



Call for Applications

Multiple Short-Term Fellowships at ICAS-MP for the Academic Year July 2024–June 2025

Closing date: 21.01.2024

The M.S. Merian – R. Tagore International Centre of Advanced Studies ‘Metamorphoses of the Political: Comparative Perspectives on the Long Twentieth Century’ (ICAS:MP), a project under the aegis of the Max Weber Stiftung India Branch Office, is seeking to award multiple fellowships **for the academic year July 2024–June 2025**.

ICAS:MP is funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and has its main location in New Delhi, India. **However, the research conducted at the centre is not restricted to India and South Asia.** The fellowship program is open to researchers (Postdoc and Senior) focusing on at least one of the following ICAS:MP research themes:

1. Working Group ‘Theory from the South’

ICAS:MP’s new research focus ‘Theory from the South’ functions as an overarching rubric for scholarship aiming to generate new concepts and propositions rooted in the histories, experiences and traditions of southern societies. Philosophy and theory are often presented as a narrative of canonical Western European thinkers – from Plato and Aristotle through Hegel and Marx to Foucault and Agamben – and taught as such, even in southern academies. Postcolonial and decolonial scholars have provincialized this overwhelmingly Eurocentric imagination of theory and criticized its universalistic pretensions by showing how such theories may not seamlessly apply to other-than-European contexts. However, much more work needs to be done to go beyond critique and undertake the creative task of generating alternative concepts and principles, which, while being situated in different locales, have a general if not global purchase. Theory from the South as an intellectual project encourages new kinds of conceptual work that takes comparison, translation and multilinguality seriously and works towards a decolonized theoretical subjectivity for the world at large. Scholars may work with different intellectual traditions as well as diverse practices and life-worlds as their research materials. However, it is expected that their research will transcend the empirical register and work towards a generalisable framework of study and analysis that will have relevance to academies of both the North and the South.

Researchers who work on one the following topics are invited to apply: i) Decolonizing Social Theory; ii) Precolonial World Views and Emergent Futures; iii) Thinking Across Intellectual Traditions

2. Thematic Consolidation Group ‘Constructing Alternative Pasts: (New) Sources and Methods’

The TCG ‘Constructing Alternative Pasts: (New) Sources and Methods’ explores the politics of history-making by focusing on the construction of ‘alternative’ historical narratives, beyond official or academic histories, and their relationship with the changing political. The Group is particularly interested in exploring non-official sources – for example, popular tracts, historical travel guides,

photography, the internet, social media, and social science data - to reconstruct the histories of marginalized groups and to rethink the archive. A special focus is on historical narratives in various media.

Applicants whose research interests lie in the politics of history, the construction of 'popular' historical narratives and in new and alternative sources to the official archive, are strongly encouraged to apply.

3. Thematic Consolidation Group 'The Challenge of Gender'

The TCG 'The Challenge of Gender' (2024–2027) is inviting applications from Fellows interested in exploring themes broadly related to how questions of gender animate political, economic, and social relations, structures and practices in both India and Germany. In this phase, the program seeks research proposals that explore the gender dimensions of heterodox/popular and organized/orthodox religiosities, the technologies and economics of reproduction, a comparative framing of regional feminisms and their vocabularies, and gendered aspects of international relations. The TCG will also build upon research questions addressed by TM 5 (<https://micasmp.hypotheses.org/tm-5-the-challenge-of-gender>) in the main phase of ICAS:MP (2017–2024), including (1) Care economies and migration within and between India/Germany (2) Gender and life cycles with a focus on ageing (3) Trans *identities (4) Masculinity, particularly as it structures the sphere of religion (5) global gender norms and international organizations. Applicants with research interests in these areas are encouraged to apply.

