The Würzburg Centre for Modern India continues to flourish. The new M.S. Merian – R. Tagore International Centre of Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences: “Metamorphoses of the Political” (ICAS:MP) had its first planning meeting. India remains in the focus of the Institute for Political and Social Sciences.

Student mobility propels research cooperation. Ten Students from Würzburg and nine from India participated in the DAAD “A New Passage to India” programme.

Cooperations in mathematics, aerospace engineering and in life sciences (in particular regarding chemical ecology) became sustainable. New contacts were established in the field of infection biology.
This was followed by talks by Indian guest faculty (Prof. G.S. Bajpai, National Law University New Delhi; MoU with Würzburg LawSchool in 2015) and two young DAAD-stipend holders (L.-M. Reuter, M.A., Indology Würzburg,, and R. Kumari, JNU New Delhi ).

A major event in 2015 was the first planning meeting (7-10 October, Institute for Economic Growth, New Delhi) of the new "M.S. Merian – R. Tagore International Centre of Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Metamorphoses of the Political" (ICAS:MP). This Centre for Advanced Studies has been initiated and is financed during its first phase (2015-2017) by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), and will focus on key political processes that evolved simultaneously in different parts of the world within the past decades. It is intended as a place for advanced research with a genuine international perspective in order to overcome methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism (read more at http://micasmp.hypotheses.org/). WCMI is one of seven German and Indian research institutions involved in ICAS:MP. A number of its members and their Indian partners met in New Delhi in order to lay down the agenda for the next years. Within ICAS:MP, the Würzburg Centre for Modern India is coordinating the Thematic Module 5 “Performing Gender: Negotiating Space in Civil Society”. Participants in the planning meeting in Delhi were the two coordinators from the Würzburg side, Profs. H. Brückner and E. Schömbucher-Kusterer, Dr. B. Lotz (all from Indology), Profs. G. Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet and M. Becker, Dr. M. Gsänger, P. Gieg, T. Lowinger (all from the Institute for Political Sciences & Sociology – IPS), Prof. I. Karremann (English

The final lecture in this successful symposium was delivered in honour of Prof. Brückner by Prof. B.A. Viveka Rai from Mangalore University

with Dr. B. Lotz. After a welcome address by the President of the University, Prof. A. Forchel, and the inaugurational speech by the Consul General of India, Mr. M. Sevala Naik, organisers and faculty active in WCMI (Drs. B. Lotz, S. Schröder-Köhne, T. Müller, Profs. G. Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, D. Holtbrügge, R. Egetenmeyer, E. Schömbucher-Kusterer, J. Kreft) presented their views and thoughts on the topic.
During the entire year, a number of bilateral activities took place at the Chair of Indology: In February, seven students travelled with their supervisor to Delhi and Varanasi for an excursion on “Exploring Language, Literature and Culture from a Banarsi Perspective”. As in previous years, Profs. J. Nair and B.A. Viveka Rai came to Würzburg to deliver lectures and to participate in seminars and workshops. Dr. M.D. Muthukumaraswamy (Director NFSC) conducted a lecture series and a workshop. New guest faculty was Prof. H.C. Boralingaiah (VC Kannada University Hampi).

During the past few years, India emerged as a focus of interest and cooperation at the Institute for Political Sciences & Sociology (IPS) and its “India Forum”. Following the ICAS:MP meeting in Delhi, Prof. G. Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet and Prof. M. Becker, Dr. M. Gsänger, P.Gieg and T. Lowinger gave lectures at JNU, Jamia Millia Islamia (New Delhi), PU Chandigarh and conducted field studies.

Prof. G. Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet lecturing on European Politics at Panjab University Chandigarh

Prof. Schömbucher-Kusterer & Dr. Lotz at the same workshop

Würzburgians & Indian cooperation partners during a reception at the German Embassy

Planning meeting at IEG New Delhi. From left to right: Prof. U.S. Bava, Prof. G. Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, P. Gieg, T. Lowinger, Dr. K. Dara, Prof. M. Becker, Dr. M. Gsänger, Prof. I. Karremann

From left: Dr. B. Lotz, Prof. J. Nair, Prof. H. Brückner, Prof. E. Schömbucher-Kusterer at IEG New Delhi

From left: Dr. B. Lotz, Prof. J. Nair, Prof. H. Brückner, Prof. E. Schömbucher-Kusterer at IEG New Delhi
Two guest professors from JNU, U.S. Bava and V. Rodrigues, came to Würzburg for a third stay and contributed intensely to the curriculum at IPS. Newcomers in 2015 were Profs. M.B. Alam (Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi) and S. Chaturvedi (PU Chandigarh).

