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Governing Global Production Networks in the New Economy

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Abstract

Global production networks (GPNs) have become a defining feature of globalisation and have significant implications for the promotion, preservation and protection of decent work. To date, much of the discussion around the future of work has focussed on the rise of these (vertical) networks and its negative impact on the effectiveness of traditional forms of governance at the national (horizontal) level. The argument in this chapter is that GPN theory offers an effective theoretical tool to understanding the impact of different forms of labour governance on the objectives of the employment relationship as well as recognising how workers can exercise agency to improve their relative position in the network. By focussing on three key areas: contestation, multi-scalarity and voice, in these global networks, a future research agenda is identified that can inform practice and policy.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the employment relations implications of Global Production Networks (GPNs)[i] have hit the headlines. Children are found to be stitching our clothes, the shrimp sold by supermarkets is peeled by forced labourers, modern day slavery is associated with our favourite sporting events, and numerous tragedies have occurred, causing appalling loss of life. Whether this is the fall of the Rana Plaza factory in 2013, killing over 1,100 workers or when commercial pressure from Apple for short lead times at Foxconn led to the attempted suicides of 18 workers in 2010, these disasters signal that our understanding of production networks is essential for researching the future of work.

GPNs, which now account for 80 per cent of world trade (UNCTAD 2013), pose a significant challenge but also an opportunity for the promotion and protection of decent work (ILO 2016). With over 450 million workers employed in these networks (ILO 2015: 132), GPNs have obvious implications for employment relations research. There has been a long tradition of international employment relations research into the effects of globalisation and, more recently, a greater focus on the interconnectedness of actors and inter-firm structural relations coordinated globally by (primarily Northern) lead firms. However, most theories of employment relations are based at the level of the firm and within specific national institutional contexts (Reinecke et al. 2018). Short shrift has been paid to the interaction between the multi-scalar activities of (trans-national) capital and the governance mechanisms promoted by a whole range of strategic actors, with a much greater focus on the agency of labour in determining their conditions of work in these networks.

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate current forms of global labour governance in the new economy and its implications for the objectives of the employment relationship: efficiency, equity and voice (Budd 2004). The focus is then shifted to reflect on some current exciting areas of research and forward into areas that are critical to continue to push the investigation of GPNs forward. The argument is that it is high time for employment relations scholars to take GPNs seriously as a theoretical tool with the recognition that workers are not at the mercy of structural inter-firm economic relationships and some have the agency to improve their relative position in the network. The subsequent focus on contestation, multi-scalarity and voice serve as potentially useful areas to help inform practice and policy.

Today, much of the discussion around the future of work and GPNs has been dominated by the assumption that technological change will have a significant impact on the international division of labour and result in 'reshoring' and the displacement of workers in these networks (ILO 2018: 2). However, these contemporary accounts stake a claim to a singular future of work where workers are inert to change that may (or may not) arrive. Technology for example can make it easier for workers to monitor working conditions and labour law compliance in GPNs and can facilitate cross-border solidarity that can galvanise the support of complementary institutions and civil society. In other words, as I and others have argued elsewhere,[ii] by focussing on only one future of work, in which workers are no more than victims to inter-firm relationships and the restructuring processes of transnational capital, obscures the work that needs to be done in understanding how labour can shape and resist these changes through experimental forms of organisation, regulation and governance. This is an area that employment relations scholars, informed by GPN theory, have a lot to offer.

2. From horizontal to vertical governance

GPNs, 'an organizational arrangement comprising interconnected economic and noneconomic actors coordinated by a global lead firm and producing goods or services across multiple geographic locations for worldwide markets' (Yeung and Coe 2015: 22), influence the structure of labour markets across the world and have led to significant changes in the international division of labour (Rainnie et al. 2011). The rise of GPNs has been associated with the rapid expansion of outsourcing by lead firms in the global North to suppliers in the developing South. Driven by intensive cost competition, many have argued that a 'race-to-the-bottom' in labour standards has started (Donaghey et al. 2014). Given what is happening in the world of work it is not surprising that many have concluded that the traditional (horizontal) system of national labour regulation, such as labour laws and collective bargaining, is under strain in the

globalised economy (Lakhani et al. 2013; Meardi and Marginson 2014). In the absence of a 'hard' system of global social justice, the declining power of organised labour and given the capacity or (un)willingness of national governments to enforce labour standards (Levi et al. 2013), a global labour governance 'regime' that prioritises soft-law over hard-law combined with a shift from the (horizontal) nation state to the (vertical) production network has emerged (Thomas and Turnbull 2018).

