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NEW INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RULES: PUTTING PEOPLE OVER PROFIT?

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GONZALO DURÁN, JOHANNES JÄGER, LUKAS SCHMIDT
The EU CSDDD: Potential Entry Points for Transferring Power Resources within Global Value Chains¹

ABSTRACT *The EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (EU CSDDD) represents an important new legal instrument that aims to protect human rights. The chapter examines whether the directive potentially represents an important step forward to transferring power resources within global value chains to the Global South. The paper starts by providing a brief overview of the making of the EU CSDDD. This is followed by an analysis of economic perspectives on international standards and by showing how a critical political economy perspective on global value chains and the power resources approach can be used to analyse this new binding legal instrument. Based on this theoretical framework, three possible scenarios and five entry points to increase the effectiveness of the EU CSDDD are presented. It is concluded that the effectiveness of the EU CSDDD will very much depend on whether power will be effectively transferred to workers and civil society in the Global South. Strengthening international civil society networks will be crucial for that. However, it remains to be seen whether the EU CSDDD represents a first step towards much more far-reaching international standards leading to more fundamental progressive changes in the global economy.*

KEYWORDS *Human rights, power resources, political economy, European Union, binding social and environmental standards*

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I. Introduction

At the global level we observe two important tendencies. Firstly, the era of hyper-globalisation, the rapid increase in global economic activities based on the cross-border liberalisation of trade, capital and finance since the 1980s, has reached its peak and has slowed down in recent years. Against this background, the term *slowbalisation* has been introduced to the debate to describe the current state of globalisation and the potential start of a new era (The Economist 2019). In line with this, a multi-polar world is emerging and protectionist policies and geopolitical strategies in the global economy have become more visible. Secondly, at least in the EU, we have seen the emergence of a minimal consensus that unregulated global competition and voluntary rules do not guarantee that basic human rights are respected. This, however, apparently clashes with a liberal understanding of the benevolent effects of capitalist expansion. While the downsides of liberal global capitalism are well-known by those who have suffered under these exploitative relations of production as well as by critical scholars (Selwyn/Leyden 2021), the liberal human rights discourse and the apparent failure of unregulated corporative activity to guarantee these rights has reached a broader public only more recently. Possibly, it has become more difficult to convincingly tell neoliberal stories against the background of the multiple crises and failures, from financial crises to social crises to environmental crises. This has led to a wider acceptance of critical voices that have been campaigning for international social standards for a long time.

The EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (EU CSDDD) is likely the most prominent example of the recent trend towards binding international rules in the global economy. Hence, the question of binding social and ecological standards is back on the agenda. Clearly, such binding rules go well beyond voluntary measures and mere reporting requirements. However, the question arises how the EU CSDDD can be evaluated and whether it transfers power resources to those who have been bearing a large share of the social and environmental costs of neoliberal hyper-globalisation. Is the agreement on the EU CSDDD a Pyrrhic victory that further legitimises a liberal capitalist economy or is it rather an important step forward towards a potentially more progressive configuration of

the global economy? To put it differently: is this a reformist measure that contributes to sustaining a global unequal capitalist system, or does it potentially transform it, and hence, can it be seen as a first step towards what André Gorz (1987) has called a ‘non-reformist reform’? To answer this question, the EU CSDDD cannot be analysed in an isolated way but must be understood within the broader context of the developments of the international political economy.

We start by providing a short overview of the emergence of the EU CSDDD. This is followed by an overview of the debate about economic perspectives on international standards in the new era of globalisation. Based on a critical political economy perspective on global value chains and the power resources approach we assess how and to what extent the EU CSDDD can translate into a progressive step forward. Based on this, we provide a preliminary assessment of the directive by discussing different scenarios and possible entry points to take advantage of the new directive.

2. The making of the EU CSDDD

In the past decades, human rights organisations have called for binding rules to prevent human rights abuses and hold corporations accountable (e.g. FIAN International 2022). In this context, the ongoing negotiations in the United Nations’ *Intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights* on the so-called UN Binding Treaty, have been seen as one of the most promising attempts to introduce binding rules at the international level (Business and Human Rights Resource Center 2024). Such rules could be based on existing recommendations such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (United Nations 2011) and the recently updated OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct (OECD 2023), both of which are voluntary. Global binding legislation could supersede such voluntary rules, which have been the instrument of choice for human rights due diligence in the past years. Due to the strong pressure of civil society movements and coordinated campaigns, countries including France (*loi de vigilance* in 2017) and Germany (*Lieferkettensorgfaltspflichtengesetz* in 2022) have already implemented binding

due diligence laws at their respective national level. In Germany, the Initiative Lieferkettengesetz was the central platform that united progressive civil society institutions, trade unions and critical economists in a campaign for the implementation of this law. With the aim of implementing binding rules to prevent human rights abuses and environmental damages in global value chains by corporations that operate in the EU, the European Commission proposed a directive on corporate sustainability due diligence in 2022.