4. Thematic Consolidation Group 'Normative Conflicts and Transformations': Focus Urban Futures

The TCG Normative Conflicts and Transformations is inviting applications from scholars interested in working on 'Urban Futures: Entrepreneurial States, Private Capital and New Forms of Citizenship in the Making of Cities'. We seek Fellows whose research interests focus on new contexts of urbanism that involve fundamental shifts in the ways cities in the Global South are designed, governed, and lived in. Contemporary urban life reflects transformations in relationships between the state, markets, and citizens and the fellowship particularly seeks to facilitate explorations of how urban life is influenced by changes across these different registers and levels. As states are exhorted to become more 'entrepreneurial' and private capital undertakes 'state-like' activities, citizens negotiate varying relationships with the two, both resisting and conforming to new conditions of urban life. This flux, in turn, is the crucible in which new imaginations of the state, the market and personal and social identities are being formed. We invite applications from scholars across the social sciences whose interests lie in exploring what happens in the 'middle' of the city as well as at its borders that are in the process of becoming urbanized. The TCG Normative Conflicts and Transformations looks for applicants whose interests lie in at least 2–3 of the following areas of research: i) Spatial imaginings: work, leisure, commerce; ii) New urbanism and social identities: religion, family life, neighbourhoods; iii) Planning, city-making, the state and different forms of capital, iv) The rural-urban frontier, v) The social and cultural contexts of new land markets. vi) Securitisation: urban surveillance mechanisms and the social life of cities; vii) The 'digital turn' in the making of cities: state, private capital, citizens, policies; viii) Changing temporal regimes of the city.

Application Details and Fellowship Terms & Conditions

The fellowships are open to applicants of all nationalities. We particularly welcome applicants based at German and Indian academic institutions. Interested scholars from related social sciences and humanities disciplines working on thematic fields relevant to ICAS:MP are invited to apply. The research project must align with the broader ICAS:MP research agenda; please consult the ICAS:MP website at <https://micasmp.hypotheses.org/>

The fellowships are for a period of up to 5 months. ICAS:MP will reimburse successful candidates with a stipend up to their salary, but no greater than 3500 € per month.

Applicants should hold a PhD degree or have successfully completed all requirements for their PhD by March 2023.

Please note that this is a residential writing fellowship based at ICAS:MP, New Delhi. Fellows should work on a topic for which the major part of research be already completed by the beginning of the fellowship. Longer absences for fieldwork or archival research outside Delhi are not allowed during the fellowship term. Applicants are expected to possess fluency in English as well as other languages that are relevant to their research proposal.

Application materials:

- Completed application form: Available for download at <https://owncloud.gwdg.de/index.php/s/ARcls4RVCj1Znvg>
- Application: A single PDF comprising list of publications, project description of 3000 words, including description of relevance and fit with ICAS:MP research theme, the framework of the thematic foci applied for, and a research schedule for the fellowship period
- Cover letter: A 1-page letter outlining research experience and academic qualifications
- Postdoctoral Fellows should also provide (1) an academic reference letter (the referee should submit this directly to Ms Sukriti Manocha at icasmpevents@mwsindia.org, (2) a copy of their PhD degree, or a letter from their supervisor/department head confirming that they will have completed all requirements for the PhD degree by March 2023.

All materials should be sent by email to Ms Sukriti Manocha (icasmpevents@mwsindia.org) **by 21.01.2024**. Late applications will not be considered.

Enquiries related to academic content:

- Theory from the South: Prof. Prathama Banerjee (prathamabanerjee@gmail.com)
- Constructing Alternative Pasts: Dr Indra Sengupta (i.sengupta@ghil.ac.uk)
- The Challenge of Gender: Prof. Janaki Nair (nair.janaki@gmail.com) and Prof. Karin Steiner (karin.steiner@uni-wuerzburg.de)
- Normative Conflicts and Transformations: Prof. Martin Fuchs (martin.fuchs@uni-erfurt.de)

For all general enquiries, e.g., terms and conditions of the fellowship and financial compensation, please contact Ms Sukriti Manocha, ICAS:MP New Delhi (icasmpevents@mwsindia.org).