Debate

Networks of Labour Activism: Collective Action across Asia and Beyond. An Introduction to the Debate

Sabrina Zajak, Niklas Egels-Zandén and Nicola Piper (iD)

ABSTRACT

As an Introduction to the Debate section that follows, this article develops the concept of 'Networks of Labour Activism' (NOLA) as a distinct, and important, aspect of cross-border, cross-organizational mobilization of workers, trade unions and other organizations and groups. NOLAs are seen as different from traditional labour activist networks in that they are neither solely connected to the position of labour in production processes, nor wholly reliant on the soft and discursive power of advocacy coalitions. The authors understand NOLAs to be characterized by the interaction of different types of labour rights, social movement and community organizations, joining forces in complex forms of strategizing vis-à-vis multiple targets. Thus, cross-boundary strategizing (across organizational and geographical divides) is seen as a basic characteristic of NOLAs. The authors argue that NOLAs continue to be deeply embedded in political-economic contexts of the state and global value chains, and alliance formation reflects the peculiar vulnerabilities and constraints resulting from this embeddedness. This Introduction draws on multiple studies of NOLAs from around the world, but its main focus is on some of those Asian countries which are at the centre of global supply chain capitalism and labour exploitation, and which have become the laboratory for new forms of networked worker agency and activism.

INTRODUCTION: THE GLOBAL ECONOMY, LABOUR RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA

This article introduces the concept of Networks of Labour Activism (NOLA) as an essential but underexplored aspect of labour agency in the

setting of global economic integration and supply chain capitalism. It argues that networked forms of labour agency are a central endeavour in reducing some of the most severe forms of exploitation rooted in class relations in the global South. Many Asian countries are at the centre of global supply chain capitalism and labour exploitation; they have also become the testing ground for new forms of networked worker agency and activism. This contribution therefore draws on multiple studies of NOLAs from across Asia and beyond.

The intensification of global economic integration, the consolidation of power in multinational enterprises, and the increase in the financialization and marketization of politics have undermined the post-war settlement in many (Western) countries and, at the same time, have prevented the emergence of trade unions and institutions capable of governing capitalism in the global South (Jackson et al., 2013; Munck, 2002). As Breman (2009) pointed out, the West 'is following the rest'; the working class is fractured into several new social classes and subjected to different forms of precarious work which deny workers basic forms of security and protection (Standing, 2016).

For many developing countries, integration into global value chains has become the dominant and unquestioned development strategy and focus of industrialization policies (Gereffi, 2014; Raj-Reichert, 2015). By providing low-wage labour, many Asian countries have gravitated towards the export of low value-added, labour-intensive manufacturing products such as garments or electronics (Nadvi and Rai-Reichert, 2015; Taylor, 2014). While this has, in some cases, contributed to economic development, it has also led to poor working conditions and labour rights violations (UNCTAD, 2013). The outsourcing of production has enabled brands and retailers to distance themselves from traditional labour relations and to break out of the unionized industrial areas, turning the global supply chain into a barrier to organizing and collective bargaining (Merk, 2009). Tsing (2009) uses the notion of 'supply chain capitalism' to describe a system of capital accumulation based on practices of transnational outsourcing, in which the managerial logic of optimizing suppliers leads to the systematic exploitation of societal inequalities and historically grown vulnerabilities. Migrant work, informal work, child labour and exploitation of female workers are common phenomena across Asian production sites, especially, but not exclusively, in Economic Processing Zones. This exploitation is often backed up by non-democratic or semi-democratic states. This has led some to argue that the history of capitalist development and its link to colonialism has resulted in the subordination of labour to such an extent that the development of a Polanyian 'protective counter-movement' has been impossible (Breman, 2009).

However, focusing on structural constraints overlooks the fact that labour in the global South is also pioneering the constitution of new forms of networked labour agency (Chhachhi, 2014; also Mosoetsa and Williams, 2012; Pye et al., 2012). Local, regional or transnational forms of resistance to global architectures of exploitation are being developed, which become

visible in the structuration of NOLAs and are distinct from traditional national patterns of resistance against a national model.

Anchored in this understanding, this Forum Debate deals with the transnationalization of labour protection and labour agency in the form of complex networks of labour activism. The notion of labour here includes all actors involved in struggles that coalesce around certain grievances and vulnerabilities of workers. When alliances are formed and additional actors enter the struggle, joint actions emerge which go beyond the original problem and the original scale of the workplace. We define NOLA as having two distinct but related characteristics. First, it involves *cross-border strategizing* in terms of activists from different places working together towards targets in two or more countries. Second, it involves *cross-organizational networking*, meaning that the agency of labour is manifested in relation to a multitude of actors, including local and global trade unions, labour rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social movements, self-organized worker groups, or grassroots community organizations.

It is our belief that researching NOLA is a good starting point to build upon and advance existing thought on cross-movement alliance formation. The concept of NOLA in relation to labour-centred development is a step towards bringing non-unionized (or not solely unionized) worker agency into focus, thereby illuminating points of synergy with research on social movements (Della Porta, 2015; Tarrow, 2005), global value chains (Barrientos et al., 2016; Carswell and de Neve, 2013; Lund-Thomsen, 2013), and global labour studies (Bieler et al., 2016; Evans, 2015; Webster, 2015).

At first glance, the ideas behind NOLA may appear to hold a promise of social development. NOLAs could be one way to overcome the fragmentation of labour or the silo mentality in organizing workers, and may lead to the empowerment of workers by exploring new power sources and forms of solidarity. NOLAs can thus be seen as an important building block in Polanyi's second movement — workers' mobilization as a counterweight to the asymmetrical power relationships between globalized capital and localized labour (Bieler et al., 2016; Burawoy, 2010; McCallum, 2013). The different contributions to this Debate carefully explore these potentially over-optimistic interpretations. The potential of NOLAs to promote social development is treated as an empirical question, subjected to critical analysis through the perspective of a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, industrial relations, sociology, political economy, development studies, geography and international politics.

This analysis is carried out on the basis of rich fieldwork data on NOLAs in a variety of Asian countries (India, China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines and Pakistan); industries (automotive, garment, palm oil and energy); and types of workers (migrant, female or other particularly precarious workers). These different lines of inquiry are brought together in an actor-centred, context-based analysis that acknowledges constraints on actors' strategic interactions due to class-based exploitation and other forms

of state and business repression. However, these lines of inquiry also aim to avoid structural over-determinism by exploring the multiple ways and practices through which different types of agencies, which are not confined to workers and the workplace, unfold.

The general argument that emerges is that neither a solely worker-centred perspective nor a structural-institutional perspective is sufficient to fully understand how NOLAs emerge and how they deal with the challenges currently facing labour in Asia. Additional factors that promote such an understanding include the reasons for cooperation, processes of alliance formation, and how networked forms of agency experiment with new strategies and practices of resistance. Networks, we argue, become their own structuring force of labour agency. The interactions, diffusions, or learning processes which occur in these networks shape the way actors behave.

