




# The politics of pro-worker reforms

Alice Evans ✉

*Socio-Economic Review*, Volume 18, Issue 4, October 2020, Pages 1089–1111,

<https://doi.org/10.1093/soceco/mwy042>

**Published:** 06 November 2018

 PDF  Split View  Cite  Permissions  Share ▼

## Abstract

This paper explores the drivers of pro-worker reforms in Vietnam. It shows how commerce, trade deals, aid and geopolitics strengthened support for higher wages, social dialogue and freedom of association. Strikes have triggered Government concerns about regime legitimacy. Manufactures are also keen to resolve strikes and propitiate reputation-conscious buyers. Reform was further incentivized by TPP's stipulation of Freedom of Association, together with economic and geopolitical incentives to join TPP. Donor-supported pilots have not motivated reform, but are nonetheless important: enabling reformists to explore new ideas; iteratively adapt; garner evidence of what furthers their priorities; with which they can persuade anxious colleagues. None of these forces are deterministic. They merely stimulate debate, authorize experimentation and are used by coalitions to push for reform. By tracing the politics of pro-worker reforms, this study draws attention to drivers often overlooked by donors: strikes, commerce, and trade deals.