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The Role of International Non-Governmental Organisations in Constructing Global Social Contracts: Global Social Justice at the WTO?

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Over the past decade, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have been contesting the neoliberal economic order in international politics and embodying normative conditions for what Richard Falk calls "humane governance". However, the degree to which INGOs have contributed to the formation of global social contracts with international organisations remains controversial. While INGO activists and various scholars advocate the establishment of a global social contract, empirical testing of this normative argument is underdeveloped. Drawing on this lack of empirical support, critics dismiss the global social contract concept and the role that INGOs play in international politics. This paper addresses this controversy and tests global social contract theories through a review, refinement and application of global social contract theory and an empirical study of two prominent INGO campaigns directed against the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Specifically, it explores the ways in which the activities of INGOs and their networks are challenging the neoliberal basis of WTO agreements and contributing to the emergence of global social contracts with this institution. From the case studies, we conclude that INGOs do indeed have the capacity to inject social justice into international economic contracts and that there is some basis for optimism regarding the formation of global social contracts.

Prof. Baogang He is the author of various books including *Nationalism, National Identity and Democratization in China* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000, with Yingjie Guo), *Multiculturalism in Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, co-editors with Will Kymlicka) and *The Search for Deliberative Democracy* (NY: Palgrave, 2006, co-editors with Ethan Leib). He has co-authored and co-translated several books in Chinese (including John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*), and has published 29 book chapters and more than 34 international refereed journal articles in English. He has established an international reputation as an authority on Chinese democratization, NGOs and local governance, and has gained international recognition in the fields of international relations and Asian Studies. Much of his empirical research has been linked to broader theoretical concepts such as civil society and democracy, and has attempted to test, modify and develop theoretical hypotheses.

**There is no entry charge and everyone is welcome.
Drinks and nibbles will be provided.**

The Blue Room, Building B, Room B2.20, Burwood Campus, Deakin University