Our approach to NOLA is reflective of other recent attempts to stretch the definitional boundaries of worker agency by including wider labour agencies and different organizational forms (Coe and Jordhus-Lier, 2011; Grote and Wagemann, forthcoming 2017; see also Campling et al., 2016 and contributions in *Third World Quarterly* 37(10); contributions in Newsome et al., 2015). This Introduction therefore synthesizes and critiques existing ideas of worker agency. In the following sections, we will introduce our analytical lenses, identify key dimensions of NOLAs and map the case studies which follow along these dimensions. We will then present a comparative analysis of the different cases discussed in this Forum Debate before summarizing the main ideas.

NETWORKED FORMS OF LABOUR AGENCY

In this Forum Debate, we elaborate the concept of NOLA by emphasizing the composition and division of labour among different actors and the multidimensionality of transnational labour agency networks. The network perspective draws attention to the nature of relations between a diverse set of organizations and their modes of coordination (Diani, 2015). Despite the rising interest in labour agency in subject areas such as international labour studies, global value chains, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and labour geography (Carswell and De Neve, 2013; Chan, 2014; Lund-Thomsen and Coe, 2015; Niforou, 2014), internal dynamics in networks and their consequences have not yet been sufficiently explored.

While each Debate contribution draws on this literature to different extents, in this Introduction we identify various shortcomings in the literature, which suggest that the concept of NOLA could be a common denominator for studying the rise of multiple forms of solidarity networks. Our literature review will show that crucial questions need further elaboration. What multiple forms of labour agency can we observe and how do they relate to each other? How can we explain the shape and structure of such networks of

labour activism, including mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion? Under what conditions are synergies or negative trade-offs produced?

The literature on global value chains (GVCs) and global production networks (GPNs) is paying increasing attention to the 'labour issue' (e.g. Carswell and De Neve, 2013; Coe and Hess, 2013). Value chains themselves have come to be understood as 'networks of embodied labour' (Cumbers et al., 2008: 372). Selwyn (2013) suggested shifting attention to 'labour-led' social upgrading through increased participation of workers, instead of focusing on managerial or economically driven changes. Scholars began to integrate labour process theory in the analytical framework of the GVC (e.g. Barrientos et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2013), and in doing so they improved our understanding of how labour's power is embedded within transnational, national and local spheres of production. This perspective has demonstrated how GVCs limit structural and associational power and agency (Bair and Werner, 2015). However, this flourishing labour agency debate has tended to focus on workers within factories, placing trade unions or cross-border union networks at the head of collective labour agency (Helfen and Fichter, 2013). What has not been examined from a multidisciplinary perspective is the multifaceted nature of networked labour actors (including social movements and other grassroots organizations, community organizations, informal labour unions and NGOs). As a result, there is an inadequate understanding of what leads these actors to cooperate.

Another line of thinking regarding new alliances originates within the trade union revitalization debate. Scipes (2014), Turner (2005) and Waterman (2015) use the concept of social movement unionism to elaborate why and how workers and trade unions ally with social movements, students or grassroots community organizations. They argue that these alliances can help workers to organize, regain strength, or at least limit severe injustices. This, to a great extent, also inspired literature on new forms of organizing (Lindell, 2010; McCallum, 2013). Peter Waterman's original normative idea was to develop an emancipatory labour strategy that had the potential to overcome the corporatist barriers that separated the established labour movement from broader social issues and that could contribute to the democratization of all social relations and institutions (Waterman, 1991; see also Nowak's contribution in this Debate). However, the social movement unionist perspective looks at networked agency from the vantage point of trade unions, disregarding the interests and backgrounds of others involved. It also focuses on very localized alternatives to worker organizing, ignoring the fact that local organizing can be strengthened or complemented by activities located in different regions and countries, or within international organizations.

The literature on transnational labour activism (dominated by constructivist international relations scholars) takes this transnational aspect seriously, looking into how transnational advocacy networks (TANs) support domestic struggles of labour. This line of inquiry has begun to integrate

insights from international relations on transnational institutions and governance with research on social movements (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). Contributions have shown that labour activists increasingly make use of global political opportunity structures and regulatory layers (de Bakker et al., 2013; Piper, 2015; Zajak, 2017). However, stemming from analyses in Europe or the USA, TANs are generally conceptualized as having been instigated by actors from the global North, underestimating the relevance of actors in the global South. The contributions to this Forum Debate, by contrast, take struggles in the global South as a starting point and highlight the relationship and division of labour among different actors in these networks.

These actors are embedded in different institutional contexts and layers of regulation, including national and international law, transnational and private rules, and local conventions and practices (Bartley, 2011; Hassel, 2008; Meardi and Marginson, 2014). As it stands, we do not have a comprehensive understanding of the shape and effectiveness of cross-border labour activism in the context of multiple layers of regulation, the often opaque and rapidly changing power constellations, and the global integration of non-democratic or only partially democratic states with differing state–society relations. In fact, the literature has led to speculation in two different directions: some authors argue that, under conditions of regulatory complexity, the combined power of multinational corporations and repressive states systematically disadvantages resource-poor actors (Campling et al., 2016); others have suggested that the multilayered nature of the existing governance architecture also provides opportunities for new transnational mobilization which ultimately has positive effects on local organizing (Evans, 2015; Kay, 2005).

To overcome these ambiguities, the contributions to this Forum Debate take into account the multiple environments and regulatory layers in which new forms of labour activism are taking place by including a range of direct and indirect targets beyond the workplace: managers, factory owners, buyers, business associations, the state, international organizations, or private regulatory organizations. For example, migrant labour activism in the form of multi-actor networks spans regions and bridges issues of labour and migration (see Piper et al., this Debate section).

In this Forum Debate we accordingly shift the research focus to the multidirectional and multilayered interactions that workers and trade unions have with other actors, including social movements, global union federations, and their allies and opponents. In doing so, we recognize and critically explore the common assumption that cooperation between different organizations is desirable, easy to achieve, and intended to increase power and effectiveness. However, we also argue that this framing underestimates cleavages, factions, and conflicts which can — and do — emerge along divides caused by ideological differences, resource inequalities, and differential access to political and economic elites. These internal cleavages constantly reshape structures and strategies of NOLAs over time. The contributions to this Forum Debate pinpoint dynamics of contention inside these networked

relationships, thereby revealing unanticipated consequences that might also produce outcomes detrimental to the actors' original intentions.

We propose a distinct way of conceptualizing NOLAs, by considering 'context specificity' when probing into labour's strategizing across a range of locations. This allows us to uncover the broad range of networked labour agency, reflecting the location-bound diversity of interests and actors in today's global economy.

VARIETIES OF NETWORKS OF LABOUR ACTIVISM

We understand NOLAs as being characterized by the interaction of different types of organizations joining forces in complex strategizing vis-à-vis multiple targets. Thus, we recognize two key characteristics of NOLAs, which will be developed here, building upon existing literature and the case studies presented in this Forum Debate.

