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## Introduction: Capitalism and Global Governance in Business History

Capitalism and global governance became inextricably linked when the turmoil of the twentieth century drove the development of institutional mechanisms beyond nation states to manage peace after world wars, address the fallout of financial and economic crises, reorganize political and trade relations after the end of empire, mitigate inequality, and respond to environmental degradation.<sup>1</sup> In the creation of international organizations, the economic and social system of capitalism found reinforcement as much as regulation. As a result, these two predominant forces and their agents relate through simultaneous concert and conflict. This dialectic contributed to the protracted crises of recent decades, demanding a critical analysis of the futures of capitalism and governance on a global scale, especially as the hyper-globalization and global interconnectedness of the twentieth century gives way to a new era of de-globalization and resurgent nationalism.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In the first issue of the *Global Governance* journal published in 1995, Lawrence Finkelstein explained that the concept of governance allows us “to penetrate and understand the government-like events that occur in the world of states even in the absence of government.” Governance is particularly helpful in grasping the functioning of international systems, which, he argued, “notoriously lack hierarchy and government.” While the concept of global governance has been criticized for its fuzziness and its ambiguity, such characteristics are also precisely at the core of what makes governance so useful, allowing to include a variety of power relations and actors in the narrative, including non-state actors such as businesspeople. See: Lawrence S. Finkelstein, “What Is Global Governance?,” *Global Governance* 1, no. 1 (1995): 367–368.

<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of the latest wave of deglobalization, see: Geoffrey Jones and Valeria Giacomini, “Deglobalization and Alternative Futures,” Harvard Business School Technical Note 322-088, Jan. 2022 (Revised March 2022). For perspectives on nationalism in the past and present, see: Cemil Aydin, Grace Ballor, Sebastian Conrad, Frederick Cooper,

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This special issue examines the historical connectedness of capitalism and global governance and aims to lay a foundation for further research on their relationship and its impacts on human society and the environment. As separate topics of study, capitalism and global governance have each attracted considerable attention, but historical research connecting the two has only recently gained momentum. Scholars working in this area have begun to examine international organizations through the lens of capitalism, analyze the institutional development of global economic governance, and question the ability of global regulations to stand up to multinational corporations.<sup>3</sup> This issue builds on such scholarship by studying the complex relationship of capitalism and global governance through the lens of business in three dimensions: historically, globally, and granularly. A historical approach makes possible an examination of the entanglements of capitalism and global governance beyond nation states, since, given its inherent instability, capitalism's reproduction has required it to be embedded within a variety of forms and levels of governance over time.<sup>4</sup> A global analysis reflects the scale of even the largest corporations and most international institutions.<sup>5</sup> And a focus on businesses as actors within the structures of capitalism and global governance opens the so-called "black boxes" of firms, their behaviors in different business environments, and the ways they relate to the international regulators, policymakers, institutions, and organizations that constitute "world order."<sup>6</sup>

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Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz, Richard Drayton, Michael Goebel, Pieter M. Judson, Sandrine Kott, Nicola Miller, Aviel Roshwald, Glenda Sluga, and Lydia Walker, "Rethinking Nationalism," *The American Historical Review* 127, no. 1, (2022): 311–371.

<sup>3</sup>On capitalist international organizations, see the extensive work of Thomas David and Pierre Eichenberger on the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), including: "A World Parliament of Business? The International Chamber of Commerce and Its Presidents in the Twentieth Century," *Business History* 65, no. 2 (2023): 260–283. See also the work of Matthias Schmelzer, who has historicized the capitalist dynamics of the OECD in *The Hegemony of Growth: The OECD and the Making of the Economic Growth Paradigm* (Cambridge, UK, 2016). For an interpretation of European cooperation through the lens of capitalism, see: Aurelie Andry, Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol, Haakon A. Ikonomou, and Quentin Jouan, "Rethinking European Integration in Light of Capitalism: The Case of the Long 1970s," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 26, no. 4 (2019): 553–572. On the development of global economic governance, see, for example: Jamie Martin, *The Meddlers: Sovereignty, Empire, and the Birth of Global Economic Governance* (Cambridge, MA, 2022). In their recent HBS Case, Geoffrey Jones and Mona Rahmani offered a wide-ranging critique of global governance: "In Search of Global Regulation," Harvard Business School Case No. 9-822-122 (2022).

<sup>4</sup>Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation Matérielle, Économie, et Capitalisme, Tome 2* (New York, 1982), 443; Karl Polanyi. *The Great Transformation* (New York, 1944).

<sup>5</sup>Global historians have engaged in a lively debate about the merits of thinking globally. See: Richard Drayton and David Motadel, "Discussion: The Futures of Global History," *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 1 (2018): 1–21.

<sup>6</sup>Walter Friedman, "Recent Trends in Business History Research: Capitalism, Democracy, and Innovation," *Enterprise & Society* 18, no. 4 (2017): 753.

As this issue demonstrates, business history offers a particularly rich set of approaches for studying the relationship between capitalism and global governance. Histories of capitalism, which gained traction during the labor movements of the 1960s and crises of the 1970s before being eclipsed by the growth paradigm of the late twentieth century, were reinvigorated in the wake of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. Since then, “new histories of capitalism” have provided valuable critical analysis of the economic and social system and its diverse origins and central features.<sup>7</sup> Recent histories of capitalism have also analyzed capitalism’s embeddedness within culture, law, politics, and social relations, and its negative contributions to inequality and environmental degradation.<sup>8</sup> Although historians of capitalism seldom study individual businesses, firms have, as Walter Friedman argues, played a significant role in the history they describe, thus demanding business historical analysis.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, international and institutional histories have examined the emergence of transnational governance and the creation of supranational organizations.<sup>10</sup> But, as recent scholarship has shown, firms and business associations have equally contributed to the making of international order by motivating collective regulation and shaping international institutions. Moreover, an international “revolving door” has enabled business elites to become global governance elites, calling for business historical studies of the entanglement of capitalism and global governance.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Recent scholarship has traced the widespread origins of capitalism from thirteenth-century Italy and early modern Asia to the transition from feudalism to industry in Britain, the transatlantic slave trade to FoxConn and Silicon Valley. See: Francesca Trivellato, *The Promise and Peril of Credit: What a Forgotten Legend about Jews and Finance Tells Us about the Makings of European Commercial Society* (Princeton, 2019); Sophus Reinert and Robert Fredona, “Merchants and the Origins of Capitalism,” in *The Routledge Companion to the Makers of Global Business*, ed. Teresa da Silva Lopes, Christina Lubinski, and Heidi Tworek (London, 2018); Giorgio Riello, ERC Project CAPASIA: *The Asian Origins of Global Capitalism: The European Factories of the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*; Caitlin Rosenthal, *Accounting for Slavery: Masters and Management* (Cambridge, MA, 2018); Margaret Pearson, Meg Rithmire, and Kellee Tsai, “Party-State Capitalism in China,” *Current History* 120, no. 827 (2021): 207-213.

<sup>8</sup>Wolfgang Streeck, “How to Study Contemporary Capitalism?,” *European Journal of Sociology/Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 53, no. 1 (2012): 3. Sven Beckert and Christine Desan founded a center for this field of study at Harvard University and have published key texts in this burgeoning field, including, *American Capitalism: New Histories* (New York, 2019). For a critical survey of the history of capitalism approach, see: Eric Hilt, “Economic History, Historical Analysis, and the ‘New History of Capitalism,’” *The Journal of Economic History* 77, no. 2 (2017): 511-536.

<sup>9</sup>Friedman, “Recent Trends in Business History Research,” 753.

<sup>10</sup>Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, eds. *Internationalisms: A Twentieth Century History* (Cambridge, UK, 2017). Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York, 2012).

