IN DUBIOUS BATTLE:

A CASE STUDY OF THE NEW LABOR TRANSNATIONALISM

by

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Abstract

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A CASE STUDY OF THE NEW LABOR TRANSNATIONALISM

Adviser: Professor Frances Fox Piven

This dissertation revisits the widely held assertion that neoliberal globalization necessarily undermines the power of workers. While increasing economic integration clearly presents challenges for organized labor, scholars have shown it also offers new opportunities based upon the contradictions of global capitalism. But recent debates about labor transnationalism provide a point of entry for a deeper examination of strategies for unions in the global era. Particularly, I assess the prospects for unions to exercise associational power by enforcing new modes of global governance. I believe that a careful assessment of actually existing labor transnationalism can help transcend debates between the negative prognosis of global processes and abstract internationalism. This in-depth case study suggests that global union campaigns can empower local voices and impact local unionization strategies. I therefore offer a new theoretical perspective that links labor transnationalism with union revitalization.

Within this large and complex context, I compare the experiences of unions in South Africa and India as they collaborate with their partner unions in North America to battle multinational employers. First, I describe the contours of a global campaign in the private security industry, in which unions from multiple countries force their global employer to sign an international framework agreement, guaranteeing certain rights and standards for all the company's employees. Secondly, I compare the different

implementation processes of the agreement between unions in South Africa and India. I conclude that workers in South Africa were able to use the rights won in the agreement to organize new workers and build stronger workplace unions. I refer to these as *mobilization-type impacts*. In India, unions have used the agreement to force the company to re-interpret important labor laws, which I call *legislative-type impacts*. I explain this variation based on an analysis of the local environments in which transnational collaboration takes place.

This case suggests that scholars of labor transnationalism should more seriously consider the dynamic interaction of local mobilization and transnational campaigning. I also seek to correct a pattern in the literature which describes the recent interest in global unionism as simply following the trajectory of corporate globalization. Instead, I argue that failed domestic campaigns against multinational employers have encouraged some unions to experiment with innovative strategies at different scales, while others have become more inward-looking.

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But this is also part of my story that began in California, before I ever returned to the east coast. So a brief word of appreciation is owed to the inspiring folks at NUHW, and to Audra, who first took me to Sonoma County and changed my life.

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PREFACE:

GLOBAL UNIONS, GLOBAL RESEARCH

If the point of Philosophy—and Sociology—is to change the world, not merely interpret it, as good a starting point as any is to consider the strategic dilemmas facing workers under global capitalism. They can retreat inward and try to defend the gains that have been won, but surrender the future. They can fight amongst each other, working classes against working classes, each vying for a more significant local victory, often at each other's expense. Or they can work in concert, toward making whole what has been smashed, and attempt to build a counterweight to global employers: global unions. This dissertation is generally concerned with these alternatives, but particularly with the development of the latter strategy.

I became interested in this subject in 2007 when I hosted two organizers from India at my home in Brooklyn, NY who coordinated global campaigns for UNI Global Union, one of the leading global union federations. They were on their way to a conference in Puerto Rico hosted by SEIU, an American union. As a former SEIU organizer myself, I was deeply cynical of the prospects for cross-border collaboration among unions. The obstacles always seemed insurmountable. Aside from a common employer, in some cases, what did the workers of the world truly share? It seemed wise to heed the cautionary tale of history, which suggested hostility, in some form or another, was a far more likely response to globalism than solidarity. Besides, it was hard enough winning campaigns in New York and New Jersey—forget about New Delhi.

Moreover, at that time the US labor movement was deeply embroiled in internal political battles, fratricide, and infighting. For example, the Puerto Rico conference, which was to ostensibly focus on building global solidarity, ended with the dramatic raid of the local Left-leaning teachers' union by SEIU. Given these circumstances, when leading unions could not even bridge the divides within their own organizations, and when labor imperialism seemed to be making a surprising comeback, it seemed justifiably insane to suggest they should lead a global organizing agenda. Yet that is exactly what my houseguests were proposing.

But after speaking with them and others, and doing more reading on the subject, I was inspired to reconsider my position. I began looking for exemplary cases, an empirical foundation for a possible course of study, and found an emerging literature on global unionism that was as intriguing as it was filled with generalizations, hyperbole, and speculation. Some were wildly optimistic, full of exuberant comparisons to the First International. Others were committed pessimists, but without being critically engaged to offer anything constructive in return. In trying to avoid the pitfalls of both positions, I decided that a comparative study that closely focused on one campaign, in varied settings, would be a significant contribution.

Soon after I began searching for cases, I was invited to attend a meeting of UNI in New York City, a happenstance that fundamentally changed the next two years of my life. There I learned of the extensive organizing happening within a campaign of private security guards in South Africa, India, and Eastern Europe. At the time it seemed that UNI was on the brink of winning one of the most ambitious global union campaigns ever undertaken, a five-year battle against G4S, the world largest private security firm. It

turned out to be just the beginning. Nonetheless, later that Spring I set off like a pilgrim on a research trip that eventually included nine countries on four continents.

Global Research

On the first day of my research abroad, in the United Kingdom, I acquired swine flu (H1N1), foisting me immediately into the epicenter of a global health pandemic. I managed to complete only a handful of key interviews before I was quarantined for days in an east-side apartment. It was not until a year later, when I was denied a follow-up interview with G4S, did I learn that I had passed on the illness to the company's Director of Human Resources. This mishap presaged a series of research trips fraught with minor calamities that nearly ended my fieldwork numerous times.

Heidegger's last words were, "Only a God can save us." My first week in India, at the start of the monsoons and a strike of rickshaw drivers that made public transport next to impossible, I thought to myself, "Only a city planner can save us." My bus fell off an embankment in the mountainous tea country near the Nepal border, leaving me, luckily, with only minor injuries. I nearly drowned alongside a young boy in the Bay of Bengal. I spent a hot night in jail in downtown New Delhi. On a dark road in Soweto I was mugged at gunpoint by two men my second week in South Africa. All of this contributed to the alienation and sensory overload that major cities in the developing world are famous for transmitting to new arrivals.

On the other hand, my research was aided by a network of global trade unionists and political activists who were sympathetic to my project and interested in its results. They became, in many ways, important stakeholders in my success. For example, in the

middle of one interview I conducted at the International Labor Organization in Geneva, I was offered a job to write research reports and strategy proposals related to other global campaigns as well. This professional work afforded me even deeper access to my research sites and related interview subjects within the global labor movement.

When I began my research I was skeptical of arguments that insisted the potential for transnational unionism was living within the geographical contradictions of global capitalism. While this is part of the story, it does not touch on what unions actually do. So I wanted to see the internal workings of a global campaign—how unions struggled to transcend the challenges posed not only by global political economy, but also their own entrenched organizational inertia in local, regional, and national frameworks. Furthermore, I wanted to examine the potential to link this "new labor transnationalism" with local union renewal efforts. Finally, as the vast majority of research in the field focused on the rich industrialized countries (Europe in particular), I wanted to broaden the geographic scope to include the global South. India and South Africa, both critical battlegrounds in the campaign, quickly emerged as important contexts.

In both places, unions were collaborating with SEIU and UNI for two interrelated purposes. First, South African and Indian unions were part of a campaign to win a global labor agreement that guaranteed new rights for hundreds of thousands of security guards around the world. Secondly, they were searching for a strategic re-orientation that would strengthen their position against local management. Rather than the application of a universal strategy, transnational union collaboration took different forms in each place, based on local opportunities, constraints, goals, and needs. North American unionism, for all its weaknesses and dubious international history, is therefore seen here as providing

the framework of a new transnational movement strategy, one that was able to negotiate the uneven architecture of the global, regional and local arenas of labor. It should not go unsaid that this framework, functional as it was, met frustrating resistance resulting from cultural and political friction. Ultimately, however, the greatest achievement of the unions may be overcoming these barriers in order to realize one of the most ambitious and successful global union campaigns ever conducted, that also had positive impacts for local unions and groups of workers. According to many experienced labor activists, it represents the hallmark of a burgeoning global union movement.

Two and a half years after I began this research with a great deal of skepticism I am now convinced that in order for unions to become a force for social transformation they will need to answer the challenges posed by global capitalism—and their own institutional blinders—with some kind of global labor organization that can facilitate sustained cross-border collaboration. As will become clear in the pages that follow, my research demonstrates that those formations are now coming into existence for the first time.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACFTU	All China Federation of Trade Unions
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).
AFL	American Federation of Labor
AIFLD	American Institute for Free Labor Development
AITUC	All India Trade Union Congress
ALF	Authentic Labor Front
ANC	African National Congress
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CAPSI	Central Association of Private Security
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
CITU	Congress of Indian Trade Unions
COCOSA	Coordinating Committee of South Africa
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPIM	Communist Party of Indian (Marxist)
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTUC	Commonwealth Trade Union Council
CTW	Change to Win
EIRO	European Industrial Relations Observatory Online
EWC	European Works Council
FEDUSA	Federation of of Unions of South Africa
FOSATU	Federation of South African Trade Unions
G4S	Group 4 Securicor
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth Employment and Redistribution
GM	General Motors
GMB	General Workers Union
GPU	Global Partnerships Unit
GUF	Global Union Federation
IAD	International Affairs Department
ICEM	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICTU	International Congress of Trade Unions
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers Union
IFA	International Framework Agreement
IFCTU	International Federation of Christian Trade Unions
IFL	Indian Federation of Labour
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
ILO	International Labour Organisation

IMF (Union)	International Metworkers Federation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INTUC	Indian National Trade Union Congress
IOE	International Organization of Employers
ISS	International Services
ISWOI	Indian Security Workers Organizing Initiative
ITF	International Transport Federation
ITS	International Trade Secretariat
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
J4J	Justice for Janitors
LHMU	Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union Association
ASPEK	Association of Indonesian Labour Unions
LRA	Labor Relations Act
MDK	Spear of the Nation
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
MSF	Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union
NACTU	National Council of Trade Unions
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAMA	Non-agricultural Market Access
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLC	National Labour Committee
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUMSA	National Union of Mineworkers South Africa
OATUU	Organization of African Trade Union Unity
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
PSGU	Private Security Guards Union
RICO Act	Racketeer Influence and Corrupt Organizations Act
RILU	Red Trade Union International
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SACTU	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SADF	South African Defense Forces
SAMWU	South African Municipal Workers Union
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SARHWU	South African Railway and Harbour Workers Union
SARHWU	South African Railway and Harbour Workers Union (SARHWU)
SATAWU	South African Transport and Allied Workers Union
SATUCC	Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Committee Private
PSIRA	Security Regulatory Authority
SCORE	Strategic Campaigns, Organizing, Research and Education
SEIU	Service Employees International Union
SFWU	Service and Food Workers Union
SIGTUR	Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights
SMU	Social Movement Unionism
T&G	Transport and General Workers Union (UK)
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union
TINA	There is No Alternative

TNC	Transnational Corporation
TUAC	Trade Union Advisory Council
TUCSA	Trade Union Council of South Africa
UAW	United Auto Workers
UE	The United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America
UK	United Kingdom
UMWA	United Mine Workers of America
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNI	Union Network International
UNIA	United Negro Improvement Association
UNIDOC	Union Development and Organizing Centers
UNISON	The Public Service Trade Union
UNITE	Union of Needle trades, Industrial, and Textile Employees
US	United States
USWA	United Steelworkers of America
WCL	World Confederation of Labour
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WTO	World Trade Organization

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract		IV
Acknowledgments		VI
Preface		VIII
Glossary of Abbreviations		XIII
Chapter 1	Introduction: Globalization and Labor Power Reconsidered: Toward a New Theory Of Union Transnationalism	1
Chapter 2	Global Unions, Global Governance: Strategies For a New Labor Transnationalism	37
Chapter 3	The Global Campaign Against G4S: Labor Transnationalism from North America to the Global South	77
Chapter 4	Trade Union Renewal And Labor Transnationalism in South Africa: The Case Of SATAWU	118
Chapter 5	Organizing The “Unorganized”: Social Dialogue and Transnational Collaboration in Two Indian Cities	155
Chapter 6	Conclusion: Prospects And Possibilities	187
Appendix I	Research Methodology	202
Appendix II	List of Interviews	211
References		212
Autobiographical Statement		232

Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost—the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?

-- John Milton (1667)

INTRODUCTION

GLOBALIZATION AND LABOR POWER RECONSIDERED: TOWARD A NEW THEORY OF UNION TRANSNATIONALISM

Recent debates about labor transnationalism suggest that we revisit the widely-held assertion that capitalist globalization[1] necessarily undermines the power of workers. Both scholarly evidence and the common wisdom suggests that the fundamental dynamics of world economic restructuring hold no hope for workers and their unions. But an emerging counter-thesis argues that it also offers new opportunities based upon the contradictions of globalization and the nature of worker organization. Thus it is often said that workers, especially in mass production industries, have new forms of "structural power" that they can use to "turn the logic of the market against itself." I present yet a different approach. While acknowledging the unique opportunities and constraints provided by certain industrial contexts, I focus on the innovative strategies unions in the non-mobile service sector deploy to forge "associational power" to overcome the negative impacts of globalization. In my formulation, labor's power derives from its ability to enforce new modes of global governance and enhance local mobilization.

[1] Perhaps because, as Jameson and Mayoshi (1998) argue, "Globalization falls outside the established academic disciplines," it is a highly contested concept that has a tendency to avoid a simple definition. What is commonly referred to as globalization takes a variety of forms. These include a late-capitalist world system developed in Kondratieff cycles of expansion and contraction (Wallerstein 1979); a neoliberal project for class power and "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey 2005, 2010); emergent forms of supranational governance (Hardt and Negri 2000, 2004); a rise of a global informational society networked via key nodes of information exchange (Castells 2000); and a techno-ontology of governance (Ong 2006). In this dissertation, the first definition is the most useful, eas it draws heavily on Polanyi's work, a major theoretical frame in global labor studies.

This dissertation is about the ways that workers and trade unions cooperate across borders in transnational campaigns. In particular, I document a campaign of private security guards that began in North America and eventually spreads across the globe, with a focus on the varied forms transnational collaboration takes in South Africa and India. A great deal has been written about labor internationalism, and the topic has enjoyed a recent resurgence in interest among scholars in the social sciences. Based on new political formations in Europe, communications technologies, changing industrial contexts, and global multilateral institutions, scholars have asserted that unions are forging a "new frontier" within an old tradition—a new labor transnationalism.

My research also re-directs our attention to the local arena of transnational unionism. This is not because the global scale is not important or interesting. But we need to understand the difference the global scale makes to workers locally to properly evaluate the significance of the global dimension. It seems so often that the current literature is content to dismiss prospects for global unionism—in the negative assessment—or invoke them in the positive view. But the surge in global unionism since the late 1990s demands that we investigate the way it can enhance union power locally, still the place it matters most. In the scramble to understand the increasing tendency to "go global" in labor politics, scholars have lost sight of the ground. The question therefore posed here is: How does transnational unionism impact the ability of workers to exercise power locally? Or more simply, how can global unions build local power?

Common sense tells us that workers who have the support of a global campaign behind them are necessarily more powerful in facing down global corporations. But Gay Seidman (2008) has shown that the kinds of transnational advocacy networks that

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) discuss have actually undermined the power of the workers to bargain and mobilize locally on their own behalf. Comparable studies by the International Labor Organization (forthcoming) have suggested similar findings.

The cases studied in this dissertation, however, has not only empowered local organizing but also itself been strengthened by local campaigns. Keck and Sikink (1998) show that social movements in poor countries can make use of a "boomerang strategy" by enlisting the support of rich country allies. That process is present here too, though we also see how unions in the North were strengthened by recruiting solidarity from unions in South Africa and India, a process that may be called a "boomerang in reverse."

I will explain the emergence of a new variety of transnational labor power that can empower workers locally by leveraging demands globally. Underlying this new tendency is decades of experimentation with new forms of unionism, and a need to link global strategies with positive local outcomes. Seen from this perspective, labor transnationalism is both a process of building cross-border relationships and a strategy for revitalization of a union movement that is beginning to face the challenges presented by globalization in general and corporate consolidation in particular. Debates about union revitalization have rarely included discussions of transnationalism as a strategy (e.g., Turner, Katz and Hurd, 2001; Lévesque and Murray, 2002; Fairbrother and Yates, 2003; Gall, 2003), though this dissertation draws strong links between the two literatures.

Seeing global unionism in this way compels us to rethink the dynamics of transnational collaboration. It forces us to shift from a top-down perspective, in which transnationalism is bound up in the institutions of the global labor movement, without surrendering to a totally bottom-up perspective, which suggests change must come from

the global proletariat, assuming there even is such a formation. Indeed, my work suggests that if workers are going to build transnational power, they should consider an approach that combines global union politics and varied forms of local mobilization (including information sharing, strikes, boycotts, solidarity campaigns, corporate campaigning, etc) depending on the local constraints and opportunities.

Having briefly outlined the contours of my argument let me now restate it in more analytic terms.

THE ARGUMENT

In the chapters that follow I argue that the bleak prognostications for labor union revitalization in the global era—the polemical context for this dissertation—can be challenged if we expand our understanding to include new experiences of transnational labor collaboration, particularly those that link struggles in the global and local arenas. From this general argument three interrelated propositions arise.

The first is that globalization is not the death knell of unionism, as is often believed on the Left and Right. The "globalization thesis," as I illustrate below, has much to recommend it but cannot explain the growing number of cases in which unions have exploited particular weak points to their advantage. But the emerging counter-thesis is similarly insufficient. Although we have learned a great deal from this perspective (described below), it has generally over-emphasized and over-simplified the structural opportunities for workers. My analysis extends beyond the limits of the counter-thesis and the focus on "structural power." Instead, evidence presented in this case shows that workers exert "associational power" when they are most successful. Erik Olin Wright's

categories of power have been given prominence through Beverly Silver's work and have made their way into much academic discourse on global unionism. Wright (2002) uses the term *structural power* to describe the power derived by workers'strategic location in the process of production. Associational power represents "the various forms of power that result from the formation of collective organization of workers" (Wright 2000). The perspective that sees a terminal crisis for labor argues that globalization has effectively undermined both forms of power.

Secondly, I show that transnational collaboration is a viable means to empower unions locally, not just the natural evolution of industrial relations in the global era. While important studies have found that global unionism can actually undermine the ability of workers to bargain for themselves, my research uncovers strategies that have allowed both levels/scales of labor movement activity to be mutually reinforcing. These strategic approaches, that coalesce around campaigns for global governance, are seen as the basis for a "new labor transnationalism," which is a wholly different conception than the one advanced in the existing literature. It may be true that "while economic relationships have become more *global* in scope and nature, political responses to economic globalization are becoming more *localized*" (Jonas 1998: 325). Though I suggest that unions are beginning to find ways to mobilize and intertwine the global and the local for mutual gain, representing a step forward from what Munck (2007) calls the "local-global paradox."

Lastly, this research challenges the widespread assumption that the recent interest in transnational collaboration within segments of the labor movement is merely a response to globalization. Seen from another perspective, it is also a response to

methodological nationalism; a reckoning with the failures of stridently national—even nationalist-—approaches to unionism that are now being reconsidered. In all the empirical chapters there is a focus on struggles within unions to overcome their own strategic deficits. Labor transnationalism is therefore considered a conjunctural phenomenon, arising out of forces both internal and external to unions.

These points emerge through a critical review of existing literature and a comparative case study of a dynamic global union campaign in the private security industry. The campaign begins as an effort by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to organize low-wage security guards in the US at G4S, the world's largest private security firm and the second largest employer. When the campaign was frustrated by an unrelenting anti-union strategy by US management, SEIU looked to allies abroad, and eventually found willing support from multiple unions in the global South. It then handed the campaign over to UNI Global Union, its global union federation, which ran a five-year effort to win an international framework agreement.

I compare the varied ways that unions of security guards in South Africa and India collaborated with their North American counterparts to implement the global agreement with G4S. During this complex campaign, workers engage in strikes, information-sharing, shareholder activism, new organizing, political mobilization and legislative lobbying. In each place, unions take advantage of particular opportunities presented by the behavior of the company and the nature of the private security industry. The variation in the two countries is explained primarily by the constraints and opportunities presented by the different local regulatory environments, labor movement histories, and degree of collaboration with the global union.

Global level campaigning empowered unions locally through a few interrelated movement strategies. First, the struggle to win an international framework agreement provided the basis for deep transnational collaboration among labor unions in key strategic places for the company and the union. Then the successful conclusion of the agreement meant that a global rights-based approach was able to constrain management behavior and activate different kinds of local mobilization. Therefore we can say that the global agreement secured not just the *right*, but also the *space,* to organize. Throughout this dissertation, these strategic approaches to global unionism will be considered in detail.

The outcome of this process—an outcome that altered the business model of one of the world's largest corporations—suggests that workers are not passive factors of production or pawns in global politics. They are active agents of change within the global economy. Recent debates about labor transnationalism provide a point of entry for a deeper examination of strategies for unions in the global era. But before proceeding to a discussion of what workers do, we need to first assess the context in which they do it.

THESIS: GLOBALIZATION AND THE DECLINE OF LABOR POWER

By now the thesis that links declining union prospects with the rise of world economic restructuring is well known. I discuss the debate at a higher level of abstraction at first, by considering the tension between competing visions of capitalist globalization and social transformation, a dynamic that conveniently plays out in the work of Austrian-born economic philosophers Friedrich von Hayek and Karl Polanyi, both of whom have played inspirational roles in the development of twentieth century political and economic

thought. Hayek's contributions are well known and popularly recognized as elaborating the foundations for neoliberal capitalism and what I call here the globalization thesis. Polanyi's work, explored in the next section, has formed the basis for a revival of global labor studies, having gained influence within sociology, international political economy, and political science.

Writing toward the end of the Second World War, Hayek theorized that all collectivist responses to laissez-faire principles, especially in the form of state intervention, would necessarily pave the "road to serfdom" (Hayek 1944 [2007]).[2] He maligned the prevailing wisdom that said fascism was a capitalist reaction against socialism, insisting instead on the common roots of fascism and socialism as tyrannical forms of central planning. Hayek argued that socialists had captured the imagination of society by showing a better way forward, and that after Nazism, this was now the task of capitalist radicals. Decades later Thatcher, Reagan and other neoliberal counter-revolutionaries answered Hayek's call with great enthusiasm, and it is during this time that we see the most aggressive assault on labor unionism around the world.

A number of theoretical positions underlie the thesis that globalization is inherently labor-weakening: a political economy perspective, a socio-cultural perspective, a nation-state perspective, and an institutional/organizational perspective. Together they construct a powerful argument for labor's structural decline and powerlessness. However, after briefly outlining each, I'll discuss the emerging counter-thesis and suggest why they are not as definitive as they initially seem.

The most popular argument for labor's weakness is made by examining the

[2] In Chapter five of *The Road to Serfdom*, "Totalitarians in our Midst," Hayek actually credits trade unions with ushering in democratic reforms. He seems to suggest it is tragic, though not inevitable, that they became so closely aligned with the state's meddling in markets.

changing global political economy. According to this logic, the acceleration of capital mobility, the geographic dispersion of production and the expansion of global trade (particularly in finance) enhance the bargaining power of capital relative labor, especially along the North-South divide. In other words, the hypermobility of capital allows corporations to move around the globe in search of cheaper labor and lower operating costs, thereby whipsawing workers in the North and South. This continual search drives down wages and deters unionization worldwide. In this line of argument, union densities, wage controls, and corporate taxation levels disappear under a worldwide labor arbitrage as workers are forced to compete with one another in the global marketplace (Roach 2006).

The entry of China into the global economy, and the concomitant downward pressure on the world's wages is the most recent and obvious example of this phenomenon (Costello, Smith, and Brecher 2006). But it was happening before China was a factor in the global political economy. Late twentieth century capitalism has presided over the precipitous decline of labor movement densities for decades across the globe (Galenson 1994; Western 1995). Statistics also show a decline in union militancy (Moody 2007) and power at the bargaining table, which led to a global "crisis of unionism" (Freeman 1989).

Despite the "Darwinian elegance" (Evans 2010) of this thesis, it is at best a partial explanation. First, the map of foreign direct investment (FDI) continues to show much more intra-North flows (where wages and costs are relatively high) than flows to cheaper labor areas (UNCTAD 2007). This would contradict the hypothesis that transnational corporations necessarily seek out low wage areas globally. Rather, they rely as much, if

not more so, on domestic relocation. This is not to suggest that capital's spatial fix has not transferred production and displaced unions on a large scale. Even the *threat* of plant relocation has been the *ne plus ultra* of bargaining chips to force concessions and deter unionization.

But there is reason to question the supposed unidirectional impact of that phenomenon. In her analysis of workers movements since 1870, Beverly Silver (2001) describes a historic dialectic between recurring instances of labor militancy and capital flight, "…a kind of *déjà vu* pattern in which strong labor movements emerged in each new favored site to which the industry relocated." While labor was weakened when capital fled (North America), new strong "strategically located" working classes appear wherever it lands (the Global South). Moreover, as we will see in the next section, the spatial contradictions of global political economy have in some ways opened up new opportunities for workers as well.

Socio-cultural perspectives suggest that globalization has undermined one of the traditional bases by which workers construct solidarity: through shared social networks and common cultural identities (Fantasia 1988). The logic is that geographic proximity infuses workers with a "culture of solidarity" based upon shared norms, values and daily practices. The argument is then premised on the idea that as the cultural cartography of the global working class diversifies, workers find fewer commonalities and more divisions, which encourages animosity, parochialism, and racism, not solidarity.

But fragmentation along non-class lines—culture wars—have always played a part in labor organizing, and union efforts always spend considerable time and energy bridging those divides. Thus this is not necessarily related to geographic proximity, since

workers in the same city, or in the same workplace, often have different racial, religious, language, and gender identities.

The state also plays a role in elaborating the globalization thesis, because, as it is often claimed, strong working classes need strong states. Since the "decline of the state" has been a hallmark of the globalization thesis, this has raised skepticism about the ability of workers to win in an environment with no political agency to enforce its will.

The state of the state has been, and continues to be, hotly debated. In the nineties, several prominent commentators forecast the state's redundancy under the excesses of hypermobile capital and global governance regimes (Naisbitt 1988, 2000; Ohmae 1996). This position sees neoliberal globalization as a "politics by other means," supplanting the role of governance and deterritorializing national decision making power. These claims provoked a series of rebuttals and refutations insisting on the continued primacy of the state in the realm of political affairs (Hirst and Thompson 1996; Zysman 1996; Panitch 2000). Saskia Sassen (2008) has elaborated a theory by which the state is fractured by globalization and some branches of the state expand (in sovereign terms) at the expense of others. Theories of declining sovereignty tend also to imply a convergence of national economic systems. On the contrary, the *varieties of capitalism* literature has found that economic globalization affects states unevenly, noting the persistent divergence among liberal market economies and coordinated market economies (Hall and Soskice 2001).

What is debated far less frequently, though, is the assumption that the state is an ally to labor at all. Undoubtedly, workers and labor movements benefit from a rule-bound environment that can enforce democratic accountability. But does the state provide this? Tilly's (1992) claim that strong states are allies of labor is reflected primarily in the

context of European social democracy. But not in the global South and less frequently in the US. Different kinds of class compromises with government happened in both places and produced different kinds of state-labor-capital relations (Webster and Adler 1999).

Structural changes in global capitalism have been accompanied by a discursive shift as well, represented most famously by Margaret Thatcher's famous TINA proclamation ("There Is No Alternative)." Both the erosion of Marxism as a mobilizing ideology and the failure of a sustainable Keynesianism gave way to the acceptance of the demobilizing neoliberal counterthesis. The only viable answer, then, to Lenin's *what is to be done?* question, for firms, nations, and workers, is to attract multinational capital and be as competitive as possible. When an alternative strategic opposition has been thereby "reduced to a whisper, the globalization thesis can be argued to reflect the ideological triumph of free market capitalism" (Wills 1998).

Finally, although capital has been global for some time, employers have not. As a result, the strategic necessity of global or transnational structures has not been immediately clear to many unionists, and investment in this area has not been high. And though global institutions have existed for a long time, they have been traditionally underfunded, under-resourced and under-utilized. Although labor's Cold War is over (see Chapter 2), the ILO is still an institution governed two thirds by state and corporate interests. The ITUC, the result of tumultuous mergers, is still an unknown body to many national unionists, even in Europe. The GUFs are dependent on their largest national affiliates, but many play absolutely no role.

That this situation still applies today should not prevent us from realizing that the situation is changing. The reorganization and revitalization of the international trade

union movement, the product of decades of strategic experiments, as we will soon see, is slowly gaining the momentum, resources, and political will to carry out a more effective global program. Despite the fact that the phenomenon has breathed life into both social science and labor studies, the growing literature on labor transnationalism has only begun to make sense of these new tendencies and currents. A central feature of that intellectual project has been the construction of a counter-thesis, arguing against the doomsday logic of globalization prevalent on the left and right. Having presented a case that the doomsday rhetoric of the globalization thesis is debatable and contingent, we now move forward with a critique.

COUNTER-THESIS: A NEW DOUBLE MOVEMENT?

A New Geography of Labor Studies

Slightly more than a decade ago, a renaissance of global labor studies, especially the variety that promoted the Polanyian prospect of another "Great Transformation," was energized when unions joined forces with new social movements and student groups against neoliberal politics. These writers sought to "put labor back in" to the steady stream of accounts of anti-corporate protests which continually neglected to mention the contributions of unions. They were also responding to the fatalism of the globalization thesis.

Though still analytically and theoretically underdeveloped, we can nonetheless see the emergence of a counter-thesis to compete with the commonsense understanding of the globalization/labor relationship. Peter Evans (2008) argues that "neo-liberal globalization has created a set of socio-cultural, ideological, organizational, and even

economic, conditions that enhance the potential for counter-hegemonic globalization." But where do these conditions come from? I suggest that the majority of the counter-thesis literature makes its point in *spatio-economic* terms.[3] In other words, the argument is that the new international division of labor, geographic dispersion of production, the vertical consolidation of corporate power, the emergence of global cities, and new labor process innovations such as just-in-time production models—in short, a new cartography of economic activity—actually make global capitalism more vulnerable to disruption. Or, in Hardt and Negri's formulation, "…the globalization of economic and cultural relationships means that the virtual center of Empire can be attacked at any point" (Hardt and Negri 2000: 59).

John Womack (2005), drawing on economist John Dunlop (1944), argues that labor power has been historically correlated with high instances of "technical power." Likewise, Eric Olin Wright (2000) uses the term *structural power* to describe the power derived by workers' strategic location in the process of production. He distinguishes this from associational power, which is based on the collective action of workers.

In Silver's (2001) estimation the power of autoworkers is substantial not only because continuous flow production lends itself to disruption, but the car requires input from a global workforce, any of whom can impact the workflow of any other. Illustrating Silver's point, labor geographer Andrew Herod has shown the ways that workers can exploit their geographic position within global assembly/supply chains, using examples

[3] This may both explain, and be explained by, the role that economic geography, as a discipline, has played in recent debates on labor transnationalism. See especially, *Place, Space, and the New Labour Internationalisms* (Wills and Waterman 2002); "Bargaining for the Space to Organize in the Global Economy: A Review of the Accor-IUF Trade Union Rights Agreement" (Wills 2002); *Labor Geographies: Workers and the Landscapes of Capitalism* (Herod 2001); and *Spaces of Work: Global Capitalism and Geographies of Labour* (Castree et al 2004).

from a 1998 dispute at General Motors. Striking workers at one location were able to stop production on a hemispheric scale, thus wielding power beyond their immediate scope of practice. Herod's example speaks to the limitations of Toyotaist production schemes, suggesting it is even more vulnerable than the Fordist model preceding it. The same can be said for disruptive strikes in transport and logistics at UPS in 1997.

These examples have challenged the idea of a unilinear race to the bottom. Silver (2001) and Cowie (2001) have both suggested that a spatial fix by capital does not necessarily imply the death knell of unionization. Rather, militant working classes often emerge to "follow the work," especially in Fordist manufacturing, when production/assembly transitions to areas with lower labor costs. Employers thereby delay profitability crises instead of completely overcoming them. Silver argues that as the interdependence of workers across the world to produce a given commodity (an automobile, for example) increases, so does their structural power to make demands on bosses. Likewise, the structural power of workers in maritime shipping has been seen as the ability of labor to exploit the globalized nature of production, transport and delivery systems (Lillie 2006; Koch-Baumgarten 1999), and similar arguments are made for campaigns now raging in the telecommunications and air transport sector (UNI Interview).

But Silver (2003) also argues we should look to growing service-sector industries within a new international division of labor for instances of labor unrest in the era of globalization. For the most part, however, the literature is dominated by analyses of old industries in Europe or North America: automobile manufacturing (Herod 2001; Greer and Hauptmeier 2008), garment workers (Armbruster-Sandoval 2003), steel and basic

industries (Juravich and Bronfenbrenner 2000), maritime shipping (Lillie 2006; Koch-Baumgarten 1999), etc. Comparatively little attention has been paid to property services, precisely the kind of non-mobile service sector labor that appears to be outstripping the growth of almost all other industries (Sassen 2001), despite the apparent willingness of these workers to organize within and beyond national borders (Milkman 2006).

So what can be said about these workers whose jobs cannot be outsourced globally? It must be pointed out that in the list of strikes in the nineties, it was the hotel workers at Harvard and (the more militant) Yale, and DHL employees in Belgium, all of whose jobs were not threatened by capital flight, that were most successful. Unlike in auto manufacturing or garment factory work, there is no obvious point of conflict between janitors or security guards in New Jersey and New Delhi. The ability of employers to exploit the "geography of jobs," as Evans (2010) puts it, is nullified: "While it may seem paradoxical, the global growth in the share of 'place-based' service jobs creates new structural openness to transnational alliances."

This power is magnified when placed in the context of emerging global cities, the command and control hubs of global capitalism (2001). Sassen argues that global cities require a conglomeration of low-skill, low-wage service sector jobs to function. And precisely because the process of making a global city global is so expensive, requiring high inputs of fixed capital, as Michael Goldman (2011) shows in Bangalore, elites "cannot easily respond to labor unrest with a spatial fix of geographical mobility" (Silver 2003: 108). Therefore, Manuel Castells' assertion—"At its core, capital is global…As a rule, labor is local" (Castells 2009: 506)—which is intended to point to labor's weakness, is seen from this perspective as its saving grace.

Following Sassen, unions have begun to pursue campaigns within the global cities to exploit the centralization of corporate power and the immobility of labor. Steven Lerner, chief architect of SEIU's Justice for Janitors campaign in Los Angeles, sees these service-sector industries as advantageous for unions by dint of their position in relation to the FIRE sector (Finance, Investment, and Real Estate) of global cities. He writes:

> These economic hubs directly depend on these service jobs, dramatically increasing the potential power of these workers. It is among the most invisible and seemingly powerless workers that we can build a global movement, reinvigorate trade unions, and face global corporations with genuinely countervailing power sufficiently strong to ensure that workers have the chance to lift themselves and their communities…the opportunity is greatest in service jobs…based in cities that are driving the world economy.

However, given the propensity for capital to crush labor's organizing efforts it would seem that the place-based nature of certain kinds of work is insufficient to explain the way workers have successfully reacted to globalization. There are a number of problems with the contention that workers can rely on structural logics to their advantage. To return to the GM example, corporate elites have by now diversified their sourcing protocols and inserted a bit more flexibility into their carefully-timed supply schedules, thereby reducing the potential for disruption. We have to ask if workers situated within strategically important nodes of production will actually take decisive action in solidarity with other workers. So far the answer is "not yet." If anything, historical divisions and animosities between skilled and unskilled labor argue against that type of action (Reid 2004). It is highly debatable whether or not the workers who were accidentally impacted by the GM dispute benefitted or not. The structural power argument tends to ascribe power to workers who may not be organized in a position to exercise it. But occupying a particular structural position within a complex division of labor does not necessarily

encourage workers to action. Power is not, as Piven (2006) cautions, "there for the taking," and grievances in themselves do not lead to action.

Do place-based workers fare any better? Let's take private security guards as an example. They stand watch over everything from strip malls to nuclear power plants, post offices to active war zones. On the one hand, their jobs cannot be outsourced to other places, and they work in a growing industry that is of crucial importance to major financial processes associated with globalization. This would seem to suggest their jobs are imbued with a certain amount of structural power, as Wright conceives of it. On the other hand, their jobs are predominantly part-time, low paid positions without career mobility, benefits, or job security. The job often requires a worker to put himself (it is a male-dominated profession) in harms way or submit to long hours of dull tedium. Nonetheless, as it requires relatively little skill, there are a multitude of people waiting to take the job, which usually makes it worse for the person who has it. Though this makes it better from an employer's perspective, who are keen to depress wages as low as possible, given that labor is such a large factor of production. This is reflected in their low rates of unionization and poor working conditions even when they are unionized—SEIU guards in the US still earn just over minimum wage in many major cities. It seems to be the case that whatever power could be derived from the industrial setting is overshadowed by the negative effects of the reserve army of labor, myriad forms of sub-contracting, labor brokering, and triangular forms of employment, and the disaggregation of trade union movements, all of which tend to militate against unionization.

