



## ICOR – Management – IOS Research Seminar

### “Contested Compliance Regimes in Global Production Networks: Insights from the Bangladesh Garment Industry”

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Friday, February 8th, 2019 – 10:00 – 12:00

#### **Abstract:**

This paper reports the findings of a field study on the emergence of collective agreements led by global brands enacting compliance measures to improve safety and working conditions in the Bangladesh garment industry. We explore how key actors in the Bangladesh garment sector who constitute the local production system of the global supply chain experienced the implementation of global agreements on factory safety. We argue that global safety compliance measures through multi-stakeholder initiatives provide legitimacy to multinational corporations and their global brands but do little to address the structural problems arising from exploitative pricing and procurement practices, which are the key reasons for deplorable working conditions in garment factories. Our findings indicate that neoliberal development policies of the state where local economies are incorporated into global production networks resulted in differential treatment and regulation of specific populations that comprise garment factory workers. The reconfiguration of state power to meet the demands of global supply chains also involved use of state violence to suppress dissent while undermining labour rights and working conditions. Our paper contributes to the politicization of multinational corporations in global production chains by showing how contestations between workers, factory owners, the state, trade unions and multinational corporations create new private forms of governance and new regimes of compliance in the industry.