

City, University of London, wins major new research pro...

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City, University of London, [issued the following press release this morning](#):

Researchers from City have [secured funding](#) to investigate how international companies use gaps in the law to increase their power and influence.

The team, led by principal investigator [Professor Ronen Palan](#) (right), has been awarded a £1.7million Advanced Grant by the [European Research Council](#) (ERC).

It is the first time City has secured an ERC [Advanced Grant](#), one of the most prestigious academic funding awards in the world.

Called CORPLINK, the project will see researchers create new ways for policy makers, regulators and academics to investigate how companies use complex global networks. This will include creating visual maps of international business structures.

Professor Palan, of the [Department of International Politics](#), argues the research is needed to understand the relationship between corporations and states in the 21st century.

He said: “Modern firms have been actively dividing themselves into hundreds and even thousands of multi-unit, multi-layered and multi-jurisdictional cells.

“CORPLINK will investigate how this process has enabled organisations to build a dimension of economic power that is not recognised in political science literature. We term this ‘arbitrage power’ — the capacity of organisations to shape the framework of the global economy to advance their interests.

“The project aims to generate new thinking about the relationship between firms and states. Corporate mapping of 22 firms will be used to support this theoretical enterprise.”

Professor Palan argues that an investigation into arbitrage power has only become possible in the past three years. This is because of the trove of corporate data that has

become available through international transparency rulings, leaks and new techniques that allow analysis of vast data sets.

The academic will be supported by a team of researchers: [Professor Richard Murphy](#), [Professor Anastasia Nesvetailova](#) and [Dr Christopher Gandrud](#) of the Department of International Politics at City; Professor Leonard Seabrooke and Associate Professor Duncan Wigan of Copenhagen Business School; Johnny West, of OpenOil.net.

The project will begin on 1st December 2016 and continue for four years.

The award comes after Professor Palan and his colleagues were involved in a successful bid for funding to investigate tax abuse in the European Union. The [COFFERS project](#), backed by a €5million European Commission [Horizon 2020](#) grant, involves City and eight other institutions.

I am, of course, delighted to be working on this project.

It now means I will be engaged full time at City as Professor of Practice in International Political Economy from 1 December. This will mean some other activities will have to reduce in scale: I am finite. I am not planning to much reduce my blogging though.