

Call for Papers

“China and the contestation of the liberal economic order”

Workshop organizers:

Tanja A. Börzel (Freie Universität Berlin)

Julia Langbein (Centre for East European and international Studies, Berlin)

China has intensified its economic engagement with countries around the world over the past two decades, even more so since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013 ([Autor et al. 2013](#), [Acemoglu et al. 2016](#), [Horn et al. 2019](#)). So far, China’s trade links and capital flows concentrate on Africa, Asia and Latin America ([Dreher et al. 2019](#); [Eichenauer et al. 2020](#)). However, China’s growing influence in Eastern Europe is increasingly acknowledged ([Matura 2019](#)). What are the implications of China’s rise to an economic and technological global power for the future of the liberal economic order? When and under what conditions will China act as a partner, a competitor or a systemic rival promoting an alternative model of economic governance (to use the terminology of a 2019 [EU strategic outlook paper](#))? What are the development effects of China’s economic engagement in terms of trade, aid and investments both abroad and domestically?

While Europe’s political debate about a realistic and pragmatic assessment of China’s role as a global power is still nascent, the scholarly debate is more advanced. Existing scholarship reveals that China’s contestation of the liberal economic order varies ([Weinhart and ten Brink 2019](#)). The effect of China’s engagement on economic development is equally differential ([Dreher et al 2020](#)).

Against this background the workshop invites scholars from different disciplines, approaches and backgrounds to submit contributions (ranging from memos to full-fledged papers) that deal with the following themes and sets of questions:

1) **China’s contestation of the liberal economic order:**

- Under what conditions does China contest which aspects of the liberal economic order? Do we see variation in contestation across countries, economic sectors or fields of China’s engagement (e.g. trade vs infrastructure projects)? How can we account for (variation in) contestation in terms of concepts and methods?
- To what extent does China promote an (attractive) alternative model of economic governance when engaging with less developed economies?
- How does China’s economic engagement impact upon international, regional or bilateral trade negotiations, e.g. between the EU and other countries?

2) **Development effects of China’s economic engagement:**

- How does China’s economic engagement shape the policy space for development of less developed economies?
- How does China’s economic engagement in terms of trade, aid and investments affect not only economic growth but also integration in global value chains and economic governance in recipient/ partner countries?
- Does China’s investment strategy change the way the EU and other Western actors approach investments in infrastructure, economic growth and development more general?
- How sustainable is China’s approach to overseas lending for its own development trajectory?

Contributions focusing on China's engagement in less-researched regions, including Eastern Europe, Eurasia and the MENA region, are particularly welcome! So are comparisons between China and the EU and other liberal actors.

The workshop will take place online on 3 and 4 June 2021. Please submit your memo/paper abstracts (max. 500 words) by 8 February 2021 to Julia.Langbein@zois-berlin.de

We will notify you about the acceptance of your proposal by 15 February 2021.