Historically, the ILO played a central role in setting the 'rules of the game' for (inter)national labour governance. According to Polanyi (1944: 27–8), the ILO was set up: 'to equalize conditions of competition among the nations so that trade might be liberated without danger to standards of living'. ILO Conventions and Recommendations provided a 'social floor' for national labour markets in Western Europe and North America under the Keynesian social democratic model. However, the ratification of many ILO Conventions is disappointingly low, and recent Conventions designed to reflect the changing world of work have seen very limited uptake and even less impact for the workers or industrial sectors concerned (Thomas and Turnbull 2018). Under the voluntarist framework for implementing ILO labour standards, governments are 'at liberty' to ratify Conventions they agree with, ignore those they do not care for, and de-ratify those they dislike, limiting the ILO's standard-setting role and impairing its supervisory mechanisms (Standing 2008: 356). Whilst the ILO maintains that public horizontal governance is the foundation of workplace compliance in GPNs and that 'national legislation is a prerequisite for decent work' (ILO 2016: 39), 'the simple fact that violations remain so widespread, and compliance with the ILO's core labour standards so uneven, suggests that costs of protection and benefits of violation often dominate' (Levi et al. 2013: 12).

Persistent labour rights violations by TNCs have been represented as products of a 'governance gap' whereby the capacity of national governments to steer and constrain transnational business activity has diminished and the (vertical) power and capabilities of TNCs has expanded. Of particular importance is the 'spatial-juridical fix' of global capital (Rainnie et al. 2011) and the exploitation of 'spaces of exception', in which certain workers are stripped of their decency and the normal rule of law does not apply (Lillie 2010). By moving spatially, capital is able to 'dis-embed' itself from particular national (horizontal) regulations and established class compromises. As a result, while even the most 'flighty' of capital must 'come to ground' at some point and 're-embed' itself in a particular place (Herod et al. 2007: 253), production systems and social relations will be reconfigured in the process, enhancing the control of capital over labour. In effect, 'capital removes specific work spaces, contexts and

