

The International Trade Union Confederation and Global Civil Society:
ITUC collaborations and their impact on transnational class formation

by

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B.A., Simon Fraser University, 2002

M.A., Simon Fraser University, 2006

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Abstract

This dissertation examines collaborations between the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and non-union elements of global civil society (GCS). GCS is presented as a crucial emergent site of transnational class formation, and ITUC collaborations within this field are treated as potentially important moments in transnational class formation. The goal of the dissertation is threefold. It seeks to 1) address the lacuna in GCS studies around the involvement of organized labour; 2) provide an analysis of what ITUC GCS collaborations mean for the remit and repertoire of action of the ITUC; and 3) provide an analysis of the impact of ITUC collaborations on transnational class formation.

What the findings show is that the ITUC is heavily engaged in GCS through numerous collaborations with non-union organizations concerned with environmental degradation, human rights, global economic inequality, and women workers. Most significantly, collaboration within GCS has provided the ITUC an avenue to incorporate the needs of marginalized women workers whose work does not “fit” into the traditional model of trade union organizing. These findings lead to the conclusion that these collaborations have allowed the ITUC to expand the remit of its activities beyond “bread-and-butter” unionism, and expand its repertoire of action beyond interstate diplomacy. However, the findings do not support the idea that the ITUC has adopted a social movement framework, although it is clear that the ethos of social movement unionism has had an impact on the organization. Nonetheless, the dissertation concludes that the incorporation of marginalized women workers, and the active engagement of the ITUC in global environmental policy debates, signifies a new moment in transnational class formation.

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List of Abbreviations

ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers Activities
AFL	American Federation of Labor
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor-Council of Industrial Organizations
AFRO	African Regional Organization (ICFTU)
AIFLD	American Institute for Free Labor Development
AITUC	All India Trade Union Confederation
AUCCTU	All Union Central Council of Trade Unions
BMS	Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh
BPSSS	Barjya Punarbyawaharikaran Shilpa Shramik Sangathan
C 177	Convention 177 (ILO) - Home-based Workers Convention
C 189	Convention 189 (ILO) - Decent Work for Domestic Workers Convention
CBA	collective bargaining agreement
CGT (Argentina)	Central General de Trabajadores
CGT (France)	La Confédération générale du travail
CITU	Centre of Indian Trade Unions
CLC	Canadian Labour Congress
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPI	Communist Party India
CPI (M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CSR	corporate social responsibility
CTA	Central de los Trabajadores de la Argentina
CTAL	Latin American Confederation of Workers
CTUO	central trade union organization (India)
CUT	Central Única dos Trabalhadores (Brazil)
DGB	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (Germany)
DNG	Doha NGO Group
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment (Philippines)
DSD	UN Division for Sustainable Development
DW	domestic workers
EB	Executive Board (ICFTU)
ECOP	Employers' Confederation of the Philippines
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ESC	Economic and Social Committee (ICFTU)
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FIL	Federation of Indian Labour
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

GC	General Council (ITUC)
GCAP	Global Call to Action against Poverty
GCS	global civil society
GJ&SM	Global Justice and Solidarity Movement
GMS	General Mazdoor Sabha (Maharashtra - India)
GOI	Government of India
GPE	global political economy
GSMU	global social movement unionism
GUF	Global Union Federation
HBW	home-based workers
HMP	Hind Mazdoor Panchayat
HMS	Hind Mazdoor Sabha
HMSS	Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IALL	International Association for Labour Legislation
ICEM	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
ICWW	International Congress of Working Women
IDWF	International Domestic Workers' Federation
IDWN	International Domestic Workers' Network
IFA	international framework agreement
IFCTU	International Federation of Christian Trade Unions
IFI	international financial institutions
IFL	Indian Federation of Labour
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
IFWEA	International Federation of Workers' Education Associations
IFWW	International Federation of Working Women
IGO	intergovernmental organization
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMEC	International Maritime Employers Committee
IMF	International Metalworkers' Federation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INF	informal workers
INTUC	Indian National Trade Union Congress
INWORK	Inclusive Labour Markets, Labour Relations and Working Conditions Branch (ILO)
IRENE	International Restructuring Education Network Europe

ISMU	international social movement unionism
ISNTUC	International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres
ISP	Informal Sector Coalition of the Philippines
ITF	International Transport Federation
ITFU	Indian Trade Union Federation
ITGLWF	International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation
ITS	International Trade Secretariats
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
IUF	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco, and Allied Workers' Associations
IWA	International Workingmen's Association (aka the 1st International)
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
KDWC	Karnataka Domestic Workers' Congress (India)
KKPKP	Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat
MAI	Multilateral Agreement on Investment
MBO	membership-based organization
MDB	Millennium Development Goals
MNC	multi-national corporation
NAALC	North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NCEUS	National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector
NCL	National Centre for Labour
NCRFW	National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
NDWM	National Domestic Worker Movement
NEP	new economic policy
NGO	non-governmental organization
NGSU	new global social unionism
NISU	new international social unionism
NMASS	National Mobilization Against Sweatshops
NSU	new social unionism
NTUF	National Trades Union Federation
NTUI	New Trade Union Initiative
NWTUL	National Women's Trade Union League
OCAP	Ontario Coalition Against Poverty
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMCT	World Organisation Against Torture
ONSL	L'Organisation Nationale des Syndicats Libres
ORIT	Organizacion Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores
RAF	Regional Activities Fund

RILU	Red International of Trade Unions
RSBY	Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (India)
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SCTU	Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SENTRO	Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (Philippines)
SEWA	Self-employed Women's Association
SEWU	Self-Employed Women's Union (South Africa)
SI	Socialist International (aka the 2nd International)
SIGTUR	Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights
SMO	social movement organization
SMU	social movement unionism
SPD	German Social Democratic Party
SUMAPI	Samahan at Ugnayan ng Manggagawang Pantahanan sa Pilipinas
SV	street vendors
TLA	Textile Labour Association (aka Majoor Mahajan Sangh)
TNC	transnational corporations
TRAVAIL	Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (ILO)
TUAC	Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD
TUCP	Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
UAW	United Autoworkers
UGT-P	União Geral de Trabalhadores (Portugal)
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNEP	UN Environment Program
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNI	Union Network International Global Union
UTUC	United Trades Union Congress
WC	Women's Committee (ICFTU)
WCC	world company council
WCL	World Confederation of Labour
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing
WP	waste pickers
WSF	World Social Forum
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	World Trade Organization

WWB
WWF

Women's World Banking
World Wildlife Fund

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Dedication

To Marika Albert, for all the support you have shown as a loving partner, and for the inspiration you have provided as an engaged public intellectual.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation is an examination of the emergent relationships between the institutions of the international union movement and civil society organizations operating transnationally. Its purpose is to explore these relationships empirically, and then theorize about their significance for transnational class formation. It breaks from most studies of working class formation by examining the role of international union federations—specifically, but not exclusively, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)—in the process of class formation.

Significantly, it goes beyond the "international" activity of the ITUC at the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other UN forums, to examine its transnational activity. By transnational, I refer to a multi-level phenomenon that "extends across and thereby links as well as transcends different (territorial) levels" (van Apeldoorn 2004:114; see also Anderson 2002; Overbeek 2004). To accomplish this, my study of the ITUC examines the organization, selectively, from "top to bottom," from the activities of its head office in Brussels to those of its Indian affiliates—the Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA).

This project is based on a transnational historical materialism (van Apeldoorn 2004) grounded in a critical realist philosophy of science (Bhaskar 1997). Transnational historical materialism takes up Gramscian concerns with the construction, maintenance, and potential challenge to contemporary capitalist hegemony — focusing particularly on the relationship between structure and agency (Joseph 2008) while maintaining the historical embeddedness of world-systems analyses of transnational class formation (Arrighi 1994; Silver and Arrighi 2003; Silver and Slater 1999). Practically, this concern with both the contemporary agency of actors and the historically produced social structure through which this agency operates required me to conduct both interviews with current labour movement staff and leaders, and an historical analysis of the international trade union institutions. Historical context is essential in order to make the argument that contemporary relationships between the ITUC and non-union civil society organizations are in fact institutional innovations that emerged over the past two decades as the international union federations began to take advantage of the emergent opportunity structure of global civil society as they engage global capital.

Discussions of class formation generally focus on the site of production. The reasons I chose to look at organized labour's activity within civil society, rather than the site of production, can be found in Gramsci's work. He argues that the power of capital is not only reproduced through direct domination via the state, or control over the labour process, but through the hegemony of capital over civil society. Hegemony, is the "consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group" (Gramsci 1971:12). The establishment and maintenance of hegemony has two preconditions – at least in terms of human agency.¹ First, the ability of a class or class fraction to provide society with "moral and intellectual leadership" is predicated on the perception that it "causes the whole society to move forward," rather than "merely satisfying its own existential requirement" (Ibid.:60). Second, the successful hegemonic group must establish alliances with other social groups. The needs of a potentially allied group must be incorporated into the hegemonic group's program; such allies must be appealed to by "incorporating and stressing the themes most capable of interesting them" (Gramsci 1971:74).

In this introduction, I critically introduce the concept of global civil society (GCS) and provide a conceptualization that guides my research. Following this, I summarize my theoretical framework of transnational class formation, because my understanding of GCS is intricately tied to this historical process. This summary borrows heavily from the Gramscian-inspired Amsterdam school, and outlines the significance of transnationalizing civil society for the construction, maintenance, and contestation of capitalist rule within the current global political economy (GPE). At the end of the introduction, I summarize my research questions and provide a chapter outline of the rest of the dissertation.

Global civil society and organized labour

Global civil society is often equated with the explosion of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social movement organizations (SMOs) operating transnationally, and

¹ This is not to suggest that reproducing hegemony is simply a product of the collective agency of a particular social group. As Joseph argues, "hegemony is strongest when rooted in the process of production and economic regulation... for a group to be hegemonic, it must be structurally located and must have behind it the economic, political and cultural conditions that allow it to put itself forward as leading" (2008:114). Thus, for a hegemonic project to succeed, it must have an accumulation strategy, aimed at giving "a certain substantive unity and direction to the circuit of capital" and a state, or political, project, which acts as a "guide" to state activity and ensures "some measure of internal unity" (Jessop and Sum 2006:95).

has been referred to as “globalization from below” (Falk 1997). Globalization, it is argued, has produced profound social and ecological crises, while simultaneously undermining the capacity of individual nation-states and the inter-state system to address these crises. For some, the apparent lack of capacity to respond to global crises calls into question the current inter-state system of global governance, and raises the possibility of a new system that allows for more direct input by organized global citizen groups (Backstrand 2006; Kaldor 2000; Scholte 2002). It is interesting that the literature connecting global civil society to global governance (see for example McKeon 2009; Walker and Thompson 2008), is largely silent on the relationship of organized labour to global civil society (see O’Brien et al. 2000 for an exception), despite the connection between capitalist globalization and the emergence of global civil society; despite the large body of literature outlining the impact of globalization on workers and their unions; and despite the fact that the international trade union federations provide some of the oldest examples of non-state actors engaged in the inter-state system.² This dissertation is a contribution to filling in this lacuna.

If properly conceptualized, the concept of global civil society can provide a useful framework through which transnational class formation can be analyzed. So that there is no confusion as to my use of the concept, I now outline what I think it is and is not. Global civil society is often presented as the virtuous “supranational sphere of social and political participation,” which emerged in the 1990s (Anheier, Glasius, and Kaldor 2002). Here “citizens’ groups, social movements, and individuals engage in dialogue, debate, confrontation, and negotiation with each other and with various governmental actors — inter-national, national, and local — as well as the business world” (Ibid.). For some the inability of the interstate system³ to produce a world free from war suggests that the road to a peaceful, “civil” global or world society must be found within the efforts of global civil society groups dedicated to peace and justice (Kaldor 2003a, 2008, 2010) acting as the “conscience of the world” (Scholte 2007:311). Closely related to this normative framing of global civil society is the tendency to reify the

² Trade union leaders from Europe and North America were directly involved in the Treaty of Versailles process (Lorwin 1953; O’Brien et al 2000; Tosstorff 2005), illustrating the fact that the predecessor organizations of the current International Trade Union Confederation and Global Union Federations have been actively involved in global governance longer than the United Nations, or the Bretton-Woods Institutions.

³ By interstate system, I refer to the structured interactions of nations states, for example, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization.

concept by conflating (some) civil society groups which operate transnationally with the social field itself, suggesting that this field of social relations can have some form of agency. Thus we have the former UN Secretary-General referring to global civil society as “a social partner” (Magis 2006:5; see also Willetts 2000), and activists and academics suggesting that global civil society is something that can “be empowered,” or “possesses the power” to shape global policy (Centre for Global Studies 2007:2).

Global civil society is almost universally presented as a third sphere, outside of the state, and untouched by the market, which is the product of a particular reading of Gramsci by post-Marxists such as Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and Cohen and Arato (1982). It is a poor reading of Gramsci, built upon a single phrase in his Prison Notebooks that refers to civil society as existing “between the economic structure and the state” (Gramsci 1971:208). For example, Beck identifies civil society as a “third actor” on “equal footing with political institutions and economic actors” in the “meta- power game of global governance” (Spini 2011:23). Keane mistakenly identifies such errors as related to a “Gramscian bias which draws a thick line between (bad) business backed by government and (good) voluntary associations” (Keane 2002:29).

Yet this “thick line,” is not to be found in Gramsci’s work. Indeed, the distinction that Gramsci makes between political and civil society is “merely methodological” (Buttigieg 2005:39). For Gramsci, this heuristic device was intended to show how in advanced capitalist society, social control is not exercised through the state alone. Political society and civil society are both part of a superstructure which rests upon the economic structure; it is not a tripartite structure of three equal parts. The foundation of capitalist rule lies within the ownership and control of the means of production. This is often confused by contemporary theorists of global civil society. What the post-Marxists who claim to be following Gramsci’s lead are doing is stripping him of his Marxist roots, positing the “economy” as simply one of many forms of oppression, and ignoring the totalizing character of capitalist social relations (Wood 1990).

However, if we follow Urry’s (1982) elaborations on Gramsci’s thinking, a clearer understanding of global civil society appears. For Urry, civil society is most helpfully seen as the superstructural realm outside of the state where “individual subjectivities are “constituted and reproduced” through “diverse social practices” (1982:407–8, see also Urry 1981). It is comprised, “of three overlapping spheres, of circulation (that is, distribution, exchange, and

consumption), of reproduction (biologically, economically and culturally), and of struggle (of individual subjects and groups, of classes, and of other social forces)” (Urry 1982: 409). We can very clearly see how these three spheres have become increasingly “globalized” (and over a longer period of time than is often suggested). The emergence of a world system that spans most of the planet has produced transnational circuits of trade and production. Social reproduction, as well as our individual subjecthood and common-sense understanding of the world, is, more and more, shaped “extra-locally” (Smith 1987) through global networks of electronic media and communications systems. Transnational networks of people engaged in social struggle have been developing as part of (and in reaction to) the expansion of capitalist social relations for well over a century.

Thus, global civil society can be seen as both an emergent social “field in which interests and identities take shape vis-à-vis each other” (Carroll 2007:39) and as a terrain of struggle, “wherein diverse groups championing (or challenging) globalization, from above or below, take up specific niches in an organizational ecology” (Ibid.:38). For those concerned with social change, this increasingly significant field suggests a future whereby the “project of neoliberal globalization” might be countered, at least somewhat, by “globalization-from-below” (Carroll 2007:9). Munck, for one, acknowledges that, although global civil society can be seen as akin to a “Sorelian-type” myth (2002), it does highlight very real activity, which Munck conceives of as a global counter-movement to the neoliberal globalization project (2007). *Thus, global civil society, as a terrain of struggle in which movements from above and movements from below engage in a struggle over the future of capitalist hegemony, should be seen as a crucial emergent site of transnational class formation.*

This dissertation explores global civil society *as a terrain of transnational class formation* by examining the emergent relationships between the international trade union institutions and non-union civil society organizations operating within this transnational field. Focusing on organized labour provides a means of reasserting a historical-materialist understanding of global civil society, which situates the emergence of global civil society within a world-history of expanding capitalist social relations. The role of organized labour within this transnational counter-movement varies within local, regional, and international spaces; however, a noticeable increase in cross-national campaigns amongst national union federations and a newfound interest in engaging what some refer to as the “global social justice movement” has

been noted (Munck 2007, 2010; Waterman and Timms 2004). While growing, the literature examining labour's activities within global civil society is still underdeveloped both empirically and theoretically. This dissertation makes a modest contribution to this literature by examining the relationship of the International Trade Union Confederation to other agents engaged in the counter-movement against the neoliberal globalization project, and asking what, if anything, these new relationships say about transnational class formation.

Transnational class formation

By transnational class formation, I refer to *the transnational process through which capitalist social structure, and the social relations inherent to capital accumulation, produce distinct social classes with contradictory needs that bring them into conflict with each other*. By transnational I mean the phenomena that both span and transcend territorial “levels” (van Apeldoorn 2004). They involve the “transnational practices” of “movements from above and from below” (Carroll 2013), as well as the deep structures of capital accumulation that link people “without any direct (personal) relationship” through the existence of global markets (van Apeldoorn 2004:161). This focus on both the visible relations within and between movements from above and below, and the deep structural relations inherent in capitalist accumulation that produce these relations, is what distinguishes transnational historical materialism from agent-centric schools of thought (Ibid.).

This dissertation is heavily informed by the Amsterdam Project, which can be characterized as a neo-Gramscian school, grounded in a critical realist⁴ philosophy of science, concerned with the process of transnational class formation, with a focus on capitalist class formation. Its “core argument,” is that the “class agency” of particular class fractions, and the struggles between competing fractions becomes increasingly important to world politics as classes take form transnationally (van Apeldoorn 2004:144). I take the insights gained from the Amsterdam Project's insights into the role of fractions in capitalist class formation and apply them to the process of transnationalization of the working class. To do so, however, requires supplementing the Amsterdam Project's analysis of how social classes are fractured with an

⁴ Critical realism is explained in Chapter 4, when I outline my research methods.

analytical framework that identifies social structures of race and gender as ontologically independent generative mechanisms⁵ in the process of transnational class formation.

Below I elaborate on this relationship between structure and agency in class formation before outlining an historical materialist understanding of classes and class fractions within capitalism. I then discuss the role of trade unions in reconciling class fractions, which I see as crucial to the process of class formation.

Structure and agency in class formation

From the perspective of a critical realist historical materialism, class formation involves a “dialectical totality of structure and agency” (Overbeek 2004:114) produced through the interaction of emergent social structures and complex processes of subject formation that develop through social struggle. This is important because too often research on and theorizing about class formation neglects or downplays the significance of social structure (see, for example, Suh 2002:114). Within the study of trade unions, the focus on agency can be seen most obviously in discussions of the failure of union “bureaucrats” to confront capital effectively, and the belief that shop floor activists are more likely than said bureaucrats to lead militant industrial action (Camfield 2006, 2013; Darlington 2009). However, such assertions ignore both the complex relationship between elected officials and union members (Hurl 2009), and the ways in which existing social structures, such as neoliberal legal frameworks and hierarchies of race and gender shape the collective responses of workers and union leaders to capitalist discipline.

It is true, as Przeworski argues, that “(m)ore than one outcome lies within the limits set” by existing social structure (1977:399); however, this does not mean that structure can be treated as a secondary issue, as “capitalist production structures the places of immediate producers, of the organizers of the process of labour, and perhaps of those who are neither” (Przeworski 1985:90). In fact, social structures do have “anteriority” to the agency of any particular actor (Joseph 2008:118). It is true that human action (re)produces social structure, but “these actions are already conditioned by the structures in a way in which the actors are seldom aware” (Ibid.). In short, structure is important in any analysis of class formation, because the agents engaged in

⁵ Generative mechanisms are explained in Chapter 4 when I discuss the ontological epistemological groundings of my research.

struggle at any given time do so within a social structure that both enables and constrains particular actions.

This is not to deny the significance of agency in class formation. Suh is correct when he argues that class formation involves “a historical process in which collective agents articulate their collective interests or identities in class terms in relation to other classes” (Suh 2002:120). The emergence of and struggle between “movements from above and from below” are the “agentic moments” in the history of class formation under capitalism (Carroll 2013:692).⁶ However, each movement emerges within, and responds to, a *specific moment* in the historical development of capitalism, and therefore, within a specific set of social relations – that is, the agents of each movement emerge and develop within a specific social structure. Carroll argues that class formation is *both* a “structural process tied to the rise and reproduction of modes of production and... a collective, agentic ensemble of practices and relations that serve as both premises and results of class struggle” (Ibid.:692).

Classes and class fractions

“Class formation,” argues van der Pijl, “occurs everywhere humanity’s interactions with nature take the form of social relations between those who produce and those who appropriate what others produce” (1997:28). Class exploitation is a universal feature of capitalist accumulation; however, because of the complex relationship between race, class, and gender, the ways in which people experience class relations are always particular. Therefore, a definition of class must recognize that social classes are far from homogeneous. Marx argues that social classes are comprised of people who “live under economic conditions of existence that divide their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of other classes, and put them in hostile contrast to the latter” (1978:608). Beginning in the 1970s, this all-encompassing definition would begin to come under attack, as social movements not easily identified with relations of production emerged in force over this period, and social theorists of these “new social movements” suggested that class, as an organizing principle of resistance, and as a

⁶ A social movement from above can be defined as the collective agency of dominant groups, which is centred on the organization of multiple forms of skilled activity around a rationality that aims to maintain or modify a dominant structure of entrenched needs and capacities in ways that either reproduce or extend the power of these groups, and their hegemonic position within a given social formation (Cox and Nilsen 2014:59–60).

meaningful category in people's lives, had lost its utility (Offe 1985:148–50; see also Krinsky 2007; Munck 2007).

And yet, as Carroll and Ratner argue, “despite the emergence of new sites of struggle that cannot be comprehended (solely) in terms of class dynamics, capitalism remains the dominant structure in the contemporary world” (1994). What is required to re-articulate class as a meaningful category is an understanding of class and class formation that “breaks with the ‘workerism’ of orthodox Marxism” (Ibid.), and acknowledges that other social structures, such as race and gender, impact class formation, but still asserts the “totalizing character” (Ibid.) of capitalism and the class relations that it produces. The objective here is not to simply reassert the centrality of class against other forms of identity or oppression, as Wood does (1998), but to treat the concept dialectically, and redefine it by reference to the very complexities that the new social movements have brought to the foreground. Therefore, it is more helpful to understand a class as “a group of people who share a common relationship to the process of social production and reproduction and are constituted relationally on the basis of social power struggles” (Robinson 2004:37). Such a definition addresses a central critique of Marx's definition, which is that people who share a class location do not necessarily share a “mode of life” or “culture.”

Such a definition allows us to see the fractured nature of social classes, both *functionally* and – particularly in the case of the working class – *ascriptively*. Functional fractions are the product of the “evolution of capitalism” (Schervish and Herman 1986:268), generated by the changing labour process and the increasing division of labour. Ascriptive fractions are those premised upon “the sedimented layers of older social relations,” relations racial, ethnic, caste and gender oppression (van der Pijl 1984:3).

Within the capitalist class, fractures develop largely through the distinctive functional forms that capital takes, first outlined by Marx in *Capital*, Volume 2. Here Marx discusses “the different functional forms capital assumes” in the circuits of capital accumulation, where commodity, money, and productive capital are integrated as distinct moments in the circuits of accumulation as finance capital (Overbeek 2004). These functional forms relate to broad categories of capital fractions — banking, commercial, and industrial capital — that break down concretely into “functional and historical fractions... as money capital, or more concretely as City merchant banks, or late nineteenth-century German heavy industry, etc.” (van der Pijl 1998:50), illustrating the regional bases of particular fractions.

The working class is also fractured functionally. Functional fractions can be characterized by different locations in the capitalist system (i.e. resource extraction, industrial manufacturing, financial services, etc.), differing degrees of control over the labour process, and the closely related level of technical skill required for a particular set of tasks, (i.e. manual, skilled, semi-skilled). However, they are all part of the same class. As Struna argues succinctly:

The term, fraction, itself could be substituted for segment, portion, component, etc., but it conveys better—as in its mathematical usage—the notion that a fraction is both merely a portion of a whole and integral to the whole itself. Fractions of the global working class can be considered individually in an analytical manner, but it is important to keep in mind that each relates to one another in a global productive division of labor (2009:246).

The functional fracturing of the working class has implication beyond the site of production. Uhlman (2001) argues that the standard distinction between primary and secondary labour markets produces a fragmented working class with implications for class formation within and beyond the workplace. Uhlman finds that the primary/secondary distinction produces “dominant” and “dominated” fractions. Workers in the dominant fraction, are those who work in the “jobs of the old industrial working class, and the lower-level clerical, service, and supervisory positions,” and are more likely to earn higher wages, have greater control over their work, and be members of a union (Ibid.:451). The dominated fractions are those in the secondary labour market, where people are likely to hold jobs with lower rates of pay, less job security, and higher levels of unemployment (Ibid.). Uhlman found that the dominant fraction dominated leadership positions in “formal grassroots organizations such as lay church groups, unions, Australian Labor Party branches, single-issue organizations, or parental mobilization around schools” (Ibid.:452), illustrating that class fractionation has implications for class formation and potential class solidarity in the community.

Clearly, the functional fractionation of the working class has profound implications for class formation. However, classes are not only fractured by different roles assumed at different moments in the circuits of accumulation. In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of Marxist theorists began to recognize that fractures in the working class “do not purely and simply coincide with

positions in the organization of labour” (Poulantzas 1978:36). A number of others illustrated how “politico-ideological relations” (Phizacklea and Miles 1980:6) based on gender and race fragment the working class, producing, for example “split labour markets” based on ethnicity and race in the US (Bonacich 1972, 1976). Such “ascriptive” segmentation (Barrera 1979), was seen to be distinct from “structural” segmentation produced by the “evolution of capitalism” (Schervish and Herman 1986:268).

Since the 1970s, theorization around and research into racial and gendered ascriptive segmentation has become much more developed through studies into how the labour market is both racialized and gendered. Race is not a “biological distinction that inheres in people themselves,” but rather, a “power-inscribed way... of reading or establishing difference” (Bannerji 2005:148) between workers. Racialization is the process whereby certain groups of people are “cordoned off for distinct, exclusionary treatment” based on misconceptions of collective attributes due to perceptions of ancestry and physical appearance (Bonacich, Alimahomed, and Wilson 2008:343). Similarly, gender can be seen then as the “socially constructed differences between men and women and the beliefs and identities that support difference and inequality” (Acker 2006:444), which produces a “sex-specific social division of labour” (Bannerji 2005:149).

My thinking around these two forms of class fracturing has been informed by both the earlier debates around “structural” and “ascriptive” class segments, as well as the more contemporary theorizations around the racialized and gendered nature of transnational labour markets. I use the term functional, rather than structural to describe class fragmentation based on locations within the circuits of capital, because race and gender are also ontologically distinct structures that intersect the class structure, producing racialized and gendered inequalities between workers (Chow, Segal, and Tan 2011). Because the class structure is shaped in part by social structures of race and gender, the class struggle is also shaped, profoundly, by these structures, as I illustrate below.

The preceding has defined a social class in part as sharing a common relationship to the overall process of production and social reproduction. I argue above that such a limited definition of class is necessary to avoid past mistakes of overlooking the ways in which classes are fractured functionally and ascriptively, by different roles in the circuits of accumulation, and by social structures of race and gender that impact where specific workers find themselves in

different functional roles. Below I argue that the global expansion of capitalist social relations means our understanding of the relationship between race, gender, and class needs to take into account the geopolitical location of workers in the global political economy (GPE).

Transnationalization of the class structure and class fractions

The transnationalization of the class structure takes place through a series of spatial “fixes”, each designed to overcome the crisis in profitability inherent in capital accumulation, and destined to become the basis for the next crisis (Harvey:2006). A “fix” can involve surplus absorption via “temporal displacement through investment in long-term capital projects or social expenditures... that defer the re-entry of capital values into circulation into the future.” Surplus capital may also be spatially displaced “through opening up new markets, new production capacities, and new resource, social and labour possibilities elsewhere” (Ibid.:109). Throughout this process the class structure expands, creating new working class fractions, while destroying previously significant ones.

The process referred to loosely as the “globalization” of the international political economy in the last quarter of the 20th Century involved a dramatic spatial fix that has profoundly impacted the class structure of an increasingly global political economy. It was, in part, the product of a crisis in profitability in the capitalist heartland of the US (Aglietta 1979; Beaudreau 1996; O’Connor 1984). The declining rate of profit at home (Dunford 2000), and the surplus of capital in US banks produced by the hike in oil prices (Gill and Law 1989), encouraged US capital to increase its overseas activities in search of new productive outlets and expand its activities from resource extraction to the creation of new financial, labour and consumer markets. Revolutionary developments in communications, transportation, and computerization acted as “an enabling or facilitating agent” (Dicken 1998:145) for the growth in US corporations operating transnationally and the global restructuring of the labour process (Letto-Gillies 2002).

In the Global South, this led to the development of quasi-Fordist factory regimes and the growth in the global proletariat. Two forms of expanded production within the Newly Industrializing Countries developed over this period: “primitive Taylorism,” which led to the growth in a largely female, highly vulnerable, workforce within Export Processing Zones; a “peripheral Fordism” also developed in countries such as South Korea and Brazil (Lipietz and

Cameron 1997), leading to the growth of militant trade union activity that eventually overcame the authoritarian regimes that ruled these countries. Thus the global restructuring of the labour process created new working classes in the South, while dis-articulating the industrial working class across the industrialized countries of the North Atlantic. In Europe and North America, a great restructuring of the labour market accompanied the shift in investment. Over the 1970s and 1980s unemployment grew across the OECD, but perhaps the worst hit were American industrial workers, who saw a spike in unemployment and wage compression, as capital shifted manufacturing increasingly to the Global South, and a number of industries protected by the state were “deregulated” (Marglin and Schor 1990; Teeple 2000; Wolfe and Davis 1987).

As Struna argues, the transnationalization of production “provides the material basis for the existence of a global proletariat. However, the worldwide working class is not homogenous” (2009:230). Noting that the transnationalization of the working class is undertheorized, his contribution to setting things right is to develop a typology of global fractions. His six-part typology is based on two factors:

1. “whether the worker moves to the point of production, or remains fixed relative to a point of production;” and
2. “whether the products move successfully to the worker (as in transnational production chains), or the products remain geographically fixed (as with local production chains)” (2009:234).

In this typology, workers are either “dynamic” or “static,” and the product of their labour is either “global” or “local.” Thus he finds six fractions:

- i) “dynamic-global” workers are those whose productive activities and products are geographically diffuse, including members of the transnational managerial cadre, journalists, and international aid workers;
- ii) “static-global” workers are those “whose productive activities are geographically fixed... but whose products are geographically diffuse relative to firms,” including software designers, factory workers whose products are produced in multiple locations, and call centre workers;

- iii) “diasporic-global” workers are those “whose productive activities are geographically diffuse as a consequence of cross-border migration and whose products may or may not be geographically diffuse relative to firms;”
- iv) “dynamic-local” workers “whose productive activities and products are geographically diffuse relative to firms within nation-states,” and “are required to be flexibly mobile;”
- v) “static-local” workers are those whose “value-added... occur within borders for local firms;”
- vi) “diasporic-local” workers are those “whose productive activities and products are geographically diffuse,” but within the nation-state, including those who have been displaced by either natural catastrophe or the destruction of local communities by the end of, or relocation of productive activity.

This comprehensive functional typology provides a map of some of the fractional interests that international union federation staff need to take into account when representing workers at the ILO, UN, and IFI meetings. However, such an analysis does not take into account the other ways in which the global working class is fractured ascriptively. Burawoy reminds us that Gramsci outlines three levels of political consciousness in the formation of social classes. The first reflects a corporatist outlook, unconcerned with anything other than local and immediate interests. The second is the level of economic class interests in which classes pursue their interests collectively but only at an economic level, i.e. in opposing this or that particular policy which negatively affects the class. The third level, the hegemonic level, involves the ability to project class interests into the future in a manner that incorporates the needs of other subaltern groups (2003:224–25). Arguably, it is the ascriptive divisions within the working class that are most challenging for those organic intellectuals who seek to develop a comprehensive and representative response to capital and the interstate system. Addressing functional fractions is crucial in moving beyond the corporatist outlook. However, a counter-hegemonic project, or even a class-based project must also address ascriptive fragmentation based on race, and nationality, as well as gender and sexuality.

Reconciling the fractional interests of the global working class

A central question for this dissertation is the role of trade unions in overcoming fractional interests within the global working class. I just argued that working class fractions are produced through ascriptive, as well as functional segmentation, and it is worth repeating van der Pijl's argument that the "dynamic totality" of capitalist social relations "also encompasses sedimented layers of older social relations, forms of ethnic and sexist oppression" (1984:3). Thus, labour leaders who seek to reconcile the various working class fractions within the GPE find themselves struggling not only against capital, *but also against racism, sexism and other forms of oppression found throughout civil society, including within the union movement.*

Lebowitz argues that "capital's power rests in large part upon its continued ability to divide and separate workers - its ability to put workers into competition with each another, to turn difference into antagonism" (Lebowitz 2003:184). McNally advances a similar argument when he asserts that a highly fractured working class divided by racist ideologies is the product of the violent global expansion of capitalist social relations, and that this fracturing is in fact a strategy for capitalist control over labour (2002:110). The social construction of race within capitalism, he suggests, can be illustrated in the subjugation of Irish, "American Indian," and Africans in the early slave trade. The "key ideological move" was to paint these groups as "uncivilized," which provided a rationale for their domination and exclusion (Ibid:102).

However, in order to prevent these groups from articulating common ground,⁷ the English bourgeoisie made a second move by intensifying "the bonds of black slavery" and relaxing "the servitude of white [mainly Irish] labourers." The purpose of this ideological move was to "create a buffer group that could reinforce the established order." In doing so British capital "introduced a new regime of racial oppression" around the concept of white supremacy" (Ibid:109). Because racialization under capitalism allows for more intense oppression for some, as well as privileges for others, it involves both capital's efforts to divide, as well as the efforts of White workers to protect their relative privilege, including the use of trade unions to do so (Bonacich et al. 2008:344). As I point out in Chapter 4, the history of North-South relations within the international union federations, includes efforts to protect the position of relatively

⁷ Racial categories in the late 1600s were highly unstable, as was control by the plantation bourgeoisie over the mix of indigenous peoples, European "chattel bond-labourers", and African slaves (McNally 2002: 106-108).

privileged workers as expressed in the response of Northern workers to international trade agreements.

The global working class is also fractured by gendered hierarchies within the world labour market. While these hierarchies vary regionally around the world, capital “relies on gendered ideologies and social relations to recruit and discipline workers, to reproduce and cheapen segmented labor forces within and across national borders,” a phenomenon that is as old as European colonialism (Mills 2003:43). Guided by "gender ideologies emphasizing the "nimble fingers" of young women," the expansion of market relations globally has led to a “process of female proletarianization” as women leave the home to find waged labour (Moghadam 2006: 247-48). As Mills notes:

“it is the hegemonic capacity of patriarchal norms to define women's labor as not only "cheap" but socially and economically worthless (and therefore less worthy of equitable pay and other treatment) that makes a gendered labor force so crucial to the accumulation strategies of global capital” (Mills 2003: 43).

However, as I argue in Chapter 6, the interaction of structures of race, class, and gender are complex, and highly contingent on where workers find themselves within the GPE. As Fowler notes, the “double day,” discussed primarily by white feminists, is not uniformly experienced by working women. Unlike professional women, working-class women “cannot throw off the double burden of paid work and unpaid housework” (Fowler 2004: 482), because while a two salary income may allow professional families to hire outside help, this is not the case with working-class families. Furthermore, the ability to hire cleaning or childcare help creates an “irony” whereby the emancipation of some women through access to high salaried occupations comes at the expense of other women, particularly migrant workers and women of colour (Ibid. 483-84). Such asymmetrical experiences of a gendered labour market force Fowler to ask:

"What if we have become so mesmerized by stories of women's progress or its limits that we failed to notice the increasing polarization of class inequalities going on behind our backs, and the indirect contribution of

women's work to this through the combining of high salaries...?" (Fowler 2004 482).

The case study of domestic workers, covered in Chapter 6, is perhaps the example *par excellence* of the interrelationships between dominant ideologies about race and gender and how they shape ideas about occupational “appropriateness” in the global labour market. However, domestic labour is not the only example of where these interrelationships occur. The hyper-exploitation of women workers in the Export Processing Zones (EPZ) that have proliferated around the world is another example of a feminized class fraction that has emerged through transnational production chains. By the turn of the century, more than 70 per cent of workers in Mexican *maquiladoras* were women, and in Bangladesh, the percentage of women in the EPZ of that country’s textile industry was between 80 and 90 per cent (McNally 2002 132). The case study in this dissertation suggests that failed efforts by traditional trade unions to integrate these women into the existing union institution may be aided through stronger collaborations with women’s organizations, migrant support groups, and other non-union elements of the broader transnational labour movement.

Trade unions have been a critical site of efforts to “combine and reduce the degree of separation” amongst working people (Lebowitz 2003:184). However, the track record of trade unions and political parties in overcoming such divisions is checkered, and it is fair to say that women and racialized peoples have often been largely excluded from consideration by white, male unionists, at least (and arguably) until very recently, a topic that will be explored throughout this dissertation. Furthermore, the struggle to overcome fractions based on ascription occur both inside and outside of the workplace. Clearly then, overcoming fractional interests within the working class involves more than the articulation of an economic program around which different fractions could coalesce. Building a global labour movement involves overcoming racism, sexism, and other forms of ideology, including nationalism and patriotism, that divide people.

What kind of institutional or organizational structures exist for the working class that might contribute to a project of fractional reconciliation? A body of literature has developed that identifies potential sites of capitalist class formation (Carroll 2003, 2007, 2009, Gill 1990, 1995; Overbeek and van der Pijl 1993; Sklair 2002; Sklar 1980), sites where comprehensive concepts

of control are developed to “stabilize capitalist fractions” (Carroll and Carson 2003:30) and cultivate unity *vis-à-vis* the working class. In short, sites of capitalist transnational class formation are well established. What exists for the working class, and what is needed? Cox and Nilsen argue that social movements from above and below are “the fundamental animating forces in the making and unmaking of the structures of needs and capacities that underpin social formations” (2014:56) and such movements should be conceived of as “a process in which a specific social group develops a collective project of skilled activities centered on a rationality... that tries to change or maintain a dominant structure of entrenched need and capacities, in part or whole” (Ibid.:57). I add to this that the process of movements creates organizations and institutions that in turn come to structure the movement itself. We can see this in the creation of the trade union as a skilled activity built with the rational intention of confronting capital at the site of production, and its institutionalization in certain places within the GPE. Trade unions have been a critical site of efforts to “combine and reduce the degree of separation” amongst working people; however, the workplace is not the only space in which such efforts need to be made (Lebowitz 2003:184).

This dissertation argues that trade unions continue to play a crucial role in class formation, and that the international trade union federations are critical institutions in the transnationalization of class struggle. Yet, trade union activity is not the only skilled activity within the labour movement, broadly speaking. Furthermore, it is clear that this institution has certain limitations when it comes to organizing and advocating for marginalized workers, and it has not always proved an effective ally to the environmental or women’s movements. Therefore, their ability to play such a role is contingent upon collaboration with other organizational forms that either *represent racialized working class fractions not currently represented by unions*, or *address issues that, until very recently, have not been considered central to union activity*, such as environmental issues. It is the potential of the international union institutions to develop transnational collaborative projects that the research for this dissertation aims to uncover.

By *collaborative projects*, I refer to a normatively defined joint activity between two or more collective subjects. This definition is based on my reading of Blunden, who describes collaboration as “working together in a common project” (Blunden 2010:9-10). He defines a project as the conscious activity of a collective subject, involving both the aim, or goal, of an “ongoing collection of actions,” and the process through which these goals are attained (2010:9).

The collective subjects I investigate are the international union federations, particularly, the ITUC (Chapter 4), and non-union elements of global civil society (Chapter 2). In Chapter 7, I explicate these concepts further, when I turn to my analysis of a range of collaborative projects in which the ITUC is engaged.

Many scholars and labour movement activists have suggested that collaboration between trade unions and non-union elements of civil society is essential if unions are to overcome their crisis, first articulated in the 1980s, of worker representation and social influence. Engaging in collaborative projects with non-union elements in civil society is seen by many as a crucial component of a turn toward social movement unionism. Social movement unionism is a form of unionism that sees a role for the union both inside and outside of the site of production. It suggests non-hierarchical collaborative relationships between unions and social movement organizations concerned with a range of issues from the status of women, to environmental degradation, to housing and other urban issues facing the working class. Both the crisis of unionism and the concept of social movement unionism are explored thoroughly in Chapter 2.

Research Objectives

This research project builds on my past work. In examining the efforts of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) — a predecessor of the current International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) — to globalize the post-war compromises between capital and labour in the industrialized North, I argue that efforts to transnationalize collective bargaining were unlikely to succeed (Huxtable 2008). My position is that resources would be better spent expanding the organization's social base to include workers outside of trade unions. In my previous research, I documented two instances from existing literature in which international union leaders appeared to be doing this. For example, Waterman suggests that the participation of international union leaders in the World Social Forum (WSF) might demonstrate a willingness of the international union federations to engage the “Global Justice and Solidarity Movement” (GJ&SM) (2004; 2009). Another example was a report on the campaign to develop an ILO Convention Concerning Home Work by Vosko. She argued that the campaign's success was partially the product of a coalition that included a number of non-union labour organizations and NGOs concerned about vulnerable and precarious labour (2002). This

research project is a follow up on these two hanging threads from my previous research, intended to see if the two examples referenced above are indications of a trend, or are simply exceptions.

The goal of this dissertation is threefold. The dissertation is intended to:

1. Address the lacuna in GCS studies around the involvement of organized labour.
2. Provide an analysis of what ITUC GCS collaborations mean for the remit and repertoire of action of the ITUC:
 - a. Is there evidence that the ITUC has expanded its remit beyond that of its predecessor organizations?
 - b. Is there evidence that the collaborations in which the ITUC participates indicate a change in the repertoire of action for the international union movement?
 - c. If there is evidence of a change in the remit and repertoire of the international union institutions, does this indicate a move toward social movement unionism?
3. Provide an analysis of the impact of ITUC collaborations on transnational class formation.
 - a. Do these collaborations indicate a new “moment” in transnational historical class formation?
 - b. Do these collaborations within GCS indicate a move towards the development of comprehensive concepts of resistance, and the development of a new counter-hegemonic bloc?

The first goal of this dissertation is to explicate the existing collaborations between the ITUC and non-union GCS actors. A thorough investigation into these collaborations is itself a significant contribution to the literature on the international trade union movement, given the limited number of empirical studies on the ITUC and its role in global civil society. For example, in assessing current global civil society actors for the potential of counterhegemonic leadership, Carroll notes that the ICFTU is co-signatory to the UN Global Compact along with the International Chamber of Commerce – a disappointment if it is an example of the ICFTU commitment to “alliances with NGOs and civil society around shared values” (2007:42). Yet, without examining in context the ICFTU involvement with the Global Compact, it is hard to draw conclusions as to the meaning of this signature. Ramasay, *contra* Carroll, sees promising “signs that labour centres such as the International Confederation of Trade Unions... are taking

measures to bring [about] some form of global labour solidarity,” yet he offers no examples of these supposed efforts (2005:22). In short, there is a great deal of speculation about the efficacy of the ITUC and other international union federations, but little empirical research. To overcome this empirical gap, I develop a three-part set of research questions that begin empirically before moving on to the more theoretical concerns arising from this research.

The initial purely empirical research questions guiding this dissertation can be organized into ‘who, how, why, and what:’

1. With *whom* does the ITUC work?
2. *How* do specific collaborations operate, and *how* might these relationships be characterized?
3. *What* are the roles played by ITUC staff and elected leaders in establishing and maintaining these collaborations?
4. What motivates the ITUC leadership to develop and maintain civil society collaborations? Why are they seen to be important?

I answer these questions by reference to data produced through my interviews with current ITUC staff and elected leaders, and a study of the ITUC’s public documents as they involve examining the activities of these agents and the products of their activity. I develop a picture of these collaborations through interviews, document and website analysis, participant observation, and a review of secondary literature. I also explore in more depth the role of coalitions between union and non-union labour organizations in advocating for marginalized workers through a case study of the ITUC’s “12 by 12 Campaign,” a transnational campaign aimed at the adoption and ratification of an ILO Convention on the rights of domestic workers. This case study draws upon data from interviews with the cadres⁸ of the ITUC and its Indian affiliates — The Indian National Trade Union Confederation (INTUC), the Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), and the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) — some of whom were critical of the emergence of this campaign.

This dissertation also provides an analysis of these collaborations, first with a focus on what they mean for the remit and repertoire of action of the international union institutions. By remit, I refer to the scope of issues that the organization’s membership considers important,

⁸ I explain my use of the term cadre in Chapter 3: Research Methods.

requiring the attention of organized labour's leadership and cadre. By repertoire of action I refer to the strategic activities that the organization pursues in addressing these issues. *What* do these collaborations say about the role of global civil society in shaping the ITUC's contemporary remit and repertoires of action? Can we see in these new relationships a shift within the ITUC from "bread-and-butter-unionism" and international diplomacy towards what Waterman (2005a) has termed a "global social movement unionism?"

Finally, this dissertation explores the potential impact of these collaborations on transnational class formation. Is there a concerted effort to develop a broad-based class project? Do such collaborations suggest moves toward a counter-hegemonic project, with comprehensive concepts of resistance? Are we seeing the development of a transnational counter-movement, putting forward alternative concepts of control that might resonate across social classes?

The evidence produced in this study supports the argument that global civil society is a crucial site of transnational class formation and a nascent opportunity structure for transnationally organized labour in three ways. First, the new collaborations being established between the international institutions of organized labour and other inter/transnational organizations allow the staff and leadership of organized labour to more effectively expand the remit of international union federations into areas of social and environmental justice not previously considered "union business." Second, these partnerships, coalitions, and other collaborations contribute to the efforts of labour's cadre to "mainstream" the question of social class in global debates over issues such as climate change, that are often not thought of in class terms. Third, through a number of its collaborations with NGOs, co-operatives, and social movement organizations, organized labour is being "introduced" to fractions of the global working class that have hitherto been marginalized within union structures. In a more general sense, at a higher analytical 'level,' the evidence presented here, considered in its entirety, suggests that many emergent relationships found within global civil society (GCS) indicate a new historical moment in global class formation.

Chapter outline

Chapter 2 explores the crisis facing trade unions and the various paths out of this crisis that have been suggested by labour activists and academics. What the chapter shows is that, although there is great disagreement around how exactly organized labour should address its

crisis, there is near consensus around the idea that the way forward involves collaborations with (non-union elements of) civil society. Chapter 2 also outlines GCS in theory and in fact. If the consensus is that unions need to work with non-union elements of civil society, it is clear that a study of the activities of the ITUC must explore the “level” of civil society within which it operates. Chapter 2 discusses political agency within GCS. It then outlines the twin meta-projects within GCS — one that orbits the various UN civil society forums, and the other that is centred on the WSF — that the ITUC operates within, framing them as a nascent political opportunity structure for the ITUC. The importance of this opportunity structure can be found in the work of both Gramsci and Polanyi, and the concepts of counter-hegemony and counter-movement will be explored at the end of Chapter 2. In brief, both of these concepts of social change highlight the importance of civil society collaborations.

After an explanation of my research methods in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 introduces the reader to the history of international trade unionism. Rather than a broad sweeping history, it focuses on three areas that are central to the study at hand: the international trade union movement’s relationship to the International Labour Organization; the struggle of women workers to have their issues addressed by a male-dominated movement; and the challenge of reconciling competing interests within an ever expanding global working class. These socio-historical explications show the significance of the more recent activities that are under study here.

Chapter 5 introduces the Indian affiliates of the ITUC and provides a brief outline of the history of trade unions in India. The case study in this dissertation looks at transnational domestic worker organizing campaigns in which the ITUC played an important role. The challenge facing trade unions globally – specifically, the question of union density – is particularly acute in India, where over 90% of workers labour under informal employment schemes, outside of the legal framework that regulates the capital-labour relationship. These acute challenges in India have led to particularly creative forms of organizing informal women workers, such as domestics. The SEWA in particular plays a crucial role in the changes occurring within the ITUC that have opened up the possibility of working with non-union GCS. Therefore, a chapter is devoted to introducing the reader to the Indian affiliates, their history, and the particular struggle of organizing informal workers.

Chapter 6 introduces, explicates, and analyzes the collaborations between the ITUC and non-union GCS actors during their campaign to organize around an ILO Convention on the rights of domestic workers.

Chapter 7 puts the case study in Chapter 6 into context by providing a wider look at ITUC-GCS collaborations. It explores the development of these emergent relationships, and locates them in the meta-projects outlined in Chapter 2. I then analyse these collaborations, answering the questions about what they signify about the changing remit and repertoire of the ITUC. Much of this analysis is built upon the works of Blunden and John-Steiner. From Blunden, my analysis borrows and builds on the idea of collaborative projects. Blunden's analysis not only highlights the centrality of collaboration in the history of the labour movement, but also explores how different forms of collaboration have produced different forms of collective subjects, from the spontaneous collective subjects of early labour agitation, to the secret societies of communist parties, to the emergence of identity-based projects and the current efforts to bring these disparate identity groups into alliance with one another.

Blunden also discusses how "modes of assisting others" change over time, and how collaboration can be motivated by a desire to colonize the projects of others, or by the need to exchange resources and ideas, or by a sense of solidarity. In a similar way that Blunden offers insights into the different motives people have for collaboration, John-Steiner illustrates how collaborations can take different forms. John-Steiner's typology allows us an analytical framework through which the different collaborations the ITUC engages in develop over time, from voluntary, often impromptu exchanges of ideas, to "complimentary" collaborations, where collaborating subjects develop a division of labour and a set of goals through negotiation. After analyzing a variety of ITUC collaborations through the typologies developed by John-Steiner and Blunden, I conclude this chapter with an analysis of these collaborations through the lens of the social movement unionism debate.

Finally, I conclude with a recap of the dissertation and highlight of its findings before providing an answer to the question of what this all means for transnational class formation.

Chapter 2: The Crisis of Trade Unionism and the Promise of Global Civil Society

This dissertation is motivated by both personal experience within the union movement, and the body of academic and activist literature outlining the “crisis of trade unionism.” As I outline below, both the associational power and the structural power of unions across the OECD, where unions were strongest, have been in decline since the 1980s. Some (e.g., Castells 1997) have gone so far as to suggest that organized labour has been superseded as an historical agent. However, I contend that this argument is premised on the idea that unions, and the people that animate them, are incapable of innovation. In the introductory chapter of this dissertation I argue that transnational class formation involves a complex of agentic practices of movements from above and from below that take place within an existing social structure. I argue further that existing structures and the institutions that animate them are open to innovation because human beings are reflexive.

In this chapter, I argue that trade unions can and need to innovate by working with non-union elements of civil society organizations as they engage the class struggle outside the workplace. I further suggest that global civil society can be seen as an important opportunity structure for such an engagement. I make these two arguments through a critical review of two bodies of literature that motivate the research questions of this dissertation. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the contextual background for my examination of collaborations between union and non-union GCS actors.

In this chapter I review literature on the crisis of trade unionism and explore a number of suggested paths past this crisis put forward by labour academics and activists. I pay particular attention to Waterman’s theorizations on global social movement unionism (GSMU), as I believe it to be the most thorough outline of a future-looking framework for the international union movement. Following this examination of the crisis and potential future facing unions, I examine the literature on global civil society. Despite the problems with how it is used in the literature, I argue that the term global civil society corresponds to an actual phenomenon. I suggest that there are two broad GCS “meta-projects” currently playing out, one that orbits the various UN civil society forums, and one that is centred on the WSF. The first is the liberal internationalist project that seeks to legitimize global governance through the active engagement of the interstate system. The second is the post-Marxist left of global justice and solidarity movement, which

rejects the current interstate system. I argue further, that the SMOs and NGOs that animate these meta-projects should be seen as potential allies for the international trade union movement. But first I turn to the crisis of organized labour and responses to it by labour academics and activists.

The crisis of trade unionism

Research on trade unions in the late 20th Century was shaped by a sense of “heightened concern and urgency” (Verma and Kochan 2004:1). Trade unions appeared to be in crisis, and were seen by many to be of declining utility for workers, at least in the Global North (Munck 2010). The drop in union density appears to have been most dramatic in the Anglo American countries (Ramasamy 2005:14). In North America, the literature references a crisis in “business unionism” (Ginden 2016) while in Europe, the crisis is presented as a crisis of the “social democratic” union model (Upchurch, Taylor, and Mathers 2008). Outside of Europe and North America, the challenge facing unions is organizing the millions of informal workers joining the global economy.

As I argue below, the ways in which the crisis for organized labour is presented vary; however, most scholars argue that the root causes of organized labour’s current crisis, at least across the OECD, can be found in dramatic changes to the global political economy beginning in the late 1960s or early 1970s when Keynesian economics was undermined by a general crisis of profitability and an increase in international competition (Bowles, Gordon, and Weisskopf 1983). The crisis of profitability in the 1970s called into question the postwar historic bloc in its entirety (Overbeek and van der Pijl 1993:14). In response to this crisis, capital accelerated its spread around the globe, developing new labour markets in areas previously untouched by industrial capitalism. Rather than seeking stability in any particular national market, global capital seeks the flexibility to create and take advantage of new markets for raw materials and cheap labour opened up by advances in technology and transportation (Harvey 1989), accelerating accumulation around the globe. The concern that capital mobility would put pressure on all workers to accept lower wages and worse working conditions led union leaders across the industrialized world to claim that a “race to the bottom” had begun (Bronfenbrenner 2007:2; Mazur 2000).

This, at least, is the view from the Global North. Silver suggests that "we should be cautious about concluding that world economic forces are producing a downward convergence of conditions for workers and workers' movements worldwide," and points out that while workers in the North are facing downward pressures on their wages, "new working classes have been created and strengthened in the favoured new sites of investment" (Silver 2003:5). Perhaps. In the South, the working class was certainly expanding over the same period, and union density over the same period presents a more nuanced picture (Ramasamy 2005:20). However, it is also the case that the integration of workers in the Global South brought about new productive technologies and methods, which appear to have been grafted onto, rather than replaced, existing forms of labour discipline (Ibid.:19; Munck 2002:110).

Frangi and Routh (2014) argue that a gap in the literature on union revitalization is the challenge that informal workers present to traditional trade unions.⁹ This is particularly glaring given that informal labour relations are "becoming central to the global South economies" (Ibid.:44), and it is the case, they argue, that this distinction explains the limited development of trade unionism in many countries outside of Europe and North America, where economic growth has not translated into a growth in formal employment. India is perhaps the most extreme case where approximately 93% of the workforce labours in the informal economy (NCEUS 2009). Here, Routh argues, traditional trade unionism has not proven to be a good fit for Indian workers (Routh 2016).

As the case study in this dissertation is on organizing domestic workers, who often work under informal employment conditions, it is important to expand on the concept of informal employment and the challenge this presents to unions. Definitions of informal labour have varied over time (Bacchetta, Bustamante, and Ernst 2009; Chen 2012; Routh 2011), and there are still disagreements over how to define it. Broadly speaking, there are those who employ a highly restrictive definition, and those (the majority) who employ an expansive one. Breman offers a highly restrictive definition, one that appears to limit informal labour to waged labour. He identifies an informal employment relationship as one where the employee and employer do not

⁹ There are exceptions, including some writers with strong connections to the international trade union movement (see, for example: Bonner and Spooner 2011; Gallin and Horn 2005; Gallin 2001).

have a contractual relationship regulated by employment law,¹⁰ resulting in a precarious situation where workers are vulnerable to “instant hire-and-fire” practices (1999:453). Often, but not always, informality can be further characterized by piece rates, rather than hourly wages.

Routh (2011) and Chen (2012) defend a more expansive definition. Routh argues that definitions of informal economic activity need to reflect the complex reality of people’s actual economic activity in the Global South, which often involves a mix of self-employment, informal waged work, criminal activity, and “non-market exchanges” (2011:217). He suggests that the definition developed by the ILO and the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) around “informal employment” allows for “a much more complete picture of the... ‘real life’ political economy” of informal economic activity (Ibid.:218). This definition of informal employment developed by the ILO and the ICLS, acknowledges informal employment in both the formal and informal sectors, and refers to “paid employment as well as self-employment, including unpaid work in an enterprise operated by another member of the household or family, and in the production of goods for own final use by households” (Ibid.:219).

The definition of informal employment as a distinct analytical category allows terms previously defined in a nebulous fashion to be used more specifically: “informal sector” can be maintained as a measurement of the contribution of “informal entrepreneurship” to a national economy or the GPE more broadly, and “informal economy” can be retained with some “conceptual efficacy... as an overarching concept to identify all kinds of informality in the economy” in the development of theoretical frameworks about causal relations, rather than as a poorly equipped measurement tool (Routh 2011:220). Most importantly for Routh, however, is the fact that the concept of informal employment “links the informal workers with their work, irrespective of the presence of a workplace or employer” and therefore recognizes that informal employment occurs in both the formal and informal sectors” (Ibid.), which is crucial for policy debates about the governance of employment relations and the provision of social security.

As I show in Chapter 5, the challenge facing organized labour in countries such as India is not about declining numbers of unionized workers due to a local decline of heavily unionized industries, as is the case in North America. Trade unions in India have never represented more than a very small fraction of workers. The challenge facing trade unions in India — as in other

areas of the Global South — is that the massive expansion of employment over the past two decades has largely occurred through the “informal” employment of workers who work in a legal grey zone. As I argue in Chapter 6, organizing and advocating for such workers is profoundly challenging for labour organizers, as these workers work outside the remit of the existing industrial relations regime that has shaped the repertoire of Indian unions since the country became independent in 1947. Without organization, such workers are in a highly precarious situation, and are generally forced to accept extremely low wages.

The way forward? Union renewal and new forms of unionism

Union revitalization: expanding the scope of union activity

Faniel (2012) identifies two sets of reactions by European trade union leaders to the crisis facing labour. This first is a focus on mobilization, where increased efforts are placed on developing the core strengths of the existing model. The second set of reactions focusses on re-examining the purpose and goals of the trade union with an open mind to structural change. In North America, both reactions can be seen within the discursive framework of union renewal, or union revitalization. At times this literature appears to reflect a desire to return to a mythical past, to the high-water mark of trade union power in the postwar period, or the 1930s — an era of mass mobilizations which is seen by some as the cause of the latter “golden age” of collective bargaining and steadily increasing wages (Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin 2002; Voss and Sherman 2000). Nonetheless, it has had an impact on the existing union movement in the US, as can be seen in the American Federation of Labor’s (AFL-CIO) Organizing Institute, which trained 150 organizers between 1989 and 1991 (Kumar 1993). However, it is clear that such efforts have been unsuccessful, as union density actually decreased in the following years, from 16.1% in 1992, to 13.3% in 1998 (Farber and Western n.d.; Kumar 1993). Such numbers would seem to offer support to those who argue that such staff-driven campaigns are both expensive and ineffective (Eisenscher 1999; Nissen and Rosen 1999), while others (Levi, Myrdal, and Robertson 2007; Vos and Sherman 2000) find that a shift to a member-driven organizing model had no impact on membership decline. In the UK, Darlington (2009) argues that the focus on membership numbers misses the point. What is needed is not so much mass membership engagement, but rather the “level of organization and consciousness” of a skilled, militant rank and file cadre. Underlining this argument is a belief that shop floor activists are more likely to

engage in militant industrial action (i.e. Camfield 2006; Darlington 2009), given the inherent conservatism of the union bureaucracy. In general, all of the above arguments about the need to revitalize or renew the trade union movement look to “rebuild” and rediscover something that the authors feel has been lost: associational power within the legal framework of collective bargaining in some cases, a militant and potentially revolutionary rank-and-file membership in others. Despite the profound differences, all of the above authors see change occurring largely within the workplace.

However, not all agree with maintaining such a heuristic focus on the workplace. Hyman, for example, suggests that, regardless of legal mechanisms that mediate class conflict, unions need to broaden their strategic field of struggle to civil society, because it is here that the “normative foundations,” which at one time led to the establishment of more equal legal relations between capital and labour in some areas of the GPE, are fought over (2001:59-60). The idea that unions in the North need to reconnect with local communities is an idea that has been around in the US since the 1960s, with the Farm Workers Union under Cesar Chavez being the example of a community-grounded union (Black 2005). However, the idea of “community unionism” would not take off until the 1990s, as researchers concerned with the crisis of organized labour, initially in the US, later in the UK (Wills and Simms 2004), began to seek out alternatives to the bureaucratic industrial union practices which had become dominant in the postwar period (Brecher and Costello 1990; Craft 1990). By the turn of the century, there was “wide consensus” in the literature on unions “that traditional workplace-based and class-centred forms of labor activism” had lost their utility in the face of “subcontracting, flexible production, immaterial capital, transnational workplaces, and precarious and flexible labor” (Mollona 2009:660). Some (Black 2005; see Eisenscher 1999) also argue that the emergence of structural unemployment would move the social base of working-class politics from the factory to the community, as issues of housing affordability and public services became more crucial for a larger portion of the working class. Recently, a number of studies (Mollona 2009; Tattersall 2008; Wills and Simms 2004) have sought to highlight examples of unions working in political alliance with community groups, understood broadly to mean communities of common interest or identity, as well as geography (Tattersall 2008:486-87; Wills and Simms 2004:61).

There is, however, no consensus on what constitutes “community unionism.” Generally, the term is used to describe efforts of trade unions to create “partnerships” with community

groups (Tattersall 2008; Wills 2001; Wills and Simms 2004; Serdar 2012), although alternatives have also been considered. For instance, Black argues that an alternative form of community unionism can be seen in "autonomous community-labor group(s)," such as the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty in Toronto (OCAP), or the National Mobilization Against Sweatshops (NMASS) in New York. Such organizations have open memberships (not attached to employment or trade), and address broad issues of class, rather than sectoral or shop-floor issues, although they also engage in work-place advocacy by engaging employers through direct action (Black 2005). Serdar (2012) also appears to be suggesting something distinct in her study of Central de los Trabajadores de la Argentina (CTA), a union federation that emerged in the 1990s in opposition to the Peronist Central General de Trabajadores (CGT). Due to regulations that restricted the right to represent workers to majority unions, the CTA did not have the structural power of the CGT. Because of this, they were forced to adopt a unique structure with a more direct form of internal democracy and to develop more extensive relations with community groups, going so far as to organize community groups under the CTA umbrella. Serdar's example of community unionism from Argentina, in fact, seems to describe a combination of the organizing model discussed above and the social union model discussed below.

While these examples might suggest a new form of unionism, Cockfield et al. suggest that many examples of community unionism put forward in the literature actually show a continuity with past union activities, rather than a "new form of unionism" (2009). They argue that a more systematic definition of community unionism needs to be developed if the newness of such activities is to be demonstrated. However, Cockfield et al. themselves appear unable or unwilling to offer such a definition. Thus the community unionism literature, while empirically interesting, is undone theoretically by the inability of scholars to develop a coherent outline of what community unionism actually is.

Going global: scaling up the trade union repertoire

For some, the crisis facing organized labour is not necessarily about the repertoire of trade unionism itself, but rather about the need for organized labour to scale up its activities and meet global capital with a global union movement (Mazur 2000). Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in cross border labour alliances in a variety of forms (Bronfenbrenner 2007; Gordon 2000; Kay 2005; Stevis and Boswell 1997). This increase in transnational activity has included,

to a limited degree, efforts to regulate capital through traditional trade union methods. Traditionally labour seeks to regulate capital both privately through the establishment of collective agreements, and publicly through state policy (Stavis and Boswell 2008). Typically, these two broad approaches involve a division of labour at the local and national level between trade unions that engage in direct negotiations with employers, and federations of trade unions that engage in various forms of lobbying, tripartite negotiations, and other forms of collective action aimed at influencing government policies. For those who see the crisis of trade unionism resulting exclusively from globalization – specifically of the threat posed by transnational capital to the gains made by unions in the industrialized North in the mid-20th Century – and not from a failure of trade union repertoires of action, labour’s response must involve the development of global regulatory regimes and transnational collective bargaining.

