



Departamento de
Teoría e Historia
Económica

Seminario: Valentina Fava (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

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Seminario 2023-2024

Título: Multinationals and Russia: the trouble of managing a never-ending transformation. The case of Fiat Group (1930-1990)

Sala: E22

Hora: 12.30

Resumen: The seminar will introduce students to the business history literature on multinational corporations (Jones, 2005; Jones and Khanna, 2006; Jones, 2017) and will provide an overview of the activities of the Western multinationals in Russia during the 20th century with a special focus on the automotive sector and the Italian group Fiat. It will reconstruct the history of the major investments of MNCs in Russia\ Soviet Union in the automotive field from the 1930s to the 1990s.



Although political risk played – and still plays, a key role in determining multinational activities, business history literature has focused especially on the ownership and locational advantages of multinational activity. It has paid less attention to the political context in both home and host economies, and to the impact of the activities of multinationals on it. This gap has been only partially filled thanks to the recent studies from Austin, Davila, Jones who have launched a new paradigm in business history which focuses on the emerging countries (Austin, Davila, Jones, 2017), and to a growing business history literature on Africa, South America and India (Bucheli, 2004; 2008, Bucheli, Salvaj, 2017; Bucheli, Min-Young Kim, 2012; Decker, 2022; Lubinski and Wadhwani, 2019; Lubinski, Jones 2021).

Business historians' interest for Russia and Central and Eastern Europe has remained relatively limited, probably due to the heavy juxtaposition of the political and the economic dimension in the planned economy, as well as the blurry borders between the firm and the state bureaucracy in the socialist systems (Fava, Kulikov, 2022). In addition, the rules of the game MNCs had to play in the socialist countries were different from the ones in force in the capitalist world and they kept changing during the 20th century.

The seminar will reconstruct the context of the business and technical East- West relations during the Cold War, the main motives and “steps” of Fiat presence in the USSR, the channels- industrial, political, financial- that Fiat used to deal with their counterpart, the political “obstacles” or advantages that Fiat had to deal with to keep its presence in USSR.