

ID Lunchtime Research Seminars 2023-24

Wednesdays 12.30-2pm

CON.7.03

Shirin Madon & Myfanwy James

WINTER TERM

January 17th

Yu Zheng - Professor and Head of Department of International Politics, School of International Relations and Public Affairs (SIRPA), Fudan University

China and the Global South: Complex Partnerships

Over the last three decades, China has established various types of strategic partnerships with more than 100 countries. China has also increased its economic ties with nearly all developing countries through trade networks and production chains, creating various degrees of economic interdependence. This talk will explore China's different patterns of engagement with countries in the Global South. In particular, it will analyze how China's strategic partnerships and economic interdependence with various developing countries affect their socioeconomic policies and development performances.

January 31st

Sohini Kar - Assistant Professor of International Development at the London School of Economics

Collective Ownership: Activism and the Politics of Finance

With the increasing financialization of the global economy, social movements and activists increasingly target financial actors and shareholders in order to enact social change. Drawing on three case studies of shareholder mobilisation in relation to the mining giant Rio Tinto, this talk examines how social movements engage financial actors. Based on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with activists, it identifies three forms of what I call financial activism and the ways in which financialization is reframed as a form of collective ownership.

February 7th

Radhika Desai - Professor at the Department of Political Studies, Director, Geopolitical Economy Research Group, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada and Convenor of the International Manifesto Group

Modi versus I.N.D.I.A.: The Stakes in the 2024 Indian General Election

Can Modi be unseated? What would it take? How are we to understand the problems and prospects of the I.N.D.I.A. grand coalition against him? Based on a framework developed to understand the politics of India in terms of the main social forces that have determined them, and electoral outcomes, since independence, this talk will assess the possibilities contained in the upcoming elections to the Lok Sabha. It will take account of the evolution of India's political economy, the active social cleavages it has created and the party-political expressions they have taken amid Modi's radical rearrangement of arena of political contests with his unconstitutional and authoritarian 'reforms'.

February 28th

Rachel Brule - Assistant Professor of Global Development Policy at Boston University's Frederick S. Pardee School of Global Studies

Discussion Rules Matter for Representation: Experimental Evidence from Rural India

Gender gaps in influence are common in group decisions. When political decision-making is a collective endeavour, the presence of elected women thus does not guarantee that women have equal influence over outcomes. Can inclusive discussion rules reduce persistent gender gaps in influence within political groups with collective decision-making? To answer and identify the causal impact of such a change, we experimentally evaluate the effect of an arguably minor, costless intervention in 605 Indian village councils: we nudge elected officials and bureaucrats in village councils to adopt explicit - and hence inclusive - discussion rules as part of a collective decision-making exercise about local budgets. We measure whether such changes in formal rules of discussion increase the objective influence of women officials. Results show that minor changes in formal discussion rules can alter the responsiveness of peers to the substantive input of women elected leaders, shifting the outcomes of collective decision-making.

March 13th

Frank Borge Wietzke - Associate Professor at the Barcelona Institute of International Studies (Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals)

Power and Conviction: The Political Economy of Missionary Work in Colonial-Era Africa

This Element engages with recent attempts by economists and political scientists to rigorously estimate impacts of missionary work in sub-Saharan Africa. It argues that, although these efforts contribute to more accurate assessments of the 'true' effects of missionary presence, they also have a tendency to present Christian involvement in the region as a largely apolitical process, that was relatively unaffected by the rapidly evolving geopolitical and socio-cultural contexts of the colonial period. Countering this trend, this Element illustrates aspects of missionary behavior that were inherently more political and context-dependent, such as local struggles for religious hegemony between Protestants and Catholics and interactions between colonial regimes and the church-based provision of goods like education. The Element draws heavily on market-based theories of organized religious behavior. These perspectives are entirely compatible with the analytical language of economists and political scientists. Yet, they played surprisingly limited roles in recent literature on missionary impacts.

March 27th

Mohamed Saleh - Associate Professor of Economic History at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a Professor of Economics (on leave) at the Toulouse School of Economics, France

The Power of Connections: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Corporate Performance in Egypt, 1890–1950

The impact of political connections on firm performance has been widely studied. It is less known though whether this effect varies under the colonial and post-independence eras. Inspired by a nationalist agenda aiming at establishing an indigenous business elite, post-independence regimes often used connections with the emerging national private sector to counter the influence of established larger colonial-era foreign corporations. Using novel fine-grained data covering the universe of corporations, founders, and members of parliament and cabinet in colonial (1890--1923) and post-independence Egypt (1924--1950), we demonstrate that connections to the Egyptian political class lowered firm value before independence but increased it afterwards. Connections became lucrative after independence because they lowered entry rates in the industry, expedited the state authorization of incorporation, and reduced the exit risk even after losses.