Efforts by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to establish enforceable global regulations around labour standards began in the 1970s. Gumbrell-McCormick refers to this period as “the long march through the institutions” (2000a:388). As early as 1973, the ICFTU had begun lobbying the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to incorporate a “social clause” within the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and it would continue to push the IMF and the World Bank on this issue throughout the 1980s, despite a lack of support among Southern affiliates (Ibid.:509-510). It also pushed for the development of a tripartite commission that would bring the ILO into the GATT process (Ibid.:508). The idea of including labour standards within the GATT would be recycled 20 years later when the WTO superseded the GATT. However, the ICFTU faced similar and even expanded opposition to its focus on “social clauses” within trade agreements from a number of member organizations (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000a:510-11).¹¹

¹¹ The disconnect between the ICFTU leadership and its increasingly militant membership became quite evident at the demonstrations targeting trade negotiations in the 1990s. As ICFTU staff and leaders engaged in “cautious lobbying” on the margins of the MAI in 1995-1996, and at the Seattle WTO summit in 1999, its members engaged in militant street protests against trade agreements in principle, alongside a broad array of other civil society actors. Even the conservative AFL-CIO waged massive public campaigns, and organized one of the largest protests in American history, in opposition to the negotiations. Voices within the ICFTU and the International Trade Secretariats (ITSs) critical of the focus on lobbying and calling for more direct action grew louder in the 1990s, calling for “a more aggressive response to the MNCs,” including public consumer-focused campaigns (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000a:510-511).

Efforts to extend the private regulation of capital internationally began with the establishment of world company councils (WCCs) at Ford and General Electric in 1966 (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000; Stevis 1998).¹² The idea of the WCCs was to develop a process of union development around the world and coordinate the expiration dates of contracts, so as to move eventually toward coordinated transnational collective bargaining (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000). However, these early efforts at transnational union coordination largely collapsed due to internal divisiveness and the unwillingness of national or local leaders to relinquish their authority over the bargaining process (Ibid.).

The idea of WCCs would make a comeback in the final decade of the 20th Century, sometimes under the banner of “global corporate networks.” By the 1990s, the IMF had 18 WCCs, while the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers’ Unions (ICEM) had 9 “global corporate networks.” These networks would be the basis of a renewed effort to privately regulate MNCs through “international framework agreements” (IFAs). These agreements have proven to be quite limited achievements, ie., nothing more than a corporate commitment to “fundamental workers’ rights” as established in the ILO Core Labour Standards (Huxtable 2008).¹³ To date, five Global Union Federations (GUFs) have 115 International Framework Agreements with firms operating transnationally. While the strategies of the different GUFs vary somewhat, the overall focus continues to be on basic trade union rights, such as the right to organize and be represented (Egels-Zandén 2008; Fairbrother and Hammer 2005; Fichter et al. 2012; Miller 2004; Stevis 2010). The majority of these are with European firms, suggesting that the use and utility of IFAs is uneven geographically.

What is clear from the recent history of union efforts to globally regulate capital either publicly or privately, is that public regulation through the existing interstate system has not come about, and it does not appear that this will happen in the near future. To date no enforceable mechanism that might regulate global capital has been ratified at the UN, no policies have been developed at the IMF or World bank connecting financial or development assistance to ILO

¹² WCCs were the idea of Walter Reuther of the United Auto Workers (UAW), who identified MNCs as a priority for the International Metalworkers Federation as early as the 1950s.

¹³ The notable exception to these early IFAs was that negotiated between the International Transport Federation (ITF) and the International Maritime Employers Committee (IMEC) in 2000. Building on earlier — and weaker — agreements, the ITF-IMEC agreement has the singular distinction of including established rules around pay and working conditions (Koch-Baumgarten 1998; Lillie 2004).

conventions on the rights of workers, and there has been no interest on the part of states to utilize WTO enforcement mechanisms either. The failure in the 1990s to get a social clause incorporated into the WTO agreements led the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to refocus its lobbying efforts on the ILO (Hennebert and Bourque 2011). As Stevis and Boswell note, although the ICFTU, was able to make “some inroads” by gaining consultative status at the IMF and World Bank, the struggle for global labour regulation is a “slow process,” which they largely attribute to the historical inability of national labour leaders to act in a unified fashion around the issue of public regulation (2008:107). It is only recently that the GUFs have been able to “forge a common agenda” around core labour standards and development goals, if not around the use of a social clause in trade agreements.

The verdict is less clear on private regulation, notably the expanded use of international framework agreements. Stevis and Boswell note that while the GUFs have had some success at engaging and regulating the behaviour of transnational capital through negotiations, their success is limited compared to the national level and there is much work to be done (2008:139), a sentiment that is shared by many (Fairbrother and Hammer 2005; Munck 2008; O’Brien 2005; Papadakis 2008). Fichter et al. argue that the challenge once GUFs do have an agreement is enforcement at the local level, with many managers having no idea about the regulations agreed to by their global parent company (2012:8). So, there is a problem of actualization and enforcement in both public and private efforts at regulating capital globally. Furthermore, because IFAs are focused on traditional worksites of multinational firms, IFAs do nothing to advance the cause of workers in the informal economy. As I argue in Chapter 6 on organizing domestic workers, non-traditional labour organizations and strategies are necessary to engage such workers.

Global social movement unionism

Global social movement unionism (GSMU) addresses a number of issues raised by critics of trade unionism and absorbs some of the elements of both union revitalization and community unionism, while scaling up the conversation to the global level. It is a concept that emerges from debates over local/ national social movement unionism (SMU) identified by Waterman and others, and outlined below. One of the important ways in which Waterman’s contribution to the SMU debates is unique is that he brings theoretical frameworks from feminist and new social

movement theory, and lessons from other social movements, into the debate on organized labour's crisis. In a sense, Waterman's GSMU is less about actually existing local, national, or transnational unionism, and more about what the labour movement might become in the future.

Compared to writings on community unionism, SMU literature has generated far more debate about definitions, as well as on the appropriateness of constructing abstract models of unionism (von Holdt 2002) and/or transposing these models to worker organizations in disparate regions of the GPE (Rahman and Langford 2010). Advocates of social movement unionism hold that the ability of unions to meaningfully participate in a process of social change depends on renewing themselves as social movement institutions that operate hand-in-hand with other social movement actors who adhere to similar conceptions of social justice (Gallin 2000; Moody 1997). Such an argument is similar to those made by writers advocating community unionism. However, the SMU debate places a greater emphasis on internationalism and in some cases has a broader conception of social justice. Generally speaking, the literature on SMU is more theoretically developed; hence the academic debates over its meaning.

The term "social movement unionism" was apparently coined by Waterman. It was subsequently picked up by Lambert and Webster who use it to explore the apparently unique union activity in South Africa (Munck and Waterman 1993). Others soon applied it to unions in Brazil and South Korea (von Holdt 2002; Waterman 2004; Rahman and Langford 2010; Serdar 2012). Von Holdt identifies the "core definition of SMU as "a highly mobilized form of unionism" that "emerges in opposition to authoritarian regimes and repressive workplaces" (2002 285). However, as Rahman and Langford point out, SMU is generally used as "shorthand... to reference the conjunction of a praiseworthy set of union characteristics," such as deep democracy, militancy, political independence, a grounding in the broader community, and strong, equitable relationships with social movements (2010:48). Yet, there appears to be little agreement on what this means, or what the purpose of social movement unionism is.

The competing understandings of SMU seem to exist on a continuum that, at one end, sees the purpose of social movement unionism as strengthening existing unions, while at the other, imagines a transcendence of the union model itself. So, at one end of the continuum, Fairbrother identifies social movement unions as having a "local focus," as equally engaged in the workplace and the community, and as seeking to develop "a distinctive and transformative union identity" (2008:213; see also Fairbrother and Webster 2008). For Fairbrother, then, SMU

is not dissimilar to community unionism, and he is largely in line with union revitalizationists who argue that the union remains the central social movement in the struggle against capitalism (Ibid.:217, 219). Moody, like Fairbrother, emphasizes the need for both democratic revival within unions and a focus on “reaching out to other sectors of the class,” but he goes further in his claims by arguing that a more “deeply democratic” union would see a more militant membership that sees its interests tied to all other workers (1997:4), a notion which Schiavone sensibly suggests is a dubious assumption (2007:283). Both Fairbrother and Moody see SMU as the grounds for a revitalized global labour movement (von Holdt 2002:285; Lambert and Webster 2001:352). Fairbrother appears more committed to a bureaucratic model than Moody, as the former sees the future of global unionism in corporate codes of conduct, social clauses attached to trade agreements, and international framework agreements between GUFs and multinational corporations (Fairbrother and Hammer 2005).

Waterman is at the other end of the continuum. His interest in SMU is less about union revitalization than it is about the labour movement transcending trade unionism (as it is currently understood) and embedding itself within the broader GJ&SM, which is grounded in projects such as the World Social Forum (2004, 2005b, 2012). Waterman’s SMU has developed since his initial contribution (1993), and he has since referred to his conception of SMU as “new social unionism” (NSU) (Waterman 1999), “new international social unionism” (NISU) (Waterman 2004), as a way of distinguishing his ideas from those of Moody, Fairbrother, and others.

Rahman and Langford synthesize these ideas succinctly (2010:50-51):

- 1) Advance a radical and utopian set of demands concerning work and other social institutions including worker/union control over everything up to and including product selection and investment; the equitable sharing of domestic work; anti-authoritarian, non-racist and non-sexist social organization; and ‘an increase in free time for cultural self-development and self-realization’.
- 2) Work with a wide variety of other groups in ways that respect those groups’ autonomy and thus ‘stimulate organizational democracy, pluralism and innovation’.
- 3) Support the production of ‘worker and popular culture’ apart from dominant institutions.
- 4) Use informational networks to pursue grassroots, international solidarity relationships that are reciprocal rather than hierarchical in character, based on the ‘needs, values and

capacities of ordinary working people’ and which aim ‘to create a global civil society and global solidarity culture’.

- 5) Overcome ‘dependency in international solidarity work by financing internationalist activities from worker or publicly-collected funds’.
- 6) Participate in formal internationalist forums with both labour unions and other progressive organizations.

Waterman’s contributions are a “critique of actually-existing unionism and union theory” (2004:222). He argues that those who study organized labour fail to see the significance of identity-based movements, and the transformative potential in a deeper engagement between organized labour and the feminist movement (Ibid.). Labour, he argues further, needs to understand itself as a single nodal point in a communicative network of movements that are engaged in the socio-cultural arena of struggle (2004). Consequently, Waterman is highly critical of Fairbrother’s consideration of unions as a social movement, correctly arguing that this ignores “the inevitable tension between a movement and an institution, a century of evidence and theory concerning unions as “managers of discontent,” and the struggle for ideological hegemony in and around the unions” (2008:304).

Waterman has come under significant criticism (Fairbrother and Webster 2008; Rahman and Langford 2010; von Hodlt (2002), particularly for throwing “the worker out with the trade union” (Fairbrother and Webster 2008:311), and having a Euro-centric and middle-class bias (Rahman and Langford 2010:56-57). Given these critiques, Waterman’s highly theoretical and utopian model of SMU does not appear to be a helpful framework for researching actually existing union activity. However, Waterman’s contribution is important for this project for two main reasons. What is perhaps most thought provoking in Waterman’s typology is that he takes the complexity of worker subjectivity seriously. Workers, are not *only* workers; they are also gendered, often racialized subjects found within a multiplicity of cultural formations interacting with the process of global capital accumulation in differentiated and contradictory ways. Furthermore, his intervention in the SMU debates reminds us that trade unions and the labour movement are not synonymous. Of all the writings on SMU, only Waterman’s can imagine a global labour movement beyond trade unionism. These aspects of Waterman’s typology are critical to my current project. With Waterman, I situate the current international union

federations and their collaborations with non-union civil society within a long history, and in doing so I examine the present for hints at the future.

Whether or not Waterman's somewhat exacting definition of "new global social movement unionism" can be achieved by the existing international union institutions — and he does not seem to think that this is the point of postulating the idea — there are some indications that the core ideas of social movement unionism are being taken up at the "global level." The clearest example seems to be that of the Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights (SIGTUR). SIGTUR was initiated at a regional conference of unions from the Indian Ocean region in 1991 (Gillan and Biyanwila 2009:444; Lambert and Webster 2001:200; Munck 2010:227). The purpose of the conference was to bring together "democratic" unions that are "social movement in orientation" and committed to struggling against "global restructuring" within their different contexts. It has affiliates in Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, India, East Timor, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Australia, Nepal, Burma, Cambodia, Brazil, and South Africa (Evans 2010:371). SIGTUR does not seek to duplicate or replace the existing international union institutions, and many of its member-organizations are active members of the ITUC — indeed, the African regional organization of the ITUC, ITUC-Africa, is a member of the network.¹⁴ What it does do is bring together a group of activist-oriented national unions and federations to share strategy, and offer support to each other's campaigns outside of the international organizations (Ibid.:367).

Below I discuss the varied responses in the literature to the crisis of trade unionism. Of particular interest is the discourse on social movement unionism. I highlight Waterman because his theorizations are so provocative, and because his analysis is premised on the complex nature of worker subjectivity — workers are always gendered, often racialized, and have hopes, fears, and concerns that go beyond their class experience at work. However, before moving on to the promise of global civil society for the labour movement, I want to end this discussion by underlining the significance of social movement unionism, broadly speaking, on this dissertation. This background discussion is necessary as I examine the possibility that the ITUC is also showing signs of social movement unionism in Chapter 7.

¹⁴ <http://www.sigtur.com/Network/>

As I show in Chapter 7, the ITUC has been actively campaigning on a number of social, economic, and environmental issues, often in collaboration with other GCS actors. SMU also encourages unions to work with other movement organizations and institutions. This has three effects that I explore later in the dissertation. First, as I show in Chapter 7, is that collaborating with non-union GCS actors has allowed the ITUC to pursue campaigns on a number of the issues noted above that it would not have the resources to pursue on its own. Second, collaborations with other GCS actors has provided the ITUC with expertise in new areas of interest that it did not initially have internally, particularly in regards to environmental issues. Third and finally, as I outline in Chapter 7, being open to working with non-union GCS organizations has allowed the ITUC to build a significant network of union and non-union domestic worker organizations around its campaigns for domestic worker rights. This is an example of openness to non-union civil society helping the ITUC engage marginalized workers outside of the union network.

Below I explore the concept of GCS and outline my understanding of the GCS meta-projects which, as I show in Chapter 7, provide a new opportunity structure for the ITUC to pursue its agenda.

The promise of global civil society

It should be clear from the SMU discussion above that an important component of this strategy is engaging non-union organizations and networks outside the workplace. Below I identify the potential allies of transnational trade unionism as those NGOs and SMOs that also operate transnationally, groups that are often identified as global civil society. As I argue in the introduction, civil society is best seen as a sphere of identity formation and a terrain of struggle, arguing against those who define global civil society by the organizations that operate within this sphere or terrain. However, it must be acknowledged that civil society has contested meanings that have changed over the centuries. It has been conceived of as a kind of society, as “part of society,” and, more recently, as a “public sphere” (Edwards 2004:10). It can be traced back to the Greek polis, where it was used by Cicero as a philosophical premise about how people ought to behave toward one another. Civil society here describes a *kind* of society, characterized by “decency” (Hall 1995:1), “greater civility in social relations” (Kaviraj, Khilnani, and Zubaida 2001:11), and refers to social relations guided by an established set of norms, enshrined and

codified in laws (Hooker 2005). This idea of “*societas civilis*,” frames the debates between Hobbes, Locke and Ferguson about the relation between the state and the individual. It implies a “political community” in which “rule of law,” “civility,” and the “consent of individuals” is the norm (Kaldor 2003a:7).

The break with this historical understanding of civil society comes through Hegel. For Hegel, modern society involves three distinct spheres, or moments, of a coherent ethical order: the family, civil society, and the state. Civil society, the “stage of difference” occurs at the point when “the family disintegrates... into a plurality of families... externally related to its neighbours” (Hegel and Knox 1967:122). Within civil society two “principles” exist, the “concrete person” of wants, needs, necessity, and the “particular person” who can only meet these needs through their relations with others (Ibid.:123). In the work of Hegel, civil society contains both a system of needs and the administration of justice (Ibid.:126). The foundation of this system of needs is the universality of freedom, but only in the abstract as the right of property, a right that is made explicit through the administration of justice, which protects it (Ibid.:134). Civil society is, for Hegel, “the sphere of economic relations together with their external regulation” (Bobbio 1988:81), “an institutional system that results from the... concretization of legal relations” (Honneth 1995:51).

Marx inherits a number of these postulations, but is nonetheless highly critical of Hegel. Like Hegel, Marx sees civil society as embracing “the whole material intercourse of individuals within a definite stage of the development of productive forces.” However, for Marx, civil society “transcends the State and the nation” because it “embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage.” Civil society “assert(s) itself in its foreign relations as nationality and inwardly must organize itself as state” (Marx, 1978:163). We can see here both the continuity between Hegel and Marx as well as the decisive break that Marx makes with his former teacher. Like Hegel, he sees civil society as comprised of the system through which individuals meet their needs. However, for Marx, civil society is not an ethical sphere, but rather a real place where individuals struggle with one another to reproduce their physical existence.

From Marx’s engagement with Hegel the concept of civil society is picked up by Gramsci who elaborates on the idea of a sphere of social interaction theoretically distinct from the state and site of production. From Gramsci, the concept travels to the current discourse on the emergence of global civil society as a political force or collective agent through the work of

Cohen and Arato, and Laclau and Mouffe. This discussion brings us to a new articulation of civil society as a collective political agent and the identification of two distinct political meta-projects – one emanating from Eastern Europe and the other from South America – which have emerged from this articulation.

Civil society as collective political agent

The idea of civil society as a political agent emerged out of the popular struggles against totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe and South America. Baker (2004) suggests that it emerged out of both practical and philosophical reasoning. Practically, “there was a strategic case for the discovery of autonomous associational life as an alternative to statist politics” for those living under authoritarian regimes. But the term served normative or philosophical desires to reject the sovereign state, which was seen to replace “the self-determining actions of free citizens with the dead weight of distant and unresponsive institutions organized in the interests of ‘power’”. What was sought after was nothing less than the democracy of civil society” (Ibid.:89). The political situations in Eastern Europe and South America in the 1980s were not exactly identical, and the projects that emerged from them were distinct; however, they shared some commonalities in terms of intellectual influences, and the practical realities of an authoritarian state. In both cases what emerged was the assertion of a new universal political agent: civil society. The emergence of civil society as a political agent may also be connected to the “sense of betrayal” felt on the left in the closing decades of the 20th Century; in Eastern Europe, the degeneration of the ‘workers state’ into a totalitarian nightmare was a daily reality. In South America, the failure of the Marxist parties, both revolutionary and parliamentary, was keenly felt by those who suffered at the hands of reactionary forces, leading many to view the belief “that society can be changed through the winning of state power” as mistaken (Holloway 2002:12–13).

The association of civil society with Eastern Europe comes to the academic left via Cohen and Arato’s analysis of the Solidarity Movement in Poland. They characterize the movement against totalitarianism as an example of “the ‘self-limiting’ revolution” (Baker 2004:14), in which “civil society” seeks not to take power, but nonetheless asserts itself as a political actor. They build on the ideas that they found applied in Eastern Europe and generalize them into a set of theories about democracy, civil society, and the relationship between the two. Their novel concept of civil society as a virtuous democratic force, autonomous from the state

builds upon their reading of Gramsci. From Gramsci, they borrow the now famous phrase, “between the economic structure and the state, with its legislation and coercion, stands civil society” (Gramsci 1971:208). For Cohen and Arato, however, Gramsci needs to be separated from his Marxian roots, and they suggest that Gramsci makes a decisive break with Marxism. This is necessary because in Marx, Cohen and Arato identify a “hatred of civil society,” (Cohen and Arato 1982:29), based on his identification of “civil society with its most historical manifestation, capitalism,” which ignores the “heterogeneous origins” of the concept” (Ibid.:24). For Cohen and Arato, “civil society (is) against the state” (Baker 2004:14), and therefore Gramsci must be presented as severing the “link between Marxism and authoritarianism” that infects “all of Marxism” (Ibid.:29).

In South America, the idea of civil society as outside and against the state would also take hold. It was inspired intellectually by Gramsci, but generally through Laclau and Mouffe, rather than Cohen and Arato. Laclau and Mouffe start from within the Gramscian framework of hegemonic struggle as occurring largely within the sphere of civil society. However, they find that “behind the concept ‘hegemony’ lies hidden ... a logic of the social” which is incompatible with the Marxist categories given the contingent nature of hegemonic power (Laclau and Mouffe 1985:3). Hegemony is an articulated practice that “takes place through a confrontation with antagonistic articulatory practices” in a field of unstable frontiers (Ibid.:135-36). They reject Gramsci’s implied hegemonic centre (the acquisition of state power) and argue that the goal of hegemonic struggle must be understood as a democratic struggle within a “plurality of political spaces... where certain discourses tendentially construct the division of a single political space in two opposed fields” (Ibid.:137). Thus, in South America, the idea of civil society developed as “an alternative to conventional politics... a social process governed by the activities of actors and agencies, all of which are located outside the scope of the state (or) against the state” (Leiva and Pagden 2001:179). The shift to civil society posed a challenge to the party system; a shift to more “concrete” forms of representation; and "a general critique of the state in its role as the subject of social and economic change" (Ibid.:199).

Baker suggests that this “radical” idea of civil society being a democratic space on its own has fallen by the side, replaced by the liberal democratic idea of civil society “as a force for democratizing the state, not a democratic space in and of itself” (2004:89-90). However, as I outline below, this idea is still a motivating one for those involved in the pluralist-left politics of

the World Social Forum. Indeed, it has travelled from South America northward to Europe (Brand and Hirsch 2004) through the networks of activists, which look to the Zapatistas and the World Social Forum for inspiration.

Global civil society and transnational political meta-projects

The potential influence of activist and advocacy networks on the interstate system became quite clear in the 1990s, and can be seen in the role of non-state groups in driving the agenda at the 1992 Rio Summit, the 1994 Cairo World Population Summit, and the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing. Other successful campaigns can be seen in the ability of campaigners to convince the World Bank to withdraw support for the Narmada Dam project in India, and the successful shutting down of WTO negotiations in Seattle in 1999. There are undoubtedly numerous global civil society projects underway, and the literature on global civil society and environmentalism (Lipschultz and Mayer 1996), global civil society and the women's' movement, global civil society and development, global civil society and peace (Kaldor 2003a, 2010, 2011; Kaldor and Kostovicova 2008) is significant. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to delve into even a fraction of it. However, below I highlight two 'meta-projects' of global civil society that exemplify the normative frame that guides the debate about what global civil society is for a large number of academic, activists, and policy makers. While distinct in purpose and ideology, both projects reflect a belief in the failure of nation-states and the interstate system *vis-à-vis* the global expansion of capital accumulation and its negative effects, and an effort to promote a more democratic world.

Providing legitimacy to the global regulation of capital

Scholte argues that our current era is witnessing "the end of sovereign statehood," largely due to the loss of control over currency (1997:443), and the "rise of supranational constituencies," by which he means global capital (Ibid.:445-46). He argues that the policy-making process has been altered dramatically due to the growth in non-transparent relationships with these "supranational constituencies," precluding the possibility of "achieving democratic governance through the state alone" (Ibid.:429-30). Increasingly, the role of the state revolves around "increased repression in response to public reaction to the demands made on states by these "supranational constituencies" (Ibid.:431). This does not signal the "demise" of the state

per se. What is occurring he argues is the supplementation of the state with supra-state agencies (Ibid.:428). Kaldor, agrees, arguing that while “the global system...is increasingly composed of layers of political institutions, individuals, groups and even companies, as well as states and international institutions,” nonetheless, “states will continue to be the juridical repository of sovereignty, although sovereignty will be much more conditional than before...” (2003:583).

The problem, of course, is that these “layers” of the interstate system are largely undemocratic and characterized by massive inequalities in power. In their final report, the participants in a 2006 conference on the “Voices of Global Civil Society” lay out the concern of those who seek to create a global democratic regime:

Powerful governments blatantly flout international regimes and rules and take actions that lead to riches for a few at the expense of many... Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), staffed by unelected officials, regularly create ‘rules of the game’ regarding interaction of citizens with the institutions. Global governance, though it carries authority and power, lacks legitimacy... Governments have the responsibility to protect their citizens, and when they breach that responsibility, the international community has the right to intercede. These democratic deficits, as well as those witnessed in other global governance bodies, create the space into which global civil society (GCS) asserts itself to articulate a voice different from the private and governmental sectors (Centre for Global Studies 2007:2).

Scholte (2006, 2012) and others (Centre for Global Studies 2007) see the project of global civil society as nothing less than the “reinvention” of “global democracy” (Scholte 2012). Central to these projects is the argument that “global capitalism has contributed to... the end of sovereign statehood” (Scholte 1997:443). According to Spini (2011) there is a “consensus” amongst those engaged in global civil society “that individual polities should gradually yield to super-national – and obviously democratic – political spaces.” Democracy within such a future regime would be based upon “the principle of ‘all affected’” because “in a globally

interdependent world, territorial membership could hardly be considered a ‘just’ criterion for participating in decision making” (Spini 2011:21).

Liberal internationalists tend to see global civil society organizations, movements, and networks as the foundation of democratic global governance. For some, the goal is to stimulate debate, and they celebrate the “Battle in Seattle” as the “first stage” of a global debate over competing visions of future global integration, but Kaldor only identifies two potential camps, the neoliberal camp and the global regulatory camp (2000:109–10). What makes global civil society “an emancipatory idea” is that it “allows every individual the potential to engage in this debate,” at least theoretically (Kaldor 2003b:592).

Others see the goal of global civil society as producing a global consensus around particular global problems. Lipschultz, for example, sees “the environmentally-oriented sector of global civil society” as an emergent “global environmental ‘regime’” that has emerged from the civil societies of numerous countries (1996:2). More broadly, Clark sees global activist networks as successfully developing the “outline” of a “common set of values and aims... that have come to dominate civil society advocacy in international policy debate” (Clark 2008:6). However, Scholte, who also seeks a greater engagement between global civil society actors and the interstate system, is less convinced. He argues that mechanisms must be developed in order to produce the common ground that Lipschultz and Clark assert.

In the late 1990s, Scholte suggested that the answer to the failure of the interstate system to protect democracy from global capital may “lie in a democratization of multilateralism” (Scholte 1997:451). Ten years later Scholte argues that global governance is emerging, but there are “shortfalls in moral standing, legal foundations, material delivery, democratic credentials, and charismatic leadership” which, “has in turn constituted a major obstacle to achieving the substantial further growth of global-scale regulation that is required to secure decent human lives for all in a more global world.” (Scholte 2007:305). He argues that civil society engagement of global regulatory institutions can do much to redress these shortcomings in legitimacy, a view he believes is widely supported “by activists, officials, and academics alike” (Ibid.).

However, he is aware that there is nothing inherently legitimate about civil society groups or their interventions (Scholte 2007:310).⁵ To that end, he is engaged in efforts to make this more likely to be the case. Scholte proposes “‘postmodern global democracies’ built around principles of transscalarity, plural identities, transculturality, egalitarian distribution and more ecologically

framed ideas of political rights and duties” (Scholte 2012:1). Scholte’s project seeks to find a way past “the country-centrism of statism, and the globalism of modern cosmopolitanism,” leaves behind ecological anthropocentrism, [and] confronts the challenges of diversity, and enshrines “egalitarian transplanetary redistribution” (Ibid.:11). Part of the challenge, he argues, is in the development of global civil society itself. A lack of “coordination and consolidation,” the squandering of resources on “fragmentation, [and] duplication of efforts and internecine competition,” he argues, has created a situation where policy makers in the institutions of global governance are “reluctant to engage with what seems in their eyes to be a diffuse swarm of often ill-defined and poorly accountable civil society activities.” (Scholte 2006:2). The answer to these problems, he argues, is to develop a “Global Civil Society Forum,” an idea that is inspired by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the World Social Forum (WSF) where these cacophonous voices might be “aggregated” (Ibid.:3).

Challenging global capitalism

The WSF is undoubtedly one of the more significant developments in what some refer to as “globalization from below,” (Carroll 2007; Waterman 2001). Emerging out of the anti- or alter-globalization movement of the 1990s, and influenced heavily by the Zapatista’s “Other Campaign”¹⁵ and the politics of the ‘new social movements,’ the WSF was initiated in 2001 by a meeting of well-known activists and intellectuals of the left associated with ATTAC, Le Monde Diplomatique, and the Brazilian Commission for Justice and Peace, (Glasius and Timms 2006; Teivainen 2002). It was conceived of as a response and retort to the WEF in Davos (Grzybowski, Insights, and Grzybowski 2006; Olivers 2004), and its slogan is “another world is possible.” Although opposition to neoliberal globalization is, at least formally, a founding principle, the Forum was conceived as a space for “dialogue and debate,” a “contact zone” for all concerned with the impact of neoliberalism (Santos 2005:17), rather than an effort to forge a political project (Hammond 2006). Annual meetings have taken place in Porto Alegre (Brazil) in 2001,

¹⁵ In 1994, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) declared war on the Mexican Army in reaction to the North American Free Trade Agreement, achieving something of a stand-off with the Mexican state. With no interest in taking state power, or participating in elections as a party, the EZLN instead established “La Otra Campaña [The Other Campaign]” in 2006, which involved travelling across Mexico and reaching out to supportive activists in their transnational network “to democratize Mexican society from the bottom up” (Carpinteiro 2013; Mora 2007; Zugman 2008:348).

2002, 2003, 2005, 2010, 2012; in Mumbai (India) in 2004; simultaneously in Caracas (Venezuela), Bamako (Mali), and Karachi (Pakistan) in 2006; in Nairobi (Kenya) in 2007; in Belém (Brazil) in 2009; in Dakar (Senegal) in 2011; in 2013 and 2015 in Tunis (Tunisia); in 2016 in Montreal. Its first meeting drew 10,000 people, but by 2005, it was drawing well over 100,000 (Bourgeois 2006; Grzybowski et al. 2006), although the numbers vary year to year, depending on its location.

The nature of the forum process is contested, and the way it is conceptualized by different theorists reflects the diverse political positions of these theorists. Some liberal cosmopolitans appreciate the structure of the WSF, but are alienated by the image (real or imagined) of an anti-neoliberal consensus. Glasius and Timms, for example, suggest that the Forum has the potential to “expand and reconfigure the infrastructure of global civil society,” while suggesting that this will only be possible if it sheds its radical roots (2006:235). Conversely, most on the left see anti-capitalism as integral to the Forum. For de Sousa Santos, the WSF “represents today, in organizational terms, the most consistent manifestation of counter-hegemonic globalization” (De Sousa Santos 2008:249).

Others are somewhat more modest in their generally positive assessments of the Forum. For Grzybowski, the WSF is a “novel experiment in global citizenship” that allows “a heterogeneous group... [to]believe in themselves and in the possibility of transforming and reconstructing the world” (Grzybowski 2006:7). Fraser has suggested that the WSF represents “a newly-fashioned ‘transnational public sphere’ that is ‘prefiguring the possibility of new institutions of post-Westphalian democratic justice’” (Conway and Singh 2009:62), as have others (Doerr 2007; Glasius 2005; Della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Smith et al. 2008; Wright 2005; Ylä-Anttila 2005). Conway and Singh agree that the WSF may be conceived of as a ‘transnational subaltern counter-public,’ which they define as a “transnational discursive arena that runs parallel to more comprehensive transnational public spheres, and in which subaltern groups can invent and circulate counter-hegemonic discourses and identities” (Conway and Singh 2009:71). However, Conway and Singh do not see the forum as a public sphere in the sense that Fraser implies. While the forum “is a communicative space, it is not a deliberative space in any formal sense of having fixed rules of participatory parity and/or an orientation toward arriving at decisions that can be represented as those of the whole... it neither seeks to produce, nor is capable of producing, a general will.” Rather, “the Forum’s central function is

one of cultural transformation of the movements and groups of civil society themselves” (2009:71).

The idea that the participants of the WSF will be transformed through their engagement with a diverse array of activists is central to the WSF mandate. Rioufol and Ve's research into the Social Forum has identified three “modes of social change,” reform, revolution, and “pockets of resistance,” represented in the forums by this diverse array of social movement organizations, NGOs, churches, and trade union institutions (Rioufol and Ve 2004). Yet rather than intransigent confrontation, they find that these modes are being recomposed through reflection and experimentation and in the process giving definition to what she calls a “progressive, heterogeneous and introspective” alternative globalization movement led by WSF organizers dedicated to “turning our plurality into an advantage.” More than a political movement, the goal, they argue is a “new culture... characterised by participation, horizontality, respecting and valorising diversity, and connecting reflection and action” (Ibid.:552). This conception of the forum is supported by others, including Conway and Singh (Conway and Singh 2009: 71).

Others are less generous in their assessments. Worth and Buckley, for example, argue that the forum process is “nothing more than a 'talk shop’” run by and for NGOs and academics (Worth and Buckley 2009:650). Others still (e.g., Sader), argue that the refusal to engage political parties and states, and the celebration of civil society in opposition to the state is highly problematic. Not only does the celebration of NGOs ignore the role of many in the neoliberal globalization project, the marginalization of state-oriented politics cuts off a “potential weapon” in the struggle against neoliberalism (Sader 2002:92). Worth and Buckley also argue that the obsession of WSF adherents to see diversity as a strength, ignores the “stark contradictions” represented by different groups which participate; they identify, for example, an inherent tension between labour and environmentalist activism: “labour calls for more growth,” they argue, which is not commensurable with the concerns expressed by environmental activists.

Whether or not Worth and Buckley present an accurate reflection of the position of “labour,” or of the real divisions between labour and environmental activists (and I would argue that it is not necessarily true), the fact remains that the desire to build a foundational consensus

within such a broad cross section of global civil society is a challenge.¹⁶ The charge levelled by Worth and Buckley of the forum being a “talk shop” is not simply a polemically laden critique. It actually speaks to how counter-hegemonic politics is understood by many forum participants. ‘Counter-hegemonic’ politics, *à la* the social forum involves an exclusively discursive project, aimed at illustrating the common interests of diverse constituencies to the members of these same constituencies, but only in such a way that no interests are seen to be subsumed under those of other groups. The challenges faced by the WSF, which have been gathering for over 10 years now, should give pause to global civil society theorists such as Scholte, who look to the WSF as an example of how a Global Civil Society Forum might provide an avenue for legitimizing global regulation. As Conway notes, the WSF as a “contact zone” is far from being free of colonial power relations that shape global civil society.

Commonalities between projects

Central to both liberal cosmopolitan and post-Marxist understandings of global civil society is the idea that civil society, as either a civilizing force (liberal cosmopolitanism) or as a revolutionary subject (post-Marxism), is somehow untainted by the logic of the state. For liberal cosmopolitans, the inability of the interstate system to produce a world free from war, suggests that the road to a peaceful, “civil” global or world society must be found in the efforts of global civil society groups dedicated to peace (Kaldor 2003a, 2010, 2011; Kaldor and Kostovicova 2008), which is to be the “conscience of the world” (Scholte 2007:311; see also Willetts 2006). For such cosmopolitans, global civil society is a means by which the violence inherent in the interstate system might be tamed or civilized (Kaldor 2003a:3). The idea of the failed state can also be seen in narratives of post-Marxists. These form part of the overall narrative of “old” left failure: focused on the winning of state power, greater state control over economic activity, and the idea of a revolutionary proletariat, the left failed in its historical project, forcing those who seek justice to find other avenues of resistance (Holloway 2002). Here the new site of struggle is within civil society itself, and many identify global civil society with efforts to establish a “new internationalism” (Waterman 2001, 2012) through meeting places such as the WSF and before

¹⁶ Surveys done by Chase-Dunn, Reese, and their colleagues (Chase-Dunn et al. 2008; Reese et al. 2006) at the 2005 WSF, suggest that differences of opinion around political orientation and strategy appear to be related to respondents’ position in the global political economy, race, and the type of organization to which they belong.

this the Intercontinental *Encuentros*, organized by the Zapatistas in southern Mexico (Nail 2013). For some of these activists, following the rhetoric of the Zapatistas, *sociedad civil* is identified as “all who struggle” against global neoliberalism (Brand and Hirsch 2004).

Such normative assertions about global civil society contribute to the confusion over its meaning, a confusion that is often compounded by a tendency to reify the concept by conflating (some) civil society groups which operate transnationally with the social field itself, and appear to suggest that this field of social relations can have some form of agency. Thus we have the former UN Secretary-General referring to global civil society as “a social partner” (Willets 2000), and activists and academics suggesting that global civil society is something that can “be empowered,” or “possesses the power” to shape global policy (Centre for Global Studies 2007:2). Clearly, the latter example is not only one of reification, but of a fundamental misunderstanding about how power operates in the world, a misunderstanding that relates back to two problems that have arisen in this review. The first is the mistaken belief that we live in a “post-national” world, where the state has been diminished in its capacity to manage the capitalist system. The second is the normative belief that global civil society is either a collection of voluntary associations, which act in the common good, or a virtuous sphere of communicative action untainted by relations of power seen within the market and state. As I argue above, civil society – global or otherwise — is neither of these, but rather, a contested terrain of struggle, and an emergent field of subject formation, which is undergoing transnationalization along with the other social structures of capitalism. It is not only the collective agency of transnational organizations that constitutes civil society. Rather, civil society must be seen as a set of relationships, and relationships are social structures. A central question for this dissertation is how to conceive of the relationships referred to as global civil society from the perspective of class formation. Below I argue that global civil society should be seen as a potential opportunity structure for organized labour. The importance of this opportunity structure is explored in subsequent chapters.

Global civil society as opportunity structure

The emergence of global civil society networks and organizations, as well as the development of avenues for interaction between social movement organizations – UN consultative forums and the WSF – present transnational labour with new opportunity structures.

However, I do not conceive of opportunity structure quite like that postulated by political opportunity theorists, who focus on the interaction of movements with states and elites (for example, Meyer and Minkoff 2004; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Tarrow 1994). Tarrow defines political opportunity structures (POS) as “dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure,” and POS theorists focus on resources that are external to a movement or movement organization (1994:85). Using this broad definition, I argue that global civil society provides organized labour with a new opportunity structure. However, POS theory is focused primarily on opportunities to impact state policy, and the role of access to state power, the influence of powerful allies, political instability, and division amongst elites (Ibid.:86-89). As Kay notes, political opportunity structures, as envisioned by such nation-bound theories, cannot be “mapped onto transnational political action” because power is constituted differently at the transnational level than it is nationally (2005:721). The interstate system lacks a democratic form of accountability or representation, making a number of POS assumptions irrelevant (Ibid.:722).

Yet, Kay does see a partial mapping of POS theory and transnational labour activities, two of which are relevant for this dissertation. In her examination of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its side agreement on labour issues, the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation (NAALC), she identifies three elements of POS that do translate transnationally: “(1) the constitution of transnational actors and interests, (2) the definition and recognition of transnational rights, and (3) adjudication of rights at the transnational level” (2005:722). The third element does not pertain to this project. However, defining and recognizing transnational labour rights is of relevance to my investigation of transnational domestic worker organizing around ILO Convention 189, the Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers. Even more central to this dissertation is the question of constituting “transnational actors and interest,” which the chapter on ITUC collaborations with non-union global civil society groups (Chapter 7) examines directly.

The way in which I conceive of global civil society as an opportunity structure is more along the lines of Katz’s argument that the network of global civil society organizations serve as nascent “global infrastructure for a future comprehensive global movement” that might form the basis of a counter-hegemonic bloc (2006:344). In other words, GCS acts as a structure through which the institutions of global trade unionism might move beyond their “militant particularism”

and toward a “social movement project” (Cox and Nilsen 2014). Cox and Nilsen identify this transition, from militant particularism, to social movement project, as the “movement process,” a process through which activists within movements from below move beyond their “locally circumscribed grievances, demands and objectives,” and develop an analysis that “joins the dots” between their “particular, situated experiences and the underlying structures that engender these experiences” (2014:72). In doing so, movement activists develop new forms of organization and repertoires of action, and potentially develop alliances with other communities. Essential to this process is the existence of an overarching structure through which collective subjects can form collaborations, and GCS is the transnational structure that provides these opportunities.

Since the 1980s, there has been an exponential growth of transnational advocacy organizations, addressing gender inequality, environmental degradation, and hyper exploitation (Keck and Sikkink 1998). As I explain in my discussion of domestic worker organizing (Chapter 6), in many cases it is not unions that have advocated for marginalized workers, but SMOs, NGOs, and religious organizations. These organizations can be seen as either threats to organized labour or as potential allies. As I discuss in the chapter on ITUC’s engagement with global civil society organizations (Chapter 7), the growth of issues that the international union federations have taken up over the past 25 years, stretches the organizational capacity of these federations. To effectively address gender inequality, environmental degradation, and unjust development models, these federations need to work alongside the GCS actors who are taking the lead in these areas.

Relations between unions and non-union civil society organizations – particularly NGOs – has not always been and is still not always, an easy one (Anner and Evans 2004; Braun and Gearhart 2004; Compa 2004; Eade 2004; Evans 2010; Leather 2005). By the end of the 1990s, the topic of establishing better relations with non-union civil society organizations had become a significant debate within the ICFTU (Jordan 2000; Waterman and Jordan 2000). By the founding conference of the ITUC, the issue appears to have been officially settled, as working with “other civil society organizations” was enshrined in the constitution (ITUC 2010b:8). Evidence found during my research suggests that the current cadre and leadership of the ITUC see these organizations as potential allies, rather than threats. What the emergence of global civil society networks offers the existing international union federations is an opportunity structure for the development of a broader labour movement, one that encompasses more workers than the

existing trade union membership, and takes on more class issues than those traditionally taken up by “bread and butter” unionism.

Counter-hegemony and counter-movements

As I discuss in Chapter 1, my study of organized labour is focused on civil society, rather than the workplace. This is because capitalist hegemony is secured to a great extent in civil society, even if its foundation is within the site of production, and the state too plays an important role in its maintenance. Hegemony is not simply another term for the ability to rule. Hegemony, involves consenting to the “moral and intellectual leadership” of a social group that is seen to propel all of society forward through its leadership (Gramsci 1971:60). Crucial to hegemony is the establishment of alliances with other social groups, and incorporating their needs into the political, economic, and social projects of the dominant group.

We can see how non-state actors contribute to the re-articulation of hegemony by tracing the history of neoliberalism. Neo-classical economics and hyper-individualistic notions of “freedom” from the state originated in private, transnational think-tanks, such as the Mont Pèlerin Society, (van der Pijl 1984; 1988). It was then transmitted through entities like the Trilateral Commission (Gill 1990) and continues to be battled over within capitalist policy shops such as the World Economic Forum, the International Chamber of Commerce and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (Carroll 2007). This is not to diminish the role that particular states, such as the US, the UK and Chile, played in the spread of this ideological offensive early on. However, it needs to be noted that ideological projects, and the movements that propel them into the mainstream, generally emerge from civil society. It is in civil society that the social hegemony of capital is secured through the transmission of ideas, the establishment of norms, and the construction of “common sense.”

Clearly then, it is from within civil society that alternative ideas, norms, and common sense understandings emerge. Carroll identifies counter-hegemony as the “articulation of various subaltern and progressive-democratic currents into a counter-hegemonic bloc that effectively organizes dissent across space and time” (2007:20). Such a project is not simply any expression of resistance to capitalist rule, either in part or in total. Nor is it merely the organizing of corporative interests to win concessions from capital and the state, regardless of how big such gains are. Both can be either dismissed or incorporated into a passive revolution. Carroll argues

that counter-hegemony must be reserved for those projects that seek a “deeper transformation” of the social structure (2006:19). But the corollary to hegemony is not necessarily counter-hegemony. Resistance to the vagaries of the market does not necessarily produce a counter-hegemonic project that seeks to overcome or transcend capitalist social relations.

Polanyi's work (1957) on the history of liberal utopianism suggests that the history of capitalist markets has involved a series of “double-movements” whereby the efforts of economic liberals to “free” capitalist market relations from moral regulation are eventually counteracted by a spontaneous reaction from “society,” which seeks to protect itself from the worst impacts of unconstrained market forces. Since the original push for “dis-embedding” market relations in the 19th Century, a number of cycles of the double-movement have taken place (Munck 2004: 252). Polanyi argues that a “free market” is a utopian ideal. It is not realizable precisely because of the destruction that is inevitably wrought on society by it. Society, then, through its non-market institutions, reacts to protect itself from market forces. Thus, each historical movement toward dis-embedding market relations from a system of broader social norms will be met by a counter-movement by “society” to re-embed the market which constitutes a “double-movement.” However, efforts to re-embed market relations are not the same as a program to overcome capitalism.

There are complementary elements to the work of Gramsci and Polanyi. Burawoy argues that for both Polanyi and Gramsci, the goal of counter-hegemonic politics is socialism, “the subordination of market and state to the self-regulating society” (Burawoy 2003:198). I would also argue that Gramsci's focus on civil society as an important site of hegemonic politics, and Polanyi's thesis that “active society” seeks to protect itself from the vagaries of the market, suggest that these two thinkers can be used in a complementary way to explore the role of collaborative, non-state politics. In my conclusion, I return to the concepts of counter-hegemony and counter-movements to provide a brief assessment of the ITUC's efforts to collaborate within GCS.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Grappling with a phenomenon as vast, contested and seemingly abstract as transnational class formation within global civil society requires data from a wide range of sources, and thus a mixed methods approach. It is not a project that lends itself to grounded theory, as the phenomenon cannot be seen in its totality through observation alone. No single researcher can “uncover” such a thing. As “the global” cannot be experienced by any one individual, such an investigation involves collecting and building upon the theories and data produced by others. It also requires moving from the abstract to the particular and back to the abstract, from theory to observation, and back to theory (Bhaskar 1997). Locating and explicating the emergent transnational relationships between the ITUC (and its allied union federations) and non-union civil society groups, requires a mixed methodology grounded in a critical realist philosophy of science. This chapter will outline the methods employed to generate and analyse data, as well as the ontological and epistemological assumptions that have guided my inquiry.

Ontological and epistemological foundations

This dissertation is grounded in a critical realist philosophy of science. Critical realism takes a strong ontological position, while maintaining a modest epistemological position — a methodological framework that allows for the existence of a “real” world that can only be partially known. A critical realist ontology is important for this project because although my empirical study involves the activities of trade union leaders and staff, understanding the significance of this activity cannot be achieved through direct observation alone. People do not make history in times and places of their own choosing. The individuals interviewed have inherited particular social structures, including particular practices of “unionism,” and find themselves engaging capitalism at a particular moment in history with a particular set of ‘tools’ developed at earlier moments in class struggle. To understand these practices, an ontological framework is required that goes beyond the merely empirical, and allows for a means by which the empirical can be connected to the deep social structures that condition action.

Critical realism is premised on the ontological and epistemological stratification of reality. As Collier reminds us, physics, biology and chemistry all reflect different layers of the natural world, “and sociology and psychology also denote real strata, founded on the natural strata, but not reducible to them” (Collier 2011:5). Certain strata are emergent from other strata,

which means that stratum A is “ontologically dependent” upon stratum B, but still contains within it causal powers that cannot be deduced from B. For example, when Marx argued that social life consisted of a base and a superstructure, he was arguing that the realm of ideas was emergent from, but not reducible to, the realm of material production (Ibid.). Each realm has its own set of causal powers, and economic necessity is itself emergent from lower strata, such as biology. Epistemologically, reality is also stratified, and can be broken down into the empirical realm — that of our direct experiences — which is only part of what is actually happening — the realm of the “actual” — which in turn is part of the realm of the “real” — the generally unseen world of generative mechanisms.

Generative mechanisms “conjointly generate events” in the world, and thus have causal powers. Generative mechanisms exist regardless of whether or not they are being realized at any given time. The causal power of generative mechanisms can only be seen in and as tendencies, however, because other mechanisms are capable of “deflecting” a particular outcome (Collier 2011:4). An important example of unobservable generative mechanisms is that of social relations, which “are real because they have real effects.” Possibilities, absences or negative facts, and values held by people are part of the real, because they have causal powers (Ibid.:11).

To accept social relations as “real,” is to put forward a social ontology premised on critical realism. A social ontology accepts “the ontological inter-dependence of people and society... and the distinctiveness of social and personal causal mechanisms” (Collier 2011:10). Because societies are “necessarily peopled” and people have “properties and powers,” such as “reflexivity towards and creativity about any social context which they confront” (Archer 1998:190), societies are intrinsically open systems. However, society “has its own nature,” and is not simply a “plurality” of the properties and powers of individuals (Collier 2011:10).

This is also the case for institutions and organizations within society. The ITUC is made up of both the elected leadership and staff who conduct its day-to-day business, as well as its member-organizations (national union federations), which are themselves made up of individual unions, which are collectivities of individual workers; however, the positions and actions it takes are not simply a reflection of the plurality of its membership. To paraphrase Marx, the ITUC expresses “the sum of interrelations” within which staff, leaders, and delegates stand (1978:147). These interrelations involve not only those internal to the organization (i.e. between staff, between delegates, and between staff and delegates), but also those that exist between the ITUC

and other organizations — the International Labour Organization, other civil society groups — and less empirically concrete structures, particularly the structure of capitalist social relations. So, while the ITUC is ontologically distinct from its staff, elected leaders, and national delegates, its collective agency is in part emergent from that of its staff, elected leaders, delegates, and individual members, as well as the structural conditions that give rise to their agency. To properly explore the development of contemporary collaborations between transnationally organized labour and other collective agents within global civil society then, requires an examination of the actions of current and past actors, as well as the ways in which history, institutional structure and ideology both enable and constrain these actions.

What this dissertation explores are the changes that have taken place within the transnational labour movement, specifically, *the expansion of the ITUC's remit*, and *the structural elaboration of a new repertoire of social action*. Processes of social change, or structural elaboration (Archer 2011) can be explained by the transformational model of social activity. Human action produces social phenomena, but there are limits on the consciousness of human action:

1. there are unacknowledged conditions, things necessary but not necessarily known by actors;
2. there are unconscious motives that may bring about a particular action, but are unknown to the actor in question;
3. there are tacit skills, or abilities, that are unknowingly used by actors;
4. there are the unintended consequences of actions great and small.

Such unintended consequences can be seen every day: people go to work, invest their savings, and pay taxes, all without the intention of reproducing the social relations of capitalism or the social structures of the state (Ibid.:12-14). Similarly, activists of one generation agitating for a particular change in social relations may open the door for future activists in ways that they could not imagine.

Institutions and organizations also develop out of the interplay between structure and human agency and are generally reproduced or changed through the unintended consequences of human action. A transformative model of social action sees change — such as the changes taking place at the ITUC — as coming about through the reflexive interaction of agents with the existing social structure. In this model, social structure is either reproduced through unconscious

human activity, or restructured through conscious human activity. Yet, social structure is a pre-condition for human activity. How can this be the case? For Archer, the answer lies in a *morphogenetic model of social change*, which highlights the "importance of past agents in determining present structures" (Collier 2011:15). Individuals within a particular generation are born into a particular historical moment and are structurally conditioned over time. And yet, through the social interaction of people endowed with reflexive capacities, structural elaboration occurs. These interactions occur over time, sometimes over generations. Decisions made by agents in the past are critical to the structuring and restructuring of the social order (or specific institutions within it) over time (Archer 2011:62).

Methods of inquiry

Several methods were used in conducting the research for this dissertation, including interviews in 4 countries, participant observations at the World Social Forum in Belém, Brazil (January/February 2009), and the ITUC Congress in Vancouver (June, 2010), in-depth analysis of the websites of the ITUC and its predecessor, the ICFTU, as well as historical surveys of the international trade union movement, the Indian trade union movement, and the International Labour Organization, and research into existing literature on a number of topics. Below is a table of research areas and the data used in each of them.

Table 1: Data used in research

Topic	Data Sources	Chapters
ITUC collaborations	interviews; participant observation; website analysis	6 & 7
ITUC collaboration background	interviews; historical survey	4 & 7
Indian affiliate collaborations	interviews; existing literature	7
Indian affiliate collaboration background	interviews; historical survey	5 & 7
Domestic worker organizing	interviews; existing literature	6
Domestic worker organizing background	interviews; existing literature	5 & 6
Informal worker organizing background	interviews; historical survey; existing literature	5 & 6

Interviews

Forty-five people were interviewed for this dissertation project. The majority of those interviewed were cadres who work for the ITUC or its Indian affiliates. Twelve ITUC cadre were interviewed. Of the 16 interviewees associated with an Indian ITUC affiliate, six were affiliated with SEWA, seven were affiliated with HMS, and three were affiliated with the INTUC. Four of the 45 interviews were cadre of the Global Union Federations IUF, ITF, and BWI,¹⁷ two were cadre with ITUC affiliates outside of India, six were union cadre from Indian unions not affiliated with the ITUC, five were cadre of non-union civil society organizations, such as anti-poverty organizations and women's organizations. A mix of purposive and snowball sampling techniques was used to select most of the individuals for interview. However, in two cases, planned interviews with a single interviewee were actually conducted with small groups, the other interviewees invited by my initial interviewee, who thought the others would add to the conversation. How I used these different sampling techniques is discussed further below.

The centrality of cadres

This dissertation explores the growing number and type of collaborations between the international trade union movement and other “global civil society” organizations, and what these collaborations say about the state of transnational class formation. In studying these collaborations, a central place is given to the intermediary and organizing tasks of the trade union cadre, and this is reflected in whom I interviewed.

Over the course of its development, a “trade union cadre,” has developed within the labour movement. As the scale of workers' collective responses adjusted to the scale of production, organizational and operational tasks required the specific skills of cadre trained in mediating the relationship with capital (van der Pijl 1998:140). As structures of socialization (van der Pijl 1998; Hyman 2001), trade unions embody a “particular dimension of compromise basically shaped by the requirements of the mode of production” (van der Pijl 1998:41) which has created “a relatively distinct stratum of cadres” who act as “intermediaries” between workers and owners, or, more specifically, between workers and the managerial cadre that manage capital

¹⁷ The IUF is the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco, and Allied Workers' Associations; the ITF is the International Transport Federation; BWI is the Building Workers' International.

on behalf of the capitalist class proper. What van der Pijl seems to be describing is a situation where class conflict is being managed, from both sides, by members of the cadre strata, with operational management on one side, and union negotiators and para-legal representatives that ensure collective agreements are followed on the shop floor, on the other.

However, the trade union cadre is no longer simply made up of negotiators and para-legal representatives. Within the countries of Western Europe, North America, and the Antipodes, unions, and union federations are also staffed with communications specialists, and professional organizers. This is largely reproduced at the international level, although there are some differences. Within the ITUC, for existence, we can also add the existence of labour diplomats, skilled in the ins and outs of the interstate system.

I use the term trade union cadre, rather than the more popular term “trade union bureaucrats” because, as Camfield notes, there is an ontological distinction between a bureaucracy, which he defines as “a form of social activity rather than a group of people” (2013:141). Bureaucracies are not simply the product of the agents that work within them. While they cannot be seen as “an external cage in which unions are trapped” (Ibid.:151), it is important to recognize that there are crucial external mechanisms which produce bureaucracy and, as Camfield points out, make union officials more or less bureaucratic in their outlook. Chief amongst these external mechanisms are labour laws that govern trade union activity and class conflict more broadly (Ibid.:150). However, there are other societal norms that have been internalized by the trade union movement as well, such as the belief that organizations such as unions are “properly run by small numbers of ‘managers’ and ‘experts,’ with little or no popular participation” (Ibid.:151).

To make a distinction between the people and the structure, Camfield uses the term “officialdom” to describe the “full time officers and staff” that work within trade unions. While accepting this distinction in part, I think that a further distinction needs to be made between the elected officers of the union and the hired staff. I distinguish elected officials from the cadre because, as Camfield notes, the development of bureaucracies is closely related to the separation of conception from execution, which is “pervasive” under capitalist social relations (Ibid.:139). Union cadres do not – at least officially – set the direction of the union movement, elected officials do, and this distinction is key to exploring the nuts and bolts of institutional innovations.

However, it is the cadre who take that broad direction dictated by elected officials and turn it into a program.

Therefore, while some of my interviews were conducted with elected officials, the majority were with members of the trade union cadre. Exploring the subjective experiences of the cadre that make up the staff and directorship of the ITUC is crucial to understanding the changes taking place within the organization. The day-to-day operations of the ITUC are planned, managed, and executed by staff with relatively little oversight from the elected representatives of member organizations. The full membership only meets every four years in its Congress, the final decision-making body comprised of delegates of all the member organizations. The General Council, elected at Congress, made up of representatives from the various regions, the Women's Committee, and the Youth Committee, meets once per year. The Executive Committee, made up of 25 representatives elected by the General Council, only meets twice per year. Clearly such a structure allows, or forces, the General Secretary, her deputies, and the cadre working from Brussels and Geneva to carry out their work with a great deal of independence from the membership. Thus, the cadre play key roles in establishing the agenda of the organization by negotiating consensus around issues introduced by member organizations and by introducing new issues to the organization.

Sampling strategies - ITUC collaborations within GCS

Twelve ITUC cadre, two cadre from non-Indian ITUC affiliates, and one IUF cadre were interviewed for this project that spoke to collaborations between the ITUC and non-union GCS organizations. A purposeful sample of ITUC staff and directors was developed through a targeted search of publicly available staff and committee lists and internet searches. The initial list was developed in a two-step process. First, a short-list of staff from a list publicly available on the ITUC website was created. Staff were selected where their positions and departments suggested that they may be involved in coalition work. For example, staff who worked in the Equality, Human and Trade Union Rights, Economic and Social Policy, and Campaigns and Communications were selected, while those in administrative departments such as Finance, Organization, or the Secretary General's office were not. From this initial list, Google searches of individual staff were performed to see what kinds of campaigns they had worked on in the

past, focusing on those with either explicit references to coalition work, or campaigns that appeared likely to involve collaborations with other organizations given the campaign issue.

Prior to contacting staff, I sent email messages to the President of the organization and the Director of International Affairs, a position that (according to an informant from the British TUC) had recently been created to oversee relationship building with non-ITUC organizations. These recruitment scripts outlined my project and requested an interview. My purpose in starting at the top of the organization was to ensure that senior staff and elected leaders were informed of my project before I began making requests to staff. Unions are rather hierarchical, and my experiences within the union movement suggested that “blessings” from the top would translate into access to staff and directors. The response to these two emails came from the Director of International Affairs who said she was asked by the President to speak on her behalf. Over the course of the interview I was assured that contacting staff for interviews would not be seen as a problem by the ITUC leadership. The strategy of starting at “the top” appeared to a good one for almost all of my email requests as interviews received prompt and positive responses.

Initial recruitment scripts to staff and directors, sent in the form of emails, were generic requests that introduced me as a union member and academic researcher, acknowledged (what I assumed from my own experiences as a union organizer) their busy schedules, and requested that they make some time to talk to me. These were followed up with phone calls, during which I tailored my requests based on their role and what I hoped to achieve from the specific interview.

Sampling strategies - Indian CTUO collaborations with non-union organizations

A clear methodological problem arose when trying to replicate this method of sampling with the case study on Indian CTUO collaborations with non-union organizations. Few CTUO had their staff listed on their websites and even when some contact information (email and main office phone numbers) was uncovered, either through CTUO webpages or contact lists of affiliated organizations from the ITUC webpage, these were often unreliable. The phone would not be answered, or would be answered by someone who could not understand me. Emails were not replied to. I came to learn through contacts that this latter problem highlighted a particularity of conducting research in India: one needs to be introduced and vouched for by someone of stature to be acknowledged.

Therefore, the way forward for the interviews conducted in India seemed to be to develop a purposive sample through a snowball technique, starting with the Indian academics I encountered upon arriving in India. Dr. S.T. Sawant of the Ambedkar Institute for Labour Studies and Dr. Sharit Bhowmik of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences were both instrumental in helping me start this process. Through these two scholars, both known and respected in the Indian trade unions, I made contact with cadre working for two of the Indian CTUOs affiliated to the ITUC, and also contacted the regional cadre of two Global Union Federations. The exception to this process was SEWA. Information about which current SEWA cadre were most appropriate to interview for this project was mainly found from their webpage.

Much background on the Indian union movement, their relations with non-union civil society organizations, and the challenge of organizing informal workers was provided by interviews. Of those interviews which contributed to these topics, three were with cadre from GUFs, six with cadre from SEWA, seven from HMS, three from INTUC, two from unions and union federations not affiliated to the ITUC, and four with cadres affiliated with non-union civil society organizations.

Sampling strategies - domestic worker campaigns and organizing

I also used a purposeful snowball sample for my case study on domestic worker campaigns and organizing. During the interview with an ITUC staff person involved in the 12 by 12 Campaign, I was informed that the IUF was heavily involved in supporting the International Domestic Workers' Network and given the name of a contact there. This interview led to contact with a SEWA activist involved in both the 12 by 12 Campaign and organizing domestic workers in India. Contact with HMS and INTUC domestic worker organizing efforts was made through interviews with the national cadre of the Indian CTUOs.

Two ITUC cadre and two IUF cadre provided information in their interviews for my case study on transnational domestic worker organizing. Of the interviewees from Indian ITUC affiliates, two INTUC interviewees as well as two SEWA, and three HSEWA4 interviewees provided information on domestic worker organizing – particularly on the 12 by 12 Campaign. In addition to the union cadre interviewed about domestic worker organizing, five interviewees from non-affiliated unions, and one interviewee from a non-union women's organization also provided information about domestic worker organizing in India.

Formal vs. informal interviews

The interviews started with a schedule, however, many took on a less formal and more conversational tone. This occurred for a few reasons. First, a number of interviewees asked me questions about my work, my background, and what I thought of the “labour situation” in Canada. Rather than deflect such questions, I felt it essential to engage them so as to demonstrate both my genuine interest in union struggles, and my own background as a union activist. In other situations, my initial set of questions about how the interviewee went about the daily business of coalition building were quickly made irrelevant, as they did not feel that coalition work was an important part of their work, or union work more generally. This was particularly the case in India, where such collaborations between unions and other civil society groups was less usual. In these situations, the interview turned to questions about why this was the case, and what the interviewee saw as the “problem” of dealing with NGOs. After one such interview, I quickly developed a set of questions about this topic specifically.

Finally, in the case of a few interviews, the interviewee felt it necessary to offer a great deal of “background” and some seemed insistent that the way to proceed was for them to tell me their “story,” from which I would be able to pull the answers to the questions I had. Again, this was particularly, but not exclusively, the case in India. I felt it best to allow the interview to proceed in a way that the participant seemed most comfortable with, conscious of the fact that I was operating in a distinct cultural milieu that I was unfamiliar with. This hunch proved to be fortuitous. In a number of interviews, the extensive historical background offered to me by the participant’s narrative allowed me to explore the role of past actions in shaping the current situation, a crucial question in a morphogenetic inquiry.

Ethics

In my introductory email or phone call, and again at the beginning of each interview I informed my participants that I did my best to ensure their anonymity, but I noted that total anonymity would be difficult, given the nature of their workplaces and the labour/ activist networks to which they belonged. Each participant was asked to read an ethics release form, and either sign it, or agree to it in writing via email. In a small number of cases, consent was obtained verbally, and is recorded. The form itself followed the standard template from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board. One innovation that I made to the form was a space

where participants could give self-identify and provide a pseudonym for themselves. None of the participants did, and more than one commented that they were unconcerned about being identified.

