

ifa Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy”

Call for Applications

ifa’s Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy” provides experts with an opportunity to conduct research on current topics related to international cultural relations and foreign cultural policy. Research projects normally last up to six months. During this period, the experts involved in the project provide actors in the area of international cultural relations with clear, concise summaries of the latest academic findings. They formulate recommendations for future external policy strategies, initiate expert dialogue, and organise discussion forums and events.

ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen invites proposals for the following research project:

Artificial Intelligence in International Cultural Relations: Threats and Challenges to Freedom of Cultural Expression

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is currently the fastest-developing technological innovation ever to exist. Its modes of operation, potentials and dangers are yet little understood outside expert circles. Social and political reality, however, is directly influenced and changed by these developments, which is why the risks and benefits of AI must be thoroughly examined. In International Relations, the salience of AI is not only reflected in the geopolitical implications of this technology, North-South power imbalances as well as inequalities in representation and biases in the underlying data, but also in aspects of privacy and cyber security. Currently, the US and China are racing each other to dominate the development and deployment of AI. Having dominance over technology also leads to exerting social and cultural influence, which is why other countries and regions as well as civil society actors need to understand the impact and possibly take (political) action.

The EU is currently preparing the world’s first comprehensive legal framework to deal with the opportunities and threats of AI to protect health, safety, fundamental rights and democracy from harmful consequences. According to the European Parliament, this will make the EU a global hub for trustworthy AI. On 14 June 2023, MEPs adopted their negotiating position on the EU Artificial Intelligence Act. The Act categorises different AI systems according to risk (unacceptable risk, high-risk systems and limited risk) and, depending on the category, bans them, allows them subject to requirements and obligations, or subjects them to comprehensive transparency regulations. By the end of 2023, an agreement on the regulations is to be reached in the Council of EU Member States on the final form of the Act.¹ Regulation at EU level is a first step, but as digital technologies are global goods, and cannot be regulated by individual countries or regions, a multilateral approach with key stakeholders including tech companies is important.

Within the framework of this research project, the current developments are to be reflected internationally in a comparative manner and the project shall examine the following aspects:

- What are the pitfalls of the current proposed EU AI Act?
- What is the role of the EU in relation to other regional actors on this issue? How can private companies be integrated into a multilateral framework?

¹ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/698792/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)698792_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/698792/EPRS_BRI(2021)698792_EN.pdf)

- Which threats to freedom arise from AI? What security-related dangers do AI pose? Are societies affected differently? If so, why? What do these developments and/or threats mean for cultural workers in particular?
- What changes in international cultural relations can be expected?
- Data is generated, reproduced and analysed under unequal power relations. What is the geopolitical race in AI? What regional tensions exist worldwide, and what are they caused by? How might international cultural relations reduce forms of inequality? In what way can actors in international cultural relations bring different perspectives into the discussions on AI? What would an inclusive, ethical AI look like? How can inclusive data practices be designed? How does the platform economy affect diversity and thus democracy?
- How is the appropriate balance between privacy and security perceived in different regions or between different social groups?

Format: Study and workshop(s)

Starting period: October 2023

Location: flexible

Fee: 12.000,00 € (gross)

Application deadline: 2nd October 2023

The following application requirements and procedures apply to all projects:

Application Requirements

- Postgraduate degree (minimum M.A.)
- Proven experience and sound knowledge of the topic of the particular project and of foreign cultural and educational policy
- For projects with an event format: proven experience in event organisation
- For projects involving publication: very good, proven knowledge of editorial work and of academic publications
- Good knowledge of English and the language required for the particular project

Application Procedure

Please include the following documents in your application for the Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy”:

1. Letter of motivation (including your contact information: i.e. address, e-mail, phone/fax/mobile numbers)
2. Description of the project:
 - Title and topic
 - Short description of the topic’s relevance and gaps in existing research
 - Brief outline of research project plan (max. 2 pages)
 - Provisional work plans showing that the project is feasible within the funding period
 - Indication of relevant sources and methods
3. Your curriculum vitae (CV).

Please send your complete application (all abovementioned documents in one attachment, max. file size: 3 MB) by 2nd October 2023 via e-mail to: research@ifa.de

The selection process is foreseen to take place around the 2nd week of October.

For further information on the ifa Research Programme, please visit:

<https://www.ifa.de/en/research/research-programmes/>