Global Union Federations:

The institutions and methods of international solidarity

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Dedicated to Fred Higgs 1946-2015

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List of Initialisations and Acronyms

AA   Anglo American plc (Company)

ACFTU   All-China Federation of Trade Unions

AFL-CIO   American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organisations

AGA   Anglo Gold Ashanti (Company)

ALM   Active learning methods

ARETU   All-Russia Electric Trade Union

CSR   Corporate Social Responsibility

DWRC   Democracy and Workers' Rights Center

EDLC   Egyptian Democratic Labour Congress

EFITU   Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions

ETUC   European Trade Union Congress

ETUF   Egyptian Trade Union Federation

FES   Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (German Friedrich Ebert Foundation)

FIDTU   Federation of Independent Democratic Trade Unions

FNPR   Federatsiia Nevasymykh Profsoiuzov Rossii (Federation of Russian Trade Unions)

FNV   Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (Dutch Confederation of Trade Unions)

FTUMMSWC Free Trade Union of Misr Mahalla Spinning and Weaving Company

GLO   Global Labour Institute

GTUEE   General Trade Union of Electricity and Energy

GTUPW   General Trade Union of Petroleum Workers

GUEWT   General Union of Electricity Workers and Technicians

GUF   Global Union Federation

HKCTU   Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions

ICEF   International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Unions (1946–1995)

ICEM   International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (1995–)

ICFTU   International Confederation of Free Trade Unions

IFA	International Framework Agreement
IFOU	Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions
IFWEA	International Federation of Workers Education Associations
ILO	International Labour Office/Organisation
IMF	International Metalworkers' Federation
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
ITGLWF	International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
IUF	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations
LSI	Labour and Society International
LSO	Labour Support Organisations
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MNC	Multinational company
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGWU	Oil and Gas Workers' Union, Azerbaijan (Union)
PGFTU	Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions
PrEAs	Private Employment Agencies
ROGWU	Russian Oil and Gas Workers' Union
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
TAW	Temporary Agency Work
TPLR	Transnational Private Labour Regulation
TUC	Trades Union Congress, UK
UFCW	United Food and Commercial Workers
UGTT	Tunisian General Labour Union
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organising

WRC   Workers' Rights Consortium

Part 1: Context Statement

Section 1: Outline and methods

1.1 Summary of Thesis

Despite the global trend of trade union decline, the Global Union Federations (GUFs) have shown remarkable durability. They have, since their creation, struggled with the enormous barriers to organising international solidarity action including the inherent difficulties of building solidaristic ties between diverse groups of workers and the costs of international campaigning against Multinational Companies (MNCs). Despite increasingly severe resource limitations, the GUFs have secured large international memberships, particularly from developing countries, principally because of the unique opportunities they provide for international solidaristic and industrial activity.

The traditional 'counter-power' argument for international trade union organisation is that it provides an organised challenge to the internationalisation of capital. As early as the 1920s, Edo Fimmen, the then General Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), in his seminal book *Labour's Alternative: the United States of Europe or Europe Limited* (1924), argued that global unions are a necessary response by labour to the internationalisation of capital and growth of European companies and monopolies.

Fimmen's work looks at the economic causes of World War II, principally the fight for control over raw materials after a period of rapid industrialization, and the subsequent challenges facing the working and capitalist classes. Fimmen predicts the development of 'concerns' (business which fuses diversified branches of production and controls under one management) and then vertical (same production process) and horizontal (same industry) 'combines' or cartels that consolidate capital in order to reduce risk and eliminate competition. This 'mingling' of capital, he argues, has led to a mingling of interests between entrepreneurs from different countries bringing with it a potential for a 'world-wide monopoly' (Fimmen, 1924: 58).

Fimmen's argument is simple; that the growing international division of labour means that local industrial action is weakened because work can be significantly redistributed internationally. Trade union organisation therefore requires international organisation to coordinate worker unity and strategy, sufficient to act as a counter power for 'successful combat'.

