

Major ESRC research grant award: 'Rising Powers, Labour Standards and the Governance of Global Production Networks'

Colleagues in the Capturing the Gains Network will be pleased to know that the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC-UK) has awarded a highly competitive major grant to Dr Khalid Nadvi, School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester. The grant, part of the ESRC's research programme on the 'Rising Powers', is titled 'Rising Powers, Labour Standards and the Governance of Global Production Networks'. The grant brings together a number of colleagues who have been involved on the CtG agenda (including Khalid Nadvi and Peter Knorringa) and takes forward a critical area of interest for the CtG programme – namely the ways in which the Rising Powers challenge the governance of labour standards and with what consequences. The grant also builds on an earlier and extremely successful network grant from the ESRC (RES-075-25-0028, 2010-2011) to Dr Nadvi to set up the 'Rising Powers and Global Standards Research Network' (see www.risingpowers.net). The new grant will start in April 2013 and run for three years. It has a total value of £684,000 and will have an additional grant for linked ESRC PhD studentship. The project brings together a well-established and prominent group of multi-disciplinary international researchers as co-Investigators including Professor Rudolf Sinkovics (Manchester Business School) and Professor Peter Knorringa (Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University, Netherlands) as well as academics and policy researchers from rising power states (including Professor Keshab Das, Gujarat Institute of Development Research, India; Dr Chris Chan, City University, Hong Kong, China; Professor Afonso Fleury, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil; and Dr Mansueto Almeida, Institute for Applied Economic Research, Brasilia, Brazil).

The project will study how China, India and Brazil are challenging existing forms of global economic governance and power. In particular, it will explore whether, and how, these Rising Powers change the 'rules of the game' and with what consequences by focusing on a key agenda in global trade relations - labour and social standards. Meeting such standards is increasingly important in the world of global production. However, with the growth of manufacturing firms and middle class consumers from the Rising Powers there is a fear of a 'race to the bottom' with declining labour standards and diminishing concerns with working conditions. This will be examined through research in Brazil, China, India, the UK and the EU. Using the analytical framework of global production networks, the international and multi-disciplinary research team will study how Rising Powers firms engage with labour and social standards in their globalised production arrangements; how civil society in these countries shape local attitudes and norms on working conditions; how Rising Power governments define and implement labour standards and interact in global institutions where such standards are formulated; and, finally, consider the implications for other developing countries, for firms and consumers in UK and the EU, and for the future governance of globalised production arrangements.

For further details, contact Dr Khalid Nadvi (khalid.nadvi@manchester.ac.uk); Professor Rudolf Sinkovics (rudolf.sinkovics@mbs.ac.uk); Professor Peter Knorringa (knorringa@iss.nl) as well as the Rising Powers website (www.risingpowers.net).