Yet we see security guard unions are pioneering a new form of global unionism, winning gains in markets where workers had, until recently, been too scared to even

organize. What is the basis for their success? The idea that labor power is determined through a relationship to the worker's location in the overall production and service delivery process, or its relative immobility, is too simplistic. Rather, I argue that labor has wielded associational power to far greater degrees and for greater success. We must widen our angle of analysis beyond the structural power of workers to include the strategies of workers to leverage associational power. In my analysis, described in the next section, workers are seen as creating the conditions for their power through new innovative strategies for renewal, not because of capitalist globalization, but despite it.

Having assessed the idea that prospects for labor transnationalism can be based on the logic of structural power, we need to move to another key inspiration for the counter-thesis argument in the work of Karl Polanyi.

Karl Polanyi and New Global Labor Studies

Karl Polanyi, Hayek's contemporary and also Austrian-born, was concerned with similar issues as Hayek but arrived at fundamentally different conclusions, suggesting that a more historical approach sees markets as necessarily embedded in states, the central feature of Market Society. He challenges the liberal orthodoxy by arguing that free markets had always been ideological constructions, not actually existing systems. Instead, "laissez-faire was planned" (Polanyi 1944 [2001]). Polanyi claimed that the pillars of nineteenth century society—the balance of powers system, the gold standard, the liberal nation-state, and the self-regulating market—produced contradictory effects. What seemed to be the ultimate antidote to autocracy and a guarantor of individual liberty, became its own kind of despotic terror.

The response came in the form of a double movement, a spontaneous reaction against “the one comprehensive feature in the history of the age,” the various ways that “society protected itself against the perils of the self-regulating market system” and re-embedded the market in a variety of collectivist projects: Fascism, Stalinism, and the New Deal (Polanyi 2001: 80). The insights of Polanyi’s historical perspective allow us to view successive waves of embedding and disembedding of society-market relations, raising the obvious question for today: What forces will arise to discipline the market sufficiently to allow society a greater degree of control over the political economy in this period of disembedded neoliberalism?

For Beverly Silver, the strength of auto-workers embodies a “Polanyi-type labor unrest [by which] we mean the backlash resistances to the spread of a global self-regulating market, particularly by working classes being unmade by global economic transformations.” This contrasts with a “Marx-type” unrest of class warfare against exploitation, not simply commodification.

Grounding Globalization, a book by three leading scholars of labor struggles in the global South, begins with an assessment of the “Polanyi Problem.” The authors offer an assessment of labor transnationalism as inspired by struggles against commodification in “new” white goods industries around the world.

Finally, Ronaldo Munck (2002) goes so far as to subtitle his book, *The New Great Transformation*. Munck draws parallels between the labor movements that successfully re-embedded the market in society the first time and the transnational labor movement of today, especially the parts of it that are interested in the social clause. In fact, these movements are gaining so much ground, assisted as they are by a crisis of legitimacy

from within the hallowed halls of market fundamentalism, that he concludes it is a turning point in the development of modern anti-capitalism. "It may, indeed, simply be the case that the hour of von Hayek is gone and the hour of Polanyi has arrived" (Munck 2002: 177-178).

Part of the allure of Polanyi's framework here is that it allows for a disorganized and disaggregated working class movement to reflexively retaliate against the market, much as the body reacts to fight disease. "For each victory of the transnational capitalist class," writes Munck, "there is a new blow struck from below through a strike, a consumer boycott, or a legal challenge to their hegemonic role" (Munck 2002: 178-179). It is no coincidence that Polanyi's work has enjoyed a revival alongside more recent texts that popularized similar social movement possibilities. Hardt and Negri suggest that the "multitude," the amorphous counter-insurgency against global capitalism, is a "living alternative that grows within Empire" (Hardt and Negri 2004 xiii).

All of these perspectives take us some distance in understanding that global processes, once thought to deliver workers only defeats, may herald the potential for union renewal on a wide scale. However, to posit that workers have power in the global arena today is to accomplish in theory what has yet to transpire through struggle. Situated awkwardly astride this optimistic theoretical outlook rests the daunting record of failed attempts to build worker power through transnational activity. Although a few sporadic "success stories" are often considered bellwethers for a "new labor transnationalism," their very exceptionalism tends to reinforce the idea that workers have a long hard road ahead before the global approaches the local as a viable sphere of contestation.

Polanyi's framework is understandably seductive to scholars trying to make sense

of both the contradictions of capitalist globalization and global labor movements in particular. As the Second World War drew to a close, he offered unwavering optimism about the future. In one of his more naive exercises in futurology, he writes, "Undoubtedly our age will be credited with having seen the end of the self-regulating market" (Polanyi 1944: 148) We know now that in the immediate postwar period Polanyi's vision played out in some smaller Scandinavian countries and was represented by various forms of dirigisme in Western Europe. But by the early seventies Hayek's classic liberalism was making an important surge.

But modern-day scholars draw from other aspects of Polanyi's vision that are less directly tied to the turn of historical events or the results of global campaigns. For example, Polanyi's critique is more than an economic counter-argument; it is a deeply moral and religious one stemming from his Christian beliefs. It is fair to say that Christianity, not Socialism, is the motive force of his reasoning, what Dimitris Stevis (2009) has called an "organismic ontology" that claims human labor should not be submitted to market forces. That Polanyi also sees it as inefficient is in many ways secondary. Another reason Polanyi's work has so much resonance today is that he emphasizes a global perspective, and can now be seen as ahead of his time. Writing at the end of the war, as decolonization and the emergence of new post-colonial states gathered momentum, Polanyi's writing looks downright prophetic today.

However, the field has been far too loose with its propensity for parallels between different transformative epochs and especially the analytic use of the "double movement" concept as an explanatory framework for today's counter-hegemonic movements. Comparing Polanyi's double movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries with similar dynamics today—crises within the *belles époques* of British and US hegemony respectively—Silver and Arrighi (2003) note important differences. First, they argue that forces have successfully constrained the tendency toward self-regulating markets to a greater extent in the late twentieth century than in the late nineteenth century, as evidenced by the abandonment of the gold standard. The second major difference in the periods is the absence of predatory colonizing states that can easily control foreign populations (Silver and Arrighi 2003). Despite these crucial differences, scholars have effortlessly invoked Polanyi's works to explain the possibility and actuality of today's counter-hegemonic globalization. It has, in many important ways, provided the foundational theory for the development of the new labor transnationalism discourse.

This is a problem, mainly because there is very little in Polanyi's corpus to suggest who or what will perform the double movement, or how they will do it. As an inspiration, Polanyi is effective, but as a guide to the contemporary scene, he is insufficient. While there are examples of successful spontaneous insurrections and social movement activity (cites), history has shown that sustained mobilization presupposes some form of coherent organization and strategy (praxis); in particular, an organizational form appropriately structured to the task at hand. In political mobilization as in architecture, form follows function. Polanyi's work is less useful for understanding the dynamics of labor transnationalism than other theoretical frameworks, especially as it seems unwise to hold labor's potential hostage to the vicissitudes of global change, or to hang one's hopes on the sudden birth of an "embryonic counter-movement."

This idea provoked a rebuttal to global labor scholars by Michael Burawoy (2010). In a critical review essay—*From Polanyi to Pollyanna: The False Optimism of*

Global Labor Studies—he spares almost no one. Peter Evans "clutches at straws"; Gay Seidman "follows the Nirvana principle"; the authors of *Grounding Globalization* (Webster et al 2008) enter into "a flight of fancy into labor internationalism and utopian society." In contrast to their overriding optimism, Burawoy suggests we take up an "uncompromising pessimism." While many scholars are apt to argue that the contradictions of global capitalism have, in effect, readied the terrain for another great transformation, another double movement, Burawoy insists nearly the opposite. He wants to inject "a careful and detailed analysis of the way capitalism combines the commodification of nature, money and labor, and thereby destroys the very ground upon which a 'counter-movement' could be built."

In a series of replies to Burawoy in a new journal dedicated to global labor studies, Dan Clawson makes a principled "defense of false optimism," while others argued against his interpretation of Polanyi (Webster 2010). The optimistic perspective of so many scholars, as well as Burawoy's skepticism, are equally understandable, but both miss the point.

Neither view adequately explains *how* those rare occasions of successful transnational collaboration happen. In both positions, prospects for labor transnationalism are evoked, rather than investigated. A handful of studies—rooted in Industrial Relations and Industrial Sociology—approach this problem through an analysis of campaign strategy. Edited volumes by Bronfenbrenner (2007) and Gordon and Turner (2000) take case study approaches to union campaigns that were designed to meet the challenges of globalism. Robert O'Brien and Jeffrey Harrod (2002) offer a collection of essays about global unions from a political economy framework. Nathan Lillie's (2005) work

describes how the International Transport Federation won global collective bargaining in the maritime shipping industry through a campaign that relied heavily on the structural power and solidarity of dockworker unions. Still others have demonstrated the positive outcomes of union collaborations with international NGOs (Gallin 2000; Armbruster-Sandoval 2003).

Though I remain cautiously optimistic, I concede Burawoy one important point—Most attempts to win gains through cross-border organizing alliances and international bargaining collapse under innumerable obstacles[4] and there are very few cases of meaningful victories for workers in the transnational arena to point to a counter-hegemonic globalization (Huxtable 2008). We therefore need a conceptual framework that can explain more than just the opportunities facing labor, but one that includes strategies to overcome the challenges that still form the reality of workers' ability to organize.

A NEW THEORY OF LABOR TRANSNATIONALISM AND UNION RENEWAL

The union renewal literature offers a more constructive basis for understanding labor's actions and prospects because of its explicit focus on the evolution of tactics and strategies to navigate a hostile industrial relations environment. This lens allows us to assess the potential for workers to exercise associational power in creative ways. The major theme that runs through this body of work is that the current conjuncture

[4] Many such obstacles have been extensively studied: renewed working class nationalism (Harvey 1989); divergences between local and national institutions (Streeck 1992); lingering Cold War ideologies (Moody 2007); difficulty overcoming cultural barriers (Eichengreen, Ulman, and Dickens 2003); defense of particularist union goals that trump global ones (Lillie 2004); and the power of multinational corporations (Gordon and Turner 2000). Some commentators are even pessimistic about prospects for building a transnational union movement at all (Mahnkopf and Altvater 1995; Eder 2002).

encourages experimentation with innovative forms of social movement unionism—not simply opportunities—and that these strategies can overcome the obstacles of political economy and also the failures of tepid business unionism (Turner 2005). Scholars have demonstrated union revitalization stems from new organizing initiatives, political alliances, and social movement tactics (Clawson 2003), though transnational collaboration is rarely mentioned (exceptions: Lillie and Martinez Lucio 2004; Gall 2009).

Viewed through this lens, labor's varied strategic approaches to transnational collaboration can be considered *experiments*, not outright failures, as unions struggle in a new terrain. Burawoy would benefit from a deeper examination of this area before dismissing out of hand the potential for transnational collaboration. This dissertation links these bodies of literature to better understand the ways that unions have, over time, reacted to globalization and the institutional narrowness of their unions.

The theoretical debates on globalization and labor power, combined with the historical and empirical accounts of transnational labor activism, have led scholars to a particular conception of what constitutes the "new labor transnationalism." But evidence presented in this dissertation suggests a different conception.

Almost all the literature assumes the recent surge in transnational collaboration between labor unions is a response to globalization, or the economic restructuring of the world economy in the 1970s. I view it as also a response to trade union nationalism. In other words, as a strategy for revitalization that is, crucially, a response to the failures of labor's nationalist politics. An historical perspective allows us to see that today's "global turn" is more of a return to internationalism—labor's original form—than it is a dynamic

new course. At its inception, labor unionism was fundamentally concerned with taking wages out of competition, which required an internationalist ethos in nineteenth century Europe just as it does today. In this sense, labor has always been responding to globalization.

But the recent surge in transnational cooperation, alliances with global social movements, and the interest in global governance can also be construed as a reaction against the methodological nationalism of most unions today. My conception—that labor is reacting to nationalism—is not merely a rhetorical or discursive shift; it emphasizes the strategic choices facing labor. Undoubtedly, labor must *accommodate* itself to globalization, a process that can take many forms that aren't necessarily transnationalism, such as increased protectionism, xenophobia, etc. In fact, unionists have, for decades, reacted to globalization with suspicion, animosity, and even deadly violence.[5] But I see transnationalism as an explicit reaction to, and rejection of, nationalism as a strategy and an ethos. So if contesting the globalization of capital is not necessarily "new," what is?

What's New About The New Labor Transnationalism?

The common view is that, whereas the "old" internationalism is vested in large (mostly) European trade union bureaucracies and political parties, "new" variants spring from social movement forces inspired by actors in the global South (Webster et al 2008; Waterman 2001). However, what is new about labor transnationalism today is a concerted focus on global governance and sustained campaigning. I'll discuss the differences below.

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[5] Lest we forget Vincent Chin, a young Chinese-American man beaten to death by Detroit autoworkers who mistakenly assumed he was Japanese. Chin was scapegoated for US economic woes that the men apparently blamed on Japanese car workers.

Peter Waterman is the first and probably the most enthusiastic exponent of the "newness" idea, having published a series of working papers and essays on the topic as early as 1984—while the "old," in other words, was still very much alive. He suggests the new labor transnationalism can be distinguished by a few characteristics. It consists fundamentally of cross-border solidarity activities between workers at the shop floor or grassroots level. It is often inspired by and directed at large forces of international exploitation: racism, imperialism, patriarchy, militarism, authoritarianism, etc. It tends to complement new social movement activity, especially identity-based movements (Waterman 1998). Structurally, it takes the form of the "rhizomatic organization," committed to a democratic decentralized network of activists, not a "tree-like" union bureaucracy, which is top-down.

This conception of a grassroots internationalism of interconnected social movements has had a widely positive reception among scholars. A more recent treatment of the subject by three leading intellectuals on the South African labor movement describe it in even more detail. This is by far the dominant conception, a strange fact considering there is so little evidence to support the claim. The South African scholars repeatedly provide the example of SIGTUR (the Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights), an Australia-based federation of unions in the southern hemisphere (Lambert 2002; Webster and Lambert. Webster et al 2008). For most of its existence, however, SIGTUR has organized nothing but conferences of international union leaders, and its website offers even less to lead us to believe it can do otherwise.[6]

Ronaldo Munck describes Waterman's conception as a "wish list." He argues,

[6] Longstanding participants within the global labor movement, interviewed for this project, had either no idea what it was or could not name anything it had accomplished, and SIGTUR declined repeated interview requests.

"What is 'new' about this internationalism is probably mainly its informational nature" (Munck 2002: 158). This stems from Munck's deep appreciation for the contributions of Eric Lee, an Internet activist who founded the online solidarity website, LabourStart.org. Lee claims that, "Thanks to the Internet, a century-long decline in internationalism has already been reversed. For thousands who log on everyday, the International has already been reborn" (Lee 1997: 186).

The revolution in telecommunications technology has undoubtedly facilitated communication and information-sharing among unions. But it also benefits capital, and we have no reason to believe that this technology is not already being used to control workers around the globe more than it's being used to unite them. Moreover, there is something perplexing about the thesis that the Internet could help rekindle the First International, seeing as that movement's primary protagonists were dead before Alexander Graham Bell was born; the first trans-Atlantic call did not happen until the next century.

So we have two popular conceptions of new labor transnationalism—one is proletarian internationalism, the other is its "informational nature." Both suggest labor can make use of the new structural contradictions of globalization and create mass-based democratic movements from below. In my view, neither conception explains the most significant aspect of labor transnationalism today: the ways unions have designed campaigns for global governance. Union attempts to exercise global governance are discussed in detail in the next chapter, but I will briefly mention them here.

Strategies to assert global governance involve forcing large multinationals to submit to some sort of rules-based system with an accountability mechanism that can

serve as a proxy for the lack of adequate labor regulation at the international level. For example, post-Maastricht Europe brought workers new possibilities to coordinate activities through the European Works Council process (Wills 1998). This directive grants workers in multinational companies with more than one thousand employees the right to organize associations for purposes of social dialogue, information sharing, and enforcing codes of conduct. Since 1994, almost fifteen million workers in eight hundred multi-national companies have participated in EWC dialogues (EIRO 2008). Another example is the effort to insert a social clause into agreements on international trade and finance or institutions of global governance. Tamara Kay (2005) examines the framework for transnational cooperation inspired by a side agreement within NAFTA to protect labor rights.

Most recently the focus of transnational activity has shifted to the global union federations (GUFs) and their campaigns to win international framework agreements. GUFs are sector-specific union groupings to which unions around the world are affiliated. UNI, to which SEIU is affiliated, is specific to the global services industries. Fairbrother and Hammer (2005) show that structural changes in the global political economy, combined with the decision to create a more discreet role apart from ICFTU (now ITUC), has led to a renewed purpose for the global union federations in the last decade. Here we see the development of unions that are organizing themselves to match the scope of capital for the first time—global unions for the global age.

As of early 2011, the global union federations have negotiated 91 international framework agreements with multinational companies, bringing some 50 million workers under the force of a contract that guarantees core labor standards, rights at work, other

company-specific demands, and occasionally the right to organize without management interference. Admittedly, global agreements are problematic, weak, and sometimes unenforceable. They often place restrictions on industrial action that serve to neuter trade union militancy in exchange for regular bureaucratized dealings with management. But they are also young, as strategies go, and there is certainly evidence that unions are learning to use them to greater advantage (Papadakis 2008; Fichter et al 2010; Stevis and Boswell 2008). They also provide the most likely hope for global-local alliances and North-South cooperation between workers. These movements for global governance—explored in depth in the next chapter—include far larger groups of workers and overshadow any tendency toward proletarian, grassroots, or bottom-up internationalism happening today.

The overall discussion of structural versus associational power should not be seen as a discussion of opposites, for it certainly the case that in some cases workers are in a stronger position to act than others. The point is that it is still not easy, and they still need to develop a strategy to take advantage of that position. Likewise, the above discussion on global governance should not imply that simply negotiating a framework agreement is an end in itself. If anything, the long list of agreements that are completely inactive and unenforceable is evidence that it is not. Moreover, some of the agreements with the strongest contract language have absolutely no union or movement behind them to press for their implementation.

However, global governance holds the best potential for unions to create a framework for a campaign, to enlist the support of unions around the world, and to construct a mechanism to constrain the purview of management, thus creating the

conditions for a more vibrant labor transnationalism. To build this kind of campaign requires the mobilization of associational power. Even in industries with strong levels of structural power—maritime shipping, for example—seafarers benefit from the considerable innovation, strategic research, and political organizing of the International Transport Federation more than they acquire the ability to disrupt the delivery of goods. While it would be foolish to deny the different structural positions of different groups of workers, it is an oversimplification to declare that that position is necessarily the main source of their power. It is also still very much unclear to what extent the structural power of one group of workers enlarges their ability to exercise associational power.

The example of security guards in this dissertation suggests that the correlation is not significant. Other examples support this case as well. Over the past two years a recent spate of IFAs have created the framework for transnational campaigns of workers in a variety of industries—Hotel workers at Accor (Wills 2000), garment and warehouse workers at H&M, auto workers in Brazil, janitors in New Zealand, and telephone workers in Columbia, Brazil and Cameroon at Telefonica (McCallum forthcoming) and the US at Deutsch Telecom. Brazilian autoworkers have also used the global agreement with BMW to enforce labor standards and wage increases at suppliers. In each of these cases, the agreements have been won, implemented, or enforced by a GUF-led campaign of global and local unionists in concert. This is the new labor transnationalism.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis touches on a few themes that will be explored in detail in the following chapters. I conceive of labor power in the global era as a shifting historical

process of strategic experimentation to outmaneuver large multinational employers, or, associational power. At first glance, workers in mass production industries appear to enjoy some form of structural power based on the global division of labor and the vulnerabilities associated with new production schemes. Likewise, place-based service workers can be seen as similarly powerful based on the immobility of their labor and their relation to key projects of globalization, such as world city production. But at the same time, I argue that capital mobility remains, in fact, a significant threat to workers, and that structural power does not necessarily encourage transnational cooperation and does not necessarily lead to any action at all. Similarly, security guards cannot be outsourced, but they are easily replaceable. Their claim to structural power is likewise highly questionable, or at least overshadowed by other negative consequences of their industrial setting. I argue that such a situation, of structural weakness, has encouraged experimentation with new forms of associational power.

I've also suggested that the reigning theoretical frameworks, which borrow heavily from Polanyi are more inspirational than instructive. However, situating labor transnationalism within debates about strategic innovation and union renewal allows us to view it as a reaction to both globalization and the institutional boundaries of trade unions. Overall, this analysis suggests a new role for labor in the global age: we need not see workers as mere factors of production, but as active agents of an alternative globalization.

Today trade unions represent one of the largest organized potential counter-force to corporate globalization. Prospects for global unionism should therefore be of general interest. How can labor organizations position themselves to most successfully challenge neoliberalism? How can workers overcome their historic nationalism and reach across

borders more constructively? How can efforts of unions to organize at the global level effect change locally? Why does transnational labor cooperation seem to take such varied forms?

The purpose of this dissertation is to answer the above questions and to reframe the attendant debates in ways that can help us better understand the various perspectives. To the extent that history provides a window into the future, we can learn from the examples of past practice. However, we are fundamentally concerned in this dissertation with what is happening today, a time of many great transformations. It is to the assessment of current strategic repertoires of global unionism that we turn in the next chapter.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is divided into six chapters including this introduction and a conclusion. These chapters are organized in such a way as to construct first a theoretical framework for the problem, then an ethnographic description of my case studies, and finally a reflection on the cases and some remarks about the future of global labor sociology.

Chapter 2: Global Unions, Global Governance: Strategies for a New Labor Transnationalism: After offering a critique of the dominant conception of the new labor transnationalism in the introduction, this chapter advances what I see as the most promising strategies for global unionism today. In particular, I take up the strategy for a social clause, or trade-labor linkages. I then move on to address international framework agreements in detail.

Chapter 3: The Globalization of the Organizing Model: Labor Transnationalism From North America to the Global South: This chapter is divided into two parts. The first traces the process by which SEIU's strategic approach was implemented around the world in order to revitalize labor movements in the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, New Zeland, and eventually parts of the global South. I focus on the development of what has come to be called the "organizing model," in contrast to the "servicing model," in which unions are perceived as providing a "product" in the form of higher wages or job security. Organizing unionism has been viewed as a panacea for "bread and butter" business union practices that became entrenched in the US and European contexts. The organizing strategy, as it was epitomized by SEIU's Justice for Janitors campaign, is now being tested globally. I suggest that the globalization of such a strategy should be viewed as a form of global union renewal. The second part of the chapter is an ethnographic description of UNI Global Union's global campaign against G4S that is the main case study of this dissertation. I conclude the chapter when the global framework agreement is signed in December 2008.

Chapter 4: Trade Union Renewal and Labor Transnationalism in South Africa: The Case of SATAWU: This chapter describes the implementation of the global agreement into Johannesburg, South Africa. I show how the South African Transport and Municipal Workers Union (SATAWU) transformed itself through its collaboration with UNI. I compare this form of transnational collaboration with other forms in South Africa's history, including the struggle against apartheid. I conclude that the global agreement had "mobilization-type" impacts in Johannesburg as it promoted the ability of the union to organize new members and activate its membership.

Chapter 5: Organizing the "Unorganized": Social dialogue and transnational collaboration in two Indian cities: As in the previous chapter, I focus on the local implementation of the global agreement in three Indian cities: New Delhi, Bangalore, and Kolkata. However, unlike in South Africa, the global agreement has not been used to mobilize workers in the same way. Rather, it has promoted a kind of social dialogue between management, the unions, and the state, which has resulted in several significant political changes to the benefit of workers. For this reason, I argue the global agreement has had "legislative-type" gains.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Prospects: The conclusion elaborates the main arguments of the dissertation, and summarizes my findings and contributions to this growing body of sociological literature. First, I argue that the distinctive quality of the new labor transnationalism is not its proletarian character, as is often suggested, but rather its orientation toward global governance and coordinated campaigning on a variety of scales. Nor does it emanate solely from the contradictions of global capitalism and vertical corporate integration. Rather, I focus mainly on the development of institutions and strategies that evolve over time that make transnational collaboration possible and more successful. Secondly, I argue that global unionism can inspire local renewal processes, as evidenced by my case studies in South Africa and India. Finally, the dissertation would be incomplete without some speculation on the future trajectory of global unionism, given the pace at which it is changing, even since my fieldwork was completed.

CHAPTER TWO:

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND THE NEW LABOR TRANSNATIONALISM

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I argued for a different conception of the new labor transnationalism, one that is embodied by current union strategies to exert global governance. I suggested that transnational union activity has not tended toward a proletarian internationalism, as is popularly stated (Moody 1997; Waterman 2002; Webster et al., 2008); nor is it best construed by its "informational nature" (Munck 2002). Rather, I argue that what *is new*, and representative of broad trends within the global labor movement, is the use of transnational campaigning to win union recognition and mechanisms for global governance. The case study with UNI and G4S embodies that conception, as will become clear. This chapter aims to first describe and then theorize a transition to a new kind of global labor politics. I start at the beginning, though I spend the majority of the chapter discussing recent trends and directions today, including what I think are the most characteristic. Of course to distinguish the "new" from the "old" we need to compare the various modes transnational labor cooperation has taken. As a kind of historical preface to that very task, which is part of the overall aim of this dissertation, we now turn to the changing landscape of labor transnationalism.

OLD LABOR INTERNATIONALISMS

Hyman (2005) distinguishes between early modes of labor transnationalism—which were motivated ideologically by socialism, full of optimism, and generally accomplished by ad

hoc groups and committees—with more recent variants. Today's international labor movement, he says, happens despite deep pessimism and is largely motivated by pragmatic self interest. Although the character and rationale for internationalism has certainly changed over time, this is a weak assessment of both periods. This section of the chapter will situate current transnational union experiments in a more complex historical context. I also show that the present holds more promise than did earlier variants.

Early Internationalism

Marx's International Workingmans Association of 1864 (the First International)[7] offers an oft-cited birthdate for transnational labor unionism, although it was more of a touchstone than a starting point. The earliest distinct forms of internationalism were British in origin, involving outreach to other inchoate unions in Belgium, France, and the Netherlands in the mid 1830s (Van der Linden 2008), a time during which a "vague idea of a common bond between laboring people emerged in Western Europe" (Lorwin 1953: 3). The 1840s, however, began a period that Holthoon and Van der Linden (1988: vii) have described as the "classical age" of proletarian internationalism, as it included the formation of several important institutions.[8]

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[7] The First International was successful at bridging the divides between the pragmatism of British trade union internationalism (which often masqueraded as a defense of decent working conditions) and Marx's abstract internationalism based on class and emerging syndicalist trends within anarchism. It never overcame these tensions, however, which eventually ripped it asunder seven years later, and the divides resurfaced during the incarnate Second International (1889-1914).

[8] These include the International Association (1855), the Congrès Démocratique International (1862), the Association Fédérative Universelle (1863), the Ligue de la Paix et de la Liberté (1867), and the Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste (1868) (Devreese 1988). By 1853 the British Amalgamated Society of Engineers union had established a branch in Australia, and later founded branches in Canada, the US, New Zealand, Malta, France, South Africa, Turkey, India, and Gibraltar (Southall 1989). A number of other schemes designed to control the flow of international strikebreakers have been documented as well (Stockton 1916).

By the mid 1880s, the US-based Knights of Labor had 10,000 members in Britain (Pelling 1956) and soon made headway into Australia (James 1986). In the first decade of its founding, the Industrial Workers of the World had branches in ten countries. What is significant about most of this activity is that it antedates the period Van der Linden calls the "national phase" of labor transnationalism, by which he means the period, primarily after the Wobblies' founding in 1905, that labor unions began to develop lasting national structures to conduct international campaigns.

"At its inception," says Munck (2002), "the labor movement was almost instinctively internationalist." Late nineteenth century Europe was a time of relatively fluid borders, and workers moved between countries and jobs regularly, in search of work, invariably carrying traditions of trade unionism with them. Hobsbawm says:

> the class struggle, in its most elementary but also spontaneous and rooted form of the trade union struggle, was internationalist insofar as any division along national racial or religious or other lines inevitably weakens the collective of workers in dispute with an employer (Hobsbawm 1988: 91).

Toward Transnationalism

By 1902, a broad swath of worker organizations had created 17 International Trade Secretariats (ITSs)[9] (Windmuller 1980). By 1914 there were 28, with a combined membership of 6.3 million (Dreyfus 2000), and existed primarily as vehicles for information sharing on wage rates, working conditions and union struggles. The AFL only became involved through the creation of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) which, significantly, organized members according to national country of origin rather than occupation (Fimmen 1922).

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[9] These bodies, precursors to the global union federations, are explored later in this chapter.

However, the emergence of international labor solidarity in the late nineteenth century has not been continuous. Rather, it was suddenly shattered with the outbreak of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution, when workers abandoned a common international cause to defend a national flag, and killed one another by the millions on the battlefields of Europe (Lorwin 1957). Thus the War is often seen as a breaking point for solidarity.[10] Nevertheless, with the war over, two decades into the new century, just as the International Labor Organization (ILO) was coming into existence, the IFTU claimed a membership of 23 million workers (Carew et al 2000: 565). But at the same time, rival organizations emerged to challenge the hegemony of the IFTU: the Red Trade Union International (RILU), founded in 1921 by the Bolsheviks, and the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU), inaugurated in 1920, inspired by Pope Leo XIII's "On the Condition of the Working Classes," a piece principally aimed at inspiring the rise of Christian trade unions to counter the explosion of socialist unions. The outbreak of war in Europe again led to the demise of the Promintern, while Fascism crushed many of its member unions. In a last ditch effort to salvage (and unite) the international union movement, in early 1945 a group of unions came together under the banner of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), though notably without the support of the AFL, which refused to collaborate with the Soviets.

Significantly, however, the *end* of the Second World War may have had an equally detrimental impact on transnationalism as the *onset* of the first. The first divided national working classes, while the second strengthened their nationalism. Although strong states have been historically linked with strong national working classes, they are

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[10] For an analysis of the war's impact on labor transnationalism, see also Braunthal (1980) and Trosky (1973[1924])

negatively correlated with instances of labor transnationalism. Since 1945, scholars have pointed to an inverse relationship between the capacity of workers to win strong gains from nation-states and their subsequent interest in transnational activity (Waterman 1998). As unions found their respective states more accommodating to wage and benefits concessions, their will to internationalism was muted. As Wills (2002) writes, "As long as nation-states offered a route to trade union influence and achievement, internationalism tended to be a paper exercise with little grassroots support."

However, it should not go without mention that the postwar configuration of states did have a dramatic impact on the internationalist outlook of many unions. It would therefore be incorrect to posit the disappearance of labor transnationalism after the war. Rather, nationalist politics came to dominate an internationalist agenda.

Labor In the Age of Three Worlds: The Cold War and Trade Union Imperialism

Following the end of the War the international trade union movement lined up behind their respective country interests to take sides for the "democratic" West or the "communist" East.

Although initially a major impetus of the WFTU was to provide assistance to unions in British and French Africa (its founding conference took place in Dakar, Senegal), it gradually became a Cold War instrument as well. This was made official after the withdrawal of almost all non-communist members (including the CIO) that went on to construct the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (Carew 2000) after a rift began over the US-backed Marshall Plan. After the split, these ideological divisions found similar expressions in Africa along colonial lines (Agyeman 2003).

No unionists took up the Cold War cause with more pluck than the Americans, who became strident allies to the US government's militant anti-communism, a significant break from sixty years prior when it conducted anti-imperialist campaigns against the Spanish in Cuba and Puerto Rico. On the heels of the Taft-Hartley Act loyalty oaths McCarthy's purges, American unionists were deployed to Western Europe to help establish noncommunist trade unions (Davis 1985; Rupert 1995). After its merger in 1955, the AFL-CIO began a more aggressive defense of "free trade unionism" through the ICFTU, which it eventually deemed insufficiently anti-communist, spurring it to found its own regional tripartite organization, the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD).

On the heels of Castro's 1959 revolution in Cuba, AIFLD became closely aligned with Kennedy's Alliance for Progress Initiative, and dedicated itself to the task of suppressing radical Left forces within the international trade unions, but mostly in Latin America (Spalding 1988). The central figure in the Institute was the notorious Jay Lovestone, the once Communist Party USA leader turned CIA spy. After leaving AIFLD, Lovestone next took control of the AFL's International Affairs Department (IAD) and initiated the massive transfer of funds from the CIA to US-backed Latin American anti-communists (Morgan 1999).

The institute quickly grew into a significant component of US foreign policy in the region (Weinrub and Bolinger 1987; Barry and Preusch 1986). It trained workers to participate in the 1964 military coup that overthrew Brazilian President Joao Goulart (Barry and Preusch 1990). It trained unionists at regional facilities to promote workplace unionism over more political/social movement forms, and spent millions of dollars in aid

constructing schools, bridges, and other infrastructure to help promote the idea that "free trade unions can produce results, while Communists produce only slogans" (AIFLD 1964a).

Although not as militant as the AFL-CIO, the British TUC played a significant Cold War role as well. In the immediate postwar period, it was instrumental in reconstructing German unions that were decentralized and factionalized, in order to discourage the influence of the Soviets. The TUC also had a hand in Greece's union environment after a civil war there left the movement divided. Finally, Busch (1983) documents the ways in which British unions also acted on their own anti-communist ethos, beyond merely answering the state's call. UK garment unions made several important missions to India to extend a particular form of solidarity designed to raise the conditions of workers in Indian textile mills, thereby making British-made garments more competitive on the world market (Cooper 1996; Brown 1988).

Thompson and Larson's *Where Were You Brother? An Account of Trade Union Imperialism* (Thompson and Larson 1978) provides a classical perspective on the overall fallout of the Cold War machinations of Northern unions on their Southern counterparts: "Third World unions have been weakened under the cover of the international trade union movement, in turn making wholesale oppression more likely" (Thompson and Larson 1978: 2).

However, while the Cold War certainly divided the movement, some important instances of collaboration happened during this time as well. During de′tent, when the AFL-CIO briefly left the ICFTU, the ICFTU and the WFTU actually found considerable common ground. But it was the increasing transnationalization of capital during this time

that provided the greatest impetus towards cooperation and unity.

Beginning in the 1960s, the trade secretariats, organized more or less industrially, took significant strides toward countering the increasing globalization of capital. The idea was to mirror the structural configurations of transnational corporations (TNCs). The key intellectual figure here was Charles Levinson, who got his start in trade union politics as the staff person for the CIO's Paris office in 1951 (Gallin 1997). Levinson went on to lead the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) for two decades, and was perhaps the first to recognize the deep challenges and potential for labor unions posed by globalization. He argued that transnational collective bargaining represented an inevitable approach of unions if they wanted to succeed (or survive). This theory prompted the ICEM to establish multiple bodies similar to world company councils (explored below) in major globalizing industries at the time.

But scholars—and unions—have long shown that national protectionism and internationalism exist in constant tension, the former in fact being a more typical response to globalism (Lorwin 1929; Olle and Schoeller 1997). Levinson's work therefore drew deep criticisms from the pro-management writers (Northrup and Rowan 1979), so called Left-pessimists (Ramsay 1997), and Marxists (Werner Olle and Wolfgang Schoeller), who disagreed with "the implicit attempt to find a superficial economic basis for the necessity and possibility of international trade union politics" (Olle and Schoeller 1984: 70).

At any rate, it was not Levinson's ICEM, but the International Metworkers Federation (IMF) that began, within the auto industry, the most significant experiment

with transnational organizing. During this time, we see the initial stages of the deindustrialization of motor manufacturing from high wage to low wage areas, first within the US, then outside of it. The UAW, operating in the classic Fordist paradigm, sought to constrain capital flight through world-wide union representation through company councils. As it turns out, the theory was more successful than the practice, and the company councils yielded very little in the way of gains for unions or workers (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000; Bendiner 1977).

Labor, Development, and the End of the Cold War

When the history of labor transnationalism has been written fully, by far the most unexpected development will be the degree to which sincere and legitimate transnational cooperation happened *despite* decades of labor imperialism, Cold War divisions, the rise of economic and cultural nationalisms, and brutal colonial legacies.

Outside the auto sector, the trade secretariats had turned their attention elsewhere. To the global South, to be exact. By the mid 1980s the ITSs were deeply enmeshed with the political economy of development in the former colonies of the Third World and in Latin America. The IUF's campaign against Coca-Cola in Guatemala, which is still ongoing, is indicative of the type of campaigning that characterized the work of these bodies.

But by far the crowning achievement of this era of transnationalism is the campaign against apartheid in South Africa. The campaign led by Trumka's United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) with the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in South Africa pressured Royal Dutch/Shell to revoke its South African operations as part of a

global boycott against apartheid. The movement was backed by churches, international NGOs, and other unions, including crucial logistical support from seafarers in the ITF who helped to expose secret trade deals between oil companies and the South African government (Bronfenbrenner 2007). Shell, unlike other oil suppliers, never left the country, choosing to trade the bad publicity for higher profits as it slowly became the primary oil supplier to the apartheid state. Nevertheless, Bronfenbrenner (2007) calls the campaign "perhaps the most comprehensive and most effective example of cross-border solidarity of labor and its allies in history."