<sup>11</sup>Glenda Sluga, “Business Transnationalism, Looking from the Outside In,” *Business History* 65, no. 2 (17 Feb. 2023): 382-388; Sandrine Kott, *Organiser le monde: Une autre*

While business historians have traditionally focused on corporate strategies and organizational forms and have only rarely studied the role of business in the capitalist system and the development of global governance frameworks, recent appeals have called for scholars in the field to investigate “business power,” especially in the international arena.<sup>12</sup> To the existing literature on business-government relations at the national level, business historians have contributed scholarship on firms and their interactions with institutions of transnational governance and supranational organizations such as the European Economic Community (EEC) and European Union (EU).<sup>13</sup> Moreover, scholarship on international cartels, philanthropic organizations, and international business interest organizations have also illustrated the importance of private forms of global governance across time and space.<sup>14</sup> Even Alfred Chandler, whose seminal contributions to business history focused on managers and corporate structures, underlined the need to study how

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*histoire de la guerre froide* (Paris, 2021); Wolfram Kaiser and Jan-Henrik Meyer, eds., *Societal Actors in European Integration: Polity-Building and Policy-Making 1958-1992* (Basingstoke, 2013).

<sup>12</sup>Neil Rollings, “The Vast and Unsolved Enigma of Power: Business History and Business Power,” *Enterprise & Society* 22, no. 4 (2021): 893–920; Philippe Lefebvre, “Penser l’entreprise comme acteur politique,” *Entreprises et histoire* 104, no. 3 (2021): 5–18; Alexia Blin, “L’entreprise, un objet d’histoire politique? Propositions et questionnements à partir du cas des États-Unis,” *Histoire Politique. Revue du Centre d’histoire de Sciences Po*, no. 39 (2019); Marieke Louis and Yohann Morival, “Au-delà de l’unité. Penser les conflits dans l’étude des acteurs économiques privés transnationaux,” *Critique internationale* 97, no. 4 (2022): 9–22; Pierre Eichenberger, Neil Rollings, and Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl, “The Brokers of Globalization: Towards a History of Business Associations in the International Arena,” *Business History* 65, no. 2 (2023): 217–234.

<sup>13</sup>Niall G. MacKenzie, Andrew Perchard, Christopher Miller, and Neil Forbes, “Business-Government Relations and National Economic Models: A Review and Future Research Directions in Varieties of Capitalism and Beyond,” *Business History* 63, no. 8 (2021): 1239–1252; Neil Rollings, *British Business in the Formative Years of European Integration, 1945-1973* (New York, 2008); Grace Ballor, “Agents of Integration: Multinational Firms and the European Union,” *Enterprise & Society* 21, no. 4 (2020): 886–892.

<sup>14</sup>For a survey, see Mairi Maclean, Charles Harvey, Ruomei Yang, and Frank Mueller, “Elite Philanthropy in the United States and United Kingdom in the New Age of Inequalities,” *International Journal of Management Reviews* 23, no. 3 (2021): 330–352; Eleanor Shaw, Jillian Gordon, Charles Harvey, and Mairi Maclean, “Exploring Contemporary Entrepreneurial Philanthropy,” *International Small Business Journal* 31, no. 5 (2013): 580–599. On transnational business interest organizations, see: Neil Rollings and Matthias Kipping, “Private Transnational Governance in the Heyday of the Nation-State: The Council of European Industrial Federations (CEIF),” *The Economic History Review* 61, no. 2 (2008): 409–431; Neil Rollings, “The Development of Transnational Business Associations during the Twentieth Century,” *Business History* (2021): 1–25; Thomas David and Pierre Eichenberger, “A World Parliament of Business? The International Chamber of Commerce and Its Presidents in the Twentieth Century,” *Business History* (2022): 1–24. On private governance, see: Marco Bertilorenzi, “The International Aluminum Industry during the 1930s: Between International Cartel Governance and National Strategic Policies,” *Entreprises et histoire* 76, no. 3 (2014): 20–40; Martin Shanahan and Susanna Fellman, eds., *A History of Business Cartels: International Politics, National Policies and Anti-Competitive Behaviour* (New York, 2022).

multinationals as “Leviathans” exert material influence on the global economy and raise global governance issues.<sup>15</sup> Because of their attention to capital and profit, organization and structure, business and economic historians are uniquely positioned to examine how global governance frameworks shaped and were, in turn, shaped by uses of capital and profit-making strategies.<sup>16</sup> Recent developments in the field demonstrate momentum for business historians to engage further with the topic of global governance and to enrich their work through collaborations with scholars in other relevant fields. Such “post-disciplinary” scholarship promises not to reinforce boundaries between fields, “but rather to question those boundaries and through this questioning, encourage innovation and creativity.”<sup>17</sup>

The contributions to this special issue demonstrate the value of writing the entangled history of capitalism and global governance through a business historical lens. The four research articles examine the ways business actors have influenced, subverted, and evaded efforts to govern the global economy, international development, and the environment. In their article, Ann-Kristin Bergquist and Thomas David trace the invention of “sustainable development” back to the International Chamber of Commerce. Véronique Dimier and Sarah Stockwell expose the British government’s capitalist motivations in international development aid after decolonization. Vanessa Ogle chronicles international efforts to hold multinational corporations accountable for tax avoidance. And Grace Ballor uncovers the role of car companies in the development of stricter European car emissions standards. This special issue also includes scholarship presented in alternative formats. In his reflection essay, Rawi Abdelal highlights the centrality of business to the relationship of capitalism and international organizations from the perspective of political economy. Four leading scholars of capitalism and global governance – Patricia Clavin, Nicolas Péronne, Neil Rollings, and Quinn Slobodian – also contributed to a roundtable discussion on the past, present, and future of scholarship in this area and the value of a business historical approach. Insights from their respective areas of expertise, along with commissioned review essays of recent scholarship, lay a foundation on which historians can continue to examine the ways

<sup>15</sup> Alfred D. Chandler and Bruce Mazlish, eds., *Leviathans: Multinational Corporations and the New Global History* (Cambridge, MA, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Mary O’Sullivan, “The Intelligent Woman’s Guide to Capitalism,” *Enterprise & Society* 19, no. 4 (2018): 751–802; Jonathan Levy, “Capital as Process and the History of Capitalism,” *Business History Review* 91, no. 3 (2017): 483–510.

<sup>17</sup> Marc Flandreau, “Border Crossing,” *Capitalism: A Journal of History and Economics* 1, no. 1 (2019): 1–9.

international organizations have attempted to regulate and, in turn, been captured by business interests.

The following pages provide a historiographical survey of the ways capitalism and its actors – including entrepreneurs and managers, firms and business associations – have interacted with international organizations and global governance frameworks. This introductory text contextualizes the interventions of the issue authors and highlights how the research articles and reflection pieces gathered in this special issue contribute to our understanding of specific aspects of those interactions.

### Governing Global Infrastructures and Integrating Markets

Several nineteenth century international organizations provided critical basic infrastructures that facilitated the global expansion of firms, such as the International Telegraph Union (1865), often remembered as the first standards international organization, the General Postal Union established (1874), and the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (1875). Historians have illustrated the triple feedback loops between the commercialization of technological innovations, the global governance systems that enabled new technologies to spread widely, and the subsequent development of related businesses to bring goods with those technologies to market.<sup>18</sup> For instance, Heidi Tworek showed that once global communications systems were established, thanks to submarine telegraphy and international conventions, news agencies could play a central role in disseminating news to newspapers, positioning them equally as profit-seeking businesses and strategic resources for governments in the battle of ideas.<sup>19</sup> As this example suggests, technological and governance spillover effects are important objects of investigation since they did not only produce globalization, but were – and still are – at the roots of counter-movements against globalization.