categories of people from the protection they would normally enjoy within sovereign states' (Lillie 2010: 688). Export processing zones (EPZs), conservatively estimated to employ at least 66 million workers worldwide (ILO 2014: 4), are the most blatant example of a spatial-juridical fix in which territorial sovereignty is 'little more than a convenient fiction' (Lillie 2010: 683). Such 'spaces of exception' now extend well beyond EPZs and certainly reach into the lower echelons of GPNs.
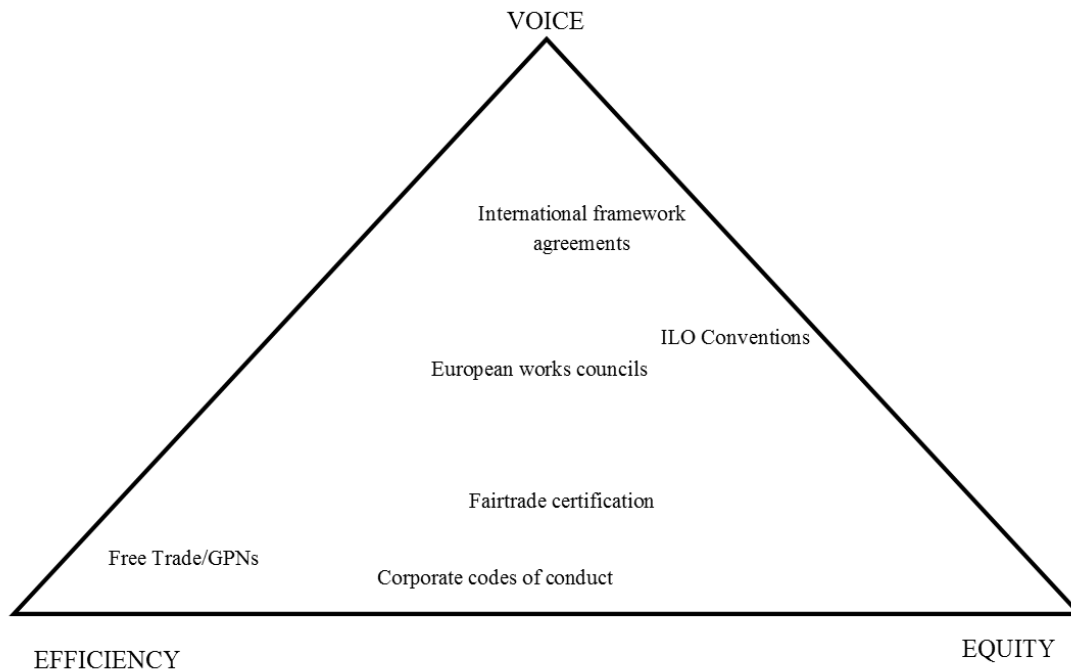
Whilst the tripartite (horizontal) actors were the traditional driving force of labour governance, nowadays 'new' (vertical) governance actors have emerged such as consumer groups, civil society organisations (CSOs), and (grudgingly) TNCs. Given the challenges that these regulatory gaps or 'spaces of exception' pose, much employment relations research on GPNs has focussed on the operation and attempted (re)regulation of these networks at the global scale (Meardi and Marginson 2014; Reinecke and Donaghey 2015; Riisgaard and Hammer 2011), and the various regulatory 'innovations' that have emerged to address these 'governance gaps' (Locke 2013; O'Rourke 2006). Recent studies have demonstrated that positive changes in conditions of work are realised when the interests of these 'new' and 'old' actors are aligned to improve labour standards (Berliner et al. 2015) and that private governance can best succeed when 'layered on' public governance (Locke 2013: 11). Indeed, a lot of intensive scholarship has focused on the impact of the voluntary codes of conduct of TNCs on equity for workers (hours of work, wages etc.). Whilst more effective vertical private governance mechanisms incorporate the fundamental ILO Conventions and compliance with other forms of public governance; many are less specific and are weak in ensuring workers' voice, such as guaranteeing freedom of association and collective bargaining (Anner 2012). The overall conclusion is that these mechanisms are 'woefully inadequate' (Gereffi and Lee 2016: 29).

The critical role of consumers in mobilising pressure against TNCs to promote and protect decent work has also emerged as a particular area of interest (Donaghey et al. 2014; Riisgaard and Hammer 2011). These campaigns are most effective when they involve a broad coalition of actors (Berliner et al. 2015) however workers are typically not involved in the establishment of multi-stakeholder mechanisms and may lack an opportunity to validate or comment on reports, or influence decision making processes (Egels-Zandén and Merk 2014). Thus, whilst these new social movements state their commitment to improved labour standards, they typically view workers as 'passive victims' that need to be helped by consumer campaigns (Tampe 2018). For example, Accenture (2013: 3) recommends 'interventions for key stakeholder groups, namely governments and corporations, to eliminate the [palm oil]

industry's dependency on and exposure to slavery' but completely ignores the agency of labour. Rather they appeal to those who are primarily responsible for the indecent work in the palm oil sector. Initiatives such as the Bangladesh Accord on Building and Fire Safety signed by two global union federations (GUFs) and over 200 multinationals, with the ILO as an independent chair, represents an innovate form of multi-stakeholder governance (Reinecke and Donaghey 2015), however key actors such as the Bangladeshi government and smaller sub-contractors are not included in its governance arrangements, limiting its effectiveness.

