

Globalizing Solidarity

The Changing Roles, Relevance and Strategies of Global
Union Federations

Senior Honors Thesis

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Abstract

Over the past quarter century the economic and political framework in which trade unions around the globe operate has changed drastically, contributing in many countries to the deterioration of the labor movement's organizational strength. In an attempt to regain the bargaining power lost as a result of years of membership and political decline and shifting industrial structures, many trade unions have begun to establish strong transnational links. This work thus first analyzes the trends which have pushed many labor unions to increase their international efforts. Three recent international organizing campaigns are then examined as outcomes of these pressures and evaluated based on the degree and type of global union federation (GUF) involvement which that a variety of industrial, global union federation and campaign specific factors influence the strategic decisions underlying the campaign. Recent changes within the international trade union movement and global economy also indicate that GUF involvement in international organizing campaigns is likely to increase in the near future.

1. Introduction

On September 27th, 2007 workers from around the world met to demonstrate in support of Italian IBM employees as they renegotiated their collective agreement with the company. While international solidarity actions in themselves are not entirely unheard of, what was unique about the action was its location: the internet-based virtual world known as Second Life. Over the course of 12 hours nearly 2,000 trade unionists, including one dressed as a banana, in over 30 countries staged a virtual protest designed to force IBM to reverse its decision to eliminate a performance bonus for the firm's 9,000 Italian employees. During the demonstration workers even managed to teleport into a virtual reality staff meeting of IBM, disrupting the event and causing the company to shut down parts of its Second Life Business Center to visitors. Ultimately, the first ever 'virtual strike' led to not only the reinstatement of the performance bonus at the heart of the dispute but also the resignation of IBM Italy's CEO and a complaint from the IBM corporation to its Italian subsidiary over the manner in which they had handled the negotiations and the resulting negative impact on the company's corporate image (UNI 2007a).

Cooperation among trade unionists around the world, such as the Second Life action coordinated by the global union federation (GUF) Union Network International (UNI), a global, sectorally-based federation of national trade unions, is becoming more common in the global economy of the twenty-first century. Rather than international union activism for ideological reasons, however, some theorists view labor transnationalism as part of a domestic strategy of labor revitalization. Frege and Kelly (2004) in their comparative study of labor rejuvenation in the United States and four European countries, identified other, more local, efforts to revive the labor movement including a renewed emphasis on organizing the unorganized, forming labor-management partnerships, political action, reforming national union structures and coalition-

building. Others approaches to organizational renewal include opening organizational boundaries, particularly to immigrant workers, (Nissen 2002), adopting a social movement (Moody 1997 and Waterman 1998a) or mutual aid (Bacharach, Bamgerger and Sonnenstuhl 2001), in contrast to a servicing orientation and expanding education, training and research programs (Westar 2006).

The logic underlying these revitalization strategies stems partially from organized labor's well-documented and near universal decline as measured by the percentage of unionized workers in the total workforce, particularly since the 1970's.¹ The varying reasons behind this decline have also been thoroughly researched and widely debated but are beyond the scope of this work.² Further propelling the need for revitalization has been the weakening of labor's ties to and influence within the national political sphere in several states. One dramatic example of this has been in the United Kingdom where the Labour Party under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown has consistently attempted to distance itself from the labor movement.³ Blair, in a prelude of what was to come, went so far as to say, on the eve of Labour's ascendance to power in 1997, that "We will not be held to ransom by the unions....unions have no special role in our election campaign just as they will get no special favors in a Labour government" (Financial Times 1997).

Due to the increasingly difficult economic and political environment that unions are now facing, many are turning to international activities as a method to reverse their organizational decline. This resurgence of labor internationalism has been hailed by some as the savior of the labor movement (Rothstein 1997; Witt and Wilson 1999; Mazur 2000). From the successful

¹ For a detailed quantitative description of union density trends see Ebbinghaus and Visser (2000) on Western Europe and Hirsch and McPerson (2003) on the United States.

² See for example Kochan, Katz and McKersie (1986).

³ For a description of party leader's efforts to limit the influence of trade unions within the party see Ludlam and Taylor (2003).

campaign of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE) against Imerys Group in 2000 to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT or Teamsters) 1997 strike against United Parcel Service, both of which included a significant and effective international component, it would appear that unions are taking to heart the directive of Karl Marx for workers of the world to unite. Internationalism, however, has not been strictly a tactic of the American labor movement. In response to the planned closure of a Renault auto plant in Vilvoorde, Belgium in 1997, workers in Spain and France as well as Belgian employees of Volkswagen, Opel, Ford and Volvo engaged in sympathy work stoppages in what came to be known as the first 'Euro strike'. Additionally, unions throughout the global south, including those from such varied countries as Australia, South Africa, Brazil and Korea, came together in 1999 to form the Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights (SIGTUR) to help coordinate union actions, foster communications and exchange information.

This increase in labor internationalism was predicted by theorists as early Karl Marx (Howard 1995). John Commons in 1909 similarly foresaw the growth of the international labor movement however rather than being the result of the proletarianization of the global working class, labor's efforts abroad are the result of an attempt to match the scope of labor organizations to that of product markets. Charles Levinson, the former General Secretary of both the GUFs the International Metalworkers Federation and the International Chemical, Energy and General Workers Federation, also wrote about the need for unions to create a 'countervailing power' to match that of transnational corporations (Levinson 1972).

That is not to say, however, that international action is necessary for unions to achieve success in organizing and contract negotiations. Herod (2003) convincingly argues, for instance, that due to globalization of the economy and technological advancements in communications and

logistics, the most effective form of worker resistance depends on their spatial location within the global economy. To support his claim Herod provides the example of the 1998 United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) strike against General Motors (GM) in which, rather than engaging in a global comprehensive campaign designed to force concessions in the contract negotiations, the workers struck only two of the firm's plants in Flint, Michigan. Because the two facilities were key locations in terms of GM's 'lean' system of just-in-time production, 27 of the firm's 29 plants in the United States, as well as others in Canada and Mexico, were forced to shut down in the following weeks (Herod 2000: 527). From Herod's analysis then, under specific circumstances the local can still be important when negotiating with a company that operates on a global level.

In spite of the UAW's 1998 success, many unions today find themselves trying to organize and negotiate with large multinational corporations (MNCs) without the advantage of having membership in strategic locations.⁴ For these unions, moving from a strictly local or national focus toward a broader global view may prove most effective, as the USW's contract campaign against Ravenswood Aluminum clearly illustrates (Juravich and Bronfenbrenner 1999). Beyond simply contract campaigns, unions have also begun to incorporate international elements into organizing drives. Consider, for instance the IBT's Graphic Communications Conference's drive to organize 735 workers at the nonunion printing plant of Quebecor World in Versailles, Kentucky. Following an aggressive employer-directed anti-union campaign, the union lost a National Labor Relations Board Election in 2001. In light of Quebecor's multinational scope with 35,000 employees in 17 countries, the union began to look for assistance abroad. Working with graphic communications sector of UNI, the workers were able

⁴ For the purpose of this paper the terms multinational corporation (MNC) and transnational corporation (TNC) are used interchangeably.

to pressure the company to agree to neutrality and card-check recognition leading to the employees in Versailles to vote three-to-one to join the union in 2005 (Brecher, Costello and Smith 2006, Tate 2006). While the use of global comprehensive campaigns by unions to aid in contract negotiations has increased in recent years as evidenced by the Ravenswood and UPS disputes, this work will focus primarily on organizing and union recognition campaigns with significant international components, such as the GCC-IBT's Quebecor campaign.

Such a focus on international organizing is useful for several reasons. First, due to changes in the world economy wrought by globalization, companies that were once national in scope are encouraged to expand their operations abroad. As a result of these changes, it is argued that unions are now required to adopt new strategies to cope with the increasingly globalized economic environment (Gordon and Turner 2000a). Studying one of the ways in which trade unions adapt to changes in the global economy then, should shed light onto the various effects economic restructuring is having on the labor movement. Moreover, interest in strengthening the international labor movement and cross-border collaboration among unions has grown in recent years (Gordon and Turner 2000b; Bronfenbrenner 2007; Waterman 1998b). This trend is further evidenced by the Global Unions Conference held in New York City in 2006 and the 2007 AFL-CIO's Global Organizing Conference at the National Labor College in Maryland. Consequently, work examining recent international organizing campaigns is not only timely but can also provide valuable insight into the movement's new trends and future prospects. Similarly, examining the specific roles of the global union federations, as sectorally-based confederations of national trade unions, is also usefully in light of their changing roles and priorities within the context of the global economy.

Finally, many scholars have studied union campaigns from both a local and national perspective. The Service Employees International Union's (SEIU) Justice for Janitors campaign in the United States, for instance, has been widely examined as representative of a new type of organizing campaign (see for example, Milkman 2006). In contrast, comparatively few theorists have moved beyond the local and/or national level to examine trade union campaigns in an international, comparative context. Examining organizing campaigns from this perspective should thus inform the debate over this relatively new development in industrial relations.

This is not to say that further research into local or national campaigns is not needed; far from it, the context in which many trade unions operate is still predominantly national in scope. By studying recent international campaigns, however, it may be possible to draw conclusions not only with respect to the international campaigns themselves but also to apply those conclusions to both the local and national levels. Research into this topic should thus prove both interesting and timely due to the fact that there has been comparatively little academic work done on the subject of international union campaigns, a development which is becoming increasingly important as changes in the global economy push trade unions to look beyond their own national borders and take a more internationalist perspective.

2. Methodology

In light of the increasing importance of international organizing campaigns, this paper will examine three recent examples undertaken by the SEIU in partnership with a variety of global partners with particular attention to one of the SEIU's closest international partners the Transport and General Workers section of Unite – the Union (T&G), located in the United Kingdom.⁵ The campaigns central to this work will be the international component of the SEIU's Justice for Janitors campaign, the drive to organize security guards employed by the multinational Group 4 Securicor and the efforts to organize the school bus drivers of First Student, the American subsidiary of the British firm First Group.

Campaigns initiated specifically by the SEIU are examined in detail in this work for several reasons. First, the SEIU has devoted comparatively greater resources to international organizing than any other union in the United States in recent years. While the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Technical Employees (UNITE), for instance, has engaged in cross-border organizing work, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean basin (Armbruster-Sandoval 2005; Jessup and Gordon 2000), no other American union has matched the SEIU's emphasis on strategic international organizing, in contrast to solely contract, campaigns. This makes the case of the SEIU unique and perhaps a bellwether for similar future efforts on the part of other unions and thus all the more interesting for study. Moreover, because the primary jurisdictions, healthcare, public services and building services, of the union are inherently immobile sectors of the economy, the SEIU's emphasis on international action merits particular

⁵ The UK unions the Transport and General Workers Union and Amicus merged in May of 2007 to form Unite – the Union. Because of the unions are still relatively early in the restructuring plan, they are essentially distinct organizations at the time of this writing, each with different headquarters. Elections for a united Executive Council are scheduled for May of 2008 while a single General Secretary for the new union will be elected in 2010. Moreover, conversations with T&G officials indicated that the official timelines set out are relatively optimistic with complete operational integration even further down the road. Due to the fact that the Amicus section of Unite had no involvement with the SEIU prior to the merger, the T&G section will be the focus of this paper.

attention as much has been made of capital mobility as a potential driver of labor transnationalism, particularly in the auto industry (Babson 2002).

Anner et. al. (2006) focused, as this study does, specifically on the logic behind different international strategies by examining the differences between labor internationalism in the motor manufacturing, maritime shipping and clothing and textile manufacturing sectors. As a result of their cross-sectoral approach, however, it is possible that important reasons behind labor's tactical choices were obscured by a number of factors including the differing political traditions inherent in every labor organization as well as the unique industrial structure of each sector. Consequently, this work adopts a more focused approach by specifically examining transnational organizing within the context of the service sector around a specific international tactic recognized by Anner et al., namely the involvement of global union federations. Keeping the main focus on the SEIU and the T&G is useful in this context as it controls some outside factors such as internal union politics, union structure and broad financial situation that are likely to have a significant impact on strategic decisions. While the focus will primarily be on the SEIU and T&G as two of the key organizing partners, I will also examine the IBT's involvement in the Driving Up Standards campaign which should shed light on the role of outside factors in the decision-making process.

It is important to note however, that international campaigns occur in many regional contexts beyond the trans-Atlantic partnerships the SEIU and IBT have established with the T&G. The United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE), for example, has a long standing cross-border organizing relationship with the Mexican union the *Frente Auténtico de Trabajo* (FAT) dating back to the debates preceding the passage of the North American Free

Trade Agreement (NAFTA).⁶ Also, as previously mentioned, the Graphic Communications Conference of the IBT (GCC-IBT) has similarly engaged in extensive cross-border work in a number of countries including Sweden, Chile and Canada in pursuit of organizing employees of the printing company Quebecor World. Consequently, focusing specifically on several trans-Atlantic alliances may not reveal the entire spectrum of reasons behind tactical choices. Nevertheless, an analysis of the T&G-SEIU-IBT partnerships, while by no means being definitive, will reveal some important factors underlying union's tactical decisions irrespective of its regional bias.

Based on the Justice for Janitors, Group 4 Securicor and Driving Up Standards campaigns then, this work will first briefly describe the background of each campaign. Following this descriptive element, the paper will proceed to a broad typology of international campaigns based on a given campaign's relation to and cooperation with the relevant GUF. Such relations are important in terms of international organizing campaigns as the global federations are playing an increasingly important role in the international labor movement in a variety of ways. First, due to the decline of communism as a dividing force in the labor movement, the potential role for global sectoral confederations, such as the International Confederation of Chemical, Energy and Mine Workers (ICEM) for instance, in coordinating national union action has increased (Windmuller 2000). Additionally, as more GUFs sign International Framework Agreements (IFAs) with multinational corporations employing members of the GUF's affiliated unions, the global federation's role as a signatory to the agreement provides it with space to act more like a union as it oversees the implementation and enforcement of the accord and helps coordinate trade union actions within various nations (Stavis and Boswell 2007).

⁶ For a description of the UE-FAT strategic alliance see Hathaway (2000).

Finally, this paper will examine the reasoning behind the different formations the three campaigns took by way of comparing their varying trajectories. A comparative approach is necessary in the context of international organizing campaigns as a single campaign, taken by itself, does little to reveal why a certain tactic was used. Only by contrasting it with strategic choices in other campaigns will a broader picture of the logic behind trade unions tactics be developed. Moreover, while many writers have analyzed international trade union campaigns utilizing the case study method (Borgers 1999; Hickey 2004; Brown and Chang 2004; Witt and Wilson 1999; Juravich and Bronfenbrenner 2003; Banks and Russo 1999; Russo 1999; Bronfenbrenner 2007), few have gone beyond examining a single campaign which in some sense limits the ability of any conclusions drawn to be generalized beyond the organizing drive's immediate context.

While this paper will focus on international organizing campaigns viewed through the lens of GUF participation, it is important to note that a number of options for international coordination exist in addition to the involvement of organizations such as UNI or the ITF. Alternative choices being debated within the ranks of trade unions today include international mergers, such as that being contemplated by the UK's Unite and the American USW and increasing bilateral relationships between unions committed to aggressive organizing as is currently being done within the context of the Global Organizing Alliance, a loose coalition of like-minded trade unions.

Data for this project came from a variety of sources including the printed literature, limited participant observation as well as interviews with academics, union consultants and trade union officials working with the T&G, SEIU, Teamsters, ITF and UNI. This method of data

collection for research on trade union activities is widely accepted in the academic literature (see for instance Milkman 2000; Milkman and Voss 2004).

Before analyzing GUF involvement in international organizing campaigns, this paper will first provide a broad overview of the global labor movement, focusing on peak-level structures and strategies, over the past 150 years. Such a description is necessary in order to better understand the context in which international organizing is taking place today. Following the history of labor transnationalism, this paper will examine in turn both the pressures toward international solidarity efforts as well as barriers to cross-border cooperation, providing an overview of the arguments which have dominated the academic discourse on transnational labor cooperation.

3. A History of Labor Internationalism

While the growth of collaboration among trade unions on an international basis in recent years is certainly noteworthy when contrasted with the majority of the post-World War Two era, it by no means represents labor's first attempt at building enduring transnational structures. The first such formal organization, named the International Workingmen's Association or the First International, was, in fact, launched in September of 1864 at a meeting of British and French trade unionists as well as a handful of political refugees living in London at the time with the inaugural address given by Karl Marx.⁷

In the years immediately following the organization's inception, the First International grew relatively slowly with small sections of associated workers and intellectuals in Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and France with the majority of its membership in England where 17 trade unions with an estimated membership of 25,000 'adhered' to the organization (Lorwin 1953: 11). After 1868, however, the Workingmen's Association began to grow in size and strength following an upswing in the European economy and by 1871 counted membership throughout Europe as well as within the National Labor Union in the United States.

Despite these gains, 1872 proved to be a fatal year for labor's first formal attempt at establishing a formal international structure to facilitate cooperation among workers. External challenges included the situation created by the Franco-Prussian war, the destruction of nearly all labor unions in France, a key source of membership, following the suppression of the Paris Commune and prohibitions on trade unions in other European states from joining international organizations. As a result of the combination of these external problems with internal

⁷ It is important to distinguish the First International from the International Working Men's Association founded in 1922. Despite the similar names, the latter was established by a group of French, German, Dutch and Swedish syndicalists after breaking away from the Third International, a successor to the First International.

ideological divisions between those supporting Marx and the Russian Michael Bakunin, the First International ceased to exist, for all intents and purposes, with the transfer of the General Council to New York City in 1873 (Lorwin 1953: 14).

Even though the First International was in effective existence for less than ten years, its importance extends beyond simply the fact that it represents labor's first major success in establishing a truly international movement. First, the debates at the annual congresses of the Workingmen's Association helped to establish many of the economic and social goals organized labor would later adopt including the eight-hour day and the need for international labor legislation. Moreover, the organization aided in the establishment of a more international mindset among unionists as leaders throughout Europe were put in regular contact with one another thus facilitating the discussion of common problems and the exchange of strategies.

Following the demise of the First International, unionists throughout Europe and in the United States became divided along ideological lines regarding the proper role of trade unions. These divisions were finally bridged, to some extent, as a result of two large scale meetings of labor leaders in Paris in 1900 and Amsterdam in 1904 leading to the establishment of the heir to the First International, appropriately named the Second International. With labor unrest throughout the world on the rise during the first decade of the twentieth century, the organization by 1914 included 27 socialist and labor parties in 22 countries representing roughly 12,000,000 members (Lorwin 1953: 28). While the advent of World War I in Europe devastated the International leading to its dissolution in 1916 as unionists rallied to support their respective governments rather than the working class as a whole (Braunthal 1980), its rise is notable for both its extensive membership numbers as well as its achievements including the establishment of May 1st as International Labor Day.

Reflecting the wide range of political and ideological outlooks present among unionists of the time, British and French labor leaders, resenting the domination of the Second International by socialists, pushed in the years following the turn of the century for the establishment of an alternative transnational labor body. In 1903 this group was successful with the founding of the International Secretariat of Trade Union Centers. With a much more modest scope of activity than the Second International, the International Secretariat focused primarily on collecting and distributing information on trade union movements in different countries as well as providing strike aid. Due to its relatively non-ideological nature the organization attracted a range of conservative, business-oriented unions including the American Federation of Labor in 1909 and by 1914 claimed to represent nearly 7 million members (Foster 1956: 172).

A further unique aspect of the International Secretariat was its strong ties to another form of international labor organization that was emerging at the same time, one that plays a key role in transnational labor cooperation to this day. Dubbed the International Trade Secretariats (ITSs), these associations were composed of affiliated national unions organized on a sectoral basis. The first such ITS, the International Federation of Boot and Shoe Operatives, was founded in 1889 by various unions of shoemakers. By 1914 almost thirty such organizations had been established in a wide variety of economic sectors including textiles, transport and mining.

The ITSs served a qualitatively different purpose than the First or Second Internationals and functioned more along the lines of the International Secretariat. Rather than focusing on ideological goals such as the abolition of the capitalist system or private property, the trade secretariats operated in a more pragmatic manner serving as clearinghouses for information on wages and working conditions, fighting international strikebreaking attempts by employers and mobilizing industrial and financial support for affiliates engaged in labor disputes.