In the wake of nineteenth century conventions to establish global infrastructures and in the context of the wars and market disruptions of the early twentieth century, several international organizations were created with the primary purpose of facilitating financial flows, supporting international trade, and stabilizing societies on capitalist

<sup>18</sup>Brad DeLong's latest book historicizes the tandem evolutions of innovation and globalization, both driven by corporations. See: J. Bradford DeLong, *Slouching Towards Utopia: An Economic History of the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2022).

<sup>19</sup>Heidi Tworek, "Magic Connections: German News Agencies and Global News Networks, 1905–1945," *Enterprise & Society* 15, no. 4 (2014): 673–674; Heidi Tworek, *News from Germany: The Competition to Control World Communications, 1900–1945* (Cambridge, MA, 2019).

premises.<sup>20</sup> This is especially true for the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations' Economic Commissions, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Bank of International Settlements (BIS), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank. Out of the same postwar environment in which these global organizations were developed came a dizzying number of regional European organizations, including the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and EEC, designed to ensure peace and stability on the continent through economic means.<sup>21</sup> Whether universal or supranational, such organizations critically shaped the environment in which businesses operate.<sup>22</sup> In some cases, they also offered expanded forums for business influence. As Neil Rollings emphasizes in his contribution to the roundtable contained in this issue, business is ubiquitous and interdependence is a key concept in understanding the evolution and integration of markets.

In theory, market integration should enable businesses to reorganize and rationalize their production. But a business history perspective offers the potential to discuss such assumptions in concrete terms and to consider the importance of non-market elements. The example of Unilever in the mid-twentieth century shows how organizational path-dependency prevailed when cultural differences and labor relations perpetuated fragmentation along national lines. Because Unilever's directory was concerned with the autonomy of its subsidiaries, adapting its products to local tastes, and preserving jobs, the company was slow to take advantage of European market integration.<sup>23</sup> This example underscores the need to examine business responses to international

<sup>20</sup> Andry, Murlon-Druol, Ikonou, and Jouan, "Rethinking European Integration," 557.

<sup>21</sup> Kiran Klaus Patel historicized these organizations in his: *Project Europe: A History* (Cambridge, UK, 2020). Quinn Slobodian has drawn attention to the tensions between those who supported global market integration and the architects of regional European economic cooperation. See Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA, 2018), Chapter 6. It is important to note that European cooperation deepened and took on new political and social dimensions over time. Its most prominent organizations (like the European Union) remained distinctly regional, differentiating "transnational" governance from "global" governance, even if the world often adopts European norms. For more on this, see Anu Bradford, *The Brussels Effect: How the European Union Rules the World* (Oxford, 2020).

<sup>22</sup> On the varieties of impacts, see for instance: Jonathan Zeitlin, ed., *Extending Experimentalist Governance? The European Union and Transnational Regulation* (Oxford, 2017).

<sup>23</sup> Geoffrey Jones and Peter Miskell, "European Integration and Corporate Restructuring: The Strategy of Unilever 1957-1990," *The Economic History Review* 58, no. 1 (2005): 113-139.

efforts to integrate markets and financial systems both as a question of economic efficiency, and also in the context of broader capitalist dynamics such as uneven economic development, consumption patterns, and competition between different national labor markets and welfare systems.

Markets have long been integrated through the creation of intersecting bilateral, regional, and global institutions. Importantly, regional market integration can erect barriers for extra-regional business as much as it can remove barriers for those inside. Moreover, market integration is rarely limited to the removal of customs duties; it often extends to the regulation of non-tariff barriers and the harmonization of economic, environmental, and social standards. Business historians have investigated the impact of such market integration initiatives on firms, as well as the ways firms have shaped the creation of international rules and norms.<sup>24</sup> In the case of the EEC and EU, vehicle standards were equally conceived as a way to foster innovation in Europe and as a protectionist device, granting time to European manufacturers to cope with Japanese competition.<sup>25</sup> In this vein, Grace Ballor's contribution in the special issue demonstrates how the strengthening of emissions regulation within the EEC has to be understood in the context of the 1992 Program to complete the Single Market. Ballor indeed describes the introduction of more stringent standards as a form of "liberal environmentalism," which resulted primarily from an alignment of interests between manufacturers and EEC policymakers, who wished to avoid market fragmentation while promoting economies of scale and the competitiveness of European industry.<sup>26</sup> While business groups were usually reluctant to accept environmental regulation, European carmakers envisioned the potential of standard harmonization at the EEC level in providing them with a comparative advantage relative to their competitors from other regions. Recognizing the ambivalence of business perspectives on regional

<sup>24</sup>On early discussion for European integration, see: Paul Turberg, "Cooperation with employers' organizations: Business relations behind the scenes of the Elysée Treaty (1961-1964)," *Relations internationales* 147, no. 3 (2020): 91-104.

<sup>25</sup>Grace Ballor, "Liberalisation or protectionism for the single market? European automakers and Japanese competition, 1985-1999," *Business History* 65, no. 2 (2023): 302-328; Samuel Klebaner and Sigfrido Ramirez Pérez, "Managing Technical Changes from the Scales of Legal Regulation: German Clean Cars against the European Pollutant Emissions Regulations in the 1980s," *Management & Organizational History* 14, (2019): 1-27; Samuel Klebaner, *Normes environnementales européennes et stratégies des constructeurs automobiles : Un jeu coopératif aux résultats ambigus* (Paris, 2020); Alice Milor, "Whose Business Is Road Safety?: From a Fragmented to an Integrated Approach in France and Europe (1972-1998)," *Transfers* 9, no. 3 (2019): 41-60.

<sup>26</sup>Grace Ballor, "Liberal Environmentalism: The Public-Private Production of European Emissions Standards," *Business History Review*, 97, no. 3 (Autumn 2023): 575-601.

market harmonization can put business historians in fruitful conversation with scholarship on alternative visions for the EEC, which was, as Laurent Warlouzet noted, a contested terrain between social, neo-mercantilist, and neoliberal views.<sup>27</sup> Finally, as Grace Ballor and Alexis Drach have each documented in the case of European integration, when global governance proved challenging to implement or did not unfold in the ways firms had hoped it would, businesses could act as “agents of integration” and develop “alternative forms of integration,” and in doing so, shape capitalist dynamics for years to come.<sup>28</sup>

### Promoting Trade and Foreign Direct Investments

In addition to fostering financial and trade integration, global governance organizations have also facilitated the expansion of business through the development of global standards and international intellectual property rights regimes.<sup>29</sup> Moreover they have supported export guarantees, created instruments of trade finance, and brokered bilateral and multilateral investment protection treaties as well as double taxation agreements.<sup>30</sup> Understanding how firms promoted and

<sup>27</sup> Laurent Warlouzet, *Governing Europe in a Globalizing World: Neoliberalism and Its Alternatives Following the 1973 Oil Crisis* (London, 2018); Laurent Warlouzet, “The European Commission Facing Crisis: Social, Neo-Mercantilist and Market-Oriented Approaches, 1967–1985,” *European Review of History* 26, no. 4 (2019): 703–722. For competing visions and conflicts on European integration, see also: Michel Dumoulin, René Giraud, and Gilbert Trausch, eds., *L'Europe du patronat: de la guerre froide aux années soixante* (Berne, 1993); Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl, “The Transatlantic Business Community Faced with US Direct Investment in Western Europe, 1958–1968,” *Business History* 58, no. 6 (2016): 880–902; Benjamin Bürbaumer, “TNC Competitiveness in the Formation of the Single Market: The Role of European Business Revisited,” *New Political Economy* 26, no. 4 (2020): 1–15; Sigfrido M. Ramírez Pérez, “Crises and Transformations of European Integration: European Business Circles during the Long 1970s,” *European Review of History* 26, no. 4 (2019): 618–635; Aurélie Dianara Andry, *Social Europe, the Road Not Taken: The Left and European Integration in the Long 1970s* (Oxford, 2022).