The official adoption of the EU CSDDD on the 24th of May 2024 and the publication of the directive (Directive (EU) 2024/1760) was preceded by disputes over the directive's content. The directive has still to be transposed into national law within the European Union to make it binding. Transposing the directive into national law is not just a technical issue as its detailed specifications have an important impact on the effectiveness of the EU CSDDD (European Coalition for Corporate Justice 2024b). However, by 2029, not only large EU companies with more than 1,000 employees and a turnover of more than 450 Mio Euro, but also large companies that export to the EU and have a turnover of more than 450 Mio Euro in the EU should be covered by the law. The companies that are in the scope of the directive will be obliged to conduct due diligence. This requires setting up a multi-stage process for risk analysis largely in line with OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct (OECD 2023). For those people affected by human rights violations, the inclusion of civil liability in article 29 of the directive might be one of the most important aspects. Affected parties can claim compensation from companies based on this article, when the damage was caused by a breach of due diligence obligations or when a breach contributed to the damage (Rosenberger 2024). It is because of such elements that the EU CSDDD was welcomed by civil society organisations. Nevertheless, NGOs also criticised the directive because of its massive loopholes. One of the reasons is that it only applies to an estimated 5,421 companies in the EU (European Coalition for Corporate Justice 2024c: 12). Furthermore, the important financial sector is effectively largely exempted by the directive's definition of *chains of activity*. This definition also narrows down what is included in downstream activities of corporations. Currently, the use of pesticides and the

export of weapons is not subject to the EU CSDDD. What is more, the underlying concept of due diligence itself is criticised by human rights organisations for its prioritisation of certain human rights over others, thus “dividing the indivisible” (Mayer/Patz 2024).

Nevertheless, despite the attempt of business actors and allied political actors to impede the EU CSDDD, even the watered-down due diligence directive is regarded as a success for civil rights organisations and progressive political actors in the EU, and as a step in the right direction (European Coalition for Corporate Justice 2024a).

The expectations by progressive forces in civil society and by parts of organised labour in Europe that the directive would be a game changer had been very high. The watering down of important aspects of the directive during the process of negotiations due to the resistance of corporate interests and their representatives leaves room for further improvement in the future (for a more detailed overview see Sattlecker 2024). However, several companies, that had already respected human rights on a voluntary basis, became public proponents in favour of the EU CSDDD. For them, binding rules were expected to entail an end to their relative competitive disadvantage and would create a level playing field. Moreover, advisory companies looking to sell services to implement and conduct due diligence obligations clearly also perceived the EU CSDDD positively. However, the strong resistance of many business actors against the CSDDD can be seen as an indicator that such a piece of legislation enforcing minimal human rights standards was perceived by them as a significant threat.

There are different ways to explain this. Firstly, this can be understood as a reaction to the fear of additional administrative costs, but it might be questioned whether this had been the major driving force behind the resistance. The regulatory costs had been estimated by the European Commission to be less than 0.009 percent of the turnover of large companies (European Commission 2020: 66). This clearly is rather insignificant. Secondly, there is the argument that European companies would lose competitiveness compared to non-EU companies. Indeed, for those European companies that re-export from Europe, complying with human rights standards might turn out to be a disadvantage relative to other competitors that might not be subject to the regulations. However, being forced to follow certain minimum standards may also become an advan-

tage for European companies. Assuming that there is a trend to strengthen human rights globally, early adopters may have a competitive advantage (Jäger et al. 2023). Thirdly, the discussion around the directive was also instrumentalised by political parties to show how they protect companies against supposedly bureaucratic EU rules. This was, for example, particularly obvious in the case of Germany's FDP (Schwab 2024). Fourthly, corporates and their think tanks feared that these rules might be the first step towards something that could systematically reduce their power and profits in the long run. Although it is difficult to disentangle which of the above motives was relatively more important, the harsh resistance can be taken as an indicator that many corporates had a more principal problem with the regulations. The EU CSDDD could potentially pave the way to further similar and more far-reaching international governance structures that could eventually strengthen people of profit.