Coding

Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. These transcriptions were then examined and the responses of interviewees was coded using Dedoose.¹⁸ The initial codes used on the interviews with most ITUC staff and directors were based on the questions in the interview schedule. By this I mean that each question was translated into a code. For example, the question posed to interviewees, “Which relationships with non-union organizations are the most significant to your work?” was coded as “Most Significant Relationships.” This allowed for each question to be examined for patterns. Of course, this did not produce a set of data that perfectly lined up with the questions as they were put to the interviewees. In some cases, people initially ignored the question put to them, so as to get across a point they felt important, only to return to the question while replying to a subsequent one. This process was far more challenging in interviews that followed a more narrative, rather than linear, form. Throughout this initial process, a broad set of codes was also devised around historical background information, potential future research questions, and topics requiring follow-up with the participant.

A second set of codes was then developed based on a number of themes such as: a) the category of “*issue*” being addressed by particular campaigns (gender, workplace, environment, economic policy, human right, workers’ rights, trade union rights); b) the *target* of the campaign (members/ member organizations, national governments, the “global public,” different UN bodies, specific IFIs). In many cases, these categories and targets were discrete but overlapping. For example, the 12 by 12 campaign ostensibly targeted national governments in an effort to have them ratify the ILO convention respecting the rights of domestic workers – C189. However, it is also clear in a number of interviews that the campaign was also intended as both a public campaign aimed at creating awareness about the plight of domestic workers, and as a tool to organize those workers at the local level and transnationally. The 12 by 12 campaign also highlights the overlap of issue framing; it was a campaign that focused on achieving a set of

¹⁸ Dedoose.com

rights for a group of workers, and therefore a “workplace” issue, but it was often framed in terms of the marginalization of women’s work, given the overwhelmingly gendered nature of domestic work, and therefore was also framed as a “gender” issue.

Participant observation

Part of my data collection involved attending the WSF from January 27 to February 1, 2009, in Belém, Brazil, where I engaged as a participant observer. Over the course of the WSF, I observed small panel discussions involving ITUC staff, as well as speeches and debates at the “World of Work” pavilion, which the ITUC and its Brazilian affiliates established on site. While at the WSF I took notes on major speeches and panel discussions, made contact with ITUC staff and elected leaders, held informal discussions with a number of participants (some of whom were affiliated with the ITUC, some of whom were not), and collected print material from the ITUC and other labour-oriented organizations.

I was also able to collect data at the ITUC World Congress in Vancouver, Canada, from June 21-25, 2010, which I attended as a guest of the Canadian Labour Congress. Guest status at the Congress was arranged through my union, the Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Union (now UNIFOR). While at the Congress, I observed and took notes on plenary floor speeches by ITUC leaders and “honoured guests,” debates between national delegates held in the resolutions committee, and topical panel discussions involving both ITUC affiliates and representatives from civil society “partners.” I also collected a number of ITUC documents for analysis.

Content analysis

One contribution of this project is a “map” of the ITUC within the social field of global civil society. An early effort to find collaborations through links to the websites of other organizations produced no results. This is due to the lack of external links on the ITUC website overall. Thus the initial list of potential collaborations to ask staff and directors about came from a search of the ITUC website, as well as field notes and documents from the WSF and the ITUC 2010 Congress.

A more extensive content analysis was subsequently performed on the ITUC website, including reports from General Council and standing committee reports, as well as issue bulletins, campaign updates, blogs, and the ITUC electronic publications *Union View* and *Equal*

Times. Documents obtained from the WSF and the 2010 ITUC Congress were also analyzed for content relating to civil society collaborations. The analysis involved searching for references to organizations that the ITUC was working alongside. The keywords used in this effort were: partners, partnership, alliance, cooperation, coordination, civil society. Collaborations were coded by issue/ topic, the frequency which a particular organization was mentioned in ITUC publications, and whether this collaboration was identified by staff as significant.

Socio-historical analysis

This project endeavours to locate the ITUC and its current transnational activities within the history of international trade union organization and, more broadly, labour internationalism. The brief history, presented in Chapter 4, is not intended to be a comprehensive history of labour internationalism, but rather aims to fulfill two tasks. The first is to demonstrate how unique the practice of collaborations with non-union civil society groups is in the history of trade union internationalism. By contrasting the past practices of the ITUC predecessor organizations to those of the ITUC currently, a clear distinction in international trade union practice will be made visible. Secondly, following Archer's morphogenetic approach to the temporal dimensions of the question of structure and agency, this socio-historical analysis highlights the structural constraints that past decisions of international trade union cadres have placed on the capacity of the current cadre.

A challenge in providing historical analysis of the international trade union movement is the limited and uneven treatment that it has received by social scientists. For example, a great deal of work has been done by American scholars on the AFL-CIO's international muck-raking during the post-war period, particularly in Latin America, but there is much less published (at least in English) on ICFTU activities in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. There is also a significant body of historical research on the "political" internationals, the IWA, the SI, and the Comintern, but less on the trade union internationals. While a fair bit of research has been conducted on the communist RILU during the inter-war period, the social democratic IFTU has only recently been subject to rigorous examination by a small number of scholars, and detailed research into the brief existence of the International Federation of Working Women has only emerged very recently. What this means is that my own research has had to depend at times on a small number of sources for historical evidence. Thus, the reader will notice that discussions of

the IFTU during the interwar period rely almost exclusively on the work of van Goethem, and analysis of ICFTU activities after the early 1960s rely almost exclusively on Gumbrell-McCormick's exhaustive archival and interview research. While the work done by these two researchers appears to be excellent, it must be acknowledged that my own historical analysis is based upon a limited amount of published archival research.

The socio-historical analysis presented in chapters 4 and 5 is woven into the findings from interviews reported in chapters 6 and 7. In this way, the accounts of informants are placed within their historical context, allowing for a critical realist account that seeks to analyse the decisions of contemporary agents within the structures in which they are operating. The intention is to provide a richer analysis that privileges neither agency or structure, but looks at how the agency of past actors produces new structures — often an unintended consequences of reacting to a particular situation — that enable and constrain the agency of current actors.

Case Study

In Chapter 6, I use a case study to explore transnational collaborations between the ITUC, its affiliates, and a number of non-union civil society organizations, many of which operate transnationally within what is identified in Chapter 2 as global civil society. The case study explores the transnational campaign to have Convention 189 – Decent Work for Domestic Workers (C189) – adopted at the ILO, and the subsequent ongoing campaign to have C189 ratified by member states through their national parliaments. This follow-up campaign is called “12 by 12,” as the initial push was to have twelve member states of the ILO ratify C189 by the end of 2012. The success of the campaign, in terms of the goals it set, can be debated. However, I chose this campaign because it is a great example of a transnationally coordinated campaign involving ITUC and a number of its national affiliates working closely with non-union civil society organizations.

The simple definition of a case study is an “in-depth study of... a relatively bounded phenomena” (Gerring 2004:341). The case study is not “a method in and of itself,” but rather, “a design frame that may incorporate a number of methods” (Thomas 2011:512). Frequently, these methods include ethnographic work, such as participant-observation, as a means of “process-tracing,” but this is by no means the only method employed in a case study (Gerring 2004:342). A case study, argues Thomas, must involve a subject — a “practical, historical unity” — and an

object of study — an “analytical or theoretical frame” — through which the subject is analyzed (Thomas 2011:513). In other words, a case study involves the study of a particular population or phenomena through a particular analytical lens (Ibid.:514-15).

Gerring argues that case studies are most helpful for postulating “descriptive inferences,” and that it is difficult to make causal inferences outside of the phenomenon because of its boundedness (Ibid.:346-47). Indeed, the challenge of generalizing the results of a case study means that case studies are often dismissed or viewed skeptically by social scientists who maintain a positivist epistemological position (Flyvbjerg 2006; Gerring 2004; Ruddin 2006; Thomas 2010, 2011). This skepticism, argue Flyvbjerg (2006) and Ruddin (2006), can be traced to a set of misunderstandings about case studies relating to concerns about generalizability and confirmation bias, and the search for context-independent knowledge. At the heart of this dispute is a fundamental disagreement on social science epistemology. Many social scientists insist on offering “induction from generalization.” However, if one rejects induction as the goal on one’s study, then case studies are a valid and valuable methodology (Thomas 2010:575). To reject induction as the primary epistemological goal, is to acknowledge that “the possibility of epistemic theoretical construction” is always thwarted in the study of “human affairs,” because all knowledge about human activity is context dependent (Flyvbjerg 2006:221). A subject in a case study is not chosen as a sample, or a representation of a wider population. It is chosen because it can act as a “revealing example” through which one can study in depth the contours of the object of study (Thomas 2011:514).

Furthermore, I would argue that in a study founded on a critical realist philosophy of science, a case study is the most helpful at exploring a range of causal mechanisms that have produced the events under study. As Sayer notes, research projects involve choices between more extensive or more intensive designs (Sayer 1992:242). What guides the researcher’s decisions are the questions that they wish to have answered. Research focused on “discovering some of the common properties and general patterns of a population as a whole” can answer such questions best through an extensive research design involving the statistical analysis of information gathered through surveys of a whole population. Research aimed at uncovering “how some causal process works out in a particular case or limited number of cases” (Ibid.) are best served by an intensive research design that is methodologically focused around a structural or causal analysis of information gathered through more qualitative processes, such as participant

observation, or in-depth interviews (Ibid. 244). If one is seeking causal relationships, one cannot depend on the correlations produced through statistical analysis. In short, a project that seeks to uncover the causal mechanisms that produced specific events – in this case, the development of collaborative projects between the ITUC and non-union GCS groups – requires an intensive research design.

In my study, the object is collaboration between the ITUC and non-union organizations operating within GCS; the subject of the case study is the campaign to have an ILO Convention on the rights of domestic workers adopted and ratified. As I argue in Chapter 7, collaborations in transnational domestic worker organizing reflect, in part, a broader pattern of collaborations between the ITUC and non-union organizations operating within GCS, and therefore, represent a “relatively bounded” phenomenon. The domestic worker campaign was not chosen as a representative sample of collaborations more generally, and at no time do I try to draw inferences about collaborations more generally from this specific case. The domestic worker campaign was chosen because it was an interesting example that appeared on the face of it to offer an opportunity to explore ITUC collaborations transnationally — from the international activities carried out through the ILO to the local and national activities of ITUC affiliates in India.

Chapter 4: The International Trade Union Movement

The following two chapters introduce the organizations under study and outline their genesis through brief historical sketches of each organization. Broadly speaking, this dissertation examines changes in the transnational activities of organized labour. Specifically, it examines the activities of the ITUC and its India affiliates. As I argue in the introduction, transnational activity is activity that links and transcends territorial “levels.” Therefore, a study in transnational action must be open to the linkages between local, national, and international social action. In chapters 6 and 7, I report on the findings of my research into the collaborations between the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and non-union organizations operating in global civil society.

In this chapter, I provide an introduction to the ITUC and a history of its predecessor organizations. This history is not exhaustive, as a thorough history of international unionism is beyond the scope of this project. The history offered here is focused. It charts the birth of international unionism, and highlights the impact of the ILO on the repertoire of international unionism. The chapter then turns to key struggles within the international union federations, those against the hierarchies of race and gender, that have profoundly shaped the international union movement since its inception.

In the case study on transnational domestic worker organizing (Chapter 6), the focus broadens to include ITUC affiliates in India: the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), the Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), and the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA). An introduction to those organizations is provided in Chapter 5.

The International Trade Union Confederation

The ITUC is the newest international trade union organization. It was created in 2006 when two of its predecessor organizations – the World Confederation of Labour (WCL), and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions – merged into a single organization. Although new, the ITUC can trace its history back to 1901, when the International Secretariat of National

Trade Union Centres (ISNTUC) was created.¹⁹ The contrast in membership between the ISNTUC and the ITUC reflects the dramatic expansion of capitalist social relations around the world over the 20th Century: the ISNTUC began with 13 affiliates across Europe, representing 1,168,000 workers (Van Goethem 2006a:14–15); the ITUC has 333 affiliates in 163 countries, representing 180,894,577 workers.²⁰

Despite not having any affiliates in China, the ITUC is by far the most representative labour organization in the history of labour internationalism – at least formally. For reasons that will become clear when its structure is outlined below, it is difficult to argue that the ITUC represents workers *substantially*; indeed, it is reasonable to suggest that most members of its affiliates do not know of the organization’s existence or their relationship to it. Waterman has noted: “The further the organisation gets from the shopfloor... the more nominal becomes the democracy. So, whilst the ICFTU might claim that it ‘represents’ 158 million workers in X number of countries, it is doubtful whether more than a small percentage know it represents them, even in Brussels where it is situated” (2012:125). Nonetheless, the ITUC is the largest, as well as the most geographically representative “voice of labour,” and it does represent the class interests of the world’s workers to the interstate system. As such, it is an important component in the process of transnational class formation.

Like its predecessors, the ITUC is an organization of organizations. Its member-organizations are national trade union federations, rather than specific national, regional, or local unions. National union federations are federations of trade unions and generally do not represent workers in the workplace, but rather confine their activities to representing workers to governments. The ITUC is an intersocietal and confederal organization. Intersocietal organizations are those organizations that operate beyond the boundaries of national societies where access is mediated through national “gatekeeper” organizations; in the case of the ITUC,

¹⁹ The International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU) was created in 1920. It changed its name to the World Confederation of Labour in 1968 (Busch 1983). The IFCTU established itself in opposition to both the socialists and communists. It rejected class conflict and argued for the “systematic collaboration of the classes” (Busch 1983:21). The IFCTU never presented a threat to the IFTU. Its efforts to build rival ITSs or become recognized as an independent organization at the ILO both failed, and outside of Holland, IFCTU affiliates were in the minority everywhere. They were little more than a “thorn in the side” of IFTU affiliates, presenting a symbolic challenge to the IFTU’s claim as the “sole voice of the working classes” (Busch 1983:21).

²⁰ Found at http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/list_of_affiliates_15th_gc.pdf, these numbers reflect the ITUC membership as of October 2015.

these gatekeepers are the national trade union federations. They are distinct from transsocietal organizations operating within global civil society, such as Greenpeace, in which individuals or groups have direct membership with the organization unmediated by national gatekeeper organizations (Stevis 1998:54). The ITUC is also a confederal organization, in the sense that – aside from rules of participation – member organizations retain total autonomy over their own governance.

Structure of the ITUC

The ITUC is ultimately governed by its Congress, which meets every four years (2006 in Vienna, 2010 in Vancouver, and 2014 in Berlin). The Congress elects a General Council (GC), General Secretary, and Auditors, establishes the broad policy framework within which the ITUC will act over the following four years, and makes the final decisions on accepting, suspending, and expelling member organizations. Delegations of national union federations are circumscribed by the number of members they represent, and by gender equity rules.²¹ The existence and enforcement of such rules is a significant break from the traditionally male-dominated trade union movement, and is the product of long historical struggles of women activists within the international trade union movement. This is a process discussed at length in this chapter and in Chapter 6.

A General Council (GC) acts as the “supreme authority of the Confederation between congresses,” (ITUC Constitution, Article XXIII). The GC is made up of 70 regional representatives (11 from Africa, 18 from the Americas, 15 from Asia-Pacific, 26 from Europe), 6 at large members nominated by the Women’s Committee, and two from the Youth Committee. Each GUF and the TUAC (Article XIX) have the authority to: 1) admit or reject applications for membership, although these decisions are ratified by the next Congress (Article II), 2) suspend, but not expel member organizations (Article IV), 3) establish the agenda for Congress (Articles VIII and XIV), and 4) elect the President (Article XXX), Deputy Presidents, and Vice Presidents

²¹ Delegations of two or more must have an equal number of men and women, while a single delegate, as is the case for organizations with less than 50,000 members, must be a woman “if women represent 50% or more of its membership” (Article XI). These rules are maintained by the Sergeant-at-Arms Committee, a committee that is traditionally a part of union conventions to record and monitor the delegate status of those who seek to participate in proceedings. At the 2010 Congress, I noted as well that the morning reports by the Sergeant-at-Arms not only outlined which delegations were in attendance, the number of delegates present, and the delegations who had been refused for non-payment of dues, it also called out those member-organizations who had been refused voting cards due to the infringement of these gender-parity rules.

(Article XXXI), which make up the Executive Bureau along with representatives from the Women's Committee and Youth Committee. While the Congress is the ultimate authority, the General Council, which meets at least once per year, is the locus of ongoing decision-making in the ITUC. The Executive Bureau manages the ITUC and has decision-making authority between meetings of the GC (Article XXV), but it only meets twice per year. In practice, this means that the General Secretary and the senior cadre of the ITUC have a great deal of independence from Executive oversight on a day-to-day basis.

ITUC relations with the global union federations

Like the ICFTU before it, the ITUC maintains close working relationships with the Global Union Federations (GUFs), referred to as International Trade Secretariats (ITSs) until 2002. These organizations also have a long history, emerging in Europe in the late 1880s (Lorwin 1953; Milner 1988; Price 1945; Stevis 1998).²² ITSs/GUFs initially emerged as either international unions of a specific trade or craft, or as federations of a number of trades and professions bound together by particular industries (Rütters 2001); however, all current GUFs represent unions in broad industrial sectors, largely the result of a series of mergers over the past 100 years. Unlike the ITUC, GUFs are “transocietal,” rather than intersocietal, meaning that any local or national union can join directly (Stevis 1998). Most GUFs share the structural outline of the ITUC: a) a delegated congress of all affiliates meeting every 4 to 5 years, b) an elected executive that meets at least annually and makes decisions between congresses, c) a managing board that meets more frequently and oversees the activities of d) a full-time secretariat. GUFs also send representatives to the Executive Board of the ITUC.

Since 2007, the ten GUFs, the ITUC, and the TUAC all participate in the Council of Global Unions (CGU), established in 2007 by a 2006 “consensus agreement” between the parties which replaced the 1951 Milan Agreement (Gordon 2000:89; Traub-Merz and Eckl 2007). The Milan Agreement signed between the then ITSs and the ICFTU had drawn lines around the respective competencies and remits of the ICFTU and the ITSs. As has been the case since the

²² It appears that a number of ITSs emerged at the same time. Price (1945) suggests that the first ITS was of leather workers, while Milner (1988), citing former IFTU leader Walter Schevenels, puts forward the International Tobacco Workers' Federation as the first, and Lorwin (1953) identifies a Paris meeting of printers from across Europe as the first ITS meeting. Each of these authors identifies 1889 as the year that these meetings were held, suggesting a busy year for trade union internationalism.

emergence of the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres (ISNTUC) and the ITSs, the ITUC addresses “political” questions, while the GUFs focus on industrial concerns and organizing workers (Gumbrell-McCormick 2004). The new agreement does not change the basic division of labour between the two, but is more focused than the Milan Agreement on establishing a formal mechanism to “enhance cooperation,” and act as “a tool for structured cooperation and coordination” (globalunions.org). The Council of Global Unions holds annual Council meetings to “consider political and strategic initiatives... mobilize global memberships around these political and strategic initiatives... facilitate joint actions, including campaigns and advocacy... share information on membership and growth, priorities... [and] to contribute to the development of the general policy of the international trade union movement.”²³

Consolidation of the international trade union institutions

The ITUC-WCL merger in 2006 was the culmination of a process that began at least in the 1970s. After the “deconfessionalization” of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions in 1968, at which point the organization was also renamed the World Confederation of Labour, a number of voices within both the WCL and the ICFTU began to call for unification, an idea in part inspired by the new-found European unity between different trade union traditions existing within the ETUC (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000: 367-371) (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:367–71). A meeting in 1974 looked as if it would lead to a formal agreement, but the process was scuttled for reasons that are unclear (Ibid.). A second meeting considering unification in 1979 broke down over the question of regional integration, particularly in Latin America, where both internationals had strong regional bodies with a history of animosity (Ibid.:374; Waterman 2007). Nonetheless, in the 1980s the two internationals engaged in a coordinated effort to support NSZZ-Solidarność in Poland (Ibid.:375), and by the 1990s, were cooperating on a number of campaigns and issuing joint statements at international forums (Huxtable 2009). The topic of unification was discussed by the ICFTU Steering Committee throughout the late 1990s (at least) and in 2000, ICFTU General Secretary Ryder was publicly calling for a review of relationships between the various international trade union organizations; in 2003, he publicly called for the unification of the WCL and the ICFTU (Ibid.). Talks appear to

²³ Found at musicians.org/documents/EC91/ECdocs/GUF_Agreement.doc

have begun the following year, and by September 2005, an agreement was reached between the three parties (Stevis and Boswell 2008:72).

The ITUC is not the first effort at international unity amongst unions. In 1945, war-time alliances between the Soviet Union, the UK, and the US, which led to war-time contacts between the British TUC and the Soviet All Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU), allowed for a form of detente between the leaders of the Soviet-aligned Red International of Labour Unions (RILU) and the IFTU. Out of this *détente*, a new international union federation – the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was created (Busch 1983; Stevis 1998). The WFTU did not last as a unified expression of trade union internationalism. In 1949, the TUC, along with the CIO, and the Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen (NVV), walked out of a WFTU Executive Board meeting. Their exit was followed shortly by “most of the other Western European unions” outside of the French and Italian communist-led federations (Busch 1983:69; Carew 2000a). On the sidelines of the European Recovery Plan Trade Union Committee (ERP-TUAC) meetings, plans were laid for the creation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), founded in late 1949 (Ibid.). The creation of the ICFTU in 1949 would make public the private Cold War that had existed within the international labour movement since the 1920s.

Although a thawing of relations between communist and non-communist union federations in Europe had begun in the late 1960s, international labour’s Cold War would not come to an end until the 1980s. By then, many of the “most prominent” Western-European members of the WFTU had begun to draw closer to the non-communist unions, in part due to splits opening up between Moscow and Western communist parties over Soviet repression in Hungary and Czechoslovakia (Van der Linden 2000:537). NSZZ-Solidarność joined both the ICFTU and the WCL in 1986, but this was largely symbolic due to interference by the Polish government (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:499). By the end of the 1990s 17 union federations from 12 former Warsaw Pact countries had joined the ICFTU (Ibid.), a number that has doubled since then (ituc.csi.org).

The merger of the ICFTU and the WCL into the ITUC is part of a pattern of consolidation that has been occurring within the international union movement since the 1990s. A number of leaders within the ITSs began arguing publicly for consolidation in the early 1990s, with Dan Gallin, the General Secretary of the IUF, arguing that there should be half as many

ITSs as there were (Gallin 1994:128–29).²⁴ The argument for mergers was motivated by an increased need to assist workers in the Global South in their union organizing initiatives and a need to organize unions better transnationally, that was not matched by a commensurate increase in funds from member organizations (Moody 1997:235; Stevis and Boswell 2008:73). Mergers creating the current GUFs began in 1993 when competing teachers’ federations completed a merger that had been under negotiation for almost a decade, and created Education International, which was joined by the WCL-associated World Confederation of Teachers in 2007. Union Network International Global Union (UNI) was the first major merger of a number of ICFTU-associated ITSs in 2000, and brought together Communication International, the International Graphical Federation, the Media and Entertainment International, and the International Federation of Employees, Technicians and Managers. The most recent merger, which created IndustriAll in 2012, has been the most significant, bringing together three of the largest and oldest trade secretariats: the IMF, the ICEM, and the ITGLWF. In 2002, the ITSs changed their names to the Global Union Federations, reflecting the declining focus on specific trades and, perhaps, the aspirations of some of their leaders to move toward truly global unionism. There are now ten GUFs, which have also absorbed the much smaller WCL trade departments since the merger of the WCL and the ITUC.

A brief history of international trade unionism

While the ITUC is a new international organization, it emerges from a long tradition and institutional lineage that can be traced back to the first international federation of trade union centres, the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres (ISNTUC). A full history of the international trade union movement is beyond the scope of this project. Instead, I focus the historical narrative below on the various manifestations of the “Amsterdam International.” The Amsterdam International is a moniker given to those federations, based in Amsterdam, that form the ISNTUC legacy. I only make reference to the communist federations, the faith-based federations, and the GUFs in passing, and only in reference to their relationship to the Amsterdam International. Table 2 below is a list of those organizations which can be seen to be part of the Amsterdam International legacy.

²⁴ Interestingly, the IUF is one of the few ITSs that did not merge with another over the last ten years of merger activity.

Table 2: International union federations

Organization	Years in existence
ISNTUC/ IFTU ²⁵	1901 – 1913
IFTU	1919 – 1945
WFTU ²⁶	1945 – 1949
ICFTU	1949 – 2006
ITUC	2006 -

This section proceeds as follows. First, I cover the emergence of the international trade union organizations, followed by an examination of how the international trade union movement became entrenched in a specific form of internationalism: trade union diplomacy. Following this introduction to the birth of trade union internationalism, I outline the ways in which hierarchies of race and gender have confounded international solidarity.

More broadly, this historical analysis shows how a particular form of international working class organization and politics developed over the 20th Century through a series of institutional innovations, which emerged out of particular moments of transnational class formation fraught with internal struggle. These moments involved the agency of particular historical actors working within the existing social structures that both enabled and constrained options for institutional innovations. In other words, the leadership of these labour movement organizations, facing specific and often new conditions for the working classes they represented, made a series of strategic decisions that were shaped in part by the institutional and ideological structures they inherited from the past, including, most significantly, structures of race and gender. The decisions they would make produced, in turn, new social structures through which future labour leaders, facing their own historically specific conditions and options, would make strategic decisions.

²⁵ ISNTUC changed its name to the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) in 1913.

²⁶ For a brief period after World War Two, federations from the IFTU had a rapprochement with the federations of the international communist movement.

Emergence of the international trade union movement

The international trade union movement emerged out of the Socialist International (SI), also referred to as the 2nd International.²⁷ Around the time of the creation of the 2nd International, a number of ITSs had been created (Price 1945; Milner 1988; Stevis 1998; Dreyfus 2000). While attending the Paris Congress of the SI in 1889, a number of craft union leaders initiated discussion around the creation of international federations of unions based on shared craft or industry.²⁸ The ITSs were the first institutional expression of trade union internationalism (Dreyfus 2000:35). The ITSs were initially based in Germany, and dominated by German social democrats (Stevis 1998; Tosstorff 2005; van Goethem 2006a). Thus, their scope of action was limited by an adherence to what was known as the “German model” of party/union relations. This model maintained a firm division of labour between party and union: all “political” issues would be addressed by the party, which, it was argued, represented the broad issues of the working class; trade unions — and their respective ITSs — would only address workplace issues within their industry (Dreyfus 2000:43; Tosstorff 2005:402).²⁹ The meetings were “information clearinghouses” for national trade and craft unions, and this focus on information sharing led them to be referred to as the “post box internationals” (Busch 1983:15); however, they also organized strike support and tried to mitigate the use of foreign strike breakers (Dreyfus 2000:35).

At the 1896 meeting of the SI, a group of trade union leaders from Germany, Denmark, and Austria initiated discussions aimed at the creation of an international organization of national

²⁷ The SI was not the first effort to establish a transnational working class project. A number of transnational working class and radical associations emerged in the mid-century, including the Fraternal Democrats (1846-53), the International Committee (1854-55), and the Communist League. All fell apart in the violent aftermath of 1848 (Price 1945:7).²⁷ More long-lasting was the International Workingmen’s Association (IWA), also referred to as the 1st International, which existed from 1864 to 1876 (Braunthal 1967; 1980; Kassalow 1969; Lorwin 1953; MacShane 1992; Milner 1988; Price 1945).

²⁸ Price (1945) suggests that the first ITS was of leather workers, while Milner (1988), citing former IFTU leader Walter Schevenels, puts forward the International Tobacco Workers’ Federation as the first, and Lorwin (1953) identifies a Paris meeting of printers from across Europe as the first ITS meeting. Each of these authors identifies 1889 as the year that these meetings were held, although none references the SI meeting as the locus for these meetings. Van Goethem argues that craft union leaders initiated discussion about the creation of international federations of unions based on shared craft or industry while attending the Paris Congress of the SI in 1889. He notes that within a year of this meeting federations of printers, hatters, cigar-makers and tobacco workers, typographers and printers, hatters and milliners had all founded international federations (2006:111).

²⁹ This model was also generally supported by the British unionists, as their dominant position within the British Labour Party allowed them to effectively pursue their political aims through the party, while keeping their unions and labour federations removed from political questions (Milner 1988:6–7).

labour centres that would address perceived shortcomings in the attention paid to trade union issues by the SI. In 1901, the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres (ISNTUC) was founded, the predecessor organization for the International Federation of Trade Unions, the World Federation of Trade Unions, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, and the current International Confederation of Trade Unions. It was established as a platform exclusively for the pursuit of “practical” trade union issues the SI did not take up consistently, such as strike aid, transferring union membership across national borders, and information sharing (Dreyfus 2000:45; see also Barkin 1967; Milner 1988; Stevis 1998; Tosstorff 2005). The development of strong national centres to which individual trade or industrial unions could affiliate was its highest priority, and in this the ISNTUC was fairly successful. It experienced consistent growth over the prewar period. Founded by seven national federations, by 1904 it had 14 affiliates, representing almost 2.5 million workers, and by 1913, when it changed its name to the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), it had 19 affiliates, representing approximately 7.5 million workers (Dreyfus 2000:57-59).

The most significant “practical” achievement of the ISNTUC/IFTU until the First World War was the organization of strike aid to member organizations. It was also able to broker agreements between national centres on recognizing union members from other countries when they immigrated, undoubtedly a great feat of diplomacy, but not one that was able to address the pressing issue of “scab labour,” which was a burning issue for most member organizations (Milner 1988:13-14; Stevis 1998:58). It would remain a weak vehicle of working class internationalism until it succumbed to competing nationalisms at the onset of World War One. So ended a divided and weak initial effort at trade union internationalism.

What we can see in the formative years of trade union internationalism is a struggle to define the international workers’ movement. This struggle is characterized early on by ideological divisions and disagreements on “what is to be done.” A significant element of this disagreement on the way forward is the role of trade unions in the struggle. Under the German model of union/party relations, trade unions are subservient to the party on political matters, and questions of strategy. While this model was generally accepted by the leaders of the most established national union movements, it is clear that many of Europe’s trade union leaders did not feel that “practical” workplace concerns were being addressed through the SI, and sought to establish organizations that could address these issues across Europe. The trade secretariats that

emerged were numerous – over 30 by 1913 – but institutionally weak. With few resources of their own, they were dependent upon the SI and the functionaries of the German trade unions to conduct their limited business (Milner 1988; Rütters 2001). With the development of the ISNTUC/ IFTU, trade union leaders became more independent of the SI and German unions, although the latter would continue to dominate the international trade union movement for years. The ISNTUC/IFTU itself would struggle to define itself, without the remit for the “practical” work of the ITSs, or the “political” work of the SI. However, the IFTU would be reconstituted as a new organization in the post-war period that was far more independent of the SI.

The international trade union structure developed prior to the First World War would come to form the basis of a more coherent labour internationalism in the aftermath. The political position of organized labour was strengthened during the First World War, as industrial production increased and the success of the Bolsheviks in Russia both inspired many workers, and terrified many business owners. By the end of the war, the governments that met in Versailles — a number of which included social democratic representatives — were more open to the demands of organized labour (Van Goethem 2006a:18–19; Tosstorff 2005:415–16; Voss and van Voss 1988:521).

In February of 1919, the national federations of the formerly warring sides met together to consolidate their demands on the governments assembled at Versailles, a process eased by the apparent consensus amongst unionists, despite not meeting together during the war. Both Tosstorff (2005) and van Goethem (2006a) note that the socialist political parties would hold their international meetings subsequent to those of the union federations, forcing the former to respond to the latter. The assembled socialist parties would endorse the demands of the trade unions without qualification (van Goethem 2006a:21; Tosstorff 2005:419–421), illustrating a new sense of independence vis à vis the political leadership and cadre of the SI. In taking the initiative to establish the demands of workers to the assembled governments at Versailles, the trade union leaders in Berne made it clear that the “German model” of union-party relations was no longer acceptable. Union representatives would address “political” questions independently where they saw a clear working class interest, rather than defer such questions to the socialist parties.

However, as the international trade union movement was establishing itself as politically independent, its leadership would endorse a new form of labour advocacy – an international

organization that would regulate industrial relations through international treaties – that would bind the international trade union movement for decades. The creation of the International Labour Organization was part of the post-war peace created in 1919. It was the result of a compromise between the working class representatives of the IFTU and the rising technocratic cadre associated with an emergent inter-state system. The creation of the ILO would provide a focus for the IFTU, something that it lacked prior to World War One (WWI). However, this focus on representing workers at the ILO would contribute to the IFTU becoming an organization more dedicated to international diplomacy than to organizing workers. It would also cement a relationship between the elected officials of the international trade union federations and an emerging technocratic cadre that concerned itself with the mediation of conflict between European capital and labour.

Emergence of international trade union diplomacy: The Amsterdam International and the International Labour Organization

In Chapter 6, I provide a case study of the ITUC's efforts at transnational domestic worker organizing. Central to this organizing effort was a campaign to have the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopt a Convention on the rights of domestic workers. The ILO has been at the centre of the international trade union repertoire since its inception in 1919, and continues to be central to the ITUC repertoire, as shown by the case study in Chapter 6. Therefore, a full understanding of the history of the relationship between the international trade union institutions and ILO is provided below.

Organized labour in Europe emerged from the war more confident, better organized, and with a list of demands for the national delegations meeting to hammer out a post-war international structure at the Versailles peace talks. One of the central demands was the establishment of an international labour office, to be managed by a board of labour and government representatives, and regular international conferences made up of trade union and government representatives to discuss and decide upon questions of labour legislation. The decisions of the international labour conferences would be binding on participating governments (Tosstorff 2005:419-421).

A combination of two existing social forces provided the motivation for international regulation: on the one hand, an increasingly organized and confident working class (Van

Goethem 2006; Tosstorff 2005), and on the other, concern within the British about competition between British industrialists and those of other countries with lower labour standards (Hidalgo-Weber 2013:13). However, it would be an emergent transnational cadre of intellectuals and state functionaries that would provide the institution through which such regulation might be realized – the future ILO. Many of the documents presented to the delegates of the international labour conference in 1919 were from an organization called the International Association for Labour Legislation (IALL), a transnational network of “experts”, mostly academics and politicians, interested in developing international labour and social legislation (Hidalgo-Weber 2013:28; Kott 2015:242).³⁰ The IALL included a small number of trade union leaders, as well as what might be term ‘progressive’ employers, however, the majority of the members saw themselves as “between capital and labour,” and regarded themselves “as ‘scientific stewards’ who would objectively apply their expertise to the study and resolution of critical social problems” (Ibid.:243). The emergence of the IALL – an “epistemic community” (Ibid.:244) of technical experts – and its early influence on the ILO, reflects the ascendancy of a new international cadre that would come to dominate not only the ILO but other interstate institutions that emerged later, such as the UN, the World Bank, and the IMF.

However, this international cadre would be marginalized once negotiations began, as would the European trade union leadership. The first meeting of the international labour conference convened by the Allied countries had minimal participation by labour organizations, although it was chaired by Samuel Gompers, the President of the American Federation of Labor (AFL). It was at this initial meeting in February 1919 that the tripartite structure of the International Labour Organization (ILO) was established, with each national delegation containing one representative each for capital and labour, and two from the state. Furthermore, the hopes for binding international social policy were dashed under the chairmanship of Gompers — who was fiercely opposed to the possibility of an “international social parliament”. It was decided that conventions and recommendation would be non-binding, and national

³⁰ The IALL was established at a meeting during the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris. Ideologically diverse, the IALL included members of the “reformist” wing of the SI, but also individuals from social Christian and social liberal backgrounds, acting as a “place of convergence for several reformist trends” (Kott 2015:242). The IALL, which changed its name to the International Association for Social Progress in 1925, would become something akin to an international think tank, largely dependent upon the ILO for funding (Ibid.:248).

governments would be encouraged to ratify these conventions, but with no meaningful sanctions against those that refused to do so (Tosstorff 2005:422-424).³¹

Clearly the ILO was a disappointment for many within the European labour movement even before it formally sat. However, when the ILO did sit for the first time in October 1919, the IFTU was effective in establishing a coherent workers' group to create common positions on each resolution.³² The IFTU did achieve a number of initial successes. Labour effectively fought off the marginalization of Germany sought by a number of victorious states, securing the openness of the ILO to all countries as it is today; it managed to have a director amenable to labour appointed — a success that the ICFTU would reproduce again in the 1990s; and it secured the ratification of a number of social policy recommendations, including the eight-hour day (Tosstorff 2005:429-431). And yet, these victories would soon prove ephemeral, as government after government — including ones with social democratic ministers — balked at ratifying the eight-hour day in their national parliaments (Ibid.:430).

Despite the evidence that the organization was not be “the decisive lever” for trade union demands, the IFTU remained “wedded” to the ILO platform (Ibid.:432), as would the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, and the International Trade Union Confederation after it, directing an inordinate amount of precious resources to diplomatic battles that could only address the daily struggle of workers in the most abstract manner, rather than spending these resources on coordinating international labour solidarity. This near-exclusive focus on lobbying the interstate system would not change in a meaningful way until the 1990s. As my analyses in chapters 6 and 7 show, these practices still guide the ITUC's actions.

North-South Relations: colonialism and the integration of non-white workers into the international union movement

The case study on domestic worker organizing in Chapter 6 shows the ITUC making a concerted effort to address the plight of informal workers. The data in Chapter 7 show how the ITUC spends far more resources on human and trade union rights and on global economic

³¹ These decisions were protested by the German government when they were presented with a *fait accompli* at the peace conference some months later. The German government, which included a strong presence of social democrats, argued that labour and government representatives should each have 50% of any nation's vote, and that resolutions should be binding (Tosstorff 2005 426-427).

³² The Workers' Group continues to be the caucus for union delegates to the ILO.

development than its predecessor organizations. These issues are important for affiliates from Southern economies, such as India. However, the international union federations do not have a long history of focusing on issues of importance to affiliates outside of the industrialized economies.

As already stated, early trade union internationalism was an almost exclusively European affair, and the participation of labour movement delegates from the colonial periphery would not be meaningful until the emergence of the ICFTU after WWII. Largely, this reflects the historical development of capitalism; generally speaking, waged labour emerges in Europe and gradually spreads across the globe over the 20th Century. However, it also reflects the reality of colonial attitudes amongst leaders and delegates to the IFTU and its “political” parent organization, the SI. What the following shows is that there is almost no contact between the workers’ international in Europe and the emergent global working class until the post-colonial period. From the post-colonial period forward there is a dramatic increase in representation from the Global South in ICFTU memberships; however, the structure of the organization ensures that it remains in the hands of the largely European cadre. During the last three decades of the 20th Century, ICFTU policy towards the increasing power of transnational capital highlights the challenges of developing responses that represent the interests of an increasingly global working class, a challenge that continues of course, and at times, acts as a reminder of how union institutions are used by relatively privileged workers to protect their privileges from racialized workers.

Colonial policy within the socialist labour internationals shifted over the first half of the 20th Century. Despite Marx’s writings on capitalism in the colonial world, the IWA was entirely silent on the question of colonial relations, perhaps owing to the pressing concerns of the fledgling international, which of course was entirely European in its make-up. It was not until the Second International that European socialist labour leaders set their minds to the “colonial question.” Kaarsholm argues that, within the SI at the turn of the century, there were three lines of thinking represented by three distinct types of people: those who decried all forms of colonialism, those who supported, or at least tolerated, certain (i.e. socialist) forms of colonialism, and those who supported imperialist expansion. Yet, all three groups shared a belief in the superiority of European civilization (1988: 57). The conflicting attitudes amongst socialists at the time can be seen also in the debates that took place during their meetings. At the

1904 Congress in Amsterdam, delegates decried the exploitation of indigenous peoples by colonial states, notably Britain, and yet these same delegates also expressed the modernist narrative of “progress” in which people of the South benefit from the intervention of the more progressive Europeans (Braunthal 1966:311-312). At the 1907 Congress in Stuttgart a resolution was tabled that rejected “capitalist colonial policies,” which on its own would cause no debate within the Congress. However, the preamble to the resolution proved to be very divisive. It stated that the SI did not “reject all colonial policies in all circumstances, such as those which, under a socialist régime, could serve a civilizing purpose” (Braunthal 1966:318). The preamble was debated for three days before being voted down; the resolution denouncing capitalist colonialism would stand without qualification. This would be the official stance of international social democracy until 1928, when a new program was adopted by the Labour and Socialist International (LSI)³³ which explicitly called for the “extension and intensification of the League of Nations’ mandate system; protection of native labour and living conditions; gradual socio-economic and political reform in the direction of autonomy/self-government except for China, Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, which would become independent” (Tichelman 1988:93).

The international trade union federations prior to 1945 passed no resolutions on colonialism. Even the IFTU, whose leadership prided itself on its independence from the LSI, and which proved willing in the circumstances outlined earlier to address questions of international policy, would not touch the colonial question (van Goethem 2006a:31). This was likely due to the overwhelming financial and political clout of the British TUC, which began to take an active role in colonial affairs during the 1920s (Davies 1964), and would be unwilling to have the IFTU interfere in its colonial affairs. Despite the lack of interest shown by the IFTU toward the political situation in the Global South, the organization did expand its geographical reach somewhat during the interwar period, although this clearly had no impact on its policies. Prior to 1927, the only non-European workers represented at the IFTU were those of Argentina, Peru, Canada, and the General Federation of Jewish Labour, none of whom played an active role. After the Congress was berated by President Purcell in 1927 for not “fully grasping the fact that millions of coloured people... have become fully proletarianized” (van Goethem 2006a:39), the

³³ The Labour and Socialist International was the name given to the post-WWI socialist international that emerged in 1923. During WWI, the SI did not meet, and fell into abeyance. In 1923 a “new” international was created, but it was essentially the same organization as the pre-war SI.

IFTU began to put some of its limited resources into global outreach, making contacts with unions in Argentina, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Egypt, Australia, the Dutch Indies, Ceylon, Japan, and Portugal over the next two years. In 1928, the South African CTUO was affiliated, despite concerns expressed by the IFTU executive about the segregation of “natives” (van Goethem 2006a:43). In 1931, the Persatoaen Vakbonden Pegawai Negeri of Dutch India affiliated, as did the National Trade Union Federation of India in 1934. The Confederacion de Trabajadores joined in 1936. The AFL was one of the last CTUOs to affiliate, in 1937, and largely out of concern that its new competitor, the Council of Industrial Organizations, would affiliate (van Goethem 2006a). Thus, despite its efforts, the IFTU remained a largely European organization.

From its inception, the ICFTU was far more active in the South than the IFTU. By 1955, it had raised \$800,000 for its Regional Activities Fund (RAF), and 33 of 53 countries represented by 1955 were from the South (Carew 2000b). In part, this effort was due to the pressure to organize affiliates placed on it by its competitor, the WFTU. Yet it was also the case that there were simply more proletarians in the South by the post-war period, owing to the integration of these regions into the capitalist global political economy, and the industrialization efforts of their post-colonial governments. The ICFTU’s efforts were complicated, however, by the competing interests of some of its most powerful member organizations. Organizing outside of Europe in the post-war period would be hampered by the colonial attitudes of some European federations, most notably the British TUC; it would subsequently be complicated by the neo-colonial attitudes of the AFL-CIO, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s.

As noted, efforts in Africa were initially stymied by the lingering colonial attitudes of the British (Carew 2000b; Davies 1964), a problem that only grew in the 1970s as anti-colonial movements across the continent grew stronger (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000). The TUC had been directly involved with colonial policy since the 1925 British Commonwealth Labour Conferences of 1925, and it began a series of fact-finding missions in 1927-28 (Davies 1964:23). By 1942, it participated in the Colonial Labour Advisory Committee, and trade unionists were appointed as Labour Advisors to the colonial apparatus (Ibid.:24). An educational program was established during the war for trade unionists from the colonies to visit the UK and receive tutelage from the TUC, and it was continued after the war ended (Ibid.:25). Labour Officers in the colonies were intended to both encourage the development of trade unions and to supervise

this development. Although the Officers were tasked with discouraging “political” unionism (Ibid.:26), given the strong connections made between economic and political freedom by local leaders in the colonial countries, relationships between the emergent union federations in these countries and the political leadership of anti-colonial movements were “inevitable” (Ibid.:29).

Despite this inevitability, when the TUC was a member organization of the WFTU, it resisted efforts of that international federation to establish a fund in support of the fledging union movement within colonial countries, seeing this as a matter of internal interference. When the ICFTU established an office in West Africa, the TUC saw this as an extension of its own existing activities (Davies 1964:30). The TUC argued publicly that establishing independent regional offices would distract from grassroots organizing in the workplace, and encourage “political” activity (Ibid.:31), which can be something of a code word for anti-colonial and even communist organizing. The attitude of the TUC increasingly invited attack from other ICFTU members, most ironically, the AFL-CIO, which accused it (justifiably) of having a paternalistic attitude (Ibid.). Despite sharing a concern with the TUC over communist organizing in Africa, the AFL-CIO encouraged establishment of an African wing of the ICFTU.

The TUC was willing to support ICFTU activities in Southern countries so long as it did not interfere with British interests; however, the Americans would have none of this (Carew 1996:153). At the creation of the ICFTU, the AFL had refused to contribute to the RAF, and continued to conduct its own international outreach through the Free Trade Union Committee (FTUC), which was “a voluntary organization subscribed to by a number of AFL affiliates but not wholly integrated into the AFL structure” (Ibid.:152). Virulently anti-communist in its focus, the FTUC was not trusted by the TUC, nor by the other American federation, the CIO (Ibid.). For its part, the AFL distrusted the TUC as well, accusing it of understating the threat of communism to organized labour. It pursued its own programs throughout Africa and Asia, despite the concerns expressed by the TUC about its “negative anti-communism” (Carew 1996:152), and the ambivalence Asian union leaders expressed towards the ICFTU’s anti-communist agenda (Carew 2000b).

The role of the Cold War in thwarting international labour solidarity is covered extensively in the literature (Busch 1983; Carew 1996, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2008; Stevis 1998a; Stevis and Boswell 2008; Windmuller 1980), and will not be replicated here. However, it is important to note the profound effect that the American-led anti-communist crusade had on the

ability of the ICFTU to assist in the development of representative union organizations in the Global South. ICFTU efforts would be particularly frustrated in Latin America by the AFL-CIO's anti-communist projects (Carew 1996; 1998; 2000a; 2000b; Daniels and Waters 2006; Gordon 2000; MacShane 1992; Morris 1967; Waters and van Goethem 2013). The AFL's imperialism and its willingness to work with the US state goes back as far as 1918, when AFL President Gompers took government funding in order to establish the anti-left Pan-American Federation of Labor, with a handful of union leaders of questionable democratic pedigree (Busch 1983; García 2012; Scipes 2005).

In the immediate post-war period, the AFL again was instrumental in establishing the Inter-American Confederation of Workers (CIT) in 1948, which joined the ICFTU in 1951 as the Organizacion Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores (ORIT). CIT/ORIT was organized as a regional counterweight to the WFTU-affiliated Latin American Confederation of Workers (CTAL), and engaged in a concerted campaign to destroy CTAL (Busch 1983; cf. García). The anti-communist campaign of the AFL in Latin America was extremely aggressive and often worked in concert with the CIA. In perhaps the most extreme case, they established a largely fictitious union federation in order to pressure the left-nationalist President of Guatemala, "members" of which would be used in the CIA-orchestrated coup of 1953 (Busch 1983:176-147). ORIT supported the coup and worked with the AFL and the CIO to establish a new union movement in post-coup Guatemala free of communist influence. In the end, they succeeded in creating a Guatemala free of any unionism at all, as the new regime outlawed trade unions and executed a number of union leaders (Ibid.:148-149). The Guatemala debacle greatly strained the relationship between the AFL and the ICFTU, of which ORIT was ostensibly a part, but clearly operating on its own, and largely under American control (Carew 2000b; Stevis 1998). In addition to the example of Guatemala in 1953, there is that of Chile in 1973. While the ICFTU condemned the coup, pursued the matter through the ILO, and organized a relief effort for Chilean unionists from its offices in Brussels, ORIT chose to sit out such efforts and offered only a mild expression of concern (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000).

ORIT would continue to be a significant problem for the ICFTU throughout the 1960s. In addition to concerns about mismanagement and corruption, were concerns over the domineering role of the AFL-CIO, even after it left the ICFTU in 1969 (Busch 1983; Carew 2000b). By the 1960s, ICFTU staff from Europe were finding it "difficult to distinguish between ORIT and

AIFLD projects” and found AIFLD staff using ORIT offices and resources as their own (Carew 2000b:316). Closely related to this were concerns over clandestine relationships with state intelligence agencies, and what was seen as “too close an identification with a number of unsavoury Latin American regimes” (Ibid.).

This brief history of the colonial and imperialist activities of the British and American labour federations highlights an historical record that would make international labour solidarity in subsequent years so challenging. Labour’s Cold War was a war fought largely by the Americans and Soviets, but it was not fought on American or Russian soil exclusively. Rather, it was contested in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It not only divided the international trade union movement, it created deep divisions within national labour movements as well, stunting the development of strong and independent worker organizations in a number of regions.

Furthermore, in addition to the divisions between communists and non-communists, the Cold War contributed to a division between union federations in the North and South. To be clear, the Cold War did not create these divisions. The attitude of European trade unionists and socialists towards the colonial world was at best a display of ignorance. Efforts to reach out to the fledgling unions in the South during the inter-war years appear to have been primarily motivated by a desire to counter the efforts of the RILU, and little effort appears to have been made to incorporate the needs of Southern workers into the program of the IFTU. When the ICFTU emerged as a far more representative organization, its European affiliates were saddled with their own history of colonial complicity. Any initial distrust of the Northern-dominated ICFTU was solidified by the lingering colonial attitudes of the TUC, and the aggressive interventions of the AFL-CIO. It should be of no surprise that in the 1970s, as the ICFTU tried to develop a common front against the expansion of MNCs across the world, that many union leaders in the South saw these efforts as another example of European and American unions working in their own interests against those of Southern workers.

Staff members within the ICFTU’s Economic and Social Department had been conducting research into MNCs since 1949 (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000). In 1969, a motion was presented at the Brussels Congress about the threat of MNCs. It expressed concern that MNCs “arbitrarily transferring production facilities... from one country to another without regard for balanced global and regional development” in order to “exploit international labour cost differentials” would have a detrimental effect on “democratic national development planning

aimed at full utilization of the social and economic potentialities” of countries seeking to industrialize (Willatt 1974:11). From this point on, establishing global regulation over capital became a central preoccupation of the ICFTU. By 1975, it and a number of ITSs had developed and agreed to a Charter of Trade Union Demands for the Legislative Control of Multinational Companies that would form the platform for future efforts around global regulation which called for intergovernmental efforts at regulating MNCs through “coordinated national legislation” and “enforceable” international conventions (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:387). In essence, the non-communist labour movement’s most significant institutions were calling for a global “neo-Keynesianism,” even if such language was not explicitly used (Ibid.:385).

Language is important, and the “race to the bottom” narrative being used by many from the North did not find a receptive audience with Southern affiliates, many of whom were concerned that discussions of global regulation were thinly veiled calls for Northern protectionism (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:385). To overcome such concerns, the message developed was one of mutual gains that could be achieved if regulation was attached to full employment development policies (Ibid.:385-386). Gumbrell-McCormick suggests that those involved in the drafting of the Charter were “especially” concerned about the impact of unregulated capital on workers in the “developing” countries (Ibid.:386). Yet “almost all of the meetings were held in Europe and... most regular participants were from the industrialized countries” (Ibid.). Representatives from the industrialized North were likely committed internationalists, and it is the case that the Charter was “adopted without opposition” at the 1975 Congress (Ibid.:387), which would not have occurred had Southern representatives had serious concern with the Charter. Nonetheless, the lack of Southern representation in formulating ICFTU/ITS policy means that affiliates in the South had no investment in the process and, therefore, no commitment to defending it.

The ICFTU maintained its focus on lobbying the international financial institutions (IFIs) around social clauses in the Charter into the 1990s (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:508), turning its attention to the World Trade Organization (WTO) when it superseded the GATT. And yet, even as the focus on social clauses consumed more resources of the ICFTU, there was growing opposition amongst Southern affiliates to these efforts, which reinforced the impression of a Northern bias within the organization. Both the INTUC, and the HMS, the two largest Indian affiliates of the ICFTU, and then the ITUC, have consistently opposed the inclusion of social

clauses or other labour protection mechanisms in trade negotiations, as did the Indian communist federations (Hensman 2010:121–22). Hensman may be correct when she argues that such positions are inherently "neoliberal" and "nationalist," and even possibly "xenophobic" (Ibid.). However, distrust of European intentions also makes these leaders susceptible to the nationalist arguments made by Indian capital, a distrust built up over decades of historical experience with a Euro-centric trade union international.

What is interesting about the continued dominance of European union federations over the ICFTU during this period is that, formally, representation from Southern affiliates was disproportionately strong on the Executive Board. For example, in 1972, membership organizations from continental Europe held 24% of the seats, reserved for regional representatives but provided 46% of the ICFTU's members; Asian federations had 20% of these seats, while providing 11% of the ICFTU's membership. Overall in 1972, federations from countries considered to be part of the "Third World" accounted for only 20% of the ICFTU's membership, but held 56% of the seats on the Executive Board. While an increase in membership in Asia, Africa, and Latin America would provide some balance by the 1990s, in 1992 regional representatives from the "Third World" still accounted for 50% of the regional seats while only representing 35% of the membership (Gumbrell-McCormick 2004:183). How does one account for this inconsistency between the apparent domination by Southern representatives and a sense of Northern domination by those same Southern representatives?

Gumbrell-McCormick argues that this can be explained through two mechanisms. The first is the subcommittee. Like many large organizations, the ICFTU Executive makes decisions based on the recommendations of small committees, such as the Finance and General Purposes Committee, which was traditionally filled with representatives from the largest contributing affiliates from Europe and North America, because these affiliates contribute the most financially (2004:182). The "real" debates and decisions about the direction of the organization took place within these committees, which would present their findings to the executive for approval (Ibid.). Rejecting such recommendations is always within the power of an executive, however, it is very difficult for the executive to do so with a paucity of information about how a subcommittee arrives at any particular decision. The second mechanism is closely related, and involves the uneven capacity of affiliates to contribute to regional organizing and development projects. A lack of resources and dramatically uneven exchange rates made it historically

difficult for member organizations from Asia, Africa, and Latin America to make significant financial contributions to the ICFTU, which impinged on their ability to have a voice on how ICFTU resources were spent (Ibid.:185-86). On top of this, a number of European and North American member organizations began, in the 1970s, to follow the lead of the AFL-CIO and pursue their own bilateral aid programs. This contributed to a sense of dependency on the part of the poorer affiliates, and allowed those contributing organizations to make decisions about what was best for development projects in the South (Ibid.:186). This situation continued throughout the life of the ICFTU, leading Gumbrell-McCormack to ask, in 2004, if the ICFTU was an expression of international solidarity, or one of dependency (Gumbrell-McCormick 2004).

More recently, Rahman and Langford (2014) suggest that “hegemonic trade union imperialism” continues, particularly in South Asia. Building on the work of Scipes (2010) and Southall (1995), they argue that hegemonic trade union imperialism has five characteristics (Rahman and Langford 2014:173):

1. Multiplication of trade unions, since imperialist labour organizations prefer to control affiliates rather than work with established unions.
2. Use of international financial resources to create clientelistic relations with the leaders and members of affiliates.
3. Failure to support the campaigns of leftist unions (this is a continuation of the anticommunism of the Cold War).
4. Support for bureaucratic avenues of change rather than mass actions by workers.
5. Promotion of Southern workers’ rights and struggles in ways that can plausibly be interpreted as protectionism for Northern workers.

In an analysis of AFL-CIO activities in the Bangladeshi garment sector over the past two decades, Rahman and Langford find that four of the five characteristics listed above can be seen in the activity of the AFL-CIO in Bangladesh (2014:183):

1. It has initiated its own organizations (unions and a NGO) that it can directly control instead of working with existing unions;
2. It has used financial resources that are quite massive in the Bangladeshi context to provide rewards to leaders (salaries, training programs, and international travel) and members (e.g., snacks at meetings), thus establishing clientelistic rather than democratic internal union relations;

3. It has steered clear of unions with links to leftist organizations, thus replicating the anticommunism of the Cold War; and
4. It employs bureaucratic and legalistic methods when pursuing workplace grievances, and is disdainful of the techniques of collective protest that have the potential to destabilize the current relations of exploitation and oppression in the (garment) industry.

They reject the idea that the AFL-CIO has acted to protect American jobs – the fifth characteristic of hegemonic trade union imperialism – arguing instead that the efforts of the AFL-CIO to have the US state impose sanctions against Bangladesh were designed to “stabilize” the Bangladeshi labour market, not protect American workers. Nonetheless, they point out that unilaterally deploying this tactic against the wishes of many Bangladeshi labour leaders “is exactly what one might expect from the trade-union-imperialist patron” (Ibid.).

The problem of European and American labour federations imposing their own vision of international solidarity upon workers and their organizations in the Global South did not end with the Cold War. Over the course of my field work, I discovered that the anti-imperialist impulse still exists amongst the Indian ITUC affiliates, and as the preceding has demonstrated, it is well founded. The challenge of North-South relations still confronts the ITUC, and it is acknowledged in its most public documents. In its 2010 Congress Statement, the authors note the following:

Solidarity... is an issue which the ITUC is obliged to address regularly, often in difficult circumstances. It is in fact what lies behind the most frequently asked question about the very rationale and credibility of the ITUC: can it really claim to be an effective representation of workers in such a bewildering variety of circumstances, and whose interests are obviously different and potentially contradictory? The question acquires greater weight in conditions of a globalisation process which seems to offer ever greater opportunities to play off different groups of workers against each other (ITUC 2010a:20).

What this quote points to is the challenge of integrating the needs and issues of a global working class that is fractured both structurally and ascriptively. Reconciling fractional interests

is a key issue in transnational class formation, and a challenge that continually faces the leadership and cadre of the international union institutions. It is a key argument in this dissertation that addressing this challenge will require significant innovation within the existing international union institutions. As this section has demonstrated, the European-dominated internationals have a poor track record in integrating workers from Southern affiliates. The following section shows a similarly poor record of integrating the needs and issues of women workers. Understanding these histories is crucial to understanding the innovation involved in the ITUC's recent efforts to organize informal women workers, such as domestics.

Fear of a female planet: the marginalization of women in the international trade union movement

The third historical struggle for unity in the international trade union movement is the struggle around solidarity with women workers — the extension of solidaristic policies and practices toward women by male-dominated organizations. While women have played a part in the labour movement since the IWA, ideological constructions of gender have consistently made participation challenging.³⁴ This fracture within the transnational labour movement still exists, of course, and is a central theme in the case study of domestic worker organizing I present in Chapter 6. The organizing campaign around domestic work, which began in earnest only recently, is an example of a highly successful campaign by transnationally organized women labour activists. However, current successes are not the exclusive product of contemporary agents. Structural changes are largely the product of the agency of past actors (Archer 2011). Therefore, to fully understand both the historical significance and the long roots of the recent transnational domestic workers' campaign we need to explore the actions of past actors, namely the women that preceded those immediately responsible for the ITUC campaign.

As just stated, women have been involved in the international labour movement since its inception, however, an important place to start this historical narrative is in 1919. Van Goethem notes that the period after World War I is an interesting one to examine the role of women in the

³⁴ The IWA was certainly dominated by men; however, at least one woman, Harriet Law, was on the executive (Braunthal 1980). During the Second International, there were a number of women leaders in the international working-class movement. Most famous is Rosa Luxemburg, but she was not alone. Clara Eissner Zetkin organized international socialists in Paris, where she lived in exile; Anna Kuliscioff was a co-founder of the Italian socialist party; Eleanor Marx was a successful labour organizer (Boxer 2014).

labour movement as it follows a massive increase in women's participation in the industrial workforce and is a period of intense struggle for the rights of women and workers (2006:1027). However, it is a bit of a stretch to claim, as van Goethem does, that women in this period "broke the hegemony of men" in the union movement (2006b:1027). What we can say is that the post-WWI peace talks, and the discussions around establishing an international organization dedicated to the "labour question," provided women activists a venue through which they could attempt to be "active participants" in the emergent "domain of international law." However, the women who sought to participate in both the peace talks and the discussions over an international labour relations regime were largely marginalized in both the official treaty processes and the Berne meeting of trade union leaders in February 1919 (Ibid.:1028-31). This marginalization effectively led to the brief rise and fall of the first and only international organization of working women.

The idea of an international of working class women was proposed by Margaret Dreier Robins, the President of the National Women's Trade Union League (NWTUL) in a meeting with other women attending the Paris peace talks in 1919 who also "resented their marginalization within the treaty negotiations" (Vapnek 2014). The first meeting of what was then called the International Congress of Working Women (ICWW) coincided with the International Labour Conference (ILC) in October/November of 1919, and succeeded in attracting a far more international crowd than the IFTU at that time, including delegates from Argentina, Cuba, India and Japan. At the first congress, the women assembled achieved consensus on a number of issues, including the eight-hour day, limits on child labour, the need to address global inequality, the expansion of unemployment benefits, the need for stronger rights for immigrants, and a demand that the ILC incorporate women into its process -- a demand that the ILC studiously ignored (Vapnek 2014; Boris & Jensen 2014).

Like other nascent working class organizations, the ICWW was something of a hybrid organization that included both working class women and middle-class supporters (Vapnek 2014). Significant differences of opinion appeared over some key questions of strategy and focus. A specific example involved the question of proposing either gender-neutral legislation around health and safety, or legislation that would specifically protect women from particular working conditions. In this agenda-setting decision, the "protectionist" view prevailed, a focus that was well received by the ILC (Boris and Jensen 2014). Both Vapnek (2014) and van

Goethem (2006b) attribute this focus on “protecting” women workers to the fact that few of the delegates were organized into trade unions. Yet, union status would seem to be less of an issue than that of social class. The NWTUL, which was the leading organization in the ICWW, was a hybrid organization of both working class women and crusading middle class reformers, and it is clear that the opinions of the latter dominated. The dominant influence of middle class women is also clearly related to the decisions taken on membership within the organization from the outset. The initial call for delegates, sent to social democratic and labour-oriented women’s groups, limited delegate status to women who could secure trade union credentials, which immediately created a problem; 200 women showed up for the meeting, but only 27 could vote (Vapnek 2014). When the organization met again in 1921 as the International Federation of Working Women (IFWW), it would settle the membership question in a way that would be highly problematic for a couple of reasons. The Congress decided that delegates would be accepted from IFTU-affiliated unions and organizations that “followed the same 'spirits, aims, and principles' as the IFTU.” This would exclude communist and Christian unionists, and prevent the organization from being “taken over by suffragists,” (Vapnek 2014). It would also allow the participation of American women, who otherwise could not participate given the AFL’s refusal to affiliate with the IFTU, as well as those women associated with cooperatives and the British Labour Party (Ibid.). This compromise was intended to ensure both the future participation of its founders, and its working class focus. However, it appears that it had two related effects. First, the focus on organizational affiliation ensured that the voices of the most marginalized women, particularly racialized women engaged in agriculture and domestic labour would be ignored, something that was pointed out to delegates of the first meeting by a group of African-American women. Second, by allowing the affiliation of some delegates from non-class-based organizations, such as cooperatives and political parties, the IFWW ensured the disproportionate influence of middle class social reformers within its Congresses.