Ultimately, much GPN employment is insecure and unprotected, falling well short of the objectives of the employment relationship (Budd 2004: 2). Whilst GPNs can create and bring organisational efficiency, they systematically fail to guarantee labour rights (Gereffi and Lee 2016). Figure 1 summarises the extent to which several mechanisms for global governance fulfil the objectives of voice, equity and efficiency. Free trade, as promoted through international finance institutions, emphasises efficiency above equity and voice (bottom-left corner of Figure 1). In a similar vein, the establishment of GPNs is also founded on the desire of TNCs to maximise efficiency and reduce costs. Corporate codes of conduct and Fairtrade certification maintain a balance between efficiency (through higher productivity from suppliers) and equity (through provisions on child labour, for example, although they typically exclude freedom of association). International institutions for providing employee voice include European Works Councils as well as transnational union activity through the establishment of International Framework Agreements (IFAs) (top of Figure 1). International labour standards established by the ILO typically combine both an equity (restrictions on child and forced labour) and voice (tripartite consultation) mechanism rather than promote the demand for organisational efficiency. However, in the new economy, efficiency is strong, and equity and voice are weak, and this represents a major challenge for workers in GPNs. What is therefore needed is vertical regulation along these production networks (vertical public governance), providing tripartite (horizontal) actors at the national level with greater leverage to protect and promote decent work (Thomas and Turnbull 2018).

Figure 1: Objectives of the employment relationship and global governance

VOICE

International framework
agreements

ILO Conventions

European works councils

Fairtrade certification

Free Trade/GPNs

Corporate codes of conduct

EFFICIENCY   EQUITY

Source: adapted from Budd (2004: 6)

3. Workers in chains?

Since the early 1990s an extensive literature has evolved to help explain how the world economy is organised and governed and how relationships between actors has impacted the development and upgrading opportunities of regions, nation states, firms and (most importantly) labour. From a multi-disciplinary field of enquiry, two key theories have emerged, namely: Global Value Chains (GVCs) and Global Production Networks (GPNs). Both share the same purpose, which is to provide researchers with the analytical tools to connect a multitude of actors even though they are geographically dispersed. Of importance here is the ability to understand how these chains/networks affect employment relations and *vice versa*.

The (early) GVC/GPN literature had very little to say about employment relations or labour as an 'active participant' of the global economy as opposed to a 'passive victim' of restructuring processes (Cumbers et al. 2008: 369). With relationships between firms at centre stage, 'labour [was] largely written out of the script' (Cumbers et al. 2008: 370). If labour did appear in the script, it was more often as a commodity (a cost to be controlled and flexibly deployed) rather than human beings with rights and entitlements. Indeed, theoretical approaches to employment relations and GVCs have often viewed workers as a 'static' category (Lakhani et al. 2013) with (private and inter-firm) governance relationships as a key determinant (Gereffi and Lee 2016). In other words, they paint a picture of a future of work

6

rooted in soft norms, encouraging 'self-regulation' rather than hard law that demands compliance, where decent work for those workers engaged in GPNs is irreconcilable with corporate self-interest. However, this presumed inevitably leaves little room for the consideration of alternatives. While GVC theory offered important insights into the coordination of firms across national boundaries, it neglects institutional influences and labour agency. An understanding of GPNs, in contrast, embraces not only interaction between lead firms and suppliers, but also the extended range of (strategic) actors who contribute to influencing and shaping global production (e.g. national governments, multi-lateral organisations, national and international trade unions and CSOs) (Barrientos et al. 2011: 321). The three main conceptual elements that 'drive' GPN research are value (to estimate where value is captured), power (how power is used in capturing this value), and embeddedness (the degree to which the network is territorially and consequently, socially and institutionally embedded) (Henderson et al. 2002). Within GPNs, the focus is on 'the way that different social actors interact in the process of value creation and capture and how this shapes geographical outcomes' (Cumbers et al. 2008: 371). Thus, the characteristics of 'GPN trade' – as 'trade in tasks' rather than simply 'trade in goods' – captures a multitude of relationships and actors (Nathan 2013).