Firstly, *cross-organizational networking* means that the agency of labour is manifested in relation to a multitude of actors, including local and global trade unions, self-organized workers' groups, labour rights NGOs, student movements and grassroots community organizations. While strands of the literature on labour agency have started to consider the relevance of alliances, it remains puzzling how these very different organizational structures, ideological backgrounds, interests and access to resources can be integrated and held together for a common cause. As we will elaborate below, insights from social movement studies, such as frame bridging, can be a good starting point for this analysis.

The second dimension, *cross-border strategizing*, relates to organizing actions along global value chains. This implies either activists from two or more countries working together or activists addressing actors and institutions outside their own country in the hope that they can leverage their influence (Caraway, 2006: 278; Tarrow, 2005). NOLAs become transnational when they start to target or mobilize transnational companies or institutions to generate change at their production sites. As the various contributions show, integrating insights from research on transnational activism, global labour studies and labour geography is advantageous when studying the development of cross-border alliances.

All the contributions to this Forum Debate investigate different facets of the cross-organizational and cross-border dimensions across space and time and in different settings. The temporal aspect is crucial as labour networks evolve differently over time, and a historically informed perspective gives a sense of why specific forms of cooperation may be triggered in some cases and not in others.[1] Although all the papers adopt a historically informed

---

1. We will not be going into the same historical depth as, for example, labour process theory does for the evolution of class relations. This would also be difficult, given that the actors and

perspective, they differ in their methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives. Such variation allows us to compare a broad range of forms of worker agency. As several of the authors point out, this might also include workers' decisions to circumvent trade union structures and to build their own networks across different workplaces (see the contributions of Do, Hauf and Nowak in this Debate).

It is important to note that the establishment of NOLAs is not an automatic process, even if it seems like a desirable alternative when facing GVCs and capitalism on a local and global scale. Several contributions, for example, point out how trade unions fail — or intentionally decide not — to build alliances, leaving particularly vulnerable workers such as migrants and informal sector workers unprotected (compare the contributions of Piper et al. and Pye). Thus, although NOLAs are manifestations of solidarity, there are components of rivalry and competition at play which need further elaboration.

Cross-Organizational Networks: Alliance Formation, Cooperation and Conflict

Worker resistance can take many shapes, and it does not automatically adopt networked forms. A common differentiation is between collective and individual forms of labour agency (e.g. Carswell and De Neve, 2013; Coe and Hess, 2013; Herod, 2001). Individual forms of agency include, for example, voting with one's feet (exit) or other forms of individual resistance and resilience. Collective worker agency in the form of strikes or collective organizing of workers is generally understood to be the result of class struggle. From a Marxian perspective, class relations are defined by the production of surplus value; a class consists of people with a shared position in production and reproduction processes (Robinson, 2004: 37). Yet, as Thompson argued, workers' and trade unions' strategies are not simply the result of their status within the production process, but also stem from historical development, deriving from interactions and repeated behaviour over time (Thompson, 1963). We agree with Bieler et al. (2016: 8) that, while agents are not completely free from their structural positions, they nevertheless have 'a range of strategies at their disposal'. By looking into the dynamics of NOLAs, we are following recent studies which argue that the analysis has long been too narrowly focused on struggles between workers and employers on the shop floor, calling for the consideration of new actors engaged in broader struggles for social, economic and political change (Bieler et al., 2015: 7; Evans, 2015; van der Linden, 2016). Recent theorizing about class relations under supply chain capitalism has developed elaborate ways of thinking about class relations beyond the production process (Campling et al., 2016 and

the various social movements involved in NOLAs have been following different historical paths (for an overview, see Berger and Nehring, 2017).

contributions in *Third World Quarterly* 37(10); Selwyn, 2016). However, networked forms of labour agency include actors with different socio-economic positions, power resources, identities and interests.

This suggests that when investigating processes of alliance formation between a range of actors, it is not sufficient to take a class-based view — even if class analysis takes social categories such as gender or ethnicity into account as being mutually constitutive (Campling et al., 2016). The behaviour of advocacy organizations or new social movements cannot solely be explained by their role in relation to dominance and subordination. Advocacy organizations are, by and large, driven by highly educated, skilled and relatively well-paid experts, who nonetheless advocate for a normative cause (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Norman, 2017). Social movement research has explicitly distanced itself from explanations grounded in class or social stratification as a sufficient condition for mobilization and protest, arguing that additional factors such as resource mobilization, political opportunities, framing and identities have to be taken into consideration (McAdam et al., 1996; Rucht, 1994).[2] While these factors have become important when explaining collective action in social movement studies, they are unquestionably taken into account in labour studies, in addition to explaining cross-movement. Lately, there have been some attempts to focus more explicitly on the relationship between trade unions and social movements, albeit with a stronger focus on alliance formation in the global North (Gahan and Pekarek, 2013; Grote and Wagemann, forthcoming 2017; Zajak et al., 2017). Heery et al. (2012), for example, identified conflict, cooperation and indifference in relations among social movement organizations and trade unions. The case studies in this Debate section also find these patterns of relations within NOLAs. Organizations may cooperate even if they are indifferent to, or in a contentious relationship regarding, certain issues. Groups tend to cooperate under certain circumstances, for instance when they share similar goals, have ideological affinities, in the presence of incentives set by the political-economic environment, or as a result of (historical) path dependencies and shifting global political opportunities. However, there are also newly emerging cleavages that break up existing alliances. For example, in relation to private governance and corporate social responsibility, cleavages have been observed between trade unions and NGOs in terms of the institutional logics that they enact (Bartley and Egels-Zandén, 2015).

Organizations can also overcome differences: trade unions may have an interest in cooperation in order to partially compensate for lost structural and associational power by allying with NGOs and social movements which possess discursive or societal power (Brookes, 2013; Frege et al., 2003; Reinecke and Donaghey, 2015; Schmalz and Dörre, 2014). Yet, from the

2. Capitalism as a driving force has only recently been reintroduced into the study of social movements as current protest waves started to be interpreted as a response to the far-reaching social, political and economic problems triggered by the ongoing crisis (Della Porta, 2015).

viewpoint of social movement research, we also know that resources and opportunities are not stable, predetermined, or even clearly definable. When it comes to discursive or societal power, in particular, movement scholars use a rather complex set of factors to explain cultural or discursive resonance (Benford and Snow, 2000). Furthermore, alliances are formed among organizations with limited resources available, including types of worker organization that resemble neither traditional trade union forms of organizing nor social movement styles of organizing, but rather originate from workers themselves in novel ways (Meagher, 2010).

