One of the major trends characterizing the beginning of the 21st century is the globalization of state owned enterprises (SOEs) and the role of the state as a cross-border investor. Despite the rise of SOEs as a dominant force in the global economic landscape, scholars’ understanding of these firms remains sparse. Until recently, most SOEs conducted business within state borders and tended to be domestically focused and thus outside the domain of traditional international business research.

This conference and the special issue of *Journal of International Business Studies* associated with it offer a unique opportunity to consider the role of governments as promoters of international business activity and to challenge and extend existing theories of the multinational along interdisciplinary lines. The successful internationalization of some SOEs creates a challenge to existing theoretical approaches and assumptions about the competitiveness and behavior of state-owned firms, the drivers and behavior of multinational companies, and the relationships between multinationals and governments. The conference aims to improve our understanding of this phenomenon as well as to promote extension of current theories to account for this new phenomenon. Analyzing the internationalization of SOEs can serve as a good incubator for interdisciplinary ideas from a range of fields that straddle the periphery of the traditional international business domain such as the study of business and government, developmental economics, financial management, industrial policy, and public sector management. By building a common platform drawing on eclectic contemporary work, IB scholars can help address the core issues that dominate debates on the global role of SOEs, SWFs, and state sponsored FDI sourcing agencies that are collectively reshaping the impact of the state in global economic activity.

The conference is generously supported by Harvard Business School, Northeastern University and its Center for Emerging Markets, and Thunderbird University. Attendance to the conference is open to the public.
About the Organizers:

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