<sup>28</sup> Ballor, “Agents of Integration”; Alexis Drach, “An Early Form of European Champions? Banking Clubs between European Integration and Global Banking (1960s–1990s),” *Business History* (2022): 1–24. See also Christos Tsakas, *Post-War Greco-German Relations, 1953–1981: Economic Development, Business Interests and European Integration* (Cham, 2022).

<sup>29</sup> On international standardization, see JoAnne Yates and Craig N. Murphy, “Introduction: Standards and the Global Economy,” *Business History Review* 96, no. 1 (2022): 3–15. On intellectual property rights see: Susan K. Sell, *Private Power, Public Law: The Globalization of Intellectual Property Rights* (Cambridge, UK, 2003); Bernardita Escobar-Andrae, “North-South Agreements on Trade and Intellectual Property beyond TRIPS: An Analysis of US Bilateral Agreements in Comparative Perspective,” *JIPR* 16, no. 6 (2011): 477–499.

<sup>30</sup> Jamieson Myles has written on trade financing in *Steering the Wheels of Commerce: State and Enterprise in International Trade Finance, 1914–1929* (Geneva, 2021). On the global governance of international investment, see Nicolás Perrone, *Investment Treaties and the Legal Imagination: How Foreign Investors Play by Their Own Rules* (Oxford, 2021);

used these agreements is crucial, since such arrangements, along with the manipulation of transfer prices, have enabled tax avoidance by multinationals. Double taxation agreements indeed allowed firms to repatriate foreign profits to tax havens (either by exacting a modest first tariff, or without being taxed at all), giving rise to what financial historian Christophe Farquet calls an international system of non-taxation.<sup>31</sup> In a similar vein, aid and technical assistance programs developed by former colonial powers nationally and at the European level, were also aimed at helping Western firms resume and increase their business in the context of decolonization.<sup>32</sup> In this special issue, Véronique Dimier and Sarah Stockwell for instance argue that there was a “commercial turn” of British aid policy after British accession to the EEC in 1973. The British government wished to instrumentalize EEC development assistance to its companies benefits and to redirect it to its

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Kathryn Greenman, *State Responsibility and Rebels: The History and Legacy of Protecting Investment Against Revolution* (Cambridge, UK, 2021); Andrea Leiter, *Making the World Safe for Investment: The Protection of Foreign Property 1922–1959* (Cambridge, 2023); Filip Batselé, “Foreign Investors of the World, Unite! The International Association for the Promotion and Protection of Private Foreign Investments (APPI) 1958–1968.” *European Journal of International Law* 34, no. 2 (2023): 415–447. On arbitration, see Guillaume Beausire, “La neutralité comme capital. Les ressorts symboliques de la compétitivité suisse sur le marché de l’arbitrage privé international (1970–1980),” *Critique internationale* 97, no. 4 (2022): 23–44. And on double taxation, see: Christophe Farquet, “Tax Avoidance, Collective Resistance, and International Negotiations: Foreign Tax Refusal by Swiss Banks and Industries Between the Two World Wars,” *Journal of Policy History* 25, no. 3 (July 2013): 334–353; Sabine Pitteloud, *Les multinationales suisses dans l’arène politique (1942–1993)* (Geneva, 2022), 213–246; Gisela Hürlimann, “Switzerland as a Laboratory for Fiscal Federalism and Global Fiscal Governance,” *Economic Sociology: European Electronic Newsletter* 21, no. 2 (2020): 15–25.

<sup>31</sup>On the creation and use of tax havens, see Sébastien Guex, “The Origins of the Swiss Banking Secrecy Law and Its Repercussions for Swiss Federal Policy,” *Business History Review* 74, no. 2 (2000): 237–266; Sébastien Guex, “The Emergence of the Swiss Tax Haven, 1816–1914,” *Business History Review* 96, no. 2 (Summer 2022): 353–372; Vanessa Ogle, “Archipelago Capitalism: Tax Havens, Offshore Money, and the State, 1950s–1970s,” *The American Historical Review* 122, no. 5 (2017): 1431–1458; Gabriel Zucman, *The Hidden Wealth of Nations: The Scourge of Tax Havens* (Chicago, 2015); Gisela Huerlimann, W. Elliot Brownlee, and Eisaku Ide, *Worlds of Taxation: The Political Economy of Taxing, Spending, and Redistribution Since 1945* (Cham, 2018); Sébastien Guex and Hadrien Buclin, eds., *Tax Evasion and Tax Havens since the Nineteenth Century* (Cham, 2023). On tax avoidance, see: Christophe Farquet, “Tax Avoidance, Collective Resistance, and International Negotiations: Foreign Tax Refusal by Swiss Banks and Industries between the World Wars,” *Journal of Policy History* 25, no. 3 (2013): 334–353.

<sup>32</sup>Sarah Stockwell, *The Business of Decolonization: British Business Strategies in the Gold Coast* (Oxford, 2000); Véronique Dimier, *The Invention of a European Development Aid Bureaucracy: Recycling Empire* (London, 2014); Véronique Dimier and Sarah Stockwell, *The Business of Development in Post-Colonial Africa* (London, 2021).

former colonies.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, foreign direct investments carried out under the cover of assistance purposes often benefited from state-sponsored and multilateral investment insurances, as well as investment protection treaties.<sup>34</sup>

In this special issue, Nicolás Perrone calls for a cross-fertilization of history of international law scholarship, to understand how the grammar of international law texts was designed by elite networks and companies' lawyers and how such investment protection schemes enabled multinationals to monopolize natural resources, labor, and assets in former colonies by protecting foreign investors against sovereign decisions that could jeopardize their economic interests, such as nationalization or capital controls.<sup>35</sup> Further work could build on existing business historical scholarship on the impact of foreign direct investments, technology transfers (or lack thereof), and multinational ownership on the developing countries that so often host them. Scholars working in this area could therefore engage with historical studies dealing with empires and decolonization, assessing business impacts not only in terms of economic consequences but also with respect to state sovereignty in the "Global South."<sup>36</sup> Indeed, multinationals historically proved to be resilient "preservers of globalization."<sup>37</sup> Business historians have for instance developed strong contributions detailing how firms managed political risks in the context of revolutions and independence movements. These firms navigated rising nationalism, as well as economic embargoes and sanctions during wars to maintain and sustain their operations.<sup>38</sup> As Geoffrey Jones pointed out in his keynote at the

<sup>33</sup>Véronique Dimier and Sarah Stockwell, "Development, Inc.? The EEC, Britain, Post-Colonial Overseas Development Aid, and Business," *Business History Review* 97, no. 3 (Autumn 2023): 513–546.

<sup>34</sup>Kevin W. Lu, Gero Verheyen, and Srilal Mohan Perera, *Investing with Confidence: Understanding Political Risk Management in the 21st Century* (Washington, 2009); Sabine Pitteloud, "Multinationals' Need for State Protection: The Creation of the Swiss Investment Risk Guarantee in the 1960s," in *Security and Insecurity in Business History: Case Studies in the Perception and Negotiation of Threats*, ed. Mark Jakob, Nina Kleinöder, and Christian Kleinschmidt, (Baden-Baden, 2021), 111–134.

<sup>35</sup>Nicolás Perrone, "Governing Global Capitalism: A Lawyer's Perspective," *Business History Review* 97, no. 3 (Autumn 2023): 614–620.

<sup>36</sup>For recent efforts to study global governance in relation to decolonization, see: Eva-Maria Muschik, "Special Issue Introduction: Towards a Global History of International Organizations and Decolonization," *Journal of Global History* 17, no. 2 (July 2022): 173–190.

