

## **CHRISTIAN SELLAR RESEARCH INTERESTS**

My current focuses on industrial restructuring in a broader context of institutional changes and democratization of post-Socialist Eastern Europe at different scales. Particularly, ‘democratization’ at local level reflects in the ways in which public and private sectors engage each other. Second, the ways in which the foreign investment is progressively integrated into the local area is related with both transparency and efficiency of local law enforcement and investors’ capability and willingness to comply with the local laws and unspoken norms. These changes at the local level are shaped by the consolidation of national level democratic institutions and regulations of the market economy. At supra-national level, the European Union affects both national level reforms – through its requirement of compliance with EU norms – and development at local level – through EU funded grants. These changes, led by the bureaucratic mechanisms of EU enlargement are intertwined with trust based decisions in the private sector. I aim to broaden this research in order to understand the ways in which changes in governance in the public and private sectors affect economic and political stability – and therefore security - at different scales.

This research builds on my Ph.D. dissertation *The Relationship between the Processes of Outsourcing of Italian Textile and Clothing Firms and the Emergence of Industrial Districts in Eastern Europe* (Department of Geography, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; defended May 4, 2007). The dissertation investigated the patterns of Italian foreign investments, especially in the textile and clothing industries, and assesses their impacts on institutional arrangements, business networks and practices in selected Eastern European host areas. The research was organized around three main research questions. 1) What are the geographies of Italian entrepreneurship in Eastern Europe? 2) How does the ‘Italian model’ influence industrial policies in Eastern Europe? 3) What kind of new networks are emerging as consequence of the Italian investments? Results have highlighted that the enlargement of the European Union has enabled deeper and stronger inter-firm relations, which in turn have supported the establishment of transnational networks of ‘European’ citizens transcending national boundaries.

The dissertation research involved nine months of fieldwork in Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine) and Italy. Research funding has been provided by a *Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant* from the National Science Foundation, an *Off Campus Dissertation Research Fellowship* from the Graduate School of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a *Doctoral Research Travel Award* from the University Center for International Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill and a *Dissertation Completion Fellowship* from the Graduate School at UNC-Chapel Hill.

This dissertation built on my first Ph.D. (in Italian), *The Industrial District as a Model of International Cooperation: a Theoretical and Empirical Analysis* (Dipartimento di Scienze Geografiche e Storiche, University of Trieste, defended April 28 2006), which analyzed the interactions between Anglo American and Italian scholars in the development of the academic literature on industrial districts and regional economies. The thesis highlighted the role of the work of British economist Alfred Marshall as theoretical basis for both the Italian school of Industrial Districts and part of American contemporary economic geography. Moreover, it described the ways in which American schools (Storper and Allen of the California School; Piore and Sabel) and Italian schools of thought (Becattini’s Florentine School; Brusco’s Modena

School) interacted and cross-fertilized during the 1990s. The work also analyzes the limits of those schools that emerged in the late 1990s and early years 2000, especially from the point of view of understanding the internationalization of Italian firms from the industrial districts in the homeland to new locations abroad.

Overall, research aims at making a theoretical contribution to the literatures on foreign investments, industrial districts, global value chains and global production networks. To further engage these literatures, I will broaden the scope of my research from regional to global. Specifically, I plan to carry on comparative work in both European and East Asian post-Socialist countries. My future research will analyze the ways in which firms' investment decisions, the inclusion of foreign firms in the local communities, and the response of government institutions at different scales are articulated in Eastern Europe and East Asia. In so doing, I hope to contribute to the understanding of the diverse effects of globalization throughout different world regions in broader context of institutional changes: democratization of post-Socialist Eastern Europe under the tutelage of the European Union, Communist Party rule and market socialism in China. The European Union affects both national level reforms through its requirement of compliance with EU norms and development at the local level through EU funded grants. In contrast, China's economic success is underpinned by a very different set of conditions and institutional arrangements. By comparing the ways in which those firms that are active in both China and Eastern Europe interact with local communities and governments, I hope to understand the ways in which changes in governance in the public and private sectors affect economic and political stability – and therefore security - at different scales.