It is clear that the leadership of the IFTU was far from happy to see the emergence of an independent working class women’s organization. Initially, the men applied a charm offensive. IFTU executive members made a point of being “prominently present” at the second ICWW/IFWW Congress, and IFTU President Odegeest invited Robins to meet about issues of common concern (Vapnek 2014; van Goethem 2006b). Charm, on the part of the IFTU leadership, turned to aggression within the year, and in 1922 the IFTU passed a resolution

outright opposing the organization (Vapnek 2014; van Goethem 2006b). By its third — and last — meeting, the IFWW was already in crisis. No national federation would support it; its meeting was boycotted by both the Germans and the Austrians; and it was financially dependent upon private donations, particularly from Robins, its President (Vapnek 2014). Between the second and third Congress, Secretary Phillips had negotiated with the IFTU, and the federation had offered to cover the costs of the organization's monthly newsletter, affiliate the organization as it stood, and make a one-time payment of five pounds for every female member of the IFTU (Vapnek 2014). However, this offer of affiliation appears to have been killed by the 1922 IFTU Congress motion (van Goethem 2006b 1041). Facing lingering doubts about the legitimacy of a women's only organization, and concerns over the organization's financial viability, the delegates voted to ask the IFTU to absorb the IFWW as a department (Ibid.). The IFTU agreed; however, facing great financial hardship itself, the Management Board turned the department into a committee — to be chaired by a man — with no independent resources; nor did the IFTU ever create a women's secretary position, as had been agreed. Although the Women's committee existed until 1938, the committee could do very little as it was starved of funds. In 1938, the IFTU decided that the committee was superfluous (van Goethem 2006b:1046).

Women activists would see more success over the lifetime of the ICFTU, although Gumbrell-McCormick points out that this involved “long years of making the same points over and over” about incorporating women's issues into the core activities of the organization (2000:492). In the early years of the organization, a specific training program for women activists was established in 1953, a joint ICFTU/ITS Consultative Committee for Women Workers' Questions was created in 1955 (Ibid.:476), and a formal Women's Committee (WC) was initiated in 1957 (Cobble 2012; Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:476). Both came out of a concerted campaign by an informal group of women labour activists to pressure the ICFTU's male leadership on issues important to women workers (Ibid.). However, despite the existence of a few strong advocates on the Executive Board (EB), the committee's budget was very “limited” and it struggled to find support within the secretariat and to make an impact on ICFTU policy and priorities (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:478–79; Richards 2011).

Over the 1960s, women were beginning to have an impact on local and national unions, and the number of affiliates with women's committees grew from 10, in 1957, to 21 in 1965 (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:477). In 1965, the ICFTU adopted a Charter of Rights of Working

Women (Cobble 2012:4; ICFTU 1969:57; Richards 2011:435). By the 1970s, the ICFTU WC was asserting itself more publicly in order to put more pressure on the secretariat to live up to the promises made in the Charter. For example, despite having representation on the preparatory working group for the 1972 congress, the WC was not able to get a single issue of its own onto the congress agenda, or to have a statement by the WC included in congress documents. In response to the intransigence of the secretariat, a WC member publicly chastised the EB and read the WC statement from the plenary floor. Shortly after the congress, the ICFTU adopted the following statement: “The ICFTU pledges itself to ensure the integration of women at all levels.” The following year, the WC was asked to send an observer to the Economic and Social Committee (ESC), which seems to have impacted the ESC’s newfound interest in questions of discrimination and equal pay (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:479-480).

However, it was not until the 1980s that the ICFTU underwent structural changes intended to increase the participation of women. In the early 1980s, the WC established a working group to draft constitutional and structural changes needed for the ICFTU to live up to its commitments made in the Program of Action for the Integration of Women into Trade Unions adopted at the 1979 Congress (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:485). The proposals, accepted at the 1983 Congress, turned the EB position from a consultative to a representative one, turned the WC into a special, rather than a consultative committee of the EB, and enshrined in the constitution a women’s representative on all governing bodies (Ibid.). These recommendations would be contentious, even within the WC itself, as some women felt that the influence of women representatives from the WC would be less than that of women elected by their own affiliates. Those opposed to the recommendations argued that a WC representative to the EB should only have titular status if there were no women elected to the EB by an affiliate (Ibid.). In 1986, the ICFTU had its first female Vice-President, Shirley Carr from the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and by the mid-1980s a number of women were nominated to the EB. However, these nominations were mostly in the capacity of substitute members (Ibid.:486), which suggests that the increased presence of women on lists of EB members did not fundamentally alter the balance of power on the Board.

Changes to the structure of the organization, however, could only effectively increase women’s participation in the ICFTU’s governing bodies if there were more women participating in the organization overall. At the 1983 Congress, the membership also added a second titular

(voting) seat on the EB for the WC and established a policy whereby all affiliates with over 250,000 women members would be expected to nominate at least one female delegate, although there was no enforcement mechanism established (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:486). The 1988 Congress saw an increase in women's participation — 89 were listed as participants, 39 of whom had full delegate status (Ibid.:489). Delegate rules changed again for the 1992 Congress, so that affiliates with 100,000 members were required to nominate at least one female delegate, to be enforced through the public shaming of having affiliates who failed to do so reported by name to the congress plenary (Ibid.:490). This appeared to have an effect as the number of female delegates doubled over the previous congress (Ibid.).

The 1960s through to the 1990s also saw a shift in focus from concerns about “protecting” women workers to concerns with the equality of men and women in the labour movement. In 1975, the Charter of the Rights of Working Women was amended to address women's representation within the union movement, and to change its policy on maternal leave to a policy on parental leave for both women and men (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:481-482). Over the late 1970s and early 1980s, the connection between discrimination and women's vulnerability in the labour market began to take hold with the ICFTU, as did the gender-specific impacts of MNC activity and technological change in the workplace (Ibid.:482-484). Sexual harassment and violence against women in the workplace (and in the union hall) also emerged as crucial questions in the 1980s, and were presented by the WC as not simply “women's issues,” but broad issues of social justice of relevance to the labour movement as a whole (Ibid.:487-488). By the 1990s, this effort to integrate women's concerns into the centre of trade union activity dovetailed with the notion of “mainstreaming” gender analyses of socio-economic problems, producing concrete efforts, such as the Women and Development project that funded regional projects aimed at increasing the participation of women in economic development projects. Gumbrell-McCormick argues that by the end of the 1990s, the Women's Committee, and the Equity Department (created in 1992) were less a pressure group within the ICFTU, and more of a central node in its operations (2000:490-492).

The WC and the Equity Department also made a profound impact on the organization in terms of the relationship between Brussels and the regions, with women activists of the ICFTU consistently showing themselves to be ahead of the curve on the matter of relations between affiliates in the North and South (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:492). Committee members sought

to engage in “noncolonizing feminist solidarity” (Richards 2011:419) at a time when the male-dominated executive of the ICFTU struggled and fought over African nationalism, European paternalism, and anti-communism (Ibid.:420). Rather than assume a “global women’s oppression based upon a universal European framework, the WC leadership understood that historical, political, geographical and cultural contexts informed specific configurations of inequalities” (Richards 2011:418). Its “incorporation of gender, class, race, culture, and nation in its programmatic and policy analyses” made it distinct from other transnational women’s networks at the time (Richards 2011:417-18). However, this was not an easy process. Support for outreach to the South was not uniform, and the different structure of women’s work in countries like India would prove a challenge to incorporate into a union paradigm. I look at these challenges in Chapter 6, with reference to interview data collected during my field work. Here I give a broad overview of this intersection of gender and regional difference according to the existing historical record.

By the early 1960s, concern was being expressed about the lack of Southern women participating in the committee (Richards 2011:419-20), something which was generally attributed to the committee’s limited funding (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:478-479), although there were European members of the WC who were largely dismissive of these concerns as well. At the 1964 ILC, during the agenda item “women workers in a changing world,” WC members from Europe expressed a range of views on the need to do more outreach to women workers in Africa and Asia.³⁵ Despite some opposition from the British TUC, “the predominant view” of WC members was to focus “organizational work in developing countries” and expand the number of voting members on the WC from the South (Richards 2011:419-20).

The lack of Southern representation on the WC was in part seen as a product of the status of women within these regions, leading to the creation of educational efforts within Latin America, Asia and Africa (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:485-87). Early educational projects in Africa, starting in the 1960s, for example, focused on literacy and basic education. Some of these programs “reinforced stereotypical interests of women” such as “beauty culture... housework management, family budgets, cooking, sewing, first aid, hygiene, and health.” However, some of

³⁵ The proceedings of the conference can be found at: [http://staging.ilo.org/public/libdoc/declarations/Declaration_for_Women_Workers/English/09616\(1964-48\)17.pdf](http://staging.ilo.org/public/libdoc/declarations/Declaration_for_Women_Workers/English/09616(1964-48)17.pdf)

the women who took these programs also “used organizing and public speaking skills” learned in the course to engage in liberation movement politics, contributing to an increase in the role of women in the “public sphere” (Richards 2011:426-28). By the mid-1980s the regional ICFTU organizations in Asia and Africa had resources dedicated to organizing women and addressing “women’s questions.” By the end of the decade, Latin America would follow suit (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:486-487).

These early programs appear to have contributed to a stronger role for African and Asian women in the ICFTU. By the mid-1980s, the chair of the WC was a representative from the INTUC; in 1992, a delegate from the L’Organisation Nationale des Syndicats Libres ONSL (Burkina Faso) was both the chair of the WC and a vice-president of the ICFTU. There is also evidence of a change in focus. By 1981, the WC brought the issue of Export Processing Zones to the attention of the ICFTU. The Committee also began research on home-based work and informal labour in the mid-1980s. In 1985, many issues facing Southern women workers were incorporated into the 4th World Women’s Conference, including the struggle of women under apartheid and South American military dictatorships, and the role of women in economic development (Gumbrell-McCormick 2011:487-88).

Organizing efforts aimed at bringing women into the union movement continued into the 1990s (and continue today). In 1992 the WC was restructured to further increase the participation of women from the South (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:490). By the middle of the 1990s new education projects were underway in Africa aimed at encouraging “women’s self-confidence and organizational capacities” as a means to increase their union participation, and a “one plus one” campaign, where women activists would commit to recruiting one new member, was launched in Asia (Ibid.:429-430). Such campaigns had both numerical and organizational impacts on the international union movement. At the beginning of the 1990s, the African Regional Organization (AFRO) had only 500,000 members from 17 affiliates across 15 countries; by mid-decade AFRO had 5 million members in 40 affiliates across 50 countries (Ibid.:430).³⁶

³⁶ There is some evidence to suggest that the focus on Africa and Asia somewhat hampered organizing women workers in other regions. Requests in the mid-1990s for support establishing a network of Eastern and Central European women workers was turned down due to financial constraints. Nonetheless, a self-organized network of these women was supported financially by AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, the Swedish LO and the Belgian FGTB. This organizing would produce the ICFTU Women’s Network of Central and Eastern Europe (Petrovic 2000:119-20).

These projects also incorporated new organizing strategies that proved more effective in informal labour markets, creating great “potential for future growth” (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000:430). The informal sector had long been ignored by the leaders of regional and national union federations, and the organizing strategies pioneered by organizations such as the Self-Employed Women’s Association in India were dismissed as NGO work, rather than proper union activity. Yet, they were supported by the ICFTU WC, as well as the ITSs involved in food and agriculture (IUF) and textiles and garment manufacturing (ITGLWF). The networks of women labour activists created by the projects would prove to be a powerful transnational movement in the international labour movement, successfully having an ILO Convention on home-based work adopted by the ILO in the 1990s (Ibid.:445-446), and much later, a Convention on domestic work, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Concluding comments: the weight of history

The ITUC, as was the case with previous manifestations of trade union internationalism, is committed to working within the ILO and other organizations of the UN system. In Chapter 2, I outline what I see as two global civil society meta-projects, one that orbits the various UN civil society forums, and one that is centred on the WSF. In Chapter 7 I argue that, while participating in the WSF, most of the ITUC's inter-organizational collaborations within GCS are built around engaging the UN system, including the ILO. As the above history shows, this should come as no surprise, as the ITUC continues in the tradition of the IFTU, which first demanded the creation of the ILO, and then found itself disappointed with the results. The advocacy projects of the IFTU, the ICFTU, and the ITUC have been institutionalized and somewhat regulated by their commitment to working within the ILO system, and at least since the 1970s, the UN system more generally. In this sense the "new" collaborations with GCS organizations that also participate in the UN system represents both continuity and change.

The historical struggle of women within the international trade union organizations is a central theme of my analysis of the transnational campaign for domestic workers' rights in Chapter 6. On the face of it, the institutional support for this campaign and the success it met at the ILO represents a dramatic departure from the history of male dominated trade union internationalism. In briefly outlining the struggle of women activists in this chapter, I wanted to show that the struggle of women within the international union movement has a long history,

despite its absence from most written histories of the international union institutions. The success of current women activists within the ITUC is in part a product of the past struggles and successes of their predecessors. I also wanted to show the trajectory of debate about the needs and rights of working class women. As I argue in Chapter 6, the ILO Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers (C189) represents an effort to address a highly gendered work issue, without defaulting into a narrative about the need to "protect" women. As the above history demonstrates, this represents an advance in the rights of women workers.

The resources put into the campaign for C189 also suggest that "Southern" issues are being taken seriously by the leadership of the ITUC. Again, this must be seen in light of the struggle of Southern worker representatives—most significantly, I argue, the representatives on the Women's Committee—to shift the focus of the ITUC away from its Euro-centric bias. As I show in Chapter 6, while domestic work occurs in every country, it is an occupation that is not only gendered, but also highly racialized, and therefore, disproportionately affects women within and from the Global South. In light of the history of (male dominated) Euro-centrism within the international union federations, this campaign must be seen as an important step.

Chapter 5: The Indian Trade Union Movement

A research project that examines transnational labour organizing cannot limit itself to either an examination of purely international activities, such as the ITUC's engagement with the ILO, or a comparative look at purely local activities, regardless of their potential significance for transnational movements. As I argue in the introduction, transnational activity is a multi-level phenomenon that both connects and transcends territorial levels. To ensure that this study fulfilled this criterion, I conducted field work with not only the international cadres of the ITUC, but also the national cadres of the ITUC's Indian affiliates.

As I argue in Chapter 6, the past activities of Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA), are of particular importance to understanding the ITUC's current efforts to work with non-union organizations concerned with the plight of informal workers. Understanding the particularity of SEWA, requires some knowledge of the history of trade unionism in India. Furthermore, the struggle of informal workers and the challenges of organizing them can be grasped well by an examination of the role of informal labour within the political economy of India, and the response of Indian Central Trade Union Organizations. For these reasons, this chapter introduces the Indian affiliates of the ITUC, along with relevant background on the history of trade unionism in India. Of particular historical interest is the challenge of informal labour relations within the context of Indian neoliberalism.

Before the Indian ITUC member organizations are introduced in depth, it is important to acknowledge that these organizations do not represent the majority of organized workers in India, and the limitations this places on the current study. Significant national trade union federations in India are referred to as central trade union organizations (CTUOs), a government designation afforded only to those unions that can verify that they have a membership of at least 500,000 in at least four states and across at least four industries (Ahn 2010:11). Today the Indian trade union movement is largely divided into thirteen CTUOs, and they are generally affiliated with a national political party.³⁷ As illustrated in Table 3 below, most CTUOs report massive increases in their membership since 2002. However, these numbers have yet to be verified and history (as illustrated in the table) suggests that these numbers may not reflect reality. Regardless, it is clear from historical data that the INTUC member organizations represent a

³⁷ A table of political affiliations is provided below, under the subsection, "The struggle for unity."

significant percentage of the organized working class in India, but nothing close to a majority of Indian workers. What this means for the current study is that discussions about organizing informal workers generally, or domestic workers specifically, in India are not reflective of the overall efforts of organized labour in India.

Table 3: Membership of Indian CTUOs³⁸

Central union federations	Approximate membership claimed in 2011	Membership claimed in 2002	Membership verified in 2002
All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)	14 200 000	4 612 457	3 442 239
Indian National Trade Union Congress	33 300 000	7 868 192	3 954 012
Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS)	9 200 000	5 350 441	3 338 491
United Trade Union Congress (UTUC)	4 700 000	781 176	606 935
United Trade Union Congress-Lenin Sarani (UTUC-LS which was renamed AIUTUC in 2008)	n.a.	1 603 287	1 373 268
Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS)	17 100 000	8 318 348	6 215 797
National Front of Indian Trade Unions-Kolkata (NFITU-Kol)	n.a.	2 142 217	33 620
Trade Union Coordination Centre (TUCC)	1 600 000	725 522	732 760
Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU)	5 700 000	3 431 518	2 678 473
Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)	1 700 000 (1 300 000) ³⁹	689 551	688 140
Labour Progressive Front (LPF)	1 900 000	738 164	611 506
All India Central Council of Trade Unions (AICCTU)		673 073	639 962
National Front of Indian Trade Unions-Dhanbad (NFITU-DHN)		4 248 000	569 599

On the face of it, such a limitation might appear significant. However, it is important to keep in mind that this dissertation is a study of the activities of the ITUC and its Indian affiliates. It is not intended to be a thorough study of the Indian trade union movement. Indeed, such a study would be beyond the scope of a single dissertation. Nor is the case study a study of domestic worker organizing generally, or domestic worker organizing in India specifically. The case study, presented in Chapter 6, is a study of the transnational efforts of the ITUC to organize around domestic worker issues, with a focus on the local efforts of its Indian affiliates.

With these caveats out of the way, I now introduce the ITUC affiliates in India.

Indian ITUC affiliates

The three CTUOs that are the subject of this study are the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), the Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), and the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA). The INTUC is considered the second largest CTUO in the country, the HMS is fourth, and SEWA is eighth, based on verified membership numbers.⁴⁰ These CTUOs were not chosen for their size, of course, but because they are the three member organizations of the ITUC from India. The INTUC appears to have dominated international relations, as it is the largest of the three, and its relationship with the Indian National Congress Party, which has ruled India for most of its independent existence, has ensured that the government recognizes it as the most representative CTUO for the purposes of ILO representation (Rao and Raju 2010b:112). However, as I explain below and in Chapter 6, since the 1980s SEWA has made impressive

³⁸ Claimed and verified memberships numbers for 2002 have been taken from Ahn (2010:13). Claimed memberships for 2011 as reported April 6 2013 Economic Times: "INTUC claims 3.33 crore members; Gives Cong required poll boost" (found at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-04-06/news/38327411_1_india-trade-union-congress-membership-indian-railways) and reported April 6 2013 Business Standard: "Indian trade unions are getting bigger, coinciding with slowdown." Found at http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/indian-trade-unions-are-getting-bigger-coinciding-with-slowdown-113040600392_1.html

³⁹ This reflects differing numbers reported in the two articles referenced above. All other numbers reported were either consistent, or only reported in one of the two articles.

⁴⁰ Membership numbers in India are generally reported as "claimed" and "verified," with verifications being conducted by the Chief Labour Commissioner of the Union Labour Ministry approximately once a decade. Gauging the actual number and size of trade unions is difficult. Membership records are supposed to be maintained, according to the Trade Union Act, but many unions fail to submit these records to the Labour Ministry. Enforcement of this section of the Act does not appear to be a priority (Ahn 2010: 17).

inroads in the international trade union scene, and has been instrumental in a number of promising changes in the ITUC's representation at the ILO, and its scope of worker advocacy.

The Indian National Trade Union Confederation (INTUC)

INTUC currently claims a membership of over 30 million, although this number needs to be treated with serious scepticism.⁴¹ In 2002, the last year of Labour Ministry verification, it claimed a membership of 7,868,192, although its verified membership was 3,954,012, a 68% increase from its verified membership of 2,692,388 in 1989. Although it is known to have a significant membership base in the public sector, according to the most recent verification process, INTUC is the most representative CTUO in the iron and steel, electrical engineering, and some plantation sectors, and the second most representative in the textile manufacturing, jute mining and processing, electronic engineering, defence services, electrical and gas, railway, coal mining, sugar, cement, chemicals, medical and financial institutions, and in soap and detergent manufacturing (Ahn 2010:16).

Ideologically, the INTUC is first and foremost a nationalist organization (Sen 2003:66), affiliated to the Indian National Congress Party (Congress). It is also decidedly corporatist, emphasizing in its original constitution negotiation, conciliation and adjudication of industrial disputes (Sen 2003:67-68). INTUC's corporatism is part of the legacy of Gandhi, who rejected the concept of class struggle, and preached "trusteeship." The words of Khandubhai Desai (first Secretary-General of the INTUC) exemplify this philosophy:

The employers and the management, in these days of democracy and freedom, are only an appendage of the economic apparatus. As Mahatma Gandhi, who was also a great trade unionist, used to tell and preach to us, there is no employee or employer. The principles that we must place before ourselves are that both are co-trustees of society and the community as a whole (Webster 2011:105).

⁴¹ Claimed membership as reported April 6 2013 Economic Times: "INTUC claims 3.33 crore members; Gives Cong required poll boost." Found at http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-04-06/news/38327411_1_india-trade-union-congress-membership-indian-railways

The INTUC emerged in 1947, the product of deep dissatisfaction with the leadership of the All India Trade Union Confederation (AITUC) on the part of the Congress, and what it perceived to be a lack of commitment to the “national interest” (Rao and Raju 2010a:110). The trigger for this split was a wave of unrest orchestrated by the AITUC, which led the Congress Working Group (a high level committee in the party apparatus) to issue a directive to all Congress members in the labour movement to accept the leadership of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh (HMSS), a “labour advisory body” associated with the Textile Labour Association (TLA) (Sen 2003:67-68). The HMSS very quickly held a labour conference, where the following motion was passed:

Whereas the course which the labour movement in the country is taking under the leadership of those who are opposed to peaceful change and democratic methods has proved extremely detrimental to the growth of strong and healthy trade unionism and is doing incalculable harm to the true interests of the country and whereas it has become now a sacred and imperative obligation of those who care for the well-being of the working class to take concerted action to safeguard and promote its interests, it is resolved that to give effect to this purpose an organization, called the Indian National Trade Union Congress be formed (Rao & Raju 2010:110-111).

Within this motion both the reality of its leaders and their ideology can be seen. It is an organization founded not by the working class itself but by those “who care for the well-being of the working class.” Bhattacharjee argues that “(u)nlike the AITUC, which rose from the rank and file, the INTUC was imposed on the labour movement from the outside” (Bhattacharjee 2002:312). This is, in fact, only half true. As I argue in the brief history of the Indian labour movement below, the AITUC was itself created by middle class and upper caste activists from the Home Rule movement. Many of them were leading lights in the Indian National Congress, the most representative umbrella organization of the independence movement that reconstituted itself as the Indian National Congress Party at Independence, and emerged as the dominant political force in post-Independence India.

In this founding motion, with its emphasis on its dedication to “peaceful change” and the “true interests of the country,” and the INTUC’s “aims,” -- the placement of “industry under national ownership and control in suitable form” and the “increasing association of the worker in the administration of industry”⁴² -- one can also see the nationalist-corporatist leanings of the Congress, and its labour wing. The INTUC would walk in lockstep with the Congress Party for most of the past 50 plus years. There were “no ambiguities in the chain of command from party to union... When confronted with a choice between the patronage of the ruling party and genuine worker support, the INTUC usually opted for the former” (Bhattacharjee 2002:312). It supported the Congress’s early labour legislation — little of which has changed since 1947 — that focused on labour peace through state-mediated arbitration and curtailment of the right to strike. (Roa & Raju 2010:112-113). It also opposed the use of the secret ballot for bargaining unit certification, which was not enshrined in the Trade Unions Act (Battacherjee 2002:312), and continues to oppose this when raised by other CTUOs (Sundar 2006a:256).

The INTUC quickly made inroads into the expanding public service (Battacherjee 2002:312). Roa & Raju argue that it was able fairly quickly to create a national federation that could rival the AITUC not simply because of the support of workers, but also because they enjoyed the “prestige of Congress... the power and resources of the central and provincial governments and... (the) full cooperation and blessings of employers” (2010:111). Battacherjee agrees that the support of the Congress Party is a significant factor in the historical success of INTUC. He notes that the power of the state was often utilized by the ruling party to support its affiliated CTUO:

Since chief ministers, labour commissioners, registrars of trade unions, inspectors, conciliators, tribunal officials, magistrates, police officers and all other officials who dealt with unions... were appointed by the Congress government, management officials were often requested or pressured to assist INTUC unions to establish themselves or defeat rival unions (2002:312).

⁴² As found at www.intuc.net

Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS)

In 2008, the Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) claimed a membership of “over 5.8 million (Purohit 2009), a small increase from its claimed membership at the last verification in 2002, when 3,338,491 members could be verified by the Labour Ministry, but a significant increase over its verified membership of 1,480,963 in 1989. Approximately 20% of its members are classified as “informal” workers (Ahn 2010:13). It is the dominant CTUO in rail, air transport, coal mining, and amongst port and dock workers. It is the second largest in clothing, iron and steel, tobacco, and printing/ publishing services (Ibid.). While the HMS is not dramatically smaller than the INTUC, it commands a much more modest place in the canon of Indian labour history or current labour movement analysis, likely because it is neither as politically powerful as the INTUC, nor as novel in its approach to labour organizing as SEWA.

The HMS was established in 1948 by socialist union leaders from the AITUC, the INTUC, and the Indian Federation of Labour (IFL) concerned with the relationship between these federations and national political parties. Those who had left the INTUC initially founded the Hind Mazdoor Panchayat (HMP). Together with the Indian Federation of Labour (IFL) and unions affiliated with the Forward Bloc Party, HMP convened a conference in December of 1948, which represented 427 unions and over 600,000 members (Purohit 2009). However, party politics would also plague the new organization. A year later splits in the Socialist Party led to splits in the union, and a number of leaders left to create the United Trades Union Congress (UTUC) (Sen 2003). A second split occurred in 1951, again due to division in the Socialist Party, when a number of leaders joined the Communist Party and their unions joined the AITUC (Purohit 2009). In 1962, further splits within the Socialist Party led to more union leaders leaving to recreate the HMP (Ibid.).

Currently, HMS is not connected to any national political party. In fact, it was created by labour leaders concerned with the maintenance of union independence from partisan interests. It is decidedly democratic socialist in its orientation, and its constitution calls for the “nationalisation of key industries, securing of effective recognition to bargain collectively, worker participation in the control and regulation of industry, and a close working relationship with the Indian cooperative movement” (Sen 2003:67).

It is perhaps because of its partisan independence that HMS has been more capable of bringing the competing CTUOs together for common projects (HMS3 interview). HMS has also

tended in its practices to be more progressive than other CTUOs around the role of women in leadership. Prior to 2001, HMS was the only CTUO, aside from SEWA to elect a women leader, and it did so twice: Maniben Kara in the early years of the organization, and Kamala Sinha in the 1970s (Ratnam and Jain 2002). It has consistently, although somewhat sporadically, worked closely with the other major left CTUOs throughout its existence, organizing its first conference of CTUOs and independent union federations in 1958 (Purohit 2009). Similar conferences aimed at joint action against the government would occur throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Sen 1994). It joined the AITUC and the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) in establishing the Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions in 1981 to coordinate strike action (Ahn 2010:33; Sundar 2006b). Again in 1989 it joined other left CTUOs in the National Campaign Committee, and subsequently the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions (SCTU) which continues to coordinate anti-privatization agitations (Ahn 2010:33), and which has organized over a dozen country-wide general strikes (Ahn 2010; Sundar 2010). It also participated in the National Platform of Mass Organizations “consisting of civil society and leftist-oriented interest groups representing farmers/villagers, students, women, youth, workers and professionals” (Ahn 2010:36). Its efforts at union unity led to merger talks with AITUC in the 1990s (Sundar 2006b, 2010), which stumbled on a number of issues, including its membership in the ICFTU, which the AITUC wanted it to abandon (Srivastava 2001).

Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA)

The Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), the smallest of the Indian CTUOs in this study, claimed a 2008 membership of 966,139 (sewa.org), indicating a growth of approximately 30% over its claimed membership of 689,551 in 2002 (688 140 verified by the Labour Ministry) (Ahn 2010:13), and a remarkable 370% increase in its claimed membership since 1990 (sewa.org). Nearly half (44.2%) of its verified 2002 membership worked in the “informal economy” (Ibid.). Due to its small size, SEWA does not make it into any of the official industry rankings developed by the Labour Ministry, however, its website breaks down its membership into four categories thusly (taken verbatim from sewa.org):

1. Hawkers, vendors and small business women like vegetable, fruit, fish, egg and other vendors of food items, household goods and clothes vendors (10.98 %)

2. Home-based workers like weavers, potters, bidi and agarbatti workers, papad rollers, ready-made garment workers, women who process agricultural products and artisans (14.45%)
3. Manual labourers & service providers like agricultural labourers, construction workers, contract labourers, handcart pullers, head – loaders, domestic workers and laundry workers. In addition to these three categories there is emergence of another category of women workers (69.37%)
4. Producers & Services who invest their labour and capital to carry out their businesses. This category includes Agriculture, cattle rearers, salt workers, gum collectors, cooking & vending etc. (5.20%)

SEWA was created in 1972, by labour lawyer and women’s activist, Ela Bhatt, who initially worked in the legal department of the Textile Labour Association (TLA), and was subsequently asked to establish a women’s department in the TLA in 1969 (Webster 2011:106). Inspired by her research into cooperatives, including time living in an Israeli kibbutz, Bhatt set out to organize the wives of TLA members who once worked alongside their male counterparts in the mills, but were subsequently “expelled” and told to dedicate themselves to home life in the post-Independence period. Bhatt saw that the wives of TLA members were indeed performing a great deal of paid economic activity, including street vending and home-based textile work (Ibid.:105-106). Bhatt rejected the accepted notion that a union needed to be focused on collective bargaining between a group of workers and a single employer, arguing that a union is simply “about coming together” to “affirm their status as workers” and project their collective voice and “enjoy the same benefits that organised labour received” (Bhatt in Webster 2011:106).

SEWA emerged as an independent union federation in 1981. At this time, the TLA — which was a founding member organization of, and one of the most politically powerful within the INTUC — had suffered an enormous membership decline as technological change and the growth of informal employment as a capitalist strategy took hold of the textile industry. Mills closed and tens of thousands of workers were made redundant. Inevitably, tensions arose within the working class, often along communal lines. In Ahmedabad, these tensions produced communal rioting (Webster 2011:108). In the midst of communal and ethnic tension, Bhatt and SEWA leadership stood in support of continuing reservation policies for “Scheduled and

Backward” castes, which were aimed at elevating the most marginalized in Indian society and overcoming the caste system (Webster 2011:108). After publicly declaring her support for the reservation system⁴³ at a mass meeting, Bhatt was accused by the TLA leadership of violating the “TLA policy of not taking sides in these communal conflicts” and SEWA was expelled from the TLA, while Bhatt herself was vilified by both other unionists and her upper caste Hindu neighbours (Webster 2011:108). The outcome of this conflict was the creation of an independent women’s union, dedicated to the most marginalized workers, rather than the most privileged. SEWA soon eclipsed the TLA in membership and over the next 30 years, became a powerful force for informally employed and women workers both nationally and internationally.

However, SEWA has faced a number of obstacles including resistance from the existing trade union movement in India and Indian Labour Ministry officials. The latter initially refused to register SEWA as a trade union because the workers represented by SEWA were self-employed and therefore not considered “workers” (SEWA6 interview; Webster 2011:107).⁴⁴ This intransigence at the Labour Ministry was matched by the dismissive attitudes of other union leaders and labour academics (SEWA6 interview), a problem that the women of SEWA still face. “Some of our biggest battles,” Bhatt has stated, “have been over contesting pre-set ideas and attitudes of official, bureaucrats, experts, and academics. Definitions are part of the battle” (as quoted in Webster 2011:107). It does not seem unreasonable to suggest further that underlying caste prejudices and sexism, as well as static understandings of class and class struggle amongst the trade union “old guard” contribute to this definitional intransigence. Sundar and others have noted that relations “between the conventional trade unions (the CTUOs) and the new forms of labour organizations,” such as SEWA, have been far from “cordial” (2010:590). The former look upon the latter as both competition and a public rebuke of long-standing practices that have not served the interests of a great portion of the Indian working classes. The other CTUOs objected to the inclusion of SEWA in the verification process in 2002, and fought

⁴³ The reservation system goes back to the late colonial period, when the British established through the Communal Award (1932) reserved seats for “Depressed Classes” – also referred to as “untouchables” – in legislatures. The term Depressed Classes was later changed to Scheduled Castes. The Constitution of India allowed for legislative reservations, as well as reservations in educational institutions and government departments, although such reservations were intended to be for a short period only. This system of reservations, however, have been extended since (Chandra et al. 2000:444–46).

⁴⁴ In-text citations referencing an interview conducted during my research are intended to protect the anonymity of the participants, as was outlined in my ethics application, and chapter on research methods.

against their membership in the ICFTU/ITUC, dismissing the organization as a NGO (Sundar 2008:1074).

SEWA is indeed unique as a labour organization. It is (since 2007) registered as a national trade union, but “it has combined the functions of a trade union, a cooperative and a pressure group” (Sundar 2010:590). Many of the organization’s cooperative projects — now studied and celebrated by researchers in the field of development and alternative labour around the world — emerged out of the need to internalize the “transaction costs” of marginal self-employment so as to “create a functional economic environment for women” (Mukherji 2009:3). These cooperatives provide educational, financial, and health services for SEWA members and their families, and are run by members themselves (Ahn, Singh, and Raya 2007). One leader of SEWA suggested to me that those who work in the cooperatives have a triple membership in the organization: they are owners of the cooperative, they are recipients of the service, and they are organized as its workforce (SEWA2 interview).

SEWA “services” provided to its unique membership include a system of childcare centres, health centres (including a system of midwives), a micro-lending bank, and a housing trust⁴⁵. All of these programs are run for and by their members. The creation of such a system of advocacy and self-help services was enabled by the development of a multi-layered organization, where SEWA members are also owners and service providers. SEWA has also created a research department, and an education centre which provides its members with everything from basic literacy to the technical and political education required for leadership locally, nationally, and internationally. So, SEWA is a union, but it is also a cooperative. It is registered as a CTUO, but also as a NGO. This NGO status allows SEWA to seek financial assistance from charitable organizations outside of India, such as the Ford Foundation, and occasionally, the Indian Government, to finance projects aimed at poverty alleviation and women’s empowerment. The leadership of SEWA is very strategic about its collaborations. When asked about its collaborations with non-union civil society organizations, one senior SEWA cadre suggested that they will only “work with” those civil society organizations that are “membership based” (SEWA3 interview); however, another suggested that the organization does coalition work with NGOs that do not have a membership base (SEWA4 interview). SEWA has taken funding from

⁴⁵ See sewa.org for a full explanation of its varied services.

international charitable NGOs, such as the Ford Foundation, which it has used in the past as “seed money” for its health care projects, for example (SEWA2 interview). It will also accept government funding for specific projects, such as the integrated child development scheme centres (SEWA2 interview), but avoids being drawn into partisan politics (SEWA6 interview; SEWA2 interview).

Because the women of SEWA do not share a common employer, they have been forced to develop unique advocacy tactics. The first collective action of this group of women is reflective of the creative way that SEWA has come to approach its advocacy work. After listening to a group of women complain about their working conditions, Ela Bhatt wrote an article for the local paper outlining the egregious way in which these workers were treated. Local merchants in turn produced their own public letter denying the charges and promising that the workers were paid better than many of the women claimed. Rather than publicly refute the merchants’ letter, SEWA printed it on to cards, along with the promised wage rates, which were then produced by the women when they went to re-negotiate their piece rates (SEWA6 interview).

SEWA also engages in negotiations with local and state authorities around issues of concern to its membership, which they argue is a form of collective bargaining. Most street-hawkers, for example, exist in a legal limbo where their carts or sidewalk stalls are generally tolerated, but not legally protected. This often leads to a situation where police or local authorities will attack these vendors, tearing down their stalls, and confiscating their carts. Recyclers also face frequent harassment from local authorities. To counter these frequent cases of harassment, SEWA has developed a network of legal services (SEWA4 interview).

Even some of its cooperative economic projects can be seen as part of its advocacy. Its initial moves to create cooperative retail outlets were also born from conflict with the merchants who control the textile industry. As in other industries, a number of women who stood up to the merchants were blacklisted. Faced with a situation where their activists were targeted by the bosses and risked losing their meagre incomes, SEWA created purchasing and retail cooperatives so that their members would have a place to sell their products. This had a two-fold effect. In the immediate term, it protected the livelihoods of those activists who faced blacklisting. In the longer term, the cooperatives would come to impact the piece rates in the regions where they

operated by offering weavers and other artisans a better rate, putting upward pressure on the local rates offered by other merchants (SEWA6 interview).

Shortly after SEWA became an independent union in 1981, Bhatt set out to affiliate the union with the appropriate global union federations. She was politely rebuffed by the leadership of the ITGLWF⁴⁶ due to the opposition of existing member unions from India (SEWA6 interview; IUF3 interview). She then went to the IUF. At the time, the IUF was led by Dan Gallin, a very rare international union leader who early on saw the need for organized labour to reach out to workers in the informal sectors (Gallin 2001, 2005).⁴⁷ He welcomed Bhatt and convinced the international board to grant affiliation despite resistance from existing Indian affiliates (SEWA6 interview; IUF3 interview). SEWA became an IUF affiliate in 1983, and was accepted into the ITGLWF shortly thereafter (Ibid.).

By the late 1990s SEWA was large enough to be considered a CTUO and sought affiliation to the ICFTU. This did not happen due to resistance from the established Indian affiliates, and some non-Indian affiliates, who refused to recognise SEWA as a union because its members did not have an employer-employee relationship based on traditional collective bargaining (ITUC9 interview), arguing instead that the organization was a NGO (IUF3 interview; SEWA6 interview). Other Indian affiliates held that SEWA was inherently discriminatory, because it organized women exclusively. One European informant involved in SEWA's efforts to affiliate internationally suggested that the widespread opposition from the established Indian CTUOs was largely about gender relations in India (IUF3 interview). SEWA was eventually accepted into the ITUC in 2006, in part due to lobbying from the ICFTU Women's Committee, staff of the Equity department, as well as some affiliates who saw the need for established trade unions to engage informal workers (SEWA6 interview). What is interesting about the struggle for international affiliation is that, despite the challenges SEWA representatives faced, some interviewees suggested that they have generally had more support from outside the country – particularly from the Women's Committee and some European

⁴⁶ In 2012 the ITGLWF merged with the International Metalworkers' Federation and the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions to create a new GUF, IndustriALL Global Union. <http://www.industriall-union.org>

⁴⁷ Dan Gallin and the IUF were also leading the push within the international union movement to collaborate with non-union civil society organizations in the 1990s (ITUC12 interview).

affiliates – than inside (SEWA6 interview; SEWA3 interview), although this support was far from uniform.

SEWA also participated in founding a number of other international networks for women workers in the informal economy. It helped found HomeNet Asia, and StreetNet International (Sundar 2010:590), two of the most important transnational organizations of informal workers. HomeNet Asia, founded in 2000, is a regional network of NGOs and unions that support or represent home-based workers.⁴⁸ StreetNet, founded in 2002, is an international network of membership-based organizations (MBOs) that support or represent street vendors.⁴⁹ SEWA is also a founding member of Women’s World Banking,⁵⁰ and the Grassroots Trading Network.⁵¹ One of the most important international organizations established by SEWA is Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), a network of membership-based organizations of informal workers and sympathetic academics who were willing to put their intellectual labour toward the cause of securing international recognition and rights for informal workers.⁵²

Of the three Indian ITUC member organizations, SEWA is certainly the most notable. It has seen a remarkable growth in its membership: in 1996, it had approximately 30,000 members (Datta 2003:351); in 2013 it had over 19 million members. It has established its own cooperative bank and health network. It has joined the international union movement, first as a trade union, and then as a union federation, and it has established a number of transnational networks to advance the cause of informal workers worldwide. In Chapter 6, I return to SEWA’s advocacy within the international union federations and global civil society, and its instrumental role in securing the ILO Home Work Convention in 1996 (Sundar 2010:590), and the Domestic Workers Convention in 2010.

⁴⁸ <http://www.homenetsouthasia.net>

⁴⁹ <http://www.streetnet.org.za>

⁵⁰ <http://www.womensworldbanking.org/>

⁵¹ <http://www.globalfairness.org/our-work/our-programs/grassroots-trading-network>

⁵² wiego.org

Brief background to the Indian trade union movement

Below I offer a thematic introduction to the Indian trade union movement, its history and contemporary challenges. As a full history of unionism in India is beyond the scope of this project, I provide brief reports on key historical and contemporary issues facing organized labour in India, particularly those that have a bearing on this research project. I identify three areas that impact my current research. The first is the history of colonialism, which, as noted earlier, continues to impact the relationship between Indian CTUO leaders and the broader international trade union movement. Indeed, India's colonial history gives insight into a few particularities of the labour market in India, as well as the trade union movement; no discussion of any aspect of Indian society can ignore the impact of British colonialism. The second topic is the ongoing struggle for unity in the dual context of political division between national labour leaders, and a working class divided by ethnicity, gender, and caste. As elsewhere in the world, building solidarity across ethnic/linguistic and ideological divides has been elusive. It has been no different for Indian trade union leaders. In India, however, the particularity of the caste system adds complexity and specificity. Finally, I briefly discuss the challenge of union organizing within a largely informal labour market. All of these topics are essential to understanding the situation facing trade union leaders and their cadres today.

Impacts of the colonial legacy on the Indian labour movement

It is not possible to overestimate the impact of European colonialism — particularly, but not exclusively, British colonialism — on contemporary South Asia. Indeed, the very borders of modern India are a product of British rule. It is equally impossible to cover this topic thoroughly here. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I outline a number of ways in which British colonialism in South Asia continues to have an impact on labour in India. Specifically, the impact of colonialism on the Indian labour movement can be seen in the way in which India was incorporated into the global political economy, and the way in which the Indian labour market continues to be shaped by the railway system built by the British colonial administration. Furthermore, the current laws which govern class relations in India can all be traced back to colonial-era laws established by the British, although many of these laws have been amended since Independence. Finally, the labour movement itself was heavily influenced by the overall reaction to British colonialism and imperialism. It developed in tandem with the independence

movement, and its earliest leaders were first and foremost leaders of the independence movement.

The contours of the Indian political economy at the time of Independence were, of course, shaped by the needs of British industry over the course of two centuries. As Chandra notes, "a peculiar structure of production and international division of labour was forced upon India. It produced foodstuffs and raw materials — cotton, jute, oilseeds, minerals — and imported manufactured products of British industry from biscuits and shoes to machinery, cars and railway engines" (2000:9). Furthermore, the "subservient position" in which it was integrated into the global political economy, and the extraction of India's economic surplus for the purposes of both maintaining the colonial state and paying tribute to Britain, meant that this surplus was not available to be turned into indigenous capital (Ibid.:9-11). Coal mining had begun in the 1820s, in Bengal. By the late 1800s, a small-scale industry had developed in Calcutta (now Kolkata), Bombay (now Mumbai), Ahmedabad, and Cawnpore (now Kanpur) (Rao and Raju 2010b:4; Sen 1994, 2003). Even more significant for the early development of an industrial working class, however, was the impact of railway construction, which in 1892 employed over half of the country's industrial workforce (Sen 2003:22). It was in these places that the industrial working class and subsequently its trade unions first emerged to fuel the capricious needs of British industry.

The railway was essential in the development of the Indian working class in two other ways as well: it transported people (as workers) from villages to the emerging industrial centres, and it provided them a route of escape from industry as well. The construction of the railway system ensured that one problem not facing colonial and nascent indigenous capital was a labour shortage. There was always a steady supply of unskilled labour. Skilled labour was often imported from Europe (Sen 1994:8).

A stable workforce, however, proved to be challenging, and absenteeism was rife. Absenteeism was likely related to two factors. The first, a most obvious one, involves the horrid working and living conditions of the workers in and around industrial factories. The advent of electricity allowed for 15 hour workdays in the mills, there were very few opportunities for sanctioned leaves, and the living conditions were extremely unsanitary in the cities. Furthermore, the work was highly insecure, and largely dependent upon maintaining favour with the *sidar* who

controlled a worker's employment (Sen 1994).⁵³ Given the working and living conditions found in the industrial towns, it should come as no surprise that many fled, or only stayed in town as long as necessary. As Basu notes, returning to the village was a survival strategy employed by many mill workers who could retreat to their village when they were ill, or living conditions were so bad that it was necessary for the health of the worker's family (Basu 2004:45–47). Thus the railway system supplied both capital's labour supply, but also the mechanism by which workers could maintain relationships with their villages, providing them with both social and economic security.

The railway continues to be a significant factor in the Indian labour market, allowing for millions of Indians to move between rural villages and urban areas over a relatively short period of time. This constant source of new entrants to urban labour markets, often recruited by labour contractors with social connections within villages, contributes to wage repression in many industrial sectors. There is often a high rate of illiteracy and ignorance of basic employment rights amongst newly recruited rural workers, and the short-term nature of their labour contracts means that they are often back in their villages between contracts. This combination of worker transience and naiveté continue to present profound challenges to union organizers (HMS1 interview).

Another legacy of British colonialism is the long list of colonial labour legislation, which, Sen notes, not only reflects European trends of the time, but is also a product of rising militancy amongst Indian workers, the intervention of high caste social reformers, and pressure from manufacturers in England who were concerned about competition from the South Asian colony (Sen 1994:16). Agitation by middle class social reformers in 1873 in Bombay led to the first Factory Commission in 1875 (Rao and Raju 2010b:5). However, colonial labour legislation began as early as 1881 with the first Factory Act (amended in 1891, 1911, and 1922) and Mines Act, both attempts to regulate particularly the employment of children and women, and to regulate hours of work (Sen 1994:16–17). Later acts included the Workers Compensation Act of

⁵³ A *sidar* — also known as a jobber, *mukadam*, mastery, or *sardar* — is a labour contractor who supplied unskilled labour to the mill in which they themselves were likely a skilled labourer. Far more powerful than the North American “foreman,” the *sardar* had the power to hire, fire, and promote; they also loaned money to workers who were strapped between monthly pay releases, and often had to be bribed by the workers who wished to take a leave from work (Sen 1994 16; 2003 22). Such contractors continue to play a powerful role in the Indian labour market by supplying labour to industries where formal employment contracts do not generally exist (HMS1 interview).

1928, and the Maternity Benefit Act of 1929 (Ibid.). The regulation of industrial disputes was enshrined in the Trades Dispute Act (1929) and the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act (1938), which focused on compulsory conciliation during workplace disputes (Ibid.:17).

The late 19th and early 20th centuries also saw a wave of agitations across industrial India and on the plantations. In the case of the latter, labour was “virtually unorganized” and would remain so until the period of Independence, but would occasionally riot and attack managers’ houses (Sen 1994:35-36). In Ahmedabad, brick kiln workers and tailors went on strike in 1873; mill workers on opposite sides of the country struck in 1881 and 1882 in Surat and Bengal; between 1881 and 1890, mill workers in Warda struck four separate times; workers in a Madras mill struck five times over the same time period; and in Kurla, strikes at the mill occurred every year between 1881 and 1887. These early acts of militancy were generally short-lived and “loosely organized” (Rao and Raju 2010:6-7) but from these agitations emerged the first working class associations in India. The first appears to have been the Bombay Mill-Hands Association (1890) organized by N.M. Lokhande who was himself a mill worker (Rao and Raju 2010b:5–6). Lokhande had previously organized a conference of workers in 1884 in order to address the second factory commission of the same year. The Mill-Hands Association was more focused on providing service to its members than organizing them for collective bargaining or political agitation (Ibid.). Between 1890 and 1910, labour associations emerged in rail, printing, and the post, largely in or around Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta (Ibid.:6-7).

However, the Indian trade union movement did not fully come into being until the interwar period, after a number of years of labour militancy during WWI (Viswanath 2014). Furthermore, it did not come into being purely of its own accord. From the beginning, organized labour was not generally organized by organic intellectuals who rose up from within its ranks, but by members of what van der Pijl would call the cadre class. Often of higher caste, these early labour leaders were more often lawyers or journalists than workers who saw great injustice, as well as great opportunity. It is clear that the trade union movement developed in tandem with, and under the leadership of the Home Rule movement of the inter-war period (Sen 1994). Sen makes the classic Leninist argument that while these leaders were clearly “outsiders” to the working class itself, their contributions were “indispensable” as the “consciousness of the workers had to be shaped from above” by “radical intellectuals” (1994:39). He seems to suggest that this necessity was born out of bringing the discipline of trade union organization to an

anarchic working class that had hitherto sought to advance its interests through local riot and rebellion, which had only succeeded in attracting harsh repression from the colonial authorities.

These “outside” leaders of the Home Rule movement were attracted to the militancy of workers during World War One, and — as previously mentioned — sought to bring organization and order to working class struggles and to integrate these struggles into the broader nationalist movement. Some of the early labour leaders are also some of the most famous names of the nationalist movement: Mahatma Gandhi and Anasuya Sarabhai led textile strikes in Ahmedabad, established the Majoor Mahajan Sangh (more commonly known as the Textile Labour Association - TLA), and B.P. Wadia formed the Madras Labour Union. The first national trade union federation, the AITUC, was established in 1920 by the Indian National Congress, and the first president and secretary — Lala Lajpat Rai and Dewan Chaman Lal, respectively — were both prominent Congress leaders, as were other founding members, such as N. M. Joshi and Joseph Baptista. Therefore, we can say with certainty — paraphrasing Marx — that British colonial capitalism produced its own gravediggers twice over; it created an anti-colonial/nationalist movement that in turn produced a large, nationally coherent labour movement, perhaps the first within the colonial world.

The relationship between the anti-colonial/nationalist project and the trade union movement of the 20th Century is profound and has had a lasting impact on the consciousness of Indian trade union leaders. In discussing the response of Indian union leaders to globalization, and specifically to its rejection of a social clause or other forms of international interference, Hensman suggests that “(t)he most difficult task in India is likely to be convincing trade unionists that nationalism is not a positive value. Nationalism is so closely associated in the minds of most Indians with the struggle for freedom from British colonialism that denouncing it is almost taboo...” (Hensman 2010:124). It seems to me that nationalism may be at the heart of the historical resistance of Indian affiliates to support the efforts of the ICFTU to have social clauses attached to trade agreements, as discussed in the last chapter. As I discuss in Chapter 7, nationalism, or at least an anti-imperialist impulse may be a causal mechanism in the general unwillingness of Indian CTUOs to collaborate with NGOs, and of their suspicion of global civil society organizations generally.

The struggle for unity

The “outside” leaders who established the national trade union movement in India, however well organized, were sharply divided politically and ideologically, and the political allegiances of its leadership would shape the national Indian trade union movement almost from the beginning. Under the guidance of Gandhi, the TLA, one of the most powerful regional unions in India, refused to join the AITUC (Sen 1994). In 1929, only six years after the AITUC was created, a group of “moderates” — including Lal, Joshi, and V.V. Giri — left the AITUC to found the Indian Trade Union Federation (ITUF),⁵⁴ out of concern over the increasing influence of the Communist Party within the AITUC. The ITUF, now under the banner of the National Trades Union Federation (NTUF), would rejoin the AITUC in 1938. Ironically, the communists themselves, under pressure from the Comintern, left the AITUC in 1931, briefly establishing the Red Trade Union Congress (Ibid.). The Indian trade union movement remained largely united in the final years of the independence struggle, with one minor exception; in 1941, M.N. Roy — a leader of one of the “moderate” factions — led a group out of the AITUC, establishing the Federation of Indian Labour (FIL).⁵⁵ Roy, who appears to have been influenced by American “bread-and-butter unionism,” was mainly concerned about the influence of political parties over trade union policy, which was clearly manifest in the battles over supporting or opposing the British war effort (Sen 1994:68).

However, in the immediate post-Independence period, between 1947 and 1949, internal battles over the influence of particular political parties, most importantly the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party India (CPI), permanently fractured the AITUC, establishing it as an exclusively CPI affiliated federation. As outlined above, tension existed between Congress and Communist labour leaders from the mid-1920s. When the Congress began to take a more active role in home rule in the last half of the 1930s, it began to focus its attention on securing labour peace. The Industrial Disputes Act of 1938 was intended to mitigate the impact of strikes through state-led conciliation mechanisms (Sen 1994). It is clear that while Congress leaders understood that conflict between workers and owners was “inevitable,” they clearly did

⁵⁴ The ITUF would subsequently become the NTUF. Led by Joshi the ITUF/NTUF was decidedly reformist. Upon leaving the AITUC, the organization received fraternal support and funding from the British TUC and the Amsterdam international, the IFTU (Rao and Raju 2010:72-73).

⁵⁵ The FIL would become part of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha when it was formed in 1948.

not see this as relating to a Marxian understanding of inherent class conflict under capitalist social relations. Gandhi spoke forcefully against the “exploitation” of workers, and yet encouraged the idea of “peaceful relations, class-co-operation, (and) arbitration” (Sen 1994:32). In order to promote this emergent ideology, Congress established the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh (HMSS) in 1938. The HMSS was an organization of labour advisors to the Congress who were closely associated with the TLA. Initially, the HMSS instructed its unions to affiliate with the AITUC, but in 1947, instructed them to disaffiliate and establish a competing organization, with the result that the Indian National Trade Union Congress was created by Congress-affiliated unions (Sen 1994). They would be followed shortly by independent socialists who, in 1948, left AITUC and INTUC to establish the HMS. The following year, unions associated with the Revolutionary Socialist Party would also leave the AITUC and establish the UTUC (Ibid.). Thus within two years of independence four of the current 13 CTUOs — and two of three subjects of this current study — were established. Enumerating the various historical splits within the Indian trade union movement from its inception is beyond the scope of this project. Indeed, such a project would be enormous and read like an Old Testament story, complete with denunciations, betrayals, and a large number of ‘begats.’ The national union federations in India continued to splinter right through until the 1980s. Below is a table outlining the emergence of the current CTUOs and their political affiliations.

Table 4: Indian Central Trade Union Organizations

Central union federations	Year Founded	Alliance with political parties
All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)	1920	Communist Party of India (CPI)
Indian National Trade Union Congress	1947	Indian National Congress (INTUC)
Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS)	1948	Its zone divisions support various socialist parties
United Trade Union Congress (UTUC)	1949	Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP)
United Trade Union Congress-Lenin Sarani (UTUC-LS which was renamed AIUTUC in 2008)	1951	Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI)
Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS)	1955	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
National Front of Indian Trade Unions-Kolkata (NFITU-Kol)	1967	Not politically affiliated
Trade Union Coordination Centre (TUCC)	1970	All India Forward Bloc (AIFB)
Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU)	1970	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)	1972	Not politically affiliated
Labour Progressive Front (LPF)	1980	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)
All India Central Council of Trade Unions (AICCTU)	1989	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation
National Front of Indian Trade Unions-Dhanbad (NFITU-DHN)	2006	Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)

Taken from Ahn (2010).

Despite the proliferation of CTUOs aligned with different political parties, there have been sporadic periods of unity amongst the CTUOs throughout the post-Independence period, although the INTUC has not historically been a part of these efforts (Sen 1994; Rao & Raju 2010). There does appear to be more willingness on the part of those CTUOs on the left (AITUC, CITU, HMS) to work together (Sundar 2010). Furthermore, changes made by the State to the Indian political economy since the late 1980s also began to strain the relationship between CTUOs and the political parties they have hitherto pledged allegiance to. The BMS was highly critical of the BJP, when it was in power, the CITU has been openly critical of its party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) in West Bengal, and even the INTUC have been critical of specific Congress initiatives (Sundar 2010:588)

In 1991, a “new economic policy” (NEP) was introduced by the Congress government. The NEP was a neoliberal reform project introduced as part of the Structural Adjustment

Program (SAP) agreed to by the Indian government and the IMF (Rao & Raju 2010:250). This produced a number of efforts on the part of Indian union leaders to present a united front against the government, with over a dozen nation-wide strikes called and adhered to by most if not always all of the CTUOs (Sundar 2010). Some CTUO leaders are convinced these actions slowed the neoliberal project in India, although observers suggest that these efforts to challenge neoliberalism in the late 1980s merely highlighted the disunity and weakness of the CTUOs (Rao & Raju 2010:250). There have been waves of coordinated strike activity throughout India's post-Independence history (Sen 1994). According to one elected official I talked to, a renewed push for unity occurred in the late 1970s in response to the Emergency Period, when opposition leaders and trade unionists were arrested en masse. The dramatic overreach of the Indian State brought together – in jail – trade union leaders from across the political spectrum: “Emergency was useful for us, because we could bring all the reactionaries to the centre” (CITU1 interview). This led to the Joint Council of Trade Unions, which lasted until 1991; it was replaced in 1992 by the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions (Ibid.; see also Ahn 2010). From this concerted push for unity, two smaller federations, the Majoor Mahajan Sangh and the National Labour Organization, merged into the INTUC in 1994. Around the same time, the AITUC and the HMS held serious merger talks about formal unification, although they could not pull together a merger (Rao & Raju 2010; Sundar 2010). At the heart of the impasse between the AITUC and the HMS was membership in their respective international federations, the ICFTU and the WFTU (Srivastava 2001:471). Perhaps because of this impasse, the AITUC has been focused on building factory and industry level federations with both independent unions and those affiliated with other CTUOs (Ibid.:472).

Clearly, the impact of ideological divisions amongst CTUO leaders is still felt across the Indian labour movement (Sundar 2006a); however, there is some evidence that change is afoot, change that may see a less partisan leadership in the future (Ahn 2010; Patil 1998). Although the national leaders of the CTUOs are often still members of the political and legal cadre, the Trade Unions Act (1926) was amended in 2001 to limit the percentage of leaders who are not from the industry to 25% (Ahn 2010 25). This may allow local and regional leaders — who are far more likely to be focused on workplace issues than politics (Patel 1998; Srivastava 2001) — a stronger say in the policies of their respective CTUOs. Nonetheless, the Indian trade union movement continues to be divided by the ideological commitments and political relationships of its “top”

leaders. Recently, in fact, political divisions within the INTUC produced a split, with a faction electing itself a new president and general secretary (DHNS 2012; TNN 2012). What is particularly interesting about this moment of division within the INTUC is that the rebellious group appears to be protesting against the willingness of the INTUC leadership to work with other CTUOs against a Congress government (Nanda 2015). And so while the Indian trade union movement *appears* to be more willing to work together – for example, the annual meetings of the Coordinating committee – the political allegiances of its national leaders still have a profound impact on the unity of the movement. In fact, some see very little chance of meaningful cooperation: “The efforts to bring about unity begin and end with well-intentioned statements in the annual conferences and multi-union gatherings; the ghosts of political and personality conflicts even lurk there” (Sundar 2006a:257–58). Such political divisions amongst the CTUOs suggest that cooperation with non-union organizations within civil society are unlikely unless there is an existing political connection between the CTUO in question and a specific civil society organization.

Ideological and partisan divisions have not been the only ones to confront the Indian trade union movement. The current situation facing organized labour in India is a divided “house of labour” that struggles to unite one of the world’s largest labour forces, itself divided by region, religion, culture, and sex. In this way, the Indian labour movement is a microcosm of the labour movement globally. It is impossible to give an adequate outline of the various divisions within Indian society here; however, a number of key facts will make the point that Indian trade union leaders face particular obstacles.

While approximately 80% of the Indian population identifies as Hindu, there is a sizeable Muslim population as well as a number of “tribal” peoples who are not fully integrated into the Indian political economy. Linguistically, less than half the population speaks Hindi, and there are 19 official languages and 415 “living languages” in India. Although there are 6 national parties, there are over 50 regional ones that also compete for seats in the Lok Sabha. As Hensman notes, a number of minorities in India have extensive organizations within civil society, but they have “not succeeded in bringing their concerns into it. Nor has the dominant male caste Hindu section of the formal union leadership taken these concerns seriously, except when they have erupted in violence” (2011:133). Clearly, the political ideologies of CTUO leaders is not the only variable

that divides the Indian working class and makes class unity a vexing project for trade union leaders.

Despite the initial post-Independence constitution declaring India “a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic,”⁵⁶ caste and communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims continue to be divisive.⁵⁷ Historically, economic strife would often lead to communal or caste-based conflict and violence. Workers travelling to the cities for work did so with their existing identities intact, including those of religion or caste, and often these identities were drawn upon for a sense of belonging as well as practical daily assistance, such as securing a loan, or accessing housing (Joshi 2008:441–42). Joshi argues that traditional Marxist historiography downplays the ways in which these identities interacted with class-based identities during times of agitation (Ibid.:441; f.n. 449). Viswanath notes that during the strike wave of World War One, Adi-Dravidas — low caste workers without access to land or domestic work due to their “untouchable” status — were shown no solidarity by other workers with access to village or estate economic opportunities and were subjected to a pogrom by other workers for not respecting a strike (2014). Sen has noted that on more than one occasion in the post-Independence period upsurges in working class militancy took place almost simultaneously with communal upheaval, which confounded the efforts of trade union leaders to organize workers; in 1946, a general strike was called off by the major federations out of concerns over communal tensions at the time (1994:82). Shaikh (2005) notes that the rise of the right-wing Shiv Sena (Army of Shivaji) — part of the wave of ethno-linguistic movements of the post-Independence era — had a profound impact on working class politics in Maharashtra. Building on the ethnic identity of native Marathi’s, resistance to the influx of migrants from southern India, and anxieties that come with a weak labour market, the Shiv Sena built a competing force of working class activists to both the Congress and communist unions within the textile industry. Violently anti-communist and nativist, the Shiv Sena directed worker anger and energy away from employers and towards other working class organizations, particularly those affiliated with the communist

⁵⁶ The Constitution of India can be found at <https://india.gov.in/my-government/constitution-india/constitution-india-full-text>. In 1976, this phrase was changed to “Sovereign Democratic Republic.”

⁵⁷ <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/deliberate-mobilisation-in-muzaffarnagar-led-to-riots-up-government-to-nhrc/articleshow/39258190.cms>
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/NGO-blames-govt-police-for-2015-riots-in-Bharuch/articleshow/51603555.cms>; <http://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/gujarat-carnage-2002/215160>

movement – frequently using violence to break up strikes called by the communists (Ibid.:1898). SEWA too has been drawn into the caste and communal politics of Ahmedabad on more than one occasion. As was discussed above, Bhatt and her colleagues were thrown out of the TLA in 1981 because they endorsed the use of reservations for Scheduled Castes. Around the same time as SEWA's ouster from the TLA, tensions about job losses due to the massive restructuring of the textile industry led to communal rioting in Ahmedabad, as discussed earlier. In 2002, the SEWA office was threatened by rioters for sheltering Muslims (SEWA6 interview). These brief examples highlight the challenges of organizing in an environment marked by profound and numerous "differences of language and race" (Sen 1994:44), and — still to this day — caste.

Social divisions within the labour market around gender are also profound in India, despite the progressive nature of the Indian constitution (Hensman 2002; Ratnam and Jain 2002), a state-mandated National Commission for Women,⁵⁸ and a Supreme Court that has several times intervened in cases of gender inequality in the workplace (Ratnam and Jain 2002:281). However, enacting legislation and policy instruments intended to ensure this constitutional right are "ineffective," and the laws are often not enforced (Hensman 2002:95). Like elsewhere in the world, the status of women in society is reflected in the status of women in trade unions. In their survey of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) across India, Ratnam and Jain found that of 200 CBAs signed by 1,800 trade union officials, only 5 signatures were those of women (Ibid.:286).

There is a recognition on the part of CTUO leaders and cadre of the lack of female participation in trade unions (Srivastava 2001:470–71). Most CTUOs see this a problem and have attempted to address the issue through the establishment of women's committees, and at least the AITUC has made changes to its delegate selection process (Ibid.). Nonetheless, women continue to be underrepresented within the trade union leadership and cadre of India. A significant contribution to the inadequate response of trade unions to women workers' issues is the fact that women are underrepresented in the formal labour market, and overrepresented in the informal labour market (Breman 1999; Hensman 2001, 2002). This has forced women to develop

⁵⁸ <http://ncw.nic.in/frmABTBreifHistory.aspx>

alternative models of organizing, such as SEWA, to traditional trade unionism. This is further explored in Chapter 6.