This vision of global unions was developed further in the 1980s and 1990s by the leadership of the GUFs. Chip Levinson, ICEF General Secretary in the 1980s, and Vic Thorpe, the ICEM General Secretary in the 1990s to 2000s, both produced important

books on this theme, *Vodka-Cola* (1978) and *Power and Counterpower: The union response to Global Capital* (1996). These books are surprisingly contemporary, outlining the international concentration of capital and predicting a global decline in wages and the increased exploitation of working people. They both predicted the results of economic globalisation as splitting the working world into two economies, formal and informal, with a decline in union organisation. As a result, both writers argued for a re-orientation of trade unions towards an organising and collective bargaining agenda organised at international level.

These three GUF leaders offer a critical and political analysis of the growth of MNCs, concentration of capital, increased insecurity of investment and decline in state regulation, themes now mainstream within the popular inequalities literature (Stiglitz, 2013). But these are also trade unionists who understood profoundly the potential of galvanising still strong Western European and North American affiliates to establish international bargaining with employers, laying the foundation for three decades of global networking across MNCs and sectors, a model that still dominates the work of the GUFs.

These economic conditions have created a demand for the work of the GUFs, particularly from affiliates in countries where national regulatory power is weak. Additionally, the GUFs provide affiliates in Western Europe and North America with increased access and scope to work internationally, including international regulatory mechanisms such as International Framework Agreements (IFAs) and long term union building programmes in developing and transition economies. This provides affiliates with important industrial relations gains, including leverage with MNCs, information and networking with unions in the same sectors and companies. The multilateral structure of the GUFs provides national unions with an important source of legitimacy, as the geographical and sectoral scope of GUF membership provides affiliates with unprecedented access to international partners, significantly beyond their capacity as individual unions.

Currently this resource is valuable enough to key affiliates in Western Europe, North America and Japan to warrant their continued financial contribution to the GUFs, something which represents the greatest part of GUF income. However, as will be argued in this context statement, GUF legitimacy in some key regions and sectors is likely to reduce, threatening the long term capacity of the GUFs to coordinate international solidarity. Future trends in international capital, geopolitical developments, changes in the employment relationship, and decline in national trade union movements will lead to a decline in GUF leverage in relation to both employers and future workers. This then raises

questions about the organisational changes required to build GUF capacity in a context of declining financial resources. The priority is inevitably therefore to develop strategies that are adaptive to these future trends while at the same time building on the GUFs' capacities and unique solidaristic value to existing and future trade union memberships.

This context statement takes a broad perspective on the basis of GUF legitimacy and capacity. Firstly it is proposed that GUF legitimacy does not rest entirely on either membership size and geographic scope or international agreements with MNCs; instead it will be argued that increasingly the GUFs' political proposals and activities will be necessary to secure their continued legitimacy. Secondly, it will be argued that GUF legitimacy is based on their capacities to build the social and political capital required to sustain international solidarity across increasingly diverse groups and networks of working people. In Section 4 it will be argued that the resources available to the GUFs to build this social and political capital are their educational activities, using an emancipatory model based on the work of Paulo Freire (1970), activities which are still considered marginal by the GUFs.

The strategic advantage of using an emancipatory education model is that it allows a deeper and broader exchange between trade union organisations and individual activists. This is important not just in developing social capital in changing societal and workplace settings, it also provides unions, who are often working in isolation, with 'field enlarging' strategies. Where unions have successfully developed responses to workplace issues, such as in the Colombian case study outlined in Section 2.4, these experiences when pooled and exchanged through GUF networks and activities create valuable collective knowledge and capacity for union building. It is additionally argued in Section 4 that through the use of emancipatory education methods the efficiency of those exchanges between individuals and groups will increase, leading to higher levels of social and political capital being generated.

This model of trade unionism emphasises the capacity for mobilisation, defined as a way of turning association (numbers of people forming a collectivity) into organisation (capacity for collective action in opposition to capital and the state) (Sullivan, 2010b). It is a relational model of organising where trade unions create spaces where working people can understand societal and industrial changes taking place, build dialogue and strong solidaristic relationships in situations of industrial conflict that can mobilise members in a context of diminishing resources.

The psychosocial (Sedgwick, 1982) basis of Freire's model regards union building as essentially a project of emancipation. Emancipation is understood as a dual task of

addressing the external reality of oppression, as well as internal psychic oppression, where individual psychological empowerment, or building ego strength, is central to the political project of organising.

