

Game Changer? Human Rights Due Diligence and Corporate Respect for Workers' Rights in a Global Economy

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I Introduction

In June 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) endorsed the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (Guiding Principles)*.¹ These *Guiding Principles* state that business enterprises have a responsibility to respect human rights in their own activities and through their business relationships. They identify and promote the concept of human rights due diligence (HRDD) as the means through which to conceptualise and operationalise this responsibility. This chapter argues that these developments – and in particular the ascension of HRDD – have significant but, to date, largely unexplored implications for transnational labour regulation and worker protections.²

This chapter reflects labour law scholarship's increasing attentiveness to the ways in which bodies of rules beyond what would conventionally have been thought of as 'labour law' shape, or have the potential to shape, the world of work. It does so through considering the implications of a regulatory approach that has emerged from the field of business and human rights, but that has significant implications for the protection and promotion of labour standards. In its concerns, this chapter intersects with, and seeks to build upon, several lines of inquiry which have featured in scholarship by former and current members of the Centre for Employment and Labour Relations Law: in particular, studies engaging with the implications of pursuing workers' rights

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1 Human Rights Council, *Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises*, 17th sess, Agenda Item 3, UN Doc A/HRC/17/4 (16 June 2011).

2 An important exception to this is A Trebilcock, 'Due Diligence on Labour Issues – Opportunities and Limits of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights' in A Trebilcock and A Blackett (eds), *Research Handbook on Transnational Labour Law* (Edward Elgar, 2015) 93.

This is a preview. Not all pages are shown.