For details see http://www.politikwissenschaft.uni-wuerzburg.de/en/institut/india_forum/

Later in the year, Dr. B. Bora, International Institute for Adult & Lifelong Learning (IIALE, Delhi) held a series of lectures, and Prof. Rajesh came for a second stay. Seven students from Würzburg travelled to Delhi for a study excursion on Adult and Continuing education at DU and IIALE. A MoU between IIALE and the University of Würzburg has been concluded in May 2015.

Dr. T. Müller (Special Needs Education) lectured in March/April at IITM Madras, where he also participated in a workshop. In August, he supervised a group of students during their excursion to the Rishi Valley Institute for Educational Resources (RIVER).

From 28.01.-06.02. the Professorship for Adult Education (Prof. R. Egetenmeyer) hosted a winter school on “Comparative Studies on Adult and Lifelong Learning”. Among the fifty-one students and twelve faculty from seven foreign countries were nine students from India, accompanied by Profs. A. Kumar (JNU) and Rajesh (University of Delhi - DU) from Delhi. The winter school was co-financed by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF), the University of Würzburg and DAAD.

In April, Prof. I. Karremann (English Literature & Cultural Studies) hosted Prof. S. Bhaduri (JNU, photo below) as visiting guest faculty.

In November, Prof. E. Hilgendorf (Law School) organized an interdisciplinary workshop on “Legal Pluralism from an Indian Perspective” in which also Prof. Nair contributed lectures. Earlier in the year, eight students from the Law School participated in a study excursion at the National Law University Delhi.

Profs. H. Fehr and H. Lenz (School of Economics) visited PU Chandigarh in August for cooperation talks, and in return Prof. U. Sawhney from PU spent one month at the Würzburg Chair of Public Finance.

As an external member of the WCMI, the Chair of Business Administration (Prof. D. Holtbrügge) at the University of Erlangen hosted Indian guest faculty (Prof. N. Vohra; IIM Ahmedabad) and conducted a student excursion to several places in India.
Student mobility propels research cooperation

In the framework of the DAAD “A New Passage to India” mobility programme in 2015 ten German students visited Indian partner institutions, and nine students from those institutions came to Würzburg for a research stay. Research area-specific cooperations that are by now firmly established could be supported in this way. This is true for the political sciences with JNU (four Germans, two Indians), mathematics with TIFR-CAM (one German and one Indian student), biology with NCBS (three Germans and two Indians) as well as the areas of adult education and special needs education, in which one German student each continued to strengthen the bonds with JNU and IIT Madras, respectively. Some of those cooperations are described in detail in other parts of this report.

Several more recent cooperation benefited as well, such as e.g. in the field of chemistry with two Indian doctoral students from IISc coming to Würzburg. Of course, the young researchers were not only ambassadors of their respective research groups, working on particular aspects of their Bachelor, Master or PhD thesis projects during their stays. They all made a carefully thought-out decision to expose themselves to the respective other country and culture, which was an exhilarating and enriching experience for them, judging from the vivid descriptions in their reports.

Cooperations in mathematics, aerospace engineering and life sciences became sustainable, new contacts have been established

The close collaboration, since 2012, between the Würzburg Dept. of Mathematics (Prof. C. Klingenberg) and the Bengaluru-based Tata Institute for Fundamental Research, Centre for Applicable Mathematics (TIFR-CAM) could be strengthened further. In 2015 alone five joint research publications appeared. Not less than nine mathematicians from Bengaluru visited Würzburg in 2015, among them the frequent guest Prof. P. Chandrashekar and the Dean of TIFR-CAM, Prof. G.D.V. Gowda. In October Prof. Klingenberg visited his Indian partners. These travels and stays were financed from a number of different resources, among them DAAD.