Following World War I and the fervent nationalism that characterized the period, the international labor movement rebuilt itself to some extent and reconstituted the International Secretariat as the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) in 1919 to reflect the organization's supposedly more inclusive nature. Notably absent, however, were delegates from Russia and Eastern Europe and many socialist union representatives from Western Europe who established the Red International of Labor Unions to combat the perceived 'yellow socialism' of the federation. The IFTU was similarly attacked from the right with the AFL declining to participate and denouncing it as having 'revolutionary principles' (Fimmen 1922).

This strong anti-communist orientation of the AFL also directed its activities in Latin America during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The Pan American Federation of Labor (PAFL), for example, was formed in 1918 following talks with the Mexican organization the *Confederación Regional de Obreros Mexicanos* as an explicit response to the regional activities of the Marxist Industrial Workers of the World (Buchanan 1990). These efforts to combat class-based, anarchist or nationalist unions in the region were intensified following the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1935 and its support for the establishment of the Marxist-affiliated *Confederación de Trabajadores de América Latina* to replace the PAFL. Even though the years surrounding World War II were marked by a decrease in anti-communist activities on the part of the AFL as it allied itself with leftist unions in the fight against fascism, its actions to subvert radical unionism were revived in the post-war period and were sustained until relatively recently.

While much more can be said about the events in the international labor movement during the inter-war years, a thorough description this period is beyond the scope of this work beyond simply to note that in the late 1920s and early 1930s the work of the IFTU was

characterized by the struggle to meet the challenges of the global economic depression and by 1935 had shifted its focus to the question of 'unity' with Soviet trade unions to oppose Fascism and war (Lorwin 1953: 165-66).

The events of the four years following World War II set the stage for the structure the international labor movement would take during the Cold War period. With the winding down of the war in Europe in 1945 the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) hosted a world trade union congress in London in February and again in September to plot out the future of the movement. Despite the absence of the AFL, which refused to attend due to conflicts with both the CIO and the Russian AUCCTU, delegates at the conference claimed to represent 67 million workers (Windmuller 1980: 44). Out of these series of meetings came the founding of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the effective dissolution of the IFTU. Possibly most unique about the WFTU in comparison to previous global labor confederations was its geographic inclusiveness with delegates from previously neglected regions such as Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Due to this wide-ranging membership, however, the WFTU was rife with divisions, particularly along ideological lines. These divisions came to a head with respect to the Marshall Plan for reconstructing Europe, a policy which the Western unions thoroughly supported while labor organizations from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union opposed the plan as a scheme on the part of American capitalists to control Europe. Because communist-oriented unions dominated the executive and administrative bodies of the confederation at the time the Western unions split off to hold their own discussions of the Marshall Plan and in 1949 formed the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) as a rival to the WFTU. This rivalry served as another front of confrontation during the ensuing Cold War with the two organizations

often supporting rival union federations within a single country. Such was the case in Nigeria during the 1960s (Millen 1963).

With the decline of the Cold War during the 1980s the importance of the WFTU decreased dramatically leaving the ICFTU as the main global labor confederation of the day (Windmuller 1980). The lack of a strong rival international labor organization does not, however, imply that the ICFTU has remained static. Rather, over the course of the past twenty years the role of the confederation has developed considerably. During this period the ICFTU first established itself as a clearinghouse for information regarding trade unions issues such as labor legislation, collective bargaining and human rights violations, publishing its comprehensive *Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights*. The ICFTU has also developed ties with a number of other international organizations and achieved consultative status with the United Nations system, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. Perhaps most relevant for the future of international union organizing, the global confederation has engaged in actions in support of specific national trade unions, helping for instance, to bring pressure on the Pittston Coal company during its 1989 labor dispute with the United Mine Workers of America (Jarley and Maranto 1990).

One issue of particular importance to the ICFTU and now the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) following its 2006 merger with the Christian-oriented World Federation of Labor has been its relation to the GUFs⁸. Due to their virtually identical constituencies a potential problem is created regarding the duplication of activities and associated waste of resources. To address this issue the ICFTU signed the Milan Agreement in 1951 with the GUFs (known as ITSs at the time) that recognized that both were part of the same international trade union movement and pledged cooperation on matters of common interest. The agreement was

⁸ The International Trade Secretariats were renamed global union federations in 2002.

revised in 1969 and again in 1992, each time providing for greater engagement and joint consultation. This close, supportive relationship has led the two parties to cooperate on a number of issues such as education, occupational health and safety and joint efforts to defend trade unionists and protect human rights. Such was the case during the 1996 European Soccer Championships when the ICFTU in conjunction with the GUFs the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF) and the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees (now part of UNI) worked to pressure manufacturers of soccer balls in Sialkot, Pakistan to respect core International Labor Organization (ILO) standards (Islam 1997).

While the previous discussion has focused on the development and role of peak-level international labor confederation that is not to say that individual national unions have done little to develop horizontal ties with trade unions in other countries to confront multinational corporations. In contrast to the vertical union linkages through international bodies such as the First International of the past and the ITUC of the present which focus on broader labor policy, horizontal ties emphasize more immediate concerns such as contract negotiations and organizing. The history of this form of labor internationalism is much shorter than the former, originating in the 1960s (Litvak and Maule 1972).

The UAW under the leadership of Walter and Victor Reuther, for instance, reached out to German and Japanese auto unions during the 1950s for the purpose of forming World Auto Councils. In spite of the fact that these initial attempts were unsuccessful, with the aid of the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) World Auto Councils were established for a number of automakers during the late 1960s (Levinson 1972). The International Federation of Chemical and General Workers' Unions (ICF) utilized a somewhat different strategy in 1969

when it attempted to establish global coordinated bargaining with unions representing employees of the French multinational glass firm St. Gobain. Following contract expirations involving French, German, Italian and American affiliates the ICF reached an agreement among the unions involved regarding mutual financial and industrial support in the event of a strike as well as an assurance that no negotiations would be concluded without consultation with and approval by the standing committee responsible for the global effort (Levinson 1972). The most advanced example of such global bargaining coordination has been in the maritime shipping sector where the GUF the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and a global employers' federation, the International Maritime Employers' Committee, directly negotiate over pay scales and working conditions for seafarers on Flag of Convenience ships for contracts covering slightly less than 30% of the sector (Koch-Baumgarten 1998; Lillie 2004).

While less comprehensive than the transnational bargaining occurring in the ocean transport sector, over the past two decades several of the global union federations have also devoted significant resources into negotiating International Framework Agreements⁹ with multinational companies. Beginning with the accord between the IUF and the French firm Danone, signed in 1989, the number of agreements has soared recently with most being negotiated since 2001 (Stevis and Boswell 2007). The logic behind this increase stems from the perceived failure to protect workers' rights of both social dialogue in global multilateral institutions such as the WTO and ILO as well as corporate social responsibility efforts leading to unilaterally-established corporate codes of conduct that became prominent in the 1980s (Torres 2004). Arising out of this disillusionment then, the ICFTU has defined IFAs as "agreements on certain principles which, while they do not constitute collective bargaining agreements in the

⁹ Also called Global Framework Agreements (GFAs). For the purpose of this paper the terms will be used interchangeably.

same sense as agreements reached at the national or local levels, provide a rights framework to encourage recognition and bargaining to take place at those levels” (ICFTU 2002: 22). Despite this standard definition, however, the actual content of the agreements vary widely, from the one page accord between Carrefour and UNI, for example, to the six to eight page agreements commonly negotiated by GUFs such as IMF, IUF and ICEM (Bourque 2006). Similarly, whereas some agreements, such as that between the IUF, the *Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Sindicatos Bananeros* and Chiquita, address a wide range of issues including the respect for core ILO Conventions, union consultation on all employment matters and the establishment of a Review Committee to monitor compliance and apply to all suppliers of the company, others, including the accord between the IMF and the Swedish firm SKF Group, merely state the employers’ intention to comply with core ILO standards and national labor legislation.

This variation has led to much debate within the international labor movement over the efficacy of IFAs. Those that argue in favor of negotiating the pacts note they can be successfully utilized to protect the rights of trade unionists. Such was the case during a labor dispute between the American Paper, Allied-Chemical and Energy Workers International Union and American Crown Petroleum where the ICEM utilized its IFA with the Norwegian Statoil to put pressure on Crown to end a five year long lockout (Hickey 2004). The IMF similarly employed its agreement with DaimlerChrysler to put pressure on one of the company’s suppliers in Turkey, ultimately forcing the firm to respect ILO Conventions 87 and 98 (IMF 2006). Despite these successes, however, many critique IFAs by noting that, first, they are primarily a European phenomenon as all but seven of the fifty-five agreements signed as of October 2007 were with continental or northern European countries with no Canadian, British, Asian or Latin American companies involved (Stavis and Boswell 2007). Moreover, the usefulness of GFAs that only

commit an employer to observing international human rights law with no strong enforcement mechanism is dubious at best. Finally, considering the GUFs on the whole are relatively underfunded and understaffed organizations, the resource commitment required to effectively administer a growing number of global agreements may not prove worthwhile in light of the questionable returns. In spite of such concerns, the growth of IFAs is significant, if for no other reason, than they may, if utilized properly, represent ‘space for bargaining and organizing’ (Wills 2002).

Complementing the resurgence of the international trade union movement in recent years, as illustrated by the increasing numbers of framework agreements, has been the rise in the number of organizing campaigns with a significant international component. In addition to the case of the campaign by the Teamsters and UNI to organize Quebecor employees in the United States, Latin American and Europe previously mentioned, the GUF the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF) has also embarked on a global campaign to organize Nestlé and Coca-Cola employees (Garver et al. 2007) and also played an important role in the victory of the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union in an NLRB election in December of 2007 (Reuters 2007). UNITE-HERE has similarly utilized international organizing strategies in its organizing effort in Plainfield and Indianapolis, Indiana for two clothing manufacturing facilities of Brylane, a subsidiary of the French firm Pinault-Printemps-Redoute (Clean Clothes Campaign 2002).

With the development of such global responses to the rise of global corporations, it is clear that the international labor movement has changed in a dramatic way over the course of the past 150 years. From its origins in the International Workingmen’s Association claiming 25,000

members primarily in Europe, the peak-level global labor organization of today, the ITUC, most recently reported over 167 million members in 305 affiliated organizations from 153 countries and territories (ITUC 2007). Looking beyond simply the numbers, the strategies of the global labor movement have also been reexamined. Whereas in its early years the movement's goals were primarily policy-driven, focusing for example on a push for international labor legislation, with some direct aid to national unions by way of financial aid during strikes, the labor internationalism of today, while still advocating a wide range of policy-related issues, has expanded to include significant political, economic and industrial support for national union's organizing drives and collective bargaining negotiations.

4. The Push to Go Global

This increase in the number and scope of cross-border efforts undertaken by trade unions in recent years stems from a wide variety of factors. First, advances in communications technology and new sources of information expand the possibilities for cooperation among trade unionists (Lee 1997). Levinson presciently noted the potential importance of such technology prior to having knowledge of the internet when he wrote that “Only a computerized information bank could possibly keep bargainers and union strategists tuned into the strengths and weaknesses of companies and provide them with current data on financial facts and figures, productions, inventories, wages, hours of work, vacations, pensions and all the other factors involved” (1972: 104).

These advances have been utilized in a variety of ways including assisting organizing efforts (Cantrell 1999), mobilizing responses to employer actions by way of website notices, e-mail bombardment, mass text messages and sharing information regarding industrial relations practices and company financial status across borders to aid in negotiations. Perhaps the most novel manner in which the internet has been employed to support union efforts is illustrated by the ‘virtual strike’ mentioned above against IBM coordinated by UNI in which activists used the internet as the stage itself for industrial action. Dock workers in Liverpool, England similarly utilized the internet to organize international support in their labor dispute in the late 1990’s (Bailey 2006). Consequently, while advances in computer and communications technology have facilitated the growth of transnational corporations, the same process has also aided workers in uniting across borders by increasing the range of available tactics and creating new avenues for collaboration.

Similarly, the decline in ideological divisions among the international labor movement following the Cold War has also served to encourage transnational collaboration. Relatively absent now, are the ideological barriers that separated communist, socialist, social democratic and business unions for much of the post World War II period. Over the past twenty years in the media sector, for instance, unions have both significantly increased their cross-border work and solidified their formal transnational structures (Wilson 2000). This is not to say, however, that all such ideological divisions between unions have disappeared as other differences, such as religious orientation, continue to play a role. Rather, the end of the Cold War simply signifies that one of the primary barriers that has fragmented the international labor movement going as far back as the First International has become less important as the rise of the global corporation replaces communism as the primary threat. Reflecting this shift, with the election of the New Voice leadership in the AFL-CIO in 1995 many of the ‘cold-warriors’ who for so long dominated the federation’s foreign policy outlook left the organization, leaving it with a number of new activists focused less on promoting non-communist labor organizations and more on fostering all forms of independent trade unionism (Moody 1997; Shorrock 1999). As a result of the rise of the new leadership, not only have the solidarity-enhancing international activities of the AFL increased but also, it is likely that radical unions and others in Latin America, who had formerly been reluctant to cooperate with the federation, will change their attitudes toward cooperation with the American labor movement.

In addition to these technological and ideological shifts, a wide range of other factors have been found to foster international cooperation between trade unions. These forces can be usefully broken down along generally economic, structural and political lines.

Economic Push Factors

Economically, part of the pressure for unions to go global stems from a global adaptation of the 'New Jersey strategy' utilized by employers in the needletrades industry during the early twentieth century in which factories were relocated from heavily unionized areas in New York City to 'foreign zones' in New Jersey. Textile unions such as the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) thus expanded their organizing efforts geographically. When the firms reacted by sending production to Philadelphia the ACTWU responded by similarly expanding the scope of its organizing efforts (Blackwell 1998). UNITE-HERE today has followed utilized the same pattern by following the work of textile and apparel firms abroad and aiding union organizing drives in Central America, the Caribbean and South Africa (Frundt 1999).

The logic of this approach stems from the effort to prevent downward pressure on wages and conditions of employment inherent in multinational's strategies of outsourcing production functions to locales with lower labor costs. Not only does capital mobility threaten the jobs of trade unionists in developed states (Bronfenbrenner and Luce 2004) but also their terms and conditions of employment through whipsawing (Rechenbach and Cohen 2002) as well as organizing efforts (Bronfenbrenner 2000) and first contract campaigns (Bronfenbrenner 2001). Consequently, in order to halt a global race to the bottom, one goal of labor internationalism is to strengthen trade unionism abroad, particularly in developing countries. This incentive to go international is further strengthened by the natural link between employees of the same multinational, despite the fact that they reside in disparate geographic spaces. This 'springboard effect' was evident in the formation in 1997 of the tri-national Echelin Alliance among the Mexican FAT, the America unions the UE, IBT, USW, and UNITE-HERE and the Canadian Autoworkers Union, each of which represents employees of the multinational firm.

A further economic factor promoting transnational cooperation among labor unions is the failure of the global governance system to address the negative effects of economic globalization. As the ILO's World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization noted, the benefits of globalization have been distributed very unequally with only 16 developing countries having greater than 3% annual growth in per capita income between 1985 and 2000 (ILO 2004: 36). Moreover, outside of China, poverty in the developing world has increased over the past twenty years with 40% of the world's population living in poverty¹⁰ today, up from 36% in 1981 and the number of people living in extreme poverty¹¹ nearly doubling from 164 to 316 million (Stiglitz 2006: 11). Inequality has similarly grown with 48 of the 73 countries surveyed in the ILO report exhibiting rising inequality over the post World War II period (Cornia and Kiiski 2001).

Despite these negative consequences for a large percentage of the global population, international institutions with the capacity to moderate these impacts, such as the World Trade Organization WTO, have failed to make a concerted effort to do so (Wilkinson 2002). Because of this failure, and the related unsuccessful efforts of other international organizations such as the ILO and ITUC to achieve an institutionalized link between trade liberalization and labor rights, many trade unionists have begun to look for other options to force firms to respect the right of freedom of association and for workers to bargain collectively. One method employed by labor has been to increase the degree of cross-border cooperation among trade unions.

Structural Pull Forces

Notwithstanding the lack of a labor-trade linkage on a global scale, regional economic integration policies and agreements, while contributing to the ascendance of the neoliberal

¹⁰ Defined by the World Bank as living on less than \$2 a day.

¹¹ Defined by the World Bank as living on less than \$1 a day.

economic model, have also created what Tarrow (2005) has termed ‘opportunity structures’ that create a “space into which domestic actors can move, encounter others like themselves and form coalitions that transcend their borders” (25). Such arrangements that serve to pull trade unions into transnational alliances have been created in a variety of regional contexts.

The 1994 European Works Council Directive, for instance, has helped to foster inter-European union collaboration. Applicable to companies with 1,000 or more employees, including at least 150 in two European Union (EU) Member States, the Directive obliges firms to establish European Works Councils (EWCs) to bring together worker representatives from all EU states in which it has operations to meet with management once a year for the purpose of informing and consulting with the employees regarding business. This structure has been utilized by unions to enhance cross-border cooperation in order to improve their bargaining power (Pulignano 2007) and aid organizing efforts. During the Quebecor campaign, for example, the one day pre-meeting of EWC representatives was used, in the words of one participant in the campaign, as a “springboard to invite the Brazilians, the Americans, [and] all the major players [in the organizing campaign] to start attending those meetings which gave them the opportunity to plan their campaign... and to establish personal relationships with other unionists,” (T&G official 5, interview by author 2008). While it is important to note that the value of EWCs for the labor movement has been questioned due to the potential for the employer to engage in ‘micro-corporatist’ relations with employees and undermine their respective trade unions (Martin and Ross 2000), they nevertheless serve as legally mandated structures that have the potential to foster inter-union collaboration.

In the North American context, the passage of the labor side agreement to NAFTA, the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation (NAALC) has similarly fostered cross-border

linkages between trade unions in Canada, Mexico and the United States, despite its relatively weak enforcement mechanisms. Because the labor agreement requires that complaints alleging a violation of one of the eleven 'labor principles' described by the accord be filed in a country other than that in which the violation took place, workers in the three states have been encouraged to work together to defend labor rights and have consequently established a number of new relationships (Compa 2001). Unionists have similarly utilized the US Government's General System of Preferences (Alston 1996; Jessup and Gordon 2000; Compa and Lyle 2003), which provides developing nations with preferential tariff treatment contingent on respect for a number of human rights, to establish transnational links and put pressure on multinationals and recalcitrant governments to honor the workers' right to freedom of association.

Opportunity structures for cross-border labor cooperation such as EWCs and the NAALC have not been strictly limited to western states. Following the creation of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in 1989 for the purpose of facilitating economic growth, trade and investment, trade unionists in the Asia-Pacific region have been provided with an opportunity to enhance cross-border collaboration. To take advantage of the APEC structure, the ICFTU helped establish the Asia Pacific Labour Network (APLN) in 1995 with the goal of enhancing the social dimension of APEC processes. Under the guise of the APLN labor leaders from throughout the region have met to send delegations to APEC forums to lobby for labor-friendly policies leading to the growth of a number of regional transnational relationships among the unions (Haworth and Hughes 2002). Even though the role of the All China Federation of Trade Unions in the APLN has proved to be a divisive issue, the organization is noteworthy as it has facilitated contacts between unions from both the developed and developing world.

National Political Climate and Transnational Labor Cooperation

Further propelling national unions to engage one another across borders has been a decline in their domestic political influence in many states. Generally, Logue emphasized in his 'rational self-interest' framework, that "the greater the degree of trade union control over its national environment, the less likely it is to undertake international activity to achieve its members' goals," (1980: 21-2). Simply put, the tendency to utilize transnational tactics is inversely proportional to a given labor organization's national influence.

Within this framework then, the declining national power of trade unions in many countries over the past twenty years has encouraged them to build countervailing transnational links. The decrease in domestic leverage has come along a variety of fronts, perhaps most important, particularly in states without a strong corporatist tradition and corresponding institutional links to those in power in government, has been the significant drop in national union density. As the ILO (1998) found, since the 1980s membership in trade unions has decreased in a variety of regional contexts falling nearly 36% in central and eastern Europe, 19.4% in Oceania, 19% in Central America, 6% in South America and 15.6% in western Europe (2). While the extent of membership decline varies widely by state with levels in some areas such as northern Europe and Asia remaining relatively static or, in some cases, growing, the overall trend has been negative with a consequent adverse affect on national political influence.