3. Economic perspectives on internationally binding standards: a contested debate

The emergence of the EU CSDDD clearly demonstrated the contested nature of any attempt to push for a reform of global trade and economic relations which prioritises human rights and environmental rules over profits. This particular political struggle made the fundamental conflict of class interests between affected communities in the Global South and transnational corporations visible. In a broader perspective, the EU CSDDD is not only about the legal configuration of the world economy, but also relates to the economic debate about the liberalisation of markets and the role of free trade for the development of the Global South.

The debate over the effects of liberal markets and the need for international binding rules is not new. Milton Friedmann (1970) argued that the only social responsibility of companies is to maximise profit. A simple neoclassical approach would indicate that international standards impose a burden on the cost function of each firm. As a result, the introduction of such regulations has negative outcomes and should therefore be avoided (Felbermayr et al. 2022). This old-fashioned view opposes any intervention, advocates a *laissez-faire* policy and is reminiscent of the traditional oppo-

sition of neoclassical economics to the traditional demands of the working class, from collective bargaining to minimum wages, maximum working hours, social protection, and the effective ban on child labour. However, from a standard neoclassical perspective, regulations have a specific function: to address market imperfections (Scherrer 2017). This can be seen even in standard introductory textbooks to economics. The argument is that when market imperfections exist, negative externalities are generated, and as a result, economic outcomes are adversely affected. In the context of this approach, violating human rights may, in fact, be considered a market imperfection that should be corrected (Jäger et al. 2023). The new institutionalist approaches (Acemoglu/Robinson 2012) make this argument and emphasise the need for good governance as a condition for the unhindered deployment of free market forces. In this perspective, human rights violations by corporations result in poor labour productivity and a lack of economic development. Hence, the claim that it is necessary to implement international rules in order to avoid a race to the bottom has frequently been made. Private labels and voluntary codes of conduct have often been proposed to address the problem. However, such strategies fall short in providing an effective answer to the problem, because of pressure in competitive markets and the goal of achieving profits. It has therefore been argued that binding regulations should be established at the international level (Greven/Scherrer 2002).

From the viewpoint of critical political economy, the globalisation of markets has enabled companies to reach a larger market than ever before. This can be seen in the sum of exports and imports as a share of GDP (Stanley 2023). Moreover, globalisation becomes an opportunity for companies (transnational corporations) to lower working conditions and environmental standards depending on differences in power relations in the markets where they operate. As a result, the same corporation can adhere to different standards when operating in different countries.

The logic behind this strategy is that of globalising production and enlarging the number of workers (Marx 1976). Depending on the conditions under which labour finds itself, companies are able to increase profitability levels. The increase in unemployment and the increase in precarious employment are factors that accelerate the process of capitalist accumulation. Accordingly, the greater the bargaining power of the working class

in a given country, the lower the capacity of companies to extract more surplus value. This means that globalisation is not only a method for accessing more markets, but also a means for capital to search for spaces where there is a greater power of capital over labour to boost the rate of profit (Maito 2014). Human rights, the environment, and communities can be adversely affected by this. When workers are weak, unorganised and without real bargaining power, corporations are more likely to lower the standards they themselves apply in other contexts where unions are strong and have significant bargaining power (Jakobsen 2007).

The logic of lowering standards is more apparent – but not exclusively so – in a context of international division of labour of the centre-periphery type, where capitalist countries in the global centre see opportunities to improve their profitability by lowering the labour and environmental standards of workers and communities in countries of the periphery (Baylos 2022), which traditionally have fewer power resources. A well-known example of this is in the mega textile sweatshops in India, where companies based in central countries use interwoven chains of outsourcing where informal and precarious labour is prevalent (Mezzadri 2017).