This Debate therefore takes a closer look at the constitution and perception of power resources. NOLAs could offer an alternative to membership strategies by focusing on other channels of influence. Increasing local organizational strength can be an important element for NOLAs and different power sources can have co-constitutive effects. The contributions which follow address this issue in different ways: Marissa Brookes highlights the differences between transnational activist networks (TANs) and transnational labour alliances (TLAs), which fundamentally rely on different power resources and mechanisms of influence. Sabrina Zajak shows that power resources do not necessarily accumulate, but that building upon one source can (unintentionally) weaken others. Such trade-offs, she explains, are due to the lack of (strategic) capacities of trade unions, which develop certain skills largely in cooperation with international donors at the expense of membership-based strategies. Jörg Nowak explores new forms of alliances between striking workers and other social movements that emerged in the post-2008 crisis period. Comparing strikes in India and Brazil, he shows that interactions between community organizations and social movements did help to compensate for the organizational and associational weaknesses of workers, but new cleavages emerged between established trade unions and new groups and alternative forms of worker organizations.

Felix Hauf illustrates the specific problem of involving labour NGOs in NOLAs. He suggests that international labour rights organizations aimed at strengthening local trade unions can produce detrimental effects by disempowering more radical and independent unions. His contribution reveals internal network mechanisms of exclusion and shifting power balances that operate to the advantage of less contentious groups. Hui Xu and Stefan Schmalz show the difficulties of forging alliances (or even cooperating at a very basic level) with state trade unions in China. Oliver Pye's contribution examines the networked patterns of labour agency of the very marginalized, which are manifested in interlinked everyday practices of resistance in the Malaysian palm oil industry. Chi Do's contribution indicates the relevance of individual power holders and officials who, on occasion, ally with workers and form NOLAs without the involvement of trade unions or NGOs.

These contributions help to explain why certain partners are chosen for cooperation and others are excluded. They suggest that access to power resources plays a rather limited role; decisions are often not strategic and

new ideological divides can outweigh potential power gains. Several of the authors stress that the empowerment of some organizations through their alliance with, for example, international NGOs or global unions, can also lead to the disempowerment of other groups. Identifying internal cleavages and competition, as well as processes which cause the unravelling of solidarity, challenges the dominant assumption about transnational advocacy networks, which are purportedly 'bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services' (Keck and Sikkink, 1999: 89; cf. Siegman et al., 2014).

The Transnationalization of Conflict: NOLAs' Multicontextual Strategizing

Activism becomes transnational when groups or organizations connect across borders or when they make use of or refer to global institutions (Tarrow, 2005). These two dimensions do not necessarily overlap. For example, networks can span different countries and locations, while the ultimate target remains local. However, networks may also form in a geographically small arena but mainly engage in transnational politics. Labour and social movement scholars tend to have differing views on the prospects of transnationalization. Overall, social movement scholars tend to share an optimistic view, arguing that cultural, technological and social dimensions of globalization facilitate the transnationalization of social movements (Fominaya, 2014; Tarrow, 2005). International institutions can become 'coral reefs' and arenas for claim making, mobilizing, or leveraging rights (Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005). In contrast, studies on class and labour relations (e.g. Campling et al., 2016; Coe and Jordhus-Lier, 2011; Gereffi and Lee, 2016) stress the fragmentation of labour through the reorganization of production along value chains and the asymmetries between 'place-bound labour and polycentric GPNs' (Coe et al., 2008: 284). To integrate both perspectives (the opportunities for transnational activism within a global institutional environment and the structural constraints produced by supply chain capitalism), we suggest that we need to look not only at NOLAs in the context of GVCs, but also at mobilization within the current global governance architecture. Thus, we need to link analysis of labour within GVCs and the global political economy with analysis of the increasing density of transnational institutions, which also provides new opportunities for strategizing and claim making (Evans, 2015). These institutions can create opportunities for differing interpretations and attempts by structurally disadvantaged actors to shift the terms of conflict (Schulze-Cleven, forthcoming 2017).

Research on transnational labour rights activism, strongly borrowing from Keck and Sikkink's idea of transnational advocacy networks (1998), has begun to explore multicontextual opportunities for transnational labour activism (Mena and Waeger, 2014; Zajak, 2017). The key idea is that workers

and trade unions can make use of different institutional contexts through networks of actors who are embedded in institutional settings at specific places. They can mobilize and leverage institutional power across spaces by 'jumping scales'.[3] As Brookes (2013: 191) puts it 'institutional power is neither simple nor static. Its exercise depends not only on workers' capacity to invoke protective laws, regulations, and procedures but also on their capacity to rescale conflict to locations in which employers remain bound by institutional frameworks' (for a further elaboration, see her contribution to this Debate). This suggests not only (re-)thinking the capacities and strategic capabilities of labour to access the institutions, but also considering and carefully specifying the kind of leverage that can be mobilized. Activists might target actors that are incapable of enforcing their demands, even if they sympathize and agree with them. This is why den Hond and de Bakker (2012) examine the power and leverage of the proximate or mediating target of activism[4] (that is, international organizations, other states and transnational companies) over the ultimate target (that is, factory management) where NOLAs actually want change to be effected. Thus, institutional power also depends on the power relationship between the proximate and ultimate. Following this idea, Zajak (2017: 17) has shown that even if global unions or activist networks are successful vis-à-vis their primary target, they nonetheless may be unable to affect the ultimate target (the state and factory management), especially because the latter can apply multiple 'boomerang defence' mechanisms. Furthermore, Bartley and Egels-Zandén (2015) have shown that workers and trade unions are able to leverage transnational companies and private regulation in more subtle and previously overlooked forms of negotiation that do not reflect a boomerang pattern.[5] Following this line of thinking, the contributions in this Forum Debate pay particular attention to the interactions between transnational actors and institutions where they 'hit the ground' at production sites.

The two contributions on the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh are insightful in this regard. When discussing empowerment and potentials for leveraging private institutions, Sabrina Zajak argues that the Accord needs to be understood as a 'double-edged sword': on the one hand, it provides unions with new opportunities for developing strategic capabilities, while on the other hand, it is also used by powerful domestic actors to exert additional forms of restraint. Christian Scheper stresses this

---

3. When actors strategically shift a conflict to a different stage, or play it out at multiple scales simultaneously (Merk, 2009).
4. Proximate targets are those which are leveraged to influence an ultimate, more distant target, or targets which are difficult to directly affect. Proximate targets become mediators for mobilization effects (cf. Soule, 2012).
5. The boomerang model states that local activists who cannot achieve their goals in the domestic arena (because they face repression or blockage) connect with activists outside their country who can pressure other states in order to promote domestic change (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

ambiguity by emphasizing the fact that the Accord hinges on transnational buyers' supply chain management regimes and on their collective sourcing power, thus reproducing, rather than opposing, existing corporate ethics of profit making. His contribution also reminds us that although the existence of GVCs allows NOLAs to emerge on a transnational scale, NOLAs also depend on the very conditions that make the GVCs profitable.