Compounding the problems of declining membership has been a political shift to the right in many states that has favored private businesses at the expense of labor.¹² As previously noted, this political swing to the right on economic policies is perhaps most evident in the United Kingdom where, despite its origin in the British trade union movement, the Labour Party under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown has consistently attempted to limit the power of the unions within government. This trend can be seen from the earliest days of the government when both Blair

¹² See Piven (1992) for a detailed examination of the causes behind the decline of labor parties.

and Gordon Brown advocated the position that all party members should be individual members with none represented by union block votes (Ludlam and Taylor 2003). Similarly, the government has refused to award legal status to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights which would have the effect of extending a range of individual rights throughout the EU and consolidating some collective rights through which individual rights may be enforced by trade unions.¹³

This shift to the right in Europe, however, has not been limited to the UK, traditionally considered one of the most economically liberal states in the region. In states characterized by coordinated market economies such as Germany, for instance, a similar policy swing occurred with the election of Christian Democrat Angela Merkel as Chancellor in 2005. Since her electoral victory she has attempted to limit the influence of trade unions, calling into question the German tradition of *Mitbestimmung* or codetermination which grants seats on company boards to workers. Moreover, the Chancellor's future plans for the role of trade unions can be deduced by looking at her electoral program which emphasized the need to dilute trade union influence on wages and to relax legal protection against dismissal (Financial Times 2006). The election of a center-right coalition in Sweden, where unions have historically wielded considerable power, likewise highlights the declining political influence of labor organizations in Europe. The breakdown in social dialogue in Sweden, as well as Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands has been argued to be the result of European and global economic integration (Kurzer 1993).

Beyond simply Europe, unions have lost power domestically in Latin American states where strong corporatist traditions used to guarantee labor at least a modicum of influence in the

¹³ It is important to note that while the UK Labour Party has shifted to the right, it is clearly more favorable toward trade union interests than the previous government led by Margaret Thatcher as indicated by the passage of legislation pushed by trade unionists such as the National Minimum Wage Act in 1998 and the Employment Relations Act of 2000 establishing a 'card check' system for union recognition.

political process. In Argentina, for example, the *Partido Justicialista* or Peronist party was transformed during the 1980s and early 1990s from a labor-dominated party into a ‘machine party’ where unions were relatively marginal actors (Levitsky 2003). Similarly, even though the election of Vicente Fox in Mexico in 2000 marked a turning point in the country’s political history as it represented a break from the one-party system dominated by the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* for the preceding 80 years, labor’s prospects in the country under his rightist *Partido Acción Nacional* have not improved (Bensusán and Cook 2003). While it is important to note that trade unions in the region may benefit from the recent rise of many leftist regimes such as Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil (himself a former leader of the metalworkers union) and Evo Morales (leader of the *cocalero* or coca growers union) in Bolivia, the foregoing examples serve to illustrate the breakdown of the corporatist system that had previously benefited unions to a certain degree in some states.

Even assuming the existence of the political will to promote labor-friendly policies, there is significant debate over whether national governments are even be able to implement such policies due to the increasing internationalization of domestic economies. From a broad perspective the decrease in barriers to capital mobility around the globe has encouraged firms to adopt new approaches to investment such as lean production, global sourcing and offshore funding (Breitenfellner 1997) that foster ‘regime shopping’ whereby MNCs search for geographic locales that best complement their respective investment strategies when making production location decisions. This increased flexibility in turn has pushed national governments to subordinate their social policy priorities to those of multinationals in order to attract foreign investment.

From a macroeconomic standpoint, the ability of governments to adopt fiscal and monetary policies favorable to labor has been similarly limited due to increasing global economic integration. Whereas Keynesian economics involving strong fiscal stimuli through government spending dominated the thinking of economic policy makers in the post World War II era, the system began to break down beginning in the early 1970s leading to the rise of neoclassical and supply-side economics characterized by an emphasis on limiting the role of the government and fiscal austerity involving low rates of taxation to encourage private investment. As a result of this new economic paradigm governments have been forced into a position of competing with other nations for investment via cutting tax rates which in turn decreases overall revenue leading policy-makers to cut or privatize public services, despite strong opposition from the labor movement, in order to maintain balanced national budgets and prevent downward pressures on the exchange rate. Such was the case in France when Socialist President Francois Mitterrand was forced to back away from his economic stimulus plan in the face of a large outflow of capital and a run on the French franc (Sachs and Wyplosz 1986).

Maintaining an independent monetary policy is similarly difficult due to the elimination of many controls on the flow of capital and financial integration. While labor would generally benefit from low interest rates that stimulate production and investments and increase employment, independently setting the rate is now difficult as an interest rate lower than that of a state's neighbors may prompt a run on its currency, increasing inflationary pressures and, ultimately, raising interest rates. Compounding this issue has been the increase in the number of independent central banks that focus their efforts almost solely on targeting inflation rather than the overall economic picture. The establishment of the European Monetary Union and the Eurozone represents the most advanced example of the effect of economic integration on

monetary policy. With many European states forgoing their national currencies in favor of the Euro, not only have they completely ceded control of national monetary policy to the European Central Bank, but are also required to meet a series of strict criteria regarding budget deficits, inflation levels and interest rates that have further limited economic policy autonomy.

Consequently, from the political perspective of labor internationalism advocated by Logue (1980), trade unions around the globe are being pressured to increase cross-border collaboration in response to their declining domestic leverage. This decline in national power is the result of not only falling membership levels, particularly in North America and Western Europe, but also political shifts that favor capital over labor as well as economic integration policies that hamper governments from pursuing labor-friendly social and macroeconomic strategies. In addition to these political pressures, economic push factors and the development of transnational opportunity structures created by the process of globalization similarly encourage trade unions to expand the scope of their actions to match that of multinational corporations. It is important to note, however, that the ultimate form of cross-border work may vary depending on a range of nationally experienced political and economic factors. Unions in the United States for instance, have prioritized labor rights policies and basic organizing, focusing on developing country and transatlantic initiatives while European unions, on the whole, have emphasized broader welfare policy and collective bargaining in their own regional setting (Burgoon and Jacoby 2004). Irrespective of these varying approaches, they nevertheless represent similar reactions to a similar set of pressures.

Broadly then, while economic globalization has negatively impacted national unions in a variety of ways such as spurring the flight of jobs from unionized environments to non-unionized sites with lower labor costs, limiting bargaining power during contract negotiations and

curtailing labor's national political influence, it has at the same time created a positive climate for increasing transnational cooperation by way of establishing both a need and corresponding structures. As Agnew and Corbridge (1995) note then, "Globalization is not only a synonym for disempowerment: it creates certain conditions for democratization, decentralization and empowerment as well as centralization and standardization. Globalization opens as many doors as it shuts" (219).

5. Barriers to Cross-Border Collaboration

Despite the multitude of factors mentioned above that are both pushing and pulling trade unions to increase their international work, there continues to be what Banks and Russo (1999) have termed a 'structural lag' between the scale of the operations of capital and that of labor. The work of most labor organizations, in fact, continues to occur primarily at the national level where the organizational, political and financial resources of unions remain concentrated (Cumbers 2004) leading to transnational cooperation occurring on a sporadic rather than an ongoing basis to support predominately defensive actions (Bronfenbrenner 2007). The causes behind the continuing emphasis on the national vary but may, however, be usefully broken down along lines relating to the practical difficulties inherent in international work, country-specific differences, the growth of economic nationalism that can be one side effect of globalization and historical legacies, particularly that of the American trade union movement.

Problems of the Practical

Beginning on a practical level, language barriers and a lack of skilled translators as well the simple cost of international work which often entails expensive travel commitments for union officials and members serve to inhibit cross-border collaboration. Moreover, although the global union federations have the potential to mitigate language and cultural barriers between unions due their extensive experience in the field of international work, they often have relatively few financial and manpower resources to draw upon in order to live up to their full potential (Brecher, Costello and Smith 2006).

Finally, assuming that the GUFs did indeed have the organizational capacity to fully facilitate international cooperation, many trade unions that have strong relationships and significant bargaining leverage with a given company may be reluctant to put that relationship at

risk to aid another in organizing a foreign subsidiary of the firm. Such was the case in the Malaysian National Union of Employees in Companies Manufacturing Rubber Products' (NUECMRP) campaign to organize employees of Euromedical Industries, a subsidiary of the Danish firm APM-Maersk. Despite the Danish General Workers Union's strong relationship and corresponding leverage with APM-Maersk, the union was reluctant to involve itself directly in the campaign causing the Danish International Forum of the Labor Movement to take the lead (Wad 2007). That is not to say that all unions will refuse requests to put pressure on a company with which they have good relations in order to aid another union as evidenced by the Swedish union representing employees of the security firm Securitas' push to sign a card check and neutrality agreement with the SEIU (Moberg 2007; Quan 2007). Rather, one salient point of the APM-Maersk campaign is that the bargaining interests of one union may collide with the organizing interests of another thus creating a barrier to cooperation between the two.

Linked to the concern that aiding an organizing drive in the foreign subsidiary of a firm with which a union already has a strong relationship would damage that relation is the unease engendered by ceding some control over the direction and form of an organizing campaign inherent in strong cross-border collaboration. This issue is particularly relevant when a GUF takes the lead in a campaign as the global federations are not directly accountable to the membership of individual unions but rather their national leadership raising fears that organizational democracy may be undermined.

National Framework Barriers

National legal and industrial relations systems may also serve to inhibit cross-border work by trade unions. First, from a broad perspective, coordination between trade unions across borders presumes the legal right for unions to exist. In a handful of states, such as Burma, this

assumption does not hold true. Further, even where labor law in theory protects workers' right to organize and bargain collectively, export processing zones in some countries including Pakistan, India and Bangladesh are excluded from national labor legislation (Gordon 2000) while in others, particularly in Central America, the law is enforced minimally, if at all (Anner and Evans 2004).¹⁴ An additional legal barrier to international trade union cooperation includes bans on affiliating with international labor organizations such as the ITUC, requiring prior authorization from the government or by permitting it only in certain statutorily prescribed circumstances (Servais 2000). Finally, some tactics may be specifically prohibited by statute or court-made law except in specific situations such as in the United Kingdom¹⁵ and the United States¹⁶.

Beyond simply the national legal frameworks in which trade unions operate, differences in the broader pattern of industrial relations between countries can also act as a barrier to cross-border cooperation. As Streeck (1991) notes, for instance, the strong position of German unions in the national economy as 'organs of the constitution' or *Verfassungsorgan* has conditioned their attitude toward European integration leading to their support for closer national economic ties whereas unions in other states such as France, Great Britain and Italy initially opposed the process thus limiting to some extent the potential for transnational linkages in a specific arena. National industrial relations systems affect not only the political orientation of trade unions but also establish their respective role in the larger national society and within the workplace. Consequently, differing representational tasks may limit the scope for cooperation as is clearly illustrated in Rothstein's (2006) account of two unions, one in Janesville, Michigan and another in Silao, Mexico, representing employees of General Motors. Despite the fact that the employees at the two plants produced the same product based on the same 'lean production'

¹⁴ This is not to say that organizing in EPZs is impossible as Gunawardana (2007) clearly illustrates.

¹⁵ Employment Act of 1990.

¹⁶ *Mackay Radio & Telegraph Co.*, 304 US 333 (1938).

techniques the two unions involved had no coordinated bargaining strategy as they bargained over completely different subjects. Whereas the American union negotiated with GM over local work rules, leaving wage bargaining to the national UAW leadership, the Mexican union, *Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Industria Metal-Mecánica, Automoriz, Similares y Conexos*, with no national structure, negotiated only wage levels, allowing General Motors to unilaterally set plant work rules. As a result, the possibility for collaboration between the two was restricted as both played substantially different bargaining roles in representing their membership.

Finally, the structure of national union organization in some countries can force a labor organization looking for a foreign partner to make either a difficult and perhaps divisive choice or alternately manage a number of partnerships at once. In the case of the former, national labor movements are divided along ideological lines such as in southern Europe where communist, socialist, and Christian-Democratic federations, among others, are in competition. Consequently, when reaching out to trade unions in such a situation it may be necessary to work around or through the ideological barriers forcing the organization to overcome what can be longstanding national practices. In the latter situation, present in countries such as Japan and Romania, unions exist on a company-by-company basis in a system known as enterprise unionism. For a labor organization attempting to build sectoral-wide solidarity around a specific campaign then, it would be forced to manage a number of concurrent partnerships further complicating an already difficult task.

Competitive Pressures of Globalization

While the process of globalization and corresponding increased economic integration may spur trade unions to increase cross-border work as they see their national political leverage decline, the same process can at the same time have a divisive effect, particularly in mobile

sectors of the economy. Whereas firms are now more than ever able to shift production to countries with lower labor costs, workers are relatively fixed in geographic space due to, among other things, controls on the free movement of labor and the high financial and emotional cost of migration. Consequently, multinational corporations have been able to play groups of workers off one another as they drive down wages and conditions of employment in the classic 'race to the bottom' while at the same time limiting the prospects for global solidarity that has the potential to halt such a trend.

Perhaps the best example of the effect of capital mobility on labor internationalism is in the textile and garment manufacturing industry. Due to the relatively low sunk costs inherent in the production process of the sector as compared to other mobile sectors, firms in the industry have successfully utilized outsourcing strategies to avoid union organizing drives, as was the case at the Kimi factory in Honduras and the Tamarin plant in El Salvador, and thus encouraged workers to compete against one another for jobs leading to labor internationalism in the sector to be 'sporadic and unsuccessful' (Anner et. al. 2006). This process is facilitated by the nature of the modern textile and garment industry, characterized by a buyer-driven commodity chain, thus further allowing large multinational firms to play workers and their clients, the actual producers, against one another (Gereffi 1994). Employer opposition as a barrier to transnational union efforts extends beyond fostering competition between workers to also include withholding information (Gordon and Turner 2000a) and outright refusals to meet union representatives (Northrup and Rowan 1979).

The Importance of History

Even in the absence of the above-mentioned factors, the historical legacies of the international actions of some trade unions from the developed world have generated a substantial

amount of mistrust among those in developing countries, particularly in Latin America; and while this suspicion may have decreased in recent years due to leadership changes and the declining importance of anti-communism politically, it undoubtedly continues to have an impact on the potential for transnational action.

Until relatively recently even, the AFL employed an active policy of opposing and undermining labor groups in Latin America that were nationalist, anarchist or classist in nature. The first inter-hemispheric labor organization, the Pan American Federation of Labor, for instance, was created in 1918 as an explicit response to the regional activities of the anarcho-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (Buchanan 1990: 3). While this pattern of opposing leftist trade unions in Latin America was moderated during the years surrounding World War II as the AFL was pushed into an alliance with socialist groups to combat fascism, the rise of the Cold War in the postwar period provoked the American federation's return to a staunch anti-communist position led initially by the roving ambassador Serafino Romualdi, himself a former agent for the predecessor to the CIA, the Office of Strategic Services (Sims 1992).

Further emphasizing the AFL's approach to promoting class collaboration and business unionism was the creation of the now infamous American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) in 1962. Through AIFLD the AFL, and indirectly, the US government which funded the project, provided technical assistance to favored labor groups, aided the rise of conservative, authoritarian regimes in countries such as Brazil (Welch 1995) and the Dominican Republic in collaboration with the CIA, backed the overthrow of labor-friendly governments in Guatemala and British Guyana (Buchanan 1990) and supported members of the El Salvadoran junta that during the 1980s killed over 30,000 (Armstrong et al 1990). Particularly damaging was AIFLD's role in supporting the 1973 military coup against the democratically elected president

of Chile Salvador Allende. These efforts to destabilize non-conservative unionism in Latin America as well as in Europe through the Free Trade Union Committee, which received far more financial support from the CIA than from sponsoring trade unions (Carew 1998), significantly tarnished the reputation of the AFL and by association the American labor movement as a whole making current efforts to develop international ties more difficult.

In addition to the historical legacy of the AFL-CIO's activities abroad generally and in Latin America in particular, a range of other factors serve as constraints on the practice of global solidarity and cooperation between trade unions. From a practical standpoint, differences in language, culture and the simple cost of engaging in extensive international work forms a barrier that unions must overcome in order to confront global corporations on a global scale. Similarly, national legal frameworks can inhibit both the range of options for transnational work as well as the possibility of engaging in cross-border efforts in the first place through statutes or case law prohibiting secondary actions and laws banning or severely restricting the ability of a national union to engage the international labor movement. Finally, while globalization has, in some respects, pushed union to increase their global work, at the same time it can serve to inhibit international solidarity through pushing workers to view one another as competitors rather than partners. Despite these barriers, however, space still does exist for unions to connect with one another for the purpose of challenging multinationals in the global economy.

6. Clearing the Hurdles

In light of the above-mentioned difficulties of establishing strong transnational links between trade unions in mutual support of organizing drives, three recent campaigns involving a wide range of global partners stand out for their both their relatively well-developed international strategies and their duration. As such, this section seeks to describe the transnational components of the Driving Up Standards, Justice for Janitors and Group 4 Securicor campaigns by charting out first, the origins of the respective organizing efforts followed by examining the key events and strategies utilized during the campaigns and will conclude by touching on the current state of each. Throughout this descriptive component particular attention will be paid to the role of the relevant global union federation in assisting the organizing efforts of its affiliates.

The source of information for both this section as well as the two that will follow is primarily interviews and discussions with the actual campaign participants including officials from the SEIU in the United States as well as the T&G and ITF in the UK and UNI in Geneva, union consultants and academic activists. Additional sources of information include limited participant observation in the UK component of the Justice for Janitors campaign, a review of the published academic literature and union campaign documentation of the drives.

A. Driving Up Standards

While the Driving Up Standards campaign has been previously analyzed by Tattersall (2007), her work centered primarily on the bilateral trade union linkage aspect of the campaign, analyzing the effort through the lens of labor-community coalitions. In contrast, the focus of the current work first, charts out the development of the campaign as a whole rather than exploring it

in terms of its relation to the SEIU's Global Partnership Department and second details the role the ITF has played throughout the course of the campaign.

As one SEIU official directly involved in the campaign notes the Driving Up Standards effort has been divided into two broad phases. First, "the unofficial period of traditional trans-Atlantic solidarity ... started as soon as First Group bought [the public transportation division of] Ryder Systems," the predecessor to First Student in 1999 (SEIU Official 1, interview by author 2008). Following the acquisition, SEIU local officials, realizing that the new owner was a British multinational, began to put themselves in contact with the T&G, the union representing roughly 95% of First Group UK bus drivers. These first informal contacts then, a T&G officer recalls, led to the T&G inviting local SEIU officials to attend a road transport meeting at the T&G's education center in Eastbourne with the purpose of mapping out the activities of the major UK carriers including Stagecoach and Arriva, in addition to First Group, as, with the maturing of the UK market for public transportation, many of the companies were beginning to expand their foreign operations (T&G Official 7, interview by author 2008).

Mirroring the T&G's conference to examine the international expansion of urban transport multinationals, the International Transport Workers' Federation in June of 2000 established the Urban Transport Multinational Network for the purpose of exchanging information on multinationals in the sector, organizing meetings and seminars to discuss current issues and coordinating international solidarity in times of dispute (ITF 2000). The founding of this network then, marked the entrance of the ITF into the campaign with participants in the meeting including, among others, both T&G activists as well as officials from SEIU Local 284 in Minnesota, despite the fact that at the time the SEIU was not affiliated to the ITF, due to a local labor dispute surrounding an organizing drive with the company in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area

(ITF Official, interview by author 2008). Not only did the creation of the network introduce the ITF into the initial, informal stages of the campaign but also laid the groundwork for future cooperation, leading to a second meeting in December of 2000 in Washington DC with wider participation among North American ITF affiliates¹⁷ with membership in British transport multinationals as well as another GUF, Public Services International (ITF 2007).