Munck claims the South African campaign "demonstrated that the spirit of the First International could be rekindled by solidaristic action." And so we are back where we began. We can see that the labor movement was internationalist at the outset and drifted periodically toward an embattled nationalism. It was also motivated by complex ideological and pragmatic concerns. In many ways, the role of labor against South African apartheid represents a kind of transition into new modes of transnational collaboration.

THE NEW LABOR TRANSNATIONALISM

To the great surprise of the participants of the 2001 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, John Sweeney, then president of the AFL-CIO, announced the "birth pangs of a new internationalism" at a time when many on the Left were committed to promoting the doom and gloom forecasts of the globalization thesis. In an oft-cited remark, Sweeney declared, "This movement for a new internationalism is building from the bottom up, not the top down…Its forum is the public square, not the boardroom."

Sweeney himself was building on an important 2000 *Foreign Affairs* article by Jay Mazur, chair of the AFL-CIO International Affairs Committee. Mazur (2000) declares an end to Cold War unionism, labor imperialism, and narrow workplace-centered campaigning. Instead, he suggests the unions had turned a corner in the international arena, inspired by the 1999 protests against the WTO in Seattle. He writes:

> For years governments ignored demands to include labor and environmental rights in trade agreements, confident that there was no political cost in doing so. This is now changing. Unions are forging new alliances with environmentalists, human rights groups, and religious and consumer activists… After Seattle, the demand for labor rights and other social standards can no longer be ignored…A social movement of potentially tremendous force has begun to gather that can affect the bottom line and the laws of the land.

For a number of years in the US it seemed that alliances with radical social movements had provided labor with a new telescope through which to view the world of work outside its borders, most evident in its collaboration with the Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment that brought radical ecologists and mainstream unionists into the collective fray against NAFTA, Fast Track, and the Seattle WTO Ministerial. Armbruster-Sandoval (2003) shows that numerous transnational campaigns arose at this time inside the Latin American maquiladora sector by unions making use of what Keck and Sikkink (1998) call a "boomerang strategy," in which poor workers recruit the assistance and solidarity of rich-country allies.

While insisting that unions were now paving a better future, Mazur says they had also uncovered a critical tradition in their past.

> [Unions] have always operated across borders; their ideological roots—and much of their early membership—grew out of the internationalist perspective of the European labor movement of the last century. When American corporations were still huddling behind tariff barriers, workers were organizing international associations based on the principles of solidarity and social justice.

As an account of labor's past, this story has merit. But the idea that labor had found a long-buried treasure has given rise to some confusing historical parallels in the literature. Munck (2002) suggests Sweeney's speech amounts to a call for a "renewal of proletarian internationalism." Waterman, an relentless champion of labor's role in the World Social Forum scene, has made the same claim a number of times. In fact, with near unanimity, Seattle is seen as a crystal clear display of the US labor movement's global turn.

It may muddy those waters considerably to remember that as police converged on protesters in downtown Seattle, the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), by far the most committed allies of the activist movement, were dumping beams of Chinese steel into Elliot Bay. Though couched as a protest of unfair trade agreements, the action had the distinctive nationalist flavor of protectionism. Let us also remember that at the critical hour during the WTO ministerial, as delegates were voting on trade-labor linkages, the AFL-CIO, as an ally to President Clinton, fought to establish a social clause within the WTO framework that would inordinately benefit Northern labor (see below).

Delegates from India and Africa staunchly opposed such a measure as thinly-veiled protectionism, a "false humanitarianism" (Scheuerman 2001), and the clause was never included. Largely as a result of the divisions caused by this decision, the WTO meetings came to a draw when it was clear no consensus could be reached on important trade-related issues. Once this history is brought front and center, an important aspect of Mazur's position becomes less tenable:

> Virtually every independent labor federation has endorsed the ICFTU's call for building labor rights into the global trading system. The divide is not between North and South; it is between workers everywhere and the great concentrations of capital and the governments they dominate.

The perceived erasure of the North-South divide represents an important tenet within global labor sociology.[11] But arguments for the homogenizing impacts of capitalist globalization are old, even classical. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels write of the industrial worker: "modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character." This was perhaps true of mid nineteenth century Europe but does not square with the overwhelming diversity of working classes today. In this case, Zolberg's question is more apt for modern times: "If capitalism is of a piece, why is the working class it has called into life so disparate?" (Zolberg 1986).

However, all debates aside, most recent examples of transnationalism labor collaboration are geographically located in the North; in these cases the question of the divide has been less central. Studies have been commonly featured in the social movements and global studies literatures for over a decade, even if not always identified as such. Much attention has focused on the cooperation of unions and non-governmental organizations (Anner and Evans 2004). The industrial relations dimension of post-Maastricht Europe has also excited many scholars, particularly the development of European Works Councils (EWCs) (Rogers and Streek 1995; Wills 1998; Marginson 1992). Following the explosion of anti-sweatshop activism on college campuses and the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle, scholars began assessing a new global justice movement in

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[11] A quarter century ago Nigel Harris declared that the development of a "global manufacturing system" had rendered any conception of the North-South divide anachronistic, a thesis that attracted much critical acclaim from writers on the Left and Right (Hoogvelt 1997: xii, 145; Held et al. 1999: 8, 177, 186-7; Robinson and Harris 2000; Burbach and Robinson 1999; Hardt and Negri 2000). This stands in stark contrast to Arrighi and Silver's contention (based on analysis of world income trends) that "…contrary to widespread opinion, the so-called North-South divide continues to constitute (as it has throughout the twentieth century) the main obstacle to the formation of a homogenous proletarian condition" (Silver and Arrighi 2000).

earnest, much of which involved struggles for international unionism and solidarity with new social movements (Waterman 2001; 1999). The focus on global institutions and movements also produced academic work on the social clauses of trade agreements and, most recently, the efforts of unions to exercise global governance (Stevis and Boswell 2008). It is this trend I want to explore next, which, to my mind, requires a theoretical re-working of the dominant thinking about new labor transnationalism.

GLOBAL UNIONS, GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Governance is a contested term, broadly referring to the constellation of forces and institutions that make decisions and enforce compliance with certain norms and rules. Significant debate has focused on the role of the state in enabling market liberalization and, conversely, the role that corporations play in world politics (Ruggie 2004). Following Foucault, sociologists often refer to an artful and subtle power formed through networks of knowledge, communication, and control, often resting in social institutions (hospitals, schools, churches, etc). International political economy, by contrast, stresses the "worldwide tilt from states to markets" (Schirm 2007: 13), giving rise to a form of rule-setting by transnational non-state actors (Czempiel and Rosenau 1992). Overall, the literature emphasizes the development of a new *arena* of "governance without government" (Muller et al., 2006). Despite the emphasis on non-state forces, labor, a central factor in much debate about private regulation, has rarely been considered an agent of global governance. My approach therefore joins a handful of others seeking to "bring labor in" to debates on governance (Stevis and Boswell 2008; Fichter et al., 2010; Papadakis 2008).

There are two primary strategies by which global unions have tried to exercise global governance in the public and private sphere: social clauses and international framework agreements. The issue is whether or not a regime can be established that oversees the effective observance/implementation of basic labor standards. One proposed method of accomplishing this is to allow the WTO the power to sanction those member states that are out of compliance. This is based on the idea that since trade is the main catalyst of the global economy, it should also be the mechanism through which to enforce labor standards (and, presumably, other standards as well). Such a strategy is called a social clause. Below, I outline the controversial campaign by some unions to insert—while some others oppose—a social clause into transnational economic agreements and global governance institutions, in particular the WTO. The debate stems from a recognition that in an increasingly interdependent global economy, the observance of labor standards in one place has serious implications for workers in other places, and that some states are more inclined to exploit their comparative advantage of cheap labor than they are to uphold basic rights. Put another way, "cross-national cooperation is structured by competition" (Anner et al. 2006: 9). This fact encouraged innovative strategizing by unions about how to take wages out of competition and build support for worker rights on a global scale.

Global labor organizations have engaged public governance institutions in a variety of ways, beginning as a hodgepodge of lobbying efforts aimed at reforming rather impermeable international organizations. But here I will focus only on the social clause strategy, as it marks the culmination of these previous efforts, and a more unified campaign against younger global (WTO) and regional (NAFTA) institutions (French

2002). In other words, unions came to view the former strategy as a dead end, but saw an opportunity to impact new transnational trade structures while the ideological and political cement was still wet.

Next, I describe in greater detail the international framework agreement (IFA) strategy as a form of exercising global governance in the private sphere. (As this dissertation focuses on a campaign to win an IFA, I devote more space to it). IFAs, or global agreements, are non-binding contracts signed between global union federations and transnational corporations for the purpose of implementing core labor standards and other rights. Campaigns to win global agreements have now eclipsed almost all other goals by the global unions. Much academic attention has been paid to the development of IFAs, mostly within the disciplines of Industrial Relations and Economic Geography. This literature has focused decidedly on the content of the agreements themselves, and the prospects for social dialogue, to the near-exclusion of the most important question: Can IFAs lead to concrete gains for unions? I show in subsequent chapters that unions have recently discovered ways that IFAs can contribute to rank and file mobilization, organizing, and union revitalization. Here, I outline the development of the strategy, and assess its strengths and weaknesses. I conclude with some comments about the G4S agreement in particular and the possible futures of union strategies to impact governance.

THE SOCIAL CLAUSE

There is a curious irony in the way that labor unions and social movements celebrate their landmark protest against the 1999 WTO Millennial Ministerial in Seattle. On the third day of negotiations, as demonstrators declared a clear victory in chaotic

streets, African and Indian delegates blocked the necessary consensus to further discussions over trade rules that would have inserted a social clause on labor standards into all WTO decisions. Such a policy, according to prevailing wisdom within the AFL-CIO, would have mandated the enforcement of minimum or core labor standards, including prohibitions against child labor and forced labor, against discrimination at work, and against violations of the freedom to organize unions.[12] The WTO's rules-based enforcement process, now widely understood as empowering transnational corporations to move investments and production freely across borders, would have been used to protect workers' rights as well (Bacon 2000). Although debates about trade-labor linkages were common questions of governance for decades, the issue of a social clause was never returned to the WTO agenda after Seattle. To understand the debates over the social clause in 1999, and why unions argued the way they did, requires a brief historical flashback.

Brief history of the social clause

Unions have proposed to link trade and economic agreements with labor rights since the mid-nineteenth century, when workers first began to feel competitive pressures from low-wage areas. Two Swiss conferences—one in Berne that limited the hours of female labor, and one in Geneva, a League of Nations event that applied import restrictions on goods made with prison labor—represent early Twentieth Century attempts to regulate labor conditions across borders (Charnovitz 1987). During the

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[12] Core labor standards technically incorporate eight basic "conventions" of the ILO into its rubric that are commonly reduced to the four general rights mentioned above. The complete set is as follows: No. 87 (freedom of association and the right to organize); No. 98 (on the right to organize and bargain collectively); No. 100 (on equal remuneration); No. 111 (on discrimination in employment and occupation); No. 138 (on minimum age); No. 29 (on forced labor); No. 105 (on the abolition of forced labor); and No. 182 (on the abolition of the worst forms of child labor).

interwar years, the ILO established treaties aimed at raising the standards of some of the most horrible forms of labor so as to level the field and decrease incentives for competition. The International Trade Organization took similar approaches after the Second World War, though it was not until the 1970s that the strategy gained more urgency, as liberalization processes encouraged the creation of legislation embedded in economic agreements (van Roozendal 2002).

The sea-changes of capitalism in the 1970s set in motion a series of processes that restructured the global division of labor and global trade patterns (Harvey 1991). In particular, we can observe an increase in the trade of finished commodities, but also a rise in the trade in inputs to produce such goods (Hammer 2008). This signifies a shift not only towards more trade integration, but also a shift from vertically integrated, or Fordist, production systems to a more horizontally dispersed network of producers along global value and supply chains (Gereffi 2006). At the same time, a regime of global economic governance gathered force in the late 1970s alongside a dynamic economic model that attacked both the Northern welfare-capitalist state and the developmental state in the South (Stiglitz 2003).

Soon the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) exercised profound discipline over the global political economy.[13] These changes prompted unions and other social movements to explore a link between trade and labor standards at the global level via economic agreements, the GATT, and/or the ILO (van Roozendaal 2002). This idea found its first

[13] It should be noted that this was not the founding rationale for the GATT. In the late 1940s, as market-based solutions were considered anathema, the GATT was established to implement a multi-lateral system of institutional checks and balances, and slowly move toward liberalization (Ikenberry 2003). This is in stark contrast to the "Shock Doctrine" of the late nineties (Klein 2008).

concrete expression in the ICFTU's campaign to insert a social clause into GATT. Though unsuccessful, a number of its policy prescriptions were subsequently included in the influential Brandt Report of 1980 (Hampson 2004). Then the AFL-CIO of the mid 1970s, at the behest of unions in industries most exposed to international competition (auotomobile manufacturing and textiles), pursued a policy of attaching labor standards to US trade policies. This activity eventually developed into the Generalized System of Preferences in 1984, which allegedly enforced punishment on trading partners for noncompliance of basic labor standards (Tsogas 2000). It is premised on the idea that "trade, not aid" should be the basis for economic development. This process even found support within the lost decade of the staunchly anti-union Reagan administration, which offered it an acceptable bargain for a free trade agreement and a mechanism to protect less competitive sectors like textiles in politically important Southern states.[14]

The social clause and the WTO

Debates about the creation of a stronger social clause gained momentum in the build-up to the Uruguay Round in 1996 as the US government aggressively pursued a trade-labor linkage within the soon-to-be-formed WTO. To its dismay, however, although the meeting took firm positions defending intellectual property rights (Collingsworth 1998), it remained quasi-neutral on the issue of labor standards, deferring the issue to the ILO, which has almost no means of enforcement. In particular, the WTO was seen as preferable target to GATT for US unions because its dispute resolution

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[14] Although activists were successful at winning the legislation, which provided an occasional buffer against the exigencies of the market (Frundt 1998), defending it has been difficult, as the administrations of Reagan, Bush, Clinton, and Bush have not enforced the rights clauses to any significant degree (FPIF: http://www.fpif.org/reports/an_enforceable_social_clause).

mechanism had the potential to sanction if labor rights violations could potentially be deemed unfair trade barriers (Wachtel 1998; O'Brien, et al., 2000)).

By the mid nineties, the strategy of safeguarding labor rights through clauses in trade agreements was the central project of the international trade secretariats, with the fiercest debates centering around enforcement mechanisms and the proper institution—the ILO versus the WTO—to promote them. In particular, the ICFTU proposed a course of action that was "antiprotectionist, aimed at opening markets and increasing growth and employment" to "spread more fairly the benefits of trade within and between countries" (ICFTU 2005). The ICFTU promoted the ILO as the first body to investigate violations, referring all unresolved cases to the WTO for possible sanctions (ICFTU 2005). After the 1996 Singapore round of the WTO did not reject or advance a position on the social clause, a perceived victory for both sides, the ICFTU pursued a successful campaign to win many Southern unions to the strategy, highlighting the expanding influence of the organization in international labor politics.

However, in the wake of that meeting the International Organization of Employers, representing business interests in the WTO, proposed nonbinding legislation that advanced a modicum of standards, but also served to foreclose the expansion of ILO powers. The result was the 1998 Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which applied core labor standards to all ILO member countries whether they have ratified the relevant conventions or not. To this day the ILO devotes an entire department to implementing these principles. Generally speaking, some of the largest EU countries and many Southern states favored the ILO as the appropriate forum, while the US supported a role for the WTO. Likewise, US unions and the ITSs were most supportive of

the social clause strategy while Southern unions, especially those from Asia, were opposed, with a few exceptions.

Which brings us back to inability of the US to realize the strategy in Seattle. One explanation for the social clause failure is that regional solidarity by Southern representatives gravitated around the perceived protectionism of their Northern counterparts, as trade-based labor standards would have certainly favored Northern producers more immediately. In particular, India led a large block of developing countries to opposition (Kolben 2006). During these debates, however, the South was divided, as South African and Brazilian delegates supported the clauses, arguing that it posed the opportunity for a deeper form of protection for workers in the global economy, and mitigated against a race to the bottom. These countries accused dissenters of supporting a developmental path based on the comparative advantage of cheap unfree labor.

Perhaps a more nuanced understanding of this dilemma appreciates the power differentials of Northern and Southern unions more fully. Most Southern unions, including some that argued against the social clause at the WTO in 1999, support it in principle, but have legitimate concerns that the process will be dominated by the more powerful trade unions of the North, subordinating the interests of the South. This situation may result in conflicting "agendas that do not reflect the core concerns of those they portend to represent," what Mark Anner has called a "paradox of labor transnationalism" (Anner 2007).

The social clause strategy is fundamentally limited by its narrow application to trade-related politics rather than the economy as a whole. The strategy also drove a

North-South wedge into global labor politics. Nevertheless, trade-labor linkages still survive in the Bush-sponsored 2002 Trade Act in the US. However, in recent years, global unions began retreating from the social clause concept toward the all-encompassing “core labor standards” discourse, which they say has deeper respect for worker rights and a better chance of gaining ground (Croucher and Cotton 2009). Implementing core labor standards has taken other forms, however, and the strategy has been primarily directed at transnational corporations, not nation-states. It is to the subject of unions and private global governance that we now turn. This rest of this chapter is devoted to presenting the history, present and future of the IFA strategy as a means to better understand global union politics today.

INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS

International Framework Agreements mark the first instance in the history of the labor movement that transnational companies have bargained directly with unions at the global level. Novelty aside, they represent an important strategy to impact the privatized forms of global governance by large corporations.[15] IFAs are non-binding contracts signed between global union federations and transnational corporations that attempt to secure labor standards throughout a company’s operations and, in some cases, its supply chain (See figure 1 in Appendix). The ICFTU defines them like this:

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[15] It is worth explaining how *private* multinational companies exercise *public* global governance. First, a company’s right to manage its employees and enforce codes of conduct on suppliers is enshrined in national law. These national laws are influenced by corporate behavior, and are often more targeted at attracting companies than regulating them. Additionally, global rules dictated by global institutions like the WTO, IMF, and World Bank enhance the legal grounding of corporations. Transnational corporations exercise direct authority over millions of employees and indirect control over the public through their influence within institutions of global governance that allows them to help shape public rules. While corporations tend to portray themselves as against public regulation, they are actually heavily committed to it.

> agreements negotiated between a multinational company and a global unions federation concerning international activities of that company. The main purpose of a framework agreement is to establish a formal ongoing relationship…which can solve problems and work in the interests of both parties (ICFTU 2002).

Worker rights are thereby made viral, diffused by human resource management practices through transnational production and service delivery networks. The fiercest debates occur unsurprisingly over their implementation, as corporations and unions invariably view IFAs as having fundamentally different ends (IOE 2007). There has been an explosion of IFAs signed in the last decade: from 5 in 2000 to 91 in 2011.[16] The recent popularity of the strategy has inspired a substantial academic literature devoted to its assessment.

One view sees IFAs as a new mechanism for "social dialogue" and multinational industrial relations. These theorists note the rising power of transnational corporations, and the declining effectiveness of national-level activism as having required that unions shift to a higher scale of bargaining. A second perspective views IFAs primarily as instruments for global governance. In the absence of a legal-regulatory apparatus that can safeguard workers at the global level, IFAs represent a mechanism to uphold basic standards and conditions that most national legal systems don't provide, especially in the global South (ILO 2009). Another interesting approach from a management perspective applies Szulanki's (1996, 2000) "practice transfer model" to international human resource management. Here global agreements are seen as conveyers of new business models (Fichter, Helfen, Sydow 2010).

All of these perspectives largely derive their conclusions from a content analysis of the actual agreements and an assessment of the formal/procedural mechanisms by

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[16] For details on all IFAs negotiated to date, see the tables in the appendix, and figure 2 for information on their rapid growth.

which they may be "implemented." However, in their quest to map the contractual features of these new instruments, industrial relations theorists have largely missed the two most important aspects of the strategy. The first is the ability of IFAs to constrain management behavior so that unions can organize. The second is the application of the agreement beyond the company's headquarters and into its corporate periphery or supply chain, where labor rights are weaker. I place these factors at the center of my assessment of IFAs throughout this dissertation. Such a perspective contributes a new understanding of IFAs as more than policy instruments, but as a useful platform for worker mobilization, solidarity, and union renewal.

However, before we judge their merits and faults today, it's important to know where they came from. Analysts have offered a handful of explanations for the development of IFAs, though we can distill these into three general categories: union internationalism, the emergence of the corporate social responsibility practices, and the evolution of European industrial relations. I will take up each in turn.

International unionism and collective bargaining

Though capital has always been global, employers were not. Therefore, it was not until the 1960s that unions sought to meet corporations at the global level, driven by the Europeanization of lead sectors in the US economy (automobiles and chemicals). First, unions called for national policies that would restrict the degree to which companies could expand internationally, reflective of the social clause strategy. This strategy largely failed in its stated mission, and in the process created bitter divisions between unions in different countries (Stevis and Boswell 2008).

Then in the 1960s Walter Reuther's UAW began to pursue coordinated bargaining. Through assistance of the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF), the UAW built the first World Company Councils, networks of workers within the same multinational firm. The inaugural meeting of four councils met in Detroit in 1966, General Motors, Ford, Volkswagen-Daimler-Benz, and Fiat/Chrysler (Bendiner 1978). Soon after, the IMF established more company councils, until the nine largest car companies in the world participated in council structures, comprising 80 percent of automobile manufacturing in the West (Gallin 2008). In years to come, approximately 60 such councils were established in multiple sectors.

Charles Levinson, then leader of the international chemical workers union, became the most outspoken proponent of this new transnationalism. He envisioned the company councils as building the skeletal framework for multinational collective bargaining, which his union was able to accomplish on at least one occasion (Levinson 1972). Largely, however, the theory seemed to out-perform the practice (Bendiner 1978). The most likely explanation for this failure of multinational collective bargaining to take off is that companies simply refused to recognize the international trade secretariats as bargaining agents, and unions were not able to exercise the power necessary to force them to the table. This inability, however, was also entwined with the political shifts unfolding during the economic crisis of the early to mid seventies. As unions became more defensive, and turned increasingly toward protectionism, internationalism was difficult to broker.

Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick (2004) has suggested that transnational collective bargaining was not the only or even primary goal of this international union activity.

Rather, she has argued that the company councils had more modest rationales: for purposes of information-sharing and more general coordinated action. Critical voices from the Left objected to the strict economic rationale of the company councils, arguing that without a political organization, unions would not be able to sustain such long-distance activism. It was, nonetheless, Levinson's somewhat bombastic claims of a new era dawning of internationalism that caught the attention of University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business, which felt compelled to weigh in through a series of case studies aimed at disparaging "every case" Levinson gives of multinational collective bargaining as a myth (Northrup and Rowan 1979).

Eventually, the world company councils withered away amid corporate intransigence, outright resistance, or inter-union rivalries over tactics and Cold War ideology, surviving only as shells within the IMF and ICEM. The IUF, however, continued to pursue it quite doggedly. In 1988, eight years after it had established a company council with the French foods company Danone, the two parties agreed to the first ever international framework agreement. The IUF, led by long-time Polish organizer, Dan Gallin, represents the historic ligature between the first and most recent attempts of unions to engage corporations at the global level. It is worth noting at this point that Danone had a history of pro-union behavior, and some of its executives, including its CEO, were prominent Socialist Party members (Gallin 2008). Actually many GUFs began targeting "soft" companies first, as a testing ground for the strategy and to encourage more resistant companies to work with unions (Coucher and Cotton 2009). In other words, Danone, like a few others, were motivated to enter into a new relationship with the union for multiple reasons, some of which were inspired by their own self-image

as worker-friendly companies. This brings us to the next pathway toward global agreements.

Corporate Social Responsibility

The idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is to embed international norms, ethical standards, and a panoply of "rights" into the business model of large corporations, thereby promoting "a market for virtue" where unions are non-existent or unable to practice the vigilant monitoring that it would otherwise require (Vogel 2006). This notion has technically existed for as long as employers have seen it in their interest to treat employees well, but the recent explosion of CSR as a management strategy has had dramatic implications for global corporate governance.

In the 1960s, again fueled by the investment of US companies in Europe, the ILO began to take notice of the impact of internationalization on unions in both places. A series of research papers eventually formed the basis for the 1977 Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, which established a voluntary commitment to fundamental rights at work (ILO 1998). At nearly the same time, the OECD produced its Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises. Both were revised in 2000 to include compliance mechanisms and language specifically highlighting core labor standards. However, enforcement has generally meant public shaming, rather than actual sanctions (TUAC 2006).

Jenkins (2001) describes a schism in the rationale for CSR policies in the 1980s. In the seventies, a wave of CSR targeted corruption and "issues of questionable payments" within corporations. In the eighties and nineties, we see a shift in CSR policies

focused increasingly on social issues at specific multinationals. Perhaps the paradigmatic examples are the Sullivan Principles, which enforced a code of conduct on transnational corporations operating in apartheid South Africa. Developed over two decades, the principles were used by the divestment campaign that convinced over one hundred US-based companies to withdraw their operations from the country. Seidman (2003) argues that the principles were meaningless as a voluntaristic measure, but became useful when defended by unions and other social movement actors. The Sullivan Principles inspired similar activism throughout the nineties led by the National Labor Committee, which famously forced a teary-eyed apology from Kathy Lee Gifford when it uncovered the El Salvadoran sweatshops that produced her line of designer clothing (Dateline NBC 1996). Soon college campuses were awash with student activists, partnered with union campaigns, demanding their universities source garments and apparel from companies that submitted to an independent monitoring regime under the auspices of the Workers Rights Consortium, formed by the NLC.[17]

Today CSR represents one of the most "prominent managerial developments of recent years" (Gordon and Miyake 2000), buoyed by the additional legitimacy given the idea by the United Nations' Global Compact in 1999. The Global Compact resulted from the unlikely meeting of trade union and international business leaders at the World Economic Forum, the first time unions had been invited to Davos in two decades. Spurred by the Asian financial crisis and a rising anti-neoliberalist sentiment around the globe, the UN sought to introduce a stronger social dimension into global capitalism.

[17] An intense amount of academic attention has been focused on such activism (see Fung, O'Rourke, and Sabel 2000; Rodriguez-Garavito 2005; Jenkins et al., 2002; Ross 1997). Keck and Sikkink (1998) have argued that transnational advocacy networks can make use of a boomerang strategy—where poor country unions recruit the assistance of allies in the North. On closer inspection, however, often these campaigns tend to undermine the ability of local unions to bargain on their own behalf (Seidman 2008).

The global unions have had a difficult time making use of the Global Compact, since it provides no role for the ILO, is non-binding, and relies on moral suasion as its primary enforcement mechanism. Moreover, unions have generally distanced themselves from anything resembling uniform codes of conduct. It is worth pointing out, however, that in the late nineties, the ICFTU and the global unions developed a more comprehensive agenda for taking advantage of CSR policies. It is subsequent to that strategic maneuvering that all but two IFAs came to pass.

Some IFAs are identical to CSR policies, without even reference to core labor standards or enforcement resolutions. A cynical interpretation therefore has lead some to the conclusion that IFAs, like CSR, have provided corporations an "easy out" when it comes to making real changes on social issues. While unions have long held this critique, a recent business-side analysis promotes a similar line. The Wall Street Journal (2010) writes:

> Large companies now routinely claim that they aren't in business just for the profits, that they're also intent on serving some larger social purpose. But it's an illusion, and a potentially dangerous one. Very simply, in cases where private profits and public interests are aligned, the idea of corporate social responsibility is irrelevant: Companies that simply do everything they can to boost profits will end up increasing social welfare. In circumstances in which profits and social welfare are in direct opposition, an appeal to corporate social responsibility will almost always be ineffective, because executives are unlikely to act voluntarily in the public interest and against shareholder interests…Irrelevant or ineffective, take your pick. But it's worse than that. The danger is that a focus on social responsibility will delay or discourage more effective measures to enhance social welfare in those cases where profits and the public good are at odds. As society looks to companies to address these problems, the real solutions may be ignored (August 23, 2010 Wall Street Journal).

Both IFAs and CSR policies rely on voluntary enforcement mechanisms, and both provide an avenue for a "public relations triumph" by multinationals (Stevis and Boswell 2008b). Corporate leaders are motivated to sign IFAs because they may promote better

employee retention and more effective human resource management practices, which can also enhance competitiveness. Fichter et al. (2010) argue that the implementation of IFAs may vary according to the company's pre-existing CSR approach. As a result of these similarities and connections, critics have suggested that IFAs and CSR policies represent two sides of the same coin. Others claim that IFAs are simply another type of CSR, broadly defined (Scherrer and Greven 2001). However, a more thorough comparative perspective points to important differences that need to be addressed (Müller & Rüb 2005).

The most obvious distinction is that IFAs are, generally, negotiated documents by worker representatives, as opposed to unilateral codes of conduct developed solely by management (Riisgaard 2003). Torres and Gunnes (2003) differentiate the contractual mechanisms of IFAs from the voluntarism that undergirds codes of conduct. Framework agreements commit the signatories to a set of principles, paramount among them being adherence to core labor standards, which simply go unmentioned by the vast majority of CSR initiatives. The most compelling difference between an IFA and a CSR policy is that the former has as its stated goal a changed relationship between workers and management. This change is oriented toward empowering unions and restricting companies, or, "creating the possibility for workers to enforce workers' rights themselves" (ICFTU 2001: 98). Codes of conduct, on the other hand, have often been put into practice for union avoidance (Gallin 2000).

The actions of unions to move toward internationalism and the actions of corporations to embrace CSR initiatives cannot fully explain the geographic locus of IFAs as overwhelmingly European. Of the 82 agreements in force as of September 2010,

70 are signed between global unions and European multinationals. The rest involve companies from the US, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Russia. Why the European focus? The final pathway toward the IFA is the emergence of an integrated European industrial relations system.

European industrial relations

Though soundly defeated in Levinson's day, multinational collective bargaining has finally begun to emerge in Europe, though in a very different way than he envisioned. Since the end of the century, in automobile manufacturing at GM, Ford, and Daimler-Chrysler, all of which are covered by framework agreements, European-wide worker structures have developed into world company councils, with a spillover effect such that the representation of workers has edged toward global (Da Costa and Rehfeldt 2006).

Stevis and Boswell (2008) suggest that as European political economy is pushed toward liberalization, its unions have learned to react the way American unions did, by shadowing corporations as they move. This process has been facilitated somewhat by the 1992 European Social Charter and the European Works Council (EWC) Directive. Largely a response to corporate restructuring during the development of a European common market, the EWC directive allows workers in European multinational companies with more than one thousand employees the right to organize associations for purposes of information sharing and enforcing codes of conduct. Since 1994, almost fifteen million workers in eight hundred multi-national companies have participated in EWC dialogues (EIRO 2008). Originally conceived as transnational bargaining councils, EWCs have been diluted by management pressure and inter-union argument over the

years. Nonetheless, we can identify two primary benefits workers derive from the process.

The first is a formal place to discuss problems and create common strategies. In some cases, this has led to deep discussions with management about proposed restructuring and coordinated industrial actions, as in the 1997 Renault-Vilvoorde affair, a coordinated strike in five EU member states by worker-members of the Renault car company's works council. When Renault threatened to close its Belgian production plant, workers in other European Renault factories held an emergency international meeting, and organized what came to be known as the first Euro-strike in France, Germany, Spain, Belgium and Slovenia (Rehfeldt 1997). In this case, the EWC can viewed not only as a transnational opportunity structure (Kay 2005) for codetermination and information sharing, but also for enabling militant solidarity. Brokering solidarity among workers in EU member states is seen of utmost importance as well, as one of the primary threats to viable EWCs so far has been the collapse of solidarity under inter-firm competition for jobs and investment (Anner, et al. 2006).

The other potential of EWCs is that they would benefit workers outside Europe as well. Global campaigns within companies with strong works councils could conceivably gain leverage through the solidarity of European counterparts. The potential for this kind of North-South cooperation is an important consideration, given that global agreements have so far been more or less isolated to European companies.

Content

The significant point of global agreements is that they are the products of

negotiations with unions and corporations, distinguishing them from CSR and unilateral codes of conduct. As a result, content varies widely, although we can extract a few common goals across all the agreements.

The first element is that the vast majority call for adherence to ILO core labor standards. Curiously, an ILO study finds that 95% of IFAs include explicit mention of the right to organize and bargain, yet only 75% take a stance against child labor. In some recent cases, such as the instance with G4S, the agreement grants additional rights that constrain management's ability to campaign against unionization, and access rights for union representatives. Another example is the agreement between UNI and ISS, a leading international multi-service provider. It includes a 100,000 Euro contribution of company money to spend on implementing the agreement. Nevertheless, although the agreement was negotiated in 2003, and renegotiated in 2006, the money has gone mostly untapped. Hammer (2005) distinguishes between different logics of agreements (rights vs. bargaining): the former expand the terrain for workers to exercise rights at work; the latter tend to handle substantive issues and facilitate social dialogue.

There are active debates—moral, economic, political—about the diffusion of core labor standards. Some claim the imposition of high-level norms on less-developed countries is unfair and impractical (Elliot 2003; Salazar 2003). Martin Khor (2000), director of the Third World Institute, suggests that widening the purview of the WTO by allowing it to decide on CLS erodes the sovereignty of developing world countries. Regardless, it seems that the existence of core labor standards is not a deterrent to attracting FDI (Cooke and Noble 1998; Sengenberger 2002) or a negative force on competitiveness (Scherrer and Greven 2001: 34).

Secondly, unions generally demand, though rarely achieve, that IFA principles apply to all workers within a given company's supply chain and its subcontractors. These provisions are becoming more common (and contentious) in the agreements, however, as the rise of labor brokers tend to shrink the percentages of formal employees relative to contract labor. Moreover, unions often compromise on even those employees directly employed. In the case of the G4S agreement, US employees were only covered under a similar, though not identical, side agreement, and Canadian G4S employees were left out altogether.

Finally, in addition to the substantive issues raised by IFAs, most specify some form of procedural implementation. Typically this amounts to annual or semi-annual meetings of corporate and union leaders that comprise some sort of sanctioned committee to discusses issues related to the agreement's scope of application (countries, suppliers, part-timers, etc) (Bercusson 2008). Monitoring of the agreements is done a variety of ways, ranging from outside enforcement agencies to internal review boards, to works councils, or, in the cases where the agreement has been more embedded into a company's human-resource management policies, home-country trade unions. Sometimes these merely extend existing structures, and sometimes it involves the creation of new institutions within unions and corporations. Nevertheless, often these provisions are very weak, with even codes of conduct occasionally providing firmer monitoring procedures (Hammer 2008).

IMPLEMENTATION OF GLOBAL AGREEMENTS

The implementation phase of global agreements is sorely understudied. It also continues to be problematic from the position of the unions. In most cases, the "new relationship" after the IFA amounts to a regulatory environment in which basic power asymmetries have been largely, if not wholly, preserved. Theoretically, the implementation and enforcement of an IFA should be a process between partners. Management, however, generally reserves the right to do it (or not do it) with discretion, and most agreements are never implemented or used in any way. This results from a number of factors.

First, the limited resources and poor access to local unions and/or rank and file workers of most GUFs ensures that they must be very selective as to where they concentrate their efforts. Secondly, in the absence of a local union with the capacity to use and enforce the agreement's pro-worker points, management's protocols generally prevail and worker rights remain a paper exercise. Finally, the channels of communication between GUFs and their affiliates are tenuous, and often unions have no idea an agreement has been negotiated at all.[18] Moreover, IFAs are usually negotiated between GUFs and corporations without the input of local union affiliates, limiting their ability to understand what an IFA is, how it can be effectively used, and why it was signed (Croucher and Cotton 2009).

As a result, even the IFAs with the best language rarely inspire any union activity at all, and only sometimes hold employers to respect the most skeletal elements of the law. At the same time, they may provide corporations a "public relations triumph" and an economic advantage through their "social" appearance to European investors.

[18] Preliminary research from a study of five global agreements in six countries conducted through the Frei Universitaet in Berlin reveals very high levels of ignorance of IFAs on the part of local unions that would conceivably be the ones to conduct the implementation.

My, interviews with staff of several GUFs reveal a cynicism about prospects for IFAs to become effective union tools on a broad scale anytime soon. One GUF staffer summed up the position of many others I spoke with:

> "They [IFAs] are imperfect, sometimes useless, sometimes worse. Sometimes I think unions would be better off without one. As a movement we don't know how to use them. But it's all we got right now. So for that reason we carry on as if it's working" (GUF staffer 2009).

Likewise, Lerner (2007) has expressed deep disdain for IFAs in writing even as the union for which he is a chief strategist (SEIU) has made the negotiation of IFAs a basic goal. He writes:

> "The time for these types of global framework agreements has come and gone. These general statements of principle are too weak and it is proven that they cannot be enforced. They should be abandoned…"

Other unionists share his skepticism. A paper by four staffers of the Intemational Union of Foodworkers (IUF: 2007), the GUF that pioneered the IFA strategy, has since announced a moratorium on IFAs due to their perceived weakness and lack of effective implementation, in favor of strategies they say will lead to deeper organizing.