Felix Hauf's contribution is even more sceptical, stressing the pitfalls of mobilizing newly created transnational institutions. Hauf provides a context-specific analysis of a multistakeholder initiative, the Freedom of Association (FoA) Protocol in Indonesia's athletic footwear industry. He argues that the FoA Protocol glosses over or even strengthens the differences and conflicts between authoritarian, reformed, progressive and radical trade unions, thereby delegitimizing more radical strategies of industrial action. While global or transnational institutions may provide incentives for cooperation, these institutions can also contribute to the creation of new leverages amongst allies. It is possible that these institutions are more open to non-work related organizations, having a significant impact on the relationship between NGOs, trade unions and workers within networks, as NGOs are suddenly turned into gatekeepers for certain types of trade unions. Transnational institutional arrangements might facilitate cooperation precisely because they do not function well or fail to cover certain groups and issues. For example, Nicola Piper et al. in this Forum Debate highlight that migrants are particularly unprotected. When people cross borders, they lose their ability to assert work-related rights due to their 'in-between' status — as 'absentee' citizens from their country of origin and as non-citizens in the country of destination. Similarly, Oliver Pye stresses that there is a 'substantial gap between the potential that lies within the everyday practices of workers and explicitly political strategies'. He suggests that NOLAs could fill this gap by strengthening the connections between the multitude of loosely coupled forms of worker resistance.

TOWARDS A COMPARISON OF NETWORKS OF LABOUR ACTIVISM

On a theoretical level, the Debate contributions that follow enrich the conceptualization of NOLA beyond transnational activist networks, social movement unionism, or new modes of worker organizing in global supply chains. They unpack the constellations of different actors and their roles and relationships vis-à-vis each other and across multiple contexts. Without this we will be unable to understand many of the current protests and actions across Asian production sites, which no longer take the form of ordinary strikes, where more or less formalized collective action events are used to pressure management into negotiations or making concessions. Table 1 gives a schematic view of the different patterns explored in the case studies, highlighting the differences along our key dimensions of NOLAs.

Table 1. Patterns of Networks of Labour Activism across Different Cases

Contribution / Labour actors	Pye — Industry: palm oil; Workers: migrants	Piper et al. — Industry: multiple; Workers: migrants	Hauf — Industry: garment; Workers: contract/GVC	Nowak — Industry: car/electronics; Workers: in-formal/formal	Scheper — Industry: garment; Workers: contract/GVC	Zajak — Industry: garment; Workers: contract/GVC	Hui Xu & Schmalz — Industry: sanitation/ service sector; Workers: contract	Do — Industries: garment footwear electronics automobile
Workers	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Other individuals and workers	x			x			x	x
Established trade unions		x			x	x		
State trade unions	x							x
Independent or new unions	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Global unions	x	x	x		x	x		
Trade unions from other countries				x				
INGOs	x	x	x		x	x		
Community organizations	x		x	x				
NGOs/advocacy groups	x	x	x				x	
Transnational labour support organizations and networks	x	x	x		x	x	x	

x indicates part of NOLA

To exemplify: looking at precarious migrant work in the palm oil industry, Pye's NOLAs consist largely of self-organized or self-help groups supported by community organizations or small NGOs receiving some support from state unions and from new trade unions. By contrast, in the case of transnational migrants' rights mobilization (Piper et al.), NOLAs are highly transnationalized and dominated by migrant rights activists allying with labour rights activists and trade unions. Nowak's contribution shows a significant shift in alliance structure, with established trade union federations losing their central coordinating role and workers using alternative community labour organizations and new trade unions for the coordination of collective action. Hui Xu and Schmalz's NOLAs include activist groups from Hong Kong and Mainland China and student activists. We suggest that it is possible to identify three key factors, which are elaborated below. Although these are by no means exhaustive, and do not include all aspects covered in the different studies, these three dimensions can help explain the variety and specific shape and functioning of NOLAs and may also guide analytical distinctions for comparing NOLAs in the future.

The Nature of the State–Business–Society Relationship

The Debate papers highlight the importance of the particular political contexts of the individual countries in which change is desired and the realities of labour therein. The country context shapes network patterns in distinct ways, and the literature on transnational activism has been criticized for neglecting this issue (Beaumont and Nicholls, 2007; Merk, 2009; Niforou, 2014). Different strands of the literature have their own approach. Bair and Palpacuer (2012), for instance, have drawn on the varieties of capitalism literature to stress that national institutions and political cultures shape actors' views on the problem of sweatshops as well as the strategies available to effect change. Labour and social movement researchers emphasize additional contextual factors that shape the room for manoeuvre of workers, trade unions and social movements. Labour scholars stress the economic forces within the global economy, the particular structure of industrial relations and capitalism within a given country (van Klaveren et al., 2015), and different regulatory frameworks and labour regimes (Appelbaum and Lichtenstein, 2016). Movement scholars tend to examine the nature of the political regime (and its capacities to repress mobilization), democratic channels of influence, the architecture of the public sphere, and state–civil society relations though the lens of democratic theory (Goldstone, 2003; Johnston, 2011; Tarrow, 1994). The contributions in this Forum Debate suggest that it is not a matter of either/or between the different factors, rather that the range of state–business–labour–civil society relations helps to explain why certain actors or organizations decide to join forces and others do not.

Drawing on literature on state–civil society relationships in non-democratic states (Howell, 2015; O'Brien, 2003), the two contributions on NOLAs in the context of non-democratic states (China and Vietnam) highlight different mechanisms used by the political regime to intervene in and shape the network structure. For example, Do shows that when workers distrust the state unions and domestic labour NGOs, new forms of strike patterns emerge based on direct interactions between workers and managers of GVCs. In China, Hui Xu and Schmalz found that networking across borders becomes increasingly difficult and is undermined by multiple state strategies, which view external interference to be illegitimate or even illegal. Both contributions show that even in non-democratic states/capitalist regimes, networked forms of agency are possible, albeit in very specific forms — that is, without the involvement of trade unions and with a constrained, yet important, role for social movements.

Industry-Specific Regulations and Actor Constellations

Contributions in this Forum Debate support the argument that not only the state, but also the industry, shape the actor constellations of NOLAs and internal modes of coordination, as capital–labour relations, forms of production and exploitation, GVCs, and regulatory institutions vary across industries. For example, the global automobile industry comprises 'producer-driven global commodity chains' in contrast to the 'buyer-driven chains' formed in the garment industry (Gereffi, 2014). In the automobile industry, NGOs and consumer campaigns have played a less significant role in shaping labour rights and labour standards than in the garment sector, where trade unions and global works councils play a more prominent role. The global garment industry is the industry with the most stable North–South trade union–social movement network structure, which has been developing since the beginning of the 1990s. These networks have contributed to the proliferation of a range of multistakeholder organizations and new forms of transnational private regulation. In contrast to other industries, these networks are also involved in shaping country-specific agreements and new institutions, such as the Accord for Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and the FoA Protocol in Indonesia, and are heavily involved in mediating complaints (see the contributions of Hauf, Scheper and Zajak). An established transnational network structure such as this does not exist in the palm oil industry. Pye identifies the fragmentation and increasingly precarious nature of labour in the palm oil industry as the historical legacy of defeat of the plantation labour movement in the 1950s and 1960s. This is one explanation for why NOLAs take a very different shape in this industry, with individual workers trying to scale-up everyday resistance strategies and trade unions or transnational labour organizations having (yet) to play any significant role.