The pattern of unofficial international links with US involvement primarily centered at the local, rather than national level, continued through 2001 with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters becoming seriously involved in the campaign for the first time when IBT Local 610 in St. Louis, Missouri went on strike against First Group's US subsidiary First Student in October (ITF Official, author interview 2008). Following the union's request for help from the ITF, the GUF first organized a second meeting in Washington DC in early December of American unions representing First Group employees, including officials from the T&G, with the unions as a group demanding the company resolve the dispute (ITF Official, author interview 2008). Two days later ITF and SEIU officials flew out to St. Louis to support the ongoing negotiations leading to an outcome favorable to the IBT local with average wage increases of 70-80% over the life of the contract (SEIU Official 1, author interview 2008; ITF 2007).

To further put pressure on First Group the ITF helped to coordinate activities surrounding its annual International Road Transport Action Day in October designed, according to one participant, to "encourage our road transport unions to organize unorganized workers," (ITF Official, author interview 2008). Centered on the dispute in Minnesota, SEIU members picketed the head office of First Student in St. Paul with TGWU stickers, posters and placards sent from the UK while at the same time T&G drivers expressed solidarity with their American 'co-

¹⁷ In addition to the SEIU, other participants included the IBT, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Amalgamated Transit Union and the Transport Workers Union.

workers' during a meeting in London and members of the British National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) engaged in solidarity actions in Portsmouth (ITF 2006).

Overall, while at the time still confined primarily to local contract and organizing disputes in the US with little in the way of a broader comprehensive international campaign strategy, this initial stage stretching from 1999 through early 2004 became crucial for the drive's later development for several reasons. First, the meetings coordinated by the ITF helped to establish links and working relationships between unions representing First Group employees in the United States and the United Kingdom and allowed the organizations to exchange information on both the company as a whole and its industrial relations practices in the US. Additionally, through ITF involvement the IBT, which would eventually take the lead in the North American component of the campaign, entered into the informal partnership. Finally, the solidarity events, conferences and support provided by the T&G and ITF raised awareness of the poor labor relations practices of First Student in the US and established a basis for future cooperation.

In addition to the strong foundation for partnership laid down between 1999 and 2001, one T&G official credits the rise of Tony Woodley to General Secretary in 2003, elected on a platform of developing a serious organizing agenda, as an additional contributing factor to the establishment of the organizing partnership with the SEIU that would later play an enormous role not only in the Driving Up Standards campaign, but also in the Justice for Cleaners campaign in the UK (T&G Official 2, author interview 2008). Resulting from the T&G's renewed commitment to aggressive organizing Andy Stern, International President of the SEIU, flew out to the UK in early 2004 to discuss organizing efforts with British unions and met with the T&G officials to discuss the SEIU's campaign to organize First Student bus drivers. Following the

meeting, a T&G official recalls writing “something up on... the way a campaign could work,” focusing on “building relationships between workers in America and Britain, and embarrassing the employer in Britain by constantly referring to their anti-union activity,” (T&G Official 7, author interview 2008).

Four months later the SEIU and T&G jointly established the International Transit Organizing Committee (ITOC) composed of six representatives from both unions for the purpose of both generally reviewing the progress of the campaign (T&G Official 7, author interview 2008), serving as a forum for critical decisions and negotiating diplomatic disputes (Tattersall 2007). The creation of the ITOC in 2004 thus marked the beginning of what one SEIU official notes is the official stage of the campaign under the name Driving Up Standards (SEIU Official 1, author interview 2008), distinguished from the earlier phase by its more comprehensive and strategic approach applying leverage on First Group, a shift in focus from the local to national and international level¹⁸ and greater involvement of high-level union officials.

With the SEIU heading the organizing effort in the US, the year following the establishment of the ITOC was primarily an ‘air campaign’ with the goal of securing a national agreement on organizing with First Group (SEIU Official 1, author interview 2008). As one campaign participant notes, however, after the SEIU began serious organizing efforts on the ground “they found the IBT was also doing the same kind of thing. They also realized quickly that doing this without the Teamsters would lead to a duplication of efforts and jurisdictional disputes so they had to work together,” (SEIU Official 1, author interview 2008). The situation for the SEIU was further complicated when the company began to argue that, with a membership in the company of less than 1,000, the SEIU was not the natural union for the bus drivers.

¹⁸ It is important to note that while the broader focus of the campaign has shifted away from supporting disputes in a somewhat ad hoc fashion, there is still a strong focus on the local level, as in any organizing campaign, on supporting the organizing work of SEIU and IBT locals.

Consequently, in order to neutralize the company's argument as well as to avoid a potentially bitter jurisdictional clash the Teamsters became the second major American partner in the campaign, and as one campaign consultant recalls, eventually took over the leading role from the SEIU in mid 2005 (Campaign Consultant 3, author interview 2008). An SEIU official involved in the international work, further explains that "We had been doing it as a joint campaign, then it became clear that it was much more their jurisdiction and it just seemed to make more sense [to transfer the lead role over to the IBT]. There are some [SEIU] locals that are still in the partnership because they were the ones who started the campaign¹⁹... but in terms of the main campaign strategy and the global part, we've turned it over to the Teamsters," (SEIU Official 3, author interview 2008).

Following the integration of the IBT into the Driving Up Standards campaign, efforts to apply pressure on First Group as a method to support the ground organizing campaign increased substantially in number and effect. In July of 2005, for instance, delegates from the T&G, SEIU and ITF attended the annual general meeting (AGM) of First Group in Aberdeen, Scotland to pose questions to the company's top executives regarding labor relations practices in North America (T&G Official 7, author interview 2008). In early 2006, the effect of the unions' corporate campaign was clearly felt as First Student lost a bid to provide bus services for the Riverside United School District in California, the largest district in the state, to a competitor with a more expensive offer partially due to its reputation as a bad corporate citizen (Compa, Logan and Feinstein 2007).

With the company's anti-union activities continuing unabated, the Teamsters contacted a professor at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, asking him to prepare

¹⁹ SEIU Local 503, for instance, was involved in a NLRB representation election in January, 2007. Other recent SEIU efforts include organizing drives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Jacksonville, Florida and Tigard, Oregon (Northwest Labor Press 2007).

a report analyzing First Student's behavior under international human rights law. The report, issued in May of 2006 concluded that, while some of the company's anti-union efforts were technically legal under US labor law, many of the strategies used to frustrate organizing efforts "violated international human rights standards on workers' freedom of association ... [and have] also jeopardized shareholders' interests because the company's increasing reputation for unfair labor practices, intimidation of employees, conflictive labor relations, and resulting effect on employee morale and turnover puts business growth at risk" (Compa 2007). With word of the company's aggressive anti-union campaign beginning to reach some of the major institutional investors of First Group, one shareholder decided in June to table a motion for the July, 2007 AGM calling for "a policy designed to minimise the risks to shareholder value that could arise from unsatisfactory labour relations outcomes," (Guardian 2006).

Further attention was called to the company's poor labor relations practices during the AGM as members and officials from the SEIU, IBT, T&G, the Irish Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU)²⁰ and ITF were in attendance and described the extent of the American subsidiary's efforts to destroy the organizing drives. Ultimately, the event was a success with the unions securing a commitment from First Group's top executives to stamp out anti-union behavior in North America. Despite the company's announced neutrality pledge, managers in the United States continued to run aggressive campaigns against organizing drives leading the unions in October of 2006 to publish a second report to, in the words of one campaign consultant, "look at what the company did after the neutrality pledge was made and their actions that clearly violated [it]," (Campaign Consultant 1, author interview 2007).

²⁰ SIPTU became involved in the campaign following First Group's purchase of the Dublin airport shuttle service Aircoach where they were engaged in an organizing drive that ran into resistance from the company that more resembled its labor relations practices in the US rather than that in Europe (ITF Official, author interview 2008).

The campaign adopted an even more extensive international orientation at the end of January 2007 when the ITF hosted a strategic meeting on First Group in light of its plans to expand into additional European transport markets. With representatives from the T&G, RMT, SIPTU, the Dutch FNV Bondgenoten and German trade union Transnet present, the purpose of the meeting was essentially for SEIU and IBT members to explain to the European trade unionists First Group's behavior in North America. One trade unionist involved in the meeting recalls the reactions of the Dutch and German representatives as particularly dramatic, describing the unionists as being "horrified just to listen to what goes on in the US when management tries to be hostile to labor unions," (ITF Official, author interview 2008). Stemming from this meeting, a delegation composed of three representatives from FNV Bondgenoten and the T&G's Chair of the National Passenger Committee traveled to upstate New York in April to speak with First Student employees about the business' labor relations practices. Upon returning to Holland one delegate, Brigitta Paas, then warned the CEO of the Dutch bus firm Connexxion, which First Group had submitted a bid to buy, about the company's conflictual employee relations which subsequently played a role in ensuring the company did not go to First Group (Campaign Consultant 2, author interview 2008).

Pressure on the company was further increased with the release of a report by the Teamsters in contemplation of the 2007 AGM that again analyzed First Student's anti-union activities under the company's alleged neutrality pledge and again concluded that significant violations had occurred (Campaign Consultant 1, author interview 2007). With the report to provide background then, the three authors of the report along with Teamster officials and members²¹ met with senior TWGU officials and members along with Mac Urata of the ITF and Brigitta Paas to attend the July 2007 shareholder meeting of First Group. During the AGM the

²¹ The lack of an SEIU presence reflects the leadership transition in the campaign to the IBT.

various delegates explained the ongoing anti-union activities and corresponding violations of company policy leading one participant, to state it was “undoubtedly the most successful AGM....and as a result we’ve seen some progress toward the type of things that might actually get this campaign won,” (Campaign Consultant 2, author interview 2008). Complementing the shareholder component of the campaign, political pressure was also placed on the company at the same time with a motion in the UK Parliament over First Group’s behavior in North America.

One concrete result of the 2007 AGM actions has been the appointment of former NLRB Chairman William Gould in December as Independent Monitor of the company’s Compliance Monitoring Programme. Supported by a staff of six, Gould is charged with investigating workers’ complaints of policy violations and reporting his findings to company officials (Franklin 2008). One trade unionist explains the problem with the appointment, however, is that it “very much has been done without the involvement of the unions directly, we are not aware of what the process is for making complaints, what the procedure is for them being dealt with, and what the sanctions are,” (Campaign Consultant 2, author interview 2008) thus prompting the General President of the IBT to write to Moir Lockhead, CEO of First Group, expressing concern.

In some cases the criticisms of the unions regarding the lack of enforcement of the neutrality policy have proven true, even relatively recently, as First Student managers continue to actively oppose organizing efforts utilizing legal, as well as illegal methods. Continuing anti-union activities prompted the Teamsters to send Fred Feinstein, one author of the tri-expert report in 2007, to Hodgkins, Illinois to investigate allegations of intimidation and coercion of the workforce on the part of management (Feinstein 2007). Similarly, as of late January, 2008 there

were over 50 separate outstanding charges against the company for violating American labor law (Raine 2008).

Despite these violations the Teamsters have enjoyed considerable success in winning NLRB representation elections, adding 3,600 members employed by First Student in 2007 alone bringing total membership in the company to 14,000 and making it the fourth largest employer for the union (BNA 2007a). This success is particularly important in light of First Group's 2007 purchase of Laidlaw International, pushing the company's American workforce to 66,000, less than half of which are unionized, and correspondingly diluting the industrial leverage the IBT has within the firm. While the growth in membership in First Student resulting from NLRB elections is clearly a positive result, such elections are resource intensive and easily delayed for extensive time periods due to the slow-moving and legalistic statutory trade union recognition process.²² Consequently, the international component of the campaign remains important to the Driving Up Standards effort as a whole, the goal of which, one participant notes, while requiring flexibility to meet changing conditions, is "a national agreement on organizing that the company wouldn't just have a 'neutrality' policy but would also give access to the workers in a constructive way," (SEIU Official 1, author interview 2008). Even though the possibility of achieving such a national agreement is uncertain at this point in time, the campaign is still actively underway at local, national and international levels with the Teamsters continuing to win representation elections.

B. Organizing Janitors Globally

Dubbed alternately Justice for Janitors, Cleaners for a Better Future, Clean Start or Justice for Cleaners depending on the national context, the campaign to organize and improve

²² For a thorough description of the problems associated with the statutory union recognition procedure established under the National Labor Relations Act see Lafer (2005).

the terms and conditions of employment for those who clean the office buildings in major commercial centers has spanned the globe from Los Angeles to The Hague to Hong Kong. With the SEIU serving as one of the key drivers to organize janitorial and building services globally, the history of the campaign stretches back to the much-hailed Justice for Janitors (JJJ) organizing effort started in the late 1980's and popularized by Ken Loach's film *Bread and Roses*.

The logic behind the initiation of the campaign in the United States stems from a variety of structural shifts in the property services sector. By the mid 1980's, while holding stable in the SEIU's traditional strongholds of New York City, Chicago and San Francisco, membership in building services in other urban markets was losing ground to non-union competitors forcing the union to make concessions to unionized employers. While the causes behind the decline vary, one key factor was the increase in the use of cleaning contractors in contrast to the past practice of building owners directly employing the janitorial workforce making for more fragile employment relationships. Moreover, because direct labor costs represent the primary cost for cleaning services firms, the importance of which rises with sales volume, once a firm reaches a certain size in terms of assets there are few economies of scale to gain making it hard to pass on wage increases to building owners and creating an extremely competitive industry. This shift undermined the bargaining power of the SEIU in property services leading, in Los Angeles for example, to the disappearance of the master union agreement in 1983 followed by a wage and benefit freeze in response to the city's move toward nonunion service providers (Fisk, Mitchell and Erickson 2000) further complicated by the increase in the number of 'double-breasted' firms where unionized employers established non-union operations under a separate name.

In addition to changes in the structure of the industry, the absolute size of the sector exploded, particularly in Los Angeles, with one third of current office space built after 1980 (Milkman 2006). As a result of these changes union density in the enormous Los Angeles building services market barely reached 30% by the 1980s in contrast to the mid 1970s where nearly all of the large buildings in downtown Los Angeles, Hollywood, Pasadena and Santa Monica were covered by a union contract (Waldinger, et. al 1998).

Occurring at the same time as the deunionization of building services in some urban areas, the SEIU was also in the process of developing a new set of campaigning tactics that would later be closely identified with the janitors organizing campaign. With the name 'Justice for Janitors' emerging out of a defensive contract struggle in Pittsburgh by using an aggressive, militant and confrontational strategy, the first offensive campaign began in Denver in 1986. As one organizer recalls, "That was the first laboratory for our campaign. It was a non-Board, a matter of diving in, raising enough hell in the downtown Denver area that the industry caved. A lot of demonstrations, legal stuff, wage and hour stuff, OSHA standards," (Waldinger, et. al 1998). These successful tactics were then exported to Los Angeles in 1988 leading to a new master union agreement by April of 1989 and contracts with ISS and American Building Maintenance, the two largest firms in the region, covering some 6,000 workers (Erickson, et. al (2002). This success was followed by contract victories in 1995 and again in 2000 when the GUF UNI helped to end the strike by putting pressure on the Danish cleaning contractor ISS through utilizing its contacts with the Danish labor movement (UNI official, author interview 2008).

While the Justice for Janitors campaign in Los Angeles truly put the organizing effort on the map in terms of publicity, the campaign has also served as a template for similar greenfield

organizing drives in other US cities including Baltimore, Miami, Columbus, Cincinnati and Indianapolis which revolve around obtaining recognition through card-check agreements. One campaign particularly notable for its international support took place in Houston, Texas, long considered a bastion of anti-unionism. Following 5,300 janitors, who clean 72% of Houston's commercial office space, achieving recognition in November of 2005, contract negotiations broke down leading to a membership vote authorizing a strike in September of 2006 (BNA 2006). In order to put pressure on the cleaning contractors, trade unionists in countries across the globe including England, Russia, Mexico, Australia, France and Brazil organized demonstrations and delegations to both the real estate firm Hines, the largest landlord in Houston, and Chevron which controls more property in the city than any other company (Participant observation, SEIU 2006a). Ultimately, due to both international and domestic pressure, the strike was settled after four weeks on terms favorable to the striking janitors.

Now representing more than 225,000 janitors across the United States (SEIU 2008), the SEIU has also played a significant role in supporting other unions to organize workers in the building services sector on a global scale. With ongoing campaigns in England, Holland, Australia and Hong Kong this section will briefly describe the history and current state of trade unions' efforts to represent janitors with a focus first, on the involvement of UNI and second, the Justice for Cleaners campaign initiated by the Transport and General Workers Union in London. The T&G's campaign merits special attention as it represents not only the first organizing effort among cleaners arising out of a partnership with the SEIU but also because UNI played an important role in mobilizing pressure on the building services firm ISS, a key player in the London market.

Similar to the Driving Up Standards campaign, the origin of what was to be called the Justice for Cleaners campaign in the United Kingdom is founded on a series of informal contacts between the SEIU and the T&G. One trade union official involved in the UK campaign recalls that around 2000 UNI contacted the T&G regarding its interest in developing its capacity for strategic organizing leading to one official travelling to New York to speak with the SEIU regarding its organizing tactics (T&G Official 1, author interview 2008). While the T&G leadership at the time was not interested in the plan, following the election of Tony Woodley as General Secretary in 2003 the opinions of T&G leadership regarding organizing were transformed and out of this transformation were born both a new campaign and a new approach to organizing.

The logic behind selecting cleaners stems from several factors, the first of which relates to the tradition of the T&G. As one official notes, the T&G has always had some membership, albeit relatively low, among cleaners, for example in car factories. Although the union had a troubled relationship with some organized groups of cleaners in the 1970s due to its bureaucratic structure at the time, by the 1980s with Margaret Thatcher's U-turn in state policy the TGWU represented cleaners dispersed throughout the public and private sector (Rowbotham 2006). Moreover, ten years ago the T&G undertook an initiative in Liverpool to establish area rates of pay for cleaning contractors which involved organizing some 3,000 cleaners in the city (T&G Official 2, author interview 2008), thus foreshadowing one goal of the UK Justice for Cleaners campaign. Combined with this history, the fact that the majority of those employed in the cleaning industry in Britain are immigrants encouraged the T&G to target the sector as it is closely related to the union's campaign to protect immigrants' rights. As a T&G officer summarizes then, the reasoning behind focusing on organizing building services arises from

“A new leadership elected nearly five years ago [was] determined to rebuild the trade union movement, to lead in that process of rebuilding, key to that was being true to our traditions of organizing the difficult, organizing the seemingly unorganizable and learning from what had happened in America and seeing this also a key element of our migrant rights/vulnerable workers agenda,” (T&G Official 2, author interview 2008).

As another trade unionist involved in the campaign notes perhaps more bluntly, cleaners were targeted “Because they are poor people and if a union can’t organize poor people on a legitimate basis then what are we here for? It’s as simple as that,” (T&G Official 1, author interview 2008).

Following from the union’s commitment to organizing building services, Justice for Cleaners was launched in Canary Wharf, a financial district in east London, in April of 2004 with the support of the community organization now known as London Citizens²³. A year later the campaign was expanded to also include what is known as the ‘Square Mile,’²⁴ the historical and financial center of London. According to one T&G official involved from the start of the campaign, Canary Wharf and the City were “an obvious place to start because they are the two citadels of finance capitalism... [and] you saw at its most grotesque the contrast between the huge salaries and bonuses earned by bankers and financiers and the shameful treatment of their cleaners,” (T&G Official 2, author interview 2008). Moreover, both are relatively self-contained commercial zones, the relative segregation of which has facilitated one of the goals of the campaign: to achieve an area standards agreement. Another T&G official explains a final reason for targeting the two zones as “it is much easier to win substantial improvements in terms of conditions for cleaners who are subcontracted by a bank than cleaners working in the poultry sector,” for instance (T&G Official 5, author interview 2008). Consequently, a variety of factors contributed to the decision to launch the campaigns in the two London districts: not only are they

²³ For a description of the partnership between the T&G and London Citizens see Holgate and Wills (2007).

²⁴ The district is also known simply as ‘The City’. The two terms will be used interchangeably in this paper.

both self-contained financial centers which eases efforts to negotiate agreements applying to commercial zones, but it also proved easier to target investment banks such as UBS and Credit Suisse for bargaining and campaign communications purposes.