4. The political economy of global value chains and the transfer of power resources

To analyse the structural reasons for human rights abuses and environmental destruction in the global economy and to open a perspective for potential change, a critical political economy perspective provides an adequate framework. For a deeper understanding of the interconnect-edness between centre and periphery and the possibilities for a shift in power relations (e.g. via binding standards), we suggest looking beyond the ‘box’ of countries and use the Global Value Chains (GVC) approach in combination with the Power Resources Approach (PRA). From a critical political economy perspective it is a problematic abstraction to plot, like neo-realists do in mainstream international political economy, the global economy as if nation states were the key-analytical category. On the contrary, the underlying social relations of production, and hence, class relations, are crucial in a critical political economy perspective (Jäger

2022). This perspective opens the ‘box’ of countries and helps us to see, not only the internal divisions within countries of the global periphery, but also the common interest of capitalists and ruling classes in countries of the core and the global periphery. Maintaining and expanding capitalist relations of production, and repressing labour in countries of the global periphery, might, therefore, be in the interest of dominant classes in both camps, the global core and the global periphery, as Bond (2016) has clearly shown. Based on this, in a critical political economy perspective, international standards do not simply represent a roll out of human rights globally, or what might be interpreted by some as the neo-colonial export of ‘Western’ values. On the contrary, the struggle for human rights and internationally binding standards can be understood as a solidaristic strategy to strengthen the weaker parts of the global working class, mainly located in the global periphery. Hence, it can be understood as international cooperation ‘from below’.

The GVC approach understands the interconnectivity of centre-periphery relations in the world economy beyond the ‘box’ of countries. Based on insights from world systems theory (Hopkins/Wallerstein 1986), it has gained widespread attention, from the 1990s onwards, as a broad field of interdisciplinary research. It established an understanding of the globalisation process which allowed for a differentiated view of the effects that the international division of labour had on different actors within a given GVC and how this is linked to certain forms of governance (Gereffi et al. 2001, 2005). Researchers highlight the unequal power relations between the different parts of the GVCs and saw a transfer of value from the beginning of the chains to their end as an underlying dynamic of the era of hyper-globalisation (for a comprehensive overview see Fischer et al. 2021). The approach also highlights the potential to upgrade within a given GVC and thus opens a perspective for development policies. Whereas these policies often focussed on economic upgrading alone, recent research in this tradition argues that economic upgrading does not guarantee social upgrading, but points out that the role of bargaining and the institutional power for improvements in value chains is crucial (Dallas et al. 2019, Marslev et al. 2022).

Thus, it is possible to counteract the capitalist strategy by internationalising standards to the benefit of workers and communities. International standards can be viewed as a beacon that illuminates local stand-

ards, and as a basic level of protection for the environment and workers to curb the impunity of multinational corporations for labour rights violations throughout their global value chains (Guamán 2024). The concrete content of these standards can be traced back to past struggles waged by workers and other social forces in countries where they are more powerful. Therefore, we are discussing a transfer of power, or a globalisation of power of subaltern groups.

To understand how international trade affects workers and which steps are necessary to improve their situation, the PRA is highly valuable. According to Erik Olin Wright (2000) and Beverly Silver (2003), two of the central authors of the PRA, the position of workers within an economic system (e.g. in the value chain) is a central foundation for their *structural power*, while *associational power* refers to power that results from collective organisation. A broad field of research has developed further insights into various power resources based on specific contexts and struggles (for an overview see Schmalz et al. 2018, Fischer et al. 2022, Flavell/Gunawardana 2022). In the context of the EU CSDDD, the concept of *institutional power* is crucial. According to Stefan Schmalz and Klaus Dörre (2014), *institutional power* is based on structural power and associational power, and is the result of previous struggles. As we have pointed out (Jäger et al. 2023), this means that new legislation such as the EU CSDDD can be interpreted as an institutionalisation of a compromise between capital and labour. What makes institutional power so important is that it potentially enshrines these compromises over longer periods of time. Even if power to the advantage of relations change over time (e.g. worsen from the viewpoint of labour), institutional power might persist in the form of such legislation. These laws could be used as power resources by social groups (e.g. workers, small scale farmers and fishers, foragers) that might be affected by human rights abuses and environmental destruction along the value chains in their struggles.