Types of Workers and the Intersection of Vulnerabilities

A third significant dimension in the Debate contributions is the types of workers involved in NOLAs. This only partially overlaps with the country and industry dimensions in that workers can, for example, be contractual or informal workers in the same industry and country. The Debate contributions suggest that the structure of NOLAs can be affected by the types of workers they are fighting for and the nature of the workers' claims.

This finding resonates with Kabeer's (2015) study which distinguishes between different categories of women workers in GVCs and shows how these categories affect the content (framing) of the claims made and the targets addressed. Kabeer argues that claims for workers in GVCs are largely made by anti-sweatshop campaigns led by Northern-based organizations, while migrant workers tend to be represented by locally based NGOs, sometimes made up of migrant workers themselves (ibid.: iv). The Debate contributions support the idea that different types of workers face specific challenges in relation to issues of migrant status (temporary, employer-tied or undocumented), discrimination against women, and precarious or informal work. The contributions indicate that the vulnerability of workers increases with informal status and lack of legal protection, which isolates them and significantly weakens their bargaining position. This also affects the network structure of NOLAs. For example, cross-organizational networking tends to be more sporadic, less strategic, and harder to maintain among self-organized worker groups without the involvement of trade unions. Informal work is also less regulated, affecting the type of alliances forged, claims made and strategies chosen. While NOLAs representing contractual workers operate in more institutionalized contexts (such as the global garment industry), NOLAs of and for limited or unregulated workers fight firstly for the establishment of rights and institutions (compare the contributions by Piper et al., Pye, and Hui Xu and Schmalz).

Informal work also challenges workers' ability to organize due to the high labour turnover and the absence of any employment security. Nevertheless, both Pye and Piper et al. have identified ways in which migrant workers use transnational networks to circumvent or challenge capital's strategies of spatial control. Using a labour geography perspective, Pye found that workers are producing new 'spatialities of solidarity'. These consist of socially embedded networks of knowledge, experience and contacts rooted in friendship or family ties. For other migrants, political opportunities have opened up on a global level, such as the negotiations surrounding the ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, which has galvanized networking between global unions, migrant rights and grassroots organizations (Piper et al.). In the absence of a functioning regulatory structure, Piper et al. examine how migrant labour networks bridge different frames and integrate demands based on citizenship rights, human rights and labour rights. An example of this would be the abandonment of border controls in conjunction

with workers' rights for undocumented or unauthorized migrant work, thus pushing for a global migrant governance regime that integrates labour rights with basic citizenship rights (Piper et al.; see also Piper and Grugel, 2015).

CONCLUSION

This Introduction has aimed to conceptualize networks of labour activism under conditions in which global restructuring noticeably prevents transnational solidarity, as workers are placed in competition with each other. Studies on global capitalism and class (such as Campling et al., 2016) and labour in global value chains (e.g. Barrientos et al., 2016; Gereffi and Lee, 2016) share the assumption that globalization and GPNs have significantly weakened the internationalist project of the labour movement. Others argue, by contrast, that globalization 'facilitates the mobilization of labour solidarity at the transnational level' (Evans, 2010: 356). We contribute to this ongoing debate by developing the concept of networks of labour activism as a distinct but important phenomenon of cross-border, cross-organizational joint mobilization of workers and others. One of its distinct characteristics is that trade unions are no longer viewed as the central player; different types of advocacy and labour activist groups are also included. Moreover, NOLAs are typically instigated or led by organizations located in the global South, and explicitly based on the working experiences of those on the bottom rungs of the globally networked economy.

As the contributions to this Forum Debate investigate different facets of NOLAs across space and time and in different settings, they enable us to compare a broad range of forms of worker agency, bringing together and developing different factors that shape the constitution, internal conflicts and outcomes of NOLAs. These factors include the nature of the state–business–society relationship; industry-specific regulations and constellations of actors; and particular types of work and associated vulnerabilities.

Taking all of the evidence into account, we suggest integrating and adding new explanatory factors for networked agency, in addition to shared (class) consciousness and the structural position of labour in production processes of global value chains. In other words, perspectives on labour agency need not only to take account of national relations of production and labour regulations, and workers' positioning in global value chains, but must also consider the structuring force of interactions within networks of labour activism which can unfold through learning or diffusion effects.

This Forum Debate does not regard all NOLAs as being analogous; rather, it calls for a closer examination and explanation of the different patterns which NOLAs display. NOLAs differ in terms of how they are organized, who is involved or excluded, the spaces they span, and their target. Explaining these varying patterns along the different dimensions outlined above could also contribute to a transnational comparative sociology that treats

the geographies and spaces of NOLAs as the comparative unit of analysis. Future studies can build upon these insights in order to move beyond the analysis of transnational advocacy networks or trade union organized forms of collective labour agency, and to look into networks of labour activism across plural contexts.

REFERENCES

Appelbaum, R. and N. Lichtenstein (eds) (2016) *Achieving Workers Rights in the Global Economy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Bair, J. and F. Palpacuer (2012) 'From Varieties of Capitalism to Varieties of Activism: The Anti-sweatshop Movement in Comparative Perspective', *Social Problems* 59(4): 522–43.

Bair, J. and M. Werner (2015) 'Global Production and Uneven Development: When Bringing Labour in Isn't Enough', in K. Newsome et al. (eds) *Putting Labour in its Place: Labour Process Analysis and Global Value Chains*, pp. 119–34. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

de Bakker, F.G.A., F. den Hond, B. King and K. Weber (2013) 'Social Movements, Civil Society and Corporations: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead', *Organization Studies* 34(5–6): 573–93.

Barrientos, S., G. Gereffi and J. Pickles (2016) 'New Dynamics of Upgrading in Global Value Chains: Shifting Terrain for Suppliers and Workers in the Global South', *Environment and Planning A* 48(7): 1214–19.

Bartley, T. (2011) 'Transnational Governance as the Layering of Rules. Intersections of Public and Private Standards', *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 12(2): 517–42.

Bartley, T. and N. Egels-Zandén (2015) 'Beyond Decoupling: Unions and the Leveraging of Corporate Social Responsibility in Indonesia', *Socio-Economic Review* 14(2): 231–55.

Beaumont, J. and W. Nicholls (2007) 'Between Relationality and Territoriality. Investigating the Geographies of Justice Movements in The Netherlands and the United States', *Environment and Planning A* 39(11): 2554–74.

Benford, R.D. and D.A. Snow (2000) 'Framing Processes and Social Movements. An Overview and Assessment', *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 611–39.

Berger, S. and H. Nehring (eds) (2017) *The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective: A Survey*. Berlin: Springer.

Bieler, A., B. Ciccaglione, J. Hilary and I. Lindberg (eds) (2016) *Free Trade and Transnational Labour*. London and New York: Routledge.

