

## Call for Applications

### Multiple Short-Term Fellowships at ICAS:MP for the Academic Year July 2026–June 2027

**Closing date: 15.07.2025**

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, invites applications for **multiple fellowships for the academic year July 2026–June 2027**.

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 research focus ‘Theory from the South’ functions as an overarching rubric for scholarship that seeks to generate new concepts, principles, and norms from the 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 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 toward 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 Thematic Consolidation Group ‘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 new and alternative sources beyond the official archive, are strongly encouraged to apply.

### **3. Thematic Consolidation Group 'The Challenge of Gender'**

The TCG 'The Challenge of Gender' (2024–2027) invites 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 programme 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': 'Breathing Well, Together – South Asian Perspectives'**

The 2026/27 ICAS TCG 4 'Normative Conflicts and Transformations' fellowship grant is devoted to examining the conditions under which breathing well has become an existential and political act. Climate change, pandemic, and pollution have, each in their own way, made breathing both the necessary condition of life and a source of new vulnerabilities. They have created new inequalities, even as new possibilities of collective action have emerged to address our contemporary atmospheric conditions. Breathing, in brief, is both an individual act and a social condition; it demands both bodily discipline and political will. Several questions may be posed in this context, including but not limited to: How does the act of breathing create new conditions of vulnerability? What new conceptions of the body and the social are needed to address contemporary concerns around air? What are the spatial coordinates through which we may act on the atmosphere? What conceptions of 'exposure' and 'thresholds' can help address these issues? How do individual bodies and social collective come together to shape a new politics of breathing? What is the role of the state, civil society and private enterprises?

#### **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 disciplines in the social sciences and humanities working on thematic fields relevant to ICAS:MP are invited to apply. The research project must relate 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, but no more than €3,500 per month.

Ideally, applicants should have three years of experience after their PhD has been awarded (not submission). The minimum requirement is one year of experience before the beginning of the fellowship.

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 has been completed at the start of the fellowship. During the fellowship term, longer absences for fieldwork or archival research outside Delhi are not allowed. Applicants must be fluent in English and any other languages relevant to their research proposal.

### Application materials

The application documents include:

- Application Form:  
<https://karriere.maxweberstiftung.de/jobposting/d137e456d654af5c508a6907f8fc2f3bda55362e0>
- Application: A single PDF comprising a list of publications, a project description of 3,000 words including relevance and fit with ICAS:MP research theme and the framework of the applied thematic focus, and a research schedule for the fellowship period.
- Cover letter: One page, outlining research experience and academic qualifications
- Postdoctoral Fellows must also provide (1) an academic reference letter (to be submitted directly by the referee to Ms. Sukriti Manocha at [manocha@mwsindia.org](mailto:manocha@mwsindia.org)), (2) a copy of their PhD degree.

All materials should be uploaded in the application form by 15.07.2025. 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), contact Ms. Sukriti Manocha, ICAS:MP New Delhi ([manocha@mwsindia.org](mailto:manocha@mwsindia.org)).