The perception of IFAs as weak, even by those whose mission it is to secure them, does not inspire confidence in the strategy. Among academics, however, this pessimism has led to some misleading conclusions in the literature that connects the lack of implementation with weak protocol in the actual agreements. But as Hammer (2008: 106) explains, the importance of IFAs is not determined by the strength or weakness of the agreement language: "Their actual significance is not on the paper, but in the strategic use of the paper."

This dissertation explains a few ways in which they are used rather well, and builds substantially on a small literature of other cases of effective implemntation. An

article by Jane Wills (2002) on the IUF-Accor Hotel agreement shows that it led to organizing gains in the US, Canada and Indonesia. Riisgaard (2005) has shown that an IFA signed between a federation of Latin American banana workers and the Chiquita corporation facilitated worker organizing, yet noted “the overall poor use of the agreement potential” (Riisgaard 2005: 1). Two reports by Dimitris Stevis (2009, 2009b) for the ILO on the implementation of the International Metalworkers Federation’s agreement with Daimler suggest it has contributed to local unionism in the US, Brazil, South Africa and Germany. Agreements signed by UNI seem to lead the field in implementation. Medland (2006) reports that its agreement with the Spanish telecommunications firm, Telefonica, has aided workers in Brazil, Puerto Rico, and Chile to organize and fight layoffs. In addition to this dissertation’s focus on UNI’s agreement with G4S in the US, South Africa and India, my own research shows that its agreements have facilitated organizing in Ghana, Malawi, and the United States (G4S), Cameroon (France Telecom), Brazil (Telefonica), Australia (ISS), and Spain (Carefour).

However, these studies often explain success relative to the larger record of non-implementation, in which case any minimal use of an agreement is considered a positive development. And certainly, despite their recent popularity, and a handful of exceptions, there is little evidence to support the conclusion that IFAs can contribute to processes of local union revitalization. Nonetheless, this dissertation describes the detailed ways in which a global agreement did just that. As an exceptional case, it offers us a window into the possible ways an IFA can complement global unionism. I therefore suggest that the negative assessment of global agreements may be premature.

THE GLOBAL AGREEMENT WITH UNI AND G4S

In subsequent chapters I undertake an in-depth examination of the various ways strategies for global governance helped local unions build power against multinationals. Primarily I accomplish this through an in-depth case study of the campaign to win and implement the global agreement between UNI and G4S. By way of introduction, however, I will briefly outline some of the major components and implications of the agreement here.

UNI and G4S concluded negotiations for what they agreed to call an Ethical Employment Partnership in December 2008, after five years of an acrimonious campaign (UNI/G4S 2008). The British General Workers Union (GMB) is also a signatory on the agreement, as it was instrumental in reconciling a dysfunctional relationship between the company, UNI, and its affiliate in the US, SEIU. The agreement now covers all 560,000 G4S employees. Originally, however, workers in the US and Canada were partially exempt, and instead included in a side agreement signed concurrent with the IFA. This side agreement granted immediate union recognition for SEIU in nine US cities where Wackenhut, G4S's American subsidiary, is active.

The union and the company agreed to a trial period of implementation in South Africa and India beginning in early 2009. These countries were chosen due to the pre-existence of active UNI campaigns and because they are strategic sites of investment and growth for G4S. To implement the agreement, G4S granted certain "organizing rights" to UNI's affiliates: access to security guard worksites and a commitment to remain "neutral" when unions attempted to win recognition. UNI then increased its presence in these countries either with staff placements or financial support for organizing campaigns

by its affiliates. This activity led to a larger role for UNI as mentors and "bridge builders" to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the agreement. Organizing rights will supposedly be granted to all G4S workers by 2012.

The global agreement provided a platform for increased union activity at the local level by creating a space for unions to maneuver. In South Africa, where unions fought to have the agreement respected, this has taken the form of new member recruitment, increased organization within existing union workplaces, and a campaigning style involving strategic research of the security market. In India, the implementation of the agreement required the formation of an entirely new union organization. Management's continued opposition to union recognition, despite the provisions in the IFA, has forced unions there to seek gains by other means. Instead, they have pressured the company to re-interpret an array of confusing and often conflicting labor laws. These decisions have led to increases in the minimum wage and pension contributions, back-pay for fired workers, identification cards and formal employment contracts for informal sector workers. These experiences show that international framework agreements are not simply static instruments of industrial relations, but can provide a framework for winning diverse gains even when they are formally unenforceable in every respect.

Regarding the implementation of global agreements, what emerges from my case study is that in contrast to the popular claim that IFAs routinize industrial relations within highly heterogenous corporations, the implementation process is still far more varied and contingent than formal or procedural. Moreover, it suggests that IFAs grant rights which are less useful as independent instruments. However, in the context of a campaign with GUF involvement, these rights have greatly buoyed the capacities of local unions in

diverse ways. Finally, there is an obvious temptation to view this case study, and a few others, as exceptions which prove the rule that IFAs offer empty promises: unenforceable rights, unrealizable gains. However, I view it as a turning point in the IFA strategy, a breakthrough that has inspired a new perspective on the way unions might approach global governance. This is because interviews for this project reveal that the success of the campaign has inspired other global unions to re-examine their approach to IFA work. As one official said, "It set a new standard."

I now turn to an in-depth look at the campaign that led to the global agreement with UNI and G4S.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST G4S: LABOR TRANSNATIONALISM FROM NORTH AMERICA TO THE GLOBAL SOUTH

INTRODUCTION

The successful campaign to win the global agreement with G4S—briefly mentioned in the last chapter and explored in detail in this one—took the global labor movement by surprise. Though it seemed to come from nowhere, it was in fact the product of decades of experimentation with new varieties of unionism. This chapter outlines the antecedents and the actual events of the campaign to place it in the context of emerging transnational labor strategies. To situate the case study within the overall framework of the dissertation, and the revitalization processes within SEIU and UNI in particular, I begin by presenting an historical sketch of the crisis which spurred SEIU to consider new strategies such as organizing in earnest, and radical internal restructuring. This provides SEIU with the finances and human capital to carry out large transnational campaigns. I then describe the adoption of organizing unionism in the Anglo-Saxon countries under the supervision and tutelage of SEIU. In part two of the chapter I outline the contours of the campaign that SEIU and UNI waged against G4S to win an international framework agreement.

In 1990 thousands of janitors in Los Angeles set in motion a process of trade union revitalization that would come to change workers movements across the world. The dramatic street demonstrations that shook LA intermittently that year were matched by a sophisticated campaign of corporate research, in-depth worker-to-worker meetings, and a

strategy to exploit the vulnerabilities of the office building ownership structure. This comprehensive approach to rebuild labor's strength through new membership growth—which became known as the "organizing model"[19]—captured the imagination of union leaders in America. The campaign is widely documented in popular and academic writing (Waldinger et al 1997; Mines and Avina 1992; Erickson et al 2002; Milkman 2006). Filmmaker Ken Loach produced *Bread and Roses* (2001), an award-winning feature based on the campaign. It also raised the profile of SEIU leaders, especially Steven Lerner, who is largely credited with concocting the strategy that eventually won union recognition for thousands of low-wage immigrant workers.

Many agree that Justice for Janitors (J4J) was a turning point in American trade unionism, a beacon of hope as the labor movement emerged from the "lost decade" of Reganomics and its own defeatist business unionism. Indeed, scholars have demonstrated that its ripple effect has been significant, instigating wide scale revitalization through organizing for many US unions (Turner and Adler 2001).

What is woefully understudied, however, is the deep impact US revitalization strategies have had on the rest of the world (see Gall 2009). This chapter traces the diffusion of US-based trade union organizing strategies around the world, a process I call "the globalization of the organizing model." The point is to link the new labor transnationalism and union revitalization in mutual interdependence. In other words, I argue that the ability of SEIU to coordinate ambitious transnational campaigns—the battle against G4S being a prime example—evolved from local and national renewal processes. But I also argue that transnational collaboration is, in turn, a viable

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[19] In contrast to the "servicing model," in which unions are perceived as providing a "product" in the form of higher wages, legal representation, or job security.

revitalization strategy, and that global union campaigns can empower local unions. In this formulation labor transnationalism can be seen as both an outcome of, and a catalyst for union renewal.

I accomplish this in two ways. First, though many have suggested that the vertical consolidation of corporate power has provided a built-in structural opportunity for unions to organize globally, I argue that an equally important—but mostly overlooked—factor was the internal restructuring process of the union itself. In other words, the centralization of control of union decisions, prerogatives, and finances was a necessary precondition for what I have described as a form of new labor transnationalism. For example, SEIU has charted an explosive new course both within the American labor movement and internationally. I demonstrate that in the process of its internal revitalization over the last two decades it created the conditions that made its global campaigning on a new scale possible. This outcome was not accidental, but also not an intended or predetermined consequence of the restructuring process.

The second half of the equation—that labor transnationalism can in turn inspire local renewal processes—is explained by presentation of this dissertation's case study detailed in this and the following two chapters. It begins with the advent of security guard organizing in the US and continues through the conclusion of the International Framework Agreement (IFA) with G4S.

SEIU: GROWTH, CRISES, AND REVITALIZATION

Since the mid eighties SEIU has undergone dramatic growth. When John Sweeney took office in 1984 as the union's president, its membership stood at 600,000,

but when he left it in 1996 to become president of the AFL-CIO, it had increased to 900,000 (Fantasia and Voss 2004). Sweeney embarked on a series of reforms designed to prioritize organizing, the most significant of which was an internal overhaul of the union's structure. At the start of Sweeney's leadership the union had resembled 'more a loose configuration of urban fiefdoms' (Fantasia and Voss 2004: 101) than a national union. Sweeney reversed this dynamic by consolidating locals through mergers and expanding the staff and influence of the International office: between 1984 and 1988 it grew tenfold, from 20 to 200 employees, a move funded by doubling membership dues (Moody 2007). The effect was a massive power transfer in the direction of Washington DC.

However, this record of extraordinary growth, in the midst of hard times for unions everywhere, belies a fundamental crisis within the union. In the 1980s janitors faced the same multi-pronged attack that plagued many workers in America, union or not. Though non-mobile service sector workers were less impacted by rapid deindustrialization than their manufacturing counterparts, they nevertheless lost in the race to the bottom too.

Specifically, cleaners faced declining wages and layoffs as increased competition among their companies forced bidding wars to secure contracts. Their unions, including SEIU, lost hundreds of members, and were in wild disarray, with no idea as to how to turn the tables. The "organizing model," as it came to be known, was born of this confusion, and came at the exact time when unions were supposed to be waging merely defensive campaigns. For this reason, the J4J campaign has always had a rising-out-of-the-ashes aspect to its origin legend.

In the wake of the J4J campaign in Los Angeles, the Labor Research Review dedicated a special issue to studying the organizing model in 1991. In it, John Meuhlenkampf, of SEIU, describes the strategic deficit facing US unions. It is both a description of the crisis and a call to action:

> "Instead of constantly developing new members, we act like they have all the information and skills they ever need. Instead of recruiting more leaders, we act like who already came forward as leaders at that point are the union's permanent leaders. Instead of targeting active workers to get them more active, we abandon them. Instead of mobilizing workers—now dues-paying members—around issues, we write letters and file grievance forms. Instead of recruiting new workers to be good union members we are satisfied just to get their dues." (Meuhelnkamp 1991: 7-8)

The J4J campaign came to LA from Denver, where it began in 1985, during an exciting yet controversial time for SEIU. Sweeney's restructuring reforms, an attempt to re-direct more emphasis on organizing, meant that responsibilities for major organizing campaigns were transferred to the International staff, who often overrode Local leaderships. In the Los Angeles J4J campaign, feuds between the leaderships of the International and Local 399 staff led to the trusteeship of the latter by the former, one of Sweeney's final acts as President. Tensions began in 1995 when a reform-minded slate representing a more racially-diverse constituency was elected to the Local's Executive Board. Increasing acrimony between the new and old guards intensified to the point where the International placed Mike Garcia of Local 1877 in control, basically merging 399 with the Northern California-based local in the process (Savage 2005).The Justice for Janitors campaign was then left solely in the hands of the International (Waldinger, et al. 1998). As both a flashpoint for SEIU's internal power re-structuring and its revitalization, Justice for Janitors represents a pivotal point for multiple reasons.

Sweeney also fundamentally changed what SEIU staff looked like. According to

Fantasia and Voss, ‘the cohort of [US union] leaders who came of age in the postwar decades were largely shaped by the practices of deal making, bureaucratic wrangling, and institutional administration’ (2004: 86), lived experiences that did not prepare union staff for the hostile neoliberal environment of Regan’s 1980s. Therefore, instead of promoting from within, Sweeney recruited widely from the ranks of community activists, many with university educations, and independent leftists that would otherwise have been beyond consideration (Fantasia and Voss 2004; Moody 2007). But while courting the Left, he also made decidedly rightward advances. As Piore notes in a widely-quoted study of Sweeney’s reforms, SEIU was eager to gather business expertise when it came to management:

> “The organisation now in place is…self consciously devised by Sweeney and his staff. The ideas that underlie it were drawn from the business management literature. The staff read widely in the business press and the more scholarly literature as well. Their single most important source was probably the Harvard Business Review. As noted, the union hired the American Management Association to do staff training (Piore 1994: 528).

The pace of growth, both internal and external, intensified under Andy Stern, who took the reigns in 1996. Union membership rocketed by a further one million members in the subsequent decade. Stern, who was known for proclaiming his allegiance to an Alinsky-esque model, continued Sweeney’s practice of hiring young activists in large numbers by increasing the role of the Organizing Institute and its presence on college campuses (Moody 2007). Dramatic growth, and its apparent embrace of young progressives, prompted journalist Harold Meyerson (2003) to describe SEIU (as part of a trinity including HERE and UNITE) as the American union movement’s militant left wing. But Fantasia and Voss, who are broadly sympathetic to SEIU’s leadership style, claim that the profile of the union’s senior staff “would tend to make for a closer

resemblance to Silicon Valley entrepreneurs than to veteran staffers of the trade union movement" (2004: 116).

With the support of key political allies within the union, Stern drove through another major investment in organizing for these new recruits to undertake. At its quadrennial convention in 2000, SEIU delegates passed measures that demanded Locals devote $130 million to new organizing. The International itself committed $50 million, or half of its annual budget, for a total of $180 million a year for organizing (Bernstein 2004). These resources are far greater than those committed to organizing by other unions, both in the US and abroad. The British union, UNITE, with a comparable membership base and organizing orientation to SEIU, plans to devote only $20 million to organizing within two years (Interview SEIU).

Stern's leadership has been associated with further centralizing the power of the International. Moody (2007) reports that the international staff count had crested at 900 by 2007. But another tool Stern employed that generated considerable internal controversy is the practice of trusteeship, whereby the International places the elected leaderships of Locals under control with its own appointees. Between 1996 and 2005, this process occurred at forty SEIU Locals, or 14% of the union's affiliates (Tait 2005; Golden 2010). SEIU elites maintain that trusteeships are imposed only in cases of extraordinary malpractice, corruption, or irreconcilable political differences. They are quick to point the finger at Sweeney's ally, Gus Bevona, the ousted leader of the Building Services Local 32BJ in New York. Bevona surrounded himself with profligate corruption of legendary proportions—including penthouses and private planes—funded by members' dues (Moody 2007).

But they also argue that the practice of trusteeship has been employed for "strategic" purposes. The forced merger of California Locals 399 and 1877 was part of SEIU's wider strategy of geographical reorganization, where a number of Locals have been combined in multi-city, state-wide and even multi-state units. The intent, they claim, is to create structures that are more effective at confronting large employers.

Critics Steve Early (2004) and Kim Moody (2007), however, argue that trusteeship and forced mergers disconnect the locals from their members. These authors view this approach as emblematic of SEIU's preference for technocratic solutions and "grand strategy" instead of member mobilization. Moody thus characterizes SEIU's *modus operandi* as "executive rather than democratic, and its understanding of power is market based and hence, shallow"(2007: 197). For Moody, shallow power emanates from an approach that prioritizes strategy over the hard work of building deep organization at the grass roots. Early (2004) has suggested that SEIU became more concerned with negotiating with managers than with mobilizing its own membership.

Dealing with management, in fact, became a defining feature of Stern's SEIU. Second to his successful campaign to divide the American trade union movement into rival federations with the creation of Change to Win (CTW) in 2005 (Aronowitz 2005), Stern will be remembered for his pioneering use of comprehensive/corporate campaigning. Comprehensive campaigning is a strategic approach to mass organizing that demands unions exploit corporate vulnerabilities in a systematic fashion. The campaigns thus induce unions to reach beyond their customary sphere of interest, seeking alliances with a range of nontraditional actors such as shareholders, bankers, and even employers. The comprehensive campaign strategy has been the primary mode through

which SEIU engages transnational corporations.[20]

This has been especially true in the fast growing property services division, which includes J4J, but also security, catering, laundry services etc, industries which are increasingly owned by foreign companies operating in the US. SEIU has therefore approached international organizing with a strategy that necessarily involves heavy lifting for union staff, a large budget, and dedicated researchers. It is this model which it has exported around the world. But before turning our attention outward, it is important to mention the union's changed attitude toward the international organizing that today it so thoroughly endorses.

SEIU'S GLOBAL TURN

Among Stern's first acts as SEIU president in 1996 was to dismantle the union's International Affairs Department (IAD) premised on the theory that it was a lavish waste of resources for a union located in the non-mobile service sector. As Stephen Lerner explained, "I was guilty of arguing that globalization was a distraction for us." (cited in Meyerson 2005: 1). At the time, international work, particularly the 'ambassadorial' functions of the IAD, was considered an expensive distraction from organizing, and should have fallen under the purview of the AFL-CIO.

However, the changing political-economic geography of the American service sector led the union to a new understanding. During the 1990s, transnational service

[20] There are no shortage of critical perspectives on the SEIU "strategic model." Most view it as some form business unionism in barely hiding in different clothes (Moody 2007; Cohen 2009; Gallin 2008). Loren Goldner's position sees it as a fundamental tenet of "left wing devalorization." Borrowing from Marx's description of the cheapening of costs, Golder identifies a phenomenon in which unions trade "organization" and "participation" for the de-socialization of the wage relation. He writes, "In his fifteen years as the head of SEIU, Andy Stern brought the left wing of devalorization to new lows" (Golder 2010).

corporations developed a large presence in several important sectors under SEIU's jurisdiction, namely catering, cleaning, security, and public transport. The majority of companies entering the American market were headquartered in countries with considerably stronger traditions of trade unionism, and, more importantly, less acrimonious labor-capital relations (Denmark [ISS, Securicor, Group 4 Falck], France [Sodexho], Sweden [Securitas], and the United Kingdom [First Group, National Express, G4S]).

One SEIU leader in the US explained:

> We kept trying to organize US workers in multinational companies. We kept running up against these European companies. Bus drivers, security, janitors, you name it. It wasn't working…Those companies have different faces [across the world]. They didn't respond to our usual tactics. We realized something had to give. (SEIU Interview)

That *something* turned out to be a purely national approach. But it became more than a simple matter of "scaling up" or "going global." As SEIU began to reach out to prospective partner unions with representation in companies that also had US affiliates, it began to realize that while those unions had amicable corporate relations, and sometimes high density rates, they did not have a history of organizing. This fact, in addition to the myriad other roadblocks to transnational collaboration, created a moment of cognitive dissonance for SEIU staff. As one organizer explains:

> Here we thought we were the ones that needed help. Well, we did. We needed help big time. Then all of a sudden it's clear that they [European trade unions] need help too. And that we can help them. It was an amazing moment, realizing this. Here it is, we thought, new lines of flight, like Deleuze says. We went from begging for help to collaborating for change. I'm telling you it was an amazing moment.

Although SEIU first looked for help abroad, it suddenly found itself in the

driver's seat of a dramatic new movement. I now turn to examine specific examples of the diffusion of the organizing model abroad. Because it found that a collaborative working relationship with unions not oriented toward new organizing was difficult, it sought to build that capacity where it found willing partners: Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Germany and eventually the global South.

THE GLOBALIZATION OF THE ORGANIZING MODEL

Australia

Australia and New Zealand undertook the earliest experiments with organizing unionism outside the US, after years of precipitous membership decline, though at first this approach was combined with increased servicing and partnership approaches as well, which proved ineffective (Walsh and Crawford 2003; Oxenbridge 2003). Delegations of union leaders to the US inspired a deeper commitment to the organizing model and a more Americanized tactical response, as the ACTU created the Organizing Works program, based on the AFL-CIO's Organizing Institute (Jarley et al 2002; Griffin, Small, Svenson 2003).

Justice for Janitors found its first international expression as Clean Start for Cleaners in Australia in the late 1990s as the Liquor Hospitality and Municipal Workers Union (LHMU) fell under the influence of SEIU when favorable union conditions began to decline. In Australia, the award system[21] helped unions enjoy solid density rates (52% in 1979) and guarded against most management offensives. Further, labor law prevented inter-corporate competition based on labor costs, and closed shop legislation favored

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[21] In Australian industrial relations, part of the logic of compulsory arbitration, is a determination, or *award,* by the state that all workers in a particular industry receive equal wages and benefits. This has been significantly eroded and replaced by a system known as enterprise bargaining.

unions too. But the ground beneath their feet began to shift in the 1980s, and by the early nineties decline was in full tilt. The award system, closed shop rules, and minimum wages unraveled one-by-one, all during the thirteen year tenure of a Labour government. As a result of years of cooperative labor relations and quiescence, unions were not oriented to go on the offensive or even stave off decline, and they began hemorrhaging members quickly. Density crashed by more than half by 2000 (Carter and Cooper 2002).

In 2005, the LHMU witnessed the complete collapse of their membership under the Howard government's Workchoices decrees. Workers who previously held stable jobs at decent wages were now forced to seek other employment just to piece together a minimum wage. As companies shed record numbers of members in layoff schemes, unions watched the sky collapse and the ground fall from below. The West Australia branch of the LHMU had six cleaners (repeat: six individuals) left in their ranks by the late nineties. But the LHMU had always represented janitors. Looking to build numbers in another industry, therefore, where organizing might find more fertile ground, as so many American unions did, was not an option. They were forced to try something new. Crosby writes:

> We need[ed] to look for a far more radical response to systemic union decline," writes Michael Crosby, then leader of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). "And in Australia we have looked – perhaps to our own surprise – to a North American union – the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

Indeed, it was a strange fit. North American unionism was rarely considered applicable in Australia. The aggressive organizing tactics of US unions had little resonance in the "land of the fair go." But Crosby has since become internationally known as an expert in the subtle art of union transformation, and a prophet of SEIU's

organizing model. In his book, *Power at Work*, largely inspired by his interactions and experiments with SEIU, he says:

> "Successful organizing depends on a remaking of the vision of what a successful union looks like. It demands a scale of organizing not seen in our country since the turn of the 19th century… It ensures that the union has to relate to the community and the political system in ways not tried in our country for generations. Above all, union success depends on a complete restructuring of the union's financial system. Waste must be driven out, tight financial management of limited resources is crucial and members generally need to be prepared to spend more money to be represented by a union organization that exercises real power in their industry." (Crosby 2007: 37)

In essence, Crosby talks of a spiritual and practical rebirth of the union, with new tactics, strategies, and goals. He was struck by the success of SEIU at a time when so many unions around the world were losing ground.

SEIU hired Crosby in Australia to direct the Clean Start campaign, and the LHMU acquired four researchers to work under the tutelage of Carol Tyson, a lead researcher from SEIU, who guided them through the paces of corporate campaigning. They assembled a dedicated team to the campaign that rivaled any other organizing drive in Australian history. The campaign targeted the fourteen largest building owners in Australia, many of whom were national and global real estate players. SEIU's model of going after the building contractors, as it turned out, needed modification. Researchers found that building owners, as well as contractors, showed no initial interest in even meeting with the union. So the team produced case studies of dirty bathrooms and contaminated kitchens, alluding to the risks of lawsuits based on health hazards. SEIU sent organizers to Sydney that trained local activists to identify leadership among the rank and file, and build a militant minority rather than a broad movement. The staid choreography of semi-annual union marches was replaced by monthly rallies in ten cities

across the country simultaneously. The LHMU even attempted to overcome the earnestness of so many union demonstrations with a little levity. Union activists positioned dirty toilets outside their buildings and encouraged passersby to adequately clean them in 35 seconds or less, the speed needed to do such a task at current worker-to-bathroom ratios. The media noticed such stunts and reported the story favorably. SEIU encouraged not only a serious commitment to research and organizing, but the creation of a counter-spectacle, a public brand of unionism that could win support of new constituencies outside even the workforce: community groups, faith leaders, politicians, mass media, other activist allies.

What were the outcomes of SEIU's first exported campaign? As of 2011, the strategy produced modest membership gains, though it did manage to stop the losses. Union leaders are cautiously optimistic that over time, with newly acquired skills and strategies, the payoff will come in the form of density increases. The success clearly stood internally, with the development of a new kind of union and a new kind of strategy. SEIU was able to reorient LHMU's practical daily activities and bring it into the next millennium with a newly acquired passion and penchant for organizing the unorganized.

The United Kingdom and Europe

Similar crises were underway in Great Britain, where unions also faced new hostilities. In the mid 1990s, the British labor movement was imploding. Membership dropped as low as 19% in the private sector in 1995. In search of a way out of the black hole, it seemed that unions increasingly faced a series of unappealing choices: revert to the militancy of a forgotten time and place, embrace class collaborative schemes with management, or reorient from a union to a service provider, in light of the popular view

at the time that workers were individual consumers first and foremost, and would be attracted to a good deal above all. (Carter 1986, Wiliams 1997, Heery 1996).

UK unions began searching for ways to reverse membership decline and plummeting density (Heery 1997) through union mergers (Carter 1991) and recruitment campaigns (Waddington and Whitson 1997). In particular, the Trade Union Congress' (TUC) New Unionism initiative led the way with the creation of the Organizing Academy (Heery 1999) in 1998 to inject new ideas into the movement. But they also looked to SEIU. British unions have been pulled by the competing influences of social partnership approaches in Europe and organizing in the US and Australia (Fairbrother and Stewart 2003), though a series of recent campaigns within the GMB, UNISON, TGWU, UNITE and others show increasing ties with SEIU's global partnerships unit and other North American unions (Tatersall 2007, Anderson unpublished, GMB Interview 2009; SEIU Interview).

Carter documents the Manufacturing, Science and Finance's (MSF) transition to organizing unionism. After some soul searching in the 1980s and early 1990s with a conservative servicing approach, it came to the sober realization that relating to members as if they were clients, each with his or her own multiple needs and grievances, is indeed a taxing strategy, especially on an organization with dwindling financial resources and declining cultural and political relevance. However, it lacked the confidence to attempt a bold turn away from this orientation for a long time, until the mid nineties.

While it is not the case that SEIU actively intervened in the MSF, or directly contributed to its transition, MSF officials became interested in creating its Organizing Works program after a visit with the ACTU, which had just returned from a leadership

delegation with SEIU in Washington DC (Carter 2000). This fact illuminates the circuitous diffusion of SEIU's influence through transcontinental networks and relationships.

Another union with which SEIU developed close ties is the Transport and General Workers Union (T&G) in Britain. Contact between the two unions began during the late 1990s following British investment in the American public transport sector and in the early 2000s through contract cleaning firms such as ISS. It was not until 2003, however, that the two unions engaged in discussions at a higher level. T&G's Tony Woodley, known in the UK for his "love affair with Andy Stern and the organizing model," was elected secretary general on a reformist slate in xxxx and helped push the union toward SEIU's organizing model. Before Woodley's rise, T&G had remained outside the UK's Organizing Academy and had watched its membership decline by over fifty percent in ten years.

However, under the close mentorship of SEIU, T&G significantly reversed past practices and expanded its organizing capacity, both domestically and internationally. By 2007 the T&G had hired one hundred new field organizers, an unprecedented investment by a British trade union, many of whom fell under the direct supervision of experienced SEIU staff stationed in the UK. The close collaboration between the unions is particularly evident in two comprehensive campaigns: *Justice for Cleaners* and *Driving Up Standards*. The former was directly inspired by J4J, as it involved the growing contract cleaning industry. The latter happened in the transport industry. Two UK-based bussing companies, FirstGroup and National Express, were also expanding to the US, which

encouraged transatlantic mobilization. Both of these efforts were led by SEIU staff imported to the UK (SEIU Interview 2008).

By the turn of the new millennium, many British trade union leaders had followed T&G's lead, and developed quite an affinity for the organizing unionism practiced in the US (Heery et al. 2000a; 2000b; Heery and Simms 2007). Today British unions are the most practiced organizers in Europe, where the "British version" (Fairbrother 2003) of the US organizing model, has been crucial to increasing the social movement character of campaigns for bus drivers (Tattersall 2007), security guards, and janitors (interview Smith).

Mixed results in Australia and the UK campaigns did not deter SEIU from pursuing a global agenda. In fact, it became more determined, and it paid off. In 2000 it launched an ambitious campaign against Securitas, a Swedish security firm that had acquired several major US companies. Through the assistance of the Swedish Transport Workers Union (STF), who had built 90% density at Securitas, and had representation on the company's board, SEIU successfully forced the company to remain neutral during a US organizing drive. By 2003 it won a national agreement from the company that also guaranteed card-check as the mechanism for union recognition. It cited the assistance of the STF as a major factor in the victory (Masciola 2006).

On the heels of the global agreement with Securitas, SEIU and UNI began collaborating more closely. Despite some success in moving Australian and British unions toward organizing, SEIU's approach to its global work was still ad hoc, and limited to unions with which it already shared close personal affinities. By 2004, Lerner's assessment about the importance of global dynamics (see above) seemed utterly passe, as

so many property services industries operating in the US were foreign-owned and well prepared to resist unionization. Moreover, the union's inconsistent approach to transnational collaboration poorly assessed the necessary structure required to coordinate internationalism on such a wide scale. The changing investment patterns of European companies into the US, mixed with the union's corporate comprehensive strategy that demanded a systematic approach to a company's corporate profile, alerted it to the need for deeper international collaboration. But how? In search of a way to match the industry's expanding corporate profile, and overcome the limitations of a failing national approach, SEIU developed the Global Partnerships Unit, with the initial purpose of furthering bilateral relationships with European unions (Tattersall 2007).

The GPU helped to significantly refocus SEIU's attention toward internationalism in its overall strategy. As one SEIU organizer put it, "We went from shying away from global companies to actively seeking them out." She cotinues:

> I'm not saying we need global companies, no. But they are there, so, we have to deal with them. They're actually the future. That's where our work is heading. How can we worry about twenty workers here when ten thousand work at the same company over here? We are wasting our resources. Resources are scarce. We started to realize this and, you know, we changed. Inside out.

The GPU pushed transnational campaigning on an unprecedented scale. Lerner (2007) has suggested that unions should target 40 critical global cities, urban-corporate nodes in the property services market for the largest players, who collectively employ millions of workers.

Michael Crosby responded to the creation of the GPU as if being called for duty. "I said, 'Let's go. Where do you want me? This thing [the organizing model] works and I'll do just about anything to prove it,'" he remarked. Crosby's Australian accent helped

soften the blow of what some were beginning to feel was a rather overzealous American labor internationalism. “He’s a great ambassador for us,” remarked an SEIU staffer. “He thinks like us, he acts like us, but he’s not really one of us. He’s…not a threat. It works out well.”

Crosby’s small team of organizers and researchers took up the mantle of the GPU quickly and aggressively. They began by assisting the Dutch union FNV Bondgenoten to lead campaigns for janitors in the Netherlands (Klaveren and Sprenger 2009), taking workers through the longest strike the industry has seen in 65 years (Unionrenewal.org). Irish unions, led by the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU), have recently established the Crosby Commission, named for its chair, to evaluate a way to transition toward organizing unionism (Allen 2009). Heery (2003) has shown that organizing plays a larger revitalizing role in the US and the UK than in Continental Europe, and some suggest that the multiplicity of new strategies in Germany are too varied and discreet to actually constitute a revitalization project (Behrens, Fichter, Frege 2003). But SEIU staff have been working with Germany’s largest unions, Ver.di and IG Metall, organizing baggage handlers at the Berlin airports, community-worker support campaigns based in local activist circles (SEIU Interview), and security guards in Hamburg (Ver.di Interview). The security campaign in particular became so hostile that workers appeared at a press conference masked and hooded for fear of retaliation at work as they testified about maltreatment from management. These efforts have yielded modest results so far, with small gains in organizing. However, the influence of North American strategies is quickly gaining so much ground that German unionists now

commonly use the term “organizing” in English instead of the German “organisieren” (IG Metal Interview).

CRITIQUE FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

This story so far gives a distorted picture of SEIU’s demonstrative steps into global union politics. It should be said now that it was not embraced by everyone. The sharpest criticisms are not blanket condemnations of labor imperialism—although they do exist—but are targeted at specific incidences of bullishness and naïveté. First, SEIU’s reputation as authoritarian and, worse, “all talk,” is actually quite widespread in Britain. This will be explored through the contentious relationship between SEIU, UNI and the GMB in the case study below. Likewise, staff of the LHMU in Australia note that dissent was unwelcome after SEIU’s intervention to their union. “We really didn’t have a voice, all of a sudden,” said a former researcher. The examination of the global campaign below also raises hostilities within the alliance SEIU built in the global South.

But still other critics exist too. Ellen David Frieman, a long time Vermont-based organizer, with years of experience also working within unions in China, claims that Stern’s friendly disposition toward China’s ACFTU has granted legitimacy to an organization that is only nominally a trade union federation (interview). It is, in fact, widely considered a puppet organ of the party-state. Dan Gallin concurs:

> Greg Tarpinian's (Executive Director of CtW) comment last May that "engagement is not acceptance, engagement is not endorsement" (quoted in: Global Labour Strategies, June 8, 2007) is beside the point. The ACFTU is not looking for acceptance or endorsement, it is looking for recognition and legitimacy, and it got what it wanted.

Gallin may be SEIU’s fiercest foe in the global labor movement because his

critique is so precise and his reputation is so credible. As the decades-long leader of the IUF, he is well known for pioneering the strategy to win global agreements. He recounts meetings on global unionism in Washington DC twenty years earlier when Stern walked out of the meeting early, insisting international organizing was a waste of time. This is contrasted to Gallin's perception of Stern today—a false prophet bent on re-inventing what he missed the first few times around. He is particularly appalled by SEIU's strategy to outsource strikes to low-wage areas. In an interview with the McKinsey Quarterly, Stern remarked that:

> If workers are ready to go on strike in the United States, and we are ready to pay them to strike, it would be very costly. But paying workers in Indonesia or India or other places to go on strike against the same global employer isn't particularly expensive.

To which Gallin replies:

> This is extraordinary. In the past, when a strike was "outsourced", it was the other way around: strong unions would put pressure on transnational corporations…to defend weaker unions that were unable to defend themselves because…they would face extreme repression. It is hard to imagine a more cynical and manipulative approach. It is also totally unrealistic. No union anywhere, except for maybe the usual, useless clients, is going to sign on to Stern's outsourced mercenary army.

Gallin's critical perspective is sharpened from decades of confronting "newbies" in the global labor movement, but on the last part of the statement above he is far off the mark. Stern and SEIU have had remarkable success at mobilizing partners, allies, and supporters across the globe. As demonstrated by the case study of this dissertation, Stern and his union have, above all, proved to be stubborn and persistent in what Gallin describes as the "complex and often thankless task of building global unionism" (Gallin 2007: 1).

To some extent, the most common critique of SEIU is even corroborated by SEIU itself. As one organizer puts it, “People say we are arrogant, that we don’t listen to others, we come in and change everything around. There’s some truth to that. But we aren’t so arrogant to think we can keep it up. So, you know, well it just made sense to go through UNI.”

ENTER UNI: CONSOLIDATION OF A GLOBAL UNION FEDERATION

UNI serves a critical function for SEIU, alluded to above. To decrease the chances of being identified as the “ugly American,” thereby sabotaging collaboration before it ever starts, SEIU sought to revitalize its global union federation into a force more capable and willing to take on active campaigns, a move endorsed by UNI’s leadership. The transition of UNI toward an SEIU organizing union is a crucial antecedent to the global campaign.

UNI’s founders, longtime friends Philip Bowyer and Philip Jennings, arrived in Geneva in the mid seventies from the UK, and rose to power within their respective trade secretariats by the late 1980s, representing postal and telecommunications workers, and clerical staff. Bowyer describes the work of the global unions at that time as a “Robin Hood industry,” as they largely existed to redistribute money and other resources taken from the North to trade unions in the East and the South. In the eighties, as the UN and the ILO were encouraging a more aggressive developmentalist agenda, the international trade secretariats became increasingly preoccupied with capacity building in third world trade unions. This included educational seminars on strategy, support for pro-democracy

movements, and direct engagement with particular campaigns, as in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

By this mid nineties, the large public sector enterprises that characterized the service industries—telephone and postal workers in particular—had been privatized or heavily de-regulated, and the trade secretariats were behind the times. "We were in our own little fiefdoms," remembers Dan Gallin, of the IUF. "We were not organized strategically. That came later, hopefully not too late." At a congress of ITS's in Montreal, the idea of an industry-wide organization of service workers began to take shape, and even then it only partially materialized. But by early 2000, UNI was officially founded through the merger of the unions representing classic new economy industries: postal and telecommunications workers union, the clerical staff's union, media workers, and the graphical workers. Later that year it began a tentative dialogue with Latin American member unions that, by 2001, established its first global agreement with the Spanish-owned Telefonica. Although the Telefonica agreement happened "nearly by accident," UNI realized it needed to operationalize its activities, or, as Bowyer puts it, "to act more like a union…What makes you a union rather than a loose federation? Well, you sign agreements with employers."