Labour action has an important effect upon territorial decisions within and between countries, thus determining in part the geography of activities within a network (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011). Much has been written on the impact of globalisation on organised labour's ability to represent and bargain for their members. Whilst the practices of TNCs have put downward pressure on labour standards, there are also examples of new forms of governance to promote workers' rights, and of worker organisation. As Tilly (1995: 5) points out: 'if workers are to enjoy collective rights in the new world order, they will have to invent new strategies at the scale of international capital'. The response of trade unions to the proliferation of GPNs is best captured by the number (albeit small) of IFAs that have been signed in recent years with limited success (Niforou 2014) and national and global unions have played a key role in international forums tasked with dealing with the impact of production networks on the promotion and protection of decent work (Donaghey and Reinecke 2018; Thomas and Turnbull 2018). Whilst the potential of workers to exercise agency is uneven across GPNs (Coe and Hess 2013), these networks offer opportunities for workers to realise conditions of work (Rainnie et al. 2011). As Padmanabhan (2012: 21) demonstrates, 'organizing locally can, in fact, be an effective strategy for use in case of confrontation with social actors who are organized at the global and other extra-local scales'. Riisgaard and

Hammer (2011) demonstrate that the scale of labour action and engagement by trade unions in 'power analyses' can identify the most effective location and method of strategic action, whilst Selwyn (2008) illustrates how just-in-time production used by TNCs is vulnerable to workers disrupting the production network by targeting specific 'choke points'. The importance of the GPN approach is the recognition that both labour agency and the impact of GPNs on labour is, 'heavily shaped by local institutional and regulatory conditions, and so will vary considerably between regional economies: place matters, to a powerful degree, when it comes to labour' (Coe and Yeung 2015: 192).

Structural approaches analyse employment relations as the result of configurations between buyers and suppliers and argue that labour standards are more likely to be followed when 'lead firms have more control and leverage over suppliers' (Lakhani et al. 2013: 462; see also Riisgaard and Hammer 2011). This however presupposes an inevitability of governance relationships based on commercial dynamics, with the focus on the lead firm as the ultimate source of value creation, which overlooks a whole host of other (non-commercial) strategic actors that can create and distribute value. Whilst the two leading conceptual frameworks in GVC research have been used effectively in employment relations research – Gereffi's (1994) producer/buyer driven chains and Gereffi et al.'s (2005) fivefold inter-firm governance typology – these theoretical tools often suffer from a lack of explanatory power due to their static conception of governance and their neglect of territorial (horizontal) effects. As Lakhani et al. (2013: 466) admit 'the GVC framework accounts for the characteristics that are likely to give rise to different patterns of GVC governance, absent other influences. If a pattern of governance does not fit the theory, then another factor may be at work'. Governance is always in contest with 'other influences' particularly when top-down private governance initiatives intersect with 'another factor', for example local organising campaigns (Ruwanpura 2016). In other words, inter-firm relationships are an important but not determining influence on employment relations, and the exact strength and nature of that influence are ultimately an empirical question. Relationships in GPNs are dynamic and emergent and the assumed certainty of future employment relations outcomes as a result of top-down dynamics obscures how workers might 'break free' of their chains. Here GPN theory is useful in placing labour action in the forefront of analysis and not secondary to institutional arrangements where alternative futures of work can be uncovered, which can potentially 'rebalance' the asymmetry of power inherent in all GVCs in favour of workers.

4. A future research agenda for employment relations and GPNs

A future research agenda for employment relations should take into account the emergence of GPNs in three different but interrelated aspects: 1) Contestation; 2) Multi-scalarity; and 3) Voice.

4.1. Contestation

Most broadly, the term 'governance' refers to the explicit or implicit 'rules of the game' however without a global authority that has been able to define the 'floor' below which any participants in an international 'race-to-the-bottom' would be 'disqualified', these rules are often contested. Whilst the ILO was the original 'umpire' of the 'rules of the game' (Polanyi 1944), the goalposts have shifted with CSOs and TNCs trying to carve themselves a place at the 'labour governance table'. Take for example, the clash between TNCs search for lower costs via outsourcing and exploiting 'spaces of exception', the striving of trade unions for recognition and better conditions of work and attempts by CSOs through their own 'rules of the game' to promote ethical accountability. In many sectors these relationships create an ongoing source of contest for labour governance (Alford et al. 2017) and, in the future, this contestation is likely to increase.

Whilst the governance of GPNs and its impact on the employment relationship can be viewed through the prism of both production and consumer relations (Donaghey and Reinecke 2018) this strand of research has primarily focussed on the alliances between consumers and workers and the complementarity of their actions (Donaghey et al. 2014; O'Rourke 2006). However, less attention has been paid to the negative impact of private power on labour power and the contested nature of labour governance with a greater focus on how workers: are 'resilient to' – get by; 'rework' – improve their conditions of work; and 'resist' – directly challenge capitalist social relations (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2011: 216; Cumbers et al. 2008). For example, in the tea sector, the rise of various certification schemes established by TNCs has posed a significant threat to trade union organising by putting all tea producers on a 'level playing field' irrespective of their actual conditions of work (Thomas 2019). Future research should consider the various attempts to improve labour standards by both private and public actors, whether they complement, substitute or contest, with the ultimate test being whether it improves workers' voice and equity in the GPN. A key component of this future research agenda will be a recognition of the multiple scales that labour governance can be established and enforced.

4.2. Multi-scalarity

As noted above, many theories of employment relations are based at the level of the firm or comparisons between national institutional contexts. GPN analysis is an effective tool for exploring the multi-scalar linkages between global and local capital, national institutional actors and workers who are societally and territorially embedded (Alford et al. 2017). These inter-linked scales provide an analytical tool for exploring the implications of the future of work on the employment relationship. The focus of future research should not be only on one scale but the whole range of (strategic) relationships that exist from the local to the global and the employment relations outcomes of these actions. A sole focus on the national or local level does not capture vertical work processes in particular sectors which are linked to GPNs and can create barriers to understanding and acknowledging the range of strategic actors and institutions that are involved in promoting and protecting decent work. At the same time a focus on the (re)regulation of labour standards at the global level often obscures the importance of local labour campaigns and their ability to alter the governance arrangements of GPNs from the bottom-up. In other words, the emergence of GPNs has opened up new sites of bargaining, contestation and struggle for governance, this calls for theoretical perspectives that facilitate examination of new forms of multi-scalar labour agency.

To date, most research has focussed on North American and European lead firms outsourcing their production to low-cost developing country producers. However, GPNs are multi-directional. South-South and South-North trade is increasing, in particular in finished goods, and lead firms based in the global South have begun to play much more important roles in shaping the governance patterns of GPNs. Emerging economies within Asia, Latin America and Africa have become fast-growing producer and consumer end markets. Taking a multi-scalar approach helps unpack the connections between the activities of these new lead firms and their interaction with Northern lead firms, alternative governance actors (CSOs etc.), the national institutional context and the individual and collective voice of workers. This is particularly important when analysing the labour agency of workers in many of these countries who have limited recourse to more traditional forms of voice (Lakhani et al. 2013).

4.3. Voice

Even in contemporary accounts of the future of work it is assumed that if firms (primarily suppliers) can successfully move to higher value-added activities in GPNs then workers 'automatically' benefit through improvements in equity (wages and hours of work) (see ILO 2018: 3). There is, however, by now a sufficient consensus, both institutionally and

academically, that this is not the case – economic upgrading (whereby enterprises move from low-efficiency to relatively high-efficiency activities) does not lead to social upgrading (equity and voice) in all cases (Barrientos et al. 2011). Ultimately, equity and voice – both collective and individual – are important objectives of the employment relationship in their own right even if they do not increase organisational efficiency (Budd 2004). Although equity and voice may clash with collective or individual responses, the more telling conflicts are between efficiency on the one hand, and equity and voice on the other. We do not expect all workers to receive the same material treatment (equity) throughout the world, but any improvements in labour governance should focus on giving workers *inter alia*, a voice in wage setting to determine their 'living wage' and the right to negotiate working time, rest breaks etc. Therefore, a central aspect of any study of the future of work and GPNs should be the analysis of different forms of governance towards improving workers' voice, particularly as the participation of workers and trade unions is weak or lacking altogether in many of these mechanisms. In other words, focussing on agency shows how change in one part of the chain can impact another and seeks to reveal weak spots within the production network that workers can exploit, find new allies and maximise their potential for voice (Quan 2008).

