



## Call for Applications

### Multiple Short-Term Fellowships at ICAS:MP for the academic year July 2025 – June 2026

**Closing date: 30.09.2024**

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 2025– June 2026**. ICAS:MP is funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and has its main location in **New Delhi, India, though the research conducted at the centre is not restricted to India and South Asia**. It offers fellowships for researchers (Postdoc and Senior) who work 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 that seeks to generate new concepts, principles and norms from traditions, histories, and experiences 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 and criticized its universal claims by showing how such theories and philosophies are produced out of local historical contexts and may not seamlessly apply to the world at large. However, much more work needs to be done to go beyond the act of critique and move towards the kind of epistemic justice that actually generates new perspectives. This fellowship seeks to encourage the creative and affirmative task of articulating alternative concepts, principles, norms and frameworks of thought, which, while emerging from different southern locales, have a general if not global purchase.

The fellowship is intended to support new research that takes comparison, translation, multilinguality and trans-contextuality seriously and paves the way to a decolonized theoretical subjectivity. The work must be based on materials drawn from southern practices, philosophies, theories, histories and experiences. However, it is expected that the research will transcend the empirical register and posit a generalizable framework of analysis that has contemporary relevance. The study must also achieve the degree of abstraction and/or generality necessary to be relevant to multiple social science and humanities disciplines. Research that has direct bearing on the theme of ‘hierarchy, inequality and egalitarian practices’ will be preferred.

#### **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’: Collective Action and the Self – South Asian Perspectives**

The 2025/26 ICAS TCG ‘Normative Conflicts and Transformations’ TCG4 fellowship grant is devoted to the question of subjecthood and collective action. The current political constellation shows that the relationships between self, subjectivity and collective action are far more complicated than standard social-science accounts suggest. Common theories of agency presuppose selves which are always already capable of action, and postulate a straightforward relationship between individual agency and the potential for acting in concert. However, the sheer scale of current political, ecological, and social changes calls this into question. Contemporary hierarchies may generate new forms of collective action; they can, however, also create recurrent experiences of weakness and humiliation which produce selves that no longer conceive of themselves as potential agents. This ambiguity is heightened by the role of digital communication technologies: They can enable simultaneous collective action across great distances; at the same time, they offer new possibilities for control, and thereby contribute to creating atomised individuals.

The questions at stake are: How, and under what conditions, do subjectivities capable of acting in concert emerge and stabilize? How are such selves being transformed once processes of collective action have begun? How and when are such subjectivities destroyed or disabled? How do the current social upheavals affect these processes? What kinds of sites contribute to making them possible, and how can the persistence of these sites be explained? How should we think about practices and performances of personhoods in these contexts? What, then, is the relationship between identity (crises), belonging, and collective action?



The fellowship seeks to support research on these and related topics with a focus on South Asia. However, comparative perspectives are welcome. We are also interested in innovative conceptual approaches that make it possible to develop contemporary theories of agency and the self in relation to processes of collective action. An interest in theoretical and conceptual questions and in interdisciplinary dialogue is expected. Scholars from across the humanities and the social sciences are invited to apply.

### **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 be related to the broader ICAS:MP research agenda; please consult the ICAS:MP website at <https://micasmp.hypotheses.org/>.

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

**Fellows must already have a PhD degree and have 3 years of research or teaching experience after their PhD.**

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 is already completed by the beginning of the fellowship. During the fellowship term, longer absences for fieldwork or archival research outside Delhi are not allowed. Applicants are expected to possess fluency in English as well as other languages that are relevant to their research proposal.

### **Application materials**

Please fill your application here:

<https://karriere.maxweberstiftung.de/jobposting/39e4b818656e985c39f5dbf82fdae657e1f0923b5>.

The application documents include:

1. **Application Form** (to be filled under the link above)
2. Attachments: Please upload the following application documents to the application form:
  - **Application:** Single PDF comprising list of publications, project description of 3000 words including description of relevance and fit with ICAS:MP research theme and the framework of the thematic foci applied for and a research schedule for the fellowship period.
  - **Cover letter:** 1 page, outlining research experience and academic qualifications
3. Postdoctoral Fellows should also provide (1) an academic reference letter (the referee should submit this directly to Ms. Sukriti Manocha ([icasmpevents@mwsindia.org](mailto:icasmpevents@mwsindia.org)), (2) A copy of their PhD degree, ideally completed at least 3 years before the start of the fellowship.

All materials should be uploaded in the application form by 30.09.2024. Late applications will not be considered.



**Enquiries related to academic content:**

- Constructing Alternative Pasts: Dr. Indra Sengupta German Historical Institute London, [i.sengupta@ghil.ac.uk](mailto:i.sengupta@ghil.ac.uk)
- The Challenge of Gender: Prof. Karin Steiner, Würzburg University, [karin.steiner@uni-wuerzburg.de](mailto:karin.steiner@uni-wuerzburg.de)
- Theory from the South Prof. Prathama Banerjee, CSDS Delhi, [prathama@csds.in](mailto:prathama@csds.in)
- Normative Conflicts and Transformations, Prof. Martin Fuchs, MWK Erfurt, [martin.fuchs@uni-erfurt.de](mailto: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 ([manocha@mwsindia.org](mailto:manocha@mwsindia.org)).