In the field of aerospace engineering Prof. K. Schilling (Informatics VII: Robotics & Telematics, University of Würzburg) is collaborating since a couple of years with Prof. R. Padhi from the Dept. of Aerospace Engineering, Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru. The two are working closely together in the Technical Committee (TC) Aerospace of the International Federation of Automatic Control (IFAC).

The research cooperation in the field of chemical ecology, which started in 2014 between Würzburg and Indian colleagues, in particular Dr. A. Brockmann from the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) Bengaluru, intensified. From 16 - 27 February Profs. C. Förster (Neurobiology & Genetics), W. Rössler (Behavioral Physiology & Sociobiology) and I. Steffan-Dewenter (Animal Ecology & Tropical Biology) were
invited faculty at the “K.S. Krishnan School for Chemical Ecology” held at NCBS. They used this opportunity to discuss ongoing and future joint projects.

From 16 September to 6 October Profs. T. Schmitt (Animal Ecology & Tropical Biology) and J. Spaethe (Behavioral Physiology & Sociobiology), together with a DAAD "Passage" fellow, accompanied Dr. A. Brockmann on an expedition into the Himalayas. The aim of this expedition was to map and collect alpine ant and bumble bee species for joint studies in chemical ecology.

From 3-8 October a delegation of infection biologists from Würzburg travelled to India, financed by a grant from the Bavarian Research Alliance (BayFOR). The objective was to gather firsthand information on the current status of research at a number of partner institutions. Thus options for new collaborations should be explored. The German delegates, Prof. T. Rudel & Dr. B. Prusty from Microbiology – Biocenter, Drs. C. Sharma & S. Gorski from the Institute for Molecular Infection Biology (IMIB) were accompanied by Prof. J. Kreft and Dr. S. Schröder-Köhne who combined this visit with their annual contact and coordination travel to Indian partners. On 5 October the Würzburgians met at the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) Bengaluru with colleagues from NCBS, Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and University of Mysore.

The expedition, in which also Prof. H. Bharti (Punjabi University Patalia) and two of his students participated, was combined with a contact visit at the Rajiv Gandhi University in Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh), with which a future collaboration is planned.

The organisers from NCBS: Dr. V. Sundaramurthy (left) and Dr. A. Ramesh

The Dean of NCBS, Prof. U.S. Bhalla
Both sides presented their results in a workshop and discussed future projects. The next day this exchange of information and intentions was continued at IISc.

On 6 October Prof. J. Vogel (IMIB) joined the delegation in New Delhi. On 7 October a workshop, similar to the one in Bengaluru, was held at the Special Centre for Molecular Medicine of JNU New Dehli which was open for all JNU researchers working in the field. Guests from other institutions (e.g. IITD, DFG India Office) were also invited. The exchange of information and project ideas, which was initiated on a larger scale during the workshops, shall be continued on an individual basis.

In the evening the German delegation met the director of the DFG India Office New Delhi, Dr. A. Hansen, in order to discuss funding options.

Networking activities

On 26 January Prof. Kreft attended, as representative of the University of Würzburg, the celebration for the Indian Republic Day, organized by the Consulate General of India in Munich.

On 10 February Dr. Schröder-Köhne and Prof. Kreft participated in a meeting at Regensburg which had been organized by the Bavarian-Indian Centre for Business and University Cooperation (BayIND).
During this meeting Dr. D. Werner (managing director) and Ms. S. Lorenz (head of the BayIND Science Office in Bengaluru) gave detailed information on the higher education landscape in India and on funding opportunities offered by BayIND.

The International Office of the University of Würzburg organized an “International Evening” in the botanical garden on 24 June. During this event, which was intended to give a broad overview on international activities and study options, Dr. Schröder-Köhne and a number of current and former DAAD “Passage” fellows informed the public on the DAAD programme and the IPS India Forum.

During the contact and coordination travel to India (see above) Dr. Schröder-Köhne and Prof. Kreft met with the Science Counselor of the German Embassy and with DAAD officers in New Delhi. During these meet-

ings information on the progress of the India Initiative and on new developments in India was exchanged.

Both in Bengaluru and New Delhi meetings with former and future “Passage” fellows took place, which were aimed at disseminating information, getting feedback and networking former and future fellows in order to strengthen the “Würzburg” network at those institutions.

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