Bieler, A., R. Erne, D. Golden, I. Helle, K. Kjeldstadli, T. Matos and S. Stan (eds) (2015) *Labour and Transnational Action in Times of Crisis*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Breman, J. (2009) 'The Great Transformation in the Setting of Asia'. Dies Natalis Lecture presented at the International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague (29 October). www.iss.nl/fileadmin/ASSETS/iss/Documents/Academic_publications/breman_address_web.pdf

Brookes, M. (2013) 'Varieties of Power in Transnational Labor Alliances: An Analysis of Workers' Structural, Institutional, and Coalitional Power in the Global Economy', *Labor Studies Journal* 38(3): 181–200.

Burawoy, M. (2010) 'From Polanyi to Pollyanna. The False Optimism of Global Labor Studies', *Global Labour Journal* 1(2): 301–13.

Campling, L., S. Miyamura, J. Pattenden and B. Selwyn (2016) 'Class Dynamics of Development: A Methodological Note', *Third World Quarterly* 37(10): 1745–67.

Caraway, T. (2006) 'Political Openness and Transnational Activism. Comparative Insights from Labor Activism', *Politics & Society* 34(2): 277–304.

Carswell, G. and G. De Neve (2013) 'Labouring for Global Markets: Conceptualising Labour Agency in Global Production Networks', *Geoforum* 44: 62–70.

Chan, C.K. (2014) 'Constrained Labour Agency and the Changing Regulatory Regime in China', *Development and Change* 45(4): 685–709.

Chhachhi, A. (2014) 'Introduction: The "Labour Question" in Contemporary Capitalism', *Development and Change* 45(5): 895–919.

Coe, N.M. and M. Hess (2013) 'Global Production Networks, Labour and Development', *Geoforum* 44: 4–9.

Coe, N.M. and D.C. Jordhus-Lier (2011) 'Constrained Agency? Re-evaluating the Geographies of Labour', *Progress in Human Geography* 35(2): 211–33.

Coe, N.M., P. Dicken and M. Hess (2008) 'Global Production Networks: Realizing the Potential', *Journal of Economic Geography* 8(3): 271–95.

Cumbers, A., N. Corinne and P. Routledge (2008) 'Labour Agency and Union Positionalities in Global Production Networks', *Journal of Economic Geography* 8(3): 369–87.

Della Porta, D. (2015) *Social Movements in Times of Austerity: Bringing Capitalism back into Protest Analysis*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Della Porta, D. and S. Tarrow (eds) (2005) *Transnational Protest & Global Activism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Diani, M. (2015) *The Cement of Civil Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Evans, P. (2010) 'Is it Labor's Turn to Globalize? Twenty-first Century Opportunities and Strategic Responses', *Global Labour Journal* 1(3): 352–79.

Evans, P. (2015) 'Pursuing a Great Transformation', *Sociology of Development* 1(1): 3–19.

Fominaya, C.F. (2014) *Social Movements and Globalization: How Protests, Occupations and Uprisings Are Changing the World*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Frege, C., E. Heery and L. Turner (2003) 'Comparative Coalition Building and the Revitalization of the Labor Movement', in IRRA *Proceedings of the 55th Annual Meeting*, pp. 122–30. Champaign, IL: Industrial Relations Research Association.

Gahan, P.G. and A. Pekarek (2013) 'Social Movement Theory, Collective Action Frames and Union Theory: A Critique and Extension', *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 51(4): 754–76.

Gereffi, G. (2014) 'Global Value Chains in a Post-Washington Consensus World', *Review of International Political Economy* 21(1): 9–37.

Gereffi, G. and J. Lee (2016) 'Economic and Social Upgrading in Global Value Chains and Industrial Clusters: Why Governance Matters', *Journal of Business Ethics* 133(1): 25–38.

Goldstone, J.A. (ed.) (2003) *States, Parties, and Social Movements*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grote, J.R. and C. Wagemann (eds) (forthcoming 2017) *Social Movements and Organised Labour. Passions and Interests.* Farnham: Ashgate Publishers.

Hassel, A. (2008) 'The Evolution of a Global Labor Governance Regime', *Governance* 21(2): 231–51.

Heery, E., S. Williams and B. Abbott (2012) 'Civil Society Organisations and Trade Unions: Conflict, Cooperation, Indifference', *Work Employment & Society* 26(1): 145–60.

Helfen, M. and M. Fichter (2013) 'Building Transnational Union Networks across Global Production Networks: Conceptualising a New Arena of Labour–Management Relations', *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 51(3): 553–76.

Herod, A. (2001) *Labor Geographies. Workers and the Landscapes of Capitalism.* New York and London: The Guilford Press.

den Hond, F. and F.G.A. de Bakker (2012) 'Boomerang Politics. How Transnational Stakeholders Impact Multinational Corporations in the Context of Globalization', in A. Lindgreen et al. (eds) *A Stakeholder Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility: Pressures, Conflicts and Reconciliation*, pp. 275–92. Aldershot: Gower Publishing.

Howell, J. (2015) 'Shall We Dance? Welfarist Incorporation and the Politics of State Labour NGO Relations', *The China Quarterly* 223: 702–23.

Jackson, G., S. Kuruvilla and C. Frege (2013) 'Across Boundaries: The Global Challenges Facing Workers and Employment Research', *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 51(3): 425–39.

Johnston, H. (2011) *States and Social Movements*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Kabeer, N. (2015) 'Women Workers and the Politics of Claims-making in a Globalizing Economy'. UNRISD Working Paper No. 2015-13. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

Kay, T. (2005) 'Labor Transnationalism and Global Governance. The Impact of NAFTA on Transnational Labor Relationships in North America', *American Journal of Sociology* 111(3): 715–56.

Keck, M. and K. Sikkink (1998) *Activists beyond Borders. Advocacy Networks in International Politics.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Keck, M. and K. Sikkink (1999) 'Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics', *International Social Science Journal* 51(159): 89–101.

van Klaveren, M., D. Gregory and T. Schulten (eds) (2015) *Minimum Wages, Collective Bargaining and Economic Development in Asia and Europe: A Labour Perspective*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lindell, I. (2010) 'Informality and Collective Organising: Identities, Alliances and Transnational Activism in Africa', *Third World Quarterly* 31(2): 207–22.

van der Linden, M. (2016) 'Global Labour: A Not-so-grand Finale and Perhaps a New Beginning', *Global Labour Journal* 7(2): 201–10.

Lund-Thomsen, P. (2013) 'Labor Agency in the Football Manufacturing Industry of Sialkot, Pakistan', *Geoforum* 44: 71–81.

Lund-Thomsen, P. and N. Coe (2015) 'Corporate Social Responsibility and Labour Agency: The Case of Nike in Pakistan', *Journal of Economic Geography* 15(2): 275–96.

McAdam, D. (ed.) (1996) *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCallum, J.K. (2013) *Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Meagher, K. (2010) *The Politics of Vulnerability: Exit, Voice and Capture in Three Nigerian Informal Manufacturing Clusters*. London: Zed Books.

Meardi, G. and P. Marginson (2014) 'Global Labour Governance: Potential and Limits of an Emerging Perspective', *Work, Employment & Society* 28(4): 651–62.

