What shapes the quality of employment in global production? Analyses on the suppliers’ perspective and decision-space in Egypt and Jordan

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Abstract:
The Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations postulate that “decent work for all” shall be achieved worldwide until 2030. In order to achieve this goal, global labour standards are promoted by public and private actors intending to ensure a minimum standard of employment across the globe. The effectiveness of global standards is especially discussed in the context of global production networks where decent work deficits are a major challenge. Research shows that the complex interaction of global and local influences on suppliers leads to context- and business-specific employment outcomes that oftentimes deviate from global standards.

The PhD project aims to further dissect how global and local factors shape local suppliers’ employment practices. It studies the quality of employment in the export-oriented textiles and garment industries in Egypt and Jordan. A special focus is laid on the design of working time arrangements, remuneration systems and employer-employee relations. The project’s main research questions are: What do local stakeholders understand by a good quality of employment? How do suppliers design their working time arrangements, remuneration systems and employer-employee relations? How can local understandings and employment practices be traced back to global and/or local influences? The PhD is conceptually rooted in the convergence-divergence debate in international business. The empirical analysis follows a multiple case study approach to compare understandings and employment practices between Egypt and Jordan, and between different nodes in the supply chain. Interviews with local stakeholders (suppliers, experts, workers) and a collection of documents inform the analysis. Research results are presented and discussed in three scientific papers.

https://doi.org/10.1108/cpoib-11-2017-0076