

# **ID Lunchtime Research Seminars 2024-2025**

**Wednesdays 12.30-2pm**

**CON.7.03**

Myfanwy James and Mahvish Shami

Winter Term

**22 Jan - Shiping Tang (Fudan University)**

**The New Landscape of International Political Economy: Toward a New Agenda**

As a tribute to Susan Strange (and her firebrand style), this talk is to be provocative. After a brief survey of the mainstream IPE (whether American or British), I argue that IPE has unwittingly ceded economic development in LDCs to the (long demised) development economics, which does not really address the pressing issues of economic development. Moreover, mainstream IPE has long been West-centric thus paid only marginal attention to LDCs. I then contend that the landscape for economic development has shifted profoundly, due not the least to the rise of China, the reawakening of the Global South, and the geopolitical upheavals in the wake of the Russo-Ukraine war and US-China rivalry. As such, IPE as a field should take on the economic development in LDCs as one of its principal focuses with more urgency. An IPE that brings international politics and domestic politics to the study of economic development in LDCs is better equipped for tackling this critical task than mainstream (development) economics, partly because the latter does not really bring politics, either international or domestic, into the picture.

**12 Feb – Dr. Elizabeth Ingleson (LSE)**

**Corporate Citizens: US Multinational Corporations' Fight Against the New International Economic Order (NIEO)**

Since the late-nineteenth century, US corporations have been protected by legislation declaring their rights and, indeed, personhood. This paper looks at moment in the 1970s when US business leaders and diplomats worked together to assert the international dimensions of this corporate personhood. Amidst larger debates about corporate social responsibility and Nixon's New Directions in foreign aid, they drew on State Department funding to create a program for multinational corporations dubbed "Corporate Citizenship." Part of their initiatives took aim at the recent proposal before the United Nations for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) that had been put forth by a group of 77 nations from the Global South. The creation of Corporate Citizenship and broader resistance to the NIEO was, I argue, a crucial component of multinational corporations' efforts to increase their foreign direct investment (FDI) initiatives, at a time when nations from the Global South were working together to limit the pernicious effects of FDI. Ultimately, Corporate Citizenship—a concept that continues to inform management theory and be taught in business schools today—paved the way for US corporate elites to increase their foreign investments while avoiding foreign taxation: crucial foundations of the emerging era of neoliberal globalization.

*Reading week: Monday 24 February – Friday 28 February 2025*

**5 March - Ann H. Kelly (University of Oxford)**

The Humble Brick: Mosquito Vectors, Ectothermicities and Designing with Air

Mosquitoes are exquisitely temperature-sensitive. Thriving in warmer and more humid conditions, mosquitoes' ectothermic biology has made them sentinels for the disease risk in an era of climate change, prompting calls for invasive species surveillance and ever-more expansive programmes of chemoprophylactic control. This paper explores another avenue to threat mosquitoes pose, a transdisciplinary project seeking to redesign the 'humble brick' as a tool for public health. The most commonly-used building artifact in the world, bricks are cheap, durable, modular, low-maintenance, energy-efficient, and have great potential for recycle and reuse. Those properties present an opportunity for the prevention of mosquito-borne diseases—a field of global health practice focused on household protection but dominated by chemical tools that offer little by way of material improvement to local living conditions. Locally sourced, affordable, and aesthetically pleasing, the brick, in contrast, can be enfolded into residential construction processes and priorities, providing the foundations for a more expansive imaginary of healthy and climate-resilient living. More than a vector control tool, transforming the humble brick can rearticulate aspirations for social progress within an enterprise circumscribed by humanitarian commitments—a global health modern better equipped to meet the needs of our collective thermal future.

**19 March - Jean-Paul Faguet (LSE)**

Very simple models of economic inequality and how to solve it

How much economic inequality is purely random? Policy debates focus on factors like human and physical capital and technology as driving productivity differences, which in turn interact with institutional and social factors to determine inequality outcomes. But is it possible that market dynamics are innately inequality-generating? I build very simple agent-based models of exchange economies in which random processes drive high levels of inequality. Some of these are so high that the economy explodes, and GDP falls to 0. I then add simple tax, transfer, and public goods features progressively and find optimal parameters that dramatically reduce inequality. It is possible to do this with modest, realistic levels of taxation and expenditure similar to European countries today. If the mechanisms are so straightforward, why are we not using them?

**2 April - Shirin Madon (LSE)**

Cash & Voucher Assistance, Interoperability and Humanitarian Governance: Learning from the IFRC

Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) is rapidly becoming the preferred modality of delivering humanitarian assistance using digital technology. As the adoption of CVA has grown it has required increasing levels of interoperability between actors, technologies and systems beyond the humanitarian ecosystem, for example with pre-existing infrastructures of

financial service providers, mobile service providers, and government social registries. The sector is very much at the early stages of understanding how CVA affects the organisation of humanitarian governance and this research aims to contribute towards this. Drawing on literature from humanitarian studies and information systems, we study how CVA is currently being strategised and operationalised through a qualitative case study of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). We focus on how CVA implementation is both shaping and is shaped by existing accountability relations between different actors and draw some preliminary implications for the Federation and the sector.