<sup>37</sup>Geoffrey Jones, *Entrepreneurship and Multinationals: Global Business and the Making of the Modern World* (Cheltenham, 2013), 6–7.

<sup>38</sup>On MNCs and political risk, see Ben Wubs, Neil Forbes, and Takafumi Kurosawa, *Multinational Enterprise, Political Risk and Organisational Change: From Total War to Cold War* (London, 2018); Jakob, Kleinöder, and Kleinschmidt, eds., *Security and Insecurity in Business History*; Mark Casson and Teresa da Silva Lopes, "Foreign Direct Investment in High-Risk Environments: An Historical Perspective," *Business History* 55, no. 3 (2013): 375–404. For work on the resilience of MNCs during times of conflict and nationalism, see:

European Business History Association annual meeting in 2022, business historians could do more to critically assess whether such resilience contributed positively or negatively to host economies and the extent to which the presence of multinationals extended wars and perpetuated authoritarian regimes.

### Mitigating Global Externalities

While global governance played a crucial role in providing business with critical infrastructures and regulatory frameworks, firms' economic activities also resulted in political, social, and environmental externalities, which made global governance responses all the more pressing.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, firms have long been the direct targets of international regulations, starting with antitrust and cartel legislation. Business historians made important contributions in showing how cartels were perceived differently depending on country and sector and were sometimes even considered to be a desirable force for stabilizing production and securing employment.<sup>40</sup> They have also investigated how firms responded to the introduction of cartel regulations and the use of alternative organizational cooperation as coping mechanisms.<sup>41</sup> Laura Philips Sawyer's recent work also highlights how the United States, acknowledging its new hegemonic position after World War I and II, used the extraterritorial reach of its law and the Marshall Plan to

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Christina Lubinski, *Navigating Nationalism in Global Enterprise: A Century of Indo-German Business Relations* (Cambridge, 2022); Pierre-Yves Donzé, "The Advantage of Being Swiss: Nestlé and Political Risk in Asia during the Early Cold War, 1945–1970," *Business History Review* 94, no. 2 (2020): 373–397; Christina Lubinski, Valeria Giacomini, and Klara Schnitzer, "Internment as a Business Challenge: Political Risk Management and German Multinationals in Colonial India (1914–1947)," *Business History* 63, no. 1 (2021): 1–26; Geoffrey Jones and Rachael Comunale, "Business, Governments and Political Risk in South Asia and Latin America since 1970," *Australian Economic History Review* 58, no. 3 (2018): 233–264; Christina Lubinski and R. Daniel Wadhvani, "Geopolitical Jockeying: Economic Nationalism and Multinational Strategy in Historical Perspective," *Strategic Management Journal* 41, no. 3 (2020): 400–421.

<sup>39</sup>Céline Pessis, *Une autre histoire des 'Trente Glorieuses': modernisation, contestations et pollutions dans la France de l'après-guerre* (Paris, 2016); Iris Borowy and Matthias Schmelzer, eds., *History of the Future of Economic Growth: Historical Roots of Current Debates on Sustainable Degrowth* (London, 2017).

<sup>40</sup>On cartels, see Harm G. Schröter, "Cartels Revisited," *Revue économique* 64, no. 6 (2013): 989–1010; Shanahan and Fellman, *A History of Business Cartels*. For more on the politics of cartel capitalism, see the recent PhD dissertation of Liane Hewitt, "Monopoly Menace: The Rise and Fall of Cartel Capitalism in Western Europe, 1918–1957" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2023); Sigfrido M. Ramírez Pérez, "Embedding the Market during Times of Crisis: The European Automobile Cartel during a Decade of Crisis (1973–1985)," *Business History* 62, no. 5 (2020): 815–836.

<sup>41</sup>Neil Rollings and Laurent Warlouzet, "Business History and European Integration: How EEC Competition Policy Affected Companies' Strategies," *Business History* 62, no. 5 (2020): 717–742.

enforce antitrust regulations internationally.<sup>42</sup> The 1970s witnessed unprecedented efforts to regulate multinationals, in the hope of mitigating deindustrialization in Western countries.<sup>43</sup> The 1970s were also a period of hope for a “New International Economic Order” in which former colonies could regain control over their natural resources and benefit from a fairer international trade regime.<sup>44</sup> Empirical studies, such as Sabine Pitteloud’s work on the reactions and strategies of Swiss multinationals, help explain why many of the envisioned international regulatory attempts failed, while others took the form of non-binding guidelines.<sup>45</sup>

Global governance often appeared as the remedy to the “race to the bottom” issues, when it comes to capital mobility. Such observation is certainly true for fiscal competition between various territories, especially given the existence of archipelago capitalism and fiscal paradise.<sup>46</sup> Efforts at settings international taxation standards dates back from the 1920s within the League of Nation, without much success given international disunity and business resistance.<sup>47</sup> After 1945 and especially since the 1970s crisis of public finance in Western States,

<sup>42</sup> See Laura Phillips Sawyer, “Jurisdiction Beyond Our Borders: The Long Road to U.S. v. Alcoa and the Extraterritorial Reach of American Antitrust, 1909–1945,” in *Antimonopoly and American Democracy*, ed. Daniel A. Crane and William J. Novak (Cambridge, MA: forthcoming). For her previous work on antitrust regulation, see Laura Phillips Sawyer, *American Fair Trade: Proprietary Capitalism, Corporatism, and the “New Competition,” 1890–1940* (Cambridge, 2018).

<sup>43</sup> For labor demands in Western countries, see Francesco Petrini, “Demanding Democracy in the Workplace: the European Trade Union Confederation and the Struggle to Regulate Multinationals,” in *Societal Actors in European Integration: Policy-Building and Policy-Making 1958–1992*, ed. Kaiser Wolfram and Meyer Jan-Henrik (Basingstoke 2013), 151–172; Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick, “Facing New Challenges: the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (1972–1990s),” in *The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*, ed. Anthony Carew and Marcel van der Linden (Bern, 2000): 341–518; Melanie Sheehan, “Opportunities Foregone: US Industrial Unions and the Politics of International Economic Policy, 1949–1983” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, 2022).

<sup>44</sup> Vanessa Ogle, “State Rights against Private Capital: The ‘New International Economic Order’ and the Struggle over Aid, Trade, and Foreign Investment, 1962–1981,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 5, no. 2 (2014): 211–234; Kott, *Organiser le monde*, 145–178.

<sup>45</sup> Sabine Pitteloud, “Unwanted Attention: Swiss Multinationals and the Creation of International Corporate Guidelines in the 1970s,” *Business & Politics* 22, no. 4 (Dec. 2020): 587–611. For the failed binding regulation attempts at the EEC, see: Warlouzet, *Governing Europe*, 57–77. On the Sullivan principles, see Jessica Ann Levy, “Black Power in the Boardroom: Corporate America, the Sullivan Principles, and the Anti-Apartheid Struggle,” *Enterprise & Society* 21, no. 1 (2020): 170–209.

<sup>46</sup> Ogle, “Archipelago Capitalism;” Guex and Buclin, eds., *Tax Evasion and Tax Havens*.

