

Call for Papers

Listen to the Global South! Uncovering the Roles of Southern Actors in Writing Global Gender Norms

Virtual Workshop in the framework of
ICAS:MP International Centre of Advanced Studies: Metamorphoses of the Political
Thematic Module 5 · The Challenge of Gender
December 1st and 2nd, 2021

The M.S. Merian – R. Tagore International Centre of Advanced Studies “Metamorphoses of the Political” (ICAS:MP) is an Indo-German research collaboration of six Indian and German institutions funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). ICAS:MP combines the benefits of an open, interdisciplinary forum for intellectual exchange with the advantages of a cutting-edge research centre. Located in New Delhi, ICAS:MP critically intervenes in global debates in the social sciences and humanities. In the framework of its Thematic Module 5 “The Challenge of Gender”, we are organising the workshop “Listen to the Global South! Uncovering the Roles of Southern Actors in Writing Global Gender Norms” which will be held virtually on December 1st and 2nd, 2021.

Theme of the workshop

In spite of the diversity in the roles and backgrounds of gender advocates, global gender norms are often associated with cultures and intellectual traditions of the Global North and are thought to be written predominantly by Northern actors. This is reflected also in the discipline of International Relations; gender-related research from the Global South does not receive due attention in mainstream scholarship (see Mama 2007; Medie/Kang 2018).

An overview of the theories and practices underpinning globally negotiated gender norms suggests that roles played by various transnational or international actors from the Global South – be it feminist networks, “femocrats”, specific state actors or international institutions – have been underestimated or sidelined, if not ignored. The proposed workshop seeks to spotlight the persistent marginalization of the Global South in the narratives on global gender norms and the reasons for, and implications of, the same. It also aims to recognize and evaluate efforts to address these concerns.

Some initial questions include: Who is perceived as constructing, implementing, or changing global gender norms? What role have different actors from the Global South

played, or are currently playing, when it comes to gender norms in world politics? Are there particular policy fields that have received more attention from actors of the Global South? How, if so, is the Global North writing gender norms in its relations with the Global South? How, if so, is the Global South influenced by actors or ideals of the Global North writing own gender norms?

In various policy fields, including peace and security, development, human rights, environmental protection and climate change and care, gender norms play an important role in setting policy standards and potentially shaping behaviour of key actors. These are negotiated and written in bilateral, transnational, and international arenas such as the UN World Conferences on Women as well as summits dedicated to related issues, human rights and civil society forums, and entail the participation of many actors, including member states, regional and international organisations, feminist groups and other non-governmental actors. Yet global gender norms that emerge from these intense political engagements have been critiqued by both opponents and supporters with regard to, for instance, universalism. Indeed, one of the few certainties here is that gender norms are in constant motion, and subject to manifold debates and actions.

A systematic study of global gender norms is particularly relevant in these times. Backlash against such norms have been reported in different parts of the world, not only but also due to the global trend of right-wing populism (Graff/Kapur/Walter 2019); gender specific consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic are apparent (Al-Ali 2020); and the 'global order' is in crisis (Ikenberry 2020). At the same time, there have been positive developments as well (Björkdahl/Somun-Krupalija 2020; Carty/Mohanty 2015). By focusing especially on the role of the Global South, this workshop would bring to fore a dimension of the evolution of global gender norms that has not received sustained attention in IR scholarship.

Submissions to the workshop may address the following questions:

- **Theory and conceptualization:** To what extent are existing IR theories able to grasp the agency of actors from the Global South in shaping global gender norms? If there are gaps, how may these be addressed?
- **Agency of the Global South:** How do activism, theory building and political engagement of actors from (and in) the Global South, at diverse levels such as the regional, local and/or transnational, inform global gender norms?
- **World order:** How does the existing architecture of the global system shape global gender norms, and vice versa? What does this entail for actors from/in the Global South?
- **Gender norms in specific policy fields:** How are gender norms in specific policy fields stabilized or changed by actors of the Global South? To what extent and in what ways are lived experiences in the Global South accounted for in gender-related policies in specific issue areas?

- **Cooperation and contestation:** How do different actors engage with each other towards changing global gender norms? For example, how are these norms changed, strengthened or contested at the level of the United Nations through South-South cooperation or by individual actors from the Global South?
- **The Global South in IR:** Why are voices from the Global South marginalized or even excluded in the discipline of IR, most notably when it comes to analysing gender and global politics? Can proposals such as the idea of Global IR (Acharya 2014) offer a possible way forward?

Abstract submission and deadlines

We welcome paper submissions that relate to the workshop theme and the broad topics and questions outlined above. We invite potential contributors to submit an abstract via e-mail to indiaforum@uni-wuerzburg.de (no more than 400 words). Please include the title of the paper, your full name and contact address including e-mail, as well as your current position and institutional affiliation.

The submission deadline is 21.06.2021. Decision regarding acceptances will be notified by 10.07.2021. The goal is to publish a collection of papers as a peer reviewed special issue or a peer reviewed edited volume in the ICAS:MP series "Debating the Political in Contemporary India and the Global South" published by SAGE.

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