



MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE

FOR COMPARATIVE PUBLIC LAW
AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

At the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, scholars pursue research relating to fundamental issues and current developments in the areas of public international law, European Union law, and the constitutional and administrative law of individual states, together with numerous visiting scholars from all over the world. In its fields, our library is the largest in Europe and one of the most comprehensive in the world.

The newly established Max Planck Research Group “Constellations of Global (Dis)Ordering” (DISORDER), headed by Dr. Gordon Friedrichs at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg, invites applications for two

Research Fellow positions (Doctoral Researchers) (x/f/m)

with a preferred starting date of 1 January 2027 (the positions are funded for three years)

The Max Planck Research Group “Constellations of Global (Dis)Ordering” (DISORDER) investigates how global order is transformed as states - particularly great and middle powers - pursue competing visions of the principles, rules and institutions that structure international relations amid intensifying geopolitical rivalry. The group conceptualizes these processes as constellations of global (dis)ordering through which states seek to advance their visions of order by creating, reshaping, connecting, bypassing, or disengaging from international institutions, building new formal or ad hoc institutional arrangements, and strategically leveraging economic and technological interdependence. DISORDER examines how such constellations emerge across the fields of security, economy, and technology, and what forms of global order they produce, transform, or erode.

Job description

The successful candidates will develop independent doctoral dissertation projects within the framework of the Max Planck Research Group “Constellations of Global (Dis)Ordering” (DISORDER). Their research should contribute to the group's broader inquiry into how states pursue competing visions of global order through international institutions and how these processes reshape global order across different issue areas.

Possible orientations of the doctoral projects include:

- an actor-centred perspective, examining how a particular great or middle power pursues its vision of global order across different issue areas institutional settings; or
- a domain-centred perspective, comparing how different states interact with and reshape international institutions within a particular field, such as security, economy, or technology.

Potential empirical cases may include, but are not limited to, the United States, China, Russia, India, Brazil, Japan, and other international actors such as the European Union.

The doctoral researchers will:

- develop and conduct an original PhD project that contributes to the conceptual and empirical agenda of the DISORDER research group;
- conduct empirical research using qualitative methods such as process tracing, qualitative content and discourse analysis, and semi-structured interviews;
- contribute to the comparative and collaborative research activities of the group;

- participate in research group meetings, workshops, conferences, and other academic activities;
- present research findings at international conferences and prepare publications for peer-reviewed academic outlets;
- contribute to the organization of workshops, conferences, and other activities of the research group and the MPIL.

Your profile

- An excellent Master's degree or equivalent in Political Science, with a specialization in International Relations or Foreign Policy Analysis
- A strong research interest in global order, international institutions, and great- and middle-power politics, including their foreign policies
- A substantive interest in one or more of the group's empirical issue areas (security, economy, and technology)
- A strong interest in qualitative research and familiarity with relevant research methods
- Excellent written and spoken English
- Additional language skills and country- or region-specific expertise relevant to the proposed doctoral project are considered assets
- The ability to conduct independent research while contributing actively to a collaborative research environment

We offer

- An attractive and international work environment with an unparalleled research infrastructure and a good working atmosphere
- A varied, responsible and team-orientated job
- Remuneration in accordance with the guidelines of the MPG funding agreements (65 per cent of EG13, TVöD-Bund)
- Access to our world-leading library and a multitude of databases
- A workplace that is easy to reach by public transport and free employee parking spaces
- A job ticket for public transport
- Offers for work-life balance and four affiliated daycare centres

Application

The Max Planck Society has set itself the goal of employing more severely disabled people. Applications from severely disabled persons are expressly encouraged. The Max Planck Society strives for gender equality and diversity. We welcome applications from all backgrounds. Furthermore, the Max Planck Society aims to increase the proportion of women in areas where they are underrepresented. Women are therefore strongly encouraged to apply.

Interested candidates are invited to submit their complete application exclusively via the [online application system](#) available on our website by **22 November 2026**.

Applications should include a CV, a cover letter of no more than two pages, copies of relevant degree certificates and transcripts of records, a one-page summary of the applicant's Master's thesis, a five-page PhD project proposal that clearly relates to the research agenda of the DISORDER group and indicates which of the thematic orientations outlined above the proposed project primarily addresses, and two letters of recommendation

The documents will be deleted after the application process. The interviews will take place in late November/early December in person at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg. Application expenses cannot be covered.

For questions regarding the positions, please contact **Dr. Gordon Friedrichs** at friedrichs@mpil.de.

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