<sup>47</sup> Farquet, “Tax Avoidance”; Farquet, “Lutte contre l’évasion fiscale: l’échec de la SDN durant l’entre-deux-guerres,” *L’Économie politique*, no. 44 (2009): 93–112. Similar resistance has been observed for international banking supervision, see Alexis Drach, *Liberté surveillée: Supervision bancaire et globalisation financière au Comité de Bâle, 1974–1988* (Rennes, 2022); Eiji Hoto, Mikael Wendschlag, and Thibaud Giddey, *Formalization of Banking Supervision. 19th–20th Centuries*, (Singapore, 2022).

multinational tax avoidance has been singled out for its negative impacts on the ability of states to administrate and to provide public goods.<sup>48</sup> For this reason, international organizations, such as the OECD or powerful states, such as the United States, attempted to better control multinational's tax evasion practices, here again, with little concrete results.<sup>49</sup> In this special issue, Vanessa Ogle reveals the existence of the so-called "Group of Four," an intergovernmental covert working party of revenue authorities established by the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and France in 1970 in response to the slow progress achieved at the OECD.<sup>50</sup> Its goal was to foster international cooperation regarding tax avoidance and information exchanges, targeting rich individual tax evaders and multinationals' transfer pricing practices and fiscal optimization schemes. Ogle's analysis of the investigations of the Group of Four brings to light the impressive ability of mobile capital to escape taxation as well as the many logistical and political roadblocks to achieve global governance in the matter.

While business history scholarship on taxation appears highly relevant in shedding light on the political and economic role of enterprises in fueling rising inequalities and difficulties to finance public goods, such an approach is also certainly needed to make sense of the current climate crisis. In recent decades, many historians, including business historians such as Geoffrey Jones and Ann-Kristin Bergquist, have made appeals to reexamine capitalist dynamics' and business' impact on the environment.<sup>51</sup> While acknowledging some significant progress, Bergquist points out in her 2019 literature review, that the "business history literature has essentially remained focused on how firms grew and innovated, without mentioning that they wrecked the

<sup>48</sup>Zucman, *The Hidden Wealth of Nations*.

<sup>49</sup>Matthieu Leimgruber, "Kansas City on Lake Geneva': Business Hubs, Tax Evasion, and International Connections around 1960," *Zeitschrift Für Unternehmensgeschichte* 60, no. 2 (2015): 123–140.

<sup>50</sup>Vanessa Ogle, "Governing Global Tax Dodgers: The 'Group of Four' and the Taxation of Multinational Corporations, 1970s-1980s," *Business History Review* 97, no. 3 (Autumn 2023): 547–574.

<sup>51</sup>Ann-Kristin Bergquist, "Renewing Business History in the Era of the Anthropocene," *Business History Review* 93, no. 1 (2019): 3–24; Geoffrey Jones, *Profits and Sustainability: A History of Green Entrepreneurship* (Oxford, 2019); Hartmut Berghoff and Adam Rome, *Green Capitalism? Business and the Environment in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia, 2017); Christine Meisner Rosen, "Doing Business History in the Age of Global Climate Change," *Enterprise & Society* 8, no. 2 (2007): 221–226; Hartmut Berghoff and Mathias Mutz, "Missing Links? Business History and Environmental Change," *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte/Economic History Yearbook* 59, no. 2 (2009): 9–22; Franck Aggeri and Mélodie Cartel, "Le changement climatique et les entreprises: Enjeux, espaces d'action, régulations internationales," *Entreprises et Histoire* 1, no 86 (2017): 6–20; Andrew Smith and Kirsten Geer, "Uniting Business History and Global Environmental History," *Business History* 59, no. 7 (2017): 987–1009; Antoine Acker, *Volkswagen in the Amazon: The Tragedy of Global Development in Modern Brazil* (Cambridge, 2017).

planet as a result.”<sup>52</sup> Many of the environmental issues that resulted from business activities were indeed global in scope, such as trans-boundary air pollution, acid rain, ozone depletion, and of course, climate change. Moreover, business interacted in many ways with global environmental governance mechanisms, since companies were simultaneously primary targets of environmental governance and political actors involved in the process of setting regulations by providing technical expertise and implementing the resulting norms.<sup>53</sup> For instance, by acting as “merchants of doubt,” the fossil fuel and plastic industries were able to delay meaningful global engagement with climate change and obscure the truth about recycling.<sup>54</sup> Business organizations were also key in promoting self-governance and market-mechanism to mitigate environmental damages in the 1980s. As Thomas David and Ann-Kristin Bergquist's contribution to this special issue shows, the International Chamber of Commerce monitored the United Nations environmental efforts since the United Nations (UN) Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 and were progressively able to establish themselves as key partners.<sup>55</sup> Business also contributed to disseminating the concept of sustainable development, replacing the idea of planetary limits.<sup>56</sup> As these examples illustrate, documenting the role of firms and industry, which had a lot to lose from the introduction of new rules, would help identify potential roadblocks and delays in terms of environmental governance. Given the numerous global and sectoral corporate regulations that seemed to be

<sup>52</sup> Bergquist, “Renewing Business History,” 5.

<sup>53</sup> Hugh S. Gorman, “The Role of Business in Constructing Systems of Environmental Governance,” in Hartmut Berghoff and Adam Rome, eds., *Green Capitalism?: Business and the Environment in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia, 2017): 33–50; Mattias Näsman and Sabine Pitteloud, “The Power and Limits of Expertise: Swiss–Swedish Linking of Vehicle Emission Standards in the 1970s and 1980s,” *Business & Politics* (2022): 2–4. On expertise, business, and the Club of Rome, see Matthias Schmelzer, “Born in the Corridors of the OECD: The Forgotten Origins of the Club of Rome, Transnational Networks, and the 1970s in Global History,” *Journal of Global History* 12, no. 1 (March 2017): 26–48.

<sup>54</sup> Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Climate Change* (New York, 2011). See also on the fossil fuel industry Geoffrey Supran and Naomi Oreskes, “Rhetoric and Frame Analysis of ExxonMobil's Climate Change Communications,” *One Earth* 4, no. 5 (2021): 696–719; Christophe Bonneuil, Pierre-Louis Choquet, and Benjamin Franta, “Early Warnings and Emerging Accountability: Total's Responses to Global Warming, 1971–2021,” *Global Environmental Change* 71 (2021).

<sup>55</sup> Ann-Kristin Bergquist and Thomas David, “Beyond Planetary Limits! The International Chamber of Commerce, the United Nations, and the Invention of Sustainable Development.” *Business History Review*, vol. 97, no. 3 (Autumn 2023): 481–511. Also see Bergquist and David, “Business In(Action): The International Chamber of Commerce and Responses to Climate Change from Stockholm to Rio (1972–1992),” working paper.

<sup>56</sup> Ben Huf, Glenda Sluga, and Sabine Selchow, “Business and the Planetary History of International Environmental Governance in the 1970s,” *Contemporary European History* 31, no. 4 (2022): 553–569.

desirable from a societal viewpoint and were demanded by much of civil society, and the few binding regulations that actually came into existence, it seems indeed worth further investigating how business acted as “institutional inhibitors.”<sup>57</sup>

### Business Shaping Global Governance

Thanks to their use of corporate and business interest organizations’ archives, business historians are well positioned to document the “invisible hands” of firm representatives in politics and lobbying strategies, which often took place behind closed doors.<sup>58</sup> A growing body of literature has indeed demonstrated the usefulness of such approaches for understanding national politics and the functioning of the varieties of national capitalist systems.<sup>59</sup> Within this flourishing scholarship some studies confirmed empirically that business interests were often assimilated to national interest and defended as such within international organization, thanks to a mix of instrumental and structural power, even if the picture appears more nuanced.<sup>60</sup> Not all attempts at exerting influence were successful, and when national diplomats were prone to compromise in international arenas, businesses and interest

<sup>57</sup>Tim Bartley, “Transnational Corporations and Global Governance,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 44, no. 1 (2018): 152.

<sup>58</sup>Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York, 2009).