UNI signed a handful of framework agreements over the next few years with companies that more or less cooperated with the process, including Securitas and ISS, two major players in the global property services market, until it met the union-resistant Quebecor, a French-Canadian publishing company. This campaign, which included coordinated pickets of the company's clients (Ikea), an enlarged role for strategic research, tested UNI's commitment to winning agreements through a fight, and was a

prelude to the campaigning style that defined its battle with G4S. At the same time, SEIU was pursuing a global dimension to its domestic campaigns, as described above. In 2005 a handful of UNI staff were replaced by SEIU leaders from Washington DC in an apparent bid to "build a union, not a network," a transformation begun officially with a name change from Union Network International to UNI Global Union.

Until 2005, UNI was, as are most GUFs today, an under-resourced organization with little or no connection to the rank and file. Although it had proved itself able to sign global agreements with cooperative companies, campaigning *against* transnational corporations was well beyond its ability. A UNI staffer says:

> Yes, it's fair to say that. None of this [G4S campaign] would have been possible without SEIU. We don't really like saying that, but we shouldn't…be ashamed. Of course resources matter. Experience matters. They brought that here.

SEIU's enlarged presence helped to transform UNI into a union with a greater ability to carry out global campaigns, including the most ambitious campaign ever conducted by a global union. Today it can be usefully thought of as the SEIU of the global labor movement. In this truncated history we see that UNI, like SEIU, developed a capacity for large international campaigns through a process of internal upheaval, organizational restructuring, and alliance building. This process has been ongoing. By 2009, with more support from SEIU, it established a war chest of 1 million dollars dedicated solely to organizing. This was complemented by the 2010 creation of the SCORE department (Strategic Campaigns, Organizing, Research and Education) to deepen its ability to realize—in the workplace—the gains guaranteed by global agreements. As the primary exemplar of its new organizing orientation we now turn to an in-depth analysis of the strategy and implications of UNI's campaign against G4S.

PART II: THE CASE STUDY

What follows is an examination of the first phase of UNI's global campaign against G4S. The first phase, to which I devote comparatively little attention, is the campaign by SEIU to organize security guards in the US, with a focus on its fight with Wackenhut, G4S's US-based subsidiary. The second phase describes the globalization of that effort, the complex expansion of the campaign to multiple countries, involving hundreds of thousands of workers, that eventually ends with the negotiation of an International Framework Agreement. Subsequent chapters undertake a closer examination of the implementation of the agreement in South Africa and India.

Phase I: Security Guard Organizing in the United States

In June of 2001, SEIU launched a national campaign to organize security workers at Argenbright, a US subsidiary of the British-owned Securicor, in order to link the safety of air passengers to the pathetic working conditions of airport screeners. Three months later, when it became public that Argenbright employees performed the screening of two of the hijacked planes on September 11, SEIU's campaign took on an air of prophecy. Though airport security was nationalized in the wake of the attacks (Time 2008), the public outcry around safety and standards created a bold new platform for organizing security guards. SEIU launched campaigns in eleven states simultaneously in late 2002 to begin organizing security guards at several of the largest providers. Initially campaigns proved particularly effective in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, and Denver, employing many of the same strategies and tactics that were made famous in J4J.

By 2006 it had secured global organizing rights with Securitas, one of the industry leaders in Europe.

Yet while security guards generally proved willing to join unions during this stage, wages and standards remained low across the industry. Union guards in New York City barely make minimum wage. The difficulties in raising standards at the industry level encouraged SEIU to look toward other tactics as well. In 2006 it surprised many in the labor movement by agreeing to ignore 10,000 security guards at Allied Barton in Philadelphia, who had shown initial interest in unionization, in exchange for organizing rights elsewhere within the company (Huffington Post 2011).

The $34 billion-a-year private security industry in America, as elsewhere, is highly precarious, characterized by high turnover, low pay, few regulations, and almost no training (USA Today 2003). In the US there are over one million private security guards, outnumbering public police officers 2:1. As noted above in other property services industries (cleaning, catering, transportation, etc), SEIU continually ran up against international employers who resisted domestic campaigns focused solely on US workers. Nevertheless, the union found considerable early success organizing security guard unions in California, Boston, and Washington DC. It was in the context of a rising tide of security guard unionism that Wackenhut chose to undercut its competitors, standing firmly against unionization.

Wackenhut grew into an industry leader, having secured important contracts with government agencies and nuclear facilities. The union campaign began in a few Midwestern states, and quickly became hostile. Wackenhut security guards were ordered to photograph SEIU organizers' license plates if they approached company property. The

company also pursued a lawsuit under the Racketeer Influence and Corrupt Organizations RICO Act (RICO)[22], alleging SEIU designed an extortion campaign to organize its employees. SEIU later responded with a series of hit pieces in the media designed to undermine the company's public image. Following a series of damaging news stories prompted by SEIU investigations that Wackenhut guards were sleeping on the job at Pennsylvania nuclear facilities, Excelon, the country's largest power plant operator, cancelled its contract with Wackenhut. Soon after it also lost its CEO, as Gary Sanders was forced to resign amid an investigation of that it had overcharged the city of Miami. However, despite the pressure and negative publicity, Wackenhut carried on fighting the union. It was the intransigence of the company that eventually propelled SEIU to abandon a domestic strategy, setting the stage for a dramatic confrontation.

Phase II: The Campaign Goes Global

In 2004, Securicor and the Danish-owned Group 4 Falk merged to form Group 4 Securicor (G4S), the second largest company in the world (only Wal-Mart is bigger) and the world's largest private security employer. Today, approximately 560,000 G4S employees work in 115 countries. During the birth pangs of the new company, the British-based leaders succeeded in retaining control of the organization and its new public image. Consequently, the hallmarks of British industrial relations philosophy

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[22] Utilized by employers such as Ravenswood Aluminum in
its dispute with the United Steelworkers of America in 1990 and Smithfield Foods in its ongoing battle with the United Food and Commercial Workers regarding its poultry processing plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, suits under the RICO Act allow for private civil suits to recover damages thus opening unions up to substantial monetary liability.

were, from the beginning, clearly the driving force of the corporation's attitude toward its employees. On the opening day of trading of G4S on the London Stock Exchange, SEIU announced the Alliance for Justice at G4S, a coalition of unions from twenty countries to organize all the company's security guards around the world. The "campaign" existed primarily on the internet, after UNI Global Union launched www.focusongroup4securicor.com, a website dedicated to promoting security guard campaigns and anti-G4S propaganda.

Then in April 2005, without prior warning, hundreds of formerly full-time Indonesian G4S security guards were converted into temporary employees, an aftershock of the corporate merger. This sparked what became a fifteen-month strike, making Indonesia the first battleground of the global campaign outside the rich countries. International solidarity by SEIU and UNI began as media announcements in support of the Securicor Indonesia Labour Union, affiliated to the Association of Indonesian Labour Unions (ASPEK). Then over 5,000 letters of support, coordinated by the transnational solidarity website, Labourstart.org, flooded G4S demanding the re-instatement of the fired workers. UNI coordinated solidarity actions at Indonesian embassies around the world, causing some prominent politicians to take note of the dispute and back the workers. Unphased, the company fought back with death threats to unionists, criminal charges against union leaders (for vague violations including "unpleasant acts"), and eventually, retaining the same lawyer who defended Suharto, appealed the case all the way to the Supreme Court (Champagne 2006).

SEIU responded by deploying a researcher from Washington DC, who learned Bahasa, and mentored local union activists in US-style organizing. It also encouraged the

Indonesian union to dedicate one of its organizers to support a research-based campaign as well, a move that first demonstrated the cultural barriers to labor transnationalism in the campaign. “The very idea of assigning a leader to research and communication to this campaign was an odd and new one to Indonesian security workers. The union was excellent at mobilizing troops and marching in to battle, but hadn’t given much thought to the propaganda side of this ‘war’” (Champagne 2006). The picket lines were consistently staffed with unionists from around the world. Slowly, a coherent campaign emerged to challenge the intransigent management.

As the Indonesia strike unfolded, SEIU widened the campaign against G4S to include unions of private security guards in Poland, Nepal, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa, India, Malawi, and The Congo. Through visits with international unions, SEIU gained a better understanding of G4S’s *modus operandi* around the globe, and built relationships with potential allies at the same time. In June 2005 UNI coordinated a protest involving workers from Indonesia, South Africa, the UK, and the US at G4S’s annual general meeting in London. Protest delegates delivered G4S shareholders an alternative annual report, “The High Cost of the Low Road,” which described the mistreatment of workers and the impact such industrial relations practices could potentially have on the public image and financial stability of G4S.

In October 2005 the UK-based General Workers Union (GMB), which had built a constructive relationship with G4S, won union recognition for thousands of security guards. In recent years, the GMB has undergone an internal sea-change, overturning years of corrupt leadership and stagnation to form a democratic union committed to organizing, with demonstrated respect for much of SEIU’s approach in the UK (GMB

Interview 2009). Since Paul Kenny's appointment and then election as General Secretary in late 2005, the union has grown by 15% (GMB Interview). Nevertheless, the GMB's entry into the campaign marked another cultural challenge for collaborative unionism as well.

The GMB volunteered to assist in the campaign when it felt the tactics and strategies of SEIU began to push the company further from the bargaining table, alienating management. As G4S reflects on comprehensive campaigning after the global agreement was signed,"…It is unarguable that managers directly touched by the campaign are left deeply cynical about unions, often more determined than ever not to concede anything" (Myles 2009). The GMB claims that the company was not principally opposed to reaching an agreement, but that regional and local G4S managers, and CEO Nick Buckles as well, were alienated by the aggressive tactics of SEIU around the world. One GMB organizer describes the campaign foundering on strategic miscalculations by UNI and SEIU:

> G4S felt that they simply could not trust SEIU or UNI to act honestly and honorably and were able to cite occasions where either SEIU in the US or UNI had reached agreements with them at works councils or other meetings only to break them soon after. They were also aggrieved that local disputes in Indonesia and elsewhere had been exploited and fanned up by UNI/SEIU to the detriment of the workforce and the possibility of reaching an agreement…[and] that G4S had been accused of everything from corrupting politicians to abusing children by the global campaign without any opportunity of a right to reply (interview GMB).

Both UNI and the GMB accuse the other of opportunism: UNI wants to punish a company into signing a deal and the GMB wants more members. A GMB organizer remarks:

> Working people are not pawns in a game of global power politics. They need to feel they are building their own power through their own unions. Delivering global or national union recognition for people and expecting them to join out of

> gratitude will never build sustainable workplace power…Global structures built without democratic control and with no mandate do not deliver working class power. They deliver global companies a handy police force of global union bureaucrats to help them control their uppity workers.

A UNI staffer replies:

> They (the GMB) didn't want us to keep up the corporate campaign because it damaged their relationship with G4S. That much is obvious to everyone, including G4S. They certainly didn't want us out there organizing in G4S's biggest markets. They don't see themselves gaining from that kind of organizing, even though, of course, they do in the long run…That's the thing, they benefit from having a stronger union… even though they don't help out (UNI Interview).

The GMB was also critical of SEIU's approach to globalism, which it determined was based on parochial assumptions, a one-size-fits all model of ideal-typical labor union practice, in apparent ignorance of local constraints.

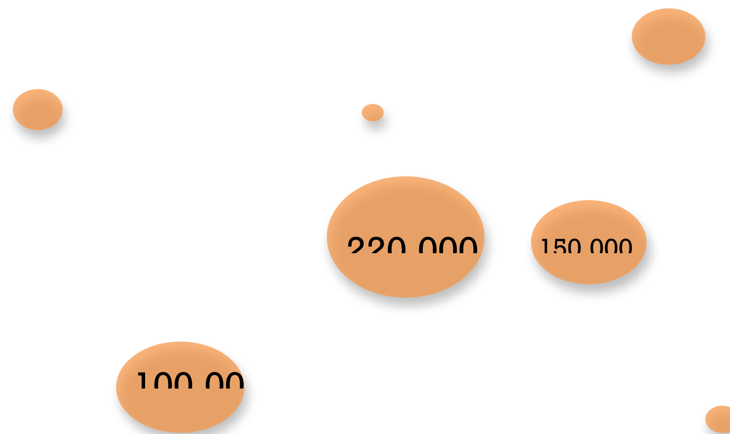
> SEIU organizers sometimes appear to be unaware that US corporate and industrial law is not universal. Their answer to the German unions was: "It soon will be." In India it was: "If we can organize in New York why can't we in New Delhi?'…The apparent SEIU search for client unions globally to build a sphere of influence also alienates many trades unionists who otherwise would support the SEIU organizing line…[The GMB] wasn't aware UNI were involved in promoting any organizing model.

In the end the GMB was included as the third signatory on the G4S agreement and its relationship with the company remains strong. It attends the UNI Property Services meetings and will continue to participate in other UNI campaigns in the future, should it be invited. Today, though it considers itself an ally of SEIU's general commitment to organizing in theory, it remains highly skeptical and critical of how that process is executed. The G4S campaign reinforced its perception of SEIU as culturally insensitive and authoritarian. "Overall," says one UNI staffer, "we are not enemies or anything, we're still comrades, but they left a bad taste in our mouth." Here the two

finally agree, as one GMB official acknowledges, "It's your best friends that tell you when your breath smells."

Therefore, instead of supporting the larger effort, collaboration with the GMB drove a temporary wedge into the global campaign. Soon after the GMB won recognition with G4S, UNI contacted British government ministers requesting that they cancel their contracts with the company in favor of a better corporate citizen. The unions clashed again when UNI attempted to block G4S from winning the security contract for the 2012 Olympic Games in London, as GMB's members stood to benefit through job creation. Numerous requests for solidarity were also made of G4S's European Works Council, which stridently refused to risk its productive relationship with the company by acting in the interests of other workers.

With solidarity on the rocks in the North, SEIU made a strategic decision to re-orient its focus on international human rights issues in the South. This decision coincided with the creation of the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI) in April 2006, which linked social issues to investment standards. Seven percent (94,041,450) of G4S shares were held by PRI signatory countries, many of which also controlled union pension funds. Compared to the miniscule percentages that most shareholder activism engages, this was a significant sum. As part of a gradual "southern strategy," G4S began divesting at this time from rich countries like Germany and France, but showed explosive growth in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. Figure 3.1 below shows the rough distribution of G4S employees as of 2010. We note that the vast majority are located in the Southern hemisphere.



These circumstances meant that narratives about low standards and mistreatment in the global South could potentially be used to influence investors in the global North. Investors are both excited and weary of companies that exhibit a kind of "entrepreneurial overreach," as the returns can be large but the risks are many. An SEIU researcher explained rather bluntly, "We found out that investors [in G4S] don't really care about poor workers in America. They care about poor workers in the Third World. So we went that route."

In March 2006, a violent general strike broke out in South Africa. Approximately 100,000 security guards--one third of the entire industry--took to the streets across the country, waging battles with rival unions and police. As many as sixty people are reported to have died in strike-related violence, making it the bloodiest battle since 1994. Most were alleged scabs, thrown from trains by strikers as they were caught commuting

to work from the townships. Others were stabbed, shot, or beaten to death. The sensationalism of the strike gained bad press for UNI's affiliate in Johannesburg. Later that summer, during a European Works Council meeting that took place on a yacht, G4S CEO Nick Buckles claimed that UNI had indirectly murdered a security guard as a result of its funding of its South African affiliate (UNI Interview). The company also insinuated that UNI had assisted with lengthening the strike, which it considered a justification for temporarily suspending dialogue about a global agreement. In the wake of strike chaos, UNI took on a larger role there, and South Africa became a local "hot spot" of the global campaign, with organizers from Europe transplanted to Johannesburg to help develop local union capacity.

In June 2006, UNI returned to G4S's shareholder meeting in London with an updated alternative report that highlighted worker abuses in poor countries. This action followed the Indonesian Supreme Court's favorable decision to re-instate the fired striking workers. Upon hearing the ruling, 150 security guards in Jakarta occupied G4S's company headquarters, refusing to leave until the court's decision was instituted. The occupation drew supportive visits from local NGOs and other trade unions. The company capitulated a month later and was forced to pay Rp 4,000 million ($570,000) in back wages and twice the minimum required in severance packages. The criminal charges against union leaders were also dropped.

In December 2006, UNI filed a complaint against G4S with the UK National Contact Point of the OECD, citing violations of its guidelines on multinational enterprises in nine countries. Swift action was not taken, and it was not until 2008 that the OECD finally decided to examine the allegations in just four countries: Congo, Nepal,

Mozambique and Malawi (UNI Interview). However, even without a verdict in hand SEIU/UNI took advantage of the opportunity to use the complaint as a vehicle to promote the image of an irresponsible global company through press releases, the internet, and direct communication with investors and shareholders (UNI Interview).

While waiting for a determination from the OECD, UNI commissioned a South African research institute in 2007 to execute a report on the record of abuse at G4S in Mozambique. To complement this report, a fact-finding delegation of labor leaders, legal experts, NGO staff and rank-and-file unionists from around the world toured Southern Africa to produce "Who Protects the Guards?" a magazine-format guide through the dark side of industrial relations in the private security industries of Mozambique, Malawi and South Africa. Released on the eve of G4S's 2007 shareholder meeting, the report uncovered stories of full-time workers in abject poverty, working seven days a week, unable to support their families, and denied dignities like bathroom breaks and water. In South Africa, cases of race-segregated bathrooms, and verbal abuse of blacks by white G4S supervisors seemed especially appalling.

The report generated deeper activism and concessions from the company in the face of bad publicity. For example, it proved instrumental in helping Moroccan G4S workers win a holiday bonus, while Ugandan security guards signed their first collective bargaining agreement with the company after using the report to shame the company in local media. UNI leades were surprised to learn that unions in Ghana had made use of the report and were applying local pressure to management. "We didn't even know that union was still active," said a UNI staffer.

But Malawian workers made the largest strides through using the report. Although workers won recognition from G4S in 2007 after a strike, half a year later it was still operating without a union contract. Guards earned just enough to keep them above the World Bank's poverty line of one dollar per day, and often worked twelve hour shifts seven days per week. The company won an injunction against another planned strike in protest of a low wage increase proposed by the company. UNI then established the Legal Aid Fund for African Unions, in order to facilitate a lawsuit alleging underpay, as well as noncompliance with ILO conventions. In other countries, G4S unions started the "It's About Time" solidarity campaign, which underscored the plight--and fight--of Malawian guards to win due pay. Finally, UNI also used the report to dissuade the FIFA Congress from awarding G4S the lucrative contract to provide security at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

Similar developments were underway on the Indian subcontinent, G4S's largest market, where the company claims to have created as many as thirty-two jobs per day for two decades. By late 2007 UNI had established three UNIDOC offices in India to coordinate a variety of campaigns in Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Delhi and Kochi. The private security campaign was notable among these for focusing exclusively on workers within the vast informal sector. To put a spotlight on these invisible workers, UNI exploited the popular claim of the country as a large democracy with a growing economy in its report, "Inequality Beneath India's Economic Boom." The document demonstrates that G4S guards receive poverty wages often below the legal minimum, work long hours without overtime pay, have no job security, and are denied the right to organize independent unions. UNI also hired legal experts from Columbia Law School and

London University, plus NGOs, to produce similarly damning profiles and case studies of G4S that framed the debate in terms of political and human rights. These documents were fodder for the campaign to steer the organizing committee of the 2010 Commonwealth Games, the $1.6 billion multi-sport event held in India, toward another security provider, causing an uproar within the country's business community. These public shaming actions raised a questionable profile of the company to European investors. By early 2008, with the assistance of UNI funds and direct support from Europe-based staff, unions in Poland, the Congo and Nepal had also built campaigns against G4S.

The OECD complaint was resolved in UNI's favor in the spring of 2008. As a condition of the conclusion of the OECD case, the union in Malawi won wage increases by as much as twenty-five percent.The determination of the OECD report, and the growing focus of unions around the world on G4S provided fertile ground for SEIU's investor activism. It was bolstered even more when it began consulting a Stockholm-based firm that analyses corporate social responsibility and issues recommendations to asset managers wishing to comply with social initiatives. After reviewing a dossier on G4S, the firm recommended its clients exclude G4S from further investment portfolios based on its poor human rights track record. In June 2008, one of Norway's largest life insurance companies heeded this advice and divested from the company, citing violations in UNI's OECD complaint. Shortly after, the Danish government threatened to cancel its contract with G4S if it did not resolve issues raised in the OECD report. "They [G4S] pretty much freaked out after the divestment stuff. They took us more seriously from then on" (UNI Interview). The divestment news was shocking not only to the company, but also within the GMB and UNI who, according to UNI staff, were nervous about

alienating such a large company when it seemed that a deal for a framework agreement was so close at hand. This anxiety proved to be unfounded, however.

In December 2008, after five years of battling unionization, the company capitulated, claiming it was "a matter of time." It also emphasized the crucial role the GMB played as a "go-between," a role facilitated by its constructive relationship with the company as well as "its shared history, cultural understanding and mutual respect" (Myles 2009).

By contrast with the company's position, UNI is certain its corporate campaign had the intended effect. The campaign and its conclusion seriously disoriented G4S, which suddenly faced the prospect of industrial relations and human resource management on a grand new scale. UNI's response was sober in comparison. A UNI leader notes, "We were happy with the win, no doubt. We were real happy. But it meant a lot more work. We knew this thing would require us to take it to the end, to implement it, and we knew we were gonna have a hard time. And so far we have."

The agreement required the company to respect four core conventions of the International Labor Organization. These are provisions against child labor, forced labor, discrimination in employment, and respect for the freedom of association. Most crucially, it also included access rights for local union staff to G4S worksites and restrained the company from anti-union campaigning when workers attempted to unionize. Had UNI been satisfied with an agreement that only stipulated these core labor standards, as it had often been in the past, it's likely the campaign would not have been as onerous as it was. In a letter drafted to G4S mid October in 2008, Christy Hoffman, then UNI's organizing

director, rejected G4S's proposed agreement because it lacked a clear statement on a pathway to union recognition, a "bedrock principle" of UNI.

The letter also raises the key issue regarding the "phase-in" of the agreement. Both parties were worried that a sudden explosion of union activity once the IFA was signed would stretch the limits of their capacities too thin, and therefore agreed to a process of selective implementation for three years, with a total phase-in within five. The sticking points were where and when. G4S proposed that UNI abandon its campaign in India, its largest market, and that the phase-in of the agreement should be dealt with at a separate time, a "loophole which engulfs the entire agreement" in UNI's opinion (UNI 2009). So UNI fought, and eventually won, to have India be the first country to implement the agreement. South Africa was selected as the other trial-run country. North American security guards were initially excluded from the agreement altogether, but a separate deal was struck to satisfy SEIU that granted immediate union recognition to Wackenhut guards in nine US cities, involving some of the same workers who, in 2003, had begun the organizing drive that eventually led to the global campaign.

ASSESSMENT/ CONCLUSION

Most examples of global unionism stop here. A transnational corporation vows to uphold and defend the rights of its employees around the world. But without unions or other organizations to monitor the process, very often the only change is that the company suddenly has a better CSR portfolio. The important development in this campaign then is the degree to which gains at the global level were interpreted locally. That is the subject of the next two chapters.

Here I have suggested that the basis for SEIU to coordinate transnational campaigns came from local and national renewal processes. I have focused on the strategic innovation and experimentation that has accompanied the changing nature of global political economy and the structure of employment in the American services sector. In so doing I have suggested that SEIU's transnational turn is not merely a decision to "go global." Rather, it is a product of its own grappling with new conditions and strategies to face the challenges of a changing political economy.

As described above, some of the same strategies that have formed the basis for SEIU's renewal have inspired similar processes elsewhere. In particular, I have described the process through which transnational collaboration and the importation of the organizing model have had positive impacts on unions in Australia, the UK, New Zealand, and the Netherlands. The tactic of targetting the clients and shareholders of large property services firms—that was one of the primary reasons G4S capitulated—is lifted right from the J4J playbook. Chun (2005) notes that the J4J model, for example, has recently been mirrored in Korea as well, inspiring the use of public dramas to draw attention to invisible service sector workers.

Although it has been asserted that security guards, janitors, and other workers in the non-mobile service sector can wield considerable structural power based upon the geographic fixity of their jobs, this chapter demonstrates that unions representing these workers—SEIU and UNI in particular—have been most successful based upon their ability to exercise associational power. In other words, the industrial context matters, but less so than the activities of the unions themselves. And in this case, transnational collaboration is seen as a viable strategy.

In the coming two chapters, I also show this is the case for local unions in South Africa and India as they implement the global agreement in different ways.

CHAPTER FOUR:

TRADE UNION RENEWAL AND LABOR TRANSNATIONALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CASE OF SATAWU

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the implementation of the global agreement in South Africa. In so doing it links new forms of labor transnationalism with local union revitalization. Through an in-depth case study it describes the renewal of the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU) as a result of its participation in the global campaign described in the previous chapter. I show that the global agreement was implemented here in a particular way based on the opportunities and constraints of the local environment. The collaborative efforts of UNI. SEIU, and SATAWU led to “mobilization-type” reforms within SATAWU, including increased organizing, member participation, and internal restructuring. This effort first expanded formal rights for workers through the establishment of the International Framework Agreement (described in Chapter 3), which then promoted deeper mobilization from below. I conclude that global unionism can inspire local renewal processes, and that strategies which guarantee the formal rights of workers are effective when used in tandem with local mobilization-based strategies.

In an effort to recoup some aspects of its former vitality, the South African union movement has responded to the structural changes of national and global political economy with a handful of strategic innovations. The federation’s September Commission Report (1997) urged a return to social unionism, and an internal

reorganization that included the formation of “mega-unions” in each sector. However, as COSATU affiliates operate with considerable autonomy, the federation does not have the power to enact such reforms that, for example, the Sweeney administration was able to accomplish in the US around the same time (See Chapter 3). Bezuidenhout (2000) suggests a renewal strategy aimed at building “global social movement unionism” could learn from South Africa’s past, though at present it is unlikely to inspire. Webster and Buhlungu (2004) note a series of strategic responses to changing conditions by unions, arguing correctly that these responses do not constitute a coherent revitalization program, a view similar to how Behrens, Fichter and Frege (2003) assess renewal in Germany. The authors position renewal efforts as fundamentally aligned against specific changes in exogenous factors of political economy and social structure.

In this chapter, however, I show that SATAWU is first and foremost concerned with redressing its own internal deficiencies. During the course of the global campaign, UNI and SEIU sought to re-direct the conversation about union weakness away from the structural conditions of capitalism and toward the subjective choices, decisions and organization of SATAWU itself. In other words, they believed that strategy *matters*. This chapter addresses the changing strategic orientations of SATAWU under the influence of UNI.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first outlines the history of labor transnationalism in South Africa as it proceeds through three different modes, the final mode being representative of SATAWU’s collaboration with UNI. The next outlines the industrial context of the private security industry. The third section provides an ethnographic narrative of my case study. Then I reflect on the changes that have

transpired within SATAWU that resulted from its participation within the global campaign. Finally, I connect this chapter's findings with the overall themes of the dissertation.

LABOR TRANSNATIONALISM THEN AND NOW IN SOUTH AFRICA

Looking back we can identify three moments of labor transnationalism here which I refer to as communist/syndicalist, social movement, and institutional to identify the dominant influences in each period. The first, roughly from 1880s to 1960 refers to the period of worker organization that was influenced by American, Australian, British and Scottish trade union traditions. The second, from 1960-1994, can be usefully called social movement internationalism, and my description here is based largely on this rich literature by South African labor scholars. The most important point for our purposes is the transition to the next phase, which takes us to the present, called institutional internationalism, and in my opinion is representative of what is "new" about labor transnationalism, especially in South Africa. This can be represented by numerous collaborative efforts by various unions and nonunion labor institutions but also the case study under question here. This is a curious distinction since what is commonly referred to as "new"—grassroots or proletarian internationalism—by South African scholars is actually more indicative of the "old" models described above (See Chapter 2). Therefore, it is in this last section where I dialogue most directly with other scholars of labor transnationalism.

Syndicalist/Communist Internationalism

At its inception the South African labor movement was internationalist. With few exceptions (Bond et al 2001:4–5), historians have portrayed early twentieth century southern African (Namibia, South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland) labor history as if the context of the nation-state made analytic sense, but during this time it did not. Such a perspective projects national borders onto a landscape of colonial or imperial rule, ignoring the significance of regional political economies, massive immigration, networks of activists, and especially the vital role of international labor markets. According to Van der Walt (2007):

> Transnational influences played a critical role in shaping working-class movements, which straddled borders and formed sections across the region and beyond it. Furthermore, ideological, ethnic and racial divides within the working class across southern Africa played a more important role in constituting divisions than state borders (2007: 223).

That's not to say we can't talk about the particular form of early laborism in modern-day South Africa; only that it must be situated in this context, which might usefully begin with the local version of the Industrial Revolution in the 1880s, propped up by speculative capital in search of gold along the shale beds of the Witswatersrand.

Cycles of union and protest movements by blacks were born and re-born throughout this period, but none were strong enough to resist the repression of the apartheid regime (Bezuidenhout 2000). By contrast, white unions made significant inroads. White workers in South Africa developed a local tradition of white labor supremacy by the early twentieth century, which combined social democratic demands with bans on blacks for certain jobs, segregation, and the repatriation of Asians. While this drew on the existing traditions of the local unions, it was also demonstrably

influenced by the policies of the Australian Labor Party, which combined laborite parliamentary socialism with white rule (Van der Walt 2007). Other early models of predominantly craft unionism were imported from Britain, which laid foundations of a socialist Labor Party, a racist organization that affiliated to the Second International. In short, whites "imagined themselves as citizens of what might be called the 'Empire of Labour,'" a "project of racial domination and class struggle" (Hyslop 2002:3–4).

Inspired by more radical Left currents around the world, however, other whites helped to build a labor internationalism that was racially inclusive and class-based. If we understand Hobsbaum's contention—that "the bulk of the revolutionary left was anarcho-syndicalist, or at least much closer to the ideas and the mood of anarcho-syndicalism than to that of classical Marxism" (Hobsbawm 1993:72–3)—then the IWW's mark on South African trade unionism makes perfect sense. Van der Walt (2007) documents the diffusion of the IWW's syndicalism from the US to the Britain's settler colonies via Scottish anarchists and European Kropotkinites. These early unions became more multinational when organizing in the Durban area began to include Indians as well. We can see these localized struggles as a direct outgrowth of a global syndicalist trend, but one that nonetheless began to take its place in black African workers culture.

The first prominent union to organize only blacks was the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), influenced heavily by white syndicalism and the Pan-African teachings of Marcus Garvey that became popular in southern Africa. Although the transatlantic relationships between Garveyites in the US and his United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) are well documented, the story of the Wobblie influence on the ICU has largely been lost, forgotten or suppressed. Lasting for eleven

years, it essentially collapsed under its own weight, unable to deal with the demands of massive influxes of aggrieved members (Southall 1996). When war broke out in Europe, the splits in the socialist movements elsewhere also worked their way through South Africa. A minority group left the party to eventually form the core of the Comintern-affiliated Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), which argued class, rather than race, should be the basis of trade union organization. Communist internationalism played a significant role in mobilizing black workers and promoting the idea of a nationalist liberation movement, though it isolated itself with the turn toward armed struggle (Southall and Bezuidenhout 2004).

Political-legal apartheid began in 1947 with the electoral victory of the National Party, which codified the racial segregation that had been central to South African culture for more than a century. This extended the decades-long system of "influx control"—the geographic containment of blacks to the homelands, or *Bantustans*—by their systematic deployment to the most arduous and dangerous kinds of work outside the majority white cities (Bendix 1996; Kraak 1993). After the upsurge of wartime militancy, ending in the bloody mineworkers' strike, in which many died and thousands were injured, the law conspired to drive black union leaders underground with the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act (Southall and Bezuidenhout 2004). Segregation was further enforced by white trade unions that excluded blacks from their industries, and the 1956 Labor Relations Act (LRA) which classified particular jobs as race-specific (Bendix 1996), ensuring blacks and other non-whites occupied the precarious and unskilled sectors. Without a voice in a white supremacist country, the apartheid workplace constituted a

bifurcated system of "racial despotism" (Burawoy 1985) that enforced profound inequality.

As postwar apartheid dynamics shaped the economy into race-specific categories, a unique system of "racial Fordism" (Gelb 1991) evolved alongside an import substitution model that combined mass production technology without the allied consumption patterns evident in the West in the industrialized areas of the country (Kraak 1996). Instead, both benefited and protected the interests of the white middle class. In this environment, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) emerged in the mid 1950s as the most energetic organizers of the black working class. Ideologically communist, politically oriented towards the national struggle, SACTU picked up most of the slack when the ANC was banned following rising unrest in the townships that culminated in the civil disobedience against pass laws and the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960.

Social Movement Union Internationalism

Massive unrest swept across Africa as national liberation movements gained momentum in the 1950s and early 1960s. South African protests against racism took the form of nation-wide anti-apartheid *stayaways* organized by SACTU in 1957, 1958, 1960 and 1961 (Silver 2000). This activity initially deflected foreign direct investment in South Africa. However, when the apartheid state proved a worthy adversary, crushing opposition and sending SACTU in to exile—and pushing many of its leaders toward underground armed struggle in the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of

the Nation)—the successful protection of cheap labor signaled a green light for foreign capital, which rushed in during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Buhlungu 2007).

This flood of foreign capital helped to incubate a renewed working class that doubled in population between 1950 and 1975 inside an expanding Fordist[23] sector (Silver 2000), which contributed to the rise of black trade unionism. But as a result of open racial hostilities at work, and the relative inability for unions to take hold, black unions also grew through informal social networks outside the workplace (Webster 1999). The geographic location of these unions outside the factory provided an opportunity to include class-wide and community demands in their struggles. Nevertheless, unions were largely quiet in the 1960s, as a coherent strategy had yet to develop. But worker discontent grew and by the early1970s the quiescence was over, as black trade unions proved capable of widespread defiance that included wildcat strikes, slowdowns, sit-ins, protests and mass insubordination.

In late 1972 a small strike of Durban longshoreman broke out against racist managers, which spread in 1973 to waves of strikes after Durban's Coronation Brick and Tile failed to pay the legal minimum wage, involving as many as 100,000 workers (Wood and Harcourt). Emboldened by the success of their decisive action, blacks joined so-called "independent unions" by the thousands, which declared their autonomy from the control of white unions and the apartheid state. Because the workplace was so hostile

[23] The concept of Fordism/Taylorism factors heavily in Silver's analysis, though some have suggested it is overblown in relation to South Africa (Kraak 1996, Adler 1993, Leger 1992), where the nature of even automobile production, and other factory work, ensured that workers retained a greater degree of control and autonomy over the labor process than is normally "allowable" in Fordist analyses. Whereas Fordism and Taylorism are generally associated with deskilling, many black South Africans experienced upskilling as they filled jobs in factories. In a related point, Kraak (2006) argues that racial Fordism, to the extent to which it existed, never died, and that the popular notion of the post-Fordist transition in the mid nineties is similarly fraught with the problem of too many continued practices of the past to constitute a period of "post" anything. He suggests Neo-Fordism instead.

toward the new unions, they deepened their ties with community organizations beyond the workplace to build a movement oriented toward radical social transformation and democracy, embodying what came to be known as social movement unionism.

In the mid 1970s, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) established the Coordinating Committee for South Africa (COCOSA) to aid the emerging industrial unions with legal strategies and recoup their operating costs to fuel further action. This took the form of raising $6.6 million in the seventies and eighties by pressuring affiliates to give solidarity donations (Southall 1996). The ICFTU also assisted the burgeoning black unions of FOSATU and the unions that would come to comprise NACTU as well (Fraser 1991).

However, those relationships have been tested at times by "suspicion and animosity" as a result of Cold War politics surrounding the Soviet-backed World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU) and internal disputes about the liberation struggle (Bezuidenhout 2000). While apartheid provided the dominant basis for international relations within the trade unions, nonalignment was COSATU's primary foreign policy strategy. By remaining neutral, COSATU was able to build a broader front of allies against apartheid and attract wider interest and foreign assistance to its domestic operations. It did, however, provoke squabbles within the international union formations that were in the midst of a Cold War of their own (see Chapter 2).