The proposal of this thesis is to prioritise the union building work of the GUFs across all areas of activity as a response to the political deficit that the GUFs currently face. An emancipatory educational model provides a union building process that encourages both the development of strong solidaristic ties between workers as well as providing a space for dialogue that allows for the development of common ideas and strategies. That is, emancipatory education methods can build both the social and political capital needed for the GUFs to bring about real social change and developmental processes.

Fimmen steadily reminds us that the work of global unions involves two objectives which, at times, are in tension: to operate within the existing economic system in order to negotiate the best conditions for working people but at the same time to develop alternatives to it. This is essentially the tension that the GUFs need now to navigate, and the proposal is to emphasise the development of the social and political capital that can shape this alternative rather than a continued strategy of adaptation to the current economic order. In Fimmen's postscript he argues that 'the most mischievous of illusions' (1924: 127) is that these multinational companies offer organising potential for global unions because of the resistance that this organising initiative will encounter. Additionally he argues against a narrow view of trade unionism focused on narrow industrial concerns and advocates instead a model of strategic solidarity in response to the growth of international capital.

In a context of declining leverage and therefore affiliation fee income, the argument of this context statement is that GUF activity will need to be re-calibrated towards a wider political project of social justice in a context of aggressive neo-liberal economic policies and the rise of nationalism and religious fundamentalism. In this context, the political work of the GUFs has to be built - not as an ideological project but rather as a developmental one. The central argument of this thesis, and the publications included in it, is that the primary value of the GUFs is that they are able to create spaces for dialogue between diverse interests and provide a safe environment out of which new political ideas and movements can start to grow.

Further, it is argued that a refocusing on this broader political purpose should then dictate the techniques and strategies that they should use. That in order to create the democratic conditions and spaces where workers can build a political agenda, emancipatory education methods should be adopted and resourced as a matter of priority.

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Although this approach does not offer a magic solution to the global threats to freedom of association, it uses the strategic advantages of the GUFs' work to their fullest effect and the basis for a developmental rather than a survival strategy.

1.2 Aims

The aim of this thesis, and the individual publications within it, is principally to provide a realistic picture of the GUFs and to critically explore their power relative to the international industrial relations and political environments within which they operate.

Additionally, the thesis aims to:
- critically analyse the GUFs from different perspectives: organisational, international relations, global governance and developmental;
- explore the factors impacting the future work of the GUFs with particular emphasis on the decline in union membership and geopolitical developments; and
- argue for a reorientation in the work of the GUFs in response to these factors with particular emphasis on building social and political capital through educational work

This context statement also aims to draw together the main themes and arguments within the publications and explore more deeply the strategic importance of the educational work of the GUFs in building the social and political capital required to adapt to this changing environment.

1.3 Methods

The publications included in this thesis are primarily based on data collected through participant observation by the author (Myers, 1999). The research is based on the author's experience as Head of Education for the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) during the period 1999-2007 and work with the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and ICEM as a project coordinator for educational programmes in Transition Economies during 1995-1999. During this period the author developed and oversaw educational programmes in thirty-five countries in every geographical region with the exception of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Programmes focused on themes such as education methods, collective bargaining and HIV/AIDS. She was also responsible for raising annual funding

and liaising with unions and donors, principally from Germany, Netherlands and Scandinavian countries. This work involved coordination with the other GUFs and the ITUC through established project coordination meetings and collaborative projects in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Transcaucasus.

In relation to the specific case studies covered by the publications the author was responsible for developing these initiatives including the content of the projects, developing partnerships with key employers and government bodies, carrying out the planning and evaluation of the projects and overseeing their management.

This experience provides an insider's viewpoint of the GUFs, their work and the political dynamics at play as well as an insight into contemporary events and the attitudes of the actors and organisations involved (Iacono et al., 2009).

Attempts have been made to minimise the subjectivity inherent in this model of data collection and analysis by the author (Darke, Shanks & Broadbent, 1998). The participant observations are supplemented by public and official documents and archival records, many of which were produced after 2007. