



## **Industrial Relations Unit (IRRU)**

Seminar Speaker Series – Autumn 2022 (Term 1)

**Speaker:** Jimmy Donaghey, Professor of Human Resource Management, UniSA Business School

**Title:** **Stitching Governance for Labour Rights: Towards Transnational Industrial Democracy?**  
Co-authored with Juliane Reinecke, Professor of Management Studies, Saïd Business School

**Date:** Wednesday 23 November 2022

**Venue:** Hybrid (In-person: WBS room 2.214 and online: Teams Meeting)

**Time:** 14:00 – 15:30 (GMT)

**Abstract:**

The 2013 Rana Plaza disaster demonstrated that the prevailing model of private labour regulation through social auditing had failed to protect its alleged beneficiaries – workers at the end of corporate supply chains. This presentation presents the arguments we make in our forthcoming book of the same title. The problem is that these private governance institutions show little concern with the democratic representation of those affected: workers and their representatives are often neither involved in a meaningful way, nor have been empowered by it. By their very nature, global supply chains undermine institutions of democratic labour regulation: democratic oversight and binding state regulation as well as workplace level democratic participation. Thus, the objective is to explore whether meaningful private transnational labour governance can emerge in a way that that is underpinned by the democratic representation of those affected – the workers. Thus, empirically, the question is what kind of institutions might promote more deliberative, representative and inclusive decision-making processes within private transnational, governance arrangements?

In the book, we argue that a model of “transnational industrial democracy” emerged based on both traditional principles of industrial democracy and more market oriented reliance on MNCs to act in a state like capacity. In this way, worker interests were represented not just through Bangladeshi unions and Global Union Federations but also through NGOs. In addition, the key leverage utilised was not one of threatening production but exerting pressure on MNC brand image. That said, while the Accord did prove a meaningful initiative in transnational labour governance problems did emerge for example in terms of the exclusion of important national actors in Bangladesh, including the government and the employers’ association. Ultimately, the argument presented is that what is needed is a new paradigm of global labour rights, rooted in principles of transnational industrial democracy.

**Registration:**

**Book now via Eventbrite:** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/irru-202223-speaker-series-with-jimmy-donaghey-tickets-463569096647>