

Special Issue Workshop Programme

“Firm-centred, multi-level approaches to overcoming semi-peripheral constraints”

Date & place

Monday, 20 March 2023, 9am – 6pm

Trafalgar Room, Arundel House, 6 Temple Place, London, WC2R 2PG

Workshop organisers

Kira Gartzou-Katsouyanni (European Institute, LSE)

Sonja Avlijaš (University of Belgrade - Faculty of Economics and Business)

Event summary

The workshop will contribute to a Special Issue of *Studies in Comparative International Development* (SCID) on “Firm-centred, multi-level approaches to overcoming semi-peripheral constraints”. The event is organised in the framework of Kira Gartzou-Katsouyanni’s ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship and it builds on earlier work at a workshop hosted by Sonja Avlijaš’ Marie Skłodowska-Curie SEEGROW project at the University of Belgrade on 20 May 2022, as well as on panel discussions during the 2021 and 2022 annual conferences of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE). The Special Issue is due to appear in SCID during the first half of 2024.

The topic

Firms in semi-peripheral areas, which do not belong to the global core or to the periphery in terms of their production and trade profiles, can be important developmental agents as they seek creative ways to avoid being trapped by both

market and government failures. Shifting to more innovative, higher value-added segments of the global market is challenging in semi-peripheral contexts characterized by low trust, social fragmentation, and path dependencies of old development models. Firms outside the core are also limited at the international level, by regulatory and financial constraints and by the dominant role of large multinational companies in the global value chains governing the production of a range of sophisticated goods.

Scholars are increasingly advocating a strong, activist developmental state as a way of overcoming those internal and external constraints that domestic firms face. These solutions, however, often fail to acknowledge that government failure is as common in semi-peripheral areas as market failure. It is unlikely that public authorities in the semi-periphery can successfully play the developmental role often requested of them in the literature. Doing so would require them to act as a *deus ex machina* for economic development, whereas in reality, they often have weak political capacity to improve existing institutions or build new ones. This weakness reflects the fragmentation of potential support coalitions, limitations in resources, as well as problems of capture by rent-seeking groups.

This workshop focuses on empirical cases where domestic firms engage with these multiple constraining features of the semi-periphery and develop strategies to overcome them. Under which conditions have local economic actors been able to carve out opportunities for developing innovative capabilities despite the developmental constraints associated with semi-peripherality? Which macro-level policies have facilitated their endeavours, and what kinds of coalitions succeed in promoting them at the national and international levels, despite adverse circumstances? By focusing on these puzzles in concrete empirical settings, the goal of the workshop is to examine dynamic pro-developmental strategies that allow firms to overcome obstacles and capitalize on opportunities observed in semi-peripheral contexts. In pursuing this goal, the workshop will encourage a process of non-hegemonic knowledge exchange about development agency in different areas of the world, cutting across the traditional global North and South divide in the political economy and international development literatures.

Agenda

9.15-9.30: Welcome

9.30-11.00: Panel 1

Chair: **Kira Gartzou-Katsouyanni** (Postdoctoral Fellow, European Institute, LSE)

- ◆ “Firm-centred, multi-level approaches to overcoming semi-peripheral constraints: Introduction to the Special Issue”, **Sonja Avlijaš** (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Belgrade) and **Kira Gartzou-Katsouyanni**
- ◆ “Rising from Rust to High-Tech Hubs: Dependent Growth and the Upgrading of Urban Economies in East Central Europe”, **Gergő Medve-Bálint** (Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

Discussant: **Marek Naczyk** (Associate Professor in Comparative Social Policy, University of Oxford)

11.30-13.00: Panel 2

Chair: **Kira Gartzou-Katsouyanni**

- ◆ “Development beyond global integration? New dynamics in agricultural regional value chain governance and outcomes”, **Carolyn Hulke** (Postdoctoral Researcher, Institute of Geography, University of Cologne)
- ◆ “How Organizational Design Shapes Regional Development: Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Incubators and High-Technology Competition in Canada”, **Alessandra Cicci** (Alumnus of the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy at the University of Toronto), **Darius Ornston** (Associate Professor, Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy, Department of Political Science, University of Toronto), and **Lisa Huh** (Student, Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy, University of Toronto)

Discussant: **Neil Lee** (Professor of Economic Geography, LSE)

13.00-14.15: Lunch

14.15-15.45: Panel 3

Chair: **Sonja Avlijaš**

- ◆ “Innovation and Power in Semi-Peripheral Economies: The Role of Value Chain Structures”, **Angela Garcia Calvo** (Assistant Professor, Henley Business School, University of Reading)
- ◆ “Ideology and Institutional Arbitrage: Islamism, the Revisionist State and Local Development in Turkey under the AKP”, **Caroline E. Arnold** (Associate Professor of Political Science, Brooklyn College, City University of New York) and **Adnan Naseemullah** (Reader in International Politics, King’s College London)

Discussant: **Saul Estrin** (Emeritus Professor of Management Economics and Strategy, LSE)

16.15-17.45: Panel 4

Chair: **Sonja Avlijaš**

- ◆ “Regulating to Exclude or to Enable: Institution Building and Standards Adoption in Mexican Food Safety”, **Gerald McDermott** (Professor, Darla Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina) and **Belem Avendaño Ruiz** (Profesor Investigador, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexico)
- ◆ “Enhancing Domestic Value Capture on the Semi-Periphery: The Role of the State in Supporting Large Domestic Enterprises in the Electrification of Transport”, **Alen Toplišek** (Senior Lecturer in Global Affairs and Politics, University of Derby)

Discussant: **Ken Shadlen** (Professor of Development Studies, LSE)

18.30: Dinner