Neoliberalism, informalization, and organized Indian labour in India

As mentioned above, the Indian State was declared secular and socialist at its creation. The early government had hoped to develop the country's economy through socialist planning, but with a Gandhian ethos of harmonious relations between social classes. Article 43 of the Indian Constitution reads in part:

The State shall endeavour to secure... to all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, work at a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities (as found in Rao & Raju 2010:130).

The post-Independence model of industrial relations was a continuation of the late-colonial model of extensive state intervention with the stated goal of ensuring labour peace (Sundar 2010:585). The Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 allowed for the establishment of workplace committees in workplaces of more than 100 workers, It also ensured that all labour disputes would be sent to a tribunal, and that strikes would be banned during any adjudication process. This was followed up by the Industrial Truce Resolution of the same year, which established a fair wages committee to create guidelines around remuneration. In 1951 the Plantations Act provided the first protective legislation for plantation workers, including the regulation of differential working hours for men, women, and children, as well as the provision of educational, recreational, and welfare schemes (Rao & Raju 2010). Tripartite industrial relations have existed in India as far back as 1942, and formalized into the India Labour Conference of 1944 (Ahn 2010) and the Joint Consultative Board of Industry and Labour in 1950 (Rao & Raju 2010). While the former continues to occur every few years, the latter — intended as an “informal” setting to “promote better understanding between labour and industry” — became defunct early on (Ibid.:130). Industrial committees still exist in the major industries, and central and state-level committees jointly oversee the administration of welfare funds covered by various pieces of legislation (Ahn 2010).

The Indian State was also initially committed to a socialist economic project, with the Industrial Relations Resolution of 1956 declaring:

...in a socialist democracy labour is a partner in the common task of development and should participate in it with enthusiasm. There should be joint consultations and workers and technicians should, wherever possible, be associated progressively in management (as cited in Rao & Raju 2010:133).

However, the Gandhian dream of a harmonious industrial relations system designed to ensure that capital and labour worked together to build the country never materialized. Despite the intentions of the post-Independence Nehru governments, the Indian political economy would never be socialist, and the Gandhian tradition of corporatist industrial relations would be rejected by capital, and all of organized labour, aside from the Congress' own INTUC.

All pretenses of the socialist path disappeared with Indira Gandhi's Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-1985), which relaxed import controls and, under her son, Rajiv, began to shift the Indian political economy away from nurturing state sector industries and toward the liberalization of the private sectors, allowing private and foreign capital a free play" (Rao & Raju 2010:201). This effort to spur growth failed in terms of employment and left the country heavily indebted to both the IMF and private creditors (Ibid.:202-203). Forced into a set of conditionalities for further assistance from the IMF and World Bank, the Government of India announced their New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1991, which posited a more aggressive policy of market reform, capital mobility, and global integration (Ibid.:209).

Rao and Raju argue that the battle against the NEP exposed the weakness of a divided labour movement that had a narrow base of support amongst the growing working class that found themselves engaged in "informal" economic activity as the economy expanded but formal employment in the existing industries did not. Traditionally, informal employment has taken place in small-scale industrial settings or — particularly for women — home-based work (Breman 1999:454). However, this can no longer be taken for granted. The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) estimates that employment in the "informal" or "unorganized" sector⁵⁹ accounted for 86 percent of the workforce in 2004, and only 0.4

⁵⁹NCEUS uses the terms unorganized and informal interchangeably. It defines this sector as consisting "of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers" (2009:12).

percent of these workers had a formal employment relationship (NCEUS 2009:13). Within the “formal” sector, 53.8 percent of the workers were formalized, a decrease from 57.9 percent in 2000.

Many large-scale industries in India (the “formal” sector) have expanded the practice of subcontracting employment through the use of middle-men who are given a contract to recruit and supervise workers, a traditional form of employment in India performed by a *sirdar* or *mukadam* (Breman 1999: 455). Under this system the owner of the firm has almost nothing to do with the workforce. Since 2000, the number of workers hired through a labour contractor has roughly doubled in India (Sundar 2011:12). Traditionally, this form of employment relationship has focused on small-scale industry and agriculture; however, the use of this system has expanded dramatically over the past few decades. Between 1999-2000 and 2004-05, informal employment in the “formal sector,” went up by almost six percent (NCEUS 2009:13).

A contemporary example of this traditional system of labour recruitment being deployed in a modern context is the ship-breaking industry. Here workers are employed informally through a complex subcontracting system that stretches from corporate boardrooms to rural villages. Within this industry, which an informant (HMS1 interview) suggested was controlled by a “mafia,” the owner of a ship-breaking firm would purchase a ship for breaking, or hold a contract to have a ship broken up. That firm would sell the rights to certain aspects of the process to a contractor, and any product that was recycled. For example, one contractor would be responsible for stripping the furniture, while another contractor was responsible for recycling electrical parts; yet another contractor would have the hull cut and the steel recycled. Each of these contractors would hire subcontractors to recruit and supervise work crews for different tasks associated with their contract area. These subcontractors (or *sirdar*, *mukadan*) would recruit unskilled labourers from rural villages far from Mumbai, where the shipyards are located. The result is a situation where the ultimate employer, the owner of the ship-breaking firm, has no direct employment relation with any worker. Such a situation is extremely difficult to organize, given language barriers, the short-term nature of the work, and the fact that extra-economic pressure can be applied to the workers:

it’s difficult to organize. (Number) one, they are migrant(s) from various states, talking different languages. They are not coming together, [...] they are not talking to each other, because of the language barrier. Number two,

they are working under the various contractors. There is not only one contractor. There are many contractors. And most of the contractors those who brought them from their native place are their relatives. So, they don't want to face any problems with the contractor that fellow brought them come right from their villages. And number three, contractor don't want that they should organize. If they organize they would ask for their right and whenever they are asking for their rights, it will be passed to the contractor and employer (HMS1 interview).

Organizing these workers began in the late 1990s (HMS1 interview). It has achieved a fair level of success despite the extraordinary challenges of organizing a temporary, transient workforce that does not share a common language. Its success was the result of creativity in the approach taken by the Mumbai Port and Dock Workers Union, including a willingness to reach out to non-union civil society groups for assistance, and financial support from ITUC member organizations in Europe.

The situation at the ship-breaking yards in Mumbai is exemplary of the challenge facing trade unionism in India. Faced with a regulatory environment that allows an increasing percentage of employers to work around rules intended to protect workers, the trade union movement has the task of organizing a workforce that is divided by language, religion, and often caste. A specific form of organized labour developed in India over the middle of the 20th Century, with a focus on tripartite negotiations and maintaining political relationships with political parties (Sundar 2006b). Chibber argues that the attachment to political parties and — particularly for the INTUC — the state has left the trade union movement without the tools to deal with neoliberalism.:

Since the entire industrial relations system of the Nehru years was designed to prevent independent action by the working class, it is no surprise that labour has had little success in defending its interests as the state has turned more resolutely hostile to labour after 1991 (Chibber 2007:194).

The particular form of working class organization that developed in the colonial period, and matured in the post-Independence period of Nehruvian state-led developmentalism finds

itself in something of a crisis. The laws that once encouraged collective action are bypassed by capital, which has exploited legal grey areas to develop a labour market governed almost entirely by informal labour relations (Sundar 2011). How well the movement in India is dealing with this crisis is disputed. Some see a labour movement in decline (Bhattacharjee 2000; Breman 2001), while others see a movement in transition (Mohanty 2009). It is certainly the case that the traditional trade unions were “behind the curve” in organizing the growing number of informal workers (Ibid.:2), although it now appears that almost all of the CTUOs have taken up organizing informal workers in some form or another (Gillan and Biyanwila 2009:42). It is also the case that new union organizations have emerged over the past two decades, such as the National Centre for Labour (NCL) (RoyChowdhury 2003; Sinha 2004; Sundar 2010), the New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI) (Bhattacharjee and Azcarate 2006; Gillan and Biyanwila 2009; Hensman 2010), and SEWA. These organizations are focusing their efforts on organizing informal workers, and doing so using new methods of organizing. It appears that at least some unions are adapting, although it is hard to get a proper assessment of how well they are adapting from the literature.

Assessing these trends is not the focus of this research project. The above sketch of the history and current struggles of the Indian CTUOs — particularly those affiliated to the ITUC — is intended to provide the backdrop to my fieldwork in India, and some background to the discussion of informal domestic labour in Chapter 6. What I suggest above is that the colonial legacy, divisions between the leaders of the CTUOs, and the growth of informal labour relations are all crucial aspects of the current situation in the Indian labour movement. The focus of my research in India was two-fold. First, it was to explore the connections between domestic worker organizing “on the ground” and the transnational campaign to secure ILO Convention 189. Second, it was to investigate any collaborations between ITUC member organizing and non-union civil society to see whether or not the types of collaborations appearing at the international “level” were also being developed at the local “level.” What the evidence from the literature above suggests is evidence that, of the three ITUC affiliates in India, only SEWA has been building such collaborative relationships. Furthermore, the literature on NCL and NTUI suggest that SEWA is not the only union federation to do so.

Chapter 6: Transnational domestic workers' campaigns

A trade union cannot properly be said to be an organization for class struggle if it only thinks of class in economic terms, without broadening the concept of class to include 'race' and gender in its intrinsic formative definition. Furthermore, it must make its understanding actionable on this socially composite ground of class (Bannerji 2005 145).

Introduction

This chapter reports the findings of a case study that emerged from efforts to find an exemplary case of a transnationally coordinated campaign involving the international trade union movement working closely with non-union civil society organizations. The example explored is the six yearlong campaign to have Convention 189 – Decent Work for Domestic Workers (C189) – adopted at the ILO, and the subsequent ongoing campaign to have C189 ratified by member states through their national parliaments. This follow-up campaign is called “12 by 12,” as the initial push was to have twelve member states of the ILO ratify C189 by the end of 2012. The 12 by 12 campaign was not successful in meeting that goal; however, efforts around transnational domestic worker organizing have proven to be very successful on a number of fronts. First, the campaigns around the ILO Convention are an excellent example of transnationally coordinated organizing by a coalition of union and non-union groups, suggesting that there has been some influence of social movement unionism on the international union movement. Second, this transnational coalition produced concrete results: the adoption of an ILO Convention and the ratification of this convention by a number of states. Finally, the coalition which emerged in support of transnational domestic worker organizing succeeded in coalescing into a stable international union federation of domestic worker organizations.

Before launching into the case study itself, I introduce domestic work as a particular form of labour, and discuss the particular organizing challenges that domestic workers face. Next I report on recent transnational domestic worker organizing initiatives, particularly the campaign to have a convention on domestic work adopted by the ILO. In these two sections I outline how the campaign came together, and how inter-organizational collaboration formed, largely from the perspective of those involved. I then step back from the present and explore the historical context in which this campaign came together. I show how the contemporary efforts of union staff and

NGO activists actually build upon the activities of past actors who pushed the international union movement to be more engaged with the specific issues and challenges facing women who work in precarious and poorly regulated sectors of the labour market. Finally, with reference to my original research questions, I explore the significance of collaborations for union-non-union global civil society relationships and for transnational class formation more generally.

In Chapter 7, I briefly revisit the domestic worker campaigns in order to place them within a typological analysis of ITUC collaborations more generally. The typology is not applied to the analysis in this chapter because the focus here is on an in-depth analysis within a critical realist framework, rather than a comparative look at ITUC collaborations, which is provided in the next chapter. The purpose of this case study is to provide a degree of depth that is not possible in a comparative analysis.

Introduction to domestic work

The ILO defines domestic work as “work performed in or for a household or households... within an employment relationship” (ILO 2013:8). This broad definition is intended to capture: “maids, cooks, waiters, valets, butlers, laundresses, gardeners, gatekeepers, stable-lads, chauffeurs, caretakers, governesses, babysitters, tutors, secretaries” (Ibid.). As noted in the literature, the heterogeneity of domestic work challenges efforts at definitive conceptualization, making accurate measurement difficult (Chen 2011; ILO 2013:19). Some domestic workers have formal employment contracts with one or multiple private employers, either directly or through a third-party firm, and some belong to cooperatives; most, however, are informally employed (Ibid.). It is conservatively estimated by the ILO that domestic work employs approximately 52 million workers worldwide, or 3.6% of “paid employees” (ILO 2013:20), and appears to be a growing employment sector: the number of domestic workers rose from 33.2 million to 52.6 million between 1995 and 2010 (ILO 2013 24).

Under capitalism, unpaid domestic labour “produces new labour-power for the wage market and protects and sustains it when it is unemployed, incapacitated or past coping with the physical toil” (Harriss-White and Gooptu 2001 96). And yet, despite its crucial role in both social and economic reproduction, it is greatly devalued. Of course, this general devaluation of domestic labour generally shapes the value of domestic labour when it is on the market. This devaluation is reproduced globally in asymmetrical patterns that are still difficult to explicate

fully. Nonetheless, despite this asymmetry, domestic labour is generally performed by poor women, often racialized or from a lower social caste, whose lives are “prone to precariousness,” regardless of where they labour within the GPE (Albin and Mantouvalou 2012).⁶⁰ Domestic workers typically earn “less than half of average wages” across the GPE (ILO 2011a), and in many areas, are barely paid enough to survive (Chigateri 2007 8). Poor remuneration is a direct product of the fact that domestic work is gendered and racialized. As Bannerji argues, pre-capitalist socially constructed differences between men and women have become “encapsulated” within the organization of capitalist production and reproduction, “but also in the way labour is valued and remunerated. There is a direct connection between lower value of the labour of women in general all over the world, and of non-white women in particular, and the profit margin” (1995 31).

The ILO estimates that 83% of domestic workers are women (ILO 2013). Almost one-third of women workers in the Middle East are domestic workers (ILO 2013 31-32). Women make up approximately two-thirds of domestic workers in Eastern Europe, and Africa. Women account for approximately 80 per cent of domestic labour in Asia and the Pacific, and over 90 per cent in North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean (ILO 2013). As gendered labour, domestic work suffers from the same devaluation of other forms of “women’s work” crucial to capitalist accumulation, even if an unequal sexual division of labour predates the capitalist GPE.

Indeed, the proletarianization of domestic work – already devalued by its nature as “women’s work” – has created a labour market that is not only gendered, but also racialized. The racialization of domestic work can be seen most visibly in the statistics on working women and migration. While it is difficult to quantify the percentage of domestic workers who are international migrants, the ILO suggests that a “substantial” share of domestic work is performed by migrants, both currently and historically (2013:24-25). In 2001, Ceriani found that half of women domestic workers in Buenos Aires were migrants (ILO 2013:27). From the Philippines alone, more than 96,500 workers went overseas to work as domestic workers in 2010 (ILO

⁶⁰ The concept of precarious employment is a somewhat nebulous term and is conceived of differently in different parts of the GPE. However, at its most basic, precarious employment is characterized by “degrees of objective (legal status) and subjective (feeling) characteristics of uncertainty and insecurity” due to “uncertainty as to the duration of employment, multiple possible employers or a disguised or ambiguous employment relationship, a lack of access to social protection and benefits usually associated with employment, low pay, and substantial legal and practical obstacles to joining a trade union and bargaining collectively” (ILO 2011:5).

2013:29). Across the Gulf States, the largest category of employed women migrants are domestic workers (Piper 2005:100). Saudi Arabia alone employed 784,500 domestic workers in 2009, many of them from South and South-East Asia (ILO 2013:31-32). In 2003, the ILO estimated that approximately half of migrant women in Italy and France worked as domestics, and over 60 percent of “non-Community foreign women” working in Spain (Piper 2005:99). However, it should be noted here that migrant vulnerability is not limited to international migrants; in places like India, domestic work is often performed by internal migrants who travel from the country to the city. These women are generally from lower castes than the families they work for, are often illiterate, and as unaware of labour laws and regulations as migrants travelling across national boundaries. Despite the difficulty in measuring the number of domestic workers who are migrants worldwide, it is clear that there is a strong relationship, as indicated by the role of organizations such as Migrant Forum Asia in transnational domestic worker organizing and the incorporation of domestic work into the annual World Social Forum on Migrations (Migrant Forum on Asia 2012).

Anderson argues that the relationship between employer and employee in the domestic sphere is “complex because they fall along multiple axes” generally between women — one who manages a household and one who performs labour under her rule — and often between women of different “races or nationalities” (Anderson 2002:104) (2002 104). The household is a complex workplace where racialized power relations are complicated by the intimate setting and complex relationships often formed between domestic workers and the families for which they work. The intimacy of the workplace often contributes to an impression that the domestic worker is more of a family member than a worker. This in turn contributes to a situation where workers are often pressured into being always available. A survey of UK domestic workers, registered with the NGO Kalayaan, found that 67% of domestic workers in the UK worked seven days a week, with no time off; 58% were told to be available 24 hours a day; 48% worked at least 16 hours per day (Albin and Mantouvalou 2012:3). The intimate and complex nature of the household can also produce unique workplace conflicts. Nannies may be mothers themselves, who have left their own children in the care of others, and conflict can arise over how children should be raised; resentments over the relationship between nanny and child contribute to explosive relationships that are more characteristic of a family dispute than between and employer and employee (Cheever 2002; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001).

Such pseudo-familial relationships between employer and employee mask the very real power differences inherent in all employee-employer relationships, but are also shaped by profound differences in status based on race and social class that employers are “often keen to maintain,” (Albin and Mantouvalou 2012:3), even if they are unwilling to acknowledge them. As Bannerji argues, race is a “power-inscribed way... of establishing difference” (2005:148). In India, caste operates in a similar way. For domestic workers, these power-inscribed differences play out in the intimate setting of the patriarchal household.

The ILO notes, that “(h)istorically, the relationship between a domestic worker and their employer has often relied on a paternalistic model, rather than on an explicit employment contract under which the worker and the employer each has clearly defined rights and obligations” (2013:44). This paternalist model is explained by the intimate setting of domestic work, and sometimes justified as a form of charity by those who employ domestics (Ibid.). Clearly, the relationship between domestic worker and employer is grounded in a master-servant relationship that originates with slavery and serfdom (Srinivas 1995) and is part of a pre-capitalist system of patriarchal governance and caste or class (Chigateri 2007).

The private setting of the household makes domestic workers particularly susceptible to physical, psychological and sexual abuse (Piper 2005:101). The UK charity, Kalayaan, has found widespread abuse of domestic workers in the UK: 60% reported not being allowed to leave the premises unaccompanied; 65% reported that their employer had withheld their passport; 54% reported psychological abuse; 18% reported physical abuse; 3% reported sexual abuse; 26% were not given adequate meals (Albin and Mantouvalou 2012:3). The ILO reports that domestic work is one of the most problematic sectors for forced labour outside of sexual exploitation (2013:45). As argued above, such vulnerability is in part a product of deep social structures of racist and sexist ideology. However, the precariousness of domestic workers’ lives is also a product of the vulnerability of working in a very private setting characterized by an informal employment relationship.

The struggle for recognition, representation, and regulation

One of the greatest challenges facing emergent fractions of the working class, such as domestic workers, is recognition by the state, and the existing labour movement. That workers in informal employment situations lead precarious lives is not because their work is informal by its

nature – as one informant suggested, all employment in the early days of European capitalism was “informal”; working relationships became formalized through struggle (IUF3 interview). The challenge for emergent fractions of labour is that they have not been recognised as workers and afforded the rights of existing groups of workers. In order for them to secure such rights, they need to be organized, and it is only very recently that domestic work came to be recognized as employment by existing unions, and therefore a field to be organized.

Regulation

According to research conducted by the ILO, domestic workers are “one of the least protected groups of workers under national labour legislation,” and have been excluded from the protections offered by national labour standards and regulations in a number of countries (ILO 2013 46).⁶¹ In many cases, legislation that directly addresses domestic work is designed to regulate the behaviour of foreign domestics, rather than protect them.⁶² Anderson (2007:250) argues that the unwillingness of many states to pass legislation regulating domestic work is ideological: because of the intimacy of the patriarchal household, the state should not interfere in the workings of the family, a perception that Chen (2011:176) asserts is “widespread” globally. Similar ideological arguments have also been used to oppose laws about domestic violence and sexual abuse, reminding us that the struggle over rights for domestic workers is not only about “labour rights,” but also “women’s rights.”

The lack of regulation around domestic work is directly related to the lack of organized representation of domestic workers. Workers achieve success in the private and public regulation of their workplaces when they have associational and/ or structural power. As marginalized workers on the periphery of the capitalist labour market, domestic workers have little structural power; they are not structurally located in a place that could quickly slow the production and distribution of goods, as say longshore workers. Nor do domestic workers have, as yet, much

⁶² For example, in Singapore, and elsewhere, the sexuality of domestic workers is highly regulated. Foreign domestic workers were forbidden from marrying locals, were forced to take regular pregnancy tests, and expelled if they became pregnant (ILO 2013 87; Piper 2005 102; Wong 1997), despite the fact that such laws and regulations violate the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the 1982 Termination of Employment Convention, and the 2000 Maternity Protection Convention (ILO 2013 91).

associational power: they are not yet a well-organized class fraction able to articulate and press for their interests as a bloc.

Representation

This lack of associational power is a direct consequence of the established trade union movement ignoring domestic workers as a fraction of the working class. The recalcitrance of trade unions is partly related to the fact that domestic work is still seen by many as women performing a “natural” role, and therefore, not really work. There is also the possibility that some unions are reluctant to organize and represent domestic workers because union members and leaders may themselves be employers of domestic labour (D’Souza 2010:23).

However, it is also the case that trade unions have been slow to organize informal and precarious workers generally, leaving the field open to others in civil society. Until recently, the interests and needs of domestic workers have been addressed largely by charities, social justice NGOs and non-union membership-based organizations. In some cases, the groups don’t identify as labour organizations per se, but rather as women’s organizations. As trade unions begin to engage domestic workers they must contend with the fact that domestics and other informal workers, often with the help of non-union civil society, have begun to organize alternative forms of representation.

Frangi and Routh (2014) argue that a gap in the literature on union revitalization is the challenge that informal workers present to traditional trade unions.⁶³ This is particularly glaring given that informal labour relations are “becoming central to the global South economies” (Ibid.:44), and it is the case, they argue, that this distinction explains the limited development of trade unionism in many countries outside of Europe and North America, where economic growth has not translated into a growth in formal employment. India is perhaps the most extreme case where approximately 93% of the workforce labours in the informal economy (NCEUS 2009). Here, Routh argues, traditional trade unionism has not proven to be a good fit for Indian workers (Routh 2016).

For decades, the trade unions of India “ignored the informal sector” (Bhowmik 2009a:137) — in 1987, only 1% of the workforce held union membership. Trade unions have

⁶³ There are exceptions, including some writers with strong connections to the international trade union movement (see, for example: Bonner and Spooner 2011; Gallin and Horn 2005; Gallin 2001).

been leery of engaging informal workers in the past for a number of reasons. First, union leaders are concerned about the extraordinary strain on their limited resources (Frangi and Routh 2014: 46). Organizing workers in an emergent industry is itself a significant task; organizing workers who often have multiple occupations over the year across a number of industries is a herculean one. There is also the perception that workers who do not have a single occupation, who are struggling the most, and who may at times be self-employed, would not share the union goals of solidarity, because they are focused on individual survival (Ibid.). Finally, the lack of a formal employment relationship calls into question the repertoires of action that the trade union movement has built up over the last century and a half. How does a union representative negotiate with an employer when there is no formal employment relationship?

The position of trade unions toward informal workers has begun to change in India and elsewhere. Current responses toward informal workers range from exclusionary to inclusive, and Frangi and Routh argue that Indian trade unions have been “partially” (and I would add: unevenly) inclusive (2014:50). Some CTUOs have had some success with certain sectors, such as bidi production and construction workers (Ibid.:52). However, a great deal of informal worker organizing in India — and elsewhere — has involved new forms of organization, which often look very different from traditional trade unions. Routh suggests that the differences are profound enough to suggest that a new term is necessary. He refers to these new labour organizations as an example of “workers’ aggregation,” to reflect the new strategies and forms of organizing, as well as the new collaborations these aggregations are developing within civil society, and with the state (2016:309–10).

These new organizations, Routh notes, are different from trade unions in three ways. First, their relationship with the state is not always adversarial. While informal worker unions will engage in political agitation, they also “adopt a more cooperative approach towards the state and employers” (2016:306). Routh notes that SEWA implements a government sponsored work education program (2016:297), and has accepted Government of India funding to establish vocational programs in Afghanistan (Chaturvedi and Mulakala 2016:88; SEWA6 interview; SEWA3 interview). Second, these organizations provide a number of services and set up business ventures, something which Indian unions do not traditionally do. Again, SEWA is the most developed informal workers’ organization, with its health care network, bank, educational system, and retail outlet. Finally, the relationship of the workers to outsiders (that is, individuals

who are not workers, but who support their unions in a tangible way) is different (2016:306). As outlined in the last chapter, unions in India were often initiated by leaders and cadres attached to political movements: the anti-colonial movement early on, and after Independence, the emergent political parties. Routh's participatory research with waste-pickers in Kolkata, and his analysis of SEWA and the *Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat* (KKPKP), led him to conclude that informal worker unions are often initiated by outsiders, rather than the workers themselves, similar to the situation of the existing union movement in India. Unlike the outsiders affiliated with established trade unions, however, the outsiders affiliated with informal worker unions are not from the political parties (2016:306).

Routh outlines these differences, but does not appear to connect them, whereas I see a clear connection between the distinct cadre that has helped create informal worker unions, and the new ideas of what a union can look like or achieve. Routh notes that the outsiders working with and within informal worker organizations often come from a legal or research background. The KKPKP was initiated by university faculty while conducting an adult education program in Pune, Maharashtra; the *Barjya Punarbyawaharikaran Shilpa Shramik Sangathan* (BPSSS) was initiated by Routh, while conducting research; SEWA was started by Ela Bhatt, who was educated in law and worked as a social worker for the TLA. Indeed, all of the cadre from SEWA I interviewed were educated in law, social science, or finance. Those I interviewed from non-SEWA domestic worker unions mostly came from charitable religious orders or women's organizations.

What this suggests, at the very least, is that the cadre that initiated these unions of informal workers did not bring to their task the "baggage" of existing union practices and ideologies; they did not have the burden of tradition to guide (or hinder?) their activities. This allowed the emergent cadre to be flexible in how it dealt with the challenges presented to it. When SEWA members in the textile industry were blacklisted by suppliers and final product purchasers (often the same people), the organization established its own retail system through which its activists could sell their products. In addition to ensuring a livelihood for its activists, this also had the effect of creating upward market pressure on wages (SEWA6 interview). As noted by Routh (2016) and Agarwala (2008), informal worker organizations focus their demands on the state, rather than employers. This focus also, in part, reflects the background of the new cadre. To be somewhat shorthanded about it, lawyers see a problem of legal rights,

social workers see poverty, and social reformers see racial, caste, and gender inequality; whereas traditional labour leaders and cadres see class struggle. The frame into which one places the problem will shape the remedies proposed. The resolution of a class struggle requires a confrontation with capital. However, the resolution of poverty can be addressed in a number of ways through various development schemes involving the state, civil society donors, or a combination of both, as can be the case.

The lack of a how-to handbook, passed down through union tradition, also allows these new unions the creative space to develop new strategies around organizing that, while developed out of the specific challenges in organizing informal workers, could also prove helpful to organizers in other sectors. In some sectors, such as domestic work, the nature of the worksite often poses particular challenges for organizers. As I outlined earlier, domestic work generally occurs within the private, patriarchal household, making access to workers very difficult for organizers. Data from my interviews with domestic worker organizers suggest that creative solutions to this problem are being developed and deployed successfully. Some of the organizers I talked to focused their organizing in the communities in which the domestic workers lived, and this organizing was embedded within broader organizing projects around the safety and security of the slums, access to medical care, and violence against women (DW2 interview; DW1 interview). One organizer, however, developed a scheme to encourage the employers of domestic workers to leave work and attend meetings, by offering professional training and access to health practitioners:

Once we had a seminar, and a small notice (was) given. She (the worker) had to get leave, so she showed that notice (to her employer). And they (the employer) called, ‘What is this? What (is) this organization doing?’ [...] Then I said, it is a seminar... and if you send your domestic worker, you are going to benefit or profit more than she benefits. If she is becoming more conscious of health and hygiene and other things... then you will get the benefit from it. [...] And they sent them (DW4 interview).

A number of labour movement researchers (Bhattacharjee 2002; Bhowmik and Sarkar 2002; Gillan and Biyanwila 2009; Mohanty 2009) concur with Frengi and Routh (2014) that the future of organized labour in India lies with the ability of the established trade union movement’s

willingness and ability to organize workers in the informal economy, such as domestic workers. Bhattacharjee argues that the major CTUOs should be encouraging new union models, such as SEWA, and a role for NGOs, where that is warranted (2002:335). Bhowmik and Sarkar similarly argue that traditional forms of protest and resistance to the shift toward neoliberalism have had “little or no impact” on government policy, and they see a “need to devise alternative means” to counter the effect of the neoliberal structural adjustment programs in place since the 1990s. Cooperatives, they suggest, are an example of alternative thinking that has had some success (2002:461).

As part of my interviews with the cadres of CTUO affiliated with the ITUC, I found mixed evidence for Routh’s argument that Indian trade unions were “partially” inclusive of informal workers and their organizations. In interviews with senior national cadre, I found that there is little interest in collaborating with the various civil society organizations that represent or assist informal workers. However, at the local level, I found that the practical needs of workers overrode ideological purity about the proper role for trade unions. Locally, union cadres work with a variety of organizations that can provide support or services to the workers the union represents. The evidence from my interviews and a reading of existing literature suggests that in India the struggle to incorporate precarious workers, such as domestic workers, is largely being conducted by non-traditional unions, such as SEWA, NCL and NTUI.

Recognition

The historical lack of legal recognition and therefore, legal protection, for informal sector workers, such as domestic work, is noted across the literature on informal employment (Agarwala 2008; Bhowmik 2009a, 2009b; Bonner and Spooner 2011b; Routh 2011). This has made the tallying of national statistics a challenge, and the collection of data on household workers has been highly uneven (D’Souza 2010:12). In part, this is due to the legal status of the workers; domestic workers are often migrants, without proper documentation, or children too young to be included in labour market statistics (Ibid.:13). More broadly, however, the lack of statistics is a product of the lack of legal recognition of some forms of work; domestic workers are not recognized as workers because they do not fit within established conceptions of what constitutes employment (Routh 2011). This lack of recognition has also been a problem within

the labour movement, and the struggle for recognition continues within the CTUOs and the ITUC. It has also been a problem within the academy (SEWA6 interview).

As Bonner and Carré argue:

Street vendors, domestic workers, waste pickers, and home-based workers are seldom recognized as ‘workers’ for the purposes of national policy on labour and social protection. They are rarely recognized as producers or providers of services for purposes of urban planning” (Bonner and Carré 2013:2).

The struggle for recognition also stood out in the interviews I conducted with the cadre of SEWA, and it was recognized by an ITUC informant as well. The problem of recognition occurred, I was told, at “all levels,” from local law enforcement, through state regulators, to the laws on the books:

The injustice happens at all levels. [...] At the local level directly, so you can see who is exploited... (by) middle men, the police — that level. Then you know that (the) police are supported by the district level, state level, rules, regulations. And these rules and regulations do not cover the protection of such people who are working their livelihood on their own. And it’s also the national laws, the trade union act or the cooperative banking act... federal banking regulators would not recognize those who are in the (informal) trade(s) [...] The policies are made in such a way that it brings injustice to these working poor (SEWA6 interview).

My informant argued that this lack of recognition within local, state, and national legislation was due to the ideas of work and employment that permeate academia and the ILO. The disconnect between what is considered employment, and who is considered a worker was “supported by the international” system, which imposes a European framework on countries such as India. The concepts which are hegemonic internationally, therefore, are reproduced within the Indian academy: “our universities also teach what is work. They always say that an employer/employee relationship, or the master and servant, that is a(n) (employment) relationship [...] But they do

not see the whole system... of touts, the whole system of contracting, subcontracting” (SEWA6 interview; see also Bhowmik 2009a).

Gaining recognition from the existing trade unions in India was also a problem. The same informant argued: “even though they say, ‘all the workers of the world unite,’ [...] they don’t see these workers as the workers.” She also told me that “the first battle... has been with the existing unions of the formal sector...the formal unions” (SEWA6 interview). Another SEWA informant echoed the idea that the problem lies with European constructions of work and unions being applied inappropriately to workers outside of that framework:

I think that’s been one of the problems, and I don’t blame the central trade unions because, you know, our model of union organizing came straight out of industrial-revolution Europe. I mean, it came when the colonial power came here and all our laws and all our concepts are based on -- well -- industrial revolution England (SEWA2 interview).

One of the great successes of SEWA and similar unions is their ability to challenge these Euro-centric concepts:

I think what has been really different about SEWA is that the whole concept of work has been challenged. What is work and employment? There are no jobs. There are hardly any people in jobs in the Indian complex. We would argue -- in our concept, collective bargaining is geographically or across trades of women come together, build their collective strengths and bargain with whoever. It may not be an employer or contractor. It may be the state, it may be the municipal authorities. In our context, that’s collective bargaining. When group of street vendors organize, form their union, and resists oppression of the police and the municipal authorities who keep on harassing them and evicting them, that’s collective bargaining. But it’s a whole other way of thinking (SEWA1 interview).

Definitions of work and employment certainly are beginning to change (Routh 2011) as the significance of informal employment on Southern economies, such as India (Chen 2012), and

informal worker unions, such as SEWA, demand action from the international labour movement, national governments, and the ILO. Below I outline the most recent, and quite successful, transnational campaign for informal worker rights, the campaign to have the ILO adopt a Convention on the rights of domestic workers. I will then make a brief argument about the significance of this transnational organizing before an explanation as to why this campaign was so successful.

Transnational domestic worker organizing: C189, 12 by 12, and the IDWF

Above I argue that existing Indian union federations were latecomers in establishing programs to organize domestic workers and others in the informal labour market. I also show that domestic worker organizing has been carried out more by NGOs and alternative unions than the main trade union federations. To a certain degree, this has also been the case at the international “level.” I argue below that the cadre of the ITUC, the IUF, and the ILO were instrumental in the recent transnational campaign to have the ILO adopt a Convention on the rights of domestic workers; however, organized labour was quite “late to the game” in organizing domestic workers. Rather, organizing of domestic workers was initiated by non-union civil society organizations, including NGOs, and faith-based organizations, often connected to the Catholic Church (IUF2 interview). This was also the case transnationally. As one ITUC cadre reported: “the issue of domestic workers has always been run, if you want, by several networks and several groups” (ITUC9 interview). Nonetheless, the ITUC and the IUF would be crucial partners in this network, particularly at the ILO, where the ITUC has a privileged position as one third of the tripartite ILO decision-making framework.

Below I outline how these loose and varied networks and groups were brought together into a single transnational network with the assistance of the international union cadre, and how, with the assistance of the IUF, this network was able to coalesce into the International Domestic Workers’ Network (IDWN) and later the International Domestic Workers’ Federation (IDWF). I then discuss the campaign to have the ILO adopt a Convention on the rights of domestic workers, and the follow up campaign, “12 by 12,” to have the Convention ratified by national governments. The data drawn upon for this reportage come from interviews with the cadre of the ITUC, IUF, and the Indian affiliates of these organizations, as well as published report-backs from others involved in the process, including a number of non-union participants.

Following my report on the emergence of the transnational domestic worker network, and its campaigns for an ILO Convention, I place these campaigns into an historical context, so as to construct an analysis that moves beyond the agency of those currently involved. Three elements of the context are explored. First, I outline past ILO engagements with the topic of domestic work. Second, I discuss the struggle of women activists within the international union federations to have issues deemed important by women workers taken seriously by a male dominated movement. Third, I place the campaign around domestic workers' rights within the longer struggle of informal women workers in Southern countries, such as India, to have the international trade union movement take the issues and needs of informal workers seriously.

Finally, I provide an analysis of the successful efforts at domestic worker organizing that is based upon my interviews, and historical analysis. My analysis shows that existing structures and the agency of past actors are as crucial to the success of the contemporary union/ non-union partnerships as those that produced the domestic worker network and campaigns. The network that developed around securing an ILO convention was able to emerge when it did, and not before, because certain forms of institutional innovation were necessary for its existence.

Initial contacts within global civil society

Regional cross-border collaborations concerned with domestic worker organizing appear to have first emerged in the late 1990s (Mather 2013; Piper 2005). For example, In Europe, RESPECT (Rights, Equality, Solidarity, Power in, Europe and Co-operation Today) began in 1998. It is a network of NGO and trade union organizations concerned with the rights of migrant domestic workers.⁶⁴ While generally focused on migrant domestic workers in Europe, RESPECT also assisted domestic worker organizations in South East Asia at early efforts to develop a regional network (Piper 2005).

In November 2006, an international conference — “Respect and Rights: Protection for Domestic Workers” — was organized in Amsterdam by the Dutch labour federation FNV Mondiaal,⁶⁵ and the Dutch NGO International Restructuring Education Network Europe (IRENE). The meeting was attended by 60 participants representing a number of organizations

⁶⁴ <http://www.respectnetworkeu.org>

⁶⁵ FNV is the *Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging* (Dutch Labour Federation). FNV Mondiaal is the international arm of FNV, and is heavily involved in numerous international solidarity projects.

concerned with domestic workers (see table 3 below) (Mather 2013 12-13; ITUC9 interview; ITUC4 interview). Funding for the project came from an equally broad group of over 20 organizations, including a number of unions, and non-union labour NGOs (Ibid.). Two important decisions were made at this meeting. The first was the establishment of a transnational network of domestic worker organizations. The second decision was to mount a campaign at the ILO around the need for a Convention on domestic work. Although these two decisions are wrapped up in the same process, they will be treated somewhat separately below for the sake of analysis.

Table 5: Initial participants in domestic worker network, 2006

Name of organization	Year created⁶⁶	Primary issue of concern	Involvement in 2006 meeting
FNV Mondiaal	1997 (website)	Department of the Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (FNV)	Convener & funder
International Restructuring Education Network Europe (IRENE)	1983 – assumed defunct as of 2016	International development and public education	Convener
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)	2006 (website)	International federation of apex national union organizations	Participant
International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco, and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)	1920	International federation of unions in the food and allied industries	Participant
Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)	2001	Human rights of migrants	Participant
Committee for Asian Women (CAW)	unknown – “over 30 years” (website)	Regional network of organizations representing women workers	Participant
Asian Domestic Workers' Network (ADWN)	2005 (weigo.org)	Capacity building for domestic workers. Facilitated by CAW.	Participant
Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC)	1976	Research and networking for the Asian labour movement and development NGOs.	Participant
Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)	1997	Advocacy for informal women workers.	Participant
Global Labour Institute (GLI)	1997	Labour education.	Participant
Anti-Slavery International	1893	Human rights.	Participant
International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour - ILO (IPEC)	1992	ILO program.	Participant
Fondation des Droits de l'Homme au Travail (Human Rights at Work Foundation)	1998 (website)	Finances international social justice projects.	Major funder
Cebemo	1961 – merged into Coraid (Coraid website)	Catholic international aid charity.	Major funder
Ford Foundation	1936	Finances international development and social justice projects.	Major funder
Humanitas/Oxfam Novib	1956 (www.oxfamnovib.nl)	Global development	Major funder

⁶⁶ Unless otherwise noted, information for the table has been gathered from the Yearbook of International Organizations: ybio.brillonline.com

The creation of the International Domestic Workers Federation

The 2006 conference in Amsterdam established a working group to investigate the feasibility of establishing a permanent network of domestic worker organizations (Mather 2013:14). At a meeting held the following year, it was decided that a transnational network of organizations concerned with the rights of domestic worker organizations would be established with the institutional support of the IUF and with the assistance of WIEGO. One ITUC staff person credited the creation of a stable network to the IUF and WIEGO: “IUF has done ground breaking work on trying to connect domestic workers and that is why they have given a lot of support to the (IDWN)... (which is) heavily supported by WIEGO as well” (ITUC4 interview). The emergent relationship between the IUF and domestic workers is due in part to the fact that domestic workers perform similar duties to those in hotels and restaurants, albeit in very different circumstances (IUF2 interview). However, it is also a product of forward thinking on the part of the IUF leadership, particularly Dan Gallin, the former General Secretary of the IUF, and former Director of WIEGO. Gallin first proposed the integration of informal sector workers into the international union movement in the 1980s, when SEWA had sought recognition within the international trade union movement (IUF3 interview; SEWA6 interview). As Mather notes, and my informants confirm, the IUF had wanted to organize domestic workers for some time, *but had lacked the resources to do so on its own* (Mather 2013; IUF3 interview; IUF2 interview).

Integrating domestic worker organizations into the GUF structure required the IUF to be flexible in terms of union representation. Acknowledging that many countries did not allow domestic workers to register trade unions, they developed a “semiautonomous” organization within the IUF itself, that would allow for “associations and support organizations” within the organization. This network was officially created in 2009 under the name International Domestic Workers’ Network (IDWN), the voting membership of which includes delegates from both union and non-union membership based organizations. Supporting NGOs without a membership base could affiliate and participate in meetings, but not vote (Mather 2013:14–16). The IDWN became the IDWF — the International Domestic Workers Federation — in October, 2013, emerging as the newest international union federation, although it does not appear to have joined Global Unions as a GUF.

The IDWN allows for the participation of NGOs that have both a sincere concern for the struggle of domestic workers and a contribution to make to that struggle. As was pointed out by a number of my informants — both union and non-union cadre — support for domestic workers was provided by both charitable and advocacy NGOs long before these workers were on the union radar. Often church-based, these organizations provided emotional, spiritual, and financial support, and advocated on their behalf at a time when many union leaders did not even see these women as “real workers.” Yet, the insistence that voting membership be restricted to membership-based organizations reinforces the belief that workers and their elected representatives must be in control of that struggle. This was acknowledged not only by those at the founding of the IDWN, but also by the non-union informants for this study who have been supporting and advocating for domestic workers for decades.

The pursuit of ILO Convention 189

At the 2006 meeting of domestic worker unions, support groups and international union federations called by IRENE, it was decided to mount a campaign to secure an ILO convention on domestic work. ILO conventions are, historically, the primary mechanism by which the organization influences national labour policy and law, although their direct effect is debatable, as will be discussed below. The process by which conventions are developed and agreed upon is long and complex. Therefore, before reporting on the campaign to have a convention on domestic work, I briefly outline the process by which a convention is developed, adopted, and ratified.

The ILO Process

Officially, the ILO influences national labour laws through the adoption of Conventions and Recommendations. Conventions are “instruments which on ratification (by a state) -create legal obligations” for that state (ILO 2012:2). They may be amended at a future date by a new Protocol, and instrument that can “partially” revise a Convention by introducing some form of flexibility, or by extending the obligations laid out in the original Convention in some way (Ibid.:17). Recommendations are not ratified by states, and therefore, not obligatory. They are intended to “give guidance as to policy, legislation, and practice” around labour legislation

(Ibid.). There is no mechanism through which the abrogation of a Convention can lead to any form of legally enforceable corrective measure.

Topics are taken up at the annual International Labour Conference (ILC), which meets for three weeks each June through a “double decision procedure” that involves an initial report on existing laws of Member States, and a questionnaire to be completed by Member States in consultation with representatives from capital and labour. The responses to this questionnaire are used to produce a second report, and a set of questions to be addressed by the ILC (Ibid.:2-3). Both reports are examined by a committee of the ILC, which decides if a Convention or Recommendation should be put on the next, or a subsequent, agenda of the ILC. If so, a Convention or Recommendation is drafted by the International Labour Office, which acts as a secretariat for the Governing Body, and is sent out to Member States for initial responses. With these responses in mind, a Drafting Committee of the ILC then prepares a final draft to be put before the ILC (Ibid.:3). Once a Convention is adopted by the ILC, it is then sent to Member States to be ratified through whatever mechanism is appropriate for that country. Once a Convention is ratified by a country, it is then obliged to adopt whatever policy and legislation is expected to fulfil its obligation under that Convention (Ibid.:13).

Complaints may be leveled against a state that fails to uphold a Convention that it has ratified, under Articles 26-34 of the ILO Constitution.⁶⁷ A complaint can be laid by any other Member State that has also ratified the Convention in question, or by a member of the ILC, or by the Governing Body itself. If a Member State refuses to take the corrective action suggested by the Commission of Inquiry, the matter may end up at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which may issue an “advisory opinion.”⁶⁸ As there are no means, other than diplomatic pressure, to enforce a ruling of the ICJ, there is, in effect no means by which a Convention can be enforced. At any rate, only 31 Complaints have been filed over the history of the ILO.⁶⁹ This

⁶⁷ The Constitution of the ILO can be found at:

http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:62:0::NO:62:P62_LIST_ENTRIE_ID:2453907:NO

A helpful graphic of the Complaints Process can be found at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---normes/documents/image/wcms_088451.pdf

⁶⁸ See the following FAQ on the role of advisory opinions in the “enforcement” of ILO conventions:

http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/leg/download/icj_advisory_10_questions.pdf

⁶⁹ For a list of Complaints, see the following webpage:

http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:50011:1209566627864651:::P50011_DISPLAY_BY:1

lack of enforcement mechanism is why the ICFTU pursued a number of efforts to have ILO Conventions attached to trade agreements that do have enforcement mechanisms, as discussed in Chapter 4.

The Campaign for C189

Given the tripartite structure of the ILO, pursuit of a convention in support of domestic workers' rights would require the leadership of the ITUC, and ITUC staff were clear in their reports to me that they saw their role as one of coordinating a range of voices not always heard in the ILO system. As one staff person put it,

ITUC was leading at the ILO... because of the ILO structure, where unions have the key role there. But there was a huge effort... also to include domestic worker NGOs and other women's organizations in the ILO (process), to also influence the negotiation. That was very successful. There was a massive presence of NGOs, of women's organizations, domestic worker organizations, and I think that was the first time there was so many presenters there (ITUC9 interview).

Another staff person, intimately involved with the Convention campaign, also recalls ITUC efforts to include non-affiliates in the process:

I did a lot of consultations. Beside consultations with unions, (there were) also consultations with others who were... trying to contribute... Migrant Forum Asia, Human Rights Watch... Anti-Slavery was there... so there were these organizations who were quite prominently... involved, and that is how it evolved (ITUC4 interview).

National representation of non-affiliates was also encouraged. The same staff person recalls that

...quite a number of union delegations included domestic workers... some of them came from existing unions, some of them came from NGOs, from associations... it became a lot more visible what a lot of national trade union centres were doing. I think take for example... CUT Brazil, one of the biggest national trade union centres... was working really very closely

with domestic workers... This was a topic they have been working on for quite some time. And... they also included domestic workers in their delegation and... you saw... it became more visible that... yeah, that there are a good number of trade union centres who are involved (ITUC4 interview).

So, while the ITUC acted to coordinate activity at the ILO, the campaign involved a range of organizations concerned with the plight of domestic workers, including unions, associations, and NGOs, from both the international and national levels. This appears to have been, as indicated by the first comment, largely unprecedented. Historically, the ILO has been the domain of trade unions, and the Workers Group — the caucus of labour representatives to the ILO — has been managed by the Amsterdam International, whether that was the IFTU, the ICFTU, or the ITUC. By tradition, only bona fide credentials from an independent trade union have enabled an individual or group access. The significance of the precedent and its causes are further explored below.

While the campaign for C189 was officially launched at the 2009 founding meeting of the International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN), efforts had already been underway to secure institutional support within the ILO bureaucracy for two years. By 2007, IUF and ITUC officials were meeting with ILO staff to establish the feasibility of having a Convention on domestic workers placed on the ILO agenda. Published reports by those involved, and the recollections of key informants interviewed for this dissertation, suggest that there was a great deal of support for a convention amongst ILO staff (Biondi 2013; Mather 2013; IUF2 interview).⁷⁰

Departmental representatives from ILO units concerned with women workers, migration, child labour, as well as the Bureau for Workers Activities (ACTRAV) and the office which oversees the process of developing and implementing ILO Conventions and Recommendations, all offered assistance and advice on securing a Domestic Workers Convention (Mather 2013 26). Support and advice from ILO staff were crucial. Staff from ACTRAV noted that a space had opened up in the “Standard Setting” agenda of the upcoming 300th session of the ILO Governing

⁷⁰ As discussed below, the plight of domestic workers had been discussed periodically at the ILO as early as 1936.

Body, to be held in November 2007. At this meeting, they secured the support of 10 out of 28 governments that were sitting on the Governing Body to have domestic work placed on the agenda. At the following meeting, they gained the support of a clear majority, and “Decent Work for Domestic Workers” was placed on the Standard Setting agenda of the June 2010 International Labour Conference (ILC). Just 18 months from their initial meeting, a network of labour and human rights activists, as well as cadres from the international trade union federations, NGO, and ILO managed to have the labour rights of a highly marginalized fraction of the working class prioritized by the Governing Body of the ILO, and the process of an ILO Convention initiated. In June of 2011, C189, the Convention concerning decent work for domestic workers, was adopted at the ILC.⁷¹ It came into effect on September 5, 2013.

As noted by one of my informants, the speed at which the network came together and was able to have a convention placed before the ILC was “absolutely incredible”:

One of the priorities of the domestic workers, as they expressed them at this Amsterdam meeting, was an international convention. We said, that's fine, but you have to be very patient, because that will take at least 10 years to get it on the agenda. [...] And then there was an opportunity to put it on the agenda and it was agreed. That was in 2008, when they managed to get it on the agenda for 2010. [...] it was absolutely incredible (IUF2 interview).

Those involved in the process note that the ability of ACTRAV to have this Convention placed on the ILC agenda so quickly was the result of some luck — in that there was a gap in the ILO agenda — and a great deal of “awareness-raising and lobbying by TRAVAIL” within the Governing Body (Mather 2013 27).⁷² The quiet diplomacy of key ILO staff “prepared the ground,” as one informant put it, by supplying crucial background documents demonstrating the significance of domestic work globally (IUF2 interview), and drawing attention to domestic work through the ACRTAV publication, “Labour Education,” for example (Mather 2013:26).

⁷¹ The full text of the Convention can be found at:
http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C189

⁷² TRAVAIL was the Conditions of Work and Employment Programme of the ILO. It is now the Inclusive Labour Markets, Labour Relations and Working Conditions Branch (INWORK).

However, there was also a great deal of lobbying taking place outside of the ILO, particularly within the international union movement itself. Following the 2007 meeting of interested organizations, both the IUF and the ITUC also used their networks of member organization to build support for the ILO process at the national level. As discussed earlier in this chapter, recognition is a key battle for marginalized fractions of workers who work in the informal sectors. Trade unions have historically ignored those fractions that are largely women and difficult to organize for the purposes of collective bargaining, and many ITUC affiliates needed to be convinced of the importance of this project. Some affiliates, such as SEWA, Brazil's CUT, and the British TUC had either begun the process of organizing domestic workers, or were working closely with non-affiliated domestic worker organizations. But many, if not most, had done little to organize domestic workers, had little to no contact with domestic workers' organizations, and needed "encouragement" from the international. ITUC staff pointed out that

...cooperation in this area was really important, because we do recognize that... a lot of domestic workers have stood up for quite some time and have formed as small organizations and a good number of them have been supported by the NGOs, and a good number of them have been supported by national trade union centres or unions... so where there (was) opportunity to consult, we wanted to make sure that at least they (ITUC affiliates) were consulting domestic (worker) groups. We did encourage cooperation... that is all we can do, we cannot impose it, but we did encourage it... in the end it is up to our affiliates to do so if they want to, but we do see that in some important key countries this kind of cooperation (happened) (ITUC4 interview).

In a number of key countries, it does appear that the encouragement of ITUC staff and leaders paid off. As one domestic worker activist from Indonesia stated:

At first the trade union federations in Indonesia resisted accepting anyone from the domestic workers' organizations into the official Indonesian Workers' Delegation to the ILC, because none were affiliated to any of them. They really didn't want to help. But then the ITUC stepped in and

asked them to, and they agreed, even though we were still not members.

This was the first time they accepted us as ‘workers’. By the time the 2010 ILC came, I was part of the official Indonesian Workers’ Delegation (Mather 2013 20).

The mechanisms that international union staff used to encourage support took a number of forms. The IUF focused much of the work of its Africa Women’s Project on encouraging members to organize domestic workers (Mather 2013 16), while the ITUC made the upcoming ILO campaign a focus of its 2009 World Women’s Conference, produced an “Action Guide” for its member organizations on working with domestic workers and their organizations, and used its considerable public relations resources to promote the campaign (Ibid.:19). Through such outreach efforts, ITUC and IUF staff built up support for the convention amongst its member organizations, which was crucial. Without the support of ITUC affiliates, it is unlikely that a domestic worker convention would be prioritized by the ILC. Securing the support of ITUC affiliates would also be crucial in building a variety of coalitions and platforms through which union and non-union organizations concerned with domestic workers could work together to encourage the ratification of C189 by national governments.

The 12 by 12: transnational campaign for national ratifications of C189

In June of 2011, C189 was adopted by the ILC.⁷³ In December 2011, the ITUC launched “12 by 12,” a network campaign for ITUC member organizations and other supporters of domestic workers who were seeking to have their national governments ratify C189. The idea behind 12 by 12 was to set a goal of 12 ratifications by the end of 2012 as part of its initial push, although the campaign continued at least two years after its inception. By April 2013, national 12 by 12 campaigns had developed in at least 83 countries, some of which involved collaboration

⁷³ The content of Convention No. 189 and its accompanying Regulation No. 201 are not the topic of this study and will not be covered here. The text of the Convention can be found at: www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::p12100_instrument_id:2551460.

For an examination of Convention No. 189 and Regulation No. 201, see Blackett, Adelle (2012) “The Decent Work for Domestic Workers Convention and Recommendation, 2011,” *American Journal of International Law*, 106:4, 778-94. For a review of the debates that occurred within the ILC’s Committee on Domestic Work, see Tomei, Manuela and Patrick Belser (2011) “New ILO standards on decent work for domestic workers: A summary of the issues and discussions,” *International Labour Review* 15:3-4, 431-438.

with non-union civil society organizations. As of October, 2016, 23 countries had ratified Convention 189.

Table 6: Countries that have ratified C189

Country	Date	Status
Argentina	24 Mar 2014	In Force
Belgium	10 Jun 2015	In Force
Bolivia, Plurinational State of	15 Apr 2013	In Force
Chile	10 Jun 2015	In Force
Colombia	09 May 2014	In Force
Costa Rica	20 Jan 2014	In Force
Dominican Republic	15 May 2015	In Force
Ecuador	18 Dec 2013	In Force
Finland	08 Jan 2015	In Force
Germany	20 Sep 2013	In Force
Guyana	09 Aug 2013	In Force
Ireland	28 Aug 2014	In Force
Italy	22 Jan 2013	In Force
Jamaica	11 Oct 2016	Not in force - - The Convention will enter into force for Jamaica on 11 Oct 2017.
Mauritius	13 Sep 2012	In Force
Nicaragua	10 Jan 2013	In Force
Panama	11 Jun 2015	In Force
Paraguay	07 May 2013	In Force
Philippines	05 Sep 2012	In Force
Portugal	17 Jul 2015	In Force
South Africa	20 Jun 2013	In Force
Switzerland	12 Nov 2014	In Force
Uruguay	14 Jun 2012	In Force

This may not appear to be a particularly successful campaign. However, if we compare the campaign for C189 to that for C177 (the Home Based Workers convention), the former's success is easier to see: so far C177 has only been ratified by seven countries since its adoption in 1996. The ITUC also argues that the campaign for C189 has contributed to a number of successes at the national level outside of ratification, including labour law reforms targeting domestic workers in 50 countries, collective agreements for domestic workers in 3 countries, and

an increase in minimum wages for domestic work in 4 countries. The campaign is also said to have inspired the creation of “dozens” of new domestic worker unions, with a combined membership of over 100,000 (ITUC 2016).

However, assessing the success or failure of 12 by 12 to achieve particular policy outcomes is not the focus of this dissertation. What this project is concerned with is an assessment of the collaborations that developed, or did not develop, between the ITUC, its affiliates, and non-union civil society organizations in the course of the campaign. What my research suggests is that the ITUC was very successful at expanding the original international network of organizations that met in 2006 to mount a campaign within the ILO and to establish a permanent network of domestic worker organizations. However, my research also suggests that replicating this international collaboration at the national level was uneven. Literature on the national campaign in the Philippines, for example, suggests the emergence of a highly effective collaboration between ITUC affiliates, other civil society organizations, and even elements within the state apparatus. My research in India, on the other hand, found that efforts to develop a broad-based coalition around the 12 by 12 campaign did not meet with the same success.

The 12 by 12 campaign has a number of international “partners” who signed on to support and promote it, as detailed in Table 7. A comparison of Table 5 and Table 7 shows the ITUC successfully broadened the scope of participating global civil society actors. ITUC cadre involved in 12 by 12 suggested that their success in pulling together a broad-based group was due to the pre-existing network that emerged first from the 2006 meeting organized by IRENE (ITUC4 interview; ITUC9 interview). However, the participation of global civil society organizations, such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and CARITAS, suggests that ITUC cadre themselves successfully parleyed existing GCS relationships into support for the domestic worker project sometime between the initial 2006 meeting and the launch of 12 by 12. Many of the non-union civil society organizations that participated in the 12 by 12 campaign became “quite prominently involved” in “trying to contribute to... the adoption of the convention at the (ILO) conference,” including Migrant Forum Asia, Human Rights Watch, Anti-Slavery International, and, of course, the newly formed International Domestic Workers Network (now Federation) (ITUC4 interview). A number of these organizations have long collaborated with the ITUC, and it is clear that these relationships were drawn upon by ITUC cadre to build support for the ILO campaign and, subsequently, 12 by 12. One ITUC staff person

noted: “we’ve been working with all those different groups for years on certain issues -- in some cases in a very concrete and ongoing way, in some cases a more ad hoc basis... according to our different agendas” (ITUC9 interview).

This finding is significant. In building a collaborative project around the need to recognise domestic work as work, and to assert the rights of domestic workers, the ITUC cadre was able to draw upon existing relationships with non-union GCS actors whose remit does not explicitly deal with “workers’ rights.” This suggests that in a number of cases, the ITUC and specific non-union GCS organizations have developed collaborations that encapsulate more than the original topic area that initiated the collaboration. For example, as will be discussed in the next chapter, the ICFTU and Amnesty International have worked together on “human rights” issues for decades. The need to address human rights violations of union activists drew the ICFTU and Amnesty together organically. The involvement of Amnesty International in the 12 by 12 campaign proves that Amnesty is willing to support the ITUC in a campaign that is not, strictly speaking, within its traditional remit. This suggests that there is the potential for future ITUC-GCS collaborations built around a sense of solidarity, rather than exchange. This finding in my research on the domestic worker campaigns is supported by similar findings in my research on other collaborations that the ITUC engages in, and will be explored further in the following chapter when I turn to an exploration and analysis of ITUC collaborations more broadly.

Table 7: 12 by 12 participating organizations

Organization	Year established⁷⁴	Primary constituency or issue of concern	Location
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)	2006	International federation of apex national union organizations	Brussels
International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco, and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)	1920	International federation of unions in the food and allied industries	Geneva
International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN) – Becomes International Domestic Workers' Federation (IDWF) in 2013	2009	International network of domestic workers' organizations.	Hong Kong
European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)	1958	European affiliate of ITUC	Brussels
Public Services International (PSI)	1907	International federation of public service unions.	Ferney-Voltaire
Migrant Forum Asia	1994	Advocacy organization concerned with migration.	Quezon City
Human Rights Watch	1987	Human rights research and advocacy.	New York
Anti-Slavery International	1893	Human rights.	London
CARITAS	1950	Umbrella organization for Catholic international charity.	Vatican City
World Solidarity	1971	Belgian international aid organization affiliated with Christian workers movement.	Brussels
Fonds voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking - Socialistische Solidariteit (FOS)	1986	International aid organization affiliated with Flanders socialist movement.	Brussels
Solidar	1948	International social justice organization affiliated with Socialist International	Brussels
Amnesty International	1961	Human rights organization.	London

⁷⁴ Unless otherwise noted, information for the table has been gathered from the Yearbook of International Organizations: ybio.brillonline.com

The campaign around C189 appears to be the example *par excellence* of cooperative collaborations between the ITUC, certain GUFs, and non-union GCS organizations. Yet, an important question that arises from this observation is whether and how such collaborations are playing out at the national level. As argued in the introductory chapter, *transnational* activity involves more than the "international" activity of the ITUC at the ILO and other UN forums. For an organizing effort to be considered transnational it must be a multi-level phenomenon that transcends local, national, and international sites of action. Therefore, I will now report on my findings of collaborations between ITUC affiliates and non-union civil society organizations at the national level of the 12 by 12 campaign. What I find is that, like the uneven response of national states to the campaign, the willingness and ability of ITUC affiliates to forge collaborative approaches to the 12 by 12 campaign are mixed as well.

From the perspective of those who work in the ITUC and IUF offices in Brussels and Geneva, respectively, 12 by 12 has received unprecedented support from coalitions of unions and non-union organizations in a number of “the big countries”. India, the Philippines, Indonesia, Brazil, South Africa, Spain, and Portugal were identified by one ITUC staff member (ITUC4 interview), while another referred to the British TUC as a European affiliate that is engaged in a sustained collaboration with non-union “partners” around domestic worker rights (ITUC9 interview).

Such coalitions involve:

...unions... organizations of domestic workers... women’s rights groups, human rights groups... whatever groups, you see they use (the) opportunity in big countries like India... to actually construct a kind of platform to work together on lobbying the government, on ratification, on adopting more (or) better rules for domestic workers, or extending legislation... In India, we hope to see that government will make a decision soon to extend legislation — existing legislation — to domestic workers. We see a very good coalition that has been formed in Indonesia. Right now several union centres... (have) said, ‘OK, we are going to work together because it will make more impact on the government,’ and there is a union of domestic workers involved and other groupings who are now like a coalition to stand up for the rights of domestic workers. That also, in

part, explains the success of the recent ratification in the Philippines.

There you have the social-technical working group which is also a mix of groups, they have been together for some time and have been coordinating the work together and it allowed them also to establish good contacts with certain key members of the parliament... you see that evolving, these kinds of platforms and coalitions. Not in every country, but in these kind of big important countries. It is quite unique, what is happening (ITUC4 interview).

The relatively short list of “big important countries” that saw successful 12 by 12 campaign coalitions suggests that success in locally/nationally reproducing the broad-based coalitions seen at the international level was uneven across ITUC affiliates. In the UK, TUC and UNITE are working with J4DW (an independent affiliate of UNITE) and Anti-Slavery International.⁷⁵ In Indonesia, both ITUC affiliates established a National Consultancy on the National Law on Domestic Workers and ILO Convention 189 with the Indonesian Domestic Workers Network JALA Pekerja Rumah Tangga.⁷⁶ In Brazil, both ITUC affiliates work with Federação Nacional de Trabalhadoras Domesticas, as well as Caritas Brazil (ITUC 2013). In South Africa, where strong domestic worker unions already exist, the campaign appears to be internal to the union movement (Ibid.). In Spain, the ITUC affiliates cooperate with an unidentified group of “civil society organizations,” and in Portugal, the União Geral de Trabalhadores (UGT –P) is working with Associação Comunitária, a migrant support group (Ibid.). The most successful collaboration appears to have occurred in the Philippines. Here a Technical Working Group on Decent Work for Domestic Workers was established, involving the Employers’ Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), a number of ITUC and non-ITUC trade union federations, a number of MBOs, and NGOs, as well as the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), and

⁷⁵ <http://www.j4dw.com/#!our-mission/cee5>

⁷⁶ http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/6th_update_on_domestic_workers_in_indonesia.pdf

other state agencies.⁷⁷ The strong support this national collaboration received from the state apparatus is likely the product of the crucial role that overseas financial remittances play in the foreign exchange strategy of the Philippine government and the significant number of Philippine domestic workers sending home such remittances.

