

Round Table*

Perspectives on Corporate Power

Monday 2 March 2020

12.30-2.30 pm

Sciences Po, Room Goguel
27 rue Saint-Guillaume, 75007 Paris



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Compulsory registration on the link above

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**MaxPo Impromptu & CEE Seminar – Key Theme: The Transformations of Capitalism*

The influence of business on politics is a pervasive phenomenon in advanced industrial societies, but the mechanisms are notoriously difficult to study. How and when can we study how business power is exercised and to what effect? This roundtable brings together scholars in political science, sociology, and history, using a variety of methods and angles to analyze elite networks, campaign contributions, and public policy. They provide insights into the stakes of business politics, their engagement, and the impact of their activities.

Programme

Corporate Power and Regulation in the European Union

Sandra Eckert, Junior Professor for Politics, Goethe University Frankfurt and Fellow at the Aarhus Institute for Advanced Studies :

Sandra Eckert is Associate Professor for Politics in the European Multilevel System at Goethe University Frankfurt a. M. She currently holds a research fellowship at the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS). Sandra previously held positions at the Universities of Berlin, Darmstadt, Mannheim, Osnabrück and at the Robert Schuman Centre of the European University Institute in Florence. She received her PhD in political science from Free University Berlin. In her research, Sandra studies issues related to European integration, comparative public policy and international political economy.

In her presentation, Sandra Eckert draws on her book on corporate power and regulation (published with Palgrave Macmillan 2019). She argues that corporations utilize distinct power resources in the regulatory process in order to prevent, shape, make or revoke regulation. She emphasizes the proactive role of business and revisits policymakers' capacity to put pressure on, or delegate power to private actors. Empirical insights draw on various areas of European regulation and sectors including the chemical, paper, home appliance, ICT, and electricity industries.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the Global Power of Business

Thomas David, Professor of History, Université de Lausanne

Thomas David is Professor of International History at the University of Lausanne. He was in Fall 2019 Visiting Scholar at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University and is currently Visiting Scholar at Science Po. A co-founder of the Swiss Elite Observatory at the University of Lausanne, he has been working for the last ten years on (trans) national elite. His latest book project, which he is co-writing with Pierre Eichenberger (New School for Social Research), is on the history of the International Chamber of Commerce.

The ICC was created in 1919 in Atlantic City and since 1920 it has been based in Paris. Having originated with a group of businessmen from five countries, the Chamber's membership soon increased to include people from 50 countries by the end of the 1920s. Today, ICC's members are spread over 120 countries. The ICC's main objective is to promote free trade and the free circulation of capital. This business association attempts to pursue this objective in two ways: political advocacy and lobbying, on the one hand, and practical services to business, on the other. In his presentation, Thomas David will focus on two issues concerning business power. First, he will describe the capacity of the ICC to mobilize businessmen from different nations as a collective interest. Second, he will analyse the influence of the ICC on global governance through its interactions with International Organizations. The aim of his presentation is also to emphasize the strengths (but also the difficulties) of combining approaches from history, political science and sociology.

Political Alignment between Firms and Employees

Jan Stuckatz, Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Toulouse

Jan Stuckatz is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse (IAST) specializing in political economy and political methodology. His research combines political economy of trade and corporate influence in politics, with a special emphasis on firm-level analysis.

When do political preferences of employees align with those of their employers? Despite the importance of employment for individual's livelihoods, little attention has been given to how the workplace impacts employees' political contributions. Jan Stuckatz investigates firm-employee alignment using donations from employees and Political Action Committees (PACs) of 9,921 public companies in the US between 2003 and 2018. Overall, 16.7% of employee donations go to political candidates supported by one's employer. Leveraging variation of donations within firm-politician connections over time, he finds that employees contribute 17.4% more dollars to company-supported candidates. Moreover, employer-employee alignment is driven by both regular employees and executives and exists in almost all industries. Employees align more when companies communicate more on their political activities and tend to align on politicians that are important for one's industry and more ideologically moderate. The results have implications for representation, individual motivations for political contributions, and the role of firms in politics.

Discussion moderated by **Cornelia Woll**, Sciences Po, CEE & MaxPo