

Inequalities in Supply Chains

Supervisory Team: Dr. Vivek Soundararajan and Dr. Deborah Brewis

One of the central drivers of globalization has been the changing production geography of multinational enterprises, whose activities have resulted in new organizational forms and relationships across the globe. Indeed, supply chains have created a range of opportunities for suppliers in developing as well as developed countries, including economic upgrading and employment. Nevertheless, as research, media, and civil society reports show (e.g., Crane et al., 2019), supplier facilities in developing countries are rife with issues pertaining to inequalities.

With respect to inequalities supply chains, current research predominantly focuses on gender issues. While gendered inequalities in supply chains are essential to understand and address, it is also pressing that we develop a deeper understanding of other forms of inequalities, including race, language, caste, religion, and place of origin, which may intersect with gender (Crenshaw 1990). Such systems of inequality are rooted in both local and global histories and contemporary transformations of the economy, technology, and society. Only by developing a greater understanding of these power dynamics and how different forms of inequalities are positional (Anthias 2006) in different contexts and for different workers can companies and policymakers appreciate the impact of how supply chains are organized and enable the change that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The aims of this project will be to:

- a) develop a greater understanding of intersecting forms of inequalities in supply chains, based in an agreed-upon context or industry;
- b) identify factors that contribute to inequalities in supply chains;
- c) explore the impact of such inequalities on individuals and organizations;
- d) develop innovative interventions that promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in supply chains.

The project invites applicants to engage in a range of qualitative methods, including interviews and observation, to collect in-depth data from a range of actors in supply chains such as suppliers, workers, families, unions, civil society actors, intermediaries, and lead firms.

We seek doctoral candidates with a first-class honours degree and/or a distinction at masters level. In applications, the candidate should express interest, any preference, and/or expertise in a socio-geographical location for the research and identify the relevant intersecting relations of power.

A research proposal is a critical component of the application package. Therefore, we request you to contact us in advance with your CV and research proposal so that we can work together and strengthen the proposal and make your application competitive.

References

Anthias, F. (2006). Belongings in a globalising and unequal world: Rethinking translocations. *The situated politics of belonging*, 17-31.

Crane, A., Soundararajan, V., Bloomfield, M. B, Spence, L. J, LeBaron, G. (2019). Decent work and economic growth in South Indian garment industry. <https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/decent-work-and-economic-growth-in-the-south-india-garment-industry/attachments/decent-work-and-economic-growth-in-the-south-india-garment-industry.pdf>.

Crenshaw, K. (1990). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stan. L. Rev.*, 43, 1241.