

Reinventing Corporate Accountability after Rana Plaza

London School of Economics and Political Science

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Abstract

The Rana Plaza collapse - which resulted in a death toll of over 1100 victims, and leaving more than 2,500 workers people injured - is the deadliest garment-factory disaster in history. For many observers, the collapse revealed the moral bankruptcy of private regulatory initiatives, including codes of conduct and their monitoring systems, set up to address substandard working conditions within global production networks. This one-day workshop will bring together experts to discuss alternative strategies of regulating corporate behavior throughout global production networks. It will debate the role of (transnational) social movements and solidarity in keeping lead firms accountable; explore the role of initiatives that put labor agency central; and debate possibilities for keeping corporations legally accountable for substandard working conditions.

Programme

Coffee and welcome: 10-10.15 am

Session 1: 10.15 - 11.45 am

Genevieve Lebaron	'Corporatizing Activism: The Politics and (In)Effectiveness of Market-Based Governance'
John Hilary	'The CSR Delusion: why we need to confront capital (not befriend it)'
Alessandra Mezzadri	'Garment Sweatshop Regimes: The Informalisation of Social Responsibility over Health and Safety Provisions'

Session 2: 12- 1 pm

Andreas Rühmkorf	'Promoting Corporate Social Responsibility in global supply chains'
Florence Palpacuer	'Voluntary versus binding forms of regulation in global production networks: Exploring the "paradoxes of partnership" in the European anti-sweatshop movement'

Lunch 1-2 pm

Session 3: 2-3 pm

Ashok Kumar	'Consolidation of Footwear Production in South China and Workers' Bargaining Power: When the Commodity Chain becomes a Lever'
Nik Hammer	'The evolution of reshoring and monitoring practices in UK apparel manufacturing'

Session 4: 3.15-5 pm

Jeroen Merk	The part of no part: outsourcing, offshoring and worker discontent
Karin Astrid Siegmann:	Precarious Workers as Agents in Non-governmental Labour Regulation
Mathias Koenig-Archibugi	'Designing inclusive corporate accountability mechanisms'

Alessandra Mezzadri

Alessandra Mezzadri is a lecturer in Development Studies at SOAS, London. Her research interests focus on globalisation and processes of labour informalisation; materialist approaches to global commodity chain analysis and global industrial systems, labour standards and CSR; gender and feminist theory; and the political economy of India. She has investigated in depth the Indian garment industry and explored its different regional sweatshop regimes and informalisation modalities, illustrating the different ways in which sweatshops are formed and reproduced.

Andreas Rühmkorf is a Lecturer in Commercial Law at the University of Sheffield where he researches and teaches company law, corporate governance, corporate social responsibility and internet law. He has worked as a lecturer at the University of Sheffield since 2008. Andreas is a fully qualified German lawyer. He completed his German law degree at the University of Münster. He then did an LLM (Masters in Law) and his PhD at the University of Sheffield. His PhD analysed the promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility in English private law. Andreas continues to research the legal aspects of CSR. He is now particularly interested in the role of the home state of multinational enterprises in the promotion of CSR/human rights in global supply chains. His book 'Corporate Social Responsibility, Private Law and Global Supply Chains', published by Edward Elgar, comes out in June 2015

Ashok Kuman recently finished his DPhil on Economic Geography from Oxford University. His research looked at changing labor-capital relations and workers' bargaining power in the global garment sector. His research in the garment sector spans a decade including as a 2008-2009 Fulbright Research Scholar in Sri Lanka. Kumar finished his undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin - Madison and his MSc from the London School of Economics. He starts as a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at Queen Mary, University of London in the Autumn of 2015.

Florence Palpacuer is a Professor in Management Studies at the University of Montpellier, France, where she is responsible for a research program on Governance of Enterprises, Organizations, and Sustainable Development funded by the French National Research Agency. A former consultant for the International Labour Organization, she has been studying globalization processes and their social consequences from a management perspective over the last 15 years, with a particular focus on the global clothing and agrifood industries. Her recent interests include workers' resistance and the rise of social movements in global value chains. She has published about 15 articles and book contributions on these issues in journals such as *Human Relations*, *World Development*, *Economy & Society* or the *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. Her two co-authored books, published in French, promote a critical management perspective on the consequences of globalization

Genevieve LeBaron, PhD (York University, 2011) is Vice-Chancellor's Fellow in Politics at the University of Sheffield, UK. She is the author of *Protest Inc: The Corporatization of Activism* (2014, Polity, with Peter Dauvergne) and 10 academic journal articles, including in the *Brown Journal of World Affairs* and *Review of International Studies*. Her research on activism and corporate governance has been profiled in *Fortune Magazine*, *The Economist*, and *The Guardian*, and she has published journalistic articles in leading newspapers including *The Guardian*, *openDemocracy*, and *Salon.com*. She has held visiting positions at the International Labour Organization in Geneva, and the University of California, Berkeley, and in 2015-2016, she will be Yale University's Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery Fellow. Genevieve has conducted funded research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, United Kingdom Economic and Social Research Council, and Social Sciences and Humanities

Research Council of Canada. In 2015, she was awarded the British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award by the British Academy for the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Jeroen Merk holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of Sussex, Brighton. He was the David Davies of Llandinam Research Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science (2014-2015). His research interests lie at the crossroads of international relations, political economy, social movements, and the governance institutions of global industrial relations. I have been particularly concerned with analysing the shifting nature of worker-employer relations within local, national and global (supply-chain) contexts; the role of ethical standards as embodied in codes of conduct and other voluntary instruments in regulating transnational corporations; and the combined (but uneven) emergence of cross-border networks of NGOs and trade unions keeping businesses accountable for labour rights violations. Between 2003- 2014, he has also been a research and policy coordinator at the International Secretariat of the Clean Clothes Campaign, a labour rights NGO with branches in 15 European countries and an extended network of partners in production countries.

John Hilary is Executive Director of War on Want. He has worked for the past 25 years in the global justice movement, and has published widely on the political economy of globalisation. In 2013 he was appointed Honorary Professor in the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Nottingham. His book, *The Poverty of Capitalism: Economic Meltdown and the Struggle for What Comes Next*, was published by Pluto Press in 2013.

Karin Astrid Siegmann works as a Senior Lecturer in Labour and Gender Economics at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam in The Hague, the Netherlands. Her research has been concerned with the intersection of global economic processes with local labour markets, stratified by varying degrees of formality of work, gender, as well as other social identities.

Mathias Koenig-Archibugi is Associate Professor (Reader) of Global Politics in the LSE Department of Government and the Department of International Relations. His research interests span the normative and empirical assessment of global governance, with a special interest in global health, development, and labour rights. His recent publications include "Why Do States Commit to International Labor Standards? Interdependent Ratification of Core ILO Conventions, 1948-2009". *World Politics* 66(3), 2014, with Leonardo Baccini; and "Accountability-by-Proxy in Transnational Non-State Governance." *Governance* 26, no. 3, 2013, with Kate Macdonald.

Nik Hammer works in the School of Management, University of Leicester, and is a member of the Centre for Sustainable Work and Employment Futures (CSWEF). He has previously conducted research on International Framework Agreements with a view on their implementation in MNCs' supply chains. Recent research focused on the interrelations between GVC restructuring, labour market segmentation, and the labour process; see e.g. a report for the Ethical Trading Initiative on working conditions in apparel manufacturing, <http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/press/for-journalists/media-resources/Leicester%20Report%20-%20Final%20-to%20publish.pdf/>