12 by 12 in India

There has been a great deal of domestic worker organizing and public action in support of the ratification of C189 and the introduction of supporting national legislation in India. All three ITUC-affiliates have been engaged in domestic worker organizing, often with the assistance of ILO-ACTRAV. Each affiliate takes different approaches to organizing. All three have also taken up the 12 by 12 campaign, although not all affiliates embraced coalition-building with non-union civil society. Even coming together to launch an “official” 12 by 12 campaign took a great deal of time, and it is unclear how collaborative the ITUC coalition is in India.

The INTUC appears to have begun organizing domestic workers in 2009, when ILO-ACTRAV offered the CTUO “financial and advisory support” for an INTUC pilot project in the state of Karnataka (Eluri and Singh 2013:25). The project was based on the development of a cadre of INTUC and Congress activists, many of whom were social workers that was dubbed the Karnataka Domestic Workers’ Brigade (Ibid.:26). Eluri & Singh note in their ILO report on the project that “some domestic workers” were amongst the crew of organizers (Ibid.:28-29). This confirms my own impressions after meeting the Brigade on November 29, 2012. Most of the women I talked to identified themselves as Congress/INTUC activists, although there were a few domestic workers as well. Members of the Brigade told me that the focus of their organizing was to have domestic workers sign up simultaneously for the Karnataka Domestic Workers’ Congress (KDWC) and the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) a national health insurance program for families living below the poverty line (Nov. 29, 2012 field notes).⁷⁸ While organizing on the street and door-to-door, Brigade activists also engaged in educating domestic

⁷⁷ Specifically, the ITUC-affiliated Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) and Federation of Free Workers, as well as the Alliance of Progressive Labor, which would come to join the ITUC as part of *Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO)*, a federation established in 2013. In addition, we also see the *Informal Sector Coalition of the Philippines (ISP)*, originally a project of the TUCP, and the domestic workers *MBO, Samahan at Ugnayan ng Manggagawang Pantahanan sa Pilipinas (SUMAPI)*.

⁷⁸ An explanation of RSBY can be found at: http://www.rsby.gov.in/about_rsby.aspx

workers about the 12 by 12 campaign, according to the KDWC leadership (Ibid.). INTUC cadre interviewed for this project reported no sustained interaction with non-union civil society organizations, domestic worker oriented or otherwise, in their organizing efforts related to 12 by 12 and domestic worker organizing more generally (INTUC2 interview, INTUC1 interview, INTUC3 interview).

At the time of my field work, HMS had domestic worker unions affiliated to it in Maharashtra (est. in 1999), Rajasthan (est. in 1995), and Madhya Pradesh (est. “recently) (HMS3 interview). Some HMS affiliates are engaged in a similar approach to domestic worker organizing, focusing on connecting domestic workers to state and central government schemes that they are entitled to, but often do not know about, or cannot access because they lack identification (ITUC7 interview). When I went to interview the president of the HMS domestic workers’ union in Mumbai, he was entering information collected by HMS organizers into the Maharashtra Domestic Workers Welfare Board website. In 2008, the state government of Maharashtra created the Board as a mechanism to provide domestic workers with access to government benefits, including accident insurance, education funding for children, and maternity benefits.⁷⁹ However, registration is limited to an online portal. As few domestic workers have access to the internet, HMS cadre collect the information needed to register, and enter it into the web portal themselves, a time-consuming process given the extremely long registration form. HMS also assists their members in acquiring a ration card, voting card, and Permanent Account Number, issued by the tax department (similar to a Canadian Social Insurance Number). In effect, accessing government programs acts as a “hook” for organizers, encouraging workers to join the union, in order to get assistance with state agencies.

However, other HMS affiliates have a more expansive domestic worker organizing program. For example, in addition to assisting domestic workers with accessing state benefits, HMS affiliate, General Mazdoor Sabha (GMS), in Thane organizes “health-related programs” as part of their domestic worker organizing campaign. Often with the assistance of civil society organizations like the Red Cross, GMS organizes “medical camps,” where women can have their health assessed, and provide educational programs on topics such as HIV/AIDS. In addition to

⁷⁹ The Act can be found at: <https://mahakamgar.maharashtra.gov.in/images/dcl/pdf/maharashtra-domestic-workers-welfare-board-act-2008.pdf>

organizing the women into the union, GMS has also helped establish “self-help” groups for women in their communities. GMS also provides direct advocacy for domestic workers, ensuring they receive their proper wages and are not being harassed.

HMS Women’s Committee, which has been coordinating the 12 by 12 efforts for HMS, has discussed co-ordinated campaigning with other CTUO women’s groups (HMS3 interview). In March 2012, around the same time as the IDWN/IUF meeting in Chennai, HMS organized a workshop on 12 by 12, with the assistance of the ILO and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, a German organization with close ties to the ITUC.⁸⁰ At this meeting, representatives of CITU, INTUC, and BMS women’s committees were present, as were representatives from SEWA. It was decided that a “national core committee,” involving a women’s representative from each CTUO, would be created with the aim of coordinating “joint activities for ratification of ILO Convention 189 (HMS3 interview). However, no evidence of, or further reference to, this committee could be found in statements from the CTUOs or news. It seems that this committee could not be sustained. No non-CTUO organizations appear to have been invited, and a senior member of the HMS cadre suggested that there were no civil society organizations outside of the CTUOs that were interested in the campaign (HMS2 interview). This would prove to be incorrect. In fact, numerous civil society organizations, including domestic worker MBOs and church-based NGOs have been actively lobbying the central government on behalf of domestic workers.

Only SEWA appears to have reached out to non-union civil society in their efforts to establish a broad-based national campaign. In March 2012, a national meeting of domestic worker organizations was organized by the IDWN and IUF. The meeting was attended by representatives of both SEWA and the National Domestic Workers Movement, an NGO that has been working with domestic workers since the 1980s, and has recently taken an interest in assisting domestic workers they support to establish independent unions (SEWA1 interview). Most of the individuals attending were from domestic worker unions from southern States, although there were attendees from unions, cooperatives, and NGOs from across India (see table 8 below). Out of this meeting, a call went out to create a “National Platform for Domestic

⁸⁰ The HMS had previously organized workshops on child labour in domestic work with the assistance of the ILO: <http://www.hindmazdoorsabha.com/two-day-hmsilo-national-workshop-domestic-workers-union.html>

Workers” and to participate in the National Task Force to develop the National Policy for Domestic Workers.⁸¹

Table 8: Attending organizations of March 17-18, 2012 meeting on domestic work called by IDWN/IUF

Name	Region	Function
1. Self Employed Women Association	National	CTUO
2. National Domestic Workers Movement	National	NGO supporting DW
3. Sarv Shramik Sangh	Mumbai, Maharashtra	DW union
4. Sarv Shramil Sangh	Pune, Maharashtra	DW union
5. Manuel Workers Union	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	composite union, incl. DW
6. Nirmala Niketan	Delhi	DW co-operative
7. Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Union	Tamil Nadu	DW union
8. Karnataka Domestic Workers Union	Karnataka	DW union
9. Karnataka Domestic Workers Rights Union	Karnataka	DW union
10. Annai Illam	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	NGO supporting migrant workers
11. Unorganized Workers Federation	Tamil Nadu	informal workers' MBO
12. Centre for Women and Development	Delhi	academic research centre
13. Manushi Trade Union for Domestic Workers	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	DW union

Other organizations had already been engaged in the national policy-making process. In 2008 the National Commission for Women and the National Campaign Committee of Unorganised Sector Workers presented the central government two draft bills.⁸² The Government of India was compelled to initiate a task force on the rights of domestic workers in 2009.⁸³ However, the central government has not followed through, and this has led to a series of actions by more than one group of unions and non-union civil society coalitions.

It appears that coordinating collective action around C189 and 12 by 12 amongst those trade unions and NGOs concerned with domestic workers has been less successful than some

⁸² http://wiego.org/informal_economy_law/domestic-workers-india

⁸³ http://www.nirmana.org/pdf/national_policy_on_domestic_work_2011.pdf

other countries.⁸⁴ Coalitions between Indian trade unions and other civil society groups have emerged, but more slowly and unevenly, and the “official” 12 by 12 campaign in India was not officially launched until December 18, 2012.⁸⁵ Coalitions involving ITUC affiliates appear to have required a fair bit of nudging support by the ILO and ITUC, as evidenced by the number of workshops sponsored by the international bodies in India. However, the network of union and NGOs campaigning for the ratification of C189 does not appear to be very strong, despite these efforts.

Coalition politics are challenging in India for a few reasons. First, the size of India, and the resources needed to attend national meetings makes country-level organizing very challenging. For example, the March 2012 meeting in Chennai, called by the IDWN and IUF did have attendees from across India; however, the majority of those in attendance were from unions in the South of the country (SEWA1 interview). Second, as discussed in Chapter 5, there is a historical lack of coordination between the numerous national trade union centres, that is only now being addressed. Evidence of the unfamiliarity in working together can be seen in the two meetings held in March 2012 by different affiliates of the ITUC. The Chennai meeting organized by IDWN and IUF was attended by a number of important domestic worker organizations, including SEWA and the National Domestic Worker Movement (NDWM). However, none of the other CTUOs participated. Almost concurrently, another meeting was taking place in Manadir, organized by the HMS Women’s Committee, with the assistance of the ILO and FES.

Third, there is a dearth of existing collaborations between the CTUOs and non-union civil society organizations at the national level, and this appears to reflect the negative opinion of

⁸⁴ As mentioned earlier, the coalition that emerged in the Philippines was particularly noteworthy. Shortly after the international declaration to pursue an ILO Convention on domestic work, the Technical Working Group on Decent Work for Domestic Workers was established with the assistance of the ILO. A forum that might be called tripartite-plus, the working group consisted of the Employers’ Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), as well as the ITUC-affiliated Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) and Federation of Free Workers, as well as the Alliance of Progressive Labor, which would come to join the ITUC as part of *Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO)*, a federation established in 2013. In addition, we also see the Informal Sector Coalition of the Philippines (ISP), originally a project of the TUCP, and the domestic workers MBO, *Samahan at Ugnayan ng Manggagawang Pantahanan sa Pilipinas (SUMAPI)*.

⁸⁵ http://www.ituc-csi.org/india,11530?debut_campup_11530=5#pagination_campup_11530

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Trade-unions-launch-campaign/articleshow/11150026.cms?referral=PM>

many national CTUO leaders on the topic of working with NGOs. The workshop, organized by HMS, referred to above, did not involve any civil society organizations. In fact the only NGO that the INTUC and HMS appear to work with is the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), a German organization that is something between an NGO and a state agency, as it is the international aid arm of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD).⁸⁶ FES provides technical and financial support for projects that fit its social democratic agenda and works closely with both the ITUC and the ILO. The exception to this general unwillingness to work with non-union civil society appears to be SEWA, which has forged a collaboration with the NDWM to create a national platform to advance their legislative agenda. The lack of existing collaborations between CTUOs and non-union civil society means that any efforts to organize non-union support for domestic worker rights into a large and coherent coalition would need to start from scratch.

Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that organizing domestic workers is subsumed within a much larger struggle for organized labour in India: the need to organize the 93% of the Indian workforce that works informally. Domestic workers are only one of many such groups that need to be organized and defended in India, and the scope of this organizing challenge cannot be overstated. In interviews with a number of SEWA leaders and cadre, there were mixed views on the importance of the 12 by 12 campaign and how central it is to the work of the organization. When asked about the 12 by 12 campaign in India, one national leader began their response by pointing out that domestic workers were but one of 125 “sub-trades” that SEWA organizes within the informal economy (SEWA3 interview). This informant went on to suggest that prioritizing a national campaign, such as 12 by 12, could not be taken by someone in the national office, as each trade group establishes its own priorities.

This suggests that a significant challenge to transnational organizing campaigns is the ability to fit into existing, ongoing projects. The question for those SEWA cadre organizing

⁸⁶ As was explained to me by its staff present at the Belem WSF in 2009 (field notes, January, 2009 -Belem, Brazil), FES re-emerged in the post-war period as one of a number of privately organized international development agencies. As part of the compromises established during this period, major political parties were allotted public funds to engage in international work that “reflects German values,” broadly speaking. Each major political party has an equivalent organization, and the FES is the organization “ideologically” (NGO1 interview) associated with the SPD. It interprets “German social values” to mean “the advancement of public policy issues in the spirit of the basic values of social democracy” (fesdc.org/content/aboutus.htm). One of its key areas of work is in supporting the work of democratic trade unions. In practice, this means working most closely and most regularly with ITUC affiliates, due to the relationship between the SPD and the German union federation, Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB), which is affiliated to the ITUC (NGO1 interview).

domestic workers is how such a campaign fits within the ongoing efforts to raise awareness and secure national legislation. For one informant, 12 by 12 is an important project only if “the domestic worker on the ground” knows about and connects to the campaign: “how does this new campaigning create awareness within the domestic worker themselves?” (SEWA3 interview). Another informant suggested that the focus on ratification was not paramount for many Indian labour activists involved in domestic worker organizing, as they were convinced that the GOI would fail to ratify the convention prior to enacting legislation. Rather than focus on ratification, they focused instead on their real goal: national legislation (SEWA1 interview). Indeed, it seems that getting legislation passed in the Lok Sabha is the priority for the Indian 12 by 12 campaign, rather than ratification of C189.

Significance of transnational domestic worker campaigns

The transnational domestic worker campaigns co-ordinated by the ITUC were successful in a number of ways. First, the campaigns demonstrate concretely that union and non-union organizations concerned with workers’ rights can successfully work together and produce a long-term, multifaceted, transnational coalition. This coalition was able to produce concrete results: the ILO Governing Body adopted C189 within six years of the initial decision of this coalition to pursue a convention, which is an astonishingly short period of time, according to informants. While the first year of the 12 by 12 Campaign failed to secure twelve national ratifications, it did manage to secure fourteen ratifications by 2014. While this may not appear to be an outright success, it is double the number of ratifications that a similar campaign for the Rights of Home-based Workers (C177) that was undertaken by the ITUC in 1996.

There is also evidence from my interviews in India to suggest that transnational organizing around the ILO Convention has contributed to an increase in local domestic worker organizing, at least in India. As shown above, support for domestic workers has, for decades, largely been provided by charitable and activist NGOs at the local level; unions have been very slow to organize domestic workers, although there are examples of the HMS having established domestic worker unions as far back as the mid-1990s (HMS3 interview). However, my informants have suggested over the past few years, two trends can be seen. First, most of the CTUOs have taken a stronger interest in organizing domestic workers into their existing structures (DW2 interview; HMS2 interview; HMS4 interview; ITUC7 interview; SEWA1

interview). Some cadres from NGOs and non-affiliated domestic worker unions appeared somewhat cynical about this move, suggesting that this increased interest is related to the prestige of being involved in ILO discussions (DW2 interview, DW4 interview).

The second local trend I can identify is a shift in the NGOs. A number of the NGOs that have traditionally *supported* domestic workers have begun to *organize* these workers into new unions. Again, this is not entirely new. However, for some NGOs, at least, the increased interest in unionization appears to be related to the privileged position of unions within the ILO structure. A SEWA cadre told me about being approached by someone from a national NGO that had supported domestic workers for some time, who was perplexed at not being invited to early ILO organizing meetings around the upcoming Convention debate:

She [a NGO cadre] was always in the movement approach because you know being church and being a foreigner and all [...] And then, when the ILO Convention discussions took off, then she realized that she has no space there, (because) she is not a union. [...] And [...] when they saw SEWA going to these meetings and I was bringing information to them they were asking me, “how come you there?” I said “just because we are a trade union. We were central union. So they begin to ask me, [...] what’s the central union.’ So I said, I tried to [...] explain (it) to them. Then they invited me to their national conference, [...] ‘will you come and explain what is the central trade union to all our people.’ [...] This happened about two or two and half years ago. So I went and explained to them what is the central trade union, what is the union and [...] how do you build up unions. And then subsequently several of them started registering unions in their own states, but then they are now stumped; they wanted to become a central trade union. I said that’s impossible, you cannot become a central trade union with one sector. [...] And this was a big shock to them. So the church finally they decided that they will begin to organize workers in general. So, the catholic church has what they call a labour wing (SEWA1 interview).

Both of these trends suggest that in India discussions around C189 have raised the profile of domestic workers and made some contribution to an increase in organizing activity. Clearly, my data cannot prove this in a quantitative manner, and — as argued earlier — the 12 by 12 campaign in India was not as successful as it was in other countries, such as the Philippines. Nonetheless, in their local struggle for recognition as workers, it appears that discussions around C189 have helped domestic workers in this crucial first step.

The third, and perhaps most important contribution of this transnational coalition is that it has produced a new international union organization of domestic workers that builds on the collaborations established between the international trade union federations and non-union civil society organizations. The IDWF is unique amongst international union federations in that it allows a role for non-union labour organizations to participate; producing an unprecedented example of flexible transnational labour organizing on the part of the international union federations. *This flexibility suggests that within some international union federations there exists a strong interest to incorporate emerging, highly vulnerable fractions of the working class that were previously left out of the existing labour movement.*

The creation of the IDWF needs to be understood as a historically significant moment in the history of transnational class formation. Arguably, institutions which make up the international union movement need to take on a more active role in organizing workers transnationally, and in challenging transnational capital. However, it seems clear that existing union federations cannot do this alone – the majority of the international union cadre interviewed for this project accepted this premise. However, the collaboration, or potential collaboration, between union organizations and NGOs has been debated for the past two decades (IUF3 interview), and it is clear from my interviews with the national leadership of the Indian ITUC affiliates that there is still resistance to working with non-union civil society. The details of this debate will be investigated more thoroughly in the following chapter. What is important for this discussion is to acknowledge that *the creation of a hybrid organization, such as IDWN, appears to represent a transcendence of this debate.*

Explaining the recent successes in transnational domestic worker organizing

The past 10 years of transnational domestic worker organizing is remarkable. Activists within the international union institutions, fledging MBOs of domestic workers, and the NGOs

that support them managed to secure an ILO Convention, launch a relatively successful transnational campaign to have that Convention ratified, and establish a permanent international union federation of domestic workers. A fraction of the global working class, highly marginalized by gendered structures of racialization is being recognized by the established labour movement, labour academics, states, and the interstate system, as workers who deserve to have the same regulatory protection as other workers.

The previous section outlines the highly effective organizing work of the cadre affiliated with the IUF, ITUC and its Indian affiliates – particularly those working within SEWA – and those affiliated with a wide range of civil society organizations – domestic worker MBOs and NGOs that have long supported domestic workers, as well as NGOs that are concerned with the rights of women, the rights of migrants, and human rights generally. Most impressive, for the purposes of this research project, is the collaboration itself. Coordinating the lobbying efforts of affiliates and allies based around the world, speaking many languages, and coming from different cultural and organizational backgrounds is undoubtedly challenging, even for a well-resourced organization like the ITUC. The creation of the IDWF is historic. While a number of “new” GUFs have emerged over the past 25 years, these have all been the product of mergers (Rütters 2001). No new federation has been created from scratch in a century.

Yet, as inspiring as the accomplishments of these women – and these collaborations have been the work almost exclusively of women – a thorough understanding of how these domestic worker campaigns were so successful over the past 10 years needs to look beyond the agency of those currently involved. Structural elaboration is not simply the product of contemporary human agency. The agency of these activist cadres is shaped by the structures in which they work. These structures have, in turned been shaped by the agency of past actors. The future of domestic worker organizing has been shaped, in part, by the activities of current cadre. Similarly, the institutions in which these contemporaries successfully operate was shaped by those who preceded them, who struggled against racism and sexism within union institutions at all levels.

As outlined in Chapter 3, my research and analysis is guided by critical realism, and specifically Archer’s morphogenetic model of social change, which posits that the actions of past actors is crucial to the shape of contemporary structures or institutions (Archer 2011). The institutions of the international union movement have been historically hostile to working with

non-affiliates,⁸⁷ and have a poor historical record of effectively engaging workers outside of Europe, particularly those marginalized through gendered structures of racialization.⁸⁸ To understand how such institutions came to embrace domestic workers in 2006, it is necessary to examine how the agency of past actors reshaped these organizations. What the following argues is that the ground was prepared for the domestic worker campaign by the activities of past actors. I highlight three key areas: the interest of ILO cadre in domestic work over the past 60 years, the struggle of women activists within the IFTU and ITUC, and the past efforts of activist cadres to have the struggle of women informal workers prioritized by the international labour movement. Of particular importance to contemporary successes are the past activities of women activists within the ICFTU and within SEWA.

Domestic work at the ILO

As noted earlier, one international union cadre who was intimately involved with the transnational domestic worker campaigns suggested that the speed with which C189 was placed on the ILC agenda, was “incredible.” However, she also noted that this was due to a number of factors, including strong support from the cadre of the ILO, and previous work done by the ILO on the topic of regulating domestic work. Indeed, while C189 is unique in the fact that it seeks to address the needs and rights of domestic workers as a specific category, domestic work itself has been discussed several times at the ILO since 1936. Table 9 lists the Conventions and Recommendations that include domestic work as a category, and therefore spell out certain rights afforded to domestic workers, along with other workers. Table 10 lists the resolutions made, and actions taken (or not) by the ILC, the ILO Governing Body (GB), and other bodies of the ILO, on the specific topic of regulating domestic work. Both tables are built on research conducted by D’Souza (2010) as an overview of ILO engagement with the question of specifically regulating domestic work through a convention prior to the efforts to have C189 placed on the ILC agenda.

What is clear from these tables is that the speed with which C189 was placed on the ILC agenda is partially attributable to the existing research and previous discussions at past meetings of the ILC, the ILO GB, and various Meetings of Experts. As Table 9 shows, a small number of

⁸⁷ See above: “The struggle for unity and solidarity: marginalization of women in the international trade union movement” in chapter 4.

⁸⁸ See above: “The struggle for unity and solidarity: North-South Relations” in chapter 4.

Recommendations, and one Convention already note the specificity of domestic work as a form of labour requiring specific forms of regulation in terms of the employment of children and young people, the regulation of employment agencies, and the challenge of inspecting non-industrial workplaces, such as homes that employ domestics.

Table 9: Conventions, Recommendations, and Protocols addressing domestic work

Convention, Recommendation, or Protocol	Year adopted	Effect
Medical Examination of Young Persons Recommendation (No.79)	1946	Recommends that youth be regularly examined medically. Specifically lists domestic work as category.
Employment Services Recommendation (No. 83)	1948	Recommends that separate employment agencies be created for certain forms of employment, including domestic work.
Protocol to Labour Inspection Convention (P81)	1995	Addresses the need for regular inspections of non-industrial and non-commercial workplaces, such as domestic workplaces.

Table created from D'Souza, 2010: 39-40.

There are two significant challenges for those who would like to see the ILO address a topic. One is establishing that the topic is of importance and within the organization's mandate. Table 10 shows that the cadre of the ILO advocating for a spot on the ILC agenda could point to past Resolutions — in 1936, 1939, 1948, 1951, 1964, and 1965 — calling upon the GB to have domestic work placed on the agenda, or calling upon Member States to regulate domestic work, as evidence that such a Convention was both within the remit of the ILO and that there had been historical support for ILO action on the topic. The other challenge is in providing ILC delegates statistical information on the topic. Table 10 suggests that the cadre could credibly argue that much work had already been done. What we can see from these tables is that although the ITUC was able, with the help of supportive ILO staff, to have a Convention on domestic work pushed onto the agenda in record time, in fact, much of the work needed to have a Convention drafted was already underway or done by ILO staff previously.

Table 10: Discussions of domestic work prior to 2010

Year/ forum	Initial Discussion	Result
1936/ ILC	Draft Convention on paid holidays (C52).	Domestic workers excluded from C52. ILC requests GB to place question of domestic work on later agenda.
1939/ Labour Conference of American States	Resolution calling, <i>inter-alia</i> , for the regulation of domestic work.	Resolution adopted. No Convention of Regulation adopted.
1945/ ILC	Resolution concerning the employment of children.	Resolution adopted that Member States should regulate the employment of children, including their employment in domestic work, for wages or maintenance. No Convention of Regulation adopted.
1948/ ILC	Resolution calling for discussion of domestic work to be placed on future agenda.	Question adjourned by GB in 1950, but meeting of experts called together.
1951/ Meeting of Experts	Discussion of the need to have domestic work regulated.	Recommendation made that domestic work be regulated as a unique form of employment. GB encouraged to put regulation on the ILC agenda. No action taken by GB.
1964/ African Regional Conference of the ILO	Resolution to have domestic work studied with an eye to regulation.	No action taken by GB.
1965/ ILC	Resolution encouraging Member States to regulate domestic work, and inviting GB to conduct further research on topic, and place domestic work on a future agenda.	Resolution adopted.
1967/ Governing Body	Survey of Member States on existing regulations of domestic work.	Report finds that domestic workers face poor working conditions and remuneration; sector under regulated; children particularly vulnerable to exploitation.
2005/ Meeting of Experts	2004 ILC Resolution on the need for a “rights-based” approach to labour migration.	2006 Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, which identifies domestic workers as “particularly vulnerable” (Principle 9.8) and domestic work as “outside the usual avenues of regulation and protection” (Principle 11.2) ⁸⁹

Table created from D’Souza, 2010: 42-45.

⁸⁹ The Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration can be found at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_178672.pdf

An obvious question that arises is why, if worker representatives between 1939 and 1967 had been able to have motions passed to investigate domestic work with an eye on a future Convention, were they unsuccessful at having a Convention come to the ILC for a vote? The answer lies in two places, the ILO and the ICFTU, which organizes the ILO workers' caucus, and can be summed up with a single word: *recognition*. It is one thing to pass a vague motion suggesting that Member States pay attention to a topic, or another motion suggesting that the ILO study the topic further. Voting in favour of such motions comes with no political cost, and, therefore, there is little effort required to achieve consensus. Adopting a Convention is another thing entirely because it means that — in theory, at least — Member States are committing to act on the topic, and willing to have ILO cadres work within each country with state bureaucracies and civil society to ensure that action is taken. Committing to a Convention then, suggests that ILC delegates *recognize* that a topic is of significant importance that employers, unions, and states are willing — in theory, at least — to follow up on the topic, negotiate with each other at the national and possibly sub-national level, and develop specific laws and policies. What was required for domestic workers to be seen as a priority, was in part a recognition of their “workerness” by the those within ILO and ICFTU who could push for such a Convention to be tabled.

Struggle of women within the ICFTU/ITUC

Clearly past work done by the ILO on domestic work influenced the speed with which the Convention was added to the ILC agenda in 2010. However, the numerous mentions of domestic work, and the lack of regulatory action suggests that something had changed over the past seven decades to make the efforts in 2006-2010 more productive than in the past. I argue that part of that change is a change in the status of women within the international trade union movement over that period. What was missing until recently, was political organization and the will to see a campaign through on an issue that almost exclusively impacted women workers. What has changed, slowly over the past 70 plus years, was the influence of women within the ICFTU/ITUC. While the activities of current women activists within the ITUC are immediately responsible for the development of a domestic worker federation and a successful transnational campaign for

domestic workers' rights, their actions build upon the actions of past actors, women activists within the international union movement who fought for decades to challenge the male-dominated institutions of the movement.

Nor is this simply the case of human agency. "Gender regimes" or "gender arrangements" are "enduring patterns of gender relations" (Franzway and Fonow 2011:7), and therefore structural, in the sense that existing ideological frameworks structure the thinking of agents at any given time and place. Yet, social structures are not fixed forever, and it is the agency of past actors that produces the (past) institutional innovations that allow current actors to further innovate. Therefore, to understand how the contemporary cadre of the international union movement were able to successfully organize and advocate for domestic workers — a feminized and marginalized fraction of the global working class — it is necessary to chart the past struggles of women workers within the trade union movement against entrenched gender regimes. These struggles have largely been outlined in Chapter 4, and therefore, I will only briefly return to that history before incorporating data from my own interviews with contemporary women cadre. The point I make here is that the struggles of women activists within the international union movement, particularly over the history of the ICFTU, produced the institutional innovations of which current actors are able to take advantage.

As outlined in Chapter 4, women have been involved in the international union movement since its inception. However, the first major effort to assert a distinctly women's agenda did not appear until the peace talks in the aftermath of WWI, when a group of women marginalized from the peace talks and the emergent ILO decided to establish the International Congress of Working Women (ICWW), subsequently the International Federation of Working Women (IFWW). This effort was short lived, however, as it faced a lack of support, and even hostility from the IFTU, and its most important national affiliates. Initially offered affiliation to the IFTU and a promise of financial support for a women's department, the IFWW was absorbed by the IFTU, which then reneged on its promises. The proposed women's department was turned into an underfunded committee, and then disbanded in 1938. The interwar period then was a time when the international working women's movement had few victories. Nonetheless,

this was the first time working women asserted themselves within the international union movement collectively, and their activities would set the stage for further developments in the post-WWII period.

Women activists within the ICFTU would build upon these efforts and through their activism would eventually produce significant structural changes within the international trade union movement. These changes would provide the structure through which contemporary activists and cadre could begin to build the networks with non-union women's groups that would eventually be instrumental in delivering the C189 and 12 by 12 campaigns. Part of this story is, of course, related to the increase in women engaging in work outside the home over the period of history in which the ICFTU existed. As Petrović notes, this is one of the most profound structural changes to the international labour movement, as can be seen from the following membership statistics from the ICFTU (Petrović 2000:118):

Table 11: Increase in female ICFTU membership 1950-2000

Year	Percentage of ICFTU members who are women
1950	7%
1965	22%
1985	30%
1996	34%
1999	39.9%

However, the increase in Congress attendance suggests that an increase in women participating was not commensurate with this increase in membership numbers. In 1983, only 10% of Congress attendees were women, only increasing to 30% in 1996 (Petrovic 2000:119). Indeed, the history of women worker activists clearly shows that every gain for them was a struggle, and the benefits of this struggle were generally not felt until the next generation of women worker activists.

Early in the ICFTU's history an informal network of women activists formed, and was able to secure support for a formal Women's Committee (WC) in 1957. The WC struggled for years to have gender issues taken seriously by the EB and the Congress. In the 1970s, it appears that the WC became more assertive, which began to produce some

changes. Initially, these changes were merely expressions of support for gender equity, but by the late 1970s the WC succeeded in having a Program of Action for the Integration of Women into Trade Unions adopted at the 1979 Congress. At the subsequent Congress, in 1983, this program was translated into proposals for a WC representative on all governing bodies, including the EB, a policy to increase the number of women delegates at future congress meetings, and a Women's Bureau within the ICFTU secretariat. These changes in the internal workings of the ICFTU governing structure in the 1980s would lead to a change in organizing culture of the ICFTU as well. By the 1990s, the Women's Bureau was changed to the Equity Department, and its mandate was commensurately expanded.

As I outline in Chapter 4, the WC and the Women's Bureau launched a number of organizing and training campaigns across Africa and Asia, early in their mandate to increase the participation of women in unions, which eventually contributed to the expansion of the informal network of women activists driving these changes within the union movement. With the creation of the Equity Department in 1992, such programs were expanded, and were more clearly focused on directly addressing the challenges facing women in the workplace and increasing the role of women in union leadership. Such campaigns continue through the ITUC, with contemporary examples such as the Decisions for Life Campaign, which engages young women in a number of African countries on the specific challenges facing women workers,⁹⁰ and the Count Me In! campaign which aims to increase the number of women delegates at the next Congress in 2018.⁹¹

Support for WC efforts to include more women from Africa, Asia, and Latin America in its deliberations was not uniform, of course, however, the Committee was by far ahead of the ICFTU overall in terms of its efforts to engage issues of importance to workers outside of the ICFTU's European heartland. As Richards argues: "Although there were earlier transnational women's labor organizations that sought to elevate

⁹⁰ See the campaign guide at: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/ituc_dfl_campaign_guide_en.pdf

⁹¹ The campaigns webpage can be found at: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/count-us-in>

women's position in labor movements, none built the kinds of sustained connections with women in the developing countries that the WC did" (2011: 417).

The struggle of WC activists in the 1960s and 1970s led to structural changes in the formal leadership structure of the ICFTU. These changes, in turn, led to a change in the organizing culture, with a greater focus on engaging women workers, and particularly women workers from Southern countries. This change in organizing culture contributed to two further institutional innovations that can be seen in the work of the ITUC. One is a greater willingness to engage non-union women's groups, who have been a source of support for ITUC organizing around issues important to women workers. This is explored further in the next chapter when I survey civil society collaborations that the ITUC has developed. The efforts to engage women workers from Africa and Asia more specifically, which clearly took decades to emerge, would eventually lead to another institutional innovation. This innovation is the willingness to engage workers whose work does not traditionally 'fit' within the established forms of trade union organization – specifically, women who work within the informal sectors of the global labour market.

Struggle of informal workers within organized labour

As Fransway and Fonow argue, the international labour movement has been forced by changes to the global political economy to adopt “more flexible policies designed to include the needs and interests of the greater variety of potential members” (Franzway and Fonow 2011:4). Similarly, they argue, “feminism has been enlivened by the need to include the diversities of global gender relations” (Ibid.:5). Just as there is no universal worker (premised on the male, industrial worker), there is no universal woman (premised on the experience of middle-class women in the industrialized North). The women activists within the ICFTU struggled against a patriarchal social structure to have issues facing women workers taken seriously by the international union movement. However, it is also the case that within the WC there was a great struggle to define these issues in a way that recognized the experience of working women outside the industrialized North – particularly women employed informally, outside of the regulatory protection of the state and the union.

The struggle of domestic workers to be recognized as workers can be located within the broader struggle of informally employed workers whose employment is often not legally recognized, and therefore not legally protected by labour legislation. Recognition as workers is a key struggle for those outside of traditional forms of proletarian labour. Here, I chart the ongoing struggle of informal workers to have their work recognized by the international trade union movement, and how this struggle contributed to the success of the struggle for C189. What I show in this subsection is that the success of the campaign for 189 *was in part due to the lessons learned from earlier stages of the struggle of informal worker organizations*, such as SEWA in India.

The terms “informal employment” and “informal economy” are often used interchangeably, although the ILO and the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) have worked to develop them as distinct analytical categories. The definitions arrived at are the product of decades of shifting definitions, related to changes in the GPE since the mid-20th Century. Just as the size and composition of informal economic activity has varied with “historically specific patterns of capitalist development” (Bernstein, as cited in Barnes 2012:148), definitions of informal economic activity have varied historically as well.

The term “informal sector” was first used by Hart in 1971 to identify the self-employed and small-scale entrepreneurs who appeared to operate outside of the developing capitalist markets of post-colonial countries, such as India (Bacchetta, Bustamante, and Ernst 2009; Breman 1999; Munck 2013; Routh 2011). The idea that a pre-capitalist economy operated outside of the developing market system, was identified by scholars dubbed the dualist school for their argument that these two economies operated as a duality, a “formal,” regulated capitalist economy and an “informal,” unregulated subsistence economy. The dualist argument that the formal and informal economies operated independent of each other would come to be challenged by a “structuralist” school (Frangi and Routh 2014; Chen 2012; Routh 2011; Bacchetta and Bustamante 2009). This school pointed to the growth of informal non-agricultural employment relations within capitalist industries as evidence of strong links between informal employment and the development of capitalism under neoliberalism. The

increased use of informal employment relations, it was argued, was a strategy to lower production costs in the face of increased global competition, made easier by the emergence of neoliberalism as a global ideological and policy framework (Routh 2011:214–16). For Barnes (2012), the formal-informal divide can obscure the realization of surplus value that takes place through the employment of informal labour. What is important for scholars concerned with the plight of workers is not to utilize these categories as simply different types of work, but rather to show how they are different forms of exploitation (Ibid.:151).

In 1993, the ILCS adopted a resolution that defined the “informal sector” as household or unincorporated enterprises that may be own-account enterprise, or enterprise of informal employers, irrespective of the nature of the workplace, extent of capital invested or duration of the operation. The purpose of this definition was to enable the statistical measurement of economic activity, not necessarily to explore the precarious lives of informally employed workers (Routh 2011:218). This sectoral approach was consistent with how the ILO had conceptualized informality since the early 1970s, when it began to study the topic (Ibid.).

For Routh, definitions of informal economic activity need to reflect the complex reality of people’s actual economic activity in countries such as India, which often involves a mix of self-employment, informal waged work, criminal activity, and “non-market exchanges” (2011:217). A sectoral approach, he argues, fails to do so. In 2001, the Delhi Group, an Expert Panel called together by the ILC to study the informal sector, suggested that the concept of “informal employment” be developed to complement the concept of an informal sector (Routh 2011:219). In 2003 the ICLS adopted a definition of “informal employment,” that drew from a 2002 ILO report, *Decent Work and the Informal Economy*⁹² (Ibid.), although it rejected the term “employment in the informal economy,” as suggested in the 2002 report. Informal

⁹² The 2002 ILO report can be found at:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc90/pdf/rep-vi.pdf>

The 2003 ICLS report can be found at:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb289/pdf/icls-17.pdf>

employment was now defined as “paid employment as well as self-employment, including unpaid work in an enterprise operated by another member of the household or family, and in the production of goods for own final use by households” (Ibid.). Routh suggests that the definition developed by the ICLS around “informal employment” allows for “a much more complete picture of the... ‘real life’ political economy” of informal economic activity (Ibid.:218). The definition of informal employment developed by the ICLS, he argues, acknowledges informal employment in both the formal and informal sectors, and “links the informal workers with their work, irrespective of the presence of a workplace or employer” (Ibid.:220), which is crucial for policy debates about the governance of employment relations and the provision of social security.

What is key for this otherwise academic discussion of definitions, is that proper recognition is key to worker organizing. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, for those employed informally, such as domestic workers, the struggle for protective regulation and union representation has been bound up in their struggle for recognition as workers. In my interviews with key SEWA cadre, it was made clear that gaining such recognition for their members was a guiding principle of their efforts from the beginning and is central to the transnational struggle of informal workers. It is this need for recognition that provides the motivation for informal worker organizations to develop transnational networks and engage the ILO process (Bonner and Carré 2013:2).

In the previous subsection of this chapter, I argue that part of the explanation for the success of the transnational campaign for C189 was the groundwork laid by women activists in the international trade union movement. The struggle of these women activists was twofold. First they struggled with a male-dominated union leadership to have the needs and rights of women workers seriously. As outlined above, and in Chapter 4, this struggle has been going on within the international union federations since 1919, at least. The story of SEWA illustrates how this struggle also took place in local and national contexts as well. The second struggle was somewhat more internal to the official committees and unofficial networks of women activists within the leadership and cadre of the international labour movement. In this struggle, women activists struggled to define their project in a way that did not replicate the North-South divide reflective in the

international union federations more broadly. These women struggled with the need to include — and even focus on — the issues facing the most marginalized women in the global labour force. *Central to this struggle was the eventual willingness to identify informal employment relations as key to the marginalization of women workers in countries such as India.*

Here, I want to focus on the women from India and elsewhere who pushed the ICFTU WC — and the ICFTU more broadly — to confront the magnitude of informality for women workers around the world. Central to this narrative is SEWA. Since its inception as an independent union, the leadership of SEWA has, perhaps more than any other national union in the world, sought to connect the local struggles of its members to informal workers in other countries, as well as to the process of international norm setting at the ILO. SEWA leaders had a clear understanding that efforts to achieve national legislation for informal workers would be greatly aided by ILO attention to the topic (SEWA6 interview; Prügl 1999:112). To do this SEWA pursued affiliation with the international union institutions, with the intention of having the struggle of informal workers taken seriously by the international union movement. SEWA was also instrumental in establishing a number of transnational civil society organizations through which the interests of informal workers could be pursued in international forums.

While SEWA continues to play a key role in transnational organizing efforts around informal labour, perhaps its most significant contributions to the success of contemporary organizing around domestic work, for example, occurred approximately 25 years ago. As I argue throughout this dissertation, institutional innovation is not simply the product of the agency of contemporary actors. Agency is always constrained and enabled by existing social structure; existing social structure is not the product of contemporary agency, but rather, the product of the agency of past actors. This being the case, it's safe to argue that the success of the campaign for C189 was in part dependent on the activities of what might be considered the first generation of SEWA's cadre, whose activities contributed to institutional innovations within the international trade union movement and the ILO necessary for the contemporary success of transnational domestic worker organizing.

Table 12 summarizes a number of key historical events of the transnational movement of informal workers, according to WIEGO.⁹³ Using this timeline as a framework of discussion, below I discuss a number of key contributions of SEWA's first generation cadre that were central to contemporary transnational informal worker organizing, including domestic worker organizing.

Table 12: Key events in informal worker organizing⁹⁴

Year	Group	Event
1972	INF	Founding of SEWA (becomes independent in 1981)
1980s		
1983	INF	SEWA affiliates with International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)
1988	HBW	Founding of Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Household Workers (CONLACTRAHO)
1989	HBW	Founding of National Network of Homeworkers (PATAMABA) Philippines
1990s		
1990	WP	Founding of Asociacion Nacional de Recicladores (ANR) Colombia
1990	HBW	International Conference on Home-Based Workers
1992	HBW	Founding of HomeNet Thailand
1994	HBW	Founding of HomeNet International
1995	SV	International conference of street vendors and Bellagio Declaration on Street Vendors, Italy ⁹⁵
1996	HBW	Adoption of ILO Convention # 177 on Homework
1997	INF	Founding of WIEGO
1997	HBW	Founding of HomeNet South-East Asia
1998	SV	Formation of National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI)
2000s		
2000	HBW	First South Asia Regional Conference on Home-Based Workers and Kathmandu Declaration, Nepal
2000	HBW	Founding of HomeNet South Asia, Nepal
2000	HBW	Collapse of HomeNet International
2000	SV	Establishment of StreetNet Association, South Africa
2001	WP	Founding of National Movement of Waste Pickers, MNCR, Brazil
2001	HBW	Formation of HomeNet India

⁹³ Information for the table came from a list provided by WIEGO at: <http://wiego.org/informal-economy/informal-workers-organizing-internationally>

⁹⁴ This table is based on one provided by WIEGO. I have added a "group" column to highlight what type of work the event references. INF highlights an event that is about informal worker organizing generally; HBW highlights an event that is about home-based workers; WP means waste pickers; SV means street vendors; DW means domestic workers. The original table can be found at: <http://wiego.org/informal-economy/informal-workers-organizing-internationally>

⁹⁵ The declaration can be found at: <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/iesf/document/bellagio-international-declaration-street-vendors-1995>

Year	Group	Event
2002	INF	Resolution and Conclusions on Decent Work in the Informal Economy, ILO
2002	SV	Official Launch of StreetNet International, South Africa
2002	INF	Founding of the Alliance of Zambian Informal Economy Associations (AZIEA)
2002	INF	Launch of CTCP- association of self-employed workers in Nicaragua
2002	HBW	Founding of HomeNet Nepal
2003	INF	First International Conference on “Organizing in the Informal Economy”, India
2003	INF	Formation of International Coordinating Committee on organizing in the IE
2005	WP	Founding of the Latin American Waste Picker Network (LAWPN)
2005	HBW	HomeNet Pakistan formed
2005	HBW	Founding of HomeNet Bangladesh
2005	DW	Founding of Asia Domestic Workers’ Network
2005	SV	Founding of Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders (KENASVIT)
2005	INF	First Regional Conference in Africa on “Organizing in the Informal Economy”, Senegal
2005	HBW	Ratification of ILO Convention on Homework Campaign led by Global Labour Institute
2006	INF	SEWA affiliates to ICFTU /ITUC
2006	INF	Second “Organizing in the Informal Economy” Conference, Ghana
2006	DW	First International Conference of Domestic Workers
2006	WP	First Meeting of Alliance of Indian Waste Pickers
2007	WP	Founding of MRP (waste picker association, Peru)
2007	WP	Founding of MNRC (waste picker association, Chile)
2007	HBW	Formal launch of HomeNet South Asia
2007	DW	Founding of National Domestic Workers Alliance, USA
2008	WP	First World Conference of Waste Pickers and Third Latin American Regional Congress, Colombia
2008	HBW	HomeNet Srilanka formed
2008	WP	Founding of National Waste Picker Associations in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Uruguay
2008	DW	Interim Steering Committee of International Domestic Workers Network set up
2008	INF	SEWA launches global project “Inclusive Cities for the Urban Working Poor”
2008	DW	Launch of campaign for international Convention for domestic workers
2009	WP	First Meeting of developing Global Alliance of Waste Pickers, Argentina
2009	WP	First national meeting of South African Waste Pickers
2009	INF	Meeting on organizing informal workers in Central and Eastern Europe
2009	DW	Consolidation of IDWN and Interim Steering Committee , Geneva
2009	DW	First African sub regional workshop of IDWN, Kenya
2009	WP	Waste pickers participate in UNFCC Climate Change conferences at Bonn and Copenhagen
2010s		
2010	WP	StreetNet Regional Meeting on Organizing Waste Pickers in Africa, Senegal
2010	INF	SEWA elected as a Vice President of ITUC
2010	WP	Fourth Latin American Waste Pickers Congress, Peru
2010	WP	First National Meeting of Waste Pickers and Collectors in Kenya
2010	SV	Third StreetNet International Congress, Benin
2010	DW	IDWN second Africa regional workshop, Benin

Year	Group	Event
2010	WP	Waste pickers participate in UNFCC, China and Mexico
2011	WP	First National Conference of Indian Waste pickers (AIW)
2011	INF	First WIEGO cross-sector MBO workshop, Thailand
2011	DW	ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (C189) adopted at ILC
2011	WP	Waste pickers participate in UNFCC Climate Change Conference in South Africa
2011	HBW	First meeting of home-based worker organizations and support groups in Eastern Europe
2012	WP	Regional Assembly of RedLacre and first Central American Conference of WPs, Nicaragua
2012	WP	Waste pickers hold global strategic workshop in Pune, India
2013	HBW	HomeNet Eastern Europe formally launched, Bulgaria
2013	WP	Waste pickers participate in ILC discussion on sustainable development, decent work and green jobs
2013	DW	Launch of Africa Domestic Workers Network (AfDWN), South Africa
2013	DW	Launch of International Domestic Workers Federation, Montevideo, Uruguay
2014	INF	Regional workshops to discuss formalization in Asia, Latin America and Africa
2014	INF	WIEGO Network delegation of informal workers participate in International Labour Conference (ILC) on formalization
2015	HBW	First Global Conference of Home-Based Workers, Delhi, India
2015	HBW	First General Body Meeting of HomeNet South Asia launching new structure

What can be seen from this table is that the early efforts of SEWA have contributed significantly to recent efforts at transnational organizing around informal work in three ways. First, SEWA succeeded in securing itself as a member of the international union movement. Prior to this, SEWA was treated by the international union movement as an NGO, rather than a union. Affiliation to the IUF and ITGLWF in the 1980s and to the ITUC in 2006 has forced the recognition that SEWA members are workers. Second, SEWA used its membership to push for the first ILO Convention on informal workers, C117, the Convention on Home Work; this struggle would provide a number of lessons that would be used in the future campaign for C189. Third, its establishment of WIEGO provided a crucial piece of infrastructure for future transnational organizing around informal work. I now address each of these contributions in turn.

As discussed in Chapter 5, and highlighted in Table 12 SEWA's long struggle to have informal workers recognized as workers and have their issues addressed as such by the international labour movement began with its affiliation to the IUF. Resistance to their international affiliation initially blocked their application to the ITGLWF, although

this was remedied shortly after SEWA joined the IUF in 1983. Ela Bhatt, the founder of SEWA, remembers clearly the struggle at this time. She recalls that the TLA, an influential Indian affiliate within the garment workers international, resisted the efforts of Charles Ford (ITGLWF General Secretary) to push through their affiliation. Despite his initial inability to overcome the intransigence of the TLA, it was Ford who encouraged SEWA to engage the ICFTU, particularly their Women's Committee, and to approach Dan Gallin, the General Secretary of the IUF, for affiliation (SEWA6 interview). Dan Gallin remembers the debates around SEWA's affiliation to the ITSs and the ICFTU this way:

The other Indian unions refused to recognize (SEWA) as a union and ...called it an NGO, but it called itself a union and we accepted it as a union. We, meaning the IUF, at the time, were the first international trade union organization to accept it into our affiliation in 1983. And — as a union — Because we were recognizing it — and they said it was discriminatory, it was discriminatory because it didn't accept men. So, so...we said we understood perfectly why they didn't want to accept men. And they said they had no employers and I said that's not necessary, a worker is somebody who works — not regularly — regardless of their employment relationship (IUF3 interview).

Although this view would come to hold sway years later, it was a minority opinion at the time. Even within the WC of the ICFTU, early support was mixed; Bhatt remembers great support from some ICFTU women cadre, but also dismissive attitudes on the part of some WC delegates (SEWA6 interview). SEWA would be invited to speak at ICFTU Congresses, but snubbed by the other Indian delegations (Ibid.).

Nonetheless, over the course of the 1980s and 1990s SEWA would build support for informal worker issues within the ICFTU, as well as the IUF and ITGLWF. A contemporary SEWA cadre told me that the IUF relationship was crucial to their efforts to have a home workers' convention adopted by the ILO, and that working with the IUF

and the ITUC has been crucial to its ability to build collaborations with informal worker organizations in other countries (SEWA3 interview). As I mention earlier in this chapter, when those assembled at the 2006 Amsterdam conference on domestic work put forward the idea of an international federation of domestic workers, the IUF agreed to provide the institutional support to get it off the ground.

The gradual acceptance of SEWA as a union within the international union movement over the 1980s allowed it to take a lead role in the crafting of the first ILO Convention relating to informal labour – C177, the Home Work Convention. SEWA was by no means the only national organization representing home-based workers; at the time similar organizations existed around the world, and had for some time (Boris and Prügl 1996; Prügl 1999). It is also the case that, since the 1970s, feminist NGOs, such as Women in Development (WID), have raised challenging questions about gender inequality within the informal sector, and had some influence on the ILO's Program on Rural Women (Prügl 1999:90–91). By the 1980s, ILO cadre began to execute a number of local programs to collect data about home-based workers and to promote their well-being (Lazo 1996; Prügl 1999). What SEWA brought to the table, however, was the IUF, the ITGLWF, and the ICFTU. This would be crucial, because these organizations controlled access to the Workers Group at the ILO, which could put forward proposals for Conventions. Furthermore, it is clear that the new union model developed by SEWA was an inspiration for organizations of women workers in Europe and elsewhere (Dagg 1996; Lazo 1996; Tate 1996).

Because the Home Work Convention (C177) was clearly a seminal moment in the struggle for informal workers generally, and domestic workers specifically (as far as the scope of this dissertation is concerned), I want to focus on its significance for the campaign for 189, drawing from the lessons learned by the participants, which contributed to the success of the latter. The campaign for C177 has one key innovation and two lessons that are important for the future campaign for C189 which began in 2006. The key innovation was the creation of HomeNet International, a network of unions and NGOs concerned with home-based workers. The key lessons from the

campaign for C177 are the failure to maintain HomeNet, and the importance of research to the process of producing an ILO Convention.

The network of activists concerned about home-based work “was a loose network at that time, when SEWA took a lead, and we tried to do a mapping of home based workers’ organizations world-wide” (SEWA4 interview). Building such a network was important to SEWA “because we wanted to reach the Civil Society as well...because there were other NGOs — national/international — who were working with, or concerned with women working in homes for different reasons” (SEWA6 interview). This loose network involved feminist academics, ILO staff, MBOs, and NGOs. What came out of SEWA’s efforts was a more solid network that would bring a diversity of resources to bear on the campaign to have a Convention on home-based work placed on the ILO agenda. In addition to individual activists HomeNet involved the following “core members”: Homeworking Group of Great Britain (an advocacy NGO), the Association for the Establishment of a Self-Employed Women’s Union of South Africa (which would become the Self-Employed Women’s Union, SEWU), the International Ladies Garment Workers’ Union of Canada (a US-based trade union), Homework Support Centres (an NGO from the Netherlands), and the Clean Clothes campaign (a German advocacy NGO). It published a newsletter originating in the UK, and “coordinated the activities of homemaker advocacy groups in preparation for discussions at the ILO,” while the ICFTU coordinated advocacy activities at the ILO itself (Prügl 1999:112–13). Unions allowed non-union advocates and homemaker representatives access to their caucus at the 1996 ILC (Prügl 1999; Vosko 2002). The role non-union civil society organizations played in the push for C177 was completely novel.

However, while HomeNet International was crucial to the campaign to have C177 adopted, it fell apart shortly after. Batliwala suggests that the collapse of HomeNet was the result of a number of contradictory pressures: the need to focus on raising the visibility of home-based workers internationally “could undermine” efforts to focus on local organizing; the effort of maintaining transnational relationships that would be necessary for a rigorous program of research and policy analysis “could overwhelm the network”; there were other sectors of informal workers that required the same support

being offered to home-based workers (2002:401). However, my own informants offered a mix of structural and agential explanations. One international union leader suggested that HomeNet International “collapsed because of a clash of... (the) basic approach between union orientated organizations and NGO orientated organizations. [...] (The) organization split, and the NGO part collapsed. The union part survived in Asia (as HomeNet Asia) (IUF3 interview). A former leader in SEWA suggested that it collapsed “for want of funds, for want of proper matching of the leaders” (SEWA6 interview).

I will take up this suggested conflict between NGOs and unions in the next chapter. Here, however, I simply point out the consequence of this collapse, and the lesson learned for the future C189 campaign. It is clear from my informants, and the literature reviewed, that the HomeNet network, and its collaboration was crucial to the adoption of C177, in terms of transnational coordination and research support. The internal struggles and the collapse of HomeNet International — officially in 2000, but likely much earlier in actuality — made a coordinated effort to have the Convention ratified around the world much more difficult. Indeed, while the 12 by 12 campaign was successful in having 14 countries ratify C189 within three years of its adoption, C177 has only been ratified by seven countries in 20 years.

The importance of building and maintaining a strong network with non-union civil society partners — particularly women’s organizations and networks — appears to be a lesson learned by the 12 by 12 campaigners at the ITUC. One staff person argued that the women’s movement “are the driving motor behind it.” She went on to say:

Because they are...very much related to the topic domestic workers' rights. This is, you know, a very important issue for all kinds of angles, because it is work traditionally done by women, and it is not respected or recognized [...] and doing domestic work you are not recognized because that is the kind of work which women are supposed to do anyway at home. [...] So from all kinds (of) perspectives and corners, this is an issue that is very important on the agenda of the women's movement (ITUC4 interview).

The ability of the ITUC to build and maintain this network is due to the overall changes in orientation, vis-à-vis collaborations with non-union global civil society, that have been taking place within the ICFTU/ ITUC over the past two decades. When the network around C177 came together in the early 1990s, such cooperation between unions and non-union civils society groups was rare, and sometimes contentious. Yet over the past 20 years, the cadre of the international union institutions have developed a number of such collaborations, and coalition work is now considered the norm, at least within the Equity Department. This topic will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter. For now, I flag this change in attitude toward coalition work as a key ingredient to the success of 12 by 12.

The other important lesson, from the perspective of SEWA, was that collaborations with academics and researchers are key to advancing the cause of recognition for informal workers. Leading up to C177, Ela Bhatt had begun to piece together such relationships while participating in the ILO process. As she tells it, the resistance and even hostility of the Employers Group to the Convention appeared to revolve around the lack of independent statistics.

The employers, particularly always ask questions in the house, made jokes about home work — ‘What is home work, and where are they?’ — because there were no statistics. Not that we did not have statistics, we had, but [...] we were the party concerned. We wanted independent statistics so that others can believe (SEWA6 interview).

Bhatt’s answer to the skepticism of the Employer Group was to recruit Marty Chen, an American academic with an existing relationship with SEWA, to help her find independent global statistics on the number of home-based workers:

I say to Marty, ‘I want to have a university stamp on our statistics. So, you have to do something.’ The next year, we were ready with the global figures [...] And we put it on the notice board at the gate of the conference for everybody to see. Then nobody asked

any questions because it had a Harvard stamp. (SEWA6 interview).

While the introduction of independent verification did not reduce the hostility of the Employer Group toward adopting the Convention, it left a lasting impression on Bhatt, and would come to shape SEWA's approach to transnational organizing and advocacy. SEWA founded WIEGO in 1997. As mentioned in Chapter 5, WIEGO is a network of informal worker organizations, as well as researchers and development practitioners concerned with informal women workers. Batliwala identifies it as "the international research and advocacy platform for women in informal employment" (2002:401). Some people involved had previously provided intellectual labour for the SEWA-led campaign for the Home Work Convention. According to one informant, who has been involved in WIEGO, the relationship between SEWA and WIEGO, and its significance for SEWA's transnational organizing project can be summed up thusly:

SEWA is the locomotive of WIEGO... in the sense that it is the biggest organization and the most influential organization inside WIEGO. WIEGO was created, more or less, as an international projection of SEWA....with the purpose of organizing women... in whatever branch of the informal economy (IUF3 interview).

Returning to table 12, we can identify the influence of early SEWA activism on subsequent transnational organizing efforts amongst informal worker organizations. In particular, we can see that SEWA's push for C177 and its creation of WIEGO, has likely had a profound impact on informal worker organizing around the world. For example, when we look at the development of national home-based worker organizations (identified as HBW in table 12) we can see a clear trend. Only a small number (4) of HBW organizations appear to have existed prior to the adoption of C177; however, in the 10 years following, the number of such organizations doubles (9). While drawing absolute conclusions from such a trend is not possible, it does suggest that the success of C177 may have acted as an inspiration for national organizing in this sector. It is also possible that the success of home-based worker organizing has inspired other informal

workers as well. When we look at the proliferation of non-HBW organizing, we can see that almost all other groups of informal workers emerge after the first transnational push on HBW organizing. The only other group of informal workers to have any transnational activity prior to 1996 are the street vendors, who have one international meeting in 1995. Following this meeting, the next relevant international activity occurs in 2002, when StreetNet International is established. Waste picker organizing appears to begin even later, with the first regional meeting taking place in Latin America in 2005, followed by the first world conference in 2008.

However, as suggestive as these trends are, it is more likely the case that the proliferation of informal worker organizing — nationally, regionally, and internationally — result from the creation of WIEGO, rather than the inspiration provided by C177. Worker organizing, particularly organizing involving marginalized workers, does not occur spontaneously. Since the creation of the Working Men’s International, organizing marginalized workers has generally involved assistance from an outside group — at least initially. These outside helpers are either another established group of workers, such as a trade union, or an organized group of non-workers, such as an NGO. We can see this in the case of domestic worker organizing in India. Long before unions in India took up the cause of domestic workers, it was church groups and women’s NGOs that advocated for them. This appears to also be the case with transnational organizing of informal workers more broadly.

One of WIEGO’s central objectives, is “to support and strengthen organizations of the working poor and to link organizations together” (wiego.org). If we replace the adoption of C177 with the creation of WIEGO, the trends identified in the previous paragraph generally overlap, as the organization is created the year following the adoption of C177 — we see a marked increase in the number of national and transnational organizations of informal workers of all four groups. Furthermore, when we look at the history of transnational organizations of informal workers, we see that SEWA, or WIEGO, or both, were heavily involved in their genesis. For example, according to its website, four organizations “played a key role in the genesis and evolution of

StreetNet”:⁹⁶ SEWA, the Self-Employed Women’s Union (SEWU – South Africa), Women’s World Banking (WWB) — which was created by SEWA (SEWA5 interview) — and the International Coalition of Women and Credit ⁹⁷(for which WWB acts as secretariat). StreetNet continues to receive research support from WIEGO. HomeNet South Asia was created by SEWA.⁹⁸ WIEGO was a founding member organization for both the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers⁹⁹ and the IDWN/IDWF.¹⁰⁰ Clearly, the creation of WIEGO appears to have had a significant impact on national and transnational organizing amongst home-based workers and subsequently other groups of informal workers. As the driving force of WIEGO, the centrality of SEWA to the emergence of transnational informal worker organizations and networks is confirmed.

Domestic worker organizing: innovation and the incorporation of marginalized, feminized fractions of the global working class

As I argued at the beginning of this chapter, domestic workers are a highly marginalized fraction of the global working class. Despite its central role in social reproduction, domestic work is devalued by the fact that it is “women’s work” and therefore, it is generally performed by socially devalued women, specifically women of colour, low caste women, and/or migrant women. Domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to the capricious whims of their employers because they work in the private sphere of the patriarchal home. Due to their marginal status and the nature of their workplace, domestic workers often work without the protection of state employment regulation. Historically, domestic workers have also been ignored by a male-dominated union movement at all levels — locally, nationally, and internationally. Their invisibility to both the union movement and the state is a status they share with other women and men working informally across various sectors of the global labour market. To the cadre

⁹⁶ <http://www.streetnet.org.za/show.php?id=19>

⁹⁷ <http://ybio.brillonline.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/s/or/en/1100057561>

⁹⁸ http://www.homenetsouthasia.net/Establishment_of_HomeNet_South_Asia.html

⁹⁹ <http://globalrec.org/who-we-are/>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.idwfed.org/en/about-us-1>

and leadership of SEWA and their allies in WIEGO this invisibility is a product of their lack of recognition as workers.

In 2006, a group of union, NGO, and ILO cadres met and set a plan to challenge this lack of recognition by having the ILO adopt a Convention recognizing their existence and their rights as workers. The coalition that emerged from this meeting would be highly successful: they achieved their goal of a Convention on domestic worker rights; they launched a transnational organizing campaign to have the Convention ratified; they created a new global union federation for domestic workers, the IDWF. The coalition that carried out this struggle was in itself a remarkable example of what unions and non-union labour NGOs can achieve together.

I here return to the research questions I established in the introductory chapter of this dissertation. The first set of questions was purely empirical, asking who the ITUC worked with, and how these collaborations operated. The ITUC's involvement with the domestic workers' network began with a meeting co-organized by a Dutch ITUC affiliate, FNV, and a Dutch NGO, IRENE.¹⁰¹ IRENE and FNV managed to bring 12 organizations together in Amsterdam with funding from a number of other NGOs. The role of the ITUC would be two-fold. Because of its key position within the ILO, the ITUC played a leadership role in organizing within the labour caucus, liaise with ILO staff, and ensure that the voices of domestic workers were heard at the ILC. After the ratification, the ITUC coordinated the 12 by 12 campaign, and brought into the network a number of non-labour organizations that it has partnered with on other global civil society campaigns. The ITUC's role then was to provide institutional support and outreach beyond the initial network of domestic worker organizations and affiliates.

Why the ITUC engaged this network so actively requires a more elaborate answer. Part of the answer involves the structural reality of limited resources for international union institutions. As I point out in this chapter, the IUF has a long history

¹⁰¹ IRENE was also involved in organizing an international meeting of activists in 1990 around the topic of labour rights for home-based workers. This 1990 conference would contribute to the formation of HomeNet International and the campaign to secure an ILO convention on homeworkers, which was achieved in 1996 with C177 (Prügl 1999 20).

of supporting the integration of informal workers, such as domestics, into the union movement. However, its willingness to organize domestic workers was not matched by the resources necessary to do so. From the reports of my informants, it is unlikely that the IUF would have been able to create the IDWN on its own. Similarly, it is clear that the ITUC was willing to support domestic worker organizing, but was itself unable to carry the load. I argued earlier that the willingness to work closely with non-union global civil society, and even incorporate GCS organizations into the IUF sponsored IDWN, showed a high degree of flexibility and openness on the part of contemporary ITUC and IUF cadres and leaders. From my reading of international labour history, this appears largely novel. Taken together, the facts and arguments I have just presented allow us to make certain *empirical* claims. The empirical evidence suggests that that the campaigns around C189 and the creation of IDWN/IDWF point to an institutional innovation in the repertoire of international union federations produced through the agency of a highly dedicated cadre. It further suggests that the successes of these innovations are largely the product of a union cadre whose personal reflexivity allows them to be open to new ideas and new allies.

