*The long walk to wage justice. International recommendations and local wage negotiations – the case of the South African textile industry during Apartheid.*

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**Abstract:** The demand for equal pay has existed probably as long as waged work. After the Second World War international bodies such as the ILO and the UN, as well has international trade unions and trade union confederations turned the issue into a truly global demand and created international standards which defined wage equality and included a number of suggested methods to implement wage equality between men and women. At the same time wage negotiations can take place in a number of different ways: In some regions labour markets consisted of a large formal sector and were characterised by a long experience of collective agreements, in other regions a large informal sector made legislation ineffective, moreover wage negotiations have also become individualized. By analysing the entanglements between international agreements and local wage negotiations in the textile industry in South Africa during the Apartheid era I will show how international agreements, but also transnational agreements such as the Treaty of Rome mattered for the equalization of wages between men and women to begin with in the foreign owned companies but very soon also in South African owned companies. At the same time this study shows the limitations of the agreements due to the fact that the agreements were modelled on the situation in the global North and did not have any effect on wage inequality based on other power relations than gender.