Here the case for a GPN driven approach to employment relations as opposed to GVC theory has been made. However, it is undoubtable that GVC theory has been useful to policymakers. After all, Gereffi et al. (2005, 82) preferred 'to create the simplest framework that generates results relevant to real-world outcomes'. This partly explains the significant uptake of this approach with international organisations. However, as noted above, the conceptualisation of a linear 'chain' connecting economic actors within the GVC model ignores the complexity of horizontal and vertical governance arrangements (Coe et al. 2008; Rainnie et al. 2011) 'as if the "invisible hand" of the market worked its magic to arrange supply chains' (Reinecke et al. 2018: 460). Thus, GVC theory applied uncritically assumes a rather narrow view of the future of work, one which has been used by international organisations who espouse the merits of GVC participation for national economies and the efficiency of firms with very little appreciation or understanding of the impact on social relations. It is in this domain that employment relations scholars have the opportunity to give a voice to the marginalised and form a counter-narrative to this future of work, informed by GPN theory that has a more nuanced view of the implications of engagement in production networks for workers' voice.

5. Conclusion: future or futures of work for global labour governance?

The proliferation of GPNs and their impact on the world of work is an emerging field of scholarship. Although competitive pressures have always existed in some sectors these pressures now transcend national boundaries and the state-based system of global labour governance has struggled to deal with, and adjust to, the expanding power of TNCs. The rise of GPNs has major implications for conventional understandings of employment relations, especially the effectiveness of existing forms of organisation and regulation. Labour governance is no longer the sole province of governments or trade unions and any contemporary account of employment relations should recognise the impact of all strategic actors at multiple scales and the contestation that occurs, with a much greater focus on the voice of workers. Enhanced dialogue between the GPN and employment relations literatures would therefore seem to offer benefits to both sides in understanding the future of work.

The predicted future of work may well not happen. Regardless of this, new ways must be found to bolster the position of labour in GPNs. The ILO's recent call for a Universal Labour Guarantee is a step in the right direction as it decouples access to labour rights from the (increasingly fissured) employment relationship and places emphasis on the need for workers voice in these networks (ILO 2019). In short, the fate of workers engaged in GPNs is not set in stone. The increasing proliferation of private governance by TNCs suggests a future of work rooted in voluntary, self-regulatory standards with labour issues being portrayed through consumers rather than workers and their representatives. Indeed, it could be argued that the current global labour governance 'regime' leaves very little room for organised labour. At a time when public governance and the power of workers is on the wane, alternatives are needed. One such alternative is the potential of a new international labour standard for decent work in global supply chains at the ILO (Thomas and Turnbull 2018), whereby a system vertical public governance could be established that would encourage states to enforce international standards on other states and actors connected through GPNs. Another alternative template for labour governance is the Bangladesh Accord which, for all its critique, is a prime example of transnational co-determination along the production network between representatives of labour and capital (Donaghey and Reinecke 2018). These initiatives, amongst others, indicate the prospects for enhancing voice in the context of the future of work.

Ultimately, there is work to be completed in ascertaining what the future of work will really look like for workers in GPNs as the claim of a singular future of work obscures the real alternatives that are already in motion. The futures of work are currently the subject of active debate and review, most notably at the ILO, and will inevitably play out in different ways in

different countries, sectors and production networks. What is dangerous about presupposing one future of work is that it assumes one destination already set, depriving people of the agency to shape and resist it through organisation and regulation. If we consider multiple futures for workers in GPNs rather than a terminus it allows us to imagine a future that is not concluded and one which activists, unions, academics, policymakers and others can identify and understand what they do and what they need to do to support the plight of the millions of workers engaged in GPNs.

Notes

[i] In this chapter I use the acronym 'GPN' to denote both the theory and the empirical phenomenon.

[ii] Go to: https://futuresofwork.co.uk/2018/09/05/editorial-from-the-future-of-work-to-futures-of-work/

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