<sup>59</sup>See for instance: Benjamin C. Waterhouse, *Lobbying America: The Politics of Business from Nixon to NAFTA* (Princeton, 2014); Jennifer A. Delton, *The Industrialists: How the National Association of Manufacturers Shaped American Capitalism* (Princeton, 2020). On the “Varieties of Capitalism” debate, see Niall G. MacKenzie, Andrew Perchard, Christopher Miller, and Neil Forbes, “Business-Government Relations and National Economic Models: A Review and Future Research Directions in Varieties of Capitalism and Beyond” *Business History* 63, no. 8 (2021): 1239–1252; Mira Wilkins, Kathleen Thelen, Richard Whitley, Rory M. Miller, Cathie Jo Martin, V. R. Berghahn, Martin Jes Iversen, Gary Herrigel, and Jonathan Zeitlin, “‘Varieties of Capitalism’ Roundtable,” *Business History Review* 84, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 637–674; Christian Marx and Morten Reitmayer, “Introduction: Rhenish Capitalism and Business History,” *Business History* 61, no. 5 (2019): 745–784.

<sup>60</sup>Laurence Badel, *Diplomatie et grands contrats: L’État français et les marchés extérieurs au XX e siècle* (Paris, 2010); Sébastien Guex, Dominique Dirlwanger, and Gian-Franco Pordenone, *La politique commerciale de La Suisse de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale à l’entrée au GATT (1945-1966)* (Zürich, 2004); Rhenisch Thomas, *Europäische Integration und industrielles Interesse: die deutsche Industrie und die Gründung der europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft* (Stuttgart, 1999); Werner Bühner, “Der BDI und die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik in den fünfziger Jahren,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 40, no. 2 (1992): 241–261; Petrini Francesco, *Il liberismo a una dimensione: la Confindustria e l’integrazione europea, 1947-1957* (Milano, 2005); Alexis Drach, “From Gentlemanly Capitalism to Lobbying Capitalism: The City and the EEC, 1972–1992,” *Financial History Review* 27 (2020): 1–21; Rollings, *British Business*; Pitteloud, *Les multinationales*; Yohann Morival, *Les Européens du patronat français depuis 1948* (New York, 2020).

associations sometimes bypassed them and found other ways to impose their agenda.<sup>61</sup>

In expanding such inquiries more systematically toward international organizations, scholars working in this area could complement the work of historians of international relations who have increasingly pinpointed the role of business during state-led negotiations, the fact that states were far from being unitary actors, and the porousness of the boundaries between the private and public spheres.<sup>62</sup> One such area of scholarship addresses the role of international banks in shaping the infrastructures of both global capitalism and empire.<sup>63</sup> Christy Thornton exposed the role of Wall Street banks in preventing the emergence of a new inter-American bank in the 1940s, which was backed by Latin American diplomats and a significant portion of the US administration.<sup>64</sup> And Amy Offner's work uncovered the failures of the mixed economy, which international elites tried to design in mid-twentieth century Latin America.<sup>65</sup> In a revisited history of the Cold War, Sandrine Kott laid a foundation for further work on the shifting coalitions of actors – including business – that transcended the division of interests between Northern and Southern countries as well as the divide between capitalist and communist countries.<sup>66</sup>

Patricia Clavin's scholarship has provided many examples of influential transnational and cosmopolitan actors, some of them carrying business functions, and whose actions were difficult to interpret according to rigid categories such as national and ethnic identity, professional attribution, political affiliation, and cultural attachments.<sup>67</sup> In this special issue, Clavin emphasizes the role of crisis and wars in blurring the line between the business and the political

<sup>61</sup>Pitteloud, *Les multinationales*.

<sup>62</sup>Laurence Badel already noted in 2014, the opening of several companies' archives, allowing for a business history approach, can fruitfully contribute to the history of international relations and global governance: Laurence Badel, "Milieux économiques et relations internationales: bilan et perspectives de la recherche au début du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Relations internationales* 157, no. 1 (2014): 3–23.

<sup>63</sup>Mary Bridges' forthcoming book demonstrates the role of US banks in this process in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. See *Branching Out: Banking, Credit, and the Globalizing US Economy, 1900s–1930s* (Princeton, 2024).

<sup>64</sup>Christy Thornton, *Revolution in Development: Mexico and the Governance of the Global* (Berkeley, 2021); Amy C. Offner, "Review of Christy Thornton's *Revolution in Development*," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 53, no. 4 (2021): 442.

<sup>65</sup>Amy Offner, *Sorting Out the Mixed Economy: The Rise and Fall of Welfare and Developmental States in the Americas* (Princeton, 2019).

<sup>66</sup>Sandrine Kott, *Organiser le monde: Une autre histoire de la guerre froide* (Seuil, 2021).

<sup>67</sup>Patricia Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism," *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (2005): 421–439. For more examples of communities and their governance projects see Marie-Laure Djelic and Sigrid Quack, eds., *Transnational Communities: Shaping Global Economic Governance* (Cambridge, 2010).

spheres and in explaining the birth of international governance bodies.<sup>68</sup> Such historical approaches of international relations certainly speak to business historians, who have also documented the importance of the revolving doors phenomenon. For instance, actors such as the former EEC commissioners Etienne Davignon and François Xavier Ortoli, who ended their careers as business representatives, were involved in a variety of governance forums ranging from supranational and international organizations such as the EEC, global summitry such as the World Economic Forum, and private governance institutions such as the European Roundtable of Industrialists.<sup>69</sup> Quinn Slobodian's contribution to the roundtable of this issue invites us to further consider the constant tensions between mass democracy and private ownership and control that have shaped the history of the twentieth century, and shows how histories of empire, decolonization, and international relations gain to be considered simultaneously with business and banking history.<sup>70</sup>

One of the strengths of choosing businesses and their interest organization as the primary unit of analysis is indeed to highlight a variety of coexisting strategies and channels of influence toward global governance. Indeed, while access to national political representatives certainly proved crucial, businesses were sometimes formally invited to hearings and hired professional lobbyists.<sup>71</sup> They also engaged in long-term ideological battles or directed financial means toward business-friendly institutions.<sup>72</sup> When uncovering such multiple channels of influence, business history echoes some existing scholarship in the history of economic thought. Quinn Slobodian's exemplary work has historicized the ways economic elites legitimized, institutionalized, and deployed neoliberalism on a global scale, while praising the existence of free trade and tax-free enclaves on which

<sup>68</sup> Patricia Clavin, "Histories and Futures of Business in a Turbulent World," *Business History Review* 97, no. 3 (Autumn 2023): 605–613.

<sup>69</sup> For Ortoli and Davignon's role, see Ballor, "Agents of Integration"; Warloutzet, *Governing Europe*. On summitry, see Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol and Federico Romero, eds., *International Summitry and Global Governance: The Rise of the G7 and the European Council, 1974-1991* (London, 2014); Jean-Christophe Graz, "Qui gouverne? Le Forum de Davos et le pouvoir informel des clubs d'élites transnationales," *A contrario* 1, no. 2 (2003): 67–89. On the ERT, see Maria Green Cowles, "Setting the Agenda for a New Europe: The ERT and EC 1992," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 33, no. 4 (1995): 501–526; Bastiaan van Apeldoorn, "Transnational Class Agency and European Governance: The Case of the European Round Table of Industrialists," *New Political Economy* 5, no. 2 (2000): 157–181; Bastiaan van Apeldoorn, *Transnational Capitalism and the Struggle over European Integration* (London, 2002).

<sup>70</sup> Quinn Slobodian, "Competing Projects in Global Governance," *Business History Review* 97, no. 3 (Autumn 2023): 626–631.

<sup>71</sup> Sylvain Laurens, *Bureaucrats and Business Lobbyists in Brussels: Capitalism Brokers* (New York, 2017).

<sup>72</sup> Sabine Pitteloud, "Les multinationales comme catégorie politique: les années formatrices (1970-1990)," *Entreprises et histoire* 104, no. 3 (2021): 93–110.

democratic collective decisions have little reach.<sup>73</sup> There is therefore an opportunity for business historians to contribute to our understanding of why some ideas became dominant, question arguments about the ‘naturalness’ or ‘inevitability’ of economic systems, and expose instances in which international trade and investment rules have been insulated from democracies. While governance frameworks, as well as their absence, might be analyzed through the lens of power relations in which business also played a role, the rules enforced by governance bodies and those they benefit can also be discussed critically.