It is also important to ask why the C189 campaign was successful now, and not at a previous moment in ILO history. As outlined above, the ILO discussed domestic workers eight times between 1936 and 1967, and yet no campaign for a domestic workers Convention ever emerged from the ICFTU. To understand why contemporary campaigners were able to secure a domestic worker convention in 2010, when it was not apparently feasible earlier, we need to look at changes in the international union institutions over time. What I show through my analysis of the domestic worker campaigns, is that contemporary institutional support for a campaign focused on informal women workers had its roots in the early interaction of the initially Eurocentric ICFTU Women's Committee and organizations such as SEWA, representing informal women workers from the South. My argument is that the activities of these cadres and leaders in the past produced institutional innovations in the ICFTU that contributed to the contemporary scenario. The ITUC was willing and able to provide significant and sustained support for a highly marginalized group of workers that did not fit within the

traditional union definition of worker largely because the first generation of SEWA leaders saw a need to confront the international union movement about their marginalization, and the ICFTU's women's committee did the work of addressing their own Eurocentrism and offering support to SEWA. This confrontation was central to subsequent efforts of the ICFTU to support women workers in countries such as India, where informal labour relations shape a very different set of capitalist social relations than those experienced in Europe or North America.

The first significant effort of the ICFTU to support informal workers at the ILO also provided a number of important lessons for future campaigners. One crucial lesson was the need for allies beyond the union network. The need for rigorous statistics with the "Harvard stamp," as one informant put it, when approaching the ILO was made plain to SEWA leaders by the opposition they faced. This need led to the creation of WIEGO, which, as I argued earlier, has been crucial to the formation of other transnational informal worker organizations, and played a central role in the formation of the IDWN/IDWF. A second lesson was the need to maintain the network after ratification. The 12 by 12 campaign was clearly a significant innovation in how the ITUC approaches ILO Conventions as more countries ratified C189 in its first year than have ever ratified C177, the Home Work Convention. Although I don't know this for sure, as I did not collect data on the question, I also suspect that 12 by 12 provided a focus for the newly formed IDWF, and likely contributed to the ability of this network to consolidate into an organization.

A central research question for me was what collaborations such as this network say about the role of global civil society in shaping the ITUC's contemporary remit and repertoires of action. Taking the history outlined in chapters 4 and 5, together with the data and arguments presented in this chapter, I argue that expanding the remit of the ICFTU to include informal workers outside of traditional union structures has largely come about through a struggle internal to the labour movement, starting principally with the movement in India. The incorporation of informal worker issues into the remit of the ICFTU — and subsequently that of the ITUC — emerged through the confrontation between SEWA and the international union federations.

However, the explosive growth of what is referred to as global civil society does seem to have impacted its repertoires of action, if only by the fact that the ITUC has far more potential allies to work with. The network around C177 was a loose one, cobbled together largely by SEWA. The network around C189 involved a number of well-established labour NGOs and was funded by a number of charitable NGOs. The 12 by 12 campaign expanded this network to include three of the largest human rights organizations operating within global civil society. What this expanded network meant was that news and requests for support from the international level to the national and local levels, through networks other than that attached to the transnational labour movement, greatly expanded the reach of the campaign.

As I show in the next chapter, working with non-union “partners” has become the norm for ITUC cadre, but this was not always the case. The effort to have C177 ratified in 1996 appears to be the first time that non-union organizations were allowed to participate as guests in the Workers’ Caucus. Since that time, there has been a proliferation of labour NGOs and networks concerned with marginalized workers, as shown in table 12. This fact and the significant contribution of non-ITUC organizations to the successful campaign for C189 suggests that there may be room in the future for an expanded role for non-union civil society in the Workers’ Caucus and the ILO more broadly. It is conceivable that a future institutional innovation may involve a transformation of the ILO’s governing structure, although this will involve a long struggle.

In Chapter 2 I argue that there are two broad political projects within global civil society. There is a liberal cosmopolitan project that focuses its attention on the UN institutions, such as the ILO, and the IFIs, and there is a post-Marxist left that meets at the WSF. Notably, the WSF does not appear to play a role in the intersection of the ITUC/IUF, and international feminist networks concerned with informal labour, such as home-based and domestic work. Likely, this is partially due to the fact that the WSF, which first emerged in 2001, did not exist when this network was forming in the late 1980s and 1990s. However, the lack of a role for the WSF in this network when the WSF did emerge is likely related to the importance paid by SEWA and others to the need for

institutional recognition of informal workers as workers. It is clear that the feminist movement has played a key role in the development of the WSF. However, it appears that this particular section of the women's movement — those concerned with the plight of informal women workers — see UN forums, such as the ILO, as more important to its project. I return to the issue of where the ITUC meets global civil society in the next chapter.

If the ITUC's repertoire for action has changed from that of the ICFTU, is it possible to conceive of this change as signifying a shift from "bread-and-butter-unionism" and international diplomacy towards "global social movement unionism?" Perhaps and partially. The recent efforts at transnational domestic worker organizing suggest both continuity and change in the international union movement. If we take Waterman as a starting point, we can say that the pursuit of an ILO Convention does not represent a "utopian set of demands concerning work and other social institutions." The structure of the international union movement clearly shaped the focus of recent transnational domestic worker organizing, by steering it into an institutionalized form. However, this did emerge from the "grassroots" via SEWA whose motivation was to confront Eurocentric definitions of a worker. Furthermore, this was supported and propelled forward within the ICFTU initially through a network of women activists within and outside the ICFTU, precisely because it confronted racist and sexist "hierarchies." Furthermore, the ITUC's involvement with this network does show a willingness to "work with a wide variety of other groups in ways that respect those groups' autonomy" and to "use informational networks to pursue grassroots, international solidarity relationships that are reciprocal rather than hierarchical in character." The answer appears to be that these campaigns represent something of a merger between old methods of international diplomacy, and more grassroots, transnational organizing within global civil society.

The impact of the ITUC's collaborations within global civil society on its repertoire of action are addressed more broadly in the next chapter. The evidence from this case study, however, does suggest that if there are moves toward a more social movement form of unionism within the international union movement, it is being brought

about by women activists. Kainer notes that despite overlapping concerns about traditional union structures and general agreement on the “overall strategic direction needed for labour movement revitalization” (2009:17–18), “there is often little or no discussion of the implications of decades of women’s labour organizing for union renewal” (Ibid.:15) or an acknowledgement of the contribution of feminist challenges to traditional union structures. Yet, the struggle of women workers to broaden the labour agenda to incorporate gender equality and other social equity demands” has enlarged and transformed “the very basis of labour struggle” (Ibid.:31). Informal work provides an illuminating example of the contribution of women worker activists to the transformation of movement, broadly speaking, because although domestic work and home-based work are labour market sectors dominated by women, as a broad category, informal labour is not. Despite this, the heavy lifting of organizing informal workers has been done by a network of women activists in the international union institutions, the ILO, and transnational feminist organizations.

Gallin argues that the success of organizations such as SEWA suggests that informal labour can be organized effectively, but that this requires “the feminization of the labour movement,” because key sectors of the informal sector in Southern countries are heavily feminized, and a significant portion of the part-time labour force in the industrialized North — another groups that has proven to be difficult to effectively organize — are women as well (Gallin 2005:244). Clearly, we are nowhere near a “complete transformation of masculinist norms” within the union movement; however, “there is greater recognition that an effective movement requires the inclusion of women and other marginalized communities” (Richards 2011:417).

The final research question proposed at the onset of this project was *what* these emergent relationships say about the historical process of transnational class formation. With the evidence from the domestic worker campaign we can tentatively say that the relationships that the ITUC has established with non-union civil society organizations — particularly women-focused labour NGOs, such as WIEGO — have played a crucial role in the incorporation of marginalized fractions of the working class into the existing movement. Undoubtedly, the incorporation of informal fractions, such as domestic

workers, will force new institutional innovations in the future, providing the basis for *the further structural elaboration of new repertoires of social action*.

Chapter 7: ITUC collaborations within GCS

In this chapter I provide a comparative examination of the numerous collaborations that the ITUC undertakes within GCS. Here I summarize the context from which such collaborations have emerged, explore the causal mechanisms of these innovations in the international union movement's repertoire, and provide an analysis of these collaborations through the deployment of typologies developed by Blunden and John-Steiner. It is clear that the domestic workers' campaigns fit into the larger context of the ITUC's expanding remit. Overall, the purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that *collaborations have allowed the ITUC to greatly expand both its remit of actionable issues and its repertoire of action over that of its predecessor organizations*. By remit I mean the scope of issues that the organization's membership considers important and requiring the attention of organized labour's leadership and cadre. By repertoire of action I refer to the activities that the organization pursues in addressing these issues. Importantly, *these collaborations are shaped by the opportunities and constraints generated by both the agency of past actors, and the current historical moment, in which we find the transnationalization of capital being met with the transnationalization of civil society*. Before exploring these collaborations, I address the nature of collaboration and how the concept is used in this chapter's analysis.

Theorizing collaboration

The campaign for C189 adoption, extending to the follow-up 12 x 12 campaign for ratification of C189 by national governments is an example of what Blunden (2010) refers to as a "collaborative project." I chose it as a case study because it is an example par excellence of how collaborative projects within global civil society have allowed the ITUC to both expand its remit beyond bread-and-butter unionism and incorporate marginalized fractions of the global working class into its over-arching project of transnational unionism. Blunden's terminology is very specific, and so I first provide an outline of his concepts before using them in a conceptual apparatus through which the ITUC's varied collaborative projects can be elucidated.

A project, for Blunden, is an “ongoing interconnected aggregate of actions” (2010:256); however, it is not simply the sum of a set of “actions,” defined as individual operations oriented toward an object (2010:10;172;175). It is a “unit of activity,” but it is not synonymous with activity (2010:9). In Blunden’s schema, “activity” is a “system of actions” focused on an object (2010:172). The distinction between action and activity can be made because of the existence of a social division of labour: action involves an individual, immediate “goal,” whereas activity involves a social motivation (2010:198), the contribution toward a collective need. Projects can be distinguished from activity because they contain both the aim, or goal, of an “ongoing collection of actions,” and the process through which these goals are attained (2010:9).

A project involves conscious activity, it is something “projected... by the [collective] subject, rather than an object to which the subject is drawn” (Ibid.). It has at its core a “concept,” although there may not be a universal understanding of that concept among the project participants (Blunden 2010:256). A concept is the “simplest unit of a shape of consciousness” within a system of thinking, social practice, and culture, which is developed through “successive concretisation as it develops from a newly emergent social practice to being an integral part of a whole way of life” (Ibid.:69). Projects also involve artifacts – words, symbols, tools, documents – which support and help define the project (Ibid.:257). Participation in projects, such as a nation, an organization, or a movement shape identity:

When people join a project their personality adapts itself to the new system of activity and artifacts and most of all their sense of identity joins itself to the aim of the project and its means of achieving it. Concretely, this happens through collaboration, interaction mediated by participation in a project (Blunden 2010:292-93).

Collaboration also has a specific meaning in Blunden’s work. At its most basic, it means “working together in a common project” (Blunden 2010:9-10). A collaborative project is different from a “joint activity,” because — like the difference between activity

and project — collaboration contains within it a normative framework, while this is not necessarily the case for all forms of joint activity (Ibid.:261). Collaboration is not the same as cooperation either as it involves both cooperation and conflict. Collaborators may very well cooperate, in the sense that they will construct a division of labour through which they each separately work toward the common goal (Ibid.:260); however, their efforts to define the normative content — the ends and means — of their collaboration will involve conflict. (Ibid.:258). A collaborative project for Blunden, then, is normatively defined joint activity between two or more subjects producing “a singular, indivisible... phenomenon” (Ibid.:261) that is shaped by its participants and, in turn, shapes their consciousness.

For Blunden, the nation is a collaborative project, as is a political movement, an academic or artistic endeavor; organizations are also collaborative projects. There are many projects under study in this dissertation, including the ITUC, including what it calls its organizational “partners,” such as Amnesty International, OXFAM, or WIEGO. The ILO is also a collaborative project that we can fit within the collaborative project of the UN system; the transnational movement to promote human rights around the world is a collaborative project involving a number of inter-project collaborations, as it involves collaboration between organizational projects such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), Anti-Slavery International, and the ITUC. In this chapter I investigate a number of inter-organizational projects in which the ITUC (itself a project), engages with other projects (e.g. Amnesty, WIEGO) within global civil society. In a sense, I am looking at inter-project collaborations, which themselves produce collaborative projects, and which may be producing new collective subjects.

Clearly, the term “collaborative project” can be confusing when it is applied to such a broad range of relations. To distinguish between these different forms of “collaborative project,” I need to modify and extend Blunden’s framework. In so doing, I refer to organizational projects simply as “organizations”, and I refer to the collaborative projects of the interstate system, such as the ILO and other UN institutions, as “institutional settings” or “fields of collaboration”. This distinction builds on a distinction that Blunden himself makes between those projects that are less about the development of

collective subjects, than about “a set of rules of behaviour and interpretation” of actions (2010:286). The ILO, for example, does not produce a collective subject, but does exist as a set of rules about how subjects engaged in disputes around international norms of labour relations will settle their differences and produce a norm-setting tool, such as a Convention or Recommendation.

As Blunden notes, projects “nest one within the other” as in shorter term or specific projects ‘nesting’ within longer term or general ones. (2010:262). For the sake of clarity, I use the term “collaborative campaign” to refer to specific, short-term inter-organizational projects, and “collaborative project” in reference to the longer-term inter-organizational collaborative projects that these specific campaigns nest within. For example, the climate change project can be nested within the broader movement project of the environmental movement. Similarly, the campaign to adopt C189 and the follow up 12 by 12 campaign to publicize the Convention and have it ratified by nation-states are examples of specific collaborative campaigns; however, these collaborative campaigns must be seen as part of a longer-term project, what I call the transnational “informal labour rights project” which clearly includes the recent C189 and 12 by 12 campaigns, but also past campaigns, such as the one around C177. As I argue in Chapter 6, the informal labour project is itself nested within two broader historical “movement projects,” the labour movement, and the women’s movement. In this sense, the informal labour rights project is, in fact, an inter-movement project.

These movement projects themselves are nested within the two “meta-projects” within GCS I outline in Chapter 2. The first is the broad liberal-cosmopolitan movement for global governance, which is a meta-project made up of a number of movement projects, such as human rights, environmental protection, and gender justice, that seek to develop a new system of global governance through engagement with the interstate system. The second is the WSF — the “movement of movements” — that, when it manifests beyond the yearly meetings, can be identified as the global justice movement. Table 13 below embodies this typology, with examples.

Table 13: Definitions of collaboration

Term	Meaning	Example
Collaborative campaigns	Short-term, goal-oriented activities, where more than one organization is involved.	Joint statements, demonstrations, or specific lobbying exercises around COP climate talks.
Collaborative projects	Ongoing collaborations between organizations, such as coalitions or alliances. Incorporates longer-term goals.	Ongoing collaboration between ITUC, Greenpeace, and WWF to influence climate change debate.
Movement projects (historical movements)	Broad, historical projects within which temporally specific projects can be located.	Labour, human rights, environmental, women's, and LGBTQ movements.
Meta-projects	Collaborations between movement projects. Common goals are often vague.	Liberal-cosmopolitan global governance and global social justice movements.

What I consider here are inter-organizational collaborations. To explore these inter-organizational collaborations, I borrow from John-Steiner (2000) and Blunden (2010, 2014) to develop three typologies through which I can analyze different ITUC collaborations. Each of these typologies speaks to different aspects of ITUC collaboration. Through her study of artistic collaborations, John-Steiner identified four “forms of collaboration,” (2000:198–205), the first two of which I use to discuss the ways in which the cadre of the ITUC collaborate with the cadre from other organizations operating within global civil society. Table 14 is an outline of her typology. I elaborate on it below in discussing specific ITUC collaborations.

Table 14: John-Steiner's "forms of collaboration"

Collaborative forms	Characteristics
Distributed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “voluntary” interactions where subjects exchange ideas and information • often, but not necessarily, occurs in an informal environment • no common goal or vision
Complementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involves a division of labour based on complementary differences of expertise or subject position • efforts are made to understand the position of the other • common goals are negotiated and an effort is made to develop a common vision
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • begins with a clear leadership structure or division of labour, but over time, roles can change/ become more democratic or distributive • potential for transformation of subjects involved in collaboration
Integrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involves the construction of a new collective subject based on shared ideology or beliefs • shared goal of developing transformative knowledge • collaborating subjects take risks in expressing solidarity • develops over a prolonged period of time

Through his study of different ways in which people collaborate over history, Blunden has identified three “modes of assisting others,” (Blunden 2004, 2010:284). See Table 15 below. These different ways in which one group assists, or collaborates, with another overlap somewhat with distinct historical “forms of collective subjectivity in the political arena” that have developed since the 1830s, each form a reaction to the one that preceded it (Blunden 2010:284–85, 2014). This historical typology is reproduced below in Table 16. Not all of these forms relate directly to an example of contemporary ITUC collaboration. Basically, I use some of Blunden’s historical examples in an analogous fashion, as they provide helpful categorizations of contemporary phenomena. With some modifications of my own, I refer to (and build on) these two typologies in the course of discussing specific ITUC collaborations.

The ITUC engages in a wide range of collaborations. Most of these collaborations are, in Blunden’s terms, collaborative campaigns, although there is evidence that the ITUC is beginning to develop longer-term collaborative projects with non-union GCS organization. In the following sub-sections, I outline and analyze the development of ITUC collaborations within GCS.

Table 15: Blunden's "modes of assisting others"

Mode of assistance	Characteristics
Colonization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assistance involving a dominant subject subsuming the activity of another into its own project • motivation may be exploitive or philanthropic • result is the subsumption of dominated subject into the dominant subject's project as a marginalized participant
External reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assistance is motivated by exchange and negotiation • rewards are offered or accepted for assistance
Solidarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assistance is provided voluntarily without regard for reward • subject receiving assistance remains in control of their project • involves a willingness to take risks in offering support

Table 16: Blunden's forms of collective subjectivity

Form of subjectivity	Characteristics
Spontaneity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acts of spontaneous activity • limited leadership and planning • limited social bonds
Secret Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small groups bound by secrecy and ideological commitment
Mass (social) movement ¹⁰²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broad-based movement motivated by radical change to the social whole order
Mutual aid association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less ideologically committed groups bound together by a willingness to provide mutual aid to one another
Commune	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group bound together out of a motivation to self-govern themselves • does not necessarily involve a coherent ideology
Political party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group bound to a political ideology and a motivation to take over the state
Front	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coalition of movements bound together out of a need to confront a particular crisis – i.e. the fight against fascism
(distinct) Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a multiplicity of movements (environmental, women's, anti-war, civil rights movements) distinct from the (singular) social movement • groups bound together out of concern for change, but not necessarily a radical restructuring of the social order
Identity politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • groups of marginalized people bound together by a sense of shared identity • motivated by a need for recognition and inclusion in the social structure
Alliance politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effort to build common ground between movements or identity groups around a particular goal or objective • no common ideological project

Collaborative fields: GCS meta-projects

As Blunden notes, projects “nest one within the other” (2010 262). Specific environmental NGOs, global social justice SMOs, and feminist networks are nested within the historical projects of the environmental, labour, and women’s movements, respectively. When collective actors engage in transnational or international activism, they can also be said to be nested within GCS meta-projects. In Chapter 2, I outline the

¹⁰² Blunden uses the term “social movement” in his 2010 book, *An Interdisciplinary Theory of Activity*, but uses the term “mass movement” in his 2014 article, “Forms of Radical Subjectivity.” He gives no reason for this change, and it is possible that “social movements” is a typo in “Theory of Activity.” Regardless, I use the term “mass movement” for the sake of clarity.

boundaries of what I refer to as two GCS meta-projects. These meta-projects are, at the same time, collaborative projects, networks, and fields of collaborative activity. The first of these is the constellation of NGOs and SMOs that participate in the consultative processes of the UN and IFIs. This activity is guided by a liberal-cosmopolitan ethos that sees institutions as flawed but necessary. For labour, environmental, development, and women's groups — not, of course, mutually exclusive, as I illustrate in Chapter 6 — reformed UN and IFI institutions could provide a democratic mechanism to regulate global capital. The second meta-project is the GJ&SM, or the “movement of movements,” that participates in the WSF. This “pure” civil society space is supposedly guided by a post-Marxist anti-neoliberal ethos, heavily influenced by particular readings of Gramsci, although my own fieldwork suggests that participants at the WSF are guided by a very broad range of ideologies. Characterised by some as a global “counter-hegemonic” project, the WSF officially stands apart from the state, and the interstate system. Rather than reform of the current system of global governance, the WSF is intended to be a space where new conceptualizations for global governance might arise. Below I outline these two meta-projects within which ITUC GCS collaborations take place, using examples from interviews, field notes at the 2009 WSF, and internet-accessed documents from the UN and World Bank.

What my data show is that the ITUC is more engaged in the global governance projects around the interstate system than in the WSF, although it continues to engage both. This suggests both continuity and change in the ITUC's repertoire of action. On the one hand, the ITUC is engaging in collaborations in spaces and with a range of GCS actors that would be unimaginable to most international union leaders 20 years ago. On the other hand, the continued emphasis on working within the interstate system demonstrates that the ITUC is still largely focused on maintaining a relationship that began almost 100 years ago with the establishment of the ILO, despite the fact that the organization has proved to be a disappointment many times over.

ITUC at the WSF

The ICFTU maintained a presence at the WSF from the inception of the WSF until the demise of the ICFTU. The ITUC continued this tradition until recently. Some of its affiliates have been on the WSF International Council, which oversees the organization, and the CUT (Brazil) and COSTU (South Africa) have played a leading role since the beginning of the WSF (ITUC12 interview). At a number of Forums, the ITUC has participated in two ways. It constructed a “World of Work” space on site, for a World Trade Union Forum. Additionally, a number of the ITUC cadre participated in workshops outside the Union Forum alongside other GCS groups. According to informants, however, ITUC interest in the Forum has waned.

My investigation of the ITUC’s relationship to the WSF included fieldwork at the 2009 WSF in Belém, Brazil. Here I encountered the “World of Work” tent that was set up for three days of the Forum. The panelists and moderators were almost exclusively trade union leaders, with the exception of a Minister in the PT-led Brazilian government, Walden Bello of Focus on the Global South, and Svend Robinson, a former Canadian parliamentarian who subsequently worked at Public Services International. Panel topics included climate change and sustainable development, migration and development, trade union and labour rights, trade and decent work, and the financial crisis, dubbed the “triple crisis” for its impact on economics, development, and environmental degradation (field notes). In addition to the World of Work, ITUC officially participated in eight workshops, listed below.

Table 17: Official ITUC participation at WSF 2009, outside World of Work¹⁰³

Title/Topic	Other official participants
Decent work, decent life alliance	Global Progress Forum
Decent work agenda: new options for action for trade unions	FES, ITUC affiliates
The triple crisis: financial, food, and energy crisis	ITUC affiliates
New global financial architecture	Global Progress Forum, Solidar, Social Alert
Civil society under threat and our collective responses	CIVICUS, Amnesty International
European-African labour alliances against economic partnership agreements	Global Network Africa, ETUC, SOLIDAR, Labour Research Service
Financing for development	Social Watch, FES, Global Progress Forum
Sustainable development and trade integration	ITUC affiliates

What is interesting to note from Table 17 above, is how thin the list of non-affiliated partnering organizations is. Two of the eight are exclusively put on by the ITUC and its affiliates. Of the eight non-ITUC organizations involved, several are affiliated closely to organized labour or European social democracy. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) is the international development arm of the German Social Democratic Party. One of its key areas of work is in supporting the work of democratic trade unions. In practice, this means working most closely and most regularly with ITUC affiliates, due to the relationship between the SPD and DGB, the German union federation, which is affiliated to the ITUC (NGO1 interview).¹⁰⁴ Social Alert was a coalition of Belgian Christian labour and human rights groups concerned with international development, and

¹⁰³ This list was produced from an examination of the WSF 2009 Program, acquired during fieldwork in January/February 2009 in Belém, Brazil.

¹⁰⁴ As was explained to me by its staff present at the Belem WSF in 2009 (field notes, January, 2009 - Belem, Brazil), FES re-emerged in the post-war period as one of a number of privately organized international development agencies. As part of the compromises established during this period, major political parties were allotted public funds to engage in international work that “reflects German values,” broadly speaking (<http://www.fesdc.org/content/aboutus.htm>). Each major political party has an equivalent organization, and the FES is the organization “ideologically” (NGO1 interview) associated with the SPD. It interprets “German social values” to mean “the advancement of public policy issues in the spirit of the basic values of social democracy.”

anchored to the former World Confederation of Labour.¹⁰⁵ Global Network Africa, is part of Global Network, a network of labour organizations dedicated to promoting Decent Work. It was started by SOLIDAR¹⁰⁶ and the International Federation of Workers' Education Associations (IFWEA),¹⁰⁷ and is coordinated by the former.¹⁰⁸ The Labour Research Service “specialises in research, dialogue-building, and developmental projects with the broad aim of strengthening civil society and a particular focus on the world of work,” and the members of its Board of Directors all come from South African unions.¹⁰⁹ The Global Progress Forum appears to be the coordinating body for European social democracy in its work in and around the WSF.¹¹⁰

Only Social Watch, CIVICUS, and Amnesty International are not directly related to the trade union movement or European social democracy. Social Watch is a transnational advocacy organization based in Uruguay that produces and disseminates research on poverty reduction efforts of governments.¹¹¹ CIVICUS, based in South Africa, is a transnational organization dedicated to citizen engagement and “strengthening civil society.”¹¹² Amnesty International¹¹³ is perhaps the most recognized human rights organization in the world. All three have worked closely with the ITUC. Both CIVICUS and Amnesty International have been invited to participate in ITUC Congresses, and both have recently joined the ITUC and other organizations in establishing the Fight Inequality Alliance in 2016, I discuss below. Social Watch

¹⁰⁵ <http://wiego.org/resources/social-alert-international>

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.solidar.org>

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.ifwea.org/>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.theglobalnetwork.net//content/14/#&panel1-3>

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.lrs.org.za/index.php/about-us>

¹¹⁰ <http://www.globalprogressiveforum.org/partners>

¹¹¹ <http://www.socialwatch.org/node/63>

¹¹² <http://www.civicus.org/index.php/en/about-us-125>

¹¹³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/>

regularly promotes the research of the ITUC on its website,¹¹⁴ and its cadre clearly work together on human rights issues¹¹⁵ and sustainable development.¹¹⁶

Having official participants on panels with other organizations is not, of course, the only mechanism by which the ITUC can collaborate with others at the WSF. In addition to its panels with the ITUC, FES, held numerous other panels involving non-union GCS organizations and academics focused on development and international taxation (field notes and artifacts). ITUC affiliates, particularly the Brazilian CUT held numerous panels on a range of topics with organizations representing women and indigenous peoples, and environmental organizations (field notes and artifacts). The opportunities for ITUC cadre to collaborate with others were extensive.

Indeed, the WSF is constructed in a way that prioritises distributed forms of collaboration. While some participants seek to develop a common platform around a particular project area on the last day of the Forum, this is not the overarching goal of the WSF. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Forum has come under heavy criticism for its emphasis on being an open space free of the pressure for consensus around any particular vision. However, the WSF must be seen as a success for what it was intended to be, a discursive space where participants from different movement projects meet and share their experiences and ideas, and develop transnational networks of like-minded individuals and groups.

Some informants reported that the WSF had played a “really important” role in developing relationships with non-union GCS (ITUC2 interview). In particular, the WSF was important for “networking,” with “progressive forces.” (ITUC9 interview) and “coalition building and linking up with the NGOs” and even planning in the case of GCAP (ITUC12 interview). Another suggested that the WSF “is a good platform to promote a certain campaign,” as they did with the domestic worker campaign at WSF

¹¹⁴ <http://www.socialwatch.org/node/17146>

<http://www.socialwatch.org/node/17116>

¹¹⁵ <http://socialwatch.org/node/812>

¹¹⁶ <http://www.socialwatch.org/node/17334>

2011 in Senegal (ITUC4 interview). In fact, when one looks at the structure of ITUC participation, it seems clear that promoting ITUC campaigns is the most significant draw for the ITUC leadership. According to then Deputy-Secretary General, Mamounata Cissé, the purpose of participating in the WSF was to “exchange our views with civil society,” and then to “develop together proposals to change the current growth model,” (ITUC 2009).

It is clear, from a position paper on the ITUC and the WSF, that the ITUC has a conflicted view of the Forum, a reflection of divisions within the international trade union movement (ITUC 2008). The document acknowledges that, although the ITUC and ICFTU had been involved from the beginning, affiliate interest in the forum is highly varied. It highlights disagreements with the Forum leadership about not engaging the IFIs, arguing that although it agrees with the critiques of the World Bank and IMF, it is worried that further marginalization of these institutions would be dangerous at a time that a “better managed” multilateralism was needed to deliver social justice globally. It also insists that “decent work” was not enough of a priority in WSF discussions, an argument that illustrates Waterman’s critique of the ITUC’s participation. In addition to these fundamental disagreements on the way forward, the ITUC position paper argues that the forum needs to be restructured in a way that groups can find consensus and take positions, and organize joint actions. In short, while the ITUC accepts the WSF Charter of Principles, it sees the Forum as having a “marginal impact.”

The idea that the Forum’s impact on the world has been marginal was reiterated by ITUC cadre in my interviews. One argued that “in terms of influencing the agenda, I would say maybe at the beginning, but I don’t believe the Forum is now influencing anything” (ITUC9 interview), while another stated that “the process is really sort of lacking momentum” (ITUC2 interview). This impression of the Forum’s marginal utility means that the ITUC leadership is unwilling to expend the considerable resources necessary to participate in a meaningful way:

...whilst it's a great forum, and people can get great benefit out of being there and participating... we don't see that we have the [...] human resources or funding resources to be able to invest in that

process at this moment. Because we need to be able to deliver some really fundamental changes for our members at a national level and elsewhere, so our priorities have kind of shifted (ITUC1 interview).

Engaging GCS through the WSF does not appear to be a priority for the ITUC any longer. Earlier, when the ICFTU was beginning to seek out collaborative relationships, the Forum was part of the process of meeting non-union GCS, although it is not clear, from what my informants have reported, how important the Forum really was in this. It has developed ad hoc collaborations with a number of large non-union GCS organizations, and in a few cases has established more significant relationships with a handful, such as Amnesty International, Oxfam, and CIVICUS. The ITUC clearly does not see a role for the Forum in the development of these relationships, and is not interested in securing relationships with the more radical (and marginal) labour movement SMOs that identify strongly with the forum. No great loss as far as Waterman is concerned, as their divergent analyses and repertoires of action mean they have little to say to each other (2008).

ITUC, GCS, and the interstate system

If the WSF has proved to be somewhat helpful as a forum for distributive collaboration – meeting others who share your concerns about particular issues, sharing ideas, and developing networks – the interstate system is where the ITUC's collaborations are concretized and take on the form of complementary collaborations. The ITUC participates in a number of UN consultative processes, where it comes into contact with a range of non-state actors. Of major significance have been the processes around the Millennium Development Goals/ Sustainable Development Goals (SDS), and the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). However, the ILO, where the ITUC does not need to share the stage with others, has still been a site of significant collaboration, as I note in Chapter 6.

As outlined in Chapter 4, the international union federations have held a privileged role in the interstate system since the Treaty of Versailles and the

establishment of the International Labour Organization. Although other civil society organizations have long played a consultative role in the UN, organized labour was by far the most significant non-state actor in the inter-state system until the 1990s. The symbolic moment of change, where organized labour went from privileged participant, to another face in the crowd, appears to be the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, which saw an unprecedented involvement of a myriad of non-state actors. It was here that transnationalizing SMOs of the women's, environmental, peace, and anti-colonial third-world movements converged on a UN process for the first time. This constellation of organizations from various distinct movements reflected a process of fragmentation of the social movement into a number of distinct movements that had been ongoing since the post-war period (Blunden 2010:285; 2014:427-30). It is this fragmentation that now makes the process of alliance building amongst oppositional forces necessary. The argument I make here is that the UN consultative process appears to be providing another framework through which this is occurring.

The ILO has always been a contested space for the varied class fractions and political factions that make up the global labour movement. To briefly reiterate the points made in Chapter 4, the struggle over representation and access to the ILO tripartite decision-making process was waged between the Amsterdam Internationals – the IFTU and the ICFTU – and the communist-affiliated unions from the beginning. It continues today, although the WFTU is a much weakened organization since the end of the Cold War, and the defection of WFTU affiliates to the ITUC has made this struggle much less intense (ITUC2 interview). Early in the history of the ILO, the male-dominated Amsterdam international also thwarted the efforts of women-workers to have an independent voice at the international level by crushing the IFWW. Later – between the 1970s and 1990s – the ILO would be a site of contestation between Northern and Southern affiliates of the ICFTU, as labour delegates struggled to form a coherent policy platform around the threat of transnationalizing corporations. As I argue in Chapter 4, these policy prescriptions highlight the ongoing dominance of European unions within the international.

However, as I show in Chapter 6, more recently the ILO has been an avenue for collaborative work that seeks to address the needs of women workers from Southern countries, such as India. The ITUC coordinates the Workers' Group at the ILO, and therefore has control over who may make presentations to it, or participate in its deliberations. As I report in Chapter 6, in at least two situations over the past 25 years – in the mid-1990s, during the C177 campaign, and more recently during the C189 campaign – the Workers' Group allowed for the partial participation of non-affiliated organizations. At the time of the C189 campaign, the secretary of the Workers' group was also the coordinator of the campaign (ITUC4 interview). One of her roles, she told me, was to consult broadly with members of the Workers' Group, which would consist of only those who were at the ILO as part of an official country delegation, with ITUC affiliates more broadly, and with the non-ITUC groups that had taken an interest in pursuing the Convention:

I did a lot of consultations. Beside consultations with unions, also consultations with others who were strongly involved in this process who were trying to contribute also to a successful result: the adoption of the convention at the conference. [...] Migrant Forum Asia, Human Rights Watch, Anti-slavery [...] were quite prominently [...] of course the most obvious one, the International Domestic Workers Network (ITUC4 interview).

The way in which non-union participants were incorporated into the ILO process during these campaigns says a great deal about ITUC relations with non-union GCS, particularly in the area of workers' rights. Only country delegates can fully participate in ILO deliberations, and all others are mere "observers." To get around this, a number of affiliates "included domestic workers in their delegations; and these domestic workers, some of them come from existing unions, some of them come from NGOs, (or) from associations" (ITUC4 interview). What this illustrates is that while the ITUC is willing to collaborate with non-union labour groups, it is not at all prepared to surrender its

privileged position at the ILO. Non-union labour organizations, it would seem are still not a full part of the official labour movement, as far as the ITUC is concerned.

Continued control of the Workers' Group by the ITUC suggests that the mode of assistance offered to marginalized fractions of workers and their organizations is an example of philanthropic colonization, rather than solidaristic. A solidaristic mode of assistance implies a dominant subject taking risks in its assistance, and involves the marginal subject maintaining control over their own project. This was clearly not the case in the example discussed in Chapter 6 of informal women workers at the ILO. What occurred in the collaborations between the ITUC and the non-affiliated domestic worker organizations during the campaign for C198, was the incorporation of a marginalized subject into the existing project of a dominant subject. However, it seems important to point out that this mode of assistance is a reflection of structural constraints upon, rather than the attitude of, the ITUC cadre involved. The ITUC cadre who "manage" the Workers' Group are mandated to maintain ITUC control over it. Furthermore, and as I argue in my conclusion, the incorporation of marginalized workers into the existing union movement is a major moment in transnational class formation, and the term colonial should not, in this case, be seen as a dismissal of this significant moment in class formation.

In all other UN bodies, the ITUC does not have such a privileged position, and this produces a more representative example of contemporary modes of assistance, premised on exchange or the promise of an external reward. I have already reported on the impact that attending the Rio Summit had on some ICFTU participants; on a personal level, participating cadre reported that they left the summit feeling a profound need to engage the global debates about environmental destruction (ITUC13 interview). It was also the case that Agenda 21, the product of the Rio meetings, identified organized labour as a crucial "stakeholder" in sustainable development strategies, dedicating a whole chapter (29) to the role of workers and unions.¹¹⁷ However, it is also the case that Agenda

¹¹⁷ The text of Agenda 21 can be found at:
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>

21 had a chapter dedicated to a number of social groups, named “major group” by the UN, arguing that “(o)ne of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making” (para 23.2).

A year after Rio, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) initiated a review of NGO access to the UN. In 1996, it passed a resolution (E/1996/31) outlining a process by which non-state actors could achieve consultative status (Paul 1999). Consultation processes are now part of the deliberations of almost every UN body. Accreditation is managed through ECOSOC, and non-state groups are organized into their respective “Major Groups.”¹¹⁸ Accreditation to ECOSOC grants non-state actors “access to not only ECOSOC, but also to its many subsidiary bodies, to the various human rights mechanisms of the United Nations, ad-hoc processes on small arms, as well as special events organized by the President of the General Assembly.”¹¹⁹

ECOSOC maintains a NGO Branch¹²⁰ and a Standing Committee¹²¹ on NGOs that controls accreditation, receives reports for NGOs with Special or General consultative status, and “monitors the consultative relationship.” The status of an organization’s accreditation is a reflection of its perceived representative status, or technical expertise. General status is reserved for those NGOs that are perceived by the Committee to “represent large segments of societies in several countries,” and to have a broad area of competence. Special status is granted to smaller “NGOs that have a special competence in, and are concerned specifically with, only a few of the fields of activity covered by ECOSOC.” Finally, Roster status is granted to “NGOs that have a more narrow and/or technical focus” (United Nations 2011). As of September 1, 2014, ECOSOC has accredited over 4,000 non-state actors.¹²²

¹¹⁸ The nine Major Groups are: Women; Children and Youth; Indigenous Peoples; Non-Governmental Organizations; Local Authorities; Workers and Trade Unions; Business and Industry; Scientific and Technological Community; and Farmers

¹¹⁹ <http://csonet.org/index.php?menu=17>

¹²⁰ <http://csonet.org/index.php?menu=14>

¹²¹ <http://csonet.org/index.php?menu=80>

¹²² It should be noted that some on the list are now defunct. The list of all accredited organizations be found at: <http://csonet.org/content/documents/E-2014-INF-5%20Issued.pdf>

The ITUC has been actively engaged in many UN processes, but two areas stand out as particularly significant. The first are those processes concerning environmental governance that emerged out of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio, also referred to as the Rio Summit or the Earth Summit. The ICFTU participated in the follow-up conferences, the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD or Rio +10), and the ITUC was heavily involved in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio +20). Each of these major events involved extensive preparatory work with other GCS actors. For example, a year and a half prior to the Rio +20 meetings, the ITUC “invited a number of key development and green organizations” to gather and brainstorm about how best to approach the Summit (ITUC1 interview). It had already established its own priorities, through internal consultation processes, and by gathering together “key” GCS organizations usually involved in UN development and environment processes early on, the ITUC established which specific organizations they could work with on different parts of their agenda. In fact, the role of the ITUC is frequently one of supporting the collective organization of other GCS actors:

In many big international processes with civil society coalitions [...] the trade unions have played a significant role, if not in terms of intellectual input, sometimes financial support, to support people getting together. It may be in providing access to governments, because we are partners, or we do know those governments, or we've got good relationships with those governments (ITUC1 interview).

Similarly, the ITUC enjoys “official constituency” status at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),¹²³ at which it engages in regular collaborations that are generally characterized by their distributive form, and exchange-

¹²³ http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article2610&var_recherche=%22new%20deal%22

based mode of assistance (ITUC6 interview), and where the ITUC acts as the “focal point” for the trade unions non-governmental organizations constituency group.¹²⁴ Other examples of ITUC leadership at UN GCS forums include chairing the UNEP Major Groups facilitating committee in 2006 (ITUC 2010c:55), and organizing the Civil Society Forum at the 2008 UN Review Conference on Financing for Development in Doha, Qatar, as part of the Doha NGO Group (DNG) (Ibid.:57). This collaborative group continued after Doha as the Global Social Economy Group, and the ITUC continues to take part in this collaboration (Ibid.). According to a senior cadre at the ITUC, all of these processes, and the role that the ITUC plays in them “are a part of what we consider a critical part of ITUC campaigns, and they all have elements of strategic alliance with civil society. Each and every one of them” (ITUC1 interview).

Analysis of ITUC meta-project engagement

Carroll notes that the ICFTU had both “elite and grassroots” elements of its repertoire of action, although its repertoire was heavily skewed toward elite social dialogue within the interstate system (2007:42). An examination of the amount of efforts spent on collaboration around the WSF and the interstate system suggests that this is still the case for the ITUC. It is clear that the ITUC is far more engaged in the global governance meta-project, than it is in the post-Marxist/ WSF project. However, I found no evidence in my data collection that the ITUC shares the highly optimistic views of those GCS actors who put forth the goal of a new “global democracy.” For the ITUC, engaging the interstate system is a matter of practicality, rather than evidence of a coherent ideological orientation. The WSF is where one meets like-minded people and shares ideas; the UN is where these ideas are put forward as policy prescriptions.

However, as I argue in Chapter 2, there are great similarities between these two spheres of GCS activity: both meta-projects are guided by an analysis that the nation-state is no longer the locus of political power in the world and they both share a

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http://unfccc.int/files/parties_and_observers/ngo/application/pdf/constituency_focal_point_as_of_2016.pdf

normative view of civil society as a force for progressive change in the world. Another similarity that I found in my field work, and in comparing lists of groups that participate in the WSF and in the UN consultative system is that very many of the same groups participate in both (field notes and artifacts). As I argue in the next section, Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) was launched at the WSF, and yet it was a collaborative project whose goal was to intervene in the interstate system. At the 2009 WSF, there were preparatory meetings for upcoming UN consultative processes (field notes and artifacts). Finally, within these two spheres of GCS activity, most collaboration can be characterized as distributive. The ITUC, and other GCS actors are drawn in to various UN consultative processes, or send delegations to the WSF. Participants voluntarily engage each other in these processes, which focus on sharing one's position on a particular topic, as discussed in the next section. In some cases, these distributive collaborations develop into complementary ones, where organizations from different movement projects share the workload of producing a common goal.

The fact that these two spheres of GCS activity – the UN consultative processes and the WSF – have enabled the ITUC to expand its remit of activity through collaborative projects with “like-minded” NGOs and SMOs supports a claim I make in Chapter 2. If we see GCS as a “global infrastructure for a future comprehensive global movement” (Katz 2006:344) then GCS can be seen as an emergent political opportunity structure. This infrastructure is a new dimension of “the political environment that provide[s] incentives for people to undertake collective action” (Tarrow 1994:85). Furthermore, UN consultative forums and the WSF act as spaces where transnational rights are defined and asserted, and transnational actors are constructed through the discovery of common interests (Kay 2005:721). This infrastructure is relatively new to the international union movement, which operated almost exclusively on its own, and with little reference to others, for almost 80 years. During this period, the Amsterdam Internationals did not stray far from “bread-and-butter unionism.” However, the emergence of a new social infrastructure, through which it can find allies in the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action, is

providing the ITUC an opportunity to expand its remit of activities through these collaborative projects.

The emergence and development of collaboration in key project areas

Since its inception, the ITUC has participated in a number of collaborative projects within global civil society and the interstate system. Through an analysis of my interviews with ITUC cadre, the Founding Program of the ITUC, and key documents produced for subsequent World Congresses, I have identified four project areas in which the ITUC regularly engages in collaborations with non-union GCS organizations. By project area, I refer to sets of social issues that the ITUC addresses through collaboration with other GCS actors. Each project area refers to a broad set of social problems that the membership of the ITUC has mandated the leadership and cadre to actively address. Over the short history of the ITUC, particular project areas have been cited as requiring the attention of the ITUC, although they are not discussed or organized in a consistent manner. Nonetheless, there are reoccurring themes that I have identified and categorised as distinct project areas. I identify these project areas as Human and Trade Union Rights, Global Economic Inequality, Environment, and Gender. I cover the most significant collaboration within the project area of gender inequality in Chapter 6. Below is an account of ITUC-GCS collaborations in the other three areas and how they developed over time. I then provide an analysis of what I refer to as collaborative fields. These two fields roughly overlap with the two GCS political meta-projects I outline in Chapter 2. This discussion is followed by an analysis of ITUC collaborations that explores the motivation, modes, and forms of the collaborations. I conclude the chapter with an analysis of the impact these collaborations have had on the ITUC and ask if these collaborations are evidence of a move toward global social movement unionism on the part of the ITUC.

Human and trade union rights

Compa argues that during the Cold War, the human rights movement and the labour movement operated in “parallel but separate tracks” (Compa 2008:210). He notes that concern for human rights during this period, particularly when expressed by the

AFL-CIO, was largely invoked as part of the anti-communist project, and concern about the violation of human rights by their ideological opponents in the global communist movement. Both concerns were regularly expressed. (Ibid.:2009). During the 1990s, he argues, the labour movement and the human rights movement began to converge in their areas of concern and analysis. While Compa's article is focused on the United States, we can see a similar trajectory occurring at the international level around the same time.

The ICFTU began the Annual Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights in 1984 (Trade Union World 1999:51). The focus of the ICFTU's survey was on the abuse by governments of people whose crime is trade union activity. In 1992, the ICFTU established a Trade Union Rights Department to expand the ICFTU's scope from reporting abuse in the Survey and to the ILO, to a comprehensive program of promoting trade union rights as human rights, through the development of workshops, seminars, conferences, and educational materials (Ibid.). The following year, a Human and Trade Union Rights Committee was established to oversee the development of this new, more aggressive program (ICFTU 1995; Trade Union World 1999:51). The Annual Survey was upgraded in both "the quantity of material presented and the quality of the format" (ICFTU 1995). The ICFTU also sent a delegation to the UN World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 (Ibid.).

In its 1996 Survey, the authors of the report note that "Invaluable additions to our work... are provided by the exchange of information and networking with leading non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights... The ICFTU will continue to cooperate closely with these groups" (ICFTU 1997), and its first website contained a link to the website of Amnesty International.¹²⁵ This early exchange of information, where individual staff reach out to one another through informal networks, is an example of a distributive form of collaboration, where the exchange of knowledge occurs largely through informal settings and networks. However, this began to change in the late 1990s.

In 1998, the ICFTU held meetings with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch (HRW), SOS Torture, and the International Federation of Human Rights, which

¹²⁵ Access to icftu.org was made through the internet archive, "Wayback Machine," found at archive.org.

discussed a systematic collaboration around sharing information and promoting issues of mutual concern. This may be the first example of a complementary form of collaboration for the ICFTU, in which the cadre and leadership of the organization sought to expand their human rights research through sharing knowledge with other organizations, through complementary networks and areas of expertise, and through the development of a division of labour, based on these complementary networks. Nonetheless, in his reflections on the 1990s collaboration between the ICFTU and human rights organizations, Gallin argues that these relationships were, at the time, still “ad hoc,” due to a “lack of resources” (Rütters and Gallin 2001:28).

As I note in Chapter 4, the ICFTU took a strong stance against apartheid very early on, calling for sanctions in 1949, and participated in the committees of the UN Committee Against Apartheid for several decades (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000 397).¹²⁶ Therefore, human rights (beyond those concerning the right to participate in union activities) was not a new topic to the ICFTU. It is also very likely that it worked with groups such as Amnesty International during that struggle. What does appear to be new in the 1990s, however, is that the ICFTU made the connection between defending the rights of trade unionists and the broader movement for human rights. This opened the door for the development of complementary collaborative relationships involving the exchange of information with organizations such as Amnesty International, HRW, and Anti-Slavery International.

Campaigning against state repression of union activists in the Global South was, and continues to be, one of the most important ongoing efforts of the ICFTU and ITUC (ITUC1 interview). Much of the information used for the Annual Report is garnered from its network of affiliates, who report such violations to the department. However, as extensive as the ITUC membership is, the network is uneven, and to make up for gaps in knowledge, ITUC staff will often turn to other organizations (ITUC7 interview). It is also

¹²⁶ Thörn suggest that the ICFTU did not address the issue of a boycott until 1959. However, the reference he uses to assert this is *Metallarbetaren*, the newspaper of the Swedish metal workers union (Thörn 2009:128). I am inclined to accept Gumbrell-McCormick’s date, as her research is based on ICFTU meeting records.

the case, however, that human rights organizations turn to the ITUC when they face a gap in their own network. ITUC's H&TUR department is a member of the World Organization Against Torture network,¹²⁷ and works closely with organizations such as Amnesty International, HRW and Anti-Slavery International, as well as nationally-based "human rights or legal organizations" in its ongoing efforts to collect data for the Annual Survey (ITUC7 interview). The development of a common purpose around defending human rights has made these emergent relationships "very natural connections":

They work on... human and trade union rights defenders, so do we; they have a lot of information about situations in countries through their networks, (and) we have a lot of information on countries through our networks, so we often connect on particular countries (ITUC7 interview).

The development of a common purpose is an important element of complementary forms of collaboration. Over the course of the past 20 years, a common framework around what constitutes human rights abuses, and what actions need to be taken by human rights defenders, develops between the ICFTU/ITUC and human rights organizations, such as Amnesty. This leads to changes in how the labour addresses human rights abuses, and how some human rights organizations conceive of human rights. In effect, each subject is subtly transformed by their collaboration with the other.

The decision of the ICFTU in the 1990s to take a more proactive stance in promoting human rights has led to the development of complementary collaborations with some human rights organizations beyond the exchange of information in writing reports on human rights violations. In the early 2000s, there is evidence in the internet archive that the ICFTU had begun to develop 'Amnesty-style' letter-writing campaigns in defence of individual labour activists. By the time the ICFTU and the WCL wrapped up their organizations and created the ITUC, collaboration with human rights groups such as Amnesty International, HRW, and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) had

¹²⁷ <http://www.omct.org>

begun to involve co-ordinated campaigns around the human rights of individual labour activists, as well as campaigns targeting countries with particularly egregious histories of violating human rights.

Over the period between its founding and its second World Congress, the ITUC collaborated with Amnesty, HRW, and the OMCT on a multi-year campaign in defence of Cambodian activists wrongly charged and jailed for the murder of another trade union leader (ITUC 2010c:43).¹²⁸ Campaigns in defence of individual labour activists also appear to have dovetailed into campaign collaborations targeting specific countries, such as Iran, which the ITUC, along with Amnesty, targeted in several “international action days” between 2007 and 2009 (ITUC 2010c:45).¹²⁹

Such cooperation around country campaigns has continued, and it is clear that the relationship between the ITUC and the key human rights organizations that operate within the space of global civil society is in the process of transformation. Some collaborations, such as that concerned with the plight of migrant Nepali workers in the Gulf States, are clearly focused on “labour-oriented” human rights issues.¹³⁰ However, it is also the case that the ITUC has supported and participated in actions and campaigns concerned with human rights abuses generally, such as the 2011 “day of action” against human rights abuses in Egypt, which was started by Amnesty.¹³¹ According to one key senior member of the ITUC, this collaboration involves not only “joint advocacy work (and) joint statements” with human rights organizations, but also “strategic” work, involving “more effective public messaging” (ITUC1 interview).

It appears that by tying the issue of trade union rights — which has generally been about the right to freely practice union activity without threats from the state or capital — to those of human rights more broadly, the ICFTU/ITUC has been successful at convincing many leading human rights organizations that labour rights, broadly speaking,

¹²⁸ See also: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/credibility-of-cambodian-justice>

¹²⁹ See also: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/iran-ai-and-international-trade>

¹³⁰ See: : <http://www.ituc-csi.org/amnesty-international-reports>

¹³¹ See: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/amnesty-international-day-of>

are basic human rights as well. This represents a significant shift for traditionally liberal human rights organizations, such as Amnesty, which have defined human rights in individualistic terms. It is impossible to prove that Amnesty's collaborations with the ICFTU and ITUC are the most significant cause of this change in Amnesty's understanding of human rights. Numerous causal mechanisms are likely at play here. However, I would argue that one of those causal mechanisms is collaboration with other collective subjects, such as the ICFTU and ITUC. Similarly, it is not possible to prove that the ICFTU's evolving approach to addressing human and trade union rights is the exclusive product of collaborating with human rights organizations. However, it is suggestive of the impact the two processes of knowledge exchange and negotiation, which take place in complementary collaborations, on subjects as they attempt to develop a common understanding of their common collaborative project.

This all leads to the need to address a recurring theme in the interviews : that ITUC cooperation with other organizations was more likely if the campaign or joint statement itself was very broad. As I note further along in this chapter this seems to be the case specifically with environmental and economic inequality issues. However, this does not seem to be the case in some of the ITUC collaborations with human rights organizations that have supported key ITUC campaigns around workers' rights. As mentioned in the last chapter, Amnesty, Anti-Slavery, and HRW all supported the 12x12 campaign for domestic workers' rights. Amnesty was also a supporter of the long-running Playfair campaign, targeting violations of workers' rights in the supply chains and construction projects of the Olympics,¹³² and the ITUC's recently initiated program around the supply chains of multi-national corporations.¹³³

The ITUC's campaign around the Olympics is a good example of the newfound ability to attract support from non-union GCS actors to labour rights, and the importance of complementary networks in collaborative campaigning. The Playfair campaign, which

¹³² See: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-s-12-by-12-campaign-keeps-up> and <http://www.ituc-csi.org/new-ioc-standards-must-lead-to>

¹³³ See: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/various-investigations-on-human> and <https://www.amnesty.org/en/search/?q=supply+chains>

now appears defunct or in limbo, targeted the global sport industry's relationship to highly exploitive labour practices in the global garment industry. For years it was coordinated by an international steering committee made up of the ITUC, the ITGLWF (which became part of Industrial in 2012), and the Clean Clothes Campaign, an "alliance" of trade unions and labour NGOs concerned with the plight of garment workers.¹³⁴

The Playfair campaign is one of the most successful ITUC campaigns in terms of an "on-the-ground" presence. This can be attributed to a few factors. First, it appears that the close relationship with a key NGO — in this case, the Clean Clothes Campaign — that maintains its own extensive transnational network enabled the Playfair campaign to maintain momentum over a number of years because the ITUC was not exclusively dependent upon its own national affiliates. For example, in the case of the Vancouver Olympics, where the national affiliate was incapable or uninterested in leading a campaign, groups from the NGO network carried the flag, as it were. Thus the existence of a complementary network allowed the ITUC to maintain an ongoing campaign in regions where its own network was weak, as is the case of Canada. The other factor is that while there is an international steering committee the coordination of actions is left to a local organizing committee, usually made up of an ITUC affiliate and local labour and human rights NGOs. This means that the actions are planned by those who will be carrying them out, rather than by a committee in Brussels, who in any event, have no control over how the plans were executed. It also means that the international coordinators have the time to reach out to other GCS organizations for support, build the transnational campaign, and widen the network.¹³⁵

What we are witnessing in most of these emergent relationships are developing complementary collaboration between the cadre of the dominant organizations of two

¹³⁴ <http://www.cleanclothes.org/>

¹³⁵ In addition to Amnesty International, the ITUC has also received support for its Olympics campaigns from a wide cross section of GCS, including FIFPro, the World Players' Union, Football Supporters Europe, Human Rights Watch, Supporters Direct Europe, Terre des Hommes International Federation and Transparency International Germany.

historically distinct movement projects, and therefore, two distinct collective subjects. We detect in the trajectory of the collaborations between the ITUC and Amnesty, HRW, Anti-Slavery, and OMCT a transition in the development of their collective subjectivity as human rights defenders. Initially, during the 1990s, the sharing of information between these organizations produced, in Blunden's terms, a *mutual aid* association, where gaps in knowledge — produced by imperfect global networks of human rights and union activists respectively — were bridged by a willingness to share information between these two international networks. Over the past 20 years, however, these relationships have developed into something novel in the history of the international union movement. From a mutual aid network has emerged campaign collaborations that present themselves as a form of *common front* against specific human rights abuses of workers. Here I refer to the coordinated individual and country campaigns as well as the campaign targeting labour rights abuses in or around the Olympics described above. But there is also new evidence that an effort to develop a form of *alliance project* around the question of global inequality between these international human rights and union organizations may be developing, a situation I discuss below.

Borrowing from John-Steiner, we can categorize and chart the development of different forms of collaboration between the cadres of ITUC, Amnesty, HRW and other human rights organizations. From my interviews, I would categorize the early interactions as a *distributed form* of collaboration; that is, individual ITUC cadre reached out to their opposites in human rights organizations to share and receive information about human rights abuses in particular regions or countries (ITUC7 interview). As these interactions become routinized and regularized, a *complementary* form of collaboration developed, a division of labour based on complementary networks, subject positions, and areas of expertise.

Clearly, the structure of collaboration involved in the Payfair campaign shares some characteristics with the other human and trade union rights focused collaborative campaigns the ITUC engages in. As just explained, the collaborations on annual reports and country campaigns supporting victims of human rights abuse, as well as the Playfair campaign, are examples of what John-Steiner refers to as complementary collaborations.

However, if the *form of collaboration* is similar across the ITUC's human and trade union rights projects, the *mode of assistance* offered and taken by collaborators appears to differ.

Playfair is distinct from other collaborations within the human and trade union rights project area in the “mode of assistance” (Blunden 2004; 2010) that is offered and taken from its co-collaborators. Blunden (2004; 2010) identifies three “modes of assistance” that collaborations are premised on: colonization, external reward, and solidarity. Modes of assistance based on external reward involve two subjects collaborating as distinct and mutually respected subjects, motivated by a desire to acquire something or achieve a goal through trade or sharing. It is clear that this is the mode of assistance that best characterizes most of the inter-organizational collaborations the ITUC is engaged in. With the case of the Playfair campaign, however, I would argue that this is better characterized as a colonizing mode of assistance. Modes of assistance based on the colonization of a weaker subject by a stronger one are not necessarily motivated by the desire to destroy the weaker subject, but rather by the desire to incorporate it into the project of the stronger subject. In the case of the Playfair campaign, the ITUC appears to be motivated by a desire to incorporate non-trade union labour activists into its project of human and trade union rights.

Global economic inequality

The ITUC also collaborates with some human rights organizations in the project area of global inequality, which includes a concern with international development and how it is funded. Collaboration in this area appears in three ways:

1. the ITUC collaborates with others in lobbying the UN and IFIs through participation in “stakeholder” or “civil society” consultation on the margins of major international meetings;
2. it cooperates in joint awareness raising campaigns and public relations exercises;
3. it works with both national affiliates of the ITUC and a number of local/ national NGOs to make aid more effective, and to ensure that aid projects are in line with

the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)¹³⁶.

Collaboration with other GCS actors concerned with global inequality goes back to at least the Jubilee 2000 debt relief campaign, which the ICFTU supported. Jubilee 2000 emerged in 1997, after the merger of Jubilee 2000, and an older anti-debt organization, Debt Crisis Network (Shawki 2010:211). The campaign started in the UK and arose in reaction to the debt crisis facing many countries in Africa, South America, and Asia, that was created by the massive debt taken on by developing countries and the Structural Adjustment Programs forced upon these governments by the World Bank and the IMF, to whom much of the debt was owed (Ibid.). It was largely a decentered campaign, based on national coalitions lobbying their local governments, signing petitions, and wearing lapel pins to raise awareness (Mayo 2005). ICFTU involvement appears to have involved public support for Jubilee.

While the campaign itself wrapped up in 2000, its impact on the international union movement was lasting. The ICFTU incorporated debt restructuring into their existing lobbying campaigns. The ITUC continues to work with NGOs concerned with debt and the impact of neoliberalism on international development, such as the Bank Information Center¹³⁷ and Jubilee USA¹³⁸ (ITUC11 interview). The ICFTU included support for debt relief in its 2006 submission to the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank, pointing out that the conditions imposed upon debtor nations were incompatible with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).¹³⁹ Its public policy

¹³⁶ The UN's Sustainable Development Goals "build" on the Millennium Development Goals, which are enshrined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted in 2000. The Millennium Goals were goals that were supposed to be achieved by 2015. The SDG is intended to guide international development between 2015 and 2030. See the following UNDP outline of the SDGs:

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html>

¹³⁷ <http://www.bankinformationcenter.org>

¹³⁸ <http://www.jubileeusa.org/home.html>

¹³⁹ https://www.tuc.org.uk/international-issues/countries/international-development/aid-and-debt/debt-relief-need-sustaining#_ftn11

statements connect the issues of debt and development,¹⁴⁰ and it was involved in a “people first” campaign, targeting the G20 at the height of the 2008 crisis, alongside a long list of campaign groups and NGOs operating within GCS.¹⁴¹

Three years after Jubilee wrapped up, the ICFTU participated in the founding of the GCAP (ITUC1 interview; ITUC12 interview). GCAP was launched in 2005 at the World Social Forum, although planning began in 2003 (ITUC12 interview). It has national chapters that operate under a number of names. The group in Canada, for example, goes by Make Poverty History,¹⁴² while the US GCAP coalition is called The One Campaign.¹⁴³ It is an interesting example of the challenges in collaboration amongst a diverse group of organizations. For example, one staff person pointed out that

...within the United States you had these strong conservative Christian coalitions who are part of the movement as well. So you would have within GCAP women’s groups that want to entrench gender equality in terms of reproductive rights, for example, and some of these organizations would not be very happy about it (ITUC12 interview).

When asked about the challenges of finding common ground within such a group, she replied:

Crafting language is always difficult and the way GCAP tried to work through that was to try to craft language at a more general level. If getting into specifics was becoming problematic they would try to stay at the more general level and set broad objectives in terms of social justice in the arena of finance, economics and trade, and try to make it broad. In terms of gender equality

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/statement.imfwb.1007.pdf>

¹⁴¹ <http://www.ituc-csi.org/tuc-g20-must-seize-chance-to-put>

¹⁴² <http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca>

¹⁴³ <http://www.one.org>

objectives and women's rights without, you know as soon as you try to flesh that out some more then you get into trouble. I mean you have to ask yourself, what are the limits of a group like the global call to action? [...] Kumi Naidu, who led the whole movement, would say, "this is a call to action on issues that we could agree on and we could all agree that it is unacceptable and unsustainable to have so much poverty and inequality in the world." So we agree on that and we have this call to action... on issues of debt relief, for example, on issues of fair trade and market access and... development assistance (ITUC12 interview).

It is perhaps these limitations that have led the ITUC to redirect its energies elsewhere. While the ICFTU was a cofounder of GCAP, it no longer takes a leading role:

The trade union movement was very much engaged in the establishment of... GCAP... (However) we don't really play a big role in that anymore. We're still a part of it, and at a national level a number of our affiliates are active in their national level platforms, and we do interact with GCAP, but we don't drive it (ITUC1 interview)

Jubilee 2000 and GCAP are similar collaborations, focused on sharing resources and sharing expertise between organizations so as to raise public awareness. They are products of years of ongoing distributive collaborations: GCS actors voluntarily meeting together, often at the margins of UN processes or at the WSF and discuss issues of mutual concern. Over time, distributive collaborations can turn into complementary ones, where different organizations come to be seen as the "expert" in a particular area:

They recognize that's where we have the expertise, and we recognize that some of them have done really good work on debt. For example, the Jubilee Campaign, [...] they just have an eye for when the World Bank is at it again. That sort of thing, where we

may not have necessarily seen it, but they are working on that. So from that point of view we find some really good synergies have come out of these coalitions we've built (ITUC12 interview).

The Global Compact, on the other hand, is a different form of collaboration that does not quite fit in with the others. It is an effort by the UN to encourage "corporate citizenship," and was first proposed by then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan at the World Economic Forum. It is premised on the idea that "enlightened self-interest" should lead corporate leaders to engage governments and civil society in dialogue around the idea of "making globalization more inclusive" (Kell 2003:36). Corporations that signed up would agree to nine principles around social and environmental responsibility that were developed through dialogue with representatives of governments, civil society (including labour), and businesses.