SACTU remained unaffiliated, yet closely aligned ideologically with the WFTU, using its international links and resources to conduct a class war from afar. South Africa was temporarily expelled from the ILO when SACTU successfully used its influence within the WFTU to lobby against ILO representation of the Trade Union Council of

South Africa (TUCSA), a racist union federation (Southall 1996). Emboldened by this victory, it began a series of battles from exile with the ICFTU, and even the emerging independent black unions. The ICFTU began to funnel aid directly to unions in order to bypass their communist leadership. SACTU took the stance that all economic aid—"direct links" —to South African workers should be channeled through its leadership, in order to appropriately fund the most politically-oriented unions. It believed that the "solidarity" of the Northern countries and European federations actually subverted the potential of the South African unions. Eventually this position proved unpopular and untenable as its connections with actual workers waned from a distance.

Nonetheless, Southall (1996) describes the important links that the ICFTU maintained with local unions to continue the support, as well as the relationships formed by individual South African unionists with those abroad after attending education workshops. These networks of inter-union communication led to crucial forms of solidarity during recognition battles. For example, when organizing against the subsidiaries of multinationals, they were supported by unions with representation in the home country of the corporation, and could call upon these unions for generalized support. During this time many unions joined their respective ITS as well.

In fact, Southall (1996) claims that during the Cold War years, unions in South Africa were more closely intertwined with the ICFTU than the WFTU explicitly because the basis of the affiliation was not ideological, but the shared experience of a particular multinational company. Unions contained in the Soviet orbit had no such avenue to offer their support. It is hard to overlook the touch of irony in the confluence of historical

events whereby capitalism, not socialism, provided a more obvious pathway to international union solidarity for a developing country.

In the face of a growing international movement that increasingly threatened the existence of apartheid (Seidman 2008), the state responded with concessions and containment by establishing the Wiehan Commission of Inquiry in 1977, which attempted to incorporate the black trade unions' workplace struggles into the orderly system of sectoral bargaining preferred by whites (Baskin 1991). Though the government hoped the new privilege accorded black unions would placate the leadership, it only stoked the discontent of the rank and file.

The 1980s saw the consolidation of the black unions, the student movement, and the broader anti-apartheid struggle within coherent organizations, including COSATU. Though COSATU did not develop a coherent international strategy in the 1980s, it inherited an internationalist legacy from its predecessor, FOSATU, which was deeply enmeshed in coordinating a variety of external assistance with domestic endeavors to end apartheid. After 1985, COSATU became the primary channel through which foreign assistance flowed.

The fall of the soviet system, the end of the Cold War, and the unbanning of the ANC and other liberation movements, brought about new patterns of international union cooperation. Since opposition to apartheid and nonalignment were twin bases for labor internationalism, how have world events re-shaped the global outlook of the South African working class?

Immediately after the Cold War ended, COSATU still pursued "active nonalignment" regarding affiliation to the ICFTU or the WFTU. Some saw the ICFTU as

an imperial wing of Europe, whose member unions' politics more or less mirrored the foreign policy objectives of their governments. At the same time, many COSATU leaders distrusted the efficacy of the communist WFTU, as its members were officially state-run front groups for the Soviet bloc. In other words, COSATU saw ICFTU affiliates as *de-facto* objects of Northern imperialism, and WFTU unions as *de jure* subjects of oppressive puppet states. Because COSATU's profile loomed so large, the issue of COSATU's affiliation to an international body was of global concern, and it received pressure from both sides. US-based unions endorsed its affiliation while others in the South, such as the Philippino KMU, argued that the ICFTU's track record of financially supporting corrupt and oppressive unions made it, at least for the time being, unworthy of support. COSATU continually pursued a path to unification of the international trade movement, which stopped in 1997 when it affiliated to the ICFTU. When the ICFTU finally merged with the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) in 2006, COSATU heralded the new organization, the ITUC, as "the second coming of the international union bureaucracy."

By 1990 COSATU began a stocktaking of its international activities, re-evaluating links with the ICFTU and WFTU and attempting to normalize its relationship with the AFLCIO (Bezuidenhout 2000). Reciprocal transnationalism was never a hallmark of COSATU's operations. Jay Naidoo, then COSATU's General Secretary, said that at times South African unions had forged ties with ICFTU-affiliated unions in Scandanavia, The Netherlands, and Canada, when in need of assistance (Naidoo 1991). In particular, throughout the early 1980s its staff was financed by five federations from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Holland (COSATU 2009). Funding also came

from GUFs, including FIAT, the precursor to UNI Global Union (Interview, Boyer). COSATU's links to European unions runs deep because they were most supportive of the anti-apartheid struggle, and helped build bridges to powerful political channels. These relationships were largely one-way streets, however, with COSATU simply on the receiving end of financial aid, political clout, and occasional technical assistance (COSATU 2009).

However, international funding was not the only link COSATU had to outside unions. During apartheid, high-ranking COSATU officers often hosted outside unionists in South Africa or traveled to foreign countries for study visits, exchange programs whereby each union traded strategies. These visits, which included India, Great Britain, the US, and African states, were principally coordinated by the Commonwealth Trade Union Council (CTUC), which worked with both sides of the Cold War divide. The workshops and seminars allowed COSATU leaders to develop longer-term policy initiatives (COSATU 2009).

While the unions of the OECD countries experienced deep crisis in the 1980s and 1990s, the South African trade union movement showed explosive growth: membership increased from 673,000 in 1976 to 2.8 million in 1993, then on to 3.8 million in 1998, 1.7 million of which (45%) were in COSATU affiliates (Donnely 2006; Mancun 1995). As the rich countries suffered under deindustrialization (Bluestone and Bennet 1985), the transition to a service-oriented economy in South Africa did not have the same adverse effects on union densities. The share of service-based employment climbed from 50% to 54% from 1979 to 1988 (Mancun and Frost 1994), at the same time the growth of white collar jobs decreased the share of blue collar labor (Kraak 1996). However, unionization

rates climbed steadily during this time, offset by the involvement of the unions in the wider liberation movement. Faced with a movement that showed no signs of retreat, the government was forced once again to offer concessions, and struck a deal with the two largest labor federations, COSATU and NACTU.

Despite increasing momentum within a strong opposition movement, the ANC could only dream of seizing power, having lost crucial political and financial support after the collapse of the Soviet bloc (Adam and Moodly 1993; MacDonald and James 1995). Furthermore, the MDK never approached the point at which it could win a military battle against the SADF, let alone the apartheid state (Duignan 1990). Nevertheless, the National party would have to contend with the declining economic fortunes of the country. As early as 1985, banks began pulling investments out of South Africa. Global boycotts and declining business confidence contributed to decreasing investments as well. Ultimately a failing economy and political isolation from the world rendered the continuation of apartheid impossible.

With legislative reforms on the table, but rising discontent, Adam and Moodly (1993) note that power-sharing soon became the only viable option. Despite the existence of a strong mass movement against apartheid, the "double transition"-- a process of simultaneously consolidating democracy and restructuring the economy—happened by an elite compromise that kept "the fundamental structures of capitalist society in place, thereby ensuring the loyalty of the propertied classes" (Webster and Adler 1999). This should not diminish the significance of the transnational labor movement that Kate Bronfenbrenner (2007) calls "perhaps the most comprehensive and most effective example of cross-border solidarity of labor and its allies in history."

Institutional Internationalism

The post-1994 agreement the African National Congress (ANC) struck with the World Bank required that South Africa phase out tariffs in twelve years. Instead, it voluntarily accomplished it in eight, reducing import taxes by almost two thirds between 1994 and 1998 alone. The state attained competitiveness in automobile manufacturing and steel production, the heavily unionized Fordist sectors, through a transition to a leaner production model. After one year of the ANC's neoliberal growth program (GEAR), the news media reported the unofficial conclusion of the "Honeymoon with the West" as the Rand fell twenty-five percent against most other foreign currencies (Koelble 1999). The increasing inability of labor to organize the swelling ranks of precarious workers since 1994 contributed to declines in membership, density, and union vitality within the workplace.

As apartheid ended and the ANC-era began, COSATU realized its dependence on Northern unions was shortsighted, and it began to seek out more "local" international linkages. Though NACTU had been active within the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) since the 1980s, COSATU did not affiliate until 1991. It also became active with Southern African unions more generally within the purview of the Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Committee (SATUCC), which was invested in the creation of a charter for workers' rights. COSATU-affiliated unions often play the support role within SATUCC, rather than being on the receiving end of solidarity assistance. For example, through SATUCC, COSATU gathered financial and other

material resources to support the Namibian peoples' movement that eventually forced its first democratic elections.

South African unions came to occupy a dominant—almost hegemonic—position within the region, much like the global role of US and European unions. Soon it became a beachhead for all kinds of international union events. In 1993 COSATU and NACTU hosted an ICFTU delegation, and toward the end of the decade they finally affiliated. FEDUSA followed suit in 1998. It also hosted the first COCOSA summit in South Africa since its founding in 1976. In 1999 COSATU hosted the Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights (SIGTUR), a promising but so far unfulfilling Australian-based project to unite unions in the Global South. This was followed late in the year by an ICEM convention, just weeks before African unionists and political leaders effectively halted forward progress of the Millenial Round of the Seattle WTO ministerial in protest. The ICFTU then met again in Durban in 2000, under the banner of Globalizing Social Justice: Trade Unionism in the 21st Century (Southall and Bezuidenhout 2004).

Despite decades of work in the international realm, COSATU has never laid out a coherent foreign policy agenda. To some extent, this failing is related funding opportunities and priorities. Because so many of COSATU's social initiatives (HIV/AIDS work[24], support for workers in other countries, international educational activities) are partially or fully funded by outside sources, each with its own interest and funding stream, the federation's work in those areas is determined by actors without necessarily a stake, interest, or knowledge in COSATUs longterm strategy.

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[24] Many unions have their own HIV/AIDS programs in addition to COSATU's services. POPCRU and SAMWU, for example, have both recently developed new initiatives.

At times, COSATU unions have used their influence within GUFs to push for radical reforms and take decisive action. NUMSA pressured the International Metalworkers Federation to adopt a principled stance in support of international sympathy strikes. COSATU's international activities have taken a variety of forms over the last decade. Through conferences and "exchange programs," COSATU encourages the cross-pollination of ideas between unions from neighboring countries. For example, through the ITUC-led Non-agricultural Market Access (NAMA) process, which addresses trade-related "distortions" such as subsidy programs, COSATU unions have weighed in on global trade issues. It has provided capacity-building support of unions in the Southern African region. NUM in particular has been active in Swaziland, Botswana, and Mozambique.

Though relationships with European unions and COSATU have been waning in recent years (with Italy, France, Norway, for example), affiliates have picked up the slack. Aside from SATAWU's involvement with UNI and SEIU, it has also developed working relationships with the German Rail Workers union and the Canadian Aviation Workers. POPCRU was partially founded by money donated from the Swedish Police Union, and NUMSA participated in a recent sympathy strike on behalf of US-based Continental Airline employees (COSATU 2009). There are many other examples as well—enough to popularize the rank and file position that dues still underwrite too many bureaucratic junkets to major European and US cities (COSATU 2009).

The fact of heavy European and American influence in the process for change in South Africa has also fueled criticisms of labor imperialism. Because COSATU does not itself drive an international agenda, affiliates are often involved in ad hoc activities with

sister unions in other countries and their GUFs. Though Webster et al (2008) argue that COSATU has not taken advantage of the potential global linkages with GUFs, the federation has demonstrated hostility toward the GUFs for reasons not dissimilar from its on-again-off-again animosity for the ICFTU. A 2009 COSATU document suggests disagreements abound over issues of political ideology, the popular support of no-strike clauses in agreements signed by GUFs, and a lukewarm approach to unionism that privileges activism (letter-writing, lobbying) over organizing (union growth). The document refers to GUFs as "individualist" and too narrowly focused on a sectoral approach. It concludes that, "Although many unions are quiet in terms of the problems in the Global Unions, when reading between the lines it is clear that there is a general problem of different orientations amongst most South African unions and their respective Global Unions" (COSATU 2009).

The problem of "different orientations" is not merely ideological, but manifests in a variety of practical ways. For example, global unions tend to prioritize actions that don't have an immediately recognizable national character or impact, thus making it hard to sell to local staff and members. Other instances of a disconnect between global and local staff are described in the case study that follows. But before proceeding, I will briefly outline the context of the private security industry

THE INDUSTRIAL CONTEXT OF PRIVATE SECURITY

The system of "weak states" (Migdal 1988) in postcolonial Africa pressured African leaders to utilize private security companies to maintain order in the absence of an underfunded public police force. The result has been a continent-wide proliferation of

private policing, with almost no regard for actual security threats. "Economic gain is the only reason why private security actors are operating in Africa; the continent's peace and stability have no place on their agenda" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007).

Even compared to conflict-ridden Sierra Leone, Liberia, DRC, and Angola, the South African industry has seen exceptional growth. The overall value of the industry exploded from 1.2 billion Rand in 1990 to 30 billion Rand in 2007, making it the fastest growing industry in the country at 13% annually, with the guarding sector leading the way for the past decade (Minnaar 2007; Gumedze 2007). Hiring freezes followed by massive retrenchments and voluntary resignations of public police officers after 1994 created a vacuum that had to be filled, given extraordinary levels of violent crime and a heavily armed civilian population (Minnaar and Ngoveni 2004:42). Many former police officers then started private security ventures. By the end of 2007, the private security forces outnumbered public police 2:1.

Widespread violence in the cities and the townships, especially after 1994, contributed to insecurity and fear of crime that has driven an increase in the use of private policing solutions for wealthy and middle class neighborhoods. The number of registered private security companies in South Africa doubled in the decade from 2,200 in 1996 to 4,763 in 2006, and many experts believe there are many more operating below the radar of the regulatory agency, the Private Security Regulatory Authority (PSIRA). Most are tiny companies, employing, as one company executive quipped, "three men, two guns, and a bakkie" (Bell and Pantland quoted in Makgetla 2007). This proliferation of so many companies is impressive given how many are swallowed up in mergers and acquisitions.

Labor costs account for 70% of the average South African security company, which far outweighs other factors of production. Employers therefore have a deep interest in keeping wages low, which is conveniently facilitated by an impressive reserve army to choose from--between 2005 and 2006, security guard job applications increased by 400% (Makgetla 2007).

Lastly, the industry is characterized by “triangular” forms of employment like “labor brokering.” Twenty years ago, most security guards were employed by the company they guarded; then large security companies added a level of complexity to the employment relationship. The real test, however, has come with the advent of labor brokers, which “employ” low-skilled workers by placing them in temporary jobs with other employers. Labor broker services have prospered in the last two decades alongside a perceived need for a more flexible workforce to enhance capital accumulation. The practice has aroused considerable controversy since its inception, but especially since it was recently banned in neighboring Namibia (Temkin 2010). Unions have compared the practice, which originated in the United States, to indentured servitude and human trafficking, the workers to “modern-day slaves” (Plessis 2009).

In this environment G4S has grown into the largest employer on the African continent, employing 60,000 personnel in South Africa alone. The country is seen as an investment gateway into the rest of Africa, making it an important market for any multinational. Guateng, for example, the area of the country containing Johannesburg, has a regional economy valued at ten percent of the GDP of all of Africa. It is obvious why a company would want a stable business climate there, and equally understandable

why a union with a proclivity towards operating in global cities would also need to establish itself in Johannesburg.

This description of the historical modes of labor transnationalism and the present-day reality of the private security industry is the context into which UNI and SEIU were bringing new ideas. Shortly after the campaign began the question became not *why* to organize security guards there, but *how*. The case study that follows attempts to answer this question.

THE CASE OF SATAWU

Background: From Social Movement Unionism to Servicing Unionism

SATAWU was formed in 1998 in response to COSATU's "one industry-one union" call for affiliates to consolidate into "mega-unions," in a tumultuous merger between unions of different the federations. The union now represents workers in maritime shipping, aviation, cleaning, and security, where it is the majority union in the industry with 8% density.

SATAWU inherited a militant tradition of social movement unionism in the public sector. One of its parent unions, South African Railway and Harbour Workers Union (SARHWU), led an upsurge in public sector wildcats and slowdowns against National Party privatization schemes toward the end of 1989 that was "unmatched in South African history" (CRIC 1990). These strikes encouraged new workers to join public sector unions in droves. In a similar fashion, the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) struck against the 1991 proposed restructuring of the South African Transport Services (SATAWU Interview). SARHWU was also closely aligned with

SAMWU, who notably stood out amongst COSATU affiliates for consistently opposing COSATU's lukewarm stance against privatization (van Driel 2007). Internationally, the TGWU and SARHWU both cooperated with the International Transport Federation (ITF) during coordinated solidarity protests and boycotts during apartheid. In a short time, however, SATAWU succumbed to stagnation.

SATAWU's plan to organize the fast-growing private security industry has been remarkably unstrategic, relying primarily on its reputation as a militant union to lure individual workers from any firm. As a result of its failure to organize effectively, it has drifted inexorably toward a textbook servicing model in which it seeks to preserve its existing membership through one-on-one legal assistance and direct aid by union organizers. I'll focus briefly on the increased role of paid union staff, and the professional manner in which organizers routinely treat their members, emblematic of a shift in the overall philosophy of what it means to be a union member and union organizer. In other words, the role of trade union organizers has changed from an emphasis on mass mobilization to the juridical determination of union contracts and labor law, a shift which sees workers not as *participants* in a movement, but *recipients* of a service.

Though in 2003 SATAWU resolved to bring 100,000 members into the union each year thereafter (COSATU 2003), between 2000 and 2006 its membership instead fell by one third (COSATU 33-4), including a loss of 28,913 members alone in 2002, more than any other COSATU affiliate that year. The union attributes this falloff to the usual assortment of labor market variables, but also its "failure of providing an effective service" (COSATU 2003) Declining membership and fewer dues meant self-imposed "belt-tightening" measures, including hiring freezes, and an economic situation in which

it barely paid its primary expenses. Finally, in its resolutions to COSATU, SATAWU affirmed…"We have a good team of committed officials in the union but there is tons of room for improvement to *service workers*…Affiliates and COSATU must allocate more resources toward *servicing membership*." Increased servicing to membership has also been at the heart of COSATU's official renewal program for years, topping its list of ways to reverse declining power (NALEDI 2009). In many ways it epitomizes the transformation common to so many South African trade unions—from social movement unionism to servicing unionism, a shift that sees workers not as *participants* in a movement, but *recipients* of a service.

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Changing roles of paid union staff, a greatly enlarged role of the trade union bureaucracy, and an increased dependence on the legalese of industrial relations suggest a shift to business unionism. Many in SATAWU claim that transformations in the roles of

their officers mirror those in other unions as well. A series of interviews with organizers and representatives of other unions confirm this. For many unions in South Africa, this is where the story has recently ended. However, the campaign to win and implement a global agreement with G4S has provided a framework for SATAWU to transform itself in multiple ways.

Phase I: Campaigning for Formal Rights through an IFA

SEIU and SATAWU began collaborating in 2005 at a time when both unions needed help. SATAWU was searching for a way out of its morass and UNI needed partners for its global campaign against G4S. SATAWU had achieved some important victories in its security campaigns through mass demonstrations and protests. By 2005, it had won improvements in training regulations, a national provident fund, and a governmental determination of wage increases for security guards (UNI 2006). Membership nevertheless declined steadily, and the union was pushed toward financial insolvency.

Glenn Adler, Tom Regan and Tom Woodruff, SEIU higherups, all traveled to South Africa in early 2005 to meet with SATAWU and other COSATU unions (UNI 2008), a trip that served the dual purpose of seeking alliance partners, and a dirt-digging mission on G4S to produce fodder for the global campaign. At this stage, SEIU was focused primarily on winning recognition with Wackenhut in the US. In June 2005 SATAWU joined a delegation of other G4S workers in London at the company's annual general meeting of shareholders. The meeting served as a coming out party for the global grassroots attack on G4S. Workers distributed Alternative Annual Reports highlighting

worker abuses, racial discrimination, and other violations. One South African delegate was able to gain entry to the floor of the meeting and asked questions from the floor regarding the mistreatment of security guards in the global South (SATAWU Interview 2009). The union returned from London energized. However, after its next bargaining session collapsed amid intra-union rivalry, it found itself mired in a brutal strike.

Historical disunity among the fifteen unions in the private security industry made bargaining difficult. Dissatisfied with industry's offers, and having been undercut by fellow unions, SATAWU called an open-ended general strike in March 2006. The strike was the flashpoint of a crisis for SATAWU, one that clarified some of its failures and provided a pivotal point for renewal. About 100,000 security guards—one third of the entire industry—took to the streets across the country, waging battles with rival unions and police. As many as sixty people are reported to have died in strike-related violence, making it the bloodiest battle since 1994 (Makgetla 2007). Most were alleged scabs, thrown from trains by strikers as they were caught commuting to work from the townships. Others were stabbed, shot, or beaten to death by angry mobs. Many observers therefore worried that the security strike foreshadowed a crisis in the new-and-improved mechanisms of labor adjudication, a view later reinforced by the violent janitors' strike in late 2006 and the Metrobus strike in 2007. Overall, the strike appeared incongruent with the promise of a peaceful democratic multiracial capitalism.

Two important changes transpired after the strike ended in July 2006. First, in order to regain a semblance of order, and sustain bargaining, SATAWU had to discipline some of its own staff and rank and file activists who viewed the strike's conclusion as a capitulation. This process of internal reckoning can be seen as first step of internal

restructuring. However, union sources say the changes were not radical enough to create lasting impressions within the organization. Secondly, SATAWU learned to channel the frustration of its members into a new kind of activism. It began working more closely with UNI, which saw the sensationalism of the strike as a liability when constructing a transnational campaign with a high international profile. Later that summer, in his opening remarks during a European Works Council meeting that took place on a yacht, G4S CEO Nick Buckles claimed that UNI had indirectly murdered a security guard as a result of its funding of SATAWU (UNI Interview). The company also insinuated that UNI had assisted with lengthening the strike, which it considered a justification for temporarily suspending dialogue about a global agreement (G4S Interview 2009).

UNI felt the sensationalism of the strike was a liability when constructing a transnational campaign with a high international profile, and that it was crucial that SATAWU regain composure and clean up its public image. To do this, UNI helped SATAWU to re-direct its anger and hostility to the company in a new way, via the global campaign. After deliberation, SATAWU's daily strategy then became more closely embedded with UNI's focus against G4S. However, deep rifts soon developed about the domination of global priorities over local ones. SATAWU, for example, was steadfast in its opposition to focusing on only one company in only three strategic cities: Johannesburg, Durban and Capetown. A SATAWU staffer explains that the work with UNI was slow to warm, and that some rank and file activists were skeptical of the idea:

> It's sometimes hard to get people [members] excited about those kinds of actions [international]. Especially in the beginning. Some are easy. But some people think, 'That's over there. Why do I have to worry about over there when we got our own problems right here?'

Still, SATAWU began to aggressively target the private security industry. UNI donated almost $100,000 for one year of assistance to SATAWU with the expectation that an additional two years would be necessary to fully develop its capacity to go it alone (UNI 2006). The money funded industry research and other component resources that laid the basis of an organizing plan, and the skills development to accomplish it. UNI-sponsored workshops on organizing, member mobilization, international solidarity, and strategic research have helped build internal organization among existing members, and SATAWU has established security guard worker committees in nine new sites. This has activated a base of members who had become largely staff-dependent. Through these sessions, members have engaged in protests and meetings with G4S workers in other countries, and have occasionally assisted SATAWU organizers recruit new members.

Nonetheless, new organizing largely failed, and UNI briefly considered abandoning South Africa as a site of struggle within the global campaign. SATAWU staff cite fear of management reprisals and poor access to worksites as the primary explanations for organizing difficulties. SATAWU again traveled to G4S's shareholder meeting in London, this time joined by workers from Mozambique and Malawi. As UNI had deepened its ties to developing world unions over the previous year, the action had a different character this time. The new Alternative Annual Report focused decidedly more on human rights in the global South, especially abuses in South Africa. UNI used this document to tarnish the company's public profile within South Africa and dissuade the FIFA Congress from awarding G4S the lucrative contract to provide security at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

As described in the previous chapter, as investors began withdrawing and the OECD report came back in the union's favor, the company capitulated and the global agreement went into force in December 2008. It included access rights for SATAWU staff to G4S worksites and ostensibly restrained the company from anti-union campaigning when workers attempted to unionize. Though it provided a new platform for organizing workers, it also became a springboard for an overhaul of the union.

Phase II: Implementing the IFA and Increased Mobilization

Though SATAWU had fought to win the global agreement, and was determined to use it, the early stages of the implementation process were especially rocky. After the agreement was signed and UNI prepared for a more amicable relationship with the company, SATAWU was suddenly confronted with the prospect of collaboration, in a sense, with its historical adversary. One SATAWU organizer explained:

> Those people [G4S] called us kaffirs. Fucking guys, man. Who made us work in the rain, standing, no chairs, who we did anything for them. They're still white. It's a dangerous job and they never understand it. Then all of a sudden [after the IFA was signed] we are friends. I can tell you that people were upset. Many people were confused how this is going to work. It's not like that, I told them, but some people do not want to hear that.

G4S did redress some of SATAWU's grievances (back wages, increased contribution to the pension fund), as stipulated in the agreement. However, while UNI complied with the agreement, and removed its company-bashing website, G4S continued its longstanding anti-union bias in its corporate periphery, a posture that is out of sync with the supposedly cooperative environment of the IFA. A G4S spokesperson in Pretoria, for example, said the IFA would not benefit the company or the workers and she had no idea why it was signed in the first place. Implementation of the agreement in

South Africa often required recourse to London, where G4S's home office was called upon by UNI to discipline its South African staff. Because UNI encouraged the dispute/resolution mechanism to happen outside the local context, it was, on occasion, charged with backroom dealing by SATAWU. During a conference on union internationalism, one SATAWU delegate, who had participated in UNI's global demonstrations in support of security guards, spoke to resentment against UNI:

> There's a disconnect. They [UNI/SEIU] have their priorities and we have ours. But to work together, we have to combine them…but we answer their demands but they almost never answer ours. Because they drive the campaign. We do their actions. I think this is why there is the resentment sometimes.

Even after years of collaboration, UNI and SATAWU were out of sync, and the global agreement risked becoming a paper exercise, as so many are. "They [SATAWU] wanted a magic bullet," explained one UNI staffer. "But the agreements don't work like that. You have to put them into practice."

Nonetheless, SATAWU agreed to re-orient its strategy to meet the demands of the global campaign and to continue working alongside UNI. In particular, SATAWU made several key decisions that moved it closer to the organizing model UNI promoted. First, it began concentrating on the major metropolitan regions of Johannesburg and Durban, and pulled staff from more rural or smaller cities into central offices. Here we see the hallmark of UNI's approach that focuses on global cities. One SATAWU leader explained, "Guateng's where the largest players are. Market players. If it works here, we can use it make other places work too," says one SATAWU organizer. Secondly, member leaders within the union's ranks suddenly had a job to do, and the renewed interest in building membership helped to initiate workplace committees of pro-union guards. SATAWU organizers were trained to speak with member-activists one-on-one, and to

build a movement within worksites around the global agreement. During a COSATU conference, one SATAWU member said, “Yes, we have been talking with [other security guards] about organizing. This is new. It is a new kind [of organizing] and we are excited. It has excited others as well in our places [of work].”

Organizing moved slowly, however, and the global agreement provided little assistance, as company intransigence and resistance was still high. Morale ebbed and flowed within SATAWU, as it occasionally seemed as though the agreement was pointless. But after approximately six months, through high-level talks among corporate and union leaders, UNI successfully convinced G4S to abandon much of its anti-unionism, and to respect the agreement it signed. According to UNI, G4S management pressured its leadership in Pretoria to abide the IFA. Here we can see the impact of the global agreement strategy quite clearly.

SATAWU was granted access to G4S security guard worksites and a handful of member activists won small amounts of paid leave for dedicated union work. As it became clear that the IFA offered access and neutrality—and thus new means to organize workers—some of SATAWU’s initial skepticism of the global campaign faded. It agreed to re-orient its strategy toward building density within the three largest private security companies, and G4S in particular. This required an even greater commitment on the part of UNI to help construct an organizing program around the global agreement.

UNI staffers began more regular phone communication with SATAWU organizers, some of whom were hired specifically to work on the G4S campaign. Additionally, it held a series of trainings for leadership, staff, and member activists in South Africa. This communication opened a critical dialogue about the means to

transform SATAWU from a servicing union into an organizing union. Industrial mapping research—a strategy to identify the largest most densely populated worksites in a particular geographic area—complements of UNI and SEIU, SATAWU was able to target the largest concentrations of guards and build up its density more quickly. Said one SATAWU staffer, "It was like a science. UNI thinks of organizing like a science. I didn't see it that way, but it is. This helped greatly." Fifteen months after the agreement was signed, campaigns in Johannesburg and Durban brought an estimated 3,000 security guards into the union, the majority in G4S. Given the extraordinary size of the private security industry, these gains are modest. But it represents approximately a 40% increase in the total number of security guards that SATAWU had organized previously, and thus demonstrable growth.

Access to the premises has not only allowed easier conversations with workers. It gave the union an air of legitimacy, a "right" to be there. This has gone a long way to convincing would-be members to set aside their fear of management retaliation for union activity. After a meeting with G4S representatives, a SATAWU organizer, proudly displaying the copy of the global agreement he'd brandished at the meeting, said:

> This is my copy of the global agreement. It's like a bible, man. When management tells me to get out, I show them this. When workers are afraid to join, I show them this. When people tell me we don't have the right, I point to this. This this this. This is the key. But only if we use it right.

LABOR TRANSNATIONALISM AND LOCAL MOBILIZATION

The campaign to win the global agreement, and its subsequent implementation, provided a framework through which labor transnationalism had demonstrable impacts on local unionism. I have shown this in two ways. First, the global agreement restrained

the company's sphere of action, thus allowing SATAWU to enter G4S worksites. But in order for any organizing to take place, SATAWU struggled to re-structure its organization to accommodate an organizing ethos. Better access to workers decreased fear of management reprisals. Alongside a strategy and structure that promoted organizing the union saw dramatic membership growth. How did this happen?

Above we saw that SATAWU placed great emphasis on servicing its membership base, especially in court or labor bureau tribunals. The casual observer at a SATAWU staff meeting would probably be given the impression that union organizers in South Africa were basically amateur lawyers hired by the national union to mediate disputes between workers and bosses. Explained a SATAWU leader: "We spent a lot of time in courts. We call them courts. Who knows what they are? Defending our members, sometimes winning other times losing. It's good work, yes, but it wasn't what a union was supposed to be doing."

Union revitalization is a complex and open-ended process. A common dilemma in the literature has to do with the source and directionality of change: from above or below? While Soskice (2000) has argued in favor of a top-down approach, others, often in the social movement camp, have insisted on the necessity of change from below (Fairbrother 1996). This article sides with the middle-ground approach of Voss and Sherman (2000) and Hurd, Milkman, and Turner (2003) that understands revitalization as an interplay between leadership and the rank and file. This conclusion has particular relevance in South Africa where the historically democratic and proletarian character of unionism was driven skillfully by ordinary workers with few paid staff, lending credence

to a belief in the lower echelons as having a "historic mission" to re-invigorate social movement unionism.

Nevertheless, the account forwarded here identifies the wellspring of union change as originating *above*, and being implemented by a cohort of unionists in the *middle*, that is, the staff between union leaders and the rank and file. This activity, however, has ignited a renewed participation in union affairs within the workplace. In other words, SATAWU's transformation into a union with more member activity, more internal democracy, more shop-floor organization, and more capacity to organize workers has been driven unmistakably by paid union staff, not rank and file workers.

In SATAWU the middle strata of the union bureaucracy—the organizers, researchers, education specialists, representatives—has taken a decisive role in the revitalization process. Their campaigns have led to growth in union membership in some major cities and an increased role for rank and filers on the shop floor. They have influential access to both the membership and the leadership, and are often the route by which new ideas flow into the union, an observation consistent with Voss and Sherman's (2000) research on revitalization in the US. One organizer highlighted the positionality of middle-range staff within the union bureaucracy:

> We run this place. SATAWU places a lot of emphasis on us. A lot of trust. If you have a question about SATAWU, you will get your answer from an organizer…The leadership asks us what's going on, they make decisions according to what we tell them often…If this place is gonna change it will start with us.

But this change is coming not only from *above*, but from *outside*. Research for this project shows that SEIU has played a significant role in union revitalization throughout the world, especially the Anglo-Saxon countries, Rhineland social

democracies, and Australia (Gall 2009), though its role in the global South is relatively new. In the rich countries, SEIU has encountered resistance to what unions consider to be unnecessary levels of confrontation with management (UNI Interview). In Johannesburg, it has met nearly the opposite, accused of "spreading business unionism" (COSATU Interview) and developing client unions that can do its bidding around the world, a biting appraisal that draws strength from the legacy of US labor imperialism in Africa (Southall 1995).

Critics claim that if the project in South Africa is successful, SATAWU will be stamped with the unmistakable imprimatur of an SEIU local. The rich experience South Africans have with international labor cooperation both prepared and admonished them from partnering with unions in the global North. After five years of collaboration, however, it appears UNI and SATAWU have forged an interdependent international relationship that is in fact more symbiotic than previous examples during apartheid, many of which were one-way-streets. As mentioned briefly above, the international solidarity of unions during the anti-apartheid struggle came largely in the form financial support (Southall 1996).

An open question in this case is the sustainability of the reforms and the continued potential of organizing. The roles of organizers, representatives and leadership changed throughout this campaign. Organizers have played a larger role in driving strategy than before, and leadership has re-directed resources toward new organizing. Part of the rationale for better internal organization has been to train shop stewards to continue some of the necessary servicing functions. In other words, an effort has been made to accommodate a new *modus operandi* at the institutional/organizational level. But how do

we know if these changes are cosmetic or sustainable? Behrens, Hurd, and Waddington (2004) develop a framework to assess union restructuring. They find that lasting examples of revitalization involve internal change that is motivated by environmental factors and a perceived new mission, both of which inform SATAWU's transformation. However, many credit then-president Randal Howard for implementing such radical changes, who has recently departed to take a political appointment within the ANC, causing some concern within UNI about the effect of the power transfer.

CONCLUSION

This case study shows that complex global and local processes contributed to SATAWU's ability to organize locally. At the global level, a campaign was able to secure fundamental rights for G4S security guards around the world. In South Africa, SATAWU combined this victory with increased mobilization at the grassroots. New organizing victories were won through a combination of increasing the formal rights of workers and rank and file mobilization. This chapter then has two related findings. The first is that labor transnationalism can inspire local union renewal. The second is that the consolidation of formal rights—through the global agreement—is a necessary yet insufficient component of a renewal strategy. A local campaign is equally crucial. Based upon the outcomes of the campaign to implement the IFA in Johannesburg I conclude that the global agreement had "mobilization-type" impacts.

South African unions have moved through a series of different modes of transnational activity, as described in the introductory parts of the chapter. But this case study deals with an example of what I have called institutional transnationalism, as the

GUFs, formal bureaucratized unions, and management play dominant roles, not political parties or community-based unions.

It is possible that the historically social movement character of South African unionism made the transition to organizing unionism far easier—or "natural"—than in other places, including in India, as we will see in the next chapter. But we can say with much confidence that the decisive factor here was the impact of the global agreement that contained management's anti-unionism and promoted the ability to organize. In this sense the global agreement helped to carve out a space, a sphere of action, in which SATAWU could do what UNI was training it to do.

Although others looking at the South African context have argued that global campaigns have undermined the ability of workers to mobilize and/or bargain on their own behalf, this chapter suggests otherwise. And in fact, I think we should expect transnational collaboration to empower local voices and contribute to new strategies. Afterall, it was an influx of activists and ideas—many from the South African anti-apartheid movements—that spurred the wave of union revitalization in the US in the early 1990s (Brecher and Costello; Tait 2008).

The case of SATAWU demonstrates that the negative assessment of global agreements, raised in chapters 2 and 3, may be premature. This study illustrates that the formal rights secured in the IFA promoted the ability of SATAWU to organize more workers by restraining the company from campaigning against the union. Lastly, a Southern perspective on revitalization has yet to develop, though it will likely contribute a new theoretical perspective to these debates. South African unions are younger than their Northern counterparts, and less intimately familiar with the "oligarchic tendencies"

that inspired debates on union revitalization in the North (Webster and Buhlungu 2004). They suggest that distinctive experiences of colonialism and imperialism, as well as recent transformations in the South associated with neoliberalism, will animate different forms of revitalization that differ from those in the North.

But we should be careful not to see "the South" as a unified space. As we will see in the next chapter, Indian unions did not follow the path made by SATAWU, but instead chose different routes based on different configurations of unionism, management behavior, industrial contexts, and state intervention. It is to another variety of transnational collaboration that we now turn.