From the T&G's newly established organizing department in its office in central London, two organizers were assigned in 2004 to initiate the campaign in Canary Wharf. Progress at the beginning, however, was slow with one T&G officer explaining that "It was particularly difficult with two white men working with a workforce that is 100% ethnic minority, black or Latino," (T&G Official 5, author interview 2008). As a result, in order to help jump-start the organizing effort, the SEIU over the course of the following two years provided three organizers to act as Team Leaders for the campaign as well as one former local president with extensive organizing experience to provide organizational and strategic campaign advice.

In addition to the support offered by the SEIU, UNI also played a key role in helping the T&G to achieve a recognition agreement with the building services multinational ISS in Canary Wharf. As one UNI official notes, in the UK Justice for Cleaners campaign the "major global player is ISS so we intervened with [the company], ... the two owners, one Swedish [the private equity firm EQT] and the other, Goldman Sachs... and the clients, all of which are vulnerable to some extent to international pressure," (UNI Official, author interview 2008). With respect to applying leverage on the contracting company itself, UNI was instrumental not only in utilizing its contacts and those of its Danish affiliates with top ISS management but also because of an International Framework Agreement it signed with the company in May of 2003. As a result of the agreement, one T&G organizer noted they were able to open up negotiations with ISS in the first place (UNI 2004a) while another T&G official reports it was most likely the agreement itself which forced the company to sign the campaign's first zonal recognition agreement (T&G

Official 1, author interview 2008). While UNI's role in the campaign beyond intervening with ISS has been relatively limited due to the limited international operations of the other major cleaning contractors in central London, the GUF's involvement in the Justice for Cleaners campaign in the UK is notable for its ability to open paths of leverage for the T&G to utilize, as is apparent with the successful use of the ISS GFA.

While the City and Canary Wharf have been the primary focus of T&G organizing activity among cleaners in London, other areas have been targeted including the city's subway system²⁵ and the cleaners working in the House of Commons. The underground was chosen because of the presence of 1,300 cleaners, primarily employed by the same contractors operating in Canary Wharf and the City, and the workplace issues commonly encountered in contract cleaning operations such as low pay (T&G Official 1, author interview 2008). The campaign, however, encountered two major problems early on. First, another union, the RMT, similarly organizes those employed in the underground and second, the complex ownership system of the tube complicates organizing efforts. Because the City of London contracts, through its Transport for London division, with two infrastructure companies, TubeLines and Metronet, who in turn contract with building services firms such as ISS, there is considerable argument between the various owners as to who should be responsible for the wages of the cleaners (T&G Official 1, author interview 2008). Further complicating efforts has been the recent bankruptcy of Metronet, now in receivership, which has made improving the terms and conditions of employment for cleaners contracted by the company nearly impossible.

Finally, selected outside the broader strategic framework utilized to select Canary Wharf and the City, the T&G has also organized cleaners contracted to work in the House of Commons

²⁵ The subway is alternately known as the underground and the tube. For the purposes of this paper the terms will be used interchangeably.

in London. Chosen as a 'hot shop' a T&G official recalls that "It happened by accident where a few people joined the union, we got involved, they had issues related to pay, we found out they were on minimum pay and thought that was wrong," (T&G Official 1, author interview 2008). While the number of cleaners organized in comparison to the other sites is relatively small, the campaign was particularly notable for the significant amount of both public and international pressure brought to bear. In addition to over 250 MPs, Peers and government Ministers who either signed an Early Day Motion in support of the campaign or wrote offering support (UNI 2005a), the T&G with the aid of UNI mobilized support from trade unions across the world including Sweden, Holland, South Africa, France and Australia (UNI 2005b) and brought "to Britain the workers from other European parliaments to declare their solidarity but also demonstrate that they were better treated than the cleaners in what the British would rather arrogantly describe as the mother of all parliaments," (T&G Official 2, author interview 2008). Consequently, even though in terms of the Justice for Cleaners campaign overall, the labor dispute in the Parliament played a relatively small role, it adequately demonstrated early in the campaign the potential value of strong international support.

With the campaign in the Parliament finished and the drive in underground system on hold pending negotiations between the operating partners, the organizing effort in Canary Wharf and the City has now reached what one T&G official has called the "consolidation phase," (T&G Official 5, author interview 2008). While six full-time organizers are still involved in the campaign, this has decreased from the ten involved in the drive at its peak in the fall of 2006 as the T&G now has recognition agreements with all of the major cleaning contractors (T&G Official 1, author interview 2008) and as of February, 2007 had reached 50% union density in the City (TGWU 2007).

Beyond the United Kingdom and the United States, the Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU) and New Zealand's Service and Food Workers' Union (SFWU) have also launched a drive to organize contract cleaners in urban centers, called central business districts (CBD) in the countries involved. Dubbed the Clean Start: A Fair Deal for Cleaners campaign, the logic behind initiating the drive in Australia stemmed from the passage of the WorkChoices Act in March of 2006. With the goal of increasing labor market flexibility in the country, the LHMU notes it has the potential to fundamentally alter industrial relations in the property services industry by increasing uncertainty in the workplace, labor unrest and the risk of injury and illness while at the same time reducing the options for resolving industrial disputes (LHMU 2006: 9). Similarly, the impetus for the campaign in New Zealand originated with the labor market reforms of the 1990s which led to wages for the country's cleaners increasing just 80 cents over the last 10 years (UNI 2006a).

From these changes in the framework of industrial relations in Australia and New Zealand, the Clean Start campaign was officially launched in April of 2006 with rallies in ten cities throughout the two countries. The first phase of the campaign revolved around forcing the various cleaning contractors to sign on the a Responsible Contracting Program which, once signed, requires the employers to provide a living wage, a safe and healthy workplace and actively respect workers' right to freedom of association (LHMU 2006: 22-23). As a result of the strong support provided by State Governments and local community leaders as well as numerous member-led public demonstrations the initial phase of the campaign has proved successful leading, in Australia for example, to over 40 contract cleaning companies that clean more than 70% of CBD office space to sign onto the Responsible Contracting Program (LHMU 2007a). Included in the list of contractors that have signed onto the program is the multinational

ISS which agreed to not only union representative access to new employee induction meetings, a one time meeting of union organizers with all workers on paid time, and regular work site access for union staff with notice to the company but also to issue a statement to all staff endorsing the workers' right to join a union (UNI 2006b). Following from this success, the second phase of the campaign was launched in August of 2007 and, while still a work in progress as of the time of this work, has focused on building on the previous gains in the sector through establishing membership negotiating committees to establish the issues that will be addressed later in collective negotiations (LHMU 2007b).

Internationally, the Clean Start campaign in Australia and New Zealand is marked by a more limited involvement of international trade union partners. While the SEIU has assigned an organizer to work in Australia in support of the campaign and has a longstanding relationship with the LHMU which has included joint campaign work (SEIU Official 3, author interview 2008), UNI's role has been relatively limited, particularly in comparison to the Justice for Cleaners campaign in the UK where it intervened on behalf of the T&G with the owners and clients of ISS (UNI Official, author interview 2008). Beyond the roles the SEIU and UNI have played, however, the most important international partnership in the Clean Start campaign has been across the Tasman Sea between the LHMU and SFWU. Despite differences in national industrial relations frameworks, because the British multinational One Complete Solution (OCS) and the Danish ISS are major players in both national markets the two unions have exchanged mutual research and organizing support and in April of 2007 the general secretaries of the two unions travelled jointly to London and Copenhagen for negotiations with OCS and ISS, respectively (Ansley 2007). Consequently, even though in the case of the Clean Start campaign UNI remained in the background, it has been international from its inception and represents a

different form of international trade union organizing campaign, founded on bilateral relationships with support coming from foreign partners.

In contrast to the relatively limited role of UNI in the Australian and New Zealand Clean Start campaign, the GUF has played a comparatively larger role in a similar effort to organize janitors in Hong Kong. The origins of the campaign stemmed from a workshop jointly hosted by the UNI Property Services Sector and the Swedish building services union *Fastighets* in Malaysia in 2001. With representatives present from Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore, one key outcome of the conference was the commitment of support to establish an organizing and recruitment project in Hong Kong (UNI 2002). This initial pledge was fulfilled in July of 2006 with the founding of a UNI Development and Organising Centre (UNIdoc) in Hong Kong. At the time the primary aim of the UNIdoc was to support an organizing drive of over 3,000 employees of the multinational transport company DHL with additional assistance provided by the German union Ver.di and the ITF. Since that time, however, the scope of UNI's efforts to support active organizing and recruitment by trade unions has expanded to also include security guards, cleaners and workers at the Disneyland Hong Kong theme park on nearby Lantau Island (UNI 2006c).

The first success of the coalition of labor organizations in Disneyland Hong Kong came with the recruitment of a large number of 'cast members' at the resort into the Disney Workers Union, affiliated with the Media, Entertainment and Arts sector of UNI. Following the recruitment drive, unionists were able to secure the right to trade union representation during internal grievance procedures although a dispute regarding union access to the workforce remains outstanding (UNI 2007b). The intensive training in organizing methods and strategies provided by the SEIU and the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions through the UNIdoc

and the success of the organizing effort among cast members, spurred kitchen cleaning staff at the Lantau Island Disneyland began their own effort in July of 2007 to organize around the issue of low pay, particularly with respect to pay differentials between workers at the resort, quickly prompting management to arrange a meeting between workers and top managers resulting in improved staffing levels and work schedules (UNI 2007c). Overall the effort to organize cleaners in Hong Kong has taken a unique form in comparison to those in Australia, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom. Whereas the UNI was involved primarily with respect to its ability to expand the range of pressure tactics available to force a recalcitrant employer to recognize a trade union, in Hong Kong UNI played a qualitatively different role by actively supporting the organizing effort on the ground through the establishment of a Development and Organising Centre in order to increase the organizing capacity of Hong Kong trade unions.

A similarly distinct campaign under the broad umbrella of organizing janitors globally was initiated by the FNV Bondgenoten in the Netherlands from a distinctly different starting point. Rather than a system of labor relations characterized by a relatively deregulated labor market with comparatively few workplace protections and decentralized wage bargaining, industrial relations in Holland are marked by a significant centralization of collective negotiations and high rates of union density and collective bargaining coverage. Despite these differences, in November of 2007 the FNV Bondgenoten launched its unique Cleaners for a Better Future campaign in preparation for negotiations for the 2008 national collective agreement. With public demonstrations in Amsterdam, The Hague, Schiphol, Heerlen and Utrecht which included presentations of street or 'guerilla' theatre (UNI 2008a), the cleaners' campaign for a better contract utilized innovative tactics unusual in the country. As a result of

this intensive member mobilization aided by organizing support from the SEIU (SEIU Official 3, author interview 2008), negotiations for the 2008 national agreement ended in February with significant increases in wages, vacation, training opportunities and full union access to worksites (UNI 2008b).

While the Cleaners for a Better Future campaign in Holland fits within the broader context of trade union efforts to improve the terms and conditions of janitors on a global basis, it will not be extensively analyzed here as it is representative of a contract campaign in contrast to the greenfield organizing drives that are the focus of this work. It is however, interesting in light of both the unique organizing tactics utilized, the degree of SEIU involvement and the role UNI played in publicizing the dispute. Consequently, in addition to the member mobilization effort undertaken by the FNV Bondgenoten in preparation for its 2008 collective negotiations, aggressive organizing and union recognition campaigns in the contract cleaning industry have emerged not only in the United States but also in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom.²⁶ With the SEIU providing strategic advice and physical support in the form of staff provided and UNI leveraging its extensive network of business and trade union contacts to increase pressure on multinational employers, while the precise differences will be explored later, it will suffice to say that the global effort to organize employees in the janitorial service industry has been qualitatively different from the Driving Up Standards campaign not only in terms of its scope, but also the nature and degree of GUF involvement.

C. Group 4 Securicor Global Alliance

A similarly distinct international organizing campaign in the property services industry has involved the British global security services giant Group 4 Securicor (G4S). Created from a

²⁶ Lerner (2007), the director of the SEIU's Property Services Division, outlines the possible future for the global Justice for Janitors effort as it revolves around organizing property services workers in the forty to fifty 'global cities' that act as 'engine rooms' for multinational corporations.

merger between the British firm Securicor and the security services arm of the Danish Group 4 Falck A/S in July of 2004, G4S is currently the largest provider of security and cash services in the world with operations in over 100 countries and roughly 470,000 employees (G4S 2006). Since the merger unions across the world have been engaged in a campaign to organize security guards (as opposed to cash-in-transit workers), most recently under the banner of the “UNI Global Union Alliance for G4S”.

As one UNI official notes, with respect to UNI involvement, the campaign has progressed through three phases. The first stage of the campaign “was initiated by a group of unions that were supporting the SEIU effort” (UNI Official, author interview 2008). These early efforts stemmed from a longstanding organizing dispute between the SEIU and the Wackenhut Corporation which became subsidiary of G4S following the 2004 merger. At the center of the dispute were first, a provision in American labor law requiring employer consent for security guard employees to join a ‘mixed’ union, one that permits both security guards and other workers to join. Whereas other major private security companies operating in the United States, such as the Swedish Securitas, assented to employee demands to join the SEIU following pressure brought to bear domestically by the SEIU and internationally by UNI, Wackenhut has consistently refused. Moreover, where employees have expressed interest in joining the SEIU the company has aggressively resisted the organizing efforts, going so far as to violate American labor law by interrogating employees regarding their union sentiments, engaging in surveillance of employees’ union activities and threatening them with the loss of employment if they unionize²⁷. While the SEIU with the aid of UNI and several Dutch unions was able to secure talks with the top management of Group 4 Falck, in February of 2004 the negotiations broke

²⁷ *Wackenhut Corporation*, 348 NLRB No. 93 (2006).

down over the establishment of a national organizing agreement and master contracts for already organized employees in San Francisco and Chicago (UNI 2004b).

Following the initial stage of the campaign, the second phase was characterized by an expansion in the number of international partners (UNI Official, author interview 2008). Coinciding with the launch of the newly formed Group 4 Securicor on the London stock market, for instance, the SEIU in conjunction with the largest union of security guards in the United Kingdom, the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union (GMB), announced the formation of a partnership to raise standards in the private security industry with a focus on the actions of G4S (UNI 2004c) as both unions had been struggling to achieve recognition agreements with the company regarding its manned security operations.²⁸

The behavior of the company outside of Western Europe began to receive increasing attention following a strike by the Indonesian trade union ASPEK, the bargaining representative of many employees of the newly formed company, initiated in May of 2005 over transfer rights in light of the merger with Group 4 Falck. Lasting until July of 2006, the strike garnered significant international support including a delegation of workers and union officials from the GMB sent in April of 2006 as well as meriting a complaint to the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association²⁹ regarding the failure of Indonesian labor law to protect workers' rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

In order to bring the concerns of unions such as the SEIU and ASPEK to the attention of the global G4S management then, workers demonstrated outside of the company's June 2005 annual general meeting in London along with representatives from the GMB, TGWU and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union. A similar action was conducted at the 2006

²⁸ The GMB had a longstanding recognition agreement for G4S' cash-in-transit services.

²⁹ Indonesian Association of Trade Unions (ASPEK Indonesia), Case No. 2494.

shareholders meeting where, in addition to representatives from the United States, Indonesia and India, trade unionists from Uganda attended in order to publicize their disputes with the company regarding the G4S Ugandan subsidiary's refusal in 2005 to recognize the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union of Uganda (ATGWU) as the representative of its employees (UNI 2007d). While the AGM demonstrations may not have had an immediate impact on the company's labor relations practices, the action is significant for the scope of international support displayed with workers from three continents joining to condemn violations of workers' rights.

Despite this exhibition of international solidarity, however, the global campaign ran into problems following the GMB achieving a recognition agreement with G4S in February of 2006. As one consultant to the campaign notes, as a result of the union's success in achieving recognition with the company, it has refrained from being involved in the more aggressive activities of the global union alliance (Campaign Consultant 3, author interview 2008). Another consultant similarly involved in the campaign adds that "whilst the GMB has been willing to help up to a point, it hasn't been prepared to go, as it sees it, so far as to put in jeopardy that recognition deal," (Campaign Consultant 2, author interview 2008). This tension is particularly acute considering G4S' status as a potential bidder for the contract to provide security services for the London 2012 Olympics. While some unions have pushed for its exclusion from the games based on its poor record on workers' rights, prohibiting G4S from winning the contract, which would deny the GMB a significant increase in membership and bargaining leverage, has created a difficult situation for the alliance in the UK.

This conflict of interest, in some situations unavoidable as illustrated not only in the instant case but also in the Malaysian NUECMRP's campaign against the Danish APM-Maersk,

while problematic, did not stall the global campaign. In May of 2006, for instance, the campaign partners held a conference regarding G4S' potential bid for 2012 Olympic security contracts leading to a report on the company's business record in the UK (Campaign Consultant 2, author interview 2008). With a focus on 'what happens when a private security company is enlisted to look after public safety in the UK', the report highlights Group 4 Securicor's failure to effectively implement its mandate to operate various private prisons and immigration and detention centers in the country (SEIU 2006b). Supplementing this political pressure tactic, campaign participants have also made submissions to the UK's newly established Parliamentary Group on Corporate Accountability designed to review the practices of British corporations abroad.

In November of 2006 the campaign shifted to a third stage with the creation of the Global Union Alliance for G4S under the leadership of UNI. This phase, in contrast to the previous two, is characterized, as a UNI official states, by "UNI as the dominant driver of the campaign, as opposed to ... an ad hoc group of people with some support of UNI," (UNI Official, author interview 2008). From the perspective of the SEIU, one official notes the logic behind pushing the lead of campaign up to level of the GUFs stemmed from the fact that the union couldn't win domestically and thus needed more leverage (SEIU Official 3, author interview 2008). Another SEIU official furthers that this global leverage is essentially both because Wackenhut management in the United States is firmly dug in against the organizing effort as well as because organizing gains in the company are essential for the SEIU to reach the necessary sectoral density in some urban markets to trigger the enforcement of collective agreements with other security companies such as Securitas and Allied Barton (SEIU Official 2, author interview 2008). Finally, the company was also a ripe target for a global campaign led by UNI due to

G4S' poor labor relations practices outside of Europe with another SEIU official commenting that "The amount of energy that is organic around how this company treats people in the developing world is unbelievable. We kept on finding fights that were going on that had nothing to do with UNI, ... one after another, just organic battles with this company," (SEIU Official 3, author interview 2008).

Following UNI taking the lead role in the campaign, in December of 2006 the organization filed a complaint under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. According to the complaint, G4S subsidiaries in Mozambique, Malawi and Israel were in violation of the OECD's Guidelines regarding the obligation of multinational companies to contribute to sustainable development while subsidiaries in Uganda, Congo, Nepal, Greece and the United States have disregarded the company's duty to respect the right of its employees to be represented by trade unions (UNI 2006d). In the initial assessment conducted by the UK National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines the organization decided to accept several of the allegations for further investigation, noting that many of the outstanding issues had either been resolved or were pending in the judicial systems of the respective nations (UK NCP 2007). Even though complaints lodged under the OECD's Guidelines, similar to those filed with the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association, cannot be remedied in the traditional 'hard law' fashion of national judicial systems, such charges can certainly have an indirect effect by mobilizing international condemnation of the behavior of a specific company or nation.

UNI took a further step to publicize the labor relations practices of G4S in developing countries in April of 2007 when a delegation composed of union representatives from the UK, Germany, Sweden and the United States along with members of two NGOs and UNI officials

travelled to southern Africa to investigate the company's practices. Arising out of a conference held in Luxemburg in early 2007 on G4S in which African trade union representatives described the 'shocking' treatment of the company's employees in the region (Campaign Consultant 2, author interview 2008), the delegation split into three groups with one travelling to Johannesburg, South Africa, another to Maputo, Mozambique and the third to Blantyre, Malawi. One campaign participant notes that, in addition to the company's poor record in the area, Africa was chosen as the site for the fact-finding mission due to both the operational size of the firm in the continent (G4S is the largest multinational employer in Africa), as well as because the region is a key growth and profit center for the company (Campaign Consultant 3, author interview 2008).

