

Call for Applications

Rethinking Extractivist Capitalism

Interdisciplinary Autumn Research School / University of Bremen, 10–18 October 2020
Venue: Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg (Institute for Advanced Study)

Deadline for Applications: 1 May 2020

Apply here: yisares.uni-bremen.de

Successful participants will be notified by 1 June 2020.

Extractivism – traditionally understood as the organisation of human life around the over-exploitation of natural resources – has led to irreversible environmental damage, such as deforestation, soil depletion, decline and contamination of fresh water, as well as the destruction of livelihoods and forms of life across the globe. While these forms of primitive accumulation have historically been key to continued colonial exploitation of the Global South, we are currently witnessing an expansion of multiple forms of extractivism. Reimagined as a developmental and even emancipatory strategy, extractivism has increasingly been implemented by constellations of states, private firms, local and traditional authorities, and networks of experts in order to capture and distribute high rents, while trying to avoid the crisis-prone economic cycles of non-renewable resources, which in fact deepen legacies of colonial dependencies. However, extractivism has also extended beyond the plundering of raw materials to cultural or non-material resources, e.g. in the form of extensive tourism, or “data-mining”. Hence, today, extractivism is not simply a description of a particular type of natural resource-oriented political economy. It has come to signify a global logic of current capitalist accumulation and valorisation which differs decisively from industrial capitalism. To secure the appropriation of rent, these different forms of extractivism are flanked by various violent and authoritarian state practices, often reinstating racist and (settler) colonial orders, erasing indigenous claims to land, large-scale dispossession and displacement, severe human rights violations, unsafe labour conditions, surveillance, and forced migration.

To reach a deeper understanding of extractivist capitalism as a global logic of accumulation, this Autumn School aims at mapping its different forms across transnational spaces and emerging relational geographies including current developments in finance, logistics and digital economies. Such a mapping requires a “retooling” of theories, analytical frameworks, and methodologies that help us engage with the multiple contradictions of this particular logic of capitalism – in particular to rethink the Global South into this logic. To do so, the Autumn School will address the political economy of extractivist accumulation, its ecological and social implications, the attendant transformations of (post-)colonial knowledge, juridical and political re-orderings and authoritarian tendencies, discursive and cultural practices of legitimation, and ultimately questions of dissent, protest and resistance.

The Autumn School offers participants an outstanding learning environment with faculty members including Deval Desai, Michi Knecht, Sandro Mezzadra, Martin Nonhoff, Shalini Randeria, Ranabir Samaddar, Klaus Schlichte, Ingo H. Warnke and Ruth Wodak. The intensive interdisciplinary programme is composed of six content modules, plus a hands-on research design workshop module and includes lectures, Q&A-sessions, interactive small-group roundtable sessions, micro-group sessions, and plenary debate. The programme aims at enhancing the participants’ critical engagement with a variety of cutting-edge disciplinary approaches, and fostering lasting collaborative international exchange among students and scholars from the Global South and North.

We invite applications from outstanding MA-students, PhD-candidates and postdoctoral researchers in political, social or cultural science, geography, linguistics, law, international relations or related disciplines. Participants are selected on the basis of the quality of their applications, which includes a letter of motivation, an academic CV and a brief research proposal connected to the topic of the autumn school. You can submit your application on our website: www.yisares.uni-bremen.de

Fees and funding Due to generous funding by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) participants will not have to pay fees or costs for accommodation. Applicable candidates can also profit from financial support for costs of travel.

The Young International Scholars Autumn Research School is organised by Excellence Chair Prof. Dr. Shalini Randeria, Research Group „Soft Authoritarianisms“, Worlds of Contradictions and funded by the DAAD from funds of the German Federal Foreign Office (AA). Partners are the Chair of German and Interdisciplinary Linguistics as well as the Faculty of Law.