CHAPTER FIVE:

ORGANIZING THE "UNORGANIZED": SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND TRANSNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN TWO INDIAN CITIES

In the previous chapter we explained the implementation of the global agreement in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the outcomes of transnational collaboration there. This chapter proposes the same basic structure, focusing mainly on two major Indian cities: Delhi, Bangalore, and Kolkata. Of note is that the local constraints and opportunities presented UNI with unique challenges here, leading to different outcomes than in South Africa, and even varied outcomes within the country. Indian unions were less successful at using the global agreement as an organizing tool. However, it provided the basis for an important social dialogue process to develop, leading to large-scale political reforms of the private security industry nationally. Therefore, we can say that the global agreement had "legislative-type" impacts here. I also find that the unions' divergent approaches in each city are based on (1) global-local union relationships; (2) legacies of state patronage and (3) legacies of labor internationalism and union imperialism. I also inquire into the possibility for union revitalization, but conclude that the unions are indicative of the larger picture within India. That is, despite recent efforts to change union conduct, and slight possibilities emerging from structural changes, there is still much to do before unions can reverse membership declines and substantially transform their organizations.

To understand the interaction between global campaigns and different local union struggles, I conduct a comparative study of union organizing in the private security industry of three major Indian cities, Bangalore and Kolkata. I compare the divergent

experiences of two unions, affiliated with different political parties, as they cooperate with UNI to implement the global agreement and, in the process, transform their organizations. In both parts I draw on approximately fifty in-depth interviews with unionists, employers, and security guards, as well as union documents and observation of meetings between August 2009 and July 2010.

This chapter is divided in three parts. First, I briefly outline the contours of Indian labor relations and trade union development, including the relationship of both to the fast-growing private security industry. Secondly, I provide an ethnographic narrative of my comparative case study. Finally, I discuss the significance of transnational collaboration for each union in two cities—Bangalore and Kolkata—and its implications for understanding prospects for global unionism to impact local struggles.

DYNAMICS OF INDIAN UNIONISM

Some have suggested that union transnationalism is an unlikely phenomenon in India, based on the premise that the exceptional nature of Indian industrial relations makes it fundamentally incompatible with other varieties of unionism, thereby warding against successful cross-national cooperation (Kuruvilla et al., 2002). Indeed, the practice international unionism is largely absent in Indian labor historiography, except for colonial-era union imperialism emanating from the UK (Busch 1983). Moreover, today India is not integrated into systems of regional trade union organization and has remained steadfast in its commitments against global trade-labor linkages.[25] The current instance of

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[25] Regional organization has been centrally important to European internationalism. The prospect of transnational collective bargaining that captured the imagination of a handful of European trade unionists did not materialize into much in practice, but did provide an ideological foundation and a political will for the creation of the European Trade Union Council, which has been influential in

transnational collaboration demonstrates that Indian and North American unions were able to overcome the unique aspects of their own national systems.

Labor in Post-Colonial India

Circumstances for Indian workers today are not circumscribed by colonialism, but they owe much to the legacy of industrial relations that was born prior to independence. When labor was relatively strong and committed to mobilization-based strategies, employment protection and income stability were guaranteed to workers in public works projects through the Industrial Disputes Act and the Factories Act, both of which survive today. Moreover, for six decades, excepting the two-year interlude (1975-1977) of Indira Gandhi's Emergency,[26] workers enjoyed a panoply of formal democratic rights. The political system therefore ensured worker protections despite low densities and an erratic commitment to organizing, inscribing a deep dependency and loyalty of trade unions on particular political parties, a persistent phenomenon today. Nevertheless, despite high levels of institutional support, the Indian labor movement remains paradoxically enfeebled.

Leading up to independence, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) and the breakaway federation, Indian Federation of Labour (IFL), exercised considerable

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social policy circles. It also helped develop the European Works Councils, and with them a higher level of regional activity, even if it has yet to bring a unified European movement to fruition (Marginson and Sisson 1996). Likewise, in Latin America, MERCOSUR—now the fourth largest trading bloc in the world, at $1,000 billion per year—stands as an exciting example of the growing regionalism of Latin American politics in general and trade unionism in particular (Seidman 2008). Brazil's leading role in the federation also gave labor a significant voice as an oppositional force to the US-led campaign to extend NAFTA all the way to Patagonia via the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

[26] Citing threats of violence after the recently-concluded war with Pakistan, Indira Ghandi declared a state of emergency amid widespread political upheaval related to allegations of election fraud. Trade unionists, strike leaders, and socialists were arrested en masse.

autonomy from Congress. The Communist Party's influence expanded during WWI, which induced the AITUC to affiliate, thus further splitting control of the unions from Congress. At the same time, the INC courted business interests and allied itself with an inchoate Indian upper class (Chibber 2007). Meanwhile, although working conditions worsened during the war, the unions emerged more separated than ever from party control, and more committed to militancy, initiating wide strikes in all basic industries. The immediate post-war upsurge was embodied in more than a four-fold increase in man-days lost through work stoppages—from 4 million in 1945 to 17.8 million in 1947 (Ibid 2007). For a new independent government committed to capitalist development, unending work stoppages presented a significant barrier to the hoped-for levels of capital accumulation.

This "crisis" for the state meant a new approach to labor discipline. What form would it take? Some in the labor movement floated the idea of an institutionalization of class conflict through a corporatist arrangement in a four-day event called the industrial Truce Conference in 1947. Though its call for works councils and codetermination differed from early South African proposals for class compromise in its marked lack of an explicitly socialist agenda, Chibber (2007) calls it "perhaps the most advanced expression ever seen in the developing world for a social democratic 'developmental state.'"

However, the right-leaning tendency within Congress, allied with Nehru, had another vision in mind. Labor's rights would be protected, but its independence restricted. In this vision, the labor unions became a junior partner to the state in its

compromise with business interests. In order to accomplish the partnering of labor to the parties, Congress did two things.

First, it legislated reforms that positioned industrial welfare in the hands of the state. The 1947 Industrial Disputes Act formed and remains the centerpiece of Indian legislation to determine outcomes of labor/management conflict. Specifically, it curtailed the right to strike and stipulated mandatory arbitration without compelling employers to bargain in good faith or deliver a timely verdict. This took the wind out of collective bargaining. It also allowed for the immediate intervention by the state in an industrial emergency, such as a strike, which effectively extended compulsory arbitration to any sector of the economy. In exchange, labor was rewarded with nominal protections to working conditions, wage and hour issues, safety, grievance procedures, etc.

Secondly, against the backdrop of increasing employer unity, the INC divided the labor movement by establishing its own union federation, the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), thereby tethering labor's future firmly to the success of the state and the advancement of workers' interests to prerogatives of the party. Fashioned as a ward of the state, the vision of the new federation was twofold. Primarily, it committed unions to labor peace and forced them to relinquish control of the workplace to a state committed to growth through unrestricted capital accumulation. Moreover, as INTUC membership soared through state patronage and support, it served as a firm base of loyal support that could populate rallies and vote Congress in newly-democratic elections.

The incorporation of organized labor into the political apparatus meant that labor policy quickly became interwoven with national planning schemes, the main objective of which was to jumpstart industrial investment. The unions soon realized that the last of

their hopes were dashed as the minimum wage laws, among the few concessions to labor in the IDA, were sidelined for *over a decade*, and then only sporadically implemented. As Jha (2007) explains:

> It was a phase when the paternalistic state not only accommodated but appeared to be encouraging unions…wage boards were set up and in terms of the overall management of the industrial relations system tripartism (rather than collective bargaining and bipartism became the norm in a context of centralized bargaining structure (Jha 2007)

There was a remarkable proliferation of unions after independence. Between 1951 and 1962 the absolute number of active unions soared from 4,623 to 11,614, almost a threefold increase. Fragmentation increased in the mid 1960s alongside a slumping industrialization process and an overall economic slowdown. As the Communist Party split to form Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of Indian (Marxist) (CPIM), the AITUC was also splintered in the process. One side formed the Center for Indian Trade Unions (CITU) in 1970, which began to gain the support of a solid base, especially in the western states.

In the 1970s, as the unions continued to grow in number and divide along a variety of axes (some ideological, political, religious, etc) they became weaker as well. Many of the newer "independent" unions developed plant-specific bargaining relations, a practice that caught on and gradually eroded the centralized industrial bargaining system. The advent of decentralized bargaining encouraged the organization of even more localized unions, often unaffiliated to national federations. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the state began retreating from the promises of "Nehruvian socialism" amid widespread restructuring of the global political economy (Frankel 2005). The addition of the Contract Labor Act to India's myriad legislative statutes introduced employment

flexibility to the Indian industrial relations landscape (Hill 2009). These developments undermined union densities, and set the stage for further liberalization policies in the early nineties (Das 2000).

From Dirigisme to Neoliberalism

Many regard the July 1991 announcement of the New Economic Policy as a decisive moment in Indian history, a hallmark of the transition to neoliberalism from state planning.

Kuruvilla and Erickson (1999) argue that the central tendency of Indian industrial relations has been transformed since the early 1990s from an authoritarian logic of maintaining labor peace to a logic promoting labor flexibility. Though it is popular to stress the legacy of dirigisme as anathema today, quite a bit changed after liberalization, with great implications for unions and workers (Venkataratnam 1993). The new policies ended the system of licensing procedures in manufacturing (the “license permit raj”), liberalized capital markets and terms of entry for foreign investment, and increased development of export processing zones (Hensman 2010; Balasubramanyam and Mahambare 2001), which had the cumulative effect of generating new inter-state rivalries for investment, precipitating a race to the bottom of labor standards inside the country and increased work-seeking migration (Bhattacherjee 2001). The last fifteen years of reforms demonstrate a disjuncture between the perceived nature of Indian labor law as rigid, and it’s actual flexibility (Sharma 2006). Moreover, beneath India’s economic boom, the delinking of growth and employment, combined with declining unionization, has resulted in fewer prospects for upward mobility for the majority of people.

Collectively, these changes have expanded the challenges facing Indian trade unions. Though common to many developing countries (Kuruvilla et al. 2002), they are compounded in India by an institutional framework mitigating labor-capital relations that has served to amplify labor's structural deficits rather than abridge them (Chibber 2005). A primary obstacle is the growing number of precarious workers. Against the predictions of development theory, growth has not been labor-absorbing. Rather, liberalization actually promoted employment flexibility so much so that today the vast majority of Indian workers are located in the "unorganized" or informal sector.[27] Many enterprises straddle the divide between the two categories, as formal sector businesses—mostly manufacturing, but increasingly technology industries—have informalized their workplaces through subcontracting to avoid labor regulations, deter unions, and maintain greater labor discipline. Breman (1976) has argued that the notion of a dualistic system is misleading and makes little analytic sense. The data show definitively that formal sector workers lost jobs not to mechanization but to contract laborers (Sen Gupta and Sett 2000).

However, unanimous political support for liberalization encouraged a slight but noticeable rupture between unions and their political parties, which many in the labor movement regard as a positive development. Despite reports of declining membership, Uba (2008) finds an increase in union action during the liberalization period. These

[27] The terms organized and unorganized are the official titles given to the formal and informal sectors of the economy, respectively. The organized, or formal, sector, is the tiny fraction of the economy composed primarily of state-owned industrial enterprises. These are old businesses, often with deep connections to particular parties, and almost all union activity happens within this sphere. The unorganized, or informal sector, refers to the world of work characterized by part time, temporary, subcontracted, and nontraditional employment that includes the overwhelming majority of Indian people. Private security guards, such as those employed by G4S, fall within this sector because their conditions of work and quality of life are so inherently precarious.

protests, largely described as blowback against the wide support by the state, parties and employers for neoliberal policy, took the form of strikes, mass marches, walkouts, traffic blockades, and hunger strikes. Though these actions did not succeed in blocking liberalization schemes, they did slow the process considerably (Candland 1998), and grew public sentiment against it: public opinion against privatization increased from 34% in 1996 to 48% by 2004 (Yadav 2004). During the heart of the market-based reforms, Indian unions also won groundbreaking legislation to benefit poor families through a massive public works program known as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (Bhowmik 2009).

Therefore, though a central part of the equation, neoliberal developments do not explain the totality of labor's weakness in India. The weakness of labor in India was in no way preordained by structural constraints, but rather owes much to the strategic choices of labor unions themselves. Historically, as Chibber (2009) describes in great detail, the class compromises made in the wake of independence, and again in the 1980s, helped to determine labor's subordination to the political parties today. Today, it is also important to contrast the discourse of labor flexibility and informality with the extreme structuring of work relations along a matrix of non-class identities: caste, gender, religion, language and age. These socio-cultural institutions are still strong determinates of what people do and the conditions under which they do it, and give rise to the political formations which inhibit class formation. As Barbara Harriss-White and Nandini Gooptu (2001) argue:

> If class is first a struggle over class and second a struggle between classes, we can say the overwhelming majority of the Indian workforce is still kept engaged in the first struggle, while capital, even though stratified and fractured, is engaged in the second (2001: 236)

These dynamics bring us even further to an understanding of the massive fissures among workers in India, and the subsequent impact it has on unified working-class mobilization. Today, while numbers vary, approximately 2% of the Indian workforce of 47 million belongs to a trade union--90% of which is concentrated in the public sector--spread over five major union federations, each controlled by a political party. Therefore the Indian labor market is constituted primarily by the expanding unorganized sector—now at about 94% of workers—and a tiny formal sector that exists as a protected oasis, surrounded on all sides by the mass of humanity that is India. The tiny minority status of union membership in India has given rise to the prevailing conception of union workers as members of an elite club who are unwilling to share their privilege with others.

As firm-level unions proliferated independent of affiliation to national federations in the 1980s, unions multiplied quickly (RoyChowdhury 2003: 39). There are about 66,000 registered trade unions today, though some estimate the actual number might be as high as 100,000, organized along myriad axes. In this scenario, inter-union competition has fiercely guarded against solidarity.[28] The Rudolphs have referred to the Indian situation as "involuted pluralism" to describe the ironic multiplication and simultaneous weakening of interest groups.

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[28] Since 1989 the Ministry of Labour and Employment has abandoned its former role as the official verifier of union statistics. As a result, union density numbers are considered unreliable and skewed in multiple directions. First, perhaps only half of registered trade unions actually report membership data annually to the government, which could mean there are potentially many more unions and union members than are reported by existing statistics. But it is also widely acknowledged that most unions report inflated figures as a form of boasting and to appease the bosses of its respective political party. This, in contrast, would tend to overstate membership data. This is further complicated by a poor accounting system at most unions. However, unions in the informal sector face an even greater challenge to membership documentation, which is related to the transient and precarious nature of the workforce. Both CITU and the PSGU, unions interviewed for this project, report being generally confused with who is and is not a member of their union when workers switch jobs often, and are employed on short term contracts. "Often we end up re-organizing the same people over and over again. I don't know if these count or not," said one PSGU organizer.

Even within this context of weakness and extreme labor pluralism, however, there are positive developments as well. First, we see a slow ebb toward independent unionism outside the sphere of party control, especially embodied by the creation of the National Centre for Labor (Mohanty 2009) and the New Trade Union Initiative, an umbrella organization of this new movement (Davala 1996; RoyChowdhury 2003; Bhattacherjee and Azcarate 2006). The Self Employed Women's Association, a union-type formation rising from Gugarati garment unions, has since the early 1970s been a voice in the wilderness within India, though has recently been joined by other informal sector movements (Gallin 2001). Agarwala (2006, 2008) explains that the strategies of bidi makers and construction workers have changed as their industries have become increasingly informalized. Where once these groups targeted employers and aimed for worker rights, they now make demands on the state and demand welfare benefits instead. However, whereas in Agarwala's studies this is due to the plethora of tiny employers that characterize the informal sector, that are unable to really bargain with their employees, in this case it results from the company's power to resist bargaining and demand the state intervene. The present case study, of low-wage security guards, is also located among informal sector workers. These trends have led some to assert that Indian trade unions are in the midst of a wide-scale revitalization process (Guptu 2005). While these examples highlight an important degree of restructuring, it is premature to announce the arrival of a new phase of unionism.

This brief discussion helps us situate the case study within the context of a historically weak and fragmented trade union movement and amid some experimentation for renewal led by informal sector worker organizations.

THE INDUSTRIAL CONTEXT OF PRIVATE SECURITY

The expansion of the private security industry in India has paralleled the transition to free market capitalism detailed above, but it has also exceeded typical service sector growth. Today, private guards outnumber public police about 3:1 (CAPSI Interview). The service sector inflated in the 1980s, and further accelerated in the 1990s, averaging 7.5 percent per year, supporting industry and agriculture, which grew on average by 5.8 percent and 3.1 percent respectively (IMF 2004).[29] The most famous dimension of the growth in services has been in software and IT-enabled services (ITES), although growth in services in India has been much more broad-based than just IT.

Private security and facilities services are located at the intersection of many growth industries in India (Goldman 2011). G4S offers clients a variety of usual services for a security company: guarding, cash transit, technology-based security (cameras, radio, etc), executive protection, armed guarding, and automobile fleet tracking. However, it has expanded its services in 2010. It now produces garments for both Indian and British uniformed personnel, and has specially designed security solutions for the IT and IT-enabled sector. It has also started a division called FirstSelect, which links corporate clients and potential employees. Its "facilities management" department bills itself as a

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[29] Though India was relatively reluctant to liberalize, or was thwarted by unions and other pressure groups, its service sector expanded comparatively quickly. Rapid growth of the services sector is not unique to India. According to the World Bank (2002), most research suggests two phases of service-sector development in poor countries. In the first, industry and services shares increase as countries move from low income to lower middle income status. In the second phase, the share of industry declines and that of services increases as the economy is elevated to upper middle and higher income levels. India follows this pattern well into the 1980s and begins to grow at a faster rate after liberalization in 1991, compared to other low-income countries (Acharya 2003).

"one-stop-shop" for a variety of solutions that essentially give G4S a monopoly at worksites that require multiple service inputs.

G4S employees 150,000 people, making it by far the market leader, and also the largest transnational employer in the country, with over double the number of employees as the next largest competitor, TopsGroup. Over the 20 years that G4S and its parent companies have operated in India, it has "created a new job" every 80 minutes, or 32 per day for two decades. Since it has grown fast by mergers and acquisitions, most of these jobs aren't "new." However, they are impressive figures nonetheless. According to Business Standard, G4S will increase the number of employees it has in India by 20% in the next year, bucking the trend of hiring freezes and layoffs during the global recession.

Because of this expansive growth, G4S credits itself with nothing less than inventing the Indian security industry. The narrative goes that fifteen years ago, a security guard in India was a "guy in a dirty lungi holding a big stick" (G4S interview). G4S, as the largest Indian security company by far, has helped to foster the growth of an industry that earlier was an afterthought, nurtured by the rapid growth of the IT sector in a few large cities—Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Mysore. Since the 2009 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, and continued tension in Kashmir, the rationale for private security has also increased as the military has been stretched increasingly thin. Filling these more serious security voids has been made possible in light of G4S's 2006 acquisition of Armor group, a private military contractor with operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and India-controlled Kashmir.

G4S claims to be the most densely unionized security company in the world, with over 200 "union agreements" in force. To this it has added the global agreement with

UNI. In the Asia-Pacific region, about 20% of its operations are unionized, roughly equivalent to the level in North America.

Nevertheless, G4S security guards in India still live in brutal poverty, and guards regularly report illegally low wages, withheld contributions to pensions, and unfair treatment at work, all of which was included in a complaint filed by UNI through the UK contact point for the OECD (see Chapter Three). The job is characterized by part-time, precarious employment in the informal sector. In 2008, the number of "whistleblower" incidents, where employees inform the company about unfair treatment at work, ostensibly for the company to rectify, increased about threefold from 2007 (G4S 2010).

This introductory section outlines the context for the chapter's case study: the transnational collaboration of UNI and local Indian unions to first win and then implement the global agreement to guarantee worker rights and improve standards for low-wage security guards. In the first phase, Indian workers join the larger movement of unions around the world to secure the global agreement. In the second phase, unions in Bangalore and Kolkata implement the agreement in different ways, and in so doing try to restructure their organizations.

CASE STUDY

Phase I

During a 2008 meeting UNI conference held at SEIU headquarters in New York City, a UNI staff person, speaking about the global campaign against G4S, said, "We thought, 'If we can do this in New York, New Jersey, New Mexico, even New South

Wales, we can do it in New Delhi.' But we were wrong. It turned out that we couldn't do it in any of those places without doing it in New Delhi first.'"

This quote tells us that UNI originally thought the global agreement would have universal applicability. In many ways they thought and hoped it would function close to how it did in Johannesburg. But local constraints presented obstacles that forced a different kind of campaign to happen here. Because India is the G4S's largest market, and collaborative work among the unions was facilitated by a common English language ability, it became a critical component of a multi-pronged pressure strategy during the global campaign.

SEIU leaders visited India in 2005 in search of partner unions in the private security industry. The labor movement's historical disunity—on the basis of political party affiliation, caste, geography, and religion (described above)—meant it was necessary to first create a new organization of the warring factions. By 2007, after completing a tour of the country's seven largest labor federations, it settled on the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), affiliated to Congress, and the Communist-controlled Center of Indian Trade Unions (CITU). Historically, INTUC unions were successful at building density in the large public sector enterprises in Karnataka, whereas CITU's strength had always been concentrated in West Bengal.

The resulting organization, the Indian Security Workers Organizing Initiative (ISWOI), is perhaps the first organization of its kind in India, as it bridges deep political divides. ISWOI is comprised of a ten-person governing council, consisting of UNI staff and representatives of the federations and their affiliates in the security industry. Its quarterly meetings often include management representatives as well. This deliberative

body is chaired by an SEIU staffer in the US, and coordinated by an India-based UNI staffer, and makes all the decisions concerning the strategy of the campaign.

By late 2007 UNI had also established three offices in India to coordinate a variety of campaigns throughout the country called Union Development and Organizing Centers (UNIDOC). The private security campaign was notable among these for focusing exclusively on workers within the vast informal sector. To put a spotlight on these invisible workers, UNI exploited the dubious claim of the country as a large democracy with a growing economy in its report, "Inequality Beneath India's Economic Boom." The document demonstrates that G4S guards receive poverty wages often below the legal minimum, work long hours without overtime pay, have no job security, and are denied the right to organize independent unions. UNI also hired legal experts from Columbia Law School to produce similarly damning profiles and case studies of the company that framed the debate in terms of political and human rights.

ISWOI began to play a larger role in the global effort, by applying pressure locally to G4S. First, local unions engaged G4S management in a number of legislative battles, kick-starting a process to re-interpret the confusing array of labor laws. In June 2007, ISWOI unions also participated in global demonstrations involving dozens of security guard unions around the globe. When the company refused to act favorably, security guard unions pressured the organizing committee of the 2010 Commonwealth Games, the $1.6 billion multi sport event held in India, to deny the lucrative security contract to G4S, based on its poor human rights track record, causing an uproar within the country's business community. These actions publicly shamed the company and

threatened profit margins in its largest market, raising a questionable profile of the company to European investors.

In December 2008, after five years of battling unionization, the company capitulated, claiming it was "a matter of time." By contrast, UNI is certain its corporate campaign had the intended effect. An Indian G4S manager shrugged his shoulders when asked why his company settled with the union. "It's not my job to ask those questions," he says. "The decision was not ours." The agreement covers 150,000 G4S employees in India.

Phase II

After the successful negotiation of the global agreement, among the first organizational decisions was to determine the scope of practice for each union in ISWOI, as it became clear that the historical divides were actually too large to bridge. It was then decided that INTUC would have sole organizing rights over G4S workers in Bangalore and Kochi, whereas CITU would operate in Kolkata and New Delhi. The strict division of labor has been an essential aspect of the campaign strategy. During the past two years, however, jurisdictional battles nonetheless broke out between the two unions in Mysore, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Pondicherry, and New Delhi.[30]

Both INTUC and CITU began their collaboration with UNI in 2007, when ISWOI was formally adopted as the campaign's strategic framework, but its work increased after the global agreement was signed, as it offered an initial promise of worksite access and employer neutrality. UNI organizers, transplanted full-time to India, mentored local

[30] Based on multiple interviews with different unionists in India at UNIDOC, PSGU, ISWOI, etc

unionists in Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata and Kochi on the ins and outs North American organizing unionism—strategic mapping, one-on-one conversations with workers, data collection, and an explicit focus on the market-dominant company. However, despite a common cause and a shared organization, the unions have taken markedly different approaches to implementing and defending the global agreement. We can examine the differences as they play out in Bangalore and Kolkata.

Bangalore

In Bangalore, UNI worked with the Private Security Guards Union (PSGU), an INTUC affiliate aligned with the Congress party. In late 1980s, twin brothers Muthappa and Muddappa, formed the first garment workers' union in the state. By 2005, security guards at union garment factories began clamoring for unionization as well, which became the inspiration for the PSGU. Muthappa has played a critical role in the construction of ISWOI and is probably the most committed Indian unionist within its ranks. Although politically he's a socialist, he prefers the union politics of the Congress party to the CPIM unions.

In 2007, as per UNI's suggestion, the PSGU committed itself to building density primarily within G4S. At 4,300 members, the union has roughly tripled in size since it began working with UNI.[31] UNI paid for another PSGU staffer to work in Bangalore to help motivate G4S workers to join the union. All in all, despite what are apparently high membership gains, organizing has been difficult. The company has intensified its retaliation against organizers and member activists, taking violent action occasionally.

[31] The statistics are difficult to verify, as the union does not record regular membership data.

On-site violence, related to union politics, has become more common as well, as the organizing environment has created divides among guards (G4S Guard Interviews 2009).

However, though still nascent, and frustrated by management's stance, this activity has produced important results for security guards statewide. Union pressure has obliged G4S to offer appointment letters to new hires, detailing the terms of the employment relationship, disregarding the practice of using labor brokers and other third party entities to hire guards. The company has also begun to pay statutory benefits such as minimum wages, more regular contributions to workers' pensions, overtime pay, and bonuses to workers of a certain seniority, finally bringing the company into compliance with national laws, the Contract Labour Law in particular. Because these gains apply to workers company-wide, not only to G4S union members, these increases will effectively double the salary value of 150,000 informal sector workers, who currently earn approximately two hundred rupees per day, about four US dollars. Finally, thousands of identity cards have been issued to union members, which affords them an opportunity to open a bank account or receive a loan, a gain which has been vital to other organizing efforts of informal workers (Agarwala 2006).

Historically, the union had built membership through mass recruitment meetings, often targeting politically radical workers. It began to shift its recruitment process under the influence of UNI to focus on one-on-one meetings with guards at worksites and homes. The absorption of an organizing orientation is deep and obvious. Leaders there credit UNI and their organizers with disseminating a new way of building the union, one which they are eager to extend to their own work. During several meetings with worker activists, there were lively debates on the value of mapping and how best to carry it out.

During one such meeting, the members protested the schedule of mapping times suggested by the UNI organizer and successfully lobbied for different days, which they felt would have a better chance of making contact with workers on the job.

Another explains that the primary way for workers to join the PSGU was to attend mass meetings, whereby the leaders extolled the virtues of union membership, and then passed out some cards to sign. The meetings were advertised by militant workers or the staff themselves by handing out leaflets or simply telling workers as they left the jobsite. "Now, it's [organizing] a science. We have a plan of action. We have strategy. That is something new. It is a good thing," says Satyamurthi, a PSGU organizer.

The PSGU has also incorporated the global agreement into its organizing mantra, and has translated it into regional languages such as Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, and Telugu. In October 2009, at a meeting in a slum on the outskirts of Bangalore, PSGU organizers spoke with security guards about the global campaign and the systematic way in which they were carrying out an organizing plan. The meeting took place in a building which houses about one hundred workers. It is a common landing pad for new migrants from Assam, Orissa, Bihar, and Andrah Pradesh, poorer states from which many security guards in Karnataka immigrate. At first workers were hesitant, and conversation in Hindi and Kannada was stilted. After an older worker who was already a union member spoke up in Tamil, twelve others signed cards.

The company has yet to recognize the union, has been delaying discussions over economic issues for years, and has carried out a public assault on union leaders. Reports by guards of physical and emotional abuse are common, with one union activist claiming he was pushed to attempt suicide as a result of company harassment. G4S has in fact

initiated contact with rival unions, as an anti-ISWOI strategy. In this environment, the global agreement has been completely ineffective at bringing the company to a union-neutral stance, which has led some in the union, including ISWOI council members, to conclude that the global agreement is a "waste of paper that we cannot afford."

Because the global agreement technically restricts the union from industrial action or certain forms of public protest—unauthorized strikes, wildcats, pickets—the PSGU has generally relied on ISWOI council meetings to voice its concerns with high-ranking G4S management. In June 2010, however, its union leaders swore not to attend another ISWOI meeting for the purposes of discussing the global agreement with G4S, citing the company's massive intransigence, sentiments shared by local INTUC and Congress Party leaders as well.

Speaking to the frustration of local unionists, a UNI staffer in Geneva says:

> We have an issue of expectations," says one UNI staffer. "They [Indian unionists] thought that this thing {the global agreement] would solve all our problems. That the company would react. Well, it has actually. It hs, but not the way they'd like. We need to show them that this can work. Patience is not easy to come by here though.

As of June 2010, after months of mapping and member-organizer trainings, staff were planning a three month "blitz" organizing program that they hope will yet again triple existing membership in G4S alone.

Kolkata

In Kolkata, CITU has taken a decidedly different approach to implementing the global agreement. CITU's membership in its security guard union hovers around 15,000, more than the membership of the other ISWOI unions combined. It has been organizing

security workers for fifteen years, longer than any of the other ISWOI unions. Approximately one third have joined since the global agreement was signed in 2008. However, CITU has not focused its campaigns on G4S workers to any great degree, choosing to build membership within any company with willing workers.

CITU has, for the better part of three decades, relied on its deep connection to the Communist-led Left Front government to secure wage gains and provide a favorable terrain for union activity. Its collaboration with UNI has not been deep, and it has generally resisted the adoption of new strategies to grow. Instead, it has continued to rely on its function as a labor broker, connecting unemployed workers with temporary jobs in informal industries like security, contract cleaning, domestic work, and other odd jobs. It has amended this strategy, however, by adding a postscript to its usual message: "We tell them [security guards] the company wants us to be in unions, that is the strongest message of why the company signed the global agreement in the first place. Then they will join."

After three decades of central planning, the Left Front government maintains decent relationships with large employers that allows a degree of cooperation with CITU. Though this is not its stated modus operandi, it became clear during a meeting with security guards, during which many of them claimed to support the union because it found them work in an otherwise jobless economy. The union does this on a rotating basis to ensure fairness, and to secure the loyalty of as many workers as possible. Workers sign a union card and take a number, and eventually CITU connects him or her with a job.

The global agreement has not been incorporated into the union's organizing

strategy, and there is no real interest in what UNI calls the organizing model. Explains a CITU organizer:

> We have our way. We don't go and pretend to be from somewhere else and ask to fill in this survey and ask all these questions and then come back days later and say, 'Oh, hi, I am from the union, from CITU.' No. we go there and we tell the people we are the union. We tell them to join, to be united and strong. That's the way we do it. We have always done it this way.

He raises two important points that pertain to the implementation of the organizing model. The first touches on the issue of how unions approach nonunion workers, the second on data collection. Many North American labor organizers understand a union organizing drive as having distinct phases; first secreted and underground, and then public. For the security unions in India, the idea of beginning covertly was new and, at first, disconcerting. Though the PSGU came to see the value of this step with time, CITU has remained skeptical.

Secondly, however, CITU has slowly come to appreciate the value of detailed record keeping and data collection. It may seem like a trivial task, but in practice it was not easy to adopt.

He explains:

> It was strange to us and strange to them [workers]. Why do we want to know where they live? Why do we want to know how many children they have? If they are married, if they have a vehicle, if they have other jobs. What business is that of ours?

None of the unions have anything resembling a dedicated research department, and the organizers, many of whom come out of the rank and file, have no experience interviewing strangers about their lives. It would be naive to consider detailed data collection an obvious part of union organizing, or to assume that it is an easy task to take up. In India, the information and statistics deficit within the trade union movement is

evident on a grand scale when one endeavors to search for reliable data from the government. However, gradually the practice of record keeping has become part of the organizing mantra, and all the unions claim have benefited from UNI insisting that there be more information at its disposal. Says a UNI organizer in India, "I counted every single damn union card that came into that office. I know how many people are there. They know. They didn't like it, But now they know."

A CITU organizer agrees. "Before, we knew we had workers," says Pijush, in Kolkata. "Now, we know who they are. It's better that way."

However, except for a reluctant acceptance of record keeping, the union has largely ignored the advice of UNI on issues of strategy. However, when its local discussions with management occasionally break down, CITU has sought help up the chain of command, relying on UNI's global social dialogue process and the company's works council to intervene, neither of which has proved effective. Other times it has used protest at worksites, strikes, and hunger strikes to draw attention to the poor conditions under which security guards labor.

While UNI organizers were generally welcomed in Bangalore, unionists in Kolkata were far more hostile to the idea of outsiders. After four years of UNI's presence in India, interviews for this project suggest that none of UNI's staff have fared well with CITU leaders. One local Indian organizer remarked about his feelings on UNI's leadership in Kolkata: "They [UNI] sent us girls. Two girls. I am a good man, nothing wrong with girls. But this is a trade union of security guards. You see what I mean?" Perhaps this comment is evidence of a fundamental truism of both trade unions and transnational corporations operating in India: they are both fiercely dominated by men.

In 2009, it held a successful two-day stayaway to pressure G4S to pay pension fund contributions. Then in April 2010, to force G4S to comply with a series of demands for jobs security, appointment letters, and back-pay, CITU held simultaneous actions in Delhi and Kolkata, including a protest in front of the British Embassy, which employs G4S guards. These actions, though technically in breach of the global agreement, and organized apart from UNI, resulted in a favorable determination from G4S to pay back wages for as long as three years to over 100 workers. It's governing ally has been a primary partner in these local actions, and has worked to pressure many companies, not just G4S, to pay the minimum wage.

In 2010, CITU officials decided it would no longer accept financial support from UNI, citing "ideological differences," and an official in Delhi suggested that it will soon reconsider its participation within ISWOI altogether. He said, "We cannot say for sure what good it [ISWOI] has done us, and maybe we might be better without it." Referring to CITU's relationship with UNI, another official in Kolkata raised his hands and moved his fingers to suggest the movements of a puppeteer bringing life to a marionette.

Nationwide

To this day, management in India is out of accord with the global agreement, in that it represses any instance of trade union organizing activity. But the global agreement has been effective in other ways.

In early 2009, G4S lost two contracts (IBM and WIPRO) with large players in the Hyderabad-based technology sector—with rumors about a third in the Salt Lake Area outside Kolkata—after it was forced to pay higher wages and larger pension contributions. "Do you know how difficult it is to stay competitive in India? Do you

know how many businesses try to do our work better and cheaper than us?" asked a G4S representative.

In light of these developments, where union employers are being punished in the market for cooperating with unions, UNI has taken on a new strategy. The social dialogue process between it and the company has not gave rise to union rights or organizing neutrality. However, after a year of lobbying the state alongside G4S, it has won nationwide legislation that will raise standards for security guards across the industry, effectively expanding aspects of the global agreement to India's political realm. The outcome has been the Indian Security Standards Act, which will effectively triple the wages, plus benefits, of five million security guards within India. The legislation will also mandate that employers issue identity cards to security workers and provide for a minimal level of rudimentary training.

The legislation becomes effective in April 2011. It will undoubtedly require vigilance on the part of unions to implement it, where it does not happen automatically. And given the fierce opposition of most of the industry, and pathetic levels of unionization, it is unlikely to happen easily or immediately. Nevertheless, it sets an important legal and political precedent for workers in the informal sector.

VARIETIES OF LABOR TRANSNATIONALISM

Why have CITU and INTUC unions used the global agreement differently? I find that the unions' divergent approaches--and varied successes--are based on (1) global-local union relationships; (2) legacies of state patronage and (3) legacies of labor internationalism and union imperialism.

Probably the most significant factor that determines the extent to which a global agreement is implemented is the relationship between the GUF and the affiliate union: the global and the local. We can clearly understand the desperate need for "bridge builders" to span the global-local divide when examining the India case. Although the importance of such activists have featured heavily in accounts of labor-community coalitions (Brecher and Costello 1990; Nissen 2004; Reynolds 2004; Tait 2008; Tatersall and Reynolds 2007), rarely have they been seen as crucial to global campaigns. Local unionists in Bangalore were far more receptive to UNI's message than in Kolkata for a number of reasons.

There is a strong UNI culture in Bangalore, absent in Kolkata, that exerts influence through the UNIDOC office, formed by SEIU and UNI in 2007. Though the PSGU has its own office, it holds most of its general meetings at the UNIDOC headquarters in Vasantanagar, a spacious clean office with a large meeting room decorated with photos from UNI's various global solidarity actions. UNIDOC houses multiple unions, each conspicuously named "UNI" plus its corresponding trade: UNITES (IT-Enabled Services), UNICOM (Tele-communications), UNIFIN (Financial services), etc. UNI has positioned itself as the primary organizing body for not only workers in the vast informal economy, but also in the fast-growing services sector in Bangalore and Hyderabad. If there is a union in India with its finger on the political-economic pulse of the country's future, it is UNI.

Though the UNIDOC structure emphasizes industrial unionism, its constituent unions in the technology-related industries organize young workers by catering to a privileged class of professionals on the basis of status, income, and knowledge labor.

