

SPERI Presents... The global impact of China's technological leadership and offshoring: Towards a second China shock?

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Scholars in International Political Economy (IPE) have long grappled with the implications of globalisation, but the reconfiguration of production networks led by China poses a fresh set of theoretical and empirical challenges. The shift from China as the 'world's factory' to China as a leader in green and hi-tech supply chains, offshoring production abroad, unsettles existing paradigms of development, dependency, and power in the global economy. As China exports its production models abroad, from electric vehicles and batteries to renewable energy and digital infrastructure, scholars and policymakers alike must rethink the frameworks they use to study global production from the systemic to the everyday levels.

This roundtable asks whether the discipline of IPE is ready for these transformations by focusing on three key questions:

What new directions in theory and method are needed to analyse China's offshoring and leadership in hi-tech and green industries?

How do host states, firms, and communities negotiate and contest China-led supply chains, and what does this reveal about agency in the Global South?

How do these dynamics challenge established debates on economic statecraft, global value chains, and green capitalism in IPE?

By bringing together scholars of Chinese political economy, global value chains, and critical IPE, the roundtable will situate China's transformations in production networks as a test for the discipline's capacity to engage with what comes next.

The panel advances BISA IPEG's debates by rethinking how China's evolving role as both a leading and offshoring power challenges Eurocentric accounts of globalisation, while foregrounding agency in the Global Majority and the everyday experiences of workers, migrants, and local communities. In doing so, it follows this year's conference aims to offer "new thinking" and "new directions" for International Studies to engage with future challenges.

The roundtable will be recorded as a live episode of SPERI Presents..., the podcast of the Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute, which will boost its public engagement, bridging academic debates with broader audiences in policy, media, and civil society.

Track Classification: International Political Economy Working Group