Following the delegation's return from the trip the group published a report in May of 2007 based on interviews with workers, union officials, academics in African universities and governmental ministers. According to the report's two major findings, the company has allowed racist behavior to go unchecked with G4S supervisors at the Johannesburg airport, for example, referring to guards as "kaffirs" and maintaining employment policies that have kept guards in poverty citing the company's refusal to pay overtime or redundancy payments and provide adequate paid leave (UNI 2007e). While it is difficult to precisely measure the impact of the report, one consultant working on the campaign notes that it "was probably the most effective political tool we have put together because anything Africa is big news in the UK Parliament ... and for a UK company to be treating people the way it was, including breaking the law in those countries in some instances, was really quite incredible," (Campaign Consultant 2, author interview 2008) The consultant furthers that the release of the report

“Was the first time that the scale of their [the company’s] reaction was really measureable... I think the saw this as being potentially pretty damaging in the UK where their base is, where the guard the Labour Party conference, the Conservative Party conference, they want to work at the Olympics and here they are being shown off as really bad people in southern Africa,” (Campaign Consultant 2, author interview 2008).

This building international pressure was subsequently turned into a victory on the ground in Malawi in July of 2007 when local G4S management signed a recognition agreement with the Malawi Textile, Garment, Leather and Security Services Workers’ Union (UNI 2007f). Even though the union is now engaged in a difficult contract dispute with the company, the achievement of the recognition agreement clearly illustrates the power and effectiveness of international pressure and transnational labor solidarity.

In addition to the above-mentioned organizing drives in Uganda and Malawi, UNI and the SEIU are also supporting a number of other campaigns. In Poland, for instance, the SEIU has seconded a staff member as well as funding to aid the UNI affiliate *NSZZ Solidarność* in organizing security guards around the country (SEIU Official 3, author interview 2008). Their efforts around Group 4 Securicor were met with success in late October of 2007 when the union signed an agreement with the company’s Polish subsidiary guaranteeing the right of employees to organize free from company interference and providing the union with the opportunity to speak to employees about unionization during the course of training sessions and other informational meetings (UNI 2007g).

Similarly, as part of UNI’s broader effort to aid the expansion of unionization in India’s rapidly growing private sector, particularly commerce, security and information technology, the GUF established Development and Organising Centres in the cities of Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad with additional partners in Chochin and Delhi (UNI 2007h). These centers along with the Swedish Transport Workers union are now supporting the Indian Security Workers

Organising Initiative (ISWOI) launched in December of 2006 with the theme of ‘Security for Security Workers’. Led on the ground in the country by two major trade union confederations, the Centre for Indian Trade Unions and the Indian National Trade Union Congress, Group 4 Securicor, with over 130,000 employees in the country, has been a major target of the campaign. In light of the company’s poor employment relations record in India with workers alleging failures to provide adequate working conditions, overtime pay and proper notice and compensation upon termination (UNI 2007h), the campaign has made some progress in the country and, as one UNI official notes, while there is no formal recognition agreement with the unions involved, the company is meeting with them (UNI Official, author interview 2008) as evidenced by negotiations in early 2008 between G4S and a committee from the ISWOI that forced the company to refund its Indian employees for the deposit they were required to pay for their uniforms (UNI 2008c). Despite the fact that the amount refunded may be small from the perspective of European or American workers, the meeting was significant not only because the reimbursement is significant for workers earning what amounts to roughly \$10 a day, but also because it may lay the groundwork for future negotiations over broader employment related issues.

UNI is similarly engaged in supporting organizing work among security guards in Nepal through its Development and Organising Centre in Pokhara. In spite of Group 4 Securicor’s documented threats to close its operations and leave the country if its employees joined a union (Rosenblau and Drew 2008), 25 security guards employed by various firms operating in Nepal met in April of 2007 for a training session on union organizing (UNI 2007i). One key results of the meeting has been a commitment by the workers involved to create a national industrial union

specifically for security guards in the country thus establishing a strong base for future G4S campaign actions in the area.

Under the umbrella of the global G4S alliance UNI is also supporting organizing efforts among the company's employees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As the only multinational firm operating in the country, according to reports from the Congolese union Sythac, the G4S subsidiary operating there has repeatedly refused to meet with union representatives for the purposes of negotiating a recognition agreement and instead has created its own company union (UNI 2007d). Further complicating the situation for trade unions in the country, one UNI official notes is the looseness of labor and employment laws making it difficult for labor organizations to effectively engage the company (UNI Official, author interview 2008).

Finally, with respect to the ongoing organizing drive led by the SEIU against the G4S subsidiary Wackenhut in the United States, the battle continues to intensify. Following damaging press reports regarding Wackenhut guards caught sleeping at a nuclear power facility in Pennsylvania prompting Exelon, the nation's largest operator of nuclear power plants, to terminate its contract with the company, and an investigation conducted by the city of Miami as to whether the company overcharged it for providing guards for its transit system, Gary Sanders, CEO of the American company, resigned in January of 2008 (Mufson 2008). Prior to the Sanders' resignation, however, Wackenhut fought back against the SEIU's organizing drive by filing a lawsuit against the union, among others, in November of 2007 under the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) alleging that the union has waged a campaign of extortion designed to coerce the company into consenting to its demands to organize the company's employees (BNA 2007b). 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. Consequently, while significant gains have been made in pressuring G4S to respect workers' right to freedom of association globally, there is still more work to be done.

In order to support the ongoing efforts of trade unions in representing employees of Group 4 Securicor, the global alliance has continued to utilize a wide range of tactics. The SEIU, for instance, has assigned a capital stewardship expert to work in Europe for the purpose of increasing financial pressure on the company. This investor-based approach has taken a variety of forms. First, the SEIU has worked on building contacts and relationships with key shareholders of G4S, particularly Scandinavian union pension funds which have held a substantial share of stock in the company going back to the days prior to the Group 4 Falck A/S-Securicor merger (SEIU Official 2, author interview 2008). Moreover, because of the City of London's status as the current center of the international financial world, the union has also been engaged in discussions with financial advisory services and corporate social responsibility rating firms regarding the company's poor labor relations practices outside of Europe and the potential effect this could have on its profit-making ability.

On the international legal front, UNI has continued to pursue not only its complaint filed under the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises but also a charge lodged jointly with the Panamanian *Unión Nacional de Trabajadores de Agencias de Seguridad* with the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association³⁰ in June of 2007 regarding alleged incidents of intimidation of trade union activists. While the Committee has yet to issue a report on the

³⁰ Union Network International (UNI) and Unión Nacional de Trabajadores de Agencias de Seguridad (UNTAS), Case No. 2576.

complaint and is waiting for its next meeting to fully analyze the issues raised, this form of legal pressure in combination with the political and investor-based leverage noted above represent the most recent efforts by the UNI Global Union Alliance for G4S to pressure the company into assenting to the ultimate goal of the global campaign: a global framework agreement on organizing with the threshold for union recognition set at the lowest legal level permissible under a given country's national legal framework (SEIU Official 2, author interview 2008).

The global campaign against Group 4 Securicor then, has taken a distinct form with respect to the involvement of the relevant Global union federation in contrast to both the Driving Up Standards campaigns and the global effort to organize janitors. Whereas in the two previously mentioned campaigns national unions played a leading role with the GUFs assisting in varying ways, the G4S campaign is characterized by the dominant role played by UNI in coordinating and leading actions on the global level. These differences in involvement, graphically illustrated in Table 6.1, are more thoroughly analyzed in the following chapter.

Table 6.1 A Framework of Campaign Activities

Campaign Characteristics	Driving Up Standards	Justice for Janitors	Global Union Alliance for G4S
Key Target Firm	First Group	Multiple Targets	Group 4 Securicor
Relevant Business of Firm	Passenger Transport	Janitorial Services	Private Manned Security
Global Sectoral Union Density	High	Very Low	Low-Medium
Home Country	United Kingdom	ISS: Denmark OCS: United Kingdom Rentokil-Initial: United Kingdom	United Kingdom
Total Firm Employment	135,000	ISS: 435,000+ OCS: 43,000 (1999) Rentokil Initial: 70,000	470,000+
Countries in which Firm Operates	US, UK, Canada	ISS: 50 OCS: 18 Rentokil-Initial: 40+	US, Canada, Europe (28), Latin America (20), Africa (18), Middle East (13), Asia (19)
Number of Countries Involved in Broader Effort	4	7	40
Unions Actively Organizing	SEIU, IBT	SEIU, T&G, LMHU, SFWU, HKCTU	SEIU, GMB, ATGWU, Solidarnosc, CITU and INTUC (India), Sythac, Malawi
Relevant GUF	ITF	UNI	UNI
Primary Avenue of GUF Involvement	Coordination, Facilitation	Coordination, Facilitation Leverage, Some Direct Organizing Support	Coordination, Facilitation, Leverage, Physical and Financial Support on the Ground
Primary Goal of International Campaign	National Agreement on Organizing in US	Building Global Sectoral Strength	International Framework Agreement on Organizing Rights
International Pressure Tactics	Shareholder Resolutions, Political Lobbying, Worker Delegations, Client Pressure	Shareholder Resolution, Worker Delegations to Top Management, Utilize International Framework Agreement	ILO & OECD Complaints, AGM Demonstrations, Delegation to Africa, 2012 London Olympics and 2010 South Africa World Cup Contract Pressure, Capital Stewardship Efforts

7. A Typology of Global Union Federation Involvement

Based on the respective descriptions of the campaigns outlined above, a number of trends regarding the involvement of the global union federations in international organizing drives become apparent. The goal of this section then, is to outline the varying patterns of GUF involvement with particular attention to the relationship between the extent of participation in the campaign and the tactics utilized by the global organizations during the course of the drive.

Such a focus on the role of the GUFs is important first, because the demands of their affiliates to support organizing drives have increased in recent years. As one ITF official notes, “10 years ago I would have said there are three roles for the ITF. One solidarity, another is information and the final is representation to organizations like the ILO or other global bodies. Increasingly, however, we are dealing with campaigns and campaigning,” (ITF Official, author interview 2008). A T&G official further elaborates on the changing demands on the GUFs noting that the “role of a GUF was primarily like a sort of overgrown telephone exchange, it basically organized conferences and events and put affiliates in touch with one another. It didn’t really have any strong organizing force when it came to real industrial organizing,” however in today’s increasingly globalized economy characterized by a significant decrease in global union density, global unions are now being called on by affiliates to help rebuild industrial strength through organizing (T&G Official 6, author interview 2008).

These pressures to adopt new strategies and structures to better support organizing efforts have consequently led to extensive debate within the international labor movement over what exactly the appropriate role of GUFs in organizing drives should be. Whereas some argue that a global union federation should lead an international organizing effort, others argue that the more appropriate task is to primarily help coordinate the activities of national unions. This debate is

also occurring within the federations themselves as evidenced by the ITF's recent internal review on how best to alter its organizational structure to support organizing. As such, examining the varying roles the GUFs are playing in current organizing campaigns may shed light on not only the current direction of this key debate but also suggest possible alternatives for the future.

In light of these new demands, the global union federations have begun to adopt a number of new tactics as well as improve their capacity to utilize pre-existing strategies. Windmuller (2000) points out a number of roles historically played by the global federations including providing information and research services, supporting affiliates during industrial disputes, providing training and education programs, providing assistance to special groups such as women and young workers and liaising with intergovernmental agencies such as the ILO. The use of many of these traditional methods is apparent in the previously described campaigns. For example throughout the international components of the Driving Up Standards, Justice for Janitors and Group 4 Securicor campaigns the ITF and UNI acted as clearinghouses for information, communicating the European expansion plans of First Group to the SEIU, IBT and T&G, outlining the corporate ownership of ISS for the T&G in its Justice for Cleaners organizing effort and reporting on the various labor rights abuses of Group 4 Securicor around the world with the campaign partners. In addition to these long-standing practices however, the GUFs have also expanded and improved upon their repertoire of tactics to include coordinating national union activities on an advanced level, assisting trade unions in bringing corporate leverage to bear on target companies and physically supporting efforts on the ground through organizing training and providing strategic campaign advice and financial aid. This last sphere of activity is perhaps best illustrated through UNI's Development and Organising Centres.

The prevalence and frequency of these tactics are intimately related to the overall involvement of the relevant GUF in the three international organizing campaigns described here and can be usefully utilized to divide the campaigns into three distinct sets, characterized by the activity of the GUFs. Before going on to outline a broad typology of global union federation involvement in the campaigns and the tactics associated with each respective type however, two caveats are in order. Organizing campaigns and international drives in particular, are formed by a series of many complex events. Consequently, it would be difficult to find an international organizing campaign that exhibits only the characteristics of one specific level of GUF involvement. For instance, while a campaign may primarily rely on the relevant global federation to provide information regarding the target company, it may also from time to time ask it to help coordinate international solidarity actions or utilize its contacts with the upper-level management of the firm thus blurring the lines between what could be seen as minimal to moderate involvement on the part of the GUF.

Moreover, while Frundt (2000; 2002) has previously established a typology of cross-border organizing campaigns, classifying them as either international campaign organizing, clandestine targeting, federation organizing or coalition organizing, such a characterization is insufficient for the campaigns examined here. Frundt's conclusions stem from his examination of transnational campaigns in the *maquila* industries of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. In such a setting characterized by highly mobile and labor-intensive operations the industrial weakness of trade unions has often been addressed by non-governmental organizations such as the National Labor Committee and United Students Against Sweatshops. This has led Frundt to emphasize the role of NGOs in transnational campaigns. In contrast, passenger transport, janitorial and private security services are inherently non-mobile sectors of the economy and in many countries

are heavily unionized economic sectors, particularly bus services. As a result of this key difference in the organizing capacity of the trade unions the role of the respective global union federations will be qualitatively different.

With these caveats in mind, this section will postulate a three-part typology of global union federation involvement in international trade union organizing campaigns. The first such type, exemplified by the Driving Up Standards campaign, may be termed a ‘horizontal campaign’ in which bilateral relationships between national trade unions, rather than vertical links with the relevant GUF, are at the forefront of the campaign’s activities. Reflecting greater participation on the part of the global federations is a ‘mixed campaign’ illustrated by the global effort to organize janitors. In this type, while bilateral union ties continue to serve a key function, the relevant GUF takes on a larger supporting role. The Global Union Alliance for Group 4 Securicor is representative of the final form of GUF involvement, namely a ‘vertical campaign’ in which the global organization is the dominant driver of the effort and plays an extensive role in supporting and coordinating the campaign’s activities.

A. Horizontal Campaigns

Founded on bilateral ties between trade unions, the focus of activity in horizontal international organizing campaigns originates primarily from the national trade unions involved rather than the relevant global union federation. In campaigns characterized in such a manner the GUFs serve principally as facilitators in the campaign by supporting the effort through aiding them in establishing contacts with other national unions and coordinators by providing the parties with information and helping to synchronize global campaign actions for maximum effect. This form of global union federation involvement is perhaps most similar to the role the organizations have historically played in organizing efforts. The activities engaged in by the

International Transport Workers' Federation in support of the Driving Up Standards campaign, however, clearly show that this form of involvement is still relevant and necessary in extant global economy.

As is characteristic of horizontal campaigns, the bilateral relationships between the SEIU, Teamsters and TGWU served as the basis for activity in the campaign to organize employees of First Student. This focus is evident in the numerous trans-Atlantic worker delegations, exhibitions of solidarity and corporate pressure tactics utilized during the campaign relatively independently of the ITF. With a former T&G activist employed by the SEIU in Washington D.C. to help coordinate the cross-border effort in what Tattersall (2007) termed a 'bridge builder' or 'broker' role, the ITF's assistance in breaking down cultural and organizational barriers was not necessary.

This is not to say that the global federation did not serve an important function in the international campaign. On the contrary, the ITF's assistance in linking the American unions up with international partners proved to be crucial from the start and was only further emphasized as the campaign progressed. Several examples of ITF support from the Driving Up Standards campaign are illustrative of both the strategies utilized and the degree of GUF involvement in international organizing efforts that are characteristic of horizontal campaigns.

First, the formation of the ITF Urban Transport Multinational Network in June of 2000 helped to formalize some of the earlier, informal contacts the SEIU had made with the T&G regarding its efforts to organize bus drivers employed by the American subsidiary of First Group. Through this meeting and another in December of 2000 which included representatives from the IBT the three unions were able to lay a foundation for future cooperation. These initial efforts were further strengthened by the ITF through its International Road Transport Action Day in

2001 in which SEIU activists picketed the office of First Student in St. Paul, Minnesota with T&G posters and placards while T&G members expressed their solidarity with the American unionists during a meeting in London.

The ITF's coordinating role was further emphasized at several other points during the organizing effort when it put the T&G, IBT and SEIU in touch with other European trade unions to support their efforts to mobilize around First Group's planned expansion into other European transport markets. Such was the case first, in 2006 when the ITF helped to initiate contacts between the campaign partners and the Irish Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) following its successful campaign to organize the coach drivers of Aircoach, a First Group subsidiary providing shuttle service between the Dublin airport and city center, Cork and Belfast. Additionally, in light of the company's bid for Conexxion, the largest Dutch bus company, the ITF called a strategic meeting in January of 2007 allowing American trade unionists to explain the company's poor record on respecting employees' rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining in the United States to British, Irish, Dutch and German union officials. The contacts formed at the meeting then led to significant support from FNV Bondgenoten and Transnet.

In addition to the coordinating activities of the ITF, the GUF has also sent representatives to a variety of events organized by the SEIU, IBT and T&G such as demonstrations at First Group's Annual General Meeting in Aberdeen, Scotland. In contrast to the global Justice for Janitors and Group 4 Securicor campaigns, however, the ITF was not able to secure direct negotiations with the firm's upper management because, as one ITF Official explains, "The company doesn't talk to us so there isn't really an opportunity to start a dialogue," (ITF Official, author interview 2008).

As illustrated by the Driving Up Standards effort then, horizontal international campaigns involve the relevant global union federation primarily with respect to its ability to put the national trade union campaign partners in touch with other trade unions around the world thus strengthening bilateral ties and coordinating international campaign actions. While such coordinating activities clearly require a certain degree of organizational resources, the degree of investment is relatively less when compared to other forms of global union federation activity such as direct intervention with management. Consequently, in the typology of organizing efforts viewed through the lens of GUF involvement, horizontal campaigns exhibit two unique characteristics: the primacy of bilateral trade union ties as the main drivers of the campaign's activities and the role of the GUF primarily as a facilitator of contacts and a source of information.

B. Mixed Campaigns

In contrast to the horizontal campaign illustrated by the Driving Up Standards organizing drive described above, mixed international organizing efforts require an increase in the level of global union federation participation. Similar to horizontal campaigns, mixed international organizing drives are still characterized by bilateral union ties as the driving force however the relevant GUF plays a substantially greater role by nature of its more resource-intensive support efforts including intervention with the top management of the targeted firm and limited direct organizing support, in addition to playing the facilitating role evident in horizontal campaigns. The global effort to organize janitors is representative of this form of transnational cooperation.

The importance of bilateral relationships in the Justice for Janitors campaign is illustrated through the considerable support the SEIU provided to the T&G, LHMU, SFWU, and HKCTU in terms of seconded staff and strategic campaign advice. In the UK campaign this included

several 'Team Leader' organizers a strategic researcher and Lead Organizer with extensive trade union and community organizing experience while in Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong the SEIU's staff commitments were comparatively less.

Similarly mirroring role of the GUFs in horizontal campaigns such as the Driving Up Standards effort, in the Justice for Janitors organizing drive one of Union Network International's important contributions was to assist in facilitating national trade union efforts on a global basis. The activities of UNI with respect to this function were evident even prior to the advent of the organizing effort in the UK when the GUF helped to put the T&G in contact with the SEIU due to the TGWU's expressed interest in increasing its organizing capacity. This initial contact led the union's Assistant General Secretary to travel to the United States to learn about the SEIU's experience thus forming the basis for the two union's future organizing relationship. UNI has also assisted the T&G in forming a relationship with the Australian LHMU (T&G Official 2, author interview 2008).

The coordinating role played by UNI, similar to that of the ITF in the previously described campaign, is perhaps best illustrated during the T&G's organizing drive at the House of Commons in London. In response to the employer's recalcitrance to increase the wages of the building's cleaners, UNI mobilized the support of unions from three continents leading to numerous statements of solidarity as well as a delegation of workers from other European parliaments to the House of Commons for the purpose of declaring their solidarity with the cleaners in England and contrasting the differences in terms and conditions of employment. Additional global events coordinated with the aid of UNI include demonstrations in front of the London offices of the real estate firm Hines in support of striking janitors in Houston and Morgan Stanley to declare the union's solidarity with cleaners in South Africa (Participant

Observation, 2006) as well as actions at the headquarters of ISS in Copenhagen in conjunction with the Danish labor confederation *Landsorganisationen i Danmark* and the trade union *Fagligt Fælles Forbund* (3F) (T&G Official 1, author interview 2008).

