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The politics of public relations, reputation management and digital influence in the Global South

Workshop, Oxford, 7-8 June 2023

Participants: Amogh Dhar Sharma, Claire Elder, Corentin Cohen, Hugo Souza de Cursi, John Heathershaw, Kunle Ogedengbe, Piergiorgio Bruno, Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, Rui Verde, Tena Prelec, Timor Sharan, Tom Mayne.

Wednesday 7 June

Venue: Seminars rooms 1 and 2, Oxford Martin School, 34 Broad St, Oxford OX1 3BD

13:30 Welcome and introductions and presentation of the workshop Ricardo & Corentin

13:40 Session 1: Creating markets and negotiating global acceptability?

What are the strategies of influence professionals to engage, negotiate and take benefit of relationships with state ? How do they legitimise their businesses and their services?

- ‘You Can’t Buy Our Services’: India’s Political Consultants and Their Worldview, Amogh Dhar Sharman
- Public Relations and imperialism: a study of the United Fruit Company in Guatemala, 1942-1954, Hugo de Souza Cursi
- Public Relations Services and State Regulation in Nigeria, Kunle Ogedengbe

15:20 Coffee break

15:40 Session 2: Influence and PR strategies for elites and kleptocrats.

What are the strategies of elites and kleptocrats to shape their image abroad and at home? How do they define and measure success?

- Two PR UK companies in the defence of Isabel dos Santos: strategies, efficiency and problems, Rui Verde
- Building Corrupt Client States and Politics of Public Management: The Case of Post-2001 Afghanistan, Timor Sharan
- An anatomy of the academic SLAPP: comparing African and Eurasian cases of lawfare in the United Kingdom, John Heathershaw, Claire Elder, Tena Prelec

19:00 Diner

Venue: Magdalen Arms, 243 Iffley Rd, Oxford OX4 1SJ

Thursday 8 June

Venue: Dorfman room, St Peter's College, New Inn Hall St, Oxford OX1 2DL

9:00 Session 3: The changing political economy of influence

How do financialisation, capital flows and access to the offshore world affect service provision?

- Financiarisation, globalisation and integrated communications: new strategies and ideology of the European advertising community (1974-1990), Piergiorgio Bruno
- Information Manipulation and Organised Crime: Examining the Nexus, Tena Prelec
- Management consultants as agents of influence? Evidence from South Africa, Corentin Cohen

10:40 Coffee

11:00 Round up on concepts, methods, questions and next steps

12:00 End of workshop & informal lunch at St Peter's