Mena, S. and D. Waeger (2014) 'Activism for Corporate Responsibility: Conceptualizing Private Regulation Opportunity Structures', *Journal of Management Studies* 51(7): 1091–117.

Merk, J. (2009) 'Jumping Scale and Bridging Space in the Era of Corporate Social Responsibility: Cross-border Labour Struggles in the Global Garment Industry', *Third World Quarterly* 30(3): 599–615.

Mosoetsa, S. and M. Williams (eds) (2012) *Labour in the Global South: Challenges and Alternatives for Workers*. Geneva: ILO.

Munck, R. (2002) *Globalization and Labour: The New 'Great Transformation'*. London: Zed Books.

Nadvi, K. and G. Raj-Reichert (2015) 'Governing Health and Safety at Lower Tiers of the Computer Industry Global Value Chain', *Regulation & Governance* 9(3): 243–58.

Newsome, K., P. Taylor, J. Bair and A. Rainnie (eds) (2015) *Putting Labour in its Place: Labour Process Analysis and Global Value Chains*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Niforou, C. (2014) 'Labour Leverage in Global Value Chains: The Role of Interdependencies and Multi-level Dynamics', *Journal of Business Ethics* 130(2): 1–11.

Norman, D.J. (2017) 'Building Democratic Public Spheres? Transnational Advocacy Networks and the Social Forum Process', *Global Networks* 17(2): 300–17.

O'Brien, K.J. (2003) 'Neither Transgressive nor Contained. Boundary-spanning Contention in China', *An International Quarterly* 8(1): 51–64.

Piper, N. (2015) 'Democratising Migration from the Bottom Up: The Rise of the Global Migrant Rights Movement', *Globalizations* 12(5): 788–802.

Piper, N. and J. Grugel (2015) 'Global Migration Governance, Social Movements and the Difficulties of Promoting Migrant Rights', in C-U. Schierup et al. (eds) *Migration, Precarity*

and Global Governance: Challenges for Labour, pp. 261–78. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pye, O., R. Daud and Y. Harmono (2012) 'Precarious Lives: Transnational Biographies of Migrant Oil Palm Workers', *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 53(3): 330–42.

Raj-Reichert, G. (2015) 'Exercising Power over Labour Governance in the Electronics Industry', *Geoforum* 67: 89–92.

Reinecke, J. and J. Donaghey (2015) 'After Rana Plaza: Building Coalitional Power for Labour Rights between Unions and (Consumption-based) Social Movement Organizations', *Organization* 22(5): 720–40.

Robinson, W. (2004) *A Theory of Global Capitalism: Production, Class, and State in a Transnational World*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Rucht, D. (1994) *Modernisierung und neue soziale Bewegungen* [*Modernization and New Social Movements*]. Frankfurt: Campus.

Schmalz, S. and K. Dörre (2014) 'Der Machtressourcenansatz: Ein Instrument zur Analyse gewerkschaftlichen Handlungsvermögens' ['The Power Resource Approach: An Instrument to Analyse Trade Union Action Capabilities'], *Industrielle Beziehungen* 21(3): 217–37.

Schulze-Cleven, T. (forthcoming 2017) 'Labour Power in the New Global Economy', special issue of *Journal of Industrial Relations* 59(4), September 2017.

Scipes, K. (2014) 'Social Movement Unionism or Social Justice Unionism? Disentangling Theoretical Confusion within the Global Labor Movement', *Class, Race and Corporate Power* 2(3) online. http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/classracecorporatepower/vol2/iss3/9

Selwyn, B. (2013) 'Social Upgrading and Labour in Global Production Networks: A Critique and an Alternative Conception', *Competition & Change* 17(1): 75–90.

Selwyn, B. (2016) 'Theory and Practice of Labour-centred Development', *Third World Quarterly* 37(6): 1035–52.

Siegmann, K.A., P. Knorringa and J.J.S. Merk (2014) 'Putting Workers' Agency at the Centre in the Indonesian Sportswear Industry'. Global Labour University Global Labour Column 169. Johannesburg: Corporate Strategy and Industrial Development, University of the Witwatersrand. www.global-labour-university.org/fileadmin/GLU_Column/papers/no_169_Siegmann_Merk_Knorringa.pdf

Soule, S. (2012) 'Targeting Organizations: Private and Contentious Politics', *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* 34: 261–85.

Standing, G. (2016) 'The Precariat, Class and Progressive Politics: A Response', *Global Labour Journal* 7(2): 189–200.

Tarrow, S. (1994) *Power in Movement. Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tarrow, S. (2005) *The New Transnational Activism*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, N. (2014) 'Theorising Capitalist Diversity: The Uneven and Combined Development of Labour Forms', *Capital & Class* 38(1): 129–41.

Taylor, P., K. Newsome and A. Rainnie (2013) '"Putting Labour in its Place": Global Value Chains and Labour Process Analysis', *Competition & Change* 17(1): S.1–5.

Thompson, E.P. (1963) *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd.

Tsing, A. (2009) 'Supply Chains and the Human Condition', *Rethinking Marxism* 21(2): 148–76.

Turner, L. (2005) 'From Transformation to Revitalization. A New Research Agenda for a Contested Global Economy', *Work and Occupations* 32(4): 383–99.

UNCTAD (2013) *World Investment Report. Global Value Chains: Investment and Trade for Development*. New York and Geneva: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/wir2013_en.pdf

Waterman, P. (1991) 'Social-movement Unionism: A New Model for a New World'. Working Paper No. 110. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.

Waterman, P. (2015) 'Adventures of Emancipatory Labour Strategy as the New Global Movement Challenges International Unionism', *Journal of World Systems Research* 10(1): 217–53.

Webster, E. (2015) 'Labour after Globalisation: Old and New Sources of Power'. ISER Working Paper 2015/1. Grahamstown: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University.

Zajak, S. (2017) *Transnational Activism, Global Labor Governance, and China*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Zajak, S., G. Gortanutti, J. Lauber and A-N. Nikolas (2017) 'Talking about the Same but Different? Alliances and Cooperation in Social Movement and Industrial Relations Theory'. Paper presented at the international conference on 'Cross-movement Mobilization', Ruhr-University Bochum (5–7 April).

Sabrina Zajak (corresponding author: sabrina.zajak@rub.de) is Junior Professor for Globalization Conflicts, Social Movements, and Labour at the Institute for Social Movements, Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany, and vice chair of the Institute for Protest and Social Movement Studies, Berlin. Her research interests focus on transnational activism, trade union building, and labour mobilization in Asia.

Niklas Egels-Zandén (niklas.zanden@gu.se) is Professor of Management and Organization at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, and Director of the Centre for Business in Society. His research interests focus on governance of global production networks and integration of sustainability into corporate strategy.

Nicola Piper (nicola.piper@sydney.edu.au) is Professor of International Migration at the University of Sydney, Australia, and Founding Director of the Sydney Asia Pacific Migration Centre. Her research interests focus on international labour migration and advocacy politics in relation to a rights-based approach to global and regional governance, about which she has published extensively.