The Global Compact is, in a sense, the logical product of decades of debate over corporate social responsibility (CSR). There has been a historical ambivalence at the ICFTU and ITUC about CSR, and this ambivalence can be seen in the ITUC's limited engagement, and the fact that no informant at the ITUC even mentioned the Compact as an example of GCS collaboration. Amongst ITUC affiliates, there is no consensus around CSR and projects like the Global Compact:

In dealing with this phenomenon, trade unions have tended to take different positions, and largely it's been based on their own experience within the context in which they operate. [...] A lot of unions have looked at all of this stuff, and said this is all public relations and nonsense, and we don't want to have anything to do with it. And then some unions have looked at it and said, well, this is going to save us... and they embrace it because it's a term that has many meanings and so they [unions] take the meaning they like, and they embrace that (ITUC10 interview).

CSR is also one of the more challenging areas of potential collaboration for the ITUC. According to one staff member, it is an area that many ITUC affiliates can point to as a reason to be suspicious toward NGOs:

our skepticism... is warranted... and there's very little to be shown for this stuff. But there's a certain amount of buy-in that I think more NGOs had done than unions. I think there's a sort of tension that way... [...] Then you can take the other dimension: do these activities support unions and collective bargaining, or do they substitute for unions and collective bargaining? [...] that sort of thing will put us in conflict with some NGOs, not with others (ITUC10 interview).

Dealing with CSR is part of the work of ITUC's Economic and Social Policy Department (ITUC2 interview; ITUC10 interview), and although it continues to participate in the Compact, it does so from a skeptical standpoint:

The ITUC remained committed to the stated aim of the Global Compact to embed principles into business behaviour. However, concerns with the Global Compact expressed at the outset remained – the Global Compact is sometimes used as a voluntary alternative for intergovernmental action or as a “light” version of a company “code of conduct”. The potential of engaging multinational companies in dialogue at the global level has not been fully realised and much Global Compact activity is uncritical in its promotion of popular CSR practices (ITUC 2010c).

The ITUC's most recent coalition around global inequality is the Fight Inequality Alliance, which the ITUC founded with ActionAid, ACT Alliance, Amnesty International, CIVICUS, FEMNET, Greenpeace International, and Oxfam. It is a much smaller group, and its mandate appears to have a stronger class analysis than the other coalitions discussed above. For example, GCAP was dedicated to “challenging the

institutions and processes that perpetuate poverty and inequality across the world to defend and promote human rights, gender justice, social justice and security needed for survival and peace.”¹⁴⁴ Any effort to narrow down the mandate of the organization proved to be a challenge, as pointed out by informants (ITUC12 interview). The Fight Inequality Alliance, on the other hand, targets “the excessive power and influence of the one per cent,” highlighting the fact that poverty is not the result of vague “institutions and processes,” but of extreme wealth accumulation.¹⁴⁵ According to the joint statement announcing the new alliance,

Our current economic system is not working at many levels. Dominated by an over-confidence in the benefits of the market, it helps only a small elite, and is failing the majority, and failing the planet. There is widespread agreement that we are living through an inequality crisis. On this the IMF, the Pope and many other influential voices are agreed. The time has come to do something about it. The current system did not come about by accident. It is the result of deliberate policy choices. It is the result of our leaders listening to the 1% instead of to the majority.¹⁴⁶

The solutions to this situation, while not radical, are more focused than those of the GCAP:

...kick starting economies and re-establishing a measure of social justice starts with minimum wages on which people can live with dignity; strengthening collective bargaining; and ensuring labour rights, the rule of law and social protection¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ <http://whiteband.org/en/node/631>

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.ituc-csi.org/unions-and-global-fight-inequality>

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.actionaid.org/2016/01/civil-society-leaders-issue-statement-step-fight-inequality>

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.ituc-csi.org/unions-and-global-fight-inequality#nb1>

It is too early to say what this alliance will produce. However, it does suggest an evolving relationship between the ITUC and a few key GCS “partners” that is moving from ad hoc support for each other’s campaigns around specific issues, to an alliance of SMOs that are trying to articulate a coherent alternative future. The new alliance appears to reflect a transition in the form of collaboration. Collaborations between ITUC and other GCS actors in the project area of global inequality have until now been based on what John-Steiner refers to as *complementary* collaboration, where each brings to the collaboration a unique subject position or expertise. This diversity of subject positions creates a situation where collaborators struggle to understand each other’s position and the development of common goals involves a great deal of negotiation.

Environment

As I argued in the introduction, a key role for the international union cadre is the reconciliation of competing fractional interests within the working class, and this has been an important aspect of the development of environmental policy at the ITUC and in the ability of the cadre to collaborate with environmental GCS. Reconciling a general class interest – for example the need to address climate change through a dramatic restructuring of the GPE – with the specific, generally shorter term interests of particular fractions of the working class that may be displaced by such restructuring, is a key challenge for the international cadre. Part of this reconciliation involved providing education and training for delegates and leaders around environmental issues, a process that began with the ICFTU (Global Unions 2002). Another part involved the development of a class-based approach to addressing environmental issues, and then bringing that approach into its collaborations with environmental GCS actors. According to a former ICFTU cadre, moves toward working with other GCS actors around issues of the environment can be traced back to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Rio Earth Summit. At Rio, a set of agreements between UN member-states established a process – still ongoing – for governments to address climate change, amongst other environmental issues. One informant who attended the Rio meetings, said that the conference had a major impact on

ICFTU staff, who came away from the conference believing that organized labour needed to engage environmental issues in a much more meaningful manner, and that this would require engaging the transnational organizations of the global environmental movement (ITUC13 interview).

The exchange of expert knowledge was central to the emergence of relationships between the ICFTU and international environmental organizations in the early 1990s, and indicated that there was ground for the emergence and development of complementary forms of collaboration.. The labour cadre and leadership that attended the Rio Earth Summit felt that the international union movement needed to engage global environmental discussions; however, the cadre of the ICFTU lacked the technical knowledge to participate meaningfully in some discussions (ITUC13 interview). For a number of environmental organizations seeking to influence UN deliberations, the problem was that they lacked experience engaging diplomatic circles and lacked the structural relationship to the UN system that the ICFTU had through its privileged position as an ILO tripartite “partner.” Thus, the early relationship between the ICFTU and environmental organizations such as Greenpeace, the World Wildlife Fund, and Friends of the Earth, may be characterized as somewhat of an exchange. On the one hand, the ICFTU’s policies around the natural environment were influenced by the technical experts of the environmental movement. On the other hand, the ICFTU provided diplomatic “muscle” to environmental organizations with less access to interstate decision makers than the ICFTU (ITUC13 interview).

The relationship between the ICFTU/ITUC and environmental organizations appears to have shifted over the past two decades, and I identify two key structural changes that are of paramount significance for this change. First, there has been a gradual change in the ideological framework of the international union movement. Since the initial Rio meeting, addressing the global environmental crisis has become increasingly important not only to the cadre who were there, but also to affiliates, and a great deal of internal debate has occurred within the ICFTU and the ITUC since then (ITUC1 interview; ITUC13 interview). Having simultaneously engaged its own membership for two decades now, the ITUC cadre is more confident in its ability to engage in

environmental debates. In response to my question, “would it be fair to say [...] that you couldn’t have had certain (environmental) debates 20 years ago?” one cadre replied, “Absolutely. We did our homework. We did the research and we did the policy work, and the training work with our own membership” (ITUC1 interview).

The second structural elaboration that has had a profound impact on collaborations between labour and environmental GCS actors involves changes to the interstate system. Since the 1990s, the UN bodies and the IFIs have either developed or expanded structures to formally incorporate non-state actors into their deliberative processes. The incorporation of GCS “voices” into UN deliberative processes, means that environmental groups are less dependent upon the international trade union federations for institutional access, and the ITUC is now one of a number of “Major Groups” consulted by the UN Division for Sustainable Development (DSD)¹⁴⁸ and the UN Environment Program (UNEP).¹⁴⁹ These twin developments have led to a shift in the collaboration between labour and some environmental groups, from a simple exchange of expertise for diplomatic access, towards efforts to find “common ground” on environmental advocacy. In John-Steiner’s terms, this shift indicates a deepening of the complementary form of collaboration, but not a transition to an integrative form, as labour and environmental organizations maintain their separate subject positions, and no effort is made to integrate them.

However, relations between organized labour and the environmental movement have always been challenging, and continue to be so according to informants. One IUF cadre suggested that it has been a challenge to bring member organizations along on environmental issues, over the past two decades, pointing out that even adopting the concept of a “just transition” was a difficult process (IUF1 interview).¹⁵⁰ There is, of

¹⁴⁸ <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups>

¹⁴⁹ Major Groups meetings are structured meetings established by UN organizations for the purpose of incorporating civil society groups into setting the agenda for UN areas of concern. See: <http://www.unep.org/civil-society/MajorGroups/tabid/52184>

¹⁵⁰ The concept of a “just transition” is discussed below. Briefly, it is an argument that workers whose livelihoods would be disrupted by efforts toward a more “green” economy would be accommodated through training and compensation.

course a range of discourses within organized labour about how climate change needs to be addressed, from “technological fixes,” to a “transformative” process that connects workers’ immediate interests to the general interests of our species (Räthzel and Uzzell 2011). As Felli notes, such divergent views reflect the contradictions facing labour as it grapples with environmental policy. These contradictions can be mapped over the environmental contradictions between different fractions of capital: workers in different sectors, and different geographical regions of the GPE will interpret the challenge of climate change differently (2014:376). For the ITUC cadre to be engaged in the climate debates, it needed to develop a coherent platform that addressed the contradictions in its membership.

As a membership based organization, the ITUC leadership and cadre cannot enter into relationships with organizations that a significant number of member organizations — or even a handful of powerful member organizations — opposed. One staff person suggested that the case of Greenpeace was illustrative of this challenge: “at the leadership level, we have very good contacts... there is no issue. Again on the policy level, we... support each other, we understand their language, we would subscribe to their statement, they would probably subscribe to ours.” However, this does not always “trickle down somehow — these very good understandings at the global level to the national level — sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't work” (ITUC9 interview).

The ITUC will also not endorse the policy of an environmental organization that is opposed by either the GUF in whose “jurisdiction” the issue rests, or by the national unions or union federations whose members would be affected. The Extractive Industries Review process conducted by the World Bank is a good example of this challenge.¹⁵¹ Although the ITUC and the ICEM¹⁵² both engaged the process as “stakeholders,” the ICEM would not sign off on the final report, due to concerns about the potential loss of mining jobs. The GUF (whose jurisdiction covered mining) would not endorse the final report, and the ITUC followed suit (ITUC11 interview). In a similar case, the ITUC

¹⁵¹http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/Industry_EXT_Content/IFC_External_Corporate_Site/Industrie/s/Oil,+Gas+and+Mining/Development_Impact/Development_Impact_Extractive_Industries_Review/

¹⁵² ICEM joined the GUF Industrial in 2012.

engaged the World Bank in negotiations about the Bujagali dam in Uganda to ensure that “it is carried out safely, that the jobs are good jobs, that workers are unionized, etc. And it’s a project that there’s a lot of environmental groups that oppose it because it’s a dam. And even groups that we work with on other things” (ITUC11 interview).

In some areas of environmental policy, the ITUC’s support for or opposition to specific policies can appear to outsiders as contradictory. This is because ITUC is following the lead of unions and federations that make up their membership. One such area involves discussions around “innovative financing for climate action.”

...(ITUC) will support... (taxation on) bunker fuels, right? The maritime industry related taxation... We can talk to people in the green movement about that. Whereas when it comes to a similar situation applied in the aviation industry, we're not there yet... We're not on the same page... we can talk about innovative financing in generic terms, and we can talk about maritime-related bunker fuels... and we can talk about a financial transactions tax... but there are certain areas we know... because we've done the policy discussions (with GUFs and affiliates), we've had the conversations about what we think — as a representative body — we can promote, and what we can talk about, and what we can't (ITUC1 interview).

Thus, collaboration between the ITUC and most environmental GCS actors has generally remained somewhat ad hoc, and in a distributive form; cadres from the different organizations engage each other, share ideas, but are not yet able to begin the process of working on a common vision around environmental governance. How closely the ITUC cooperates with any particular organization or coalition/ network appears to depend largely on the specifics of the issue being addressed. The ITUC has a number of internal consultative processes that it uses to develop its position on environmental issues:

... around the Rio +20 process... we put out a statement earlier this year about what we figured were the key areas of priority for the

ITUC, and that had been through our internal process and been agreed to at a Global Council level, that had input from our national level affiliates, and [this is] what they said were important, [these] three things: social protection, financial transactions tax, and the green jobs, green economy work. And so we've gone about working with different civil society groups on one or more of those parts of that agenda (ITUC1 interview).

Different relationships “pick up on different parts of the (ITUC) agenda” (ITUC1 interview). For example, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has, for a number of years now, “really taken up their campaign around a revenue base for climate action and support the financial transaction tax,” which made it easy for the ITUC to organize a joint media event around this specific issue (ITUC1 interview). What made this an easy decision for the ITUC leadership was the longstanding support that the ITUC had expressed for international transaction taxes when addressing meetings of the G8 and G20.¹⁵³ However, the quote above, referencing different fuel taxes, reminds that collaboration is still largely dependent upon the ability to come to agreement on specific policies, and thus, relationships with the environmental movement remain somewhat ad hoc.

However, since the 2010 ITUC Convention, the senior cadre of the organization have begun to hold regular meetings with key international NGOs to “share priorities,” seek common ground on environmental issues with Greenpeace, Oxfam, and WWF, and “build trust” (ITUC6 interview). It is likely that the emergence of the Fight Inequality Alliance is a part of that process. Two of the three environmental organizations mentioned in that list are, along with the ITUC, founding members of the Alliance. The first statement issued by the Alliance directly connects climate change to inequality by pointing out that “the carbon consumption of the 1% (is) as much as 175 times that of the

¹⁵³ http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/robin_hood_tax_global_week_of_action.pdf
<http://www.ituc-csi.org/g20-told-voters-want-banks-to-put>

poorest.”¹⁵⁴ Such a development indicates a deepening of the comprehensive collaboration between the ITUC and these organizations, and makes possible the emergence of a more integrative form of collaboration, where collaborating subjects begin to develop shared goals, a shared ideological framework, and a form of collaboration based on solidarity, rather than exchange.

The fact that the ITUC’s relationships with the environmental movement include both ad hoc cooperation and an effort to build more cohesive alliances can be explained by what seems to be an implicit goal of the ITUC. Connecting environmental and social issues has been a significant driver in the ITUC’s efforts to collaborate with the environmental movement: “mainstreaming” a class analysis within civil society and interstate discourses around climate change.¹⁵⁵

As one of my informants noted (ITUC13 interview), unions have been engaged in environmental politics for generations, despite the fact that “bourgeois accounts of environmentalism” often omit the role of labour in this history (Felli 2014; see also Sklair 2001). For Felli, what we see with the engagement of international federations in environmental politics is “not so much an expansion of the trade unions’ sphere of interest... but, rather, a renewed engagement with a broader political understanding of the role of trade unions in society” (2014:373–74). This is only partially true. While it is the case that unions have been involved in environmental issues for generations, this has largely been at the local level, as an extension of workplace health and safety activism. The engagement of the ICFTU and, subsequently, the ITUC, with the transnational environmental movement is indeed an expansion of the organization’s remit, just as its collaborations with environmental GCS groups are an expansion of the traditional repertoire of action for the ITUC’s predecessors. However, I do agree with Felli that this demonstrates a renewed interest in an expansive role for unions within civil society.

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.actionaid.org/2016/01/civil-society-leaders-issue-statement-step-fight-inequality>

¹⁵⁵ By “mainstreaming” I refer to the idea of making questions of social class central to the discourse on climate change. The idea of “mainstreaming” emerges out of feminist efforts to have a gender lens applied to policy areas that had previously been treated as “gender neutral.” Within the ILO, there has been a significant effort to make gender analyses a mainstream practice within the organization (Boris and Jensen 2014).

The unique contribution of the ITUC to current debates on climate change is an assertion of the social implications of addressing climate change. Like its predecessor organizations, the ITUC is engaged in a number of UN forums relating to economic development and ecological sustainability. In these forums ITUC has pushed to have the “social dimension” of environmental sustainability incorporated into policy platforms. Again, this program goes back to the 1990s, when the ICFTU was successful in having a chapter added to Agenda 21 on “strengthening the role of workers and trade unions.”

In 2002 Global Unions produced its “Fashioning a New Deal” report on its goals for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Global Unions 2002).

Acknowledging that the document represented a “ten-year evolution in thinking” amongst international union leaders and that the positions had been arrived at only after “long and contentious” debate, the authors suggest that their position is distinguished from that put forward by other Major Groups by their “focus on the Social Dimension” of sustainable development. In “Fashioning a New Deal,” 19 different priorities are identified relating to: poverty eradication, decent work, workplace agreements and framework agreements as tools to meet Agenda 21 goals, work place education on consumption and environmental issues, “plough-to-plate approaches to food and agriculture,” community planning around sustainable energy and transportation, gender and age issues, and child labour. The document argues for the necessity of engaging workers in their workplace on the topic of sustainability and outlines a number of ways workers can contribute to community efforts to develop more sustainable lifestyles and economic practices. This UN-focused campaign appears to have had some success. Since then, the UNEP has produced a number of documents calling for a “green new deal,” that echo many of the arguments put forward by labour (UNEP 2007a, 2007b).¹⁵⁶

Furthermore, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=548&ArticleID=5957&l=en>

Climate Change (UNFCCC) has come out in favour of a global “green jobs” strategy,¹⁵⁷ as has Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon.¹⁵⁸

One cadre informed me that an important aspect of their engagement with environmental groups is highlighting social protection as an important part of the environmental conversation:

Social protection is a much broader conversation than old age pensions or children's ... cash transfers for nutrition etc. [...] social protection also includes such tools as skills development, training programs, funding for, having workers transition from a brown industry to a green, or greener industry (ITUC1 interview)

Such conversations were not always easy:

We've had some robust conversations with people in the Green movement where we've said, 'if you go for a no-growth model, we're out.' We need growth for the generation of jobs, and for addressing global poverty. [...] What we can do is ensure that investment (is directed) into greening the economy [...] and what we call green jobs (ITUC1 interview).

Informants suggest that there has been a shift in thinking amongst some significant environmental NGOs, and the ITUC is now called upon to educate environmental leaders about “green jobs,” and other “social dimensions” of climate change policy:

...the women's environment and development organizations [...] approached us to discuss it [green jobs] and to see what's our

¹⁵⁷ http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article2568&var_recherche=%22new%20deal%22

¹⁵⁸ http://www.unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_14/statements/application/pdf/cop_14_statement_ban_ki-moon.pdf

concept, and how we see it operationalized. So, I think that's positive that they are approaching us as well (ITUC12 interview).

The responses of two different ITUC cadre I interviewed at different stages of this research project lead me to conclude that the emergence and development of complementary forms of collaboration with key environmental groups around a policy agenda that addresses both environmental and social issues, is fairly recent. In 2009, I asked one informant about whether or not she saw a shift in the thinking of environmental organizations, and she replied:

Yes, there's a lot of talk, and I don't know how much substance there is behind it, because the talk has only been going on for a year. [...] I don't know how much thought has really gone into it, but certainly, I do hear that from environmental groups now (ITUC11 interview).

Three years later, another informant reported that the campaign to have environmental GCS pick up on the "green jobs" agenda was clearly bearing fruit:

What's been fascinating in the last year, both for Greenpeace and the [WWF] particularly [...] (is that) they totally get what the social pillar is. [...] They now get that. [...] Green groups 10 years ago — even 5 years ago probably — looked at us as the hard hat, blue overall union movement that they didn't have much in common with. Whereas (now) they love having us on their podiums. I was at the Greenpeace general meeting... addressing their meeting about what the future — in terms of employment and social rights — means for the green movement (ITUC1 interview).

As is the case with the other project areas discussed above, collaboration within the area of environmental issues begins in a distributive form. ITUC cadre engage the cadre of environmental organizations as the "other," and share their positions and ideas with them. As I show in the section on meta-project engagement, this often occurs at the

WSF, or UN GCS for a, although some cadre suggested that contact initiation also occurred via the world wide web (ITUC2 interview) or personal networks (ITUC6 interview). In a few cases, these distributive forms of collaboration produce a complementary form of collaboration, where the cadre of the ITUC and the cadre of particular environmental organizations feel that there are grounds to work together. In a minority of these cases, these complementary collaborations become quite developed.

ITUC collaboration: Motivation, modes, forms, and collective subjects

While the goals of ITUC engagement with environmental GCS actors appear fairly clear, this does not fully explain why and how collaboration has become such a significant aspect of the ITUC's repertoire over the past 20 years across all of its project areas. The reasons why the ITUC engages in so many collaborations are related to the expansion of the ITUC remit, under pressure from its affiliates, and the need to find external resources to support this expanded remit. Frances O'Grady, Deputy General Secretary of the British Trade Union Congress, has argued that, "(g)rowing globalisation has demonstrated ever more vividly that going it alone [for the unions] is not an option" (as cited in Munck 2010:228). This sentiment was shared by a number of the ITUC cadre interviewed:

When Sharron Burrow was elected as the General Secretary in June of 2010 it was on the mandate of what you can see on the website of the ITUC, the Congress mandate on dealing with all those campaigns and issues and processes that the international trade union movement thought was important [...] She acknowledged that we, as a trade union movement [...] won't be able to fulfill that vision, and be effective if we just try and do it on our own. She created the position called Director of External Relations [...] to further develop the relationships that the ITUC has had historically — both the ICFTU and the WCL and their respective histories; but also... (to develop) some more effective work in strategic alliance building with people in different parts of

civil society [...] in order for us to be effective in addressing some of those issues and being successful in changing the kind of conditions that we know need to be changed globally for the benefit of workers (ITUC1 interview).

...many aspects contributed to change our vision about how we can't do alone, or no... how we can't improve the conditions of work and life for the workers if we work alone, but (only) if we work together with the other partners, not only with the trade unions (ITUC5 interview).

I believe there was increased consciousness about the need to work in a more collaborative way, coordinating more, and cooperating more with other trade union organizations in the world, but also with the other actors that are at play in the world of work [...] We, as trade union organizations, know that if we want to advance and achieve our goals, which are clearly to defend and promote the rights of male and female workers, well, we know that we have to work in collaboration, because we can't do it all alone. The issues at stake are too broad. We don't have sufficient financial or human resources, and we are perhaps also deficient in experience necessary to face the broad issues experienced by workers, and the most important thing is to work in collaboration, benefiting from the collective experience of all the different actors in civil society, who are located in different spheres (ITUC5 interview).

It is important to have the cooperation with all the associations who work with the domestic workers, also because the unions, many unions don't have enough resources, they don't, they can't do all the work. For example, in the informal economy, many unions work like in the past time, and they don't have the capacity

to organize, because they need to think of different strategies to organizing workers in the informal economy (ITUC5 interview).

We started to realize the trade union movement on its own couldn't achieve the things we wanted to. So, therefore, it was a very practical kind of drive behind (collaboration). [...] We've got these goals. How do we achieve them? How do we get the maximum kind of hit? [...] Actual union membership was declining, and we needed to reverse that, and we needed new ways of doing things, and more outreach. So a lot of us who wanted to be more outward looking kept pushing that. [...] and I think that kind of percolated upwards a bit (TUC1 interview)

There were a lot of requests from the regional women's committees that we should really take a look (at domestic work). But, it's like agricultural workers, it needs an enormous amount of resources, both human and financial resources, to do meaningful work for this sector. So, then the Secretary said, 'if you can find specific outside funding and outside resource persons, that would be really great, then we could really take it on. But with the current internal resources we can't do much' (IUF2 interview).

What is clear from these accounts is that the ICFTU came under pressure from its affiliates to take up issues toward which the international union federations had not traditionally directed resources. One longstanding cadre of both the ICFTU and the ITUC agreed that part of this pressure came from the expansion of its membership (ITUC2 interview). Many of its new affiliates are from Southern economies, bringing with them new issues, such as informal labour, and a more social movement union orientation, such as those affiliated with SIGTUR, discussed in Chapter 2. Additionally:

... (there are) more communist and more left-wing European unions involved as well. For example, in France, in Spain and Italy

[...] we sort of incorporated the communist unions, and so that's sort of changed the balance of the ITUC's internal power structure. [...] the big serious communist unions joined the ITUC: COSATU, CUT Brazil, KCTU Korea... next month we're expecting to affiliate a left wing Philippine union called... Alliance for Progressive Labour... so that is certainly affecting the balance in the ITUC (ITUC2 interview).

As the ITUC came under pressure to address a broader array of social and environmental issues, the cadre came to see that collaboration was the only practical means of addressing these issues. The practical, pragmatic orientation of the international union cadre shaped its mode of collaboration, particularly in the early stages of collaborative relationships with human rights and environmental GCS actors.

Returning to Blunden's (2010:284) schema, the modes of assistance provided by ITUC in its collaborations with other GCS actors vary between project areas, and in some cases change over time. If we look at its collaboration with informal workers' organizations, as exemplified in the two domestic worker campaigns, we can find evidence of both philanthropic colonization, and solidarity. For Blunden, the former involves a dominant subject "subsuming" the activity of another into its own project. The aim of this assistance is not necessarily exploitive; the dominant subject may very well be philanthropic (2010:284). Nonetheless, this form of assistance leads to the destruction of the weaker subject, and its incorporation into the project of the dominant one (Blunden 2004). What we see with the efforts of the ITUC and the IUF to incorporate informal workers, such as domestics, is their incorporation into the already existing, and dominant, subject of the labour movement: the institutions of international unionism. There is no question of the altruistic intent of this assistance, and given the demand for recognition and representation of informal workers by the unions, this form of "colonization" is likely welcomed by the MBOs that have until now been seen to be a distinct subject.

As I argue in Chapter 6, informal workers have largely been treated as a distinct class by academics, state managers, and union leaders. Yet, domestic workers, and others

that work under informal working conditions do not make up a distinct class, but rather, are marginalized fractions of the global working class.¹⁵⁹ As I argue in the introductory chapter, incorporating marginalized fractions of the working class into the existing labour movement is a key task for the international union cadre. The process of class formation necessarily involves the incorporation of marginalized subjects into the existing subject, and the creation of a new subject – a broader, more inclusive working class movement.

Furthermore, this process does not destroy differentiation (Blunden 2004), but incorporates it into the new subject. Historically, colonization creates a “dominated self-consciousness” in the marginal subject. However, in the case of incorporating domestic workers and others informally employed into the existing international union movement, there appears to be evidence that the IUF and the ITUC have recognized the need for forms of organization that are distinct from the traditional trade union form. As noted in Chapter 6, the IDWF allows for the membership of MBOs that do not conform to the union structure, and allows for the participation of NGOs who work with domestic workers. Whether or not this flexibility heralds a new moment in working class formation remains to be seen, but the influence of SEWA, outlined in Chapter 6, does suggest that the marginal subject being colonized can, in fact, have an influence on the dominant subject.

If the collaborations between the ITUC and non-union organizations concerned with domestic workers have allowed for the integration of new fractions of the global working class into the existing movement, collaborations with GCS elements of the

¹⁵⁹ The view that marginalized workers are a distinct social class, rather than fractions of the global working class is the error that Guy Standing makes in his positing of the “precariat” (Standing 2011). Standing suggests that the precariat, while heterogeneous, all share the unique historical experience of work as “instrumental (to live), opportunistic (taking what comes) and precarious” (2011 13-14). However, this explanation reflects both the current experience of the majority of workers around the world, and the experience of workers under capitalism historically. The historical reference that Standing makes to “long-term stable, fixed-hour jobs with established routes of advancement, subject to unionization and collective agreements” reflects a very truncated history of labour under capitalism. Even within the European heartland of social democracy, precarity has been the experience for the majority for the past several centuries, save a brief period after the Second World War. As Munck suggests, “precarity should not be seen in a binary relation to a “mythical stable-formal-regular worker status” (2011 10). Palmer is even more categorical in his critique: “rather than the material basis of a new, contemporary class,” dispossession - which generates the insecurities cited by Standing - has been historically, “the fundamental feature of class formation” (Palmer 2014:45).

environmental and human rights movements, and those concerned with international development, have allowed it to expand its remit into topic areas not traditionally taken up by the international union federations. These collaborations look quite different because they involve distinct collective identities and subjects that cannot be “colonized.” In expanding its remit to include a more expansive concern with human rights, more forcefully confronting global inequality, and participating in the climate change debate, the ITUC cadre has engaged in a number of collaborations. The form of these collaborations have, in some cases changed, although the mode of assistance offered non-union GCS appears to have generally remained one that Blunden characterizes as focused on “external reward.”

In each project area outlined above, we can chart a trajectory from distributed, through to complementary, and, in one case, to the possibility of integrative forms of collaboration. For John-Steiner, distributed forms of collaboration include “voluntary” exchanges of information, often in informal settings (2000:198). As illustrated earlier, this best characterizes early interactions between the cadre of the Human & Trade Union Rights Department, where long-standing and informal relationships with the cadre of human rights organizations involved the sharing of information about human rights cases. Such relationships appear to stretch back to the 1980s, where the ICFTU began to document human rights abuses against trade union leaders. As John-Steiner notes, distributed collaborations may lead to “lasting partnerships” (Ibid.), and this was the case in the area of human rights. Over time, the ICFTU cadre developed their own information networks that would complement those of organizations such as Amnesty International, and vice versa, and a division of labour developed. A complementary form of collaboration emerges and develops over time. The ICFTU, Amnesty, HRW, and other human rights organizations developed coordinated campaigns around human rights, and these campaigns continue still between these organizations and the ITUC. In complementary collaborations, goals are negotiated, and efforts are made to understand each other and to develop a common understanding of the issues being addressed.

In the case of human rights, we see evidence of collaborations which create a new consensus that expands the scope of work for each subject. For the most part, the

international union movement is focused on the human rights of union leaders and the collective rights of workers to form trade unions. For its part, Amnesty has historically been a liberal human rights organization, focused on the civil rights of individuals. Over the course of their collaborations, however, we see human rights organizations, such as Amnesty, begin to support the “labour rights” campaigns of the ITUC, such as the domestic workers’ campaigns. The ITUC has also expanded its view of human rights work, as illustrated in its support for human rights campaigns that address civil rights more generally, such as the co-ordinated action around human rights in Egypt, in 2011. As distributive collaboration develops into complementary collaboration, efforts to find common ground lead to certain human rights organizations and the ITUC to appropriate each other’s ideas and concepts (John-Steiner 2000:199).

A similar trajectory in the form of collaboration appears in the project area of economic development/ global inequality and environmental degradation, with one crucial difference. In all three project areas collaboration initially takes a distributed form. Distributive collaboration occurs as two distinct subjects reaching out to one another in the hope of supplementing their own efforts with those of the other. For example, research cadre from the Human and Trade Union Rights Department reach out to their counterparts in Amnesty, HRW, Anti-Slavery, and OMCT for assistance in their work, and vice versa. As one informant remarked: “You just Google a few times when you're preparing a document and you hit the main actors preparing stuff. So then you start to send each other questions” (ITUC9 interview). In the case of the environmental and development collaborations, however, the distributive collaboration is not initiated by the subjects alone. Here, distinct movement projects were often initially brought together through the intervention of the institutional settings of UN consultative processes, where the possibility of collaboration between the ITUC and GCS actors concerned with environmental governance or global inequality first presented itself. As argued above, the WSF is another institutional setting through which ITUC cadre engage in distributive collaborations, but it is clear from my interviews that it is of secondary and diminishing importance to the organization’s collaborations.

Through these initial introductory settings, ITUC cadre developed formal, but relatively short-lived complementary collaborations in the shape of joint-press releases, co-ordinated street demonstrations at environmental summits, and even coalitions such as Jubilee 2000 and GCAP. Informants reported that these collaborations involved a great deal of negotiation. By negotiation, I do not refer to a set of trade-offs or exchanges, but rather to efforts to reach consensus on a press release or a set of demands. As Blunden notes, collaboration involves both cooperation and conflict. Through consultation participants try to reach a consensus, but this is not always possible, and collaborators may go their separate ways. But the end of a specific collaboration does not necessarily preclude the possibility of future collaborations. As noted above the ITUC frequently works with Greenpeace and the WWF, but this does not mean that they always share a platform or present the same demands, as I note in the last subsection. As observed by one informant, the “very good working relationships” are built in part on “understandings about where our common agendas lie and where we differ’ (ITUC1 interview).

The mode of assistance that appears in each of these collaborations remains one of external reward. Blunden’s concept of external reward references exchanges of wages, and different forms of trade as some examples of an external reward, but he also references the reward of support for a participant’s project (2010:284). However, more abstractly, his conceptualization of external reward is a reflection on atomized societal relations in capitalist society, and how these shape most contemporary human collaborations (Blunden 2004). Assistance through external reward is offered to an “external” subject, albeit one that is recognized as an equal (Ibid.).

Blunden uses the term external reward in contrast to solidarity, which involves assisting another subject unconditionally and in such a way that “the other remains the owner of the project” (Blunden 2010:284). While assistance through external reward is mediated by some form of reward external to the subject — wages, goods, or support, for example — the mediating activity of solidaristic assistance is the struggle of others (Blunden 2004). As mentioned above, collaborations between the ITUC and GCS actors all involve negotiation. Whether it is a press release expressing disappointment with climate change negotiations, or a list of demands for state action against poverty in the

Global South, each of these collaborations requires one of two things: compromise, or a level of abstraction that negates or buries specific disagreements.

Modes of assistance based on external reward are instrumental relationships. Subjects — in this case, institutions representing different movement projects — can move from “mutual indifference, through mutual instrumentalization [external reward], up to a merging into a new shared identity” (Blunden 2010:293). Blunden’s formula is based on Hegel’s typology of the subject-object relation: mechanism, where subjects are mutually indifferent to one another; chemism, where subjects develop an affinity and recognize a relation between them, and the possibility of common cause; and organism, where each subject begins to find its own “essence” in the other and make the project of the other subject their own (Ibid.:72). From the 1990s until now, the ICFTU/ITUC has undergone a fairly dramatic change in its orientation to non-union GCS. The ITUC is clearly not indifferent to SMOs and NGOS who focus on environmental, gender, or economic inequality issues. However, it is still the case that collaborations between the ITUC and other GCS actors remain based on mutual instrumentalization.

Nonetheless, each of these collaborations involves the construction of a collective subject. Blunden argues that throughout the history of modern social movements, different forms of collective subjectivity have emerged, one succeeding the other, in response to different historical moments in the history of capital accumulation. The different forms of subjectivity reflect different forms of ‘social consciousness and identity, as well as the unique needs of the workers’ movement at any given historical moment (2010:284, 2014:419). Blunden’s is an historical outline of historical moments in the history of social movements. However, history does not progress in a straight line, and I find analogies for contemporary ITUC collaborations within his historical outline.

For example, through the initiation of distributive collaboration around human rights, two distinct *movement* subjects — ICFTU/ITUC of the labour movement, Amnesty, HRW, Anti-Slavery, and OMCT of the human rights movement — create a collective subjectivity, best described, in the terminology of Blunden, as a *mutual aid* network. Blunden’s historical example is the IWA, which was focused on meeting practical issues of the class struggle, such as providing assistance to strikers, and was

ideologically heterogeneous (2014:421). A collaboration between the ITUC and Amnesty International may appear to be a strange comparison; however, in both cases the focus is on mutual support for a group of people tied together by a single common cause. In the historical example the focus is on supporting the class struggle at the site of production, whereas in the latter case, the focus is on supporting workers who confront the power of repressive states.

In the 1990s, as a multiplicity of distinct movements began to assert themselves within GCS, the international trade union movement faced a new situation. It had until that point few other movement subjects to collaborate with internationally. It had a long history collaborating with human rights groups, such as Amnesty International, but it had little to no relationship with the dominant environmental organizations operating within GCS, such as Greenpeace. The explosion of transnational activism around “globalization” provided these distinct movement subjects a container (and later, an “open space” in the WSF) into which they could each pour their particular concerns. Union activists met environmental activists and anti-poverty activists in the streets of Seattle, Genoa, and anywhere else the G20, G7, or WTO met. While often highly planned demonstrations, most of those who participated experienced them as a *spontaneous* collective subject, engaged in a distributed form of collaboration. After the demonstrations, little contact is sustained between these individuals or the cadre of the organizations they supported. For a time, the “movement of movements” appeared to be a powerful force on the streets.

Blunden identifies this period as one of an emergent *alliance* form of political subjectivity. While the street battles of the late 1990s could not be sustained, the example of different movement organizations working together within GCS stuck. In addition to the efforts to turn the movement of movements into an “alliance of movement” at the WSF, a wide range of GCS actors also met regularly at various civil society consultative processes of the UNEP, and other UN institutions, as well as meetings of the World Bank and IMF. Blunden argues that alliance politics are characterized by a non-obligatory, consensus model of organizing. Alliances he suggests, have “no common vision” or “on-going program.” Their decisions are merely technical ones designed to prosecute a

particular action (2014:430–31). However, this seems little different from the front politics of the 1930s that he cites in his work. Rather than alliances, I would consider most of these collaborations a form of front politics, where distinct movement subjects present themselves as a *front* against climate change or poverty, for example, and these fronts would sometimes coalesce into an organizational form, such as GCAP. However, like front politics in the interwar period, most of these weak collaborations were only sustained by what they were against, and only in very broad terms. An alliance, I argue, involves an effort to build common ground, even if there is no common ideological project, as Blunden appears to suggest elsewhere (2010:285).

In my research, I found no evidence of the ITUC engaged in an alliance, as I have just defined it. As one senior cadre responded, when I used the term alliance to describe its relationships with environmental organizations during an interview, “I wouldn't call it an alliance, because it doesn't have a formal structure, but we have very good working relationships with the World Wildlife Fund, with Greenpeace, and Friends of the Earth” (ITUC1 interview). Since its inception, the ITUC has been engaged in efforts to build on its ad hoc collaborations, and this appears to have become a priority since Sharron Burrow was elected to lead the organization in 2010. It is possible that the Fight Inequality Alliance may become an example of the ITUC truly constructing an alliance form of collective subject with a number of GCS actors that it shares a common outlook with, but it is too early to make a pronouncement on this.

What the Fight Inequality Alliance may herald is a recognition of its own complex subjectivity. The ITUC is both a single movement subject, as an institution of the historical labour movement, and part of multiple collective subjects, as a collaborator in the human rights movement, the women's movement, and the environmental movement. This is necessarily the case because, as a representation of the collective subject of labour, it reflects the multiple subjectivities of its members and cadre. Domestic workers are (very usually) women workers, their status as woman is inextricably bound up in the work that she does and the poor recognition and remuneration she receives as a worker. The same informant quoted above put it very well when she told me, “I'm a woman, I'm a trade unionist, I'm a human rights activist, I'm a

consumer, you know... I don't divide up my sense of my own identity when I make decisions about what products I buy, or under what conditions I'm willing to participate in political actions" (AT).

The impact of collaboration on the ITUC

When people join a project their personality adapts itself to the new system of activity and artifacts and most of all their sense of identity joins itself to the aim of the project and its means of achieving it. Concretely, this happens through collaboration, interaction mediated by participation in a project (Blunden 2010:292-93).

Above I discuss how the ITUC's collaboration with environmental NGOs appeared to be at least partially focused on encouraging environmental leaders to adopt a more class-oriented or socially-oriented approach to addressing climate change. In this section, I briefly explore the influence of collaboration on the scope of issues taken up by the ITUC, and on its repertoire of action. I then conclude by asking whether or not these collaborations can be considered examples of social movement unionism.

Influence of other GCS actors on ITUC remit and repertoire

One of my questions for ITUC cadre was about the influence of other GCS actors on the organization's activities. Opinions on this ranged widely, although one constant was that no respondents cited a particular organization that had influenced the ITUC. One cadre from the Economic and Social Policy Department suggested that influence of NGOs on the ITUC could be seen in its new repertoire of action:

I think in terms of the media relations, yes. We have different ways of working, because NGOs kind of depend upon media... to do anything, really... in the end that's how they get supporters, get money, sell the policy they're trying to push. Whereas we... we do quite a lot of that, but we're always working through the power of our affiliates in different countries, where they have a link to a

government, or make a mass demonstration of hundreds of thousands of people in the street, which is quite different from an NGO way of working, where they can't depend upon that base of strength. So, the way we work is a combination of those two things. I guess in the 1980s and 90s we were much more only focused on our affiliates to get anything changed. Whereas, in the last 10-20 years we've developed a much better sensitivity to the media and to NGO-type techniques, stunts and so on (ITUC2 interview).

Cadres from the Equity Department were quick to identify the transnational women's movement as an important influence. One identified the transnational feminist movement as the "driving motor" behind the domestic workers' campaign. Another replied:

Yes of course. [...] I don't believe one sole organization would have, but there is the influence of all that is going on, for example in the forums, all the forums taking place... with the World March of Women... [...] of course we are inspired by them and we carry out... we integrate, rather, these objectives in our way of doing the work (ITUC5 interview).

This quote is similar to comments of others who saw external influences in less tangible ways than identified in the first quote above. One informant, who argued that labour and environmental organizations had influenced each other, suggested the change in the ITUC was more likely a reflection of a general change in common sense around environmental degradation:

I think that everywhere people are realizing how crucial it (the environment question) is. There's government negotiations on it, it would just be ridiculous to not think about it. So, the leadership in ITUC has recognized that. And you know, probably some of the

positions certainly have been influenced by groups that have been working on this longer, but if anything, I think it's just the situation's changed, people are recognizing the need to respond to it (ITUC11 interview).

Her comments somewhat echo those of other cadre who have been quoted already. The British TUC delegate quoted earlier, who argued that pressure on the ITUC to collaborate had “percolated up” through the organization, also suggested that this was in part a product of the fact that at the national level, active union members are also active in other social justice campaigns. He believes that pressure from these mostly younger members had influenced the TUC cadre, who in turn, put pressure on the ITUC to support various projects outside the traditional international union remit. Remember also the earlier quote of the ITUC cadre on complex subjectivities: “I'm a woman, I'm a trade unionist, I'm a human rights activist [...] I don't divide up my sense of my own identity” (ITUC1 interview).

What this suggests is that the influence of GCS on the ITUC is essentially indirect and not related to the actual collaborations between cadre. The cadre are responding to the concerns and consciousness of their members. It would appear that while most ITUC members have no knowledge of, and perhaps little interest in, their membership in the ITUC (Waterman personal communication, September 2012), the ITUC cadre and leadership are paying attention to the changes in their own membership. There is also the fact that few people politically active in the late 1990s were untouched by the seemingly spontaneous interactions of labour, environmental, anti-poverty, women's, and LGBTQ movement organizations in the anti-globalization street protests of the time. The analysis of the British TUC cadre member struck me as particularly significant, because the possibility of “teamsters and turtles” working together challenged the assumed silos within which distinct movement organizations were operating. Two informants with long histories in the international union movement highlighted the impact of Seattle:

...it wasn't the same 20 years ago... things like Seattle, the WTO in 99. And that's a pretty seminal point, I think, when NGOs

started and unions started to work together very well (ITUC9 interview).

...different things happened (to encourage collaboration) [...] like the buildup to the WTO meeting in Seattle, where, because of globalization, many social movements were starting to be active on the broad front of globalization and then you had anti-globalization movements and so on. And so I think the trade union movement had to take up those issues and had to say these people are sort of dealing with the same issues we are dealing with – how do we work (with them)? (ITUC12 interview).

It would seem that the willingness of the ITUC to collaborate is a product of broader changes, including a shift toward coalition politics and efforts to develop new collective subjects out of alliances between the plethora of movements which had emerged over the 1960s, 70s, and 80s (Blunden 2014). However, it took a number of years for these new elements to be incorporated into the repertoire of action in the international union federations, and to define the method of ITUC engagement in GCS.

Global social movement unionism: is the ITUC fully utilizing GCS as an opportunity structure?

In Chapter 2, I present GCS as a potential opportunity structure through which the ITUC might expand its remit beyond bread-and-butter unionism, through collaborations with non-union GCS actors. In this chapter, I show that in the early 21st century such collaborations were indeed taking place on a large scale. The question that remains is whether or not these collaborations can be taken as evidence of social movement unionism.

In Chapter 2, I outline Waterman's notion of GSMU. It is an exacting list of demands. Succinctly, GSMU would entail:

1. a radical and utopian set of demands that address not only the mode of production, but also the mode of social reproduction, and articulate a clear anti-sexist, anti-racist, anti-authoritarian future,
2. developing these demands with a wide range of civil society organizations through horizontal collaborations guided by a pluralist, internationalist ethos,
3. with the aim of creating a new social order based on a global civil society that allows workers the time and space to develop their own popular culture.

It is clear that Waterman would give the ITUC failing grades.

There is, of course, nothing utopian about the positions that the ITUC puts forward, and the analysis that guides its policy positions is far from radical. The leadership of the ITUC and Global Unions have put forward what appears to be an ambitious program for a post-neoliberal global political economy. The founding Program of ITUC “pledges the ITUC to change globalisation fundamentally” in such a way that “the policies of free market neo-liberalism, and the manifest failings and incoherence of the international community in respect to the current process of globalisation, give way to governance of the global economy.” In this alternative the emphasis is on economic, social and environment sustainability, workers’ rights, and promoting “growth with equitable income distribution” through the generation of “decent work for all” (ITUC 2006:1–2). It is clear that the majority of the ITUC leadership believes that these goals are at least potentially achievable through the current interstate system, including the IFIs, despite some misgivings. The ITUC argues that although “criticisms of the current mode of governance” are “well founded” ITUC continues to engage these institutions because they are concerned that such criticisms “run the risk of weakening the multilateral edifice, which, if managed differently, could be a guarantor of peace, stability and social justice” (ITUC 2008:2). In effect, ITUC seeks to reproduce the post-war Keynesian economic model on a global scale. This vision involves a system of global governance whereby goals for economic development and regulatory rules for international trade and investment are established in the more inclusive UN forums and enforced through institutions that have the power to do so.

The ITUC has been engaged in an ambitious and wide-ranging set of collaborations, all of which appear to be with organizations that it considers its equal, and there is no evidence of the power-dynamic that concerns Waterman. However, none of these collaborations has yet developed into an integrative form of collaboration, in which participants develop a new collective subject based on a shared set of beliefs (John-Steiner 2000:205), and in which collaboration is based on solidarity, rather than instrumental exchange (Blunden 2010:285; 2014). As I argue above, ITUC collaborations within GCS appear to be guided by exchanges of support, negotiations over goals, and a complementary division of labour, rather than solidarity in a deeper sense. While Waterman does not use these terms, it is clear that what he is looking for are integrative forms of collaboration premised on a solidaristic mode of assistance, and the ITUC is simply not engaged in such activities. Given the amount of negotiation that is required to develop goals and policies within the ITUC, it seems unlikely that this will change in the near future.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

In this conclusion, I recap the goals of the dissertation, indicate how these goals have been met, and conclude with a brief look at some directions that future research on this topic could take. For the sake of clarity, I first reproduce the goal of this dissertation in point form, and then explore each point below.

The goal of this dissertation is threefold:

1. to address the lacuna in GCS studies around the involvement of organized labour.
2. to provide an analysis of what ITUC GCS collaborations mean for the remit and repertoire of action of the ITUC:
 - a. Is there evidence that the ITUC has expanded its remit beyond that of its predecessor organizations? If so, does this indicate a move toward social movement unionism?
 - b. Is there evidence that the collaborations in which the ITUC participates illustrate a change in the repertoire of action for the international union movement?
 - c. If there is evidence of a change in the remit and repertoire of the international union institutions, does this indicate a move toward social movement unionism?
3. to provide an analysis of the impact of ITUC collaborations on transnational class formation.
 - a. Do these collaborations illustrate a new “moment” in transnational historical class formation?
 - b. Do these collaborations within GCS illustrate a move toward the development of comprehensive concepts of resistance, and the development of a new counter-hegemonic bloc?

Addressing the lacuna in GCS literature

In the Introduction and Chapter 3, I argue that GCS has been misconstrued by many civil society theorists and activists as a virtuous political agent, untainted by the state in both its capitalist and communist forms. To post-Marxist neo-Gramscians, civil

society was both autonomous and “against the state.” For liberal-cosmopolitans, civil society was an autonomous agent capable of democratizing the state. Applying a Gramscian analysis, and utilizing the work of Urry and Carroll, I argue that civil society is neither an agent, nor autonomous from the state. I argue that civil society must be seen as a contested field in which subjects’ identities are shaped through social struggle. Thus, I agree with Munck when he argues that: although global civil society can be seen as akin to a “Sorelian-type” myth (2002), it is an important terrain *of struggle in which movements from above and from below clash over the future of capitalist hegemony.*

The story of the international trade union institutions has not played a prominent role in the development of GCS theory. To address this lacuna, I consider how the institutions of the international labour movement have begun to engage in cross-class alliances with non-union SMOs and NGOs that operate within this emergent terrain of struggle – movements concerned with a range of social, political, and ecological issues. I argue that the labour movement has been front and centre to many of the projects – GCAP and the anti-debt movement, to name but two – heralded by GCS theorists as the dawn of a new era in politics. In this way, I address important empirical as well as theoretical lacuna in the literature on GCS. By focusing on the central international trade union institution, I reassert social class as theoretically crucial to understanding the GCS phenomenon. GCS is not “an alternative to conventional politics,” either “outside the scope of the state (or) against the state” (Leiva and Pagden 2001:179). Rather, it is a terrain of struggle, and a site of transnational class formation that is intimately connected to the interstate system.

Changes in the remit and repertoire of international unionism

In addition to addressing these empirical and theoretical lacuna, this dissertation explores the relationship between GCS collaboration and the remit and repertoire of the ITUC. What I show is that beginning in the 1990s, and throughout the first decade of the 21st Century, there was an expansion in the remit of the ICFTU and, even more so, of the ITUC. This expansion in the remit of the international union institutions is a result of the ICFTU coming under increasing pressure from its affiliates, from the cadre of the Equity

Department, and activists within the Women's Committee, to be more engaged in issues that had been seen historically to be either outside the remit of the international union confederations or of a lower priority to traditional "trade union" issues. These issues include international development and global inequality, the marginalization of women in the labour force, and the environment. Additionally, trade union rights became explicitly connected to the human rights movement. These changes, I argue, are the product of historical struggles of marginalized fractions of the global working class to have their issues incorporated into the existing transnational labour movement, particularly in the case of global inequality and domestic worker organizing.

An expanded remit for international unionism

The historical evidence I provide in Chapter 5 suggests that the increased attention paid to issues of international economic development and global inequality is the product of a Euro-centric movement institution belatedly responding to the expansion of its non-European membership. The ICFTU emerged in the early days of the post-colonial period, whereas its pre-war predecessor, the IFTU, had a handful of affiliates outside of Europe – nine national centres from all of North, Central, and South America, Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia – and issues not affecting European trade unions were rarely addressed. In contrast, 33 out of 55 affiliates to the ICFTU in 1955 were from outside of Europe and North America. However, efforts of the ICFTU leadership to organize aggressively in the South were stymied by lingering colonial relations between powerful European affiliates and unions in Africa and Asia, and by the cold-war politics of the AFL-CIO, particularly in Latin America. From the 1970s thru to the 1990s, the response of the ICFTU to the challenge of MNCs was perceived by many Southern affiliates as guided by the defensive posture of Northern affiliates who sought to stem the tide of investment and jobs from North to South. Affiliates from the South, such as the Indian affiliates INTUC and HMS, consistently opposed efforts by the ICFTU to include social clauses in international trade agreements. It is against this background of historical mistrust that the ITUC leadership seeks to address the concerns of Southern affiliates in part through an active engagement with issues of global economic inequality.

The collaborations around domestic worker organizing explored in Chapter 7 must also be seen in the light of two important historical struggles within the international union institutions. One is the struggle of Southern affiliates to have “Southern” issues addressed more aggressively by the ICFTU. Concern with the rights of home-based workers in the mid-1990s, and with the rights of domestic workers more recently, must be put in the context of addressing the needs of informal workers generally. This is an important pivot for the international union federations, as it conveys an effort to confront one of the most pressing issues for unions in countries such as India – how to organize and represent workers in the informal sectors. One of the great ironies of contemporary “global” labour studies that address the crisis of union density, is that they are largely focused on Europe and North America, when over 90% of workers in India work under legal conditions that prevent them from even engaging in collective bargaining. A central issue for unions in countries such as India is how to organize people, such as home-based workers and domestic workers, in informal employment schemes. The efforts of the ICFTU and the ITUC to do so through the ILO and follow up organizing must be seen as an important moment in transnational class formation, an attempt to incorporate highly marginalized fractions of the global working class.

In Chapter 7 I note, however, that the struggle of women activists within the transnational labour movement was of even greater significance for the recognition of informal women workers. Having the ITUC put such resources towards transnational domestic worker organizing was a significant win for women activists, particularly the women of SEWA. One ITUC cadre suggested that “women, traditionally, are more open to cooperating with each (other) across national centres,” and are “more in touch with NGOs.” The success of the 12 by 12 campaign, she argued, was a result of their commitment to consultation amongst these women (ITUC4 interview). Perhaps these are important contributing factors. However – and without wishing to detract from the amazing work conducted by the women who conducted this campaign – as a critical realist I argue that we need to look beyond the agency of contemporary actors to explain contemporary phenomena.

I argue in Chapter 7 that structural conditions that allowed for this campaign were produced by the agency of past actors in SEWA, the ICFTU, and the ILO. SEWA struggled for years to have informal women workers recognized as workers and have their union recognized as one by the international union federations. They found allies in the Women's Committee and the Equity Department of the ICFTU. As outlined in Chapter 5, the women activists within the WC and the Equity Department had themselves engaged in a struggle against a male-dominated institution for decades. I argue in Chapter 5 that these women were far ahead of the rest of the organization in their efforts to integrate the issues of Southern workers, particularly women workers. Chapter 7 provides strong evidence that the "meeting" of these two struggles was a crucial precursor to the ITUC-led collaborative campaigns in support of domestic workers. Also important for the relatively quick response of the ILO to the campaign for C189 was the work conducted by ILO cadre over the past 70 years. Again, it is quite clear from the history presented in chapters 5 and 7 that the conditions for such success would not arise without the past efforts of women labour activists. We always stand on the shoulders of giants.

The expanding ITUC remit indicates an effort on the part of the international leadership and cadre to incorporate the issues deemed important by their affiliates from Southern countries such as India. In this way, the ITUC leadership and cadre appear to be making a more concerted effort than their predecessors to reconcile the fractional interests of an expanding global working class. Perhaps even more significant is the expansion of the ITUC remit to address the struggles of informal workers and their organizations. As I show in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, those who labour in informal sectors have largely been ignored by unions, and in some cases, not acknowledged as "real" workers. The C189 and 12 by 12 campaigns clearly illustrate a shift in thinking on the place of informal workers and their organizations within the transnational labour movement, and an effort to incorporate marginalized fractions of the working class into the existing movement.

A more activist repertoire of action for international unionism

In this dissertation I argue that collaborations between the ITUC and other GCS actors represent new elements in the repertoire of action for the international union institutions. It is more difficult to answer with certainty, however, whether these new relationships have impacted the ITUC's repertoire of action beyond the collaborations themselves. One cadre, who has worked in the ITUC and ICFTU before that, suggested that the ITUC's move toward more "stunts," such as public demonstrations and media campaigns is a product of a changing media environment, and the example provided by large NGOs, such as Greenpeace, who have been highly successful in getting their message across to policy makers and voters around the world using such tactics. I also argue that the ITUC cadre were "inspired" by other movements. Others suggested that particular issues, such as climate change, are now part of the public discourse and cannot be ignored by ITUC leaders. A member of the cadre of an important European affiliate suggested that the demand for a more aggressive approach to addressing particular issues had "percolated up" from the membership. All of this suggests an indirect influence of non-union SMOs and NGOs on the ITUC's repertoire of action, rather than a direct one. However, it is also the case that these collaborations allow the ITUC to conduct more campaigns through the sharing of resources.

The conclusion I have reached about the role of collaborations and non-union civil society in the expansion of the ITUC remit, and the shifting repertoire of action, is the following. The growth of non-union GCS actors over the past 25 years, has indirectly contributed to the expansion of its remit through their general influence on the thinking of ITUC members, leaders, and cadre. It is very clear, for example, that transnational environmental NGOs have had an impact on the public discourse in many parts of the world. As complex subjects concerned with the status of women, environmental degradation, and global inequality, as well as worker rights, members, leaders and cadre are influenced by these discourses, and may come to identify with the movements of environmentalism, feminism, and global economic equality. The growth of GCS actors has also contributed to the expansion of the ITUC remit by providing the ITUC with a host of potential collaborators that can "share the load" when it comes to developing and

executing campaigns. This is what I mean by GCS providing the ITUC a previously unavailable political opportunity structure.

Social movement unionism?

This dissertation also speaks to the literature on social movement unionism, and a question posited in the Introduction was whether or not these collaborations signify a break from “bread-and-butter unionism,” or “workerism,” and a move toward global social movement unionism. Carroll and Ratner argue that many “sites of struggle... cannot be comprehended in terms of class dynamics,” despite the fact that “capitalism remains the dominant structure in the contemporary world” (Carroll and Ratner 1994:16–17). What is required is the re-articulation of class that breaks from the “workerism of orthodox Marxism (Ibid.:16). While the ITUC cannot be seen as a Marxist organization, its predecessor organizations certainly viewed the world through a “workerist” framework. This framework was articulated through both traditional European social democratic labour politics and through the “bread-and-butter unionism” most identified with the American unions. A move toward social movement unionism would seem to require a break from these politics.

It is clear through a comparison of the activities of the ITUC and the positions it takes, as outlined in chapters 7 and 8, to those of its predecessor organizations in Chapter 5, that the ITUC has expanded its articulation of class politics beyond “bread-and-butter unionism,” by taking seriously the need to address environmental degradation and gender inequality, both inside and outside the labour movement, as well as its willingness to take up the cause of workers who don’t fit the profile of the traditional (European) proletarian. By a careful consideration of its engagement with environmental and women’s movements, we can make the case that the ITUC’s understanding of “class issues” is far more expansive and nuanced than its predecessor organizations. That said, the inability to adopt environmental policies that may negatively impact some of its affiliates’ members in the short term, as outlined in Chapter 8, points to the fact that there is some way to go before we can say that a decisive break from “workerism” has been made.

As I argue at the end of Chapter 7, the collaborative activities of the ITUC cannot be said to represent global social movement unionism, as articulated by Waterman. Its commitment to a form of global-Keynesianism is not a utopian or emancipatory project. Furthermore, the collaborations between the ITUC and non-union GCS actors do not embody the solidaristic instinct that I believe Waterman would see as the necessary foundation for GSMU. Furthermore, although the collaborations I outline in chapters 7 and 8 demonstrate a newfound appreciation for movements as communicative networks, the ITUC remains, and is likely to remain for some time, a social movement institution, not a communicative movement network itself. However, as I argue in Chapter 2, the purpose of focusing on Waterman's understanding of social movement unionism is precisely because it is a utopian and forward-looking framework intended to inspire labour activists, rather than a demonstrative typology. It is clear that GSMU is not simply a list of demonstrative characteristics that can be ticked off, but rather a potential future that the labour movement can strive towards: a collaborative project.

With this in mind, it seems reasonable to suggest that social movement unionism, as an ethos, rather than a list of characteristics, has clearly had an impact on the leadership and cadre of the ITUC. They are trying to work with non-union organizations operating within GCS. The expansion of the ITUC remit suggests that they do appear to take the complexity of worker subjectivity seriously. ITUC campaigns such as Playfair and 12 by 12 do exemplify a move away from hierarchical organizing and towards more reciprocal, network-oriented practices in dealing with other GCS actors and their own affiliates. Finally, the evidence presented in Chapter 8 suggests an evolving relationship between the ICFTU/ITUC and a few key GCS "partners" that is moving from ad hoc, instrumental support for each other's campaigns around specific issues, to an alliance of SMOs that are trying to articulate a coherent alternative future. The recent Fight Inequality Alliance is particularly suggestive of a new direction for ITUC collaboration within GCS.

GCS collaboration and transnational class formation

While the ITUC's expanded remit and shifting repertoire of action – particularly its collaborations with non-union GCS – may not exactly epitomize a transition to global social movement unionism, they do signify a new moment in transnational class formation. The transnational union federations have never before been so representative of the global working class, although they still have a long way to go, of course. The ITUC accepts new affiliates every year, mostly from Southern and former Eastern-bloc economies. The new domestic worker GUF, the IDWF, acknowledges the need for worker organization outside of the traditional trade union structure. Collaboration between the “old” institutions of the labour movement – most particularly the ITUC and the IUF – and new SMOs representing domestics and other informal workers are examples of the existing labour movement incorporating the needs of “new” fractions of the working class. This on its own is a significant development.

The active participation of the ITUC in the environmental and women's movements are examples of transnational labour's leadership and cadre both expanding their understanding of the needs of the working class, and asserting a class framework into these global discourses, particularly in the case of the global environmental movement. This is also a significant development in the history of transnational class formation, even if it does not prove a complete break from workerism and a transition to global social movement unionism. In the Introduction, I asked if the changes brought within the ITUC indicate an effort to develop a broad-based class project. I conclude that they do.

But what is the nature of this class project? Do these tentative steps toward alliance politics within GCS suggest a set of comprehensive concepts of resistance, or moves toward a counter-hegemonic project? The evidence I gathered for this dissertation suggests that this is not the case. The concept of counter-hegemony must be reserved for those projects that seek a “deeper transformation” of the social structure (Carroll 2006:19). The ITUC articulates a vision for the future that is not a break from capitalism, but from its worst excesses under neoliberalism. What the ITUC articulates is a global neo-Keynesianism, aimed at addressing ecological and economic disaster through

redistribution of the social surplus produced under capitalist social relations. These are not comprehensive concepts of resistance, but rather alternative concepts of control, whereby the power of capital is balanced against the power of the state and the interstate system. The power of the corporate cadre is checked, but not overcome, by the power of the cadre within the state and the interstate system. Therefore, the ITUC's project, and the collaborations that it engages in to achieve this project cannot be said to be counter-hegemonic.

What the collaborations between the ITUC and non-union social and ecological justice groups operating within GCS are suggestive of, however, is the potential for a consolidation of the global countermovement against neoliberalism. A counter-movement, according to Polanyi (2001), involves organized elements within civil society acting in coalitions to re-embed market relations within an ethico-political framework that acts to protect society from the vagaries of the market. Unlike a counter-hegemonic project, a counter-movement does not have a coherent plan for a post-capitalist society. In fact, a countermovement is not necessarily a class-based project for all the parties involved. This, I argue, is a much more accurate representation of the collaborations I have outlined here between labour and other social movements than the idea of an ITUC-led counter-hegemonic bloc.

What is emerging from the international trade union movement involves a serious, if nascent, attempt at coordinating their responses to the worst outcomes of capitalist excess with other civil society groups, while putting forward a platform that goes much deeper than bread-and-butter trade unionism. Yet in a Gramscian sense it is difficult to characterize the ITUC as a counter-hegemonic force. This is not only because the very existence of independent trade unions is a product of, and dependent upon capitalist social relations, but also because the program envisioned leaves untouched the very relationships which make capitalist hegemony possible: control over the means of production.

Future research directions

While I see this dissertation as having succeeded in partially addressing the lacuna of transnational labour in GCS studies, its findings are, of course tentative. The emergence of collaboration between labour and other social movements within GCS requires much more study before pronouncements can be made about the near to mid-term future of organized labour. Furthermore, these collaborations are evolving. The Fight Inequality Alliance suggests that the limited collaborations between the ITUC and non-union GCS actors could, in the future, produce much more cohesive and solidaristic alliances amongst the cadre of these movements. As cliché as it is, time (and research) will tell.

It is also the case that much more research on the evolving relationship between the ITUC leadership and cadre and its affiliates in countries like India is necessary to have any sense of where the transnational union institutions are going. Countries such as India are the future of whatever global labour movement emerges over the coming decades. How Southern affiliates, such as SEWA, INTUC, and HMS, address the question of alliances within civil society will define the future practices of the ITUC, and shape the coming counter-movement.

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