5. Which way forward? Three possible scenarios and five entry points

Although the uneven structure of global trade persists, the end of hyper-globalisation and the recent debates over a new regulation of global trade clearly indicate a turning point. Cracks in global neoliberal

hegemony have appeared but also rising geopolitical tensions are affecting workers' rights, as Christoph Scherrer shows in this issue. The recently agreed EU due diligence legislation potentially represents a paradigmatic change in international economic governance structures. Reforming international economic relations by establishing binding rules is thus taking shape. However, the EU CSDDD is not only opposed by many corporates within the EU but also interpreted as a protectionist measure in a new era of globalisation, for instance by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce (Global Times 2024). From a critical political economy perspective, such criticisms stand in sharp contrast to international labour solidarity. As Nadine Reis and Maria Gómez analyse in their contribution in this issue, the experiences with the social chapter in the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) provide an interesting and ambivalent example of new international labour standards. As Oliver Pye in this issue insists, when analysing the German supply chain law, well intended international rules may not necessarily have positive effects on workers in the Global South and so strengthen them automatically. The EU CSDDD potentially also suffers problems, as Marieta Kaufmann shows in this issue. This is mainly because of the legal weaknesses and a framework that seems to make it very difficult for workers and NGOs from the global periphery to successfully bring to court large international corporations. In a similar vein, Gonzalo Durán and Paula Vidal in this issue, analyse in the case of Chile the difficulties of facing the working class and trade unions in peripheral countries to potentially take advantage of international social standards such as the EU CSDDD.

Hence, we may ask to what degree the EU CSDDD indeed can be characterised as progressive and strengthen workers' power globally, or in which way it tends to legitimise and therefore stabilise neoliberal patterns of the global economy. We have shown in detail (Jäger et al. 2023) how and why the EU CSDDD – as well as binding international rules in general – can be interpreted as a transfer of institutional power from the Global North to workers in the Global South. As a result of such international standards, local power resources can be boosted or activated. This means that workers' power resources can in principle be increased in a country of the Global South by setting international standards. However, the specific configuration of such international regulations is crucial for their effects

and thus the institutional power that is potentially created or transferred. Although the directive is supposed to protect basic human rights, such as the right for unionisation, and it demands that a ‘living wage’ or ‘living income’ be paid, it remains to be seen what this means on the ground. As Scheper (2017) warns, the effectiveness of due diligence regulations depends very much on the specific configuration.

Undoubtedly, the EU CSDDD can in principle be seen as an important step towards binding international regulations. It certainly has an impact on international debates and possibly could induce other countries to follow the example – what can be referred to as the ‘Brussels effect’ (Bradford 2020). The EU’s international initiatives are of global significance. Such developments could also activate local power resources in particular struggles in the Global South. However, the material content of the EU CSDDD is rather thin and does not address global economic relations in general, as well as being very weak regarding environmental issues. The EU CSDDD, as it stands, has at least brought back the question of international binding standards to the discussion.

Three scenarios can be distinguished:

(i) Under the *first scenario that we term authoritarian-neoliberal*, the EU CSDDD will turn out to have rather weak or no significant material effects because of legal loopholes and difficulties in enforcing due diligence effectively. Effectively exempting the financial sector from the regulation is such a loophole. If these deficiencies turn out to be significant, it is likely that the EU CSDDD will have no significant impact but may instead legitimise liberal global capitalism and potentially hinder further reforms. In the worst case, a backlash due to the political right gaining strength in the EU is also possible. In that case, even the minimal rules might be watered down further or even abandoned completely. It also remains to be seen whether the re-election of Donald Trump will further intensify narrow nationalistic policies, or whether the EU will arise as a counterbalance to these developments.

(ii) We call the *second scenario liberal-reformist*. This builds on the assumption that the EU CSDDD creates a material basis for concrete improvements for workers. This is based on a partial transfer of power to workers in the global periphery. With this, basic human rights are largely

respected and the conditions for workers to facilitate unionisation improve considerably. This presupposes that improvements remain largely limited to those who are connected via supply chains of large companies directly with the EU, but not extended to the others. In this case capitalism and its global uneven structures and the related division of labour remain largely intact, and the horizon for change ends with partially improving working conditions within global unequal and imperialist capitalist structures and value chains.

(iii) The *third scenario that we distinguished is a radical-reformist or transformative-progressive* one. Under this scenario, the EU CSDDD is the first step for further reforms which aim at substantially reducing and eventually overcoming capitalist power. This happens by building up workers' power based on global solidarity as the foundation for solidaristic international economic structures in a post-capitalist world, a context that enables sustainable welfare for all. In this scenario, human rights and environmental standards would be prioritised over corporate profits.

Which scenario will eventually come to pass will depend on worker's struggles and how the EU CSDDD will be used as an entry point for pushing progressive struggles. In the case that rules can be effectively enforced, a transfer of power resources to workers beyond the EU can be expected to take place. This facilitates the possibility of organising collectively and of bargaining more effectively. In addition, the EU CSDDD could be a first step towards further stricter international social and environmental standards. In such a dynamic perspective, increasing international labour solidarity could be understood as a mutually beneficial strategy for workers in the Global South as well as for workers in the EU. This could support a reformist scenario. Eventually, in a long-term perspective, struggles around international social and environmental standards could provide an important cornerstone for contributing to a radical reformist scenario.