These workers, UNIDOC staffers say, are of a new era, and do not identify with the public sector unions which have dominated the landscape throughout Bangalore's history. One might say the new workforce is presumed to have a different *habitus* than the average Indian union member, that inclines him or her to reject trade unions in favor of elite associations. UNITES, for example, the only union to materialize so far in the Indian IT industry, claims 20,000 members, and makes recruitment appeals almost solely through an on-line portal that describes the organization as a rich NGO.

Though talk of "organizing unionism" is widespread, its actual realization has been stymied by the continuation of old ways of business unionism, even cronyism. The UNIDOC unions also have a different relationship with employers. There is no global agreement to be implemented, there is no official UNI mentorship program for organizers, and they tend to avoid, whenever possible, direct confrontations with management. Nevertheless, the UNI presence is strongly felt, and the staff are proud to be a part of what they see as an international movement. UNIDOC therefore fosters a collective identification with a common cause and global partner, though not necessarily a shared methodology.

By contrast CITU staffers report significant dissatisfaction with the UNI campaign. Ardenhu Dakshi, a CITU leader, waves his hand dismissively at the air at the mention of UNI, as if batting away a fly. He also expressed a sense of hopelessness about the ISWOI coalition. Though he clearly stated CITU's deep desire for labor movement unity, he doubted that INTUC shared his commitments to nonpartisanship, and therefore thought ISWOI represented more of a UNI-directed front group more than a legitimate

heterogenous Indian organization. He raised his hands and moved his fingers as to suggest the movements of a puppeteer bringing life to a marionette.

He says membership growth has not been any different since the collaboration started. But he is more troubled by the dynamic whereby CITU and the other Indian unions seem to be under the influence, and direction, of UNI and SEIU. "We are not sure what good this has done," says another staffer at CITU. "We have to ask this question. Right now, why would workers join this union? I have no idea," he says.

Secondly, the historical patterns of labor mobilization are embedded in the divergent political contexts of the two city-states of Bangalore and Kolkata. CITU's close connections to the reigning CPI[M] has meant that for the better part of three decades, the union faced little resistance from the state, and attracted members based on their political affiliations more than any other reason. This situation de-incentivized a coherent organizing program for growth, since the state's role in mediating disputes and guaranteeing wages and conditions was so prevalent.

In Karnataka, by contrast, although INTUC unions grew alongside the Congress and enjoyed success in its state-run enterprises, it has never held the same degree of control over local political economy. This has meant that unions have matured less dependent on party-state alliances than elsewhere. Moreover, comparably rapid de-industrialization, the dramatic rise of services, and the BJP's recent electoral victories in the Lok Sabha have forced the unions into a new quest for relevancy. Though union density fell as it did elsewhere, these circumstances nonetheless seem to have sounded an important alarm for workers in Bangalore, where the old state-sector unions are organizing again and the new autonomous unions (described above in the introduction)

have found significant growth.

Finally, different experiences with transnational labor cooperation have impacted the way unions in each place relate to UNI, and therefore the extent to which the global agreement has had much currency. Latin American trade unions benefit from their involvement in regional politics through MERCOSUR.[32] India lacks such integration into an Asian bloc[33] or trade union association (Kuruvilla et al.,). CITU unionists have also been at the front of the movement that successfully opposed a social clause in global trade agreements and WTO rules, preferring to bank on the comparative advantage of poor workers to attract jobs, than to raise standards everywhere.

Kolkata, as the erstwhile capital of the British Empire in India, was on the receiving end of much labor imperialism from the UK. It has impacted the perception of international collaboration with local unions even to this day. A CITU leader spoke to his relationship with UNI staff:

> They [UNI] don't understand us. It's as simple as that. To work with people, you have to understand what they do, how they operate, what they are like. They know us only as workers, not as people. We have our way, and it is not theirs, and they are pressurizing us to change. Okay, so that is their job. But we do our job and we do not do it like they want always. So, you can say we are not in agreement at all times. It has always been like that for Indians and Europeans, you know this right? Read, ask people, you will see.

CONCLUSION

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[32] MERCOSUR--now the fourth largest trading bloc in the world, at $1,000 billion per year--stands as an exciting example of the growing regionalism of Latin American politics in general and trade unionism in particular. Brazil's leading role in the federation also gave labor a significant voice as an oppositional force to the US-led campaign to extend NAFTA all the way to Patagonia via the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

[33] The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum have not been used to foster union solidarity, and in any event India is not a member of the former and was formally excluded from the latter. http://www.theage.com.au/news/National/APEC-to-decide-whether-to-let-India-join/2007/01/11/1168105110986.html

Above I have argued that Indian unions collaborated with UNI in varied ways to win and implement the global agreement. I focused first on the unique context of Indian industrial relations—involuted pluralism, deeply politicized unions, massive informalization—and then moved on to discuss how this context shaped the campaign strategy. The main strategic response to this situation was to overcome the deep political chasms of unions within India by building the ISWOI coalition. Imperfect and fragile, it has nonetheless acted as a reasonable framework within a country that has rarely seen sustained cross-federation union collaborations.

Regarding the implementation of the global agreement, the ISWOI was partially successful by winning by bringing the employer into compliance with national law (the Contract Labor Act), which required that it pay higher (legal) minimum wages and pension fund contributions. Unlike in South Africa, however, where the global agreement constrained management's anti-union behavior, local G4S leaders were not asked by G4S's global leadership to act in accord with the agreement. This fact encouraged a different tactical maneuver by UNI. ISWOI was forced to re-direct their claims away from management and toward the state. The result, which was the outcome of a cumbersome yet ultimately productive social dialogue process with management, has been the establishment of the Indian Security Standards Act, that will legislate increases in standards for five million security guards in the country: higher pension fund contributions, wage increases, and mandated ID cards.

This demonstrates that the global agreement, on the surface a simple labor contract, can be used by unions to win different kinds of gains. This outcome suggests a certain affinity with an idea raised by Emile Durkheim, regarding the non-contractual

elements of contracts. Durkheim (1933/1984) suggested that the legitimacy of all contracts, regardless of their official and stated purpose, rests in the commitments of the consenting parties. In this instance, the power of the global agreement turned out to be the fact that it generated a social dialogue process, or, as one UNI organizer put it, a "place to solve problems. Without that space, none of this would have happened."

In the Indian case, we see that the influence of local bridge builders was also critical. In Bangalore, local organizers credit UNI's staff with helping to develop a new kind of "scientific" unionism, whereas in Kolkata, UNI was marginalized based on perceived cultural divisions and political incompatibilities. These differences help us explain why the global agreement received different attention in each city and why it was more thoroughly implemented in Bangalore than in Kolkata. Other reasons include relationships between unions and the state and past legacies of labor imperialism.

However, the challenges facing the Indian unions are still great. Massive employer repression has held much constructive organizing at bay, and the unions in both cities remain loose formations, with rotating and fluctuating membership. UNI's recent exit from India, based on "resource issues," raises obvious questions about the sustainability of the ISWOI coalition without local UNI staff to monitor it. Therefore, we can conclude that the UNI-ISWOI collaboration represents an important step forward in the Indian labor movements, which has heretofore had very limited experience with transnational collaboration. However, it remains to be seen whether or not it has helped to develop strong enough local structure that can sustain a campaign against the largest multinational company in the country.

CONCLUSION:

PROSPECTS AND POSSIBILITIES

Even as this conclusion was being written, the campaign against G4S had advanced several crucial stages. As many as eleven countries are currently implementing the global agreement in various ways. In Morocco and Ghana that process inspired strikes; in Mozambique it settled them. In Poland the agreement has helped to raise wages and standards throughout the industry. The Indonesian union that was the first to tackle G4S outside the US alongside SEIU and UNI has since collapsed amid infighting, and workers there have seen the erosion of many significant gains. But we also see the birth of security guard unions in Nepal, and several Latin American countries. Most recently, security guards throughout the US were grandfathered in to the global agreement in December 2010, two years after it was signed, which granted them the right to organize without management interference. This brings us back to the beginning, as the US is where the campaign began in 2003.

What were trends within the global union movement when I began this research have blossomed into established practices. Over the past two years, global unions have signed forty-one international framework agreements with transnational employers—21 alone within UNI—for a total of 91 as of January 2011. Increasingly, the scope of these agreements has broadened to include countries within the global South and organizing rights. UNI's battle against G4S has inspired a turn towards sustained campaigning and strategic corporate targeting within the GUFs, practices that replaced focusing on small companies, hot shops, and simply winning agreements for the sake of it.

This conclusion examines the results of our enquiry into labor transnationalism in the global era. In trying to make sense of the various issues raised in this dissertation I have undoubtedly posed more questions than I answer. But in the interest of leaving the field more coherent than I found it, I will briefly return to an overview of the key empirical findings and then move toward an analysis of how they help us further develop the underlying theoretical problematics.

FINDINGS

In Chapter 2 I outlined the strategies that comprise the new labor transnationalism. These differ markedly from those commonly offered by scholars. Munck's remark that the popular vision of a return to proletarian internationalism constitutes a "wish list" of academics could not be more astute. We can regard these scholarly positions with the same skepticism—though not hostility—that Gopal Balakrishnan reserves for Hardt and Negri in *Empire*: "a Solerian myth of empowerment, offering consolation to oppositional desire, in place of sober political realism" (Balakrishnan 2003: ix). Rather, the current dilemmas facing labor at the global level have inspired a significant trend toward transnational campaigning and global governance, both of which are epitomized by UNI's campaign against G4S.

Transnational campaigns have largely developed as a response to common international employers and new political conditions. The European common market provided a basis of regional transnationalism first. The Europeanization of the American services sector in the last twenty years has also prompted unions to reconsider the efficacy of "unionism in one country" (Lambert 2010). Thus, as documented in the first

part of Chapter Three, we see joint campaigns by SEIU with unions in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand. These efforts, I argue, have also contributed to the transformation of several important European unions, as the influence of the North American "organizing model" has found significant traction in an arena characterized by corporatism. This section also shows that SEIU's interest in global unionism emerged not from a principled commitment to internationalism but as a coping mechanism with the industrial structure of the US services sector.

The case study begins in Chapter 3. Through a process of naming, framing (David Snow, 2004) and shaming at the global level, and the mobilization of local unions in some of the company's key markets, SEIU and UNI were able to force G4S to the table to sign an international framework agreement. Though these agreements were initially conceived of as an extension of corporate social responsibility schemes, or simple contracts to ensure core labor standards, this particular agreement represents a step forward. I suggested that the global agreement won not only the right, but also the space to organize. And as we see in Chapters 4 and 5 that space provided for strategies that necessarily produced different outcomes in each context.

In each case legacies of the past, and present local constraints and opportunities structured different strategic responses and forms of transnational cooperation.
Chapter 4 describes how, in Johannesburg, SATAWU benefitted from the campaign in two primary ways. First, the global agreement successfully constrained management behavior (albeit begrudgingly), which made it far easier to organize new workers. Here we see quite clearly the benefits local workers derived from the effort at the global level. Secondly, the mentorship it received from UNI/SEIU was an inspiration to begin internal

restructuring processes and a new strategic approach to unionizing the industry. The results of these changes are evident in the addition of thousands of new security guards to the union's ranks at a time when it was previously shedding members in droves. Workers also suggest that the campaign to implement the global agreement has also resulted in more active member committees. In South Africa the global campaign has had "mobilization-type" impacts.

The Indian situation was quite different, where a disaggregated labor movement and an incredibly precarious group of workers presented a unique challenge—how to bridge decades of inter-union hostility and political fragmentation. UNI's answer was to construct ISWOI, the awkward coalition of Congress and Communist unions that managed to form a tentative organization of private security guards. The global agreement did not have the same mobilization-type gains as in South Africa because Indian management was never forced by its global leadership in the UK to recognize the neutrality clause it signed. Aggressive anti-unionism still ruled the day, and the unions were not able to move past this. However, the unions found success by working within the political realm, deflecting their concerns onto the local state. In so doing it forced the company to comply with minimum wage laws, to pay higher pension fund contributions, and to offer workers ID cards and labor contracts when they are employed. Although these gains were won primarily by the Bangalore-based PSGU, the company agreed to institute them country-wide. Indian unions were also successful at pressuring the state to enact new national legislation to raise the conditions of all five million private security guards in the country through the Indian Security Standards Act. The law has not gone into effect yet, but provides an important precedent for state intervention into the

informal sector workforce. I suggest therefore that the global agreement had "legislative-type" impacts in India.

Local constraints and opportunities encouraged a particular form of transnational collaboration in each place. In South Africa, for example, the behavior of local management presented SATAWU with an opportunity to organize it did not enjoy previously. The historic legacy of social movement unionism in the country, and SATAWU in particular, also allowed for an easier shift towards an organizing model. Finally, the clear hegemony of SATAWU within the industry made it clear that UNI would have only one partner union to work with and therefore would be able to avoid the maneuvering that had to be done in India. In India, trade union divisiveness based upon political party affiliation demanded that UNI broker a semblance of labor peace by constructing ISWOI, the coalition of Congress and Communist affiliated unions. Again, as different from South Africa, local management was not constrained in its anti-unionism by its parent company, and unions were unsuccessful at forcing union recognition. This discouraged the unions from a typical organizing campaign. Instead, the unions turned toward pressuring the state to handle their grievances. In both places the nature of the private security industry—seen as a guardian of public safety (however untrue that may be) and foreign capital—encouraged a more sympathetic outlook by the national state that unions benefitted from.

Both cases demonstrate examples where a global campaign has inspired local revitalization processes, such as gains in organizing, membership growth, internal mobilization, legislative and political gains. Overall, the campaign was able to alter the business model of one of the world's largest corporations, and re-orient the strategic

models of unions in different places to make them more effective. This paints a picture of labor as more than a simple factor of production; it suggests they are active agents for change in the global political economy.

The depth to which this campaign impacted unionism in South Africa and India, and seems to be spreading, stands in stark contrast to so many campaigns that fail or have no obvious impact on the lives of workers whatsoever. But the facts do not speak for themselves. Interpreting what happened here requires a theoretical lens. So what does this case study tell us about the larger questions posed at the beginning?

LABOR POWER AND GLOBALIZATION

As for the continual debates on the impacts of world economic restructuring on trade unionism, this dissertation suggests workers can put themselves in a position to exercise power at a global scale. On the one hand, drawing on Silver (2003) and Sassen (2001) I have suggested in the Introduction how the structural limitations of global capitalism may enhance labor's power in the non-mobile service sector, where a spatial fix cannot easily outsource labor globally. This is especially true within the global cities studied here, Johannesburg, Bangalore, and Kolkata. On the other hand, the reserve army of labor, new forms of labor brokering and sub-contracting, and the general disarray of the trade union movement, tend to overshadow whatever benefits may be derived from the vulnerabilities of capitalism. Instead, I have argued that these conditions suggest a crucial need for unions to exercise associational power through creative strategies.

The perspective of the union revitalization literature best accommodates a discussion of the efforts to fruitfully use associational power. Viewed through that lens,

the ability of this campaign to exercise such power is first and foremost the result of a historical process of institutional and organizational innovation at the local, national and global level, a process which many large unions in the US and Europe have yet to begin. I have briefly outlined the process as it happened within SEIU in Chapter 3. These experiments with global unionism, many of which are abject failures, found a viable strategy in this case: the combination of global governance and local mobilization-based campaigns in key markets of the company. Each of these strategies represents a burgeoning practice in the global union movement, though usually, the successful negotiation of an international framework agreement has little impact on workers' lives or their unions. For that to happen, as it did here, it seems the GUF and local groups of workers—unionized or not—must play a significant role in overall implementation process.

And herein lies the rub. The campaign against G4S, though it has inspired considerable efforts toward a more aggressive global unionism, and should be considered a bellwether for a new mode of labor transnationalism, is not easily replicable at this point in time. Costing millions of dollars that will never be recouped by dues, and years of vigilance, it is exceptional in many ways. GUFs are under-resourced organizations and new to campaigning. In many ways they are still emerging from their former roles as development organizations, and junior partners in tripartite arrangements. Having re-envisioned themselves as unions, not international trade secretariats, is a first step. Acting like it is a different matter.

But there is good news too. Unions aren't locked in place, and they are not condemned to compete with one another for miserable jobs. Though not exactly at their

strongest point, evidence suggests that the declining fortunes of labor has, in some corners of the movement, been a time of creative thinking. And today we see transnational collaboration as an increasingly popular answer to the globalism of the corporation. The dictum of two prominent labor writers Larry Cohen and Steve Early (2000)—“As they globalize, they de-unionize”—that condemns workers to a disaggregated mass, divided not only by time and space but also socio-cultural differences, may not be the iron law it was thought to be. According to many experienced participants within the global labor movement, the campaign against G4S that won the global agreement in late 2008 was the global version of Justice for Janitors circa 1991. Since then it has been similarly inspired renewed commitments to organizing and innovative strategy in its wake.

As an exceptional case, this campaign underscores the incredible challenges facing labor as they operate in the global arena. But it also expands the boundaries of what is possible in that arena. In particular, this campaign suggests that global unionism is capable of not only restraining companies at the global level, but can also inspire local union movements, where it matters most. How did that happen?

GLOBAL UNIONS, LOCAL POWER: RE-ASSESSING THE GLOBAL-LOCAL PARADOX

How can global unions build local power? Ronaldo Munck suggests that, “If the new internationalism of the global era is to be seen as distinctive it might also involve a new understanding of the ‘architecture’ of human society” (Munck 2002: 169). In other words, how do the various social strata relate to each other? There is a lot of distance—culturally, economically, politically—between trade unions in North America, South

Africa and India. The challenge for a campaign like the one described above is to bridge the divide.

In many cases of international labor cooperation, this has been accomplished through regional-level organization. However, South Africa and India do not benefit from a system of regional unions and organizations as do unions in Europe and Latin America. Gallin (2008) asserts that the array of Southern African union organizations are corrupt puppets of local governments. India lacks the integration into an Asian bloc[34] or trade union association altogether (Kuruvilla et al.,), a happenstance that has tended to widen the divide between SEIU/UNI and ISWOI. Indian unionists have also been at the front of the movement that successfully opposed a social clause in global trade agreements and WTO rules, preferring to bank on the comparative advantage of poor workers to attract jobs than to raise standards everywhere.

In both cases therefore we can clearly understand the desperate need for "bridge builders" to span the global-local divide. Stories of the interactions between local and global union staff are strewn throughout the case studies in Chapters 4 and 5. Although the importance of such activists have featured heavily in accounts of labor-community coalitions (Brecher and Costello 1990; Nissen 2004; Tait 2008; Tatersall 2010), rarely have they been seen as crucial to global campaigns. These roles have been played by a variety of American and European staff placed into South Africa and India full-time, for over three years, to translate daily the local strategic priorities of the global campaign. In both places culture clashes between local and global staff played out as arguments over strategy. Nevertheless, the unions were eventually able to overcome these divisions, and

[34] The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum have not, to my knowledge, been used by trade unions successfully to broker solidarity, and in any event India is not a member of the former and was formally excluded from the latter.

the collaborations played a vital part in construction of a new kind of local unionism. As one South African leader remarked, referring to a UNI staffer, “She’s not your ordinary European trade unionist. We know them. But she’s one of us. She’s why we are making changes.”

Focusing on the local as a measurement for the success or failures of global unionism allows us an insight we’d otherwise miss, as Burawoy (2010) did—the interaction of labor transnationalism with local circumstances. Seeing transnational collaboration as having a local dimension compels us to rethink its dynamics. It forces us to shift from a top-down perspective, in which transnationalism is bound up in the institutions of the global labor movement, without surrendering to a totally bottom-up perspective, which suggests change must come from the global grassroots. Indeed, if workers are going to build power it seems transnational cooperation should take the form of the dynamic interaction between global union politics and varied forms of local mobilization. In contrast to what Gay Seidman (2008) and others find, I’ve shown that global campaigns can empower local movements in varied ways, and that success in the former sphere requires careful attention to the latter.

In a sense then I have argued that the local is where the global matters most, not to assert a militant particularism against a cosmopolitan universalism, or because the local is “an island in the stormy seas of globalization” (Munck 2002: 185), both of which “accede to spatial fetishism” (Massey 2000: 2). Rather, labor markets and employment relations are still largely determined by local contingencies and global unions are incapable of solving local problems. There is a temptation to argue, as some have done in earlier eras (Levinson 1957), that a system of global industrial relations will soon surpass

a system based within nation-states. Even if that were to happen, and it will not any time soon, place-bound workers (who are increasing in numbers) will still need local unions.

All in all, this work suggests that scholars of transnationalism should more deeply consider the local arena when assessing the efficacy of global social movements.

THE NEW GLOBAL LABOR STUDIES

As the world of labor has changed, so the world of labor studies. Two decade ago, the seemingly terminal crisis of the former challenged the explanatory power of the latter. A veritable cottage industry emerged to bid farewell to the working class and its primary organizations, a critique based on its passivity and purported decline in the face of the transformation of the world political economy. During a time when workers' movements seemed anachronistic, and even the alter-globalization movement—so full of promise during the millennial craze of the late nineties—dissolved into innumerable single-issue causes, one might not have bet on a sustainable labor transnationalism to emerge when it did. But as Henri Lefevbre (1968) remarked, when writing about the explosion of May 1968, "Events belie forecasts: to the extent that the events are historical, they upset calculations."

Today labor is fashionable again. Recently global unionism has been featured in the popular media and cultural forums, such as American Prospect, The Nation, Mother Jones, Alternet, and TED Talks. But the scholarly examination of labor and union movements is also taking up more space in the social sciences, largely dedicated to an assessment, in one form or another, of prospects for renewal, as is this dissertation. There is even a new journal dedicated to global labor studies, and a handful of international

research institutes dedicated to an interdisciplinary study of world labor politics, drawing a significant number of students from the movements themselves.

The analytic thrust of global labor studies is to assess the conjuncture for labor and help propose a course forward. The movements and scholarly communities are both sufficiently small and inchoate that the potential for collaboration is higher than in the entrenched national movements and other academic subfields. Key figures in both worlds have personal histories of being in the other, which also makes a common understanding more likely.

Recasting labor studies in a global lens allows us to shed new light on the macro-sociological position of workers today. And a close examination of "actually existing" transnationalism opens a window into the impacts it has on local communities. It is these two dimensions I have tried to illuminate here.

While global labor studies remains an emerging field, somewhere in the intersection of Sociology, Industrial Relations, Business Management, and Political Economy, the current dominant schools of thought are strangely reminiscent of an earlier time—what Michael Denning called the age of three worlds. Europe tends to have both the most agnostic and the most bombastic analysts. A burgeoning group of scholars in the global South (here including Australia), have most thoroughly embraced the Polanyian perspective that considers new modes of bottom-up social movement unionism to be a defining characteristic of the age. The handful of US-based scholars comprise a patchwork of positions that are less classifiable, but have generally seen the rise of labor transnationalism as a positive force to interject a new lifeblood into unions dominated by nationalist, protectionist, or racist ideologies. The instances of cooperation between labor

and social movement organizations, as in the 1999 Seattle anti-WTO demonstrations and the immigrants rights actions on May 1st, 2006, are seen as potential turning points toward a more cosmopolitan outlook. I put myself in this last group.

This is an admittedly rosy outlook, possibly echoing Dan Clawson's call for a "defense of false optimism" (Clawson 2010). Most movements, he says, fail before they win. If we are to believe other accounts, however, there is far less cause for hope. In a careful assessment of the last quarter century of unionism, Loren Goldner (2010) suggests "there is nothing positive for the class as a whole to be achieved through the unions." Moreover, he argues that Stern's recent departure from SEIU signals the "ignominious end of a period of renewal." I see no reason why this should be the case; if anything, Stern's retirement from the union movement has been a welcome relief by many young militant organizers, including those exasperated organizers, researchers, and political activists who endured his relentlessly crushing authoritarianism the last few years at SEIU.

Though I question the unbridled optimism of some insisting on the existence of a counter-movement waiting in the wings, I also see concrete evidence that suggests the global arena represents a place where unions can make a turnaround. I view the potential of the global agreement strategy through a Gorzian lens. In *Strategy for Labor: A Radical Proposal*, Andre Gorz (1964) lays out the concept of *nonreformist reforms*. These are not once-and-done alterations to the conditions of capitalism but rather reformist policies which leave open the potential for deeper social transformation. At their best, IFAs represent a good example of what Gorz had in mind. Moreover, the explosion of global unionism in the decade is evidence of a re-organization of trade union priorities. Unlike

earlier internationalisms to which the newest incarnation is often wrongly compared, there is a large degree of economism in its underlying rationale. But this is reflective of large tendencies already extant in the union movements of the North. As Northern unionism comes into contact with other traditions in the South, as is the case here, perhaps they will influence each other positively.

So we have then a picture that suggests cause for cautious optimism that, to move beyond this stage, will need to answer more questions. This means more research on the local impacts of global governance regimes and the "implementation" of global agreements. I have limited myself to the complexities of one such case, but to gain the experiences of larger groups of workers requires more research on similar campaigns. How can global unionism move further beyond the facile constraints of *monitoring* corporate power to *challenging* it? Under what circumstances should local and national unions move beyond a national outlook and pursue a global approach, and when is it unhelpful? What are the strengths and limitations of a strategy that so closely tie labor's and management's fate in mutual interdependence? Will this increase labor's power to act, as Piven and Cloward's position might suggest, or will it finally tie their hands for good with a Gordian knot? These questions raise significant challenges and fertile ground for future research into the field of global labor studies.

Nevertheless, despite these lingering questions, careful consideration of the evidence put forth in this dissertation, combined with new theoretical arguments challenging the fatalism of the globalization thesis, suggests that unions are beginning to navigate the global arena with more prospects for building power. Increasing reports of dynamic creative global campaigns are an encouraging sign that labor is charting a new

course. While I have a more sober assessment than those who assert the coming of another double movement, I think ample evidence exists to suggest that the discourse on the new labor transnationalism, as I have formulated it here, has firm ground to stand on.

APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This appendix describes the data I used and why I chose this particular methodological approach over others. The case selection and interview data require more explanation than was possible in the body of the text.

NESTED CASE STUDIES

This dissertation follows a case study methodology, and draws on insights from multiple disciplines. Case studies are an appropriate qualitative method for developing sociological theory (George and Bennet 2005). Moreover, it is particularly fitting in this context, as I gathered "multiple sources of evidence—converging on the same set of issues" in order to analyze both a particular *phenomenon* [labor transnationalism] and the *context* [the private security industry of two countries, South Africa and India] in which the phenomenon is occurring (Yin 1993).

I focus on a campaign of private security guards in South Africa and India as they collaborate with their North American counterparts to organize transnational labor unions. In effect, these are cases (South Africa and India) within a case (a global campaign), what I call a *nested case studies* approach. Nested case studies allow us to study a divergent phenomena that is contained and contextualized within a single unit of analysis. I this case the unit of analysis is the campaign in each location (Johannesburg, Bangalore, Kolkata).

My methodology draws on the theoretical understandings of Burawoy's (1985; Burawoy et al., 2001) global ethnographic work and Geertz's (1977) emphasis on cultural connection. Though I have not undertaken a strict ethnography, I make direct links with

the local, regional, national and global arenas under study by specifically targeting interviews and observation within each sphere. I argue that Johannesburg, for example, cannot be seen as inherently separate from the history of its nation-state, South Africa, which is also inextricably linked with regional and global political economy. Moreover, the aspects of my study which focus on the private security industry globally, are also conducted at multiple scales, to account for the complications involved with studying subcontracted employment, and global supply chains. I have taken care to emphasize an understanding of my case studies as situated in discreet but related arenas of action.

My case study is broken down into two parts. The first, dealt with in Chapter three, covers the period of 2003-2008, during which time SEIU and UNI Global Union campaigned against G4S, a UK-based private security firm, to win an international framework agreement. The second part takes place in chapters four and five, and involves the implementation of the global agreement strategy into South Africa and India.

Undoubtedly there are critics who will take issue with the biases inherent in my case study methodology, and indeed there are biases. I chose to focus on this campaign because, after considering a comparative study with other campaigns, I decided I wanted to focus on an exemplar of new strategies—the cutting edge of global unionism. At that time, this was that campaign. I focused on South Africa and India as research sites because there is such a strong basis for comparison, and yet, the results in each place were so different. Johannesburg, Delhi, Bangalore, and Kolkatta, are all regionally important cities with strong links to the global economy. Both were also important battlegrounds in the global campaign for the employer and the unions. However, peculiarities of labor law, union history, and political structure ensure that local structures

create different environments for labor transnationalism to take place. As I was interested in how the local context influenced the implementation of the global strategy, these two places provided a rather unique opportunity to study such a process as it unfolded in real time. This situation provided the basis for an analysis of not only how global unionism can have local impacts, but why it takes different forms in different places.

They were also chosen for theoretical importance. Indeed the campaign against G4S cannot be regarded as typical; nor is the depth to which the campaign was taken up in South Africa and India. But as there are so few examples of actual global campaigns, choosing a "typical" or "representative" one is not easy. Here Burawoy's insights into case study methodology have been influential again. He argues that there are multiple "modes of generalization," not only the typical mode, which extrapolates from sample to population. But a second mode conjoins the micro context with the larger social totality that shapes it, the underlying assumption being that "every particularity contains a generality" (Burawoy 1985: 18) It is the aspiration of this analysis to expose these forces as they construct a social reality.

For example, the campaign against G4S is the product of, as I argue in Chapter Three, general revitalization efforts in the US labor movement, the incorporation of those strategies around the globe, the reactions to the Europeanization of the US service sector, and the ability of UNI to coordinate the various social forces to actually put in into action. Likewise, as the South African experience of mobilization-based reforms (as a consequence of transnational collaboration) is indicative of general trends within that country's union movement, so the campaign in India is quite indicative of current informal sector labor movements (Agarwala 2009).

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data collection for this dissertation spanned one and a half years and four continents, including approximately one hundred formal and semi-structured interviews with trade union organizers, government officials, corporate leaders, low-level managers, political activists, and other academics. (See table 1 for details). I also spoke informally with groups of workers and union organizers during meetings, at their homes, and at worksites. Where possible, I observed meetings that related to the implementation of the global framework agreement. Often these meetings included representatives from multiple trade unions, rank and file workers, and corporate representatives. Observation of day-to-day settings, at different times and in different locations, provided a rich picture *in situ* (Becker 1996). Most of the interviews took place in Johannesburg, South Africa and in three Indian cities: New Delhi, Bangalore, and Kolkata, though also in Geneva and Washington DC.

Interviews

The majority of information about my cases in the text comes from my interviews with unionists, employers, and assorted experts like academics, local politicians, social movement activists, etc. I spent two months in Johannesburg, South Africa, June and July 2009. There I spoke with labor activists within SATAWU, COSATU, NALEDI, other local unions and a few representatives within the GUFs. Additionally, I met with political activists from the South African Communist Party and local social movements, including the anti-privatization forum that has led protests

against austerity measures and has had occasionally friendly and hostile relationships with the COSATU unions. My work within this milieu was assisted by a graduate student from Wits, who I eventually hired as my research assistant, and whose own PhD work focused on global unionism. During this time I also attended meetings with SATAWU organizers, and a four-day workshop that UNI ran with local SATAWU activists in Durban. A brief trip to Pretoria allowed me to interview regional G4S leaders too.

My research took almost five months in India, with the bulk of the time spent in New Delhi, Bangalore and Kolkata. In Delhi, I met primarily with labor leaders within the Communist-led CITU, as they were UNI's primary allies in that region (see Chapter 5). I was also able to meet with local UNI representatives and G4S corporate leaders, including its Indian Human Resources Director. In Bangalore I was able to meet a wider swath of people. I conducted interviews with leaders of the Congress-affiliated unions, the PSGU, INTUC, and the local government representatives of the labor board. I was able to observe meeting at UNIDOC headquarters in Vasantanagar and on Mysore Road. During my time there, several meetings with UNI took place that I was able to observe as well. Local PSGU activists allowed me to accompany them on site visits to local homes and workplaces of several large groups of security guards. In Kolkata, where I spent comparatively less time, I met with local Communist Party [Marxist] leaders, interviewed a large group of about twenty security guards (with the help of a translator), and met with UNI's partners at CITU. In all three cities I met with local academics that helped confirm or challenge my observations and conclusions from the fieldwork. By far the most fruitful of these meetings were at the Bangalore-based Institute for Social and Economic Change and the Institute for Development Studies in Kolkata.

The month I spent in Switzerland was mostly dedicated to meeting staff within the GUFs, with a focus on UNI. However, during this time I traveled to Amsterdam and Brussels to meet SEIU/Change to Win staff and leaders within the ITUC and the European Works Council for G4S.

Almost all of these interviews were recorded on a hand-held digital recorder, although occasionally, if I thought it would impact the tenor of the interview, I simply took notes. To protect the anonymity of those who requested it (many did not) and for the sake of consistency, I have only cited the interview subject's institutional affiliation and the date. And though I have attempted to accurately cite my sources, I have occasionally omitted interview sources in the interest of maintaining a flow of the argument. I hope to compensate for that here.

Based on the contacts I developed over years as a labor organizer, I began with deep access to my research sites. Almost all my interviews were conducted in English. Nevertheless, I benefitted from the support of local graduate students and labor activists, especially in South Africa, who helped me navigate the local contexts, and provided translation where necessary. Nonetheless, snowball sampling – whereby respondents recommend additional potential interviewees – became a primary way to identify future interviewees. Therefore, specific sampling decisions evolved during the research process itself.

Most were face-to-face interviews, but some were completed over the phone, via skype, and one took place via email. In-person interviews generally took place at offices during regular work hours (union staff and corporate staff) and near worksites (with rank and file workers), but occasionally they took place in cafes, bars, homes, or hotels.

Most of the formal interviews lasted approximately sixty minutes, with most interview questions reflecting both the particular area of the subject's expertise, and general knowledge or interest in broader concerns. For interview questions that are broader and more open-ended, sequencing flowed logically from one set of ideas to another (Kvale 1996). Interviews were coded for overlapping themes related to both general viewpoints on labor transnationalism and particular ideas about the case under study. In this way, interviews contributed to both the conceptual/theoretical and the local/ethnographic dimensions of the dissertation.

Though I did not undertake a study guided completely by grounded theory, some of my research questions had no obvious hypothesis and were more open-ended than others. These included questions related to the effectiveness of different strategies and the interplay of national and transnational activism and structures.

Material from interviews and observations were triangulated with additional sources of data. These documents include, but are not limited to: meeting minutes, annual reports and regular white papers by the ILO and UNI Global Union, the World Labor Group

Database on global labor unrest, reports from regional Solidarity Centers affiliated with the AFL-CIO, World Bank development indicators, and regular reports from think tanks and research centers such as the Global Union Research Network and the Society Work and Development Institute (SWOP) in Johannesburg.

Studying transnationalism

This dissertation claims to study an emerging practice known as labor transnationalism, differentiated from past forms of cross-border collaboration. In recent years, the concept of transnationalism has gained ground as an explanatory framework to describe migration patters, economic, flows, social movement activity, and cultural exchange (see Portes 1997; Portes et al 1999; Waldinger and Fitgerald 2004; Tarrow 2005). Portes et al (1999) stress the importance of delimiting the concept of transnationalism so as not overburden it with the necessity of having to explain everything, or diluting it until it is meaningless. My conception of the phenomena meets their three criteria for what constitutes a transnational activity:

> a) the process involves a significant proportion of persons in the relevant universe (in this case, workers and their unions);
> b) the activities of interest are not fleeting or exceptional, but possess certain stability and resilience over time;
> c) the content of these activities is not captured by some pre-existing concept, making the invention of a new term redundant (Portes et al 1999).

This last point raises an important distinction to be made between transnationalism and internationalism. I distinguish transnationalism from internationalism by the way the state functions in each concept, a demarcation borrowed from social movement studies (Tarrow 2005). In other words, whereas international activities can be seen as one-way interactions or simply collaborations between states, transnationalism implies a blurring of state demarcations and a tendency to transcend national borders, not merely cooperate within them.

In truth, both phenomena operate in my dissertation, reflecting the different positions of the various labor movements and ideological approaches to labor activism that I draw out. However, I feel that internationalism is more indicative of earlier modes of cross-border union activity than it is today.

Appendix II: Number of Interviews By Location

Location	**Date**	**Interview**
England (London)	June 2009	Corporate: 2 Local Unionists: 2 Other: 2
South Africa (Johannesburg/Pretoria)	May – July 2009	Local Unionist: 14 GUF Staff: 4 Management: 3 Other: 3
India (Delhi)	August – September 2009	Local Unionists: 4 GUF Staff: 2 Management: 1 Other: 3
India (Bangalore)	September – October 2009	Local Unionists: 8 GUF Staff: 1 Management: 1 Other: 8
India (Kolkata)	November 2009	Local Unionists: 4 Other: 2
Switzerland (Geneve)	November – December 2009	GUF Staff: 13 Other: 6
England (London)	June 2009	Corporate: 2 Local Unionists: 2 Other: 2
United States (New York, DC, San Francisco)	2010	Local Unionists: 9
		Total Interviews: 97

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Jamie K McCallum received his PhD in Sociology from the CUNY Graduate Center in 2011. He came to graduate school having been an activist and journalist, experiences that greatly determined the course of his intellectual engagement. He left with scholarly training, a deeper commitment to radicalism, and a greater appreciation for philosophy.