While the coordinating and facilitating functions of the GUF described above are similar to those of the ITF in the Driving Up Standards effort, UNI has utilized two additional support tactics in the global Justice for Janitors campaign that merit its characterization as a ‘mixed’ international organizing effort. First, in contrast to the ITF’s inability to directly pressure First Group management, UNI has been able to intervene with two owners of ISS, the largest cleaning contractor in the world, in order to pressure the company to cede to the demands of trade unions. Such was the case during the course of the organizing effort in the United Kingdom when UNI officials met with representatives from the corporate owners of ISS, the investment bank Goldman Sachs and the Swedish private equity firm EQT, as well as top G4S executives (UNI Official and T&G Official 2, author interview 2008). UNI’s leverage strategy was complemented by its international framework agreement with the company, the combination of which led ISS to sign a zonal recognition agreement with the T&G for both Canary Wharf and the City, described by a manager from the company as the most significant development in his 30 plus years in the contract cleaning industry (T&G Official 2, author interview 2008). UNI has similarly attempted to intervene with the top managers of the British multinational cleaning contractor One Complete Solution (OCS) in support of affiliate organizing efforts however its success has been more limited (UNI Official, author interview 2008). This corporate leverage strategy employed by UNI in the global Justice for Janitors campaign distinguishes it with respect to GUF involvement from the Driving Up Standards effort. Whereas coordinating and facilitating activities clearly require a substantial effort on the part of the GUF, directly

intervening with the ownership and top managers of a multinational corporation entails a comparatively higher level of resource commitment due to the time required to build and maintain relationships with the corporate executives and the possibility of jeopardizing those relationships if negotiations completely break down.

A final important distinction between the degree of GUF involvement in the Driving Up Standards and global Justice for Janitors campaign comes with respect to UNI's establishment of a Development and Organising Centre in Hong Kong that has served to support the drive to organize cleaners of Disneyland Hong Kong. Not only does running such a center imply a relatively permanent presence in the area but also necessitates a high degree of staff and financial resources.

As a whole then, the role of global union federations in 'mixed' international organizing campaigns is qualitatively different from that of their role in 'horizontal' campaigns. While several elements such as the importance of bilateral relationships between national trade unions and GUF facilitating and coordinating tactics are common to both types, campaigns characterized as 'mixed' exhibit a higher degree of global union federation involvement as illustrated in the global Justice for Janitors effort by UNI's use of corporate pressure tactics and direct organizing support for the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions.

C. Vertical Campaigns

Representative of the most advanced form of global union federation involvement in international organizing efforts are campaigns characterized as 'vertical' in nature. The campaign to organize security guards employed by Group 4 Securicor can be described as such. While some of the activities associated with this campaign form are also present in horizontal organizing drives such as facilitating contacts and coordinating support actions as well as in

mixed efforts such as corporate leverage strategies and direct organizing support, they are utilized more extensively in vertical campaigns.

Perhaps most distinctly, however, the focus of activity in vertical international organizing efforts is moved from primarily bilateral national trade union relationships to the global union federation itself. One UNI Official, for instance, explains that following the establishment of the UNI Global Union Alliance for G4S in November of 2006, “UNI became the dominant driver of the campaign, as opposed to sort of an ad hoc group of people with some support from UNI.”³¹ The Official further explains that the global federation currently has, among others, four key prongs of activity: a public relations campaign to keep the spotlight on G4S, field campaigns to support affiliate organizing and bargaining efforts, a legal campaign and a capital stewardship program to increase pressure on the company (UNI Official, author interview 2008).

With respect to the role of GUFs as facilitators of international campaigns, the G4S Global Alliance is clearly distinct from the two previously described organizing drives with respect to the sheer scale of the effort. In contrast to the four countries involved in Driving Up Standards and seven in Justice for Janitors, the campaign against Group 4 Securicor has involved roughly 40 in one way or another (UNI Official, author interview 2008). The degree of GUF participation required by such an extremely broad-based organizing effort thus places the G4S campaign in a separate category as defined by global federation involvement and is indicative of a vertical international organizing campaign.

UNI’s extensive work in coordinating global actions in support of the campaign similarly distinguishes it from the previously described efforts. In addition to supporting actions at the company’s annual general meeting in London, worker delegations to various countries and

³¹ While the SEIU has assigned a number of staff to work on the global campaign it is “completely coordinated at UNI,” (SEIU Official 3, author interview 2008).

numerous demonstrations throughout the world the global federation also helped to coordinate the successful delegation to Africa publicizing Group 4 Securicor's poor record of respecting workers' rights in the area. Such an effort clearly requires substantial coordination and communication work from uncovering the abuses to selecting the countries to arranging meetings with trade unionists, workers and government officials that is comparatively absent in the Driving Up Standards and Justice for Janitors campaigns.

Another factor differentiating the campaign from the previous two is UNI's activities in building legal and financial pressure on the company. From the legal perspective the GUF conducted extensive research in support of both OECD and ILO complaints against the company, acting as a primary trade union contact point for the intergovernmental organizations. UNI has similarly been extensively involved in the campaign's capital stewardship program. With numerous ways to approach the campaign's investment strategy including contacting pension funds, shareholders in the United Kingdom, financial advisory services, corporate social responsibility ratings firms and utilizing the United Nations' Principles for Responsible Investment the simple number of possible financial leverage points has necessitated a degree of UNI involvement absent in the Driving Up Standards and Justice for Janitors campaigns.³²

A final distinguishing factor present in the Group 4 Securicor campaign has been UNI's role in directly supporting affiliates in their respective organizing efforts through training and strategic campaign advice. While in the global Justice for Janitors campaign UNI did aid the organizing drive of the HKCTU through its Development and Organising Centre in Hong Kong, the scale of such activities has been far greater in the effort against G4S. With UNIDocs open in

³² During the Driving Up Standards campaign the partners did utilize the capital stewardship strategy of putting forward shareholder resolutions however the resolutions were the undertaken by the national trade unions involved rather than the ITF.

Nepal and three cities in India aiding the effort, the GUF has also assisted in funding G4S organizing drives in Poland, Malawi and Uganda with more to come in the future.

From the various strategies utilized by UNI in its involvement with the global campaign to organize employees of Group 4 Securicor, several characteristics of vertical international organizing campaigns become apparent. First, in contrast to horizontal and mixed efforts where much of the activity is revolves around national trade unions, the center of campaign activity in vertical campaigns is the global union federation itself. Moreover, in addition to playing a much larger facilitating and coordinating role, the relevant GUF in a vertical global organizing drive utilizes a wider variety of corporate pressure tactics, in the case of the G4S campaign legal complaints and capital stewardship strategies, in compared to the other two forms. Finally, direct support for affiliate organizing by means of funding, organizing training and providing strategic campaign advice takes on a much greater emphasis in a vertical campaign. This is not to say, however, a vertical approach is the best or most effective in every international campaign. Rather, the form a particular global organizing effort takes depends on a variety of factors, as will be explained in the following chapter.

8. Determinants of Global Union Federation Involvement

In light of the three distinct patterns of global union federation involvement in the international trade union organizing campaigns described above, a question regarding the source of this variation is raised. Exploring the answer to this question is useful first because it may help explain the changing roles of the global union federations with respect to the organizing drives of their affiliates. If, for instance, the role of the relevant GUF in an international organizing drive is a partial function of the geographic scope of a targeted corporation, as will be expanded upon later, the corresponding role of the global federation will necessarily be larger for corporations with a broader global reach. Consequently, as companies that were once primarily national in scope become more internationally oriented, the potential role of the GUFs in affiliate organizing campaigns will increase.

Moreover, many theorists have studied union campaigns from both a local and national perspective. In contrast, comparatively few theorists have moved beyond the local and/or national level to examine trade union campaigns in an international context. While recently some have done excellent work on the subject (c.f. Bronfenbrenner 2007), much more research remains to be done. Consequently, examining the reasons behind the different strategic choices made by labor organizations in the context of international campaigns should inform the debate over this relatively new development in industrial relations.

As such, this section will analyze the factors underlying the role that the relevant global union federation played in the Driving Up Standards, Justice for Janitors and Group 4 Securicor global organizing campaigns. These causal factors can usefully be divided into three groups based on the specific aspect of the campaign to which they are related. The first such group includes industrial and firm-specific factors while the second relates to directly to the nature of

the respective global union federations themselves with the third revolving around issues intrinsic to the campaign as constructed by its various partners.

Industrial Determinants

The first factor contributing to the varying levels of global union federation involvement in international organizing campaigns relates to the geographic scope of the targeted employer or employers. If, for instance, the target operates in only a few countries that are relatively similar in terms of culture and labor market institutions the relevant global labor federation will likely play a comparatively smaller role than if the employer operates in a large number of countries with a high level of cultural, political and economic diversity. Such was the case in the Driving Up Standards campaign where the primary role of the ITF focused on facilitating and coordinating the campaign activities while bilateral national trade union links served as the key drivers of the organizing effort.

In that case the most important operations of the British multinational First Group were limited to the United States and the United Kingdom, although the company does have smaller facilities in Canada and the Republic of Ireland. Consequently, with the IBT, SEIU and T&G as the only partners, the resources of the ITF were not required as extensively as would be the case if First Group was active in a larger number of countries. As one consultant on the campaign notes, “Since it was a two country, two union relationship, it’s easier to manage on a one to one basis than if there were more partners involved,” (Campaign Consultant 1, author interview 2007). Moreover, because the United States and the United Kingdom are culturally, politically and economically similar when viewed from a global perspective, share a common language and have a history of trans-Atlantic trade union cooperation the aid of the ITF in bridging national barriers between unions was not required. If, however, an ITF official explains, a company is

more than just a company in the US and UK, but in the developing countries as well, it is questionable whether an initiative from two larger unions would be sufficient (ITF Official, author interview 2008). In such a situation the ITF would be needed to provide comparatively more help to manage the global trade union relationships. Simply put, when a targeted employer is limited in geographic scope, the campaign may tend to revolve around bilateral or horizontal links between national unions rather than vertical ties through the relevant GUF.

In contrast, during the course of the global Justice for Janitors organizing campaign, a higher degree of UNI involvement was required in order to successfully manage the links between the unions in the United States, UK, Australia and Hong Kong. This was particularly true with respect to the organizing effort in Hong Kong, where UNI had the largest degree of involvement through its Development and Organising Centre as national differences between the various partners represented a larger potential problem. Even in this case, however, cultural, historical and linguistic similarities between the US, UK and Australia helped to mitigate the need for UNI to play a larger coordinating and facilitating role, particularly compared to the Group 4 Securicor campaign.

With nearly 500,000 employees in over 100 countries in 2006, including a large number of developing nations, organizing employees of G4S on a global basis has required the highest level of GUF involvement leading to UNI taking the leading role in the campaign compared to primarily facilitating bilateral trade union relationships that are the drivers in horizontal and mixed organizing efforts. One of the reasons behind the high degree of UNI involvement is that, prior to the G4S campaign, many of the unions that would eventually become active participants simply did not know one another. An SEIU official explains that with respect to the Driving Up Standards campaign, “We had a pretty good relationship with the T&G, knew them pretty well,

so we didn't need the ITF to connect us whereas we had to use UNI on many occasions to connect us to unions in property services who we didn't know," (SEIU Official 3, author interview 2008).

Broadly then, the geographic scope of the employer or employers targeted during an international union organizing campaign affects the nature of GUF involvement in two important ways. First, in cases where the target has extensive operations throughout the globe the assistance of the relevant global union federation is required in order to negotiate the various barriers between national trade unions such as linguistic, cultural and political differences. This factor is particularly important in campaigns with involving a number of unions from developing countries. Moreover, in international campaigns with a large number of trade union partners the aid of the GUFs is correspondingly increased as there is less likely to be a history of cooperation that would facilitate future coordinated activities.

An additional factor affecting the level of global union federation involvement and the ultimate form an international organizing campaign will take stems from the degree the relevant industrial sector is consolidated on a global basis. While at first glance one would assume that the more fragmented a given industry is the larger role a GUF would play in uniting the various unions who represent workers dispersed throughout a large number of firms. In the three campaigns examined here, however, it would appear that the extent an industry is consolidated on a global level is positively correlated with the level of involvement a GUF has in a given international organizing campaign.

Employment in the passenger road transport sector, for instance, is relatively spread out among a number of private firms and governmental agencies. Because bus services in many countries and European states in particular were run for many years by local governments, only

somewhat recently have large multinational corporations emerged in the sector following a wave of deregulation and privatization during the 1980's. As a result of this change in the business environment in the bus services industry companies such as First Group along with its major competitors including the French firm Veolia Transport, and the British companies Stagecoach, National Express and Arriva began to look for business abroad (ITF Official, author interview 2008). This new trend has yielded a number of multinationals of similar size and geographic scope without a single firm dominating the global market (ITF 2000).

Partially due to the relatively low startup costs inherent in the sector, the global facilities maintenance sector is similarly fragmented to a certain degree. While it is true that the Danish multinational ISS employs a much larger number of janitorial staff on a global basis than many of its closest competitors such as OCS and Rentokil-Initial, the fact that the vast majority of workers in the sector in developing countries are employed outside of the formal economy indicates a dispersed industry in terms of employment. One UNI official dramatically contrasts the fragmentation in the contract cleaning industry with that of the global private security sector noting that "If you look in Malawi, G4S has 60% of the market and the cleaners are not even part of the formal economy, the same thing would go for India where G4S really dominates the market which is not really the case with ISS ... [as] most of the people who work as cleaners in India aren't part of the formal economy," (UNI Official, author interview 2008).

The relatively consolidated nature of the global security industry, where large companies such as G4S and Securitas dominate, may have thus affected the role of UNI in the G4S campaign when compared to that of the GUFs in the Driving Up Standards and Justice for Janitors efforts. Based on this logic, when organizing the employees of the one or two multinationals that dominate the market in a given industry the involvement of the relevant GUF

will be comparatively higher perhaps because the perceived value of any potential outcome of the GUF's involvement, when compared to the cost in resources of the activity, is relatively greater than if the same degree of effort was divided among a larger number of firms. This strategic choice over the allocation of GUF resources is particularly important considering the lack of sufficient financial and staff resources in the global federations is often claimed to negatively impact their ability to successfully assist their affiliates leading one T&G official to claim that the staff quotient of many GUFs "needs to be doubled, tripled or quadrupled to become a more effective organizations," (T&G Official 6, author interview, 2008). As such, when organizing an economic sector with employment consolidated in a small number of firms the GUFs may play a larger role pushing the effort towards what has been termed here a 'vertical campaign'. On the other hand, during a global organizing effort in a fragmented industry bilateral union ties may be the primary drivers as is characteristic of horizontal and mixed campaigns possibly due to the perceived ratio of potential beneficial results and the cost of obtaining them.

Global Union Federation Determinants

Beyond simply the industrial structure of the economic sector in which an international organizing campaign takes place, several factors pertaining to the global union federations themselves may also affect their involvement in a given campaign. From this perspective, the historical legacy and current capabilities of each GUF, the trade union density of their respective economic sectors and the internal organizational politics all combine to create different sets of incentives for affiliated national trade unions to work with the global federations during the course of international organizing campaigns. Consequently, in order to provide a fuller understanding of the differing historical trajectories and current trends within the ITF and UNI as

they affect the organizations' involvement in affiliate organizing drives, this section will first briefly outline the recent histories of the two organizations, noting the salient differences, then move on to elaborate on how the differences may affect their role in contemporary organizing campaigns.

One of the oldest global union federations today, what was to become the International Transport Workers' Federation was founded as the International Federation of Ship, Dock and River Workers at a meeting in London in 1896. With a membership initially dominated by seafarers and dock workers, as transport technology made rapid advances throughout the early twentieth century the composition of the organization's affiliates was dramatically transformed with railway workers composing by far the largest segment by the early 1920's (ITF 1996). Despite these changes in membership however, many of the industrial activities of the ITF during its first 30 years were focused on the regulation of the transnational ocean shipping industry, leading the ILO to adopt numerous Conventions and Recommendations in the sector. Further efforts to improve the terms and conditions of seafarers have evolved into the global Flags of Convenience campaign which, of all GUF efforts, most closely resembles true peak-level global collective bargaining.

As the global transport industry has continued to change the ITF has correspondingly adapted its strategies and increased the scope of its operations, for instance bringing in affiliates with membership in the civil aviation sector as the sector developed during the 1930s and establishing a civil aviation sector within the organization in 1949. At that time the ITF also began to expand its efforts into Africa, Asia and Latin America following the dismantling of many colonial empires leading to significant increases in membership. On the whole, however,

much of the membership growth has been the result of new affiliates rather than large increases in the membership of already affiliated national trade unions.

With a long history of coordinating solidarity actions across the globe in support of workers engaged in industrial disputes with their employers, the ITF has been comparatively less active in supporting affiliate organizing drives. One key reason behind this trend stems from the fact that many of the sectors covered by the ITF are relatively highly unionized. Consequently, because the activities of any GUF are shaped by the needs of its affiliates, the demands on the ITF to actively assist organizing efforts have been somewhat less. This, however, looks to change in the near future as the global federation has undertaken a comprehensive review of the implications of globalization in the transport sector and the potential affect on the ITF's own role. One T&G Official closely involved in the effort explains the first phase was to come to a common understanding of current trends in the global transport industry with second phase focused on "understanding how that impacts on their members, members," (T&G Official 6, author interview, 2008). The final phase of the project, initiated in October of 2007, focuses on internally reorganizing the organization so as to better provide member services. One component of this process has involved a debate over whether to create a cross-sectoral organizing committee responsible for coordinating and facilitating international organizing drives.

In contrast to the extensive history of the ITF, UNI is a relative newcomer to the international labor movement, formed in 2000 from a merger of four preexisting GUFs, the Communications International, International Graphical Federation, the Media and Entertainment International and the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees. Similarly distinguishing UNI from the ITF has been its focus on

international organizing from its inception. Following its establishment in January of 2000, the global federation immediately embarked on process to develop a comprehensive organizing strategy, holding a conference on the issue in July of 2000, creating an “Organising Manual” and setting up an Organising and Campaigns Department which in April of 2001, for instance, began a project specifically to look at organizing call centers (UNI 2000). Just as the ITF’s focus on supporting affiliates in industrial disputes stems from the relatively highly unionized economic sectors it covers, UNI’s greater emphasis on organizing may be the result of the low trade union density in some of covered industries such as mobile phone companies and janitorial services.

Due to these key differences in history, industrial base and current capacities when affiliates become engaged in an international organizing campaign they will consequently face a different set of incentives to involve the GUFs when the organizing is occurring in the passenger transport industry, for instance, when compared to the property services sector. When examined from this perspective two important implications for the potential for GUF involvement become apparent.

First, because UNI’s affiliates are likely to demand more from the organization in terms of organizing support the GUF has consequently built up a larger capacity for directly supporting affiliate campaigns as reflected in the establishment of a separate UNI Organising Department. Based on this larger resource commitment as well as UNI’s proven ability to successfully support organizing drives, illustrated by the GCC-IBT’s victory over Quebecor in 2005, it logically follows that affiliates will ask UNI to play a significant role, if appropriate in the context of the campaign. In contrast, the ITF is still in the process of developing a capacity to

assist international organizing drives therefore possibly limiting its role to primarily facilitating and coordinating functions, as became clear during the Driving Up Standards campaign.³³

Additionally, because the industries for which the ITF is responsible are relatively highly unionized when compared to many of those covered by UNI the potential campaign role for the respective GUFs may vary. With passenger transport, for instance, thoroughly unionized in many countries unions such as the SEIU and IBT looking to organize in the sector have a number of readily available and, in many cases, industrially strong potential partners thus limiting the need for the ITF to aid in coordinating the effort. In contrast, because density in the property services sector is comparatively much lower it may be necessary for national trade unions in search of partners for a campaign to utilize UNI's extensive contacts within the international trade union movement.

