

**UABS Research Symposium on  
Sustainability  
Friday 13 November, 2015**

**09.30 – 09.50: Verifying  
sustainability in supply chains**

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# Applying GVC in IB Research: Environmental Upgrading

- The global value chains (GVCs) literature has to-date highlighted the role of lead firms in the greening of GVCs, leaving the role of supplier firms under-theorized.
- We find that an understanding of the process of environmental upgrading is incomplete if the capabilities and strategic intent of suppliers are not taken into consideration:
  - KHATTAK, A. AND STRINGER, C. The role of suppliers in the greening of GVCs: Evidence from the Sri Lankan apparel industry, in Erdoğan, M., Arun, T, and Ahmad, A. (eds), *Handbook of Research on Green Economic Development Initiatives and Strategies*, forthcoming.

# Applying GVC in IB Research: Social Upgrading

- According to Rossi et al. (2014: 1) 'the globalization of apparel export production has been one of the major triggers of poor working conditions'.
- We examine the extent to which workers in the Bangladeshi RMG sector benefit through incorporation into GVCs in terms of improvements in working conditions and entitlements.
- Social compliance remains a crucial issue – collaborative efforts are needed at private, public and social governance levels
  - ISLAM, T. AND STRINGER, C. The Bangladesh apparel industry: is social upgrading occurring?, under review, *Journal of South Asian Development*.

# Applying GVC in IB Research: Labour Standards

- A criticism of the GVC and GPN analysis has been its inadequate incorporation of labour with mounting calls to 'bring labour back in' (Cumbers *et al.*, 2008).
- Labour and human rights abuses in the New Zealand fishing industry:
  - STRINGER, C.A., SIMMONS, G., COULSTON, D., AND WHITTAKER, D.H. 'Not in New Zealand's waters, surely? Linking labour issues to GPNs', *Journal of Economic Geography*, 14(4): 739-758, 2013.
  - SIMMONS, G. AND STRINGER, C. 'New Zealand's fisheries management system: Forced labour an ignored or overlooked dimension?', *Marine Policy*, 50, (Part A), 70-84, 2014.
  - STRINGER, C., WHITTAKER, D.H. AND SIMMONS, G. 'New Zealand's turbulent waters: The use of forced labour in the fishing industry', *Global Networks*, 2015, 10.1111/glob.12077.

# Applying GVC in IB Research: Labour Standards

- How parties inside and outside GVCs can come to contest labour standards, laying the base for credible regulation out of a virtual void:
  - STRINGER, C., HUGHES, S., WHITTAKER, H., HAWORTH, N. AND SIMMONS, G. Labour standards and regulation in GVCs: the case of the New Zealand fishing industry, under revise and resubmit, *Environment and Planning A*.
- Employment conditions in the Thai fishing industry (596 fishers surveyed): coercive recruitment practices, exploitative working conditions, and forced and child labour:
  - CHANTAVANICH, S., LAODUMRONGCHAI, S. AND STRINGER. C. Under the shadow: forced labour among sea fishers in Thailand, under revise and resubmit, *Marine Policy*.
- Ongoing research into labour standards, governance deficits, and corporate social responsibility initiatives in both the fishing and apparel industries.