### Establishing Private Governance

Businesses and economic elites not only influenced the work of international organizations, but they also developed private forms of global governance, sometimes supporting the work of international organizations, sometimes substituting some of their functions.<sup>74</sup> At times, business elites also actively undermined the work of international organizations.<sup>75</sup> Several international business interest organizations were created in response to the work of international organizations, some of which enjoyed formal consultative status. As Thomas David and Pierre Eichenberger have shown, the ICC was formed as a business response to the creation of the Société des nations and then the UN.<sup>76</sup> Several scholars have historicized the origins of employers’ organizations like UNICE as well as their interactions with global governance structures like the EEC and EU and the ways these business organizations have tried to influence international agreements.<sup>77</sup> Others have examined the ways business

<sup>73</sup>Slobodian, *Globalists*; Slobodian, *Crack-Up Capitalism: Market Radicals and the Dream of a World Without Democracy* (London, 2023). On business shaping ideas, see also Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl and François Vallotton, “Business, anticommunisme et néolibéralisme: réseaux transatlantiques durant la Guerre froide,” *Relations internationales* 180, no. 4 (2019): 3–11; Glenda Sluga, “Twentieth-Century International Economic Thinking, and the Complex History of Globalization: A New Research Programme,” *Working Paper EUI HEC*, (2021): 1–11.

<sup>74</sup>See for an empirical example, Andreas Goldthau and Llewelyn Hughes, “Saudi on the Rhine? Explaining the Emergence of Private Governance in the Global Oil Market,” *Review of International Political Economy* 28, no.5 (2020); Marco Bertilorenzi, “Futures of Europe: The City of London’s Commodity Exchanges, the European Economic Community, and the Global Regulation of Futures Trading (1960s–1980s),” *Enterprise & Society*, (2022): 1–28.

<sup>75</sup>Jean-Christophe Graz and Andreas Nölke, *Transnational Private Governance and Its Limits* (London, 2007); Grace Ballor and Aydin B. Yildirim, “Multinational Corporations and the Politics of International Trade in Multidisciplinary Perspective,” *Business and Politics* 22, no. 4 (2020): 573–586.

<sup>76</sup>Thomas David and Pierre Eichenberger, “Business and Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century: A Corporatist View,” *Diplomatica* 2, no. 1 (2020): 48–56.

<sup>77</sup>Yohann Morival, “La fabrique des légitimités européennes: les acteurs de la confédération patronale européenne depuis 1952,” *Critique internationale* 74, no. 1 (2017): 33–51; Héléne Michel, ed., *Représenter le patronat européen: formes d’organisation*

groups like the BIAC have interacted with the OECD.<sup>78</sup> A growing body of scholarship has demonstrated how international business interest organizations defensively developed self-regulation in a variety of domains such as labor, human rights, and environment, to prevent governments from legislating.<sup>79</sup> As Rami Kaplan has written, concepts such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) can equally be interpreted as a strategy to mitigate social and political demands on business as a form of business regulation.<sup>80</sup> At the same time, corporate commitments to stakeholder capitalism have coopted and neutralized their critics within international and non-governmental organizations.<sup>81</sup> Even international cartels, as Marco Bertilorenzi suggests, were not limited to price collusion, but were important in securing production and employment in times of high uncertainty like the interwar period, therefore constituting an alternative to state planning.<sup>82</sup> While international business interest organizations functioned as important arenas for business to develop self-regulation, business historians have described the challenges of building consensus between a variety of sectoral and national business interests.<sup>83</sup>

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*patronale et modes d'action européenne* (Bern, 2013); Yohann Morival, "Reassessing the Historical Dynamics of European Business Associations: The Genesis of UNICE, Late 1940s to 1970s," *Business History* (advanced online publication, 26 Oct. 2022), accessed 24 Oct. 2023, 1-18, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00076791.2022.2128109>.

<sup>78</sup>For an overview, see Christian Chavagneux and Marieke Louis, *Le Pouvoir Des Multinationales* (Paris, 2018); Eichenberger, Rollings, and Schaufelbuehl, "The Brokers of Globalization."

<sup>79</sup>Sectoral international business organizations were also important. See Paul Turberg, "Le patronat ouest-européen et américain et la structuration internationale de l'industrie pharmaceutique, 1963-1971," *Relations internationales* 180, no. 4 (2019): 75-89; Karin Bugow, "The Role of Multinational Corporations in the Green Revolution, 1960s and 1970s," (PhD diss, Jacobs University, 2021). See also the ongoing research project of Maiju Wuokko on the International Council of Chemical Associations and its "Responsible Care Programme." On international organizations specialized to promote family firms, see Paloma Fernández Pérez and Nuria Puig, "Global Lobbies for a Global Economy: The Creation of the Spanish Institute of Family Firms in International Perspective," *Business History* 51, no. 5 (2009): 712-733.

<sup>80</sup>Rami Kaplan, "Who Has Been Regulating Whom, Business or Society? The Mid-20th-Century Institutionalization of 'Corporate Responsibility' in the USA," *Socio-Economic Review* 13, no. 1 (2015): 125-155. See also, Michel Capron and Françoise Quairel-Lanoizelée, "Un éclairage sociohistorique et théorique de l'évolution des relations entreprise-société," *Reperes* (2015): 13-42.

<sup>81</sup>Genevieve LeBaron and Peter Dauvergne, *Protest Inc.: The Corporatization of Activism* (New York, 2014).

<sup>82</sup>Marco Bertilorenzi, "The International Chamber of Commerce. The Organisation of Free-Trade and Market Regulations from the Interwar Period to the 1960s," in *Free Trade and Social Welfare in Europe. Explorations in the Long 20th Century*, ed. Lucia Coppolaro and Lorenzo Mechi (London, 2020): 90-108.

<sup>83</sup>Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl, "The Transatlantic Business Community Faced with US Direct Investment in Western Europe, 1958-1968." *Business History* 58, no. 6 (2016): 880-902; Ludovic Iberg, "Fighting for a Neoliberal Europe: Swiss Business Associations and the UNICE, 1970-1978," *Business History* (2021): 1-16; Sabine Pitteloud, "Let's Coordinate! The Reinforcement of a 'Liberal Bastion' within European Industrial Federations, 1978-1987," *Business History* (2021): 1-21; Louis and Morival, "Au-delà de l'unité."

The solutions adopted by both private and state-led international organizations often reflected nothing more than the lowest common denominator.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, that global philanthropic institutions and private foundations, such as those created by Andrew Carnegie, J.D. Rockefeller, George Soros, and Bill Gates, as well as multinational consulting firms, have increasingly filled the gap left by insufficient global governance in the fight against certain diseases and in fostering education, raises new questions about the accumulation of private wealth and connects with the historical literature on inequality.<sup>85</sup>

As this literature review has highlighted, business historical scholarship has already contributed much to our collective understanding of how the nexus of capitalism and global governance has evolved. Surveying this scholarship has also revealed the many areas still in need of further analysis. This special issue and its collection of research articles and reflection pieces are part of the ongoing efforts to promote such research agenda and is an invitation for business historians to further engage with other relevant historical and disciplinary traditions.

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<sup>84</sup> Rollings and Kipping, "Private Transnational Governance."

<sup>85</sup> See, for example: Maclean, Harvey, Yang, and Mueller, "Elite Philanthropy." Mazzucato, Mariana, and Rosie Collington, *The Big Con: How the Consulting Industry Weakens our Businesses, Infantilizes our Governments and Warps our Economies* (London, 2023). Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA, 2014).