

## **The impact of private and public labour regulation on labour struggles in global value chains**

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*Ruya Gokhan Kocer ([r.g.kocer@uva.nl](mailto:r.g.kocer@uva.nl)) & Luc Fransen ([L.W.Fransen@uva.nl](mailto:L.W.Fransen@uva.nl))  
Amsterdam School for Social science Research, University of Amsterdam.*

Essential for an understanding of the impact of transnational private regulatory instruments to improve labour conditions is to see how implementation links up with circumstances at the point of production. We should therefore first take into account how private labour regulation relates to the existing institutional framework. Most private regulation is implemented in countries with legal frameworks which are not only discouraging unionization and collective bargaining, but are also applied asymmetrically leading to zones of informal productive practice. Second, it is important to study how private regulation adoption interacts with existing patterns of industrial relations.

This study focuses on precisely these matters in an analysis of the practice of private labour regulation in the Turkish clothing and textile industry. Our focus is on the degree to which private regulation contributes to the right of workers in this sector to organize and choose representatives, or, in legal terms, Freedom of Association. The paper argues that a shift in development strategy towards export orientation by Turkish government in the 1980s stimulated changes in the Turkish legal framework negatively affecting the position of worker organizations. Asymmetric legal enforcement furthermore led to a rift between formal and informal sections of industries. Private labour regulation is presented as a tool to confront these challenges. We show, with in-detail analysis of three workplaces, that private regulation does affect industrial relations in these zones, but not always in ways expected by their supporters. The effect of private labour regulation on worker capacity to organize is reliant on a set of conditions, including strategic choices of actors on different levels of industrial relations bargaining.