Against this background, *five specific entry points to increase the effectiveness of the EU CSDDD and to use it as leverage* for pushing solidarity for the further creation and transfer of power in global value chains to workers in the Global South can be distinguished at different scales and related to different time horizons.

(i) Firstly, the potential and limits of the directive in terms of strategies to take companies to court in the European Union must be analysed and the findings made accessible. In addition, activities that potentially involve human rights abuses must be made public in a systematic way. In so doing, the knowledge about the scope of the problem and the information regarding legal remedies can be spread.

(ii) Secondly, intervention in the transposition phase, i.e. the currently ongoing national implementation of the directive, is essential. It is thereby necessary to understand how international cooperative strategies and networks could contribute to creating national laws and national supervisory institutions that make them more likely to be susceptible to the demands of workers and civil society in the global periphery. In so doing, the effectiveness of the EU CSDDD can be increased.

(iii) Thirdly, concrete measures to support the transfer of power resources should be designed and spread among workers and civil society in the Global South. This means, for example, creating awareness and developing toolkits on how to use the binding rules in order to take action against human rights abuses by transnational corporations in global value chains. This would catalyse the potential of the EU CSDDD.

(iv) Fourthly, it should be analysed how the threat of being sued can be increased due to effective international cooperation, so that a higher degree of ‘voluntary’ compliance by companies is achieved. Ideally, human rights abuses could be prevented by this in many cases without the need to take explicit action.

(v) Fifthly, it needs to be understood how, based on the EU CSDDD as a first step, international cooperative strategies can potentially lead to further and more advanced binding international rules and thereby protect and empower workers and civil society more effectively in the medium and long term. This means that international labour solidarity, as the essential basis for global progressive strategies, is strengthened. This should include aiming at the transformation of global production networks and assuring a global ‘just transition’. It would involve overcoming the ‘container’ thinking and the plotting of country against country and opens the perspective for the need for international solidarity networks and international cooperation ‘from below’.

The future will depend on whether possible entry points provided by the EU CSDDD will be used effectively by workers to take advantage of this new opportunity. Strengthening existing cooperations and building new networks between unions and progressive civil society organisations will be crucial. This will allow for being able to use the legislation more effectively and for pushing the agenda for building stricter international social and environmental rules further. Obviously, this will be encountered by fierce opposition from corporates and their allies.

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ABSTRACT Die EU-Richtlinie über die Sorgfaltspflichten von Unternehmen im Hinblick auf Nachhaltigkeit (EU CSDDD) stellte eine wichtige neue Regulierung dar, die darauf abzielt Menschenrechte zu schützen. Dieser Artikel untersucht, ob die neue Richtlinie potenziell einen wichtigen Schritt in Richtung eines Transfers von Machtressourcen hin zum Globalen Süden innerhalb globaler Wertschöpfungsketten darstellt. Zunächst gibt der Beitrag einen kurzen Überblick zur Entstehung der EU CSDDD. Anschließend werden unterschiedliche ökonomische Perspektiven auf die Rolle von internationalen Standards analysiert. Ein besonderer Fokus liegt dabei auf der Perspektive der kritischen politischen Ökonomie, der Global Value Chain Analyse und dem Machtressourcen Ansatz. Aufbauend auf diesen theoretischen Rahmen werden drei mögliche Szenarien dargestellt. Darüber hinaus werden fünf Ansatzpunkte zur Erhöhung der Effektivität der EU CSDDD präsentiert. Wir kommen zu Schlussfolgerung, dass die Effektivität der EU CSDDD sehr stark davon abhängen wird, ob es gelingt, Machtressourcen zu Arbeiter:innen und Zivilgesellschaft im Globalen Süden zu transferieren. Um dies zu erreichen ist die Stärkung von internationalen zivilgesellschaftlichen Netzwerken zentral. Dennoch bleibt offen, inwieweit die EU CSDDD tatsächlich einen ersten Schritt in Richtung weitreichender bindender internationaler Standards darstellt, der zu einer wesentlichen progressiven Veränderung der globalen Ökonomie beitragen kann.

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