While factors intrinsic to the global union federations such as their current organizing capacity and industrial base may thus affect their respective roles in international organizing campaigns, the degree of influence a national trade union has within a GUF can similarly affect the role the GUF will play. Based on this logic, the higher the degree of influence a given trade union has within a global union federation, the more likely it will be to ask the GUF for support and actively engage it during the course of a campaign. This pattern can be seen when comparing the role of the ITF in the Driving Up Standards campaign to that of UNI in the Justice for Janitors and G4S efforts when viewed through from the perspective of the American trade union partners.

Prior to the Driving Up Standards campaign, for instance, the SEIU was not even affiliated to the ITF, despite having some membership in the passenger services sector. Only as

³³ This is not to say however, that the ITF has no experience or success in assisting international organizing campaigns. To the contrary, the ITF recently played a key role in successfully securing recognition for port drivers in Mumbai, India working under contract for APM-Maersk (ITF Official, author interview 2008).

the campaign began to take off in 2004 did the union become a member of the global federation (T&G Official 7, author interview 2008). As such, when faced with a decision over whether to involve the ITF in a particular aspect of the campaign the SEIU may have been reluctant as it lacked longstanding contacts within the organization and the trust that results from such ties. Similarly, while the IBT had been an affiliate of the ITF for decades, it disaffiliated in the 1960s following threats of expulsion from the AFL-CIO. Although the Teamsters rejoined the global labor federation during the 1990s under the presidency of Ron Carey with the two partners working together very closely around the 1997 UPS strike, the leadership change in 1999 placed some strain on the relationship (ITF Official, author interview 2008). Just as the SEIU's lack of involvement with the ITF prior to the Driving Up Standards campaign may have affected its willingness to ask the GUF for support so too may the IBT's tumultuous relationship with the global federation have played a role in limiting its involvement.

An SEIU official contrasts the trade union's links with the ITF to those with UNI noting that "We had been members and leaders of UNI property services for decades and decades and we had just joined the ITF... We knew UNI, knew all the people who serve on the steering committees ... but in the bus driver campaign we had never been to an ITF meeting, we had not heard who they were as we are not a transport union," (SEIU Official 3, author interview 2008). In addition to these longstanding ties, the SEIU has also provided UNI with both staff and financial resources to support organizing drives which in turn imply a considerable degree of influence within the organization. One campaign participant furthers that the "SEIU are a huge part of what UNI is so therefore it shouldn't surprise anyone that UNI is putting everything its got into [the G4S campaign]... sometimes these things just come down to pounds and pence," (Campaign Consultant 2, author interview 2008). Consequently, with such a degree of resources

invested in UNI it stands to reason that influence within the organization will follow thus possibly leading the SEIU to more actively seek out the involvement of the global federation in the Justice for Janitors and Group 4 Securicor campaigns in contrast to the Driving Up Standards effort.

The Role of the Goal

Beyond factors specific to both the industrial setting in which a campaign takes place and the global union federation responsible for that sector, perhaps one of the largest determinants of a GUF's role in an international organizing effort is the overall objective of the campaign. Each of the three campaigns examined here exhibit a unique goal which presumably directly affected the degree and nature of global union federation involvement.

Beginning with horizontal campaigns characterized by the lowest degree of GUF involvement, the Driving Up Standards effort is representative of a comprehensive trade union organizing campaign expanded to a global scale in order to pressure the employer to sign a national agreement on organizing applicable to single country, in this case the United States. This goal then, has several implications for the potential role of the ITF. First, because any agreement reached would apply only to the US rather than the global passenger transport sector, direct ITF involvement in the negotiations could be considered outside of its competency or appropriate role, absent special circumstances. One campaign consultant furthers that "Direct talks with management would be in the UK with the T&G and in the US with the IBT and SEIU as the unions involved. The ITF would only directly talk with management if they were specifically requested," (Campaign Consultant 2, author interview 2008). Simply put, national trade unions are generally considered the appropriate signatories to national agreements whereas global labor federations may play a greater role in negotiating global agreements. Additionally,

a national agreement implies a more limited number of campaign partners thus reducing the need for the GUF to facilitate inter-union relationships. Consequently, the ITF's role in the campaign was for the most part limited to putting the SEIU and IBT in contact with other national unions that were in a position to provide aid and to a lesser degree coordinating campaign actions.

In contrast to the goal of Driving Up Standards campaign which was primarily national in scope, the goals of the Justice for Janitors campaign are much broader. From the perspective of the national trade union participants, one T&G official comments that

“Even if you organize workers by not just one site, but across the whole company in the UK you can't really move terms and conditions of employment until you've taken the competitors of the company on. So one of the key things in our organizing strategy is taking a sectoral approach and we're not just confining the sectoral approach within the country of the union, it should be a sectoral approach globally,” (T&G Official 4, author interview 2008).

As a result of adopting this global sectoral approach the bargaining position of all participant unions stands to benefit with one UNI official further explaining that “In terms of our bargaining strength with ISS [for example] if we have 20% density we don't have much power,” (UNI Official, author interview 2008). In addition to building industrial strength in the contract cleaning industry on a global basis, from the perspective of UNI another aim of the campaign may also be to help develop the organizing capacity of its affiliate with membership in the sector.

Based on these goals then, the global Justice for Janitors campaign necessitated a greater degree of involvement on the part of the UNI when compared to the ITF in the Driving Up Standards campaign, first because such an international effort entails more work by UNI in facilitating trade union relationships and coordinating actions. Whereas actual organizing in the Driving Up Standards drive was limited to the United States, during the Justice for Janitors

campaign efforts on the ground were spread across five countries on four continents thus requiring UNI to devote more resources to help manage the various actions and international linkages. Moreover, because a sectoral approach implies organizing multiple employers in multiple locations, UNI's ability to apply leverage on the cleaning companies and their clients to secure union recognition may have been needed in several countries. Although such aid was not necessarily required in the Australian or New Zealand campaigns UNI was needed to intervene on behalf of the SEIU during its effort in the United States as well as on behalf of the T&G in the United Kingdom, a role the ITF was not needed to fill in the American campaign against First Group. Finally, with the aim of building the organizing capacity of affiliates with membership in the sector, UNI devoted a significant degree of resources to establishing a Development and Organising Centre Hong Kong, further explaining the variation in GUF involvement between horizontal and mixed international organizing campaigns.

Requiring even more involvement on the part of UNI, however, has been the campaign against Group 4 Securicor where since November of 2006 the GUF has been playing the leading role. With the stated goal of achieving a global framework agreement that includes organizing rights for national trade unions, UNI's efforts in spearheading the campaign have required it to facilitate relationships and coordinate actions among the 40 countries that have been involved in one way or another, conduct legal and public relations campaigns against the company and actively support affiliate organizing drives through financial assistance and technical advice in countries such as Nepal and India. Such an effort on the part of UNI is required as, in order to force the company to acquiesce to a global agreement, pressure is needed to be brought to bear on a global basis, a position which UNI, as the relevant GUF, is uniquely situated to do.³⁴ Just as

³⁴ While non-GUF labor organizations have been signatories to international framework agreements in the past, as was the case for the IFA between the IUF, COLSIBA and Chiquita as well as that between the European

a national agreement with a company in the United States, for instance, is best pursued through efforts coordinated by the trade union's national or international office, so too is the global G4S organizing effort best pursued through UNI. As one UNI official aptly notes, "The focus of the campaign early on was to achieve recognition for workers in the US, now we're not about that, it is about achieving a global agreement that would apply everywhere in the world. I think that is the natural transition, if we are campaign for a global agreement, that requires a global campaign," (UNI Official, author interview 2008).

Metalworkers Federation, the BMW European Works Council and BMW, these are the exceptions rather than the rule and arose out of circumstances particular to the company's operations not necessarily applicable to the global security industry.

9. Conclusion

From the discussion in the preceding chapter then, a number of factors play a role in determining the degree of involvement a given global union federation has in international organizing campaigns run by its affiliates. In the Driving Up Standards campaign, for instance, the fact that First Group's operations were primarily based in the United States and the United Kingdom decreased the need for the ITF to significantly involve itself in facilitating and coordinating campaign activities considering the limited number of partners engaged in the campaign. Similarly, because the bus services industry is somewhat fragmented on a global basis with a number of roughly equally sized firms competing not only between themselves but also against publically run local transport services the relative payoff of the ITF investing significant resources in intervening with the company may be perceived as less due to the presence of multiple competitors.

Factors relating to the ITF itself may have also limited the potential for the organization to become more involved in the campaign. One such feature is the actual capacity the ITF possesses to effectively support organizing campaigns. Due to the relatively highly unionized nature of the industry in which its affiliates represent members, the global labor federation has more experience in supporting trade unions during labor disputes, such as the 1997 Teamsters' strike against UPS, than in aiding international organizing campaigns. Only recently has the ITF begun a process to review its organizing support capacity. As a result, the IBT and SEIU may have seen the T&G as a more effective source of leverage over the company, particularly considering the British union's 95% density within company in the UK. Further contributing to the ITF's limited involvement may be the relative low degree of influence the two American unions have within the GUF. The SEIU only recently joined the organization and, while the IBT

does have an extensive history with the ITF, the recent relationship has been somewhat tumultuous which may have altered both unions' willingness to solicit significant involvement from the GUF.

Finally, the simple fact that the goal of the campaign was to achieve a national agreement on organizing in the US also had an impact on the ITF's role as it may have been considered inappropriate for a GUF to become involved in direct negotiations with unions regarding an agreement applying only to one country, absent unusual circumstances. As a result of the combination of these factors then, the ITF's primary responsibilities during the Driving Up Standards campaign have been to facilitate trade union relations, bringing in other union partners when it would benefit the effort, and coordinate some international campaign activities. Bilateral trade union relations thus served as the dominant driver of the organizing effort, allowing the campaign to be usefully characterized as primarily horizontal in nature.

Similar to the bus services industry, active organizing against the targeted employers in the Justice for Janitors campaign was initially limited to a handful of relatively culturally and linguistically similar countries, namely the US, UK and Australia. In contrast to the Driving Up Standards campaign, however, organizing in the janitorial sector also included Hong Kong which, notwithstanding the colonial influence of the British, has a distinctly different cultural and linguistic heritage. Emphasizing the importance of these differences, it was in Hong Kong that UNI has played the largest role in supporting the janitor's campaign by providing direct physical and financial support. Also limiting the potential role of UNI in the campaign is the fragmented nature of the cleaning industry globally which, despite the extensive operations of a few companies such as ISS and Initial-Rentokil, has thousands if not tens of thousands of much smaller firms.

With respect to the individual characteristic of the relevant GUF, however, the potential for UNI involvement in the Justice for Janitors campaign was significantly higher than that of the ITF in the Driving Up Standards effort for two reasons. First, UNI has had a strong tradition of effectively supporting affiliate organizing drives since its inception in 2000. With a separate division devoted to supporting affiliate organizing drives and a proven track record, as evidenced by the successful Quebecor campaign, it is likely that the partners in the Justice for Janitors campaign saw the organization as being able to provide significant contributions to the drive and thus more actively sought its aid. Moreover, because the SEIU, one of the principal campaign partners, has a substantial degree of influence within the organization they may have been more willing to solicit UNI's support.

A final influential component of the global Justice for Janitors campaign was the nature of its goal, namely to build trade union industrial strength in the sector on an international basis. By virtue of this goal bilateral trade union relationships have continued to drive the campaign as the national sphere remains the primary focus of activity, albeit in the janitor's campaign there are four hubs of organizing rather than one in the bus driver's effort. This goal, when combined to the unique set of GUF and industrial characteristics has thus led UNI to become involved in corporate leverage and limited direct organizing support activities which, in addition to the facilitation and coordination, exemplify a mixed international organizing campaign.

Leading to the highest degree of GUF involvement, the industrial factors underlying the organizing effort against Group 4 Securicor include a single targeted employer with extensive operations on six continents and a relatively consolidated industrial sector. The consequent large number of diverse national trade unions with an interest in the project has greatly expanded the potential role of UNI in facilitating, coordinating and in other ways supporting the campaign.

The history of the labor federation and influence of the SEIU, again a major campaign partner, have similarly opened the path for UNI participation, as previously explained. Finally, with the goal of the campaign to achieve an international framework agreement, UNI is uniquely situated to spearhead the effort as the focus of the campaign is shifted from the national sphere(s) predominate in the Driving Up Standards and Justice for Janitors organizing efforts, to that of the international thus allowing the campaign to be characterized as vertical in nature.

In light of these factors that influence the role of the global union federations in international organizing campaigns several implications for the future become apparent. First, as companies that were once primarily national in scope expand their operations abroad, the potential for the global union federations to become involved in organizing efforts is thus correspondingly increased. GUF aid in coordinating such organizing and solidarity actions will be particularly important in the future due to not only the threat of outsourcing or plant closure but also because of the increasing business diversification of many firms. When a national union mounts a strike against a local subsidiary of a multinational corporation, for instance, the ability of the company to withstand the strike is substantially bolstered if it can cross-subsidize its losses in the struck segment with profits from another unrelated division. If, however, a GUF can generate enough international support among trade unionists in other parts of the company, the firm may be pushed back to the bargaining table.

Further compelling global union federations toward greater involvement in organizing is the growth in international framework agreements over the past five years. While many have criticized these agreement as being ‘toothless’, only requiring that the corporation respect basic ILO Conventions, there are signs that organizing rights will increasingly become a key component of any potential IFA. UNI, for instance, has recently concluded agreements with

Portugal Telecom requiring the company to adopt a ‘neutral view’ toward union organizing and Securitas where the agreement calls for union recognition in any country they operate globally (Lerner 2007). In a move that will have a direct impact on the global Justice for Janitors campaign, UNI is also in the process of renegotiating its IFA with ISS with the goal of likewise including language obligating the company to respect workers’ right to organize and bargain collectively (SEIU Official 3, author interview 2008). To support UNI in its negotiations trade unionists have recently staged demonstrations in front of Goldman Sachs’ offices in London, 8 American cities, Hong Kong, Madrid and Switzerland with additional messages of support coming from Australia, France and Sweden (UNI 2008d). The IUF has moved in a similar direction with its governing body recently agreeing to set much stricter conditions for future IFAs which require the agreement to contain practical provisions for strengthening union organizing and bargaining before they will be signed by the organization (Garver et. al 2007). As a result of this new emphasis on IFA organizing language the GUF’s the potential role in affiliate campaigns is correspondingly increased as the global federations become responsible for implementing, monitoring and enforcing the agreement.

Also propelling the global union federations toward greater involvement in organizing campaigns is the recognition within the organizations that, for many of them, in order to remain relevant they must reallocate resources towards organizing and campaign support in order to remain relevant. It was this realization that prompted UNI to prioritize organizing from its inception in 2000. As mentioned earlier, the ITF is now undergoing an internal review process, one goal of which is to ascertain the best way to support affiliate campaigns. The IUF is also representative of the changing GUF attitude toward organizing as reflected in its March 2007 Congress where it adopted amendments to its constitution that would make union membership

growth a core priority and force the organization to evaluate all other ongoing activities in terms of their contribution toward that goal (Garver et. al 2007). With more and more global union federations adopting such an approach to bolster their capacity to support affiliate organizing it can be expected that they will become more involved in such campaigns in the future.

Despite these recent advances, however, several barriers to effective and successful organizing support remain. First, many of the global union federations are tremendously understaffed and under-funded. This not only limits what the labor federations can currently do for their affiliates but also creates a catch-22 of sorts for the future. For many of the GUFs, in order to adequately support affiliate organizing campaigns a significant investment of affiliate resources is required. In order to convince trade unions to make such an investment, however, the federation must demonstrate an ability to successfully support campaigns. Consequently, in some situations a global labor federation can be forced into the position of supporting a campaign without a sufficient resource commitment thus jeopardizing future efforts.

An additional difficulty pertains to the nature of organizing itself. As one T&G official aptly observed, when we talk about organizing, “I think we are assuming that we are thinking the same thing and I think on a very basic level that is not the case. I think if you had five unions in here, each would tell you a different thing about what organizing is as different unions do it differently and sometimes it is not organizing at all,” (T&G Official 4, author interview 2008). With so many different conceptions of what organizing actually entails the GUFs are thus put in a situation where they must allocate scarce resources among varying affiliate requests with no criteria by which to judge them.

In light of these challenges a debate is urgently needed within both the global union federations in conjunction with their affiliates, as well as the international trade union movement

as a whole.³⁵ Such a debate must address first what is meant by organizing workers. Without this conversation any future discussion may prove ineffective without a specific frame of reference. After establishing a definition of organizing which must be flexible enough to account for the wide variation in national economic, political and cultural traditions, the debate must also address what exactly is needed from the global organizations by the national trade unions. The outcome these discussions may then be used to establish a set of criteria, unique to each global union federation and perhaps even unique to each economic sector, that can be used to allocate resources among campaigns. Not only would such a debate raise the awareness of affiliates regarding the potential role of the GUFs in organizing campaigns possibly leading to greater funding, but also push the international trade union movement to think more strategically about organizing objectives rather than simply distributing resources on an ad hoc basis, as has often been the case in the past.

The importance of discussing the future of organizing in such a manner is underscored by several recent developments. In the absence of the global union federations proving their worth to their affiliates trade unions, compelled by the rapidly changing global economy and declining union density, will search for other, perhaps less effective, methods to increase their industrial strength. Some, for instance, have argued in favor of international mergers between national unions to parallel the international scope of employers. While this proposal may be conceptually attractive, it is fraught with several dangers. First, it does nothing in terms of expanding trade union membership on an international basis but rather represents the reorganization of existing trade unions. Moreover, in the age of footloose capital for such a transnational merger to be truly effective in increasing industrial strength, particularly in mobile economic sectors, would

³⁵ Particular attention should be paid to include unions from the global south who have often been underrepresented or unrepresented at all within the global labor federations which in the past have in some cases been dominated by European trade unionists.

be required to merge with trade unions in multiple other countries where the employer has, or may potentially have, facilities. Considering that mergers between unions within a single country that share the same language, culture and political economy are extremely difficult, it would seem unlikely that at this point such an international merger would be effective. Despite the problems inherent in the merger approach, it does represent an attempt by trade unions to cope with the internationalization of capital outside of the established trade union channels.

More controversial for the international trade union movement, however, has been the establishment of the Global Organizing Alliance (GOA) several years ago. Described as an association of like-minded unions committed to developing a serious organizing agenda the GOA has brought together unions from around the world including the US, UK, Australia, Ireland, Canada, Australia, Denmark, Germany and Holland for the purpose of discussing common issues and exchanging organizing strategies. Discussions have recently shifted to establishing global organizing campaigns with the GOA as the driving force. While the IUF and UNI have recently attended GOA meetings, some in the international labor movement see the alliance as circumventing the global union federations. Rather than going through the established paths within the GUFs with their extensive contacts around the world and years of experience, it is argued that the GOA is leaving them out of the process and thus in a sense reinventing the wheel. Conversely, others justify the activities of the GOA noting that international organizing is imperative if trade unions are to regain or even maintain current industrial strength so if the GUFs are unwilling or unable to effectively support such organizing, some other venue is needed.

Irrespective of the current debate regarding the Global Organizing Alliance, it is clear that the global union federations, even those responsible for sectors with relatively high union

density, must reevaluate their priorities. Just as many trade unions around the world have looked inward and prioritized organizing as one key component of rebuilding the power of the labor movement, so too must the GUFs similarly adapt to the changing world economy by adopting new priorities and strategies. Fortunately, this appears to be happening as global union federations such as the IUF, UNI and the ITF have begun to develop serious strategies to support affiliate organizing campaigns, and while adopting this new orientation is clearly a learning process; the most difficult part is taking the first step. The importance of this first step for trade unions and workers everywhere, however, cannot be understated. With increasing numbers of workers becoming directly affected by the global economy through the processes of outsourcing, privatization, deregulation and the contracting out of government services, a global response is essential. A T&G official thus comments that “International work is no longer the preserve of a few university education national [trade union] officers... but has now become necessary for people right down to the workplace to understand what happening on the other side of the world otherwise they can not adequately bargain or represent their members,” and coworkers (T&G Official 6, author interview 2008).

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