

2016 IR Honors Conference

**4:00 Panel 1: International Interactions Emergent From The Local Field:
Rethinking Soft Power and South-South Migration**

How are international interactions mechanized at a local level?
How do local factors affect the outcome of transnational perspectives?
What are the prospects of the Sino-Latin American interaction?

**5:00 Panel 2: Directions of Causality Between State Power Projections and
Economic Growth: Macro- and Micro-Political Perspectives**

What is the relationship between interstate power dynamics
and economic growth?
To what extent does hegemony correlate with global economic trends?
Do we need to re-conceptualize the firm in the international
political economy?

Moderator **Grace Alzaibak**
Translator **Oriana Van Praag**



2016 Honors Candidates

PANEL I

Weiwei Liu
Aida Patricia Palma Carpio

PANEL II

Kevin Netaniel Dhali
James Janison

International Relations Program 2016 Honors Conference

Thursday, May 5, 2016

4:00-6:00 p.m.

Reception to follow.

Joukowsky Forum
Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs
111 Thayer Street
Providence, RI

Watch livestream:

<https://mediacapture.brown.edu:8443/ess/echo/presentation/32cc9675-64e8-41b4-8160-282fbdd357a5>

Soft Power Status in Context: Explaining Cross-National Variations in Chinese Soft Power in Latin America

Weiwei Liu

What explains variation in soft power status—the ability to shape ideas without force or coercion? While millions of dollars across the globe are funneled into soft power strategies, we know little about their effectiveness. Following Joseph Nye’s theory, scholarship claims that soft-power is determined by factors on the power-holder side—predominately the promotion of culture. However, this work overlooks the relational nature of soft power and local context of the target population. Combining literature on soft power with media theory on framing and priming, this thesis seeks to understand the influence of local media on soft power. Through content analysis of 1,566 newspaper articles from 2005-2013 in Argentina, Chile, and Peru—countries with differing views on China—I compare the frequency, issue areas, and attitudes in news coverage to understand the image of China constructed by local media. By observing longitudinal and cross-national correlations between the image of China and public opinion collected by Latinobarómetro, I find that local media coverage serves as a filter, representing certain issue areas over others, and identify economics as the most influential factor on soft power status. Soft power scholars and strategists should deemphasize universal cultural promotion and consider local context. (Advisors: Claudia Elliott, Andrew Schrank)

Chinese “Paisanos” in Guadalajara, Mexico: Rethinking South-South Migration Flows

Aida Patricia Palma Carpio

What are the processes and mechanisms that initiate, perpetuate, and give continuity to long-distance South-South migration flows? Scholarship of international migration has historically emphasized the study of South-North Migration. While South-South Migration is not new, research over the past decade finds that it consists primarily of back-and-forth seasonal labor and transit route migration occurring predominantly at an intra-regional level. However, these studies do not account for newer South-South Migration flows between countries that are geographically distanced. I argue that long-distance South-South Migration is best understood as long-term and economically driven migration. Migrants undergo high initial costs expecting to find opportunities of capital accumulation and upward mobility in the receiving society. Based on nearly three months of ethnographic research in 2015, I evaluate the case of Chinese restaurant and cultural shop sector immigrants in Guadalajara, Mexico. I find that social connections are fundamental to long-distance South-South movements, that low-skill international migrants find opportunities in urban pockets of development in the Global South, and that long-distances encourage family immigration—which promotes long-term settlement in the receiving society. Thus, long-distance South-South Migration exhibits similar traits to South-North Migration, and these similarities display beginnings of a bottom-up globalization processes in the Global South.

(Advisors: Matthew Gutmann, David Lindstrom)

Rethinking Security Policies: Determining Aggressiveness Through Economic Preponderance and Strategic Partnerships—the Case of China

Kevin Netaniel Dhali

What factors determine a country’s security policies? The realist camp proposes the Hegemonic Stability Theory, the Power Transition Theory, and the Rogue State Doctrine to claim rival states as determinants of security policies. Liberal internationalism, meanwhile, postulates partnership and cooperation as determinants of security policies. Moving beyond this general insight, I posit a more comprehensive framework that correlates better with the modern notion of security. My framework recognizes both the self-reliance and strategic cooperation facets of security, while acknowledging the current global trend for economic advancements through international trading systems. Hence, my framework combines a country’s economic preponderance with strategic partnerships to serve as determinants of security policies. Examining the cases of China-Indonesia and China-Iran relations, I conduct longitudinal analyses of both cases using process tracing and path dependency approaches before applying the convergence theory to test my hypothesis. I analyze how China’s economic preponderance incentivizes the formation of strategic partnerships before eventually determining security policies. Using the two cases, my framework also incorporates partnerships with different typologies of nation’s power status. Given that China is not the only country currently enjoying exponential economic growths, this thesis has broader implications for both China’s rise and other economically preponderant countries post-globalization.

(Advisors: Lyle Goldstein, Nicholas Miller)

Examining the International Political Economy of the Firm: The Dynamics of State Aggression in Georgian-Russian Trade 1996-2014

James Janison

How does state aggression influence a firm’s export decision? Existing theory of interstate peace as a condition for trade argues that state aggression—state acts of hostile coercion such as invasion or embargo—prompts uncertainty among market actors, one result of which is export deterrence. Moving beyond this general insight, I posit a more nuanced political economy of the firm in which a fluid dynamic between idiosyncratic political outlook and market factors determines a firm’s proclivity to avoid risk, shaping its export decisions under state aggression. My framework adapts the concept of risk-aversion as posited by behavioral economics, integrating risk consideration with other export factors from international trade theory. Taking the 2006 Russian embargo on Georgian agricultural goods as a critical juncture of state aggression, this framework incorporates both process-tracing of firm-level interview data and differences-in-differences economic modeling to understand how Georgian firms altered their export practices in response to state aggression. This mixed methods approach allows future research to systematize dynamics between firm-level political outlook and market factors, which purely quantitative trade approaches cannot do. Because Georgia is not unique in that Russia targets its economy for political leverage, this thesis also has broader implications for Post-Soviet political economy.

(Advisors: John Friedman, Maxim Boycko)