

Vacancy Postdoctoral Researcher

Project RESAUT

“Defending democracy: resistance strategies against autocratization attempts”

Vacancy notice for 1 postdoctoral researcher in Political Science

The Department of Political Science at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) is hiring 1 postdoctoral researcher for the project “**Defending democracy: resistance strategies against autocratization attempts**” (funded by the ULB - Action de Recherche Concertée).

Synopsis of the project

Regime change towards autocracy is a topical phenomenon nowadays. After decades of unprecedented democratic progress, the evolving situation led democratic scholars to be now much more pessimistic about the future of democracy. Following an alarming trend of autocratic changes, the scholarly debate in the field of study on political regimes recently moved from a focus solely on democratization to the current focus on the opposite process, i.e. autocratization. Today, the processes of autocratization in the post-cold war period are clearly at the centre of the academic debate. However, scholars often overlooked a central actor: those who resist this process, be they institutional, political or social actors. In other words, **the ‘opponents’ of autocratization**. If there is someone that drives the process of autocratization (autocratic leaders and coalitions), there is also one or more ‘opponents’ of the same process: those who react, those who resist. We almost know nothing about them, their identity, their roles, their strategies in facing and, often, fighting against such processes of autocratization.

Any research on political regime change towards autocracy cannot be complete without an adequate analysis of the role, actions, and strategies of the opponents of autocratization, and that the existing literature falls short of assessing this complexity. Resistance to autocratization, coming from public pressure, political opposition, independent institutions, and international organizations deserve to be brought back under the spotlights. By introducing a new topic in autocratization studies (the resistance to autocratization) this project will answer the question: **how does resistance to autocratization take place, and under which conditions are resistance strategies adopted by institutional, political, social, and international actors feasible and effective to face a ruling elite willing to change the nature of the political regime in an authoritarian direction?** The findings will have relevant policy implications for domestic and international actors and institutions willing to understand how to stop and reverse ongoing regime changes towards autocracy.

The project adopts a multi-dimensional approach to the analysis of the resistance to autocratization focusing on the role of *institutional, political, social, and international* actors, by implementing a qualitative study on the resistance to autocratization with a global scope, through the analysis of cases in all the regions where the phenomenon occurs. It will rely on an original comparative approach, combining the creation of a dataset of instances of resistance to autocratization with an in-depth study of selected case studies

Job description

This is a call for applications for one full-time postdoctoral position for 1 year. The postdoctoral researcher will become an active member of the research project “Defending democracy: resistance strategies against autocratization attempts” and of the CEVIPOL (ULB). It offers a stimulating working environment in a growing, dynamic and international research team.

The researcher will be based at the Cevipol (ULB). He/she will have an office and relevant administrative support at ULB. She/he will have no teaching obligations. He/she will be expected to contribute to the collective work in the framework of the research project RESAUT. In particular, he/she will be responsible for the analysis of Latin American cases. She/he is expected to present and publish individual or collective research outputs. During the fellowship, the postdoctoral researcher will be supported and encouraged in the submission of an application for the FNRS postdoctoral research scheme, to fund his/her research for the following years.

The Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) is an equal opportunity employer.

Within the project, the selected PhD candidate will perform the following tasks:

- collect data on resistance against autocratization in the contemporary period in selected cases in Latin America
- contribute to build the databases of the project
- work on individual and collective publications based on the findings of the research project
- help with the organization of workshop and/or events related to the project

Profile

- PhD in political science or related disciplines
- Research interest and expertise in democratization, autocratization, democracy, and Latin American politics
- Good command of qualitative and comparative methods of research
- Good organizational and time management skills
- Ability to work in a team
- A good command of English or French (or willingness to improve one's command of the other language during the scholarship)
- Knowledge of Spanish and/or Portuguese is essential.

STARTING DATE is 1 October 2021.

INTERESTED?

Questions regarding the PhD scholarship can be addressed to Professor Luca Tomini (ltomini@ulb.be)

APPLICATIONS should include (in one single PDF document):

- a copy of the passport/ID
- a letter of motivation explaining the candidate's general interest for the project, discussing how his/her previous experiences may be useful for this project, and how the candidate would tackle the main research question
- a full academic CV with list of publication
- affiliation and email of two referees who can be contacted if necessary

The deadline for applications is June 25 2021.

A Zoom/Teams or face-to-face interview may be organized in early July 2021

Please send the above documents electronically to Ana Noppen (Ana.Noppen@ulb.be)