissent but also seem to move away from pursuing the previously much hyped “Knowledge Economy” in favour of what can be called the “Authoritarian Competition State”. It seems that many capitalist elites and their representatives in government who were once enthralled by the prospect of upgrading to a “Knowledge Economy” have given up on this risky strategy. Instead, they leave the business of innovation to some old capitalist powers together with China. They pursue a “low road” of profit maximization by concentrating on extractive industries and routine industrial as well service tasks. In a world market characterized by ample surplus labour and, therefore, fierce competition, such a strategy requires the suppression of organized labour, environmentalists, and reflective social sciences. Moreover, reproduction and care are either neglected or exploited as commodified labour. Certain aspects of these developments have been discussed under the aegis of “neo-extractivism” or “accumulation by dispossession”. Nevertheless, we believe that under the impression of a worldwide trend towards authoritarian statehood, the claim of the turn to an “Authoritarian Competition State” requires deeper analysis highlighting local contexts as well as the global entanglements of these developments.

Possible questions might be:

- To what extent are governments moving away from aiming at a “knowledge economy” and towards a “low road” of profit maximization, and what are the underlying political and economic dynamics of this development?
- Is this turn away from pursuing a “knowledge economy” selective, i.e. are some fields, such as military technology, exempted?
- If there is such a turn, is it based on a conscious decision, a decision following deliberation, or is it a more spontaneous, independently decided strategy of key capitalist fractions?
- Do these developments reflect a transformation of the global division of labour (including gendered division of labour), and if so, what role do key global players and institutions play in it?
- In what ways do global and local financial actors influence these decisions?
- How does the turn towards an “Authoritarian Competition State” make itself felt in the field of labour relations and/or in academia?
- What are possible counter-strategies to these repressive “low road” economic policies?

This list is not exhaustive. We encourage you to look at the profiles of researchers based at the ICDD as well. We welcome applications from the fields of critical political economy, critical policy studies, innovation studies, and postcolonial approaches that work within the scope of this call.

Requirements

Due to funding stipulations, only citizens of [ODA-recipient countries](#) are eligible to apply.

Applicants should have completed their PhD within the last five years.

Please note that in order to facilitate an ongoing and productive dialogue between scholars, the working language at the ICDD and in the International Research Group on Authoritarianism & Counter-Strategies is English. Therefore, applicants are required to have a very good command of the English language.

Financial Support

The financial support provided to the researchers is calculated at €2,300 per month for the time spent at the host institution. Return (economy class) airfares for intercontinental flights will be covered by the fellowship, as well as travel costs to attend events at the RLS headquarters in Berlin. If you plan to travel with your family, additional funding may be granted. Assistance will be provided in facilitating the stay (i.e. securing housing, childcare).

Submission

Please direct any queries and submit your application in one single PDF file (5 MB max; please name the file "SurnameName_application.pdf") to gsdp.application@rosalux.org.

Your application should include:

- **A letter of motivation**
- An **outline of the project** you would like to carry out and present while in Kassel, consisting of:
 - abstract (max. 250 words);
 - research proposal (max. 2,500 words);
 - project timeline (please include your proposed start date); and
 - proposed publication outcomes.
- **Curriculum vitae, including a publication list**
The publication list should be divided into publications in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters, and conference papers. If available, please provide a digital link to the publication.
- Brief description of **political, social, and/or cultural engagement**
As a political foundation in the tradition of the workers' and women's movements, as well as anti-fascism and anti-racism, the RLS places strong emphasis on candidates'

political, social, and cultural engagement. We ask you to provide some information on this.

- **Referee's report on the candidate**

The report can be written either by an academic expert or by a person involved in leftist political projects, movements, or initiatives. In both cases, the report should provide information on the candidate.

- **Copy of your passport**

- **English language skills**

You should have at least a CEFR C1 level of English. If you do not have a certificate to prove this, please provide written information regarding your language skills.

- **Certificate of your highest academic degree** (generally a PhD).

Unless the document is issued in English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish, please provide an English translation (a certified translation is not required).

We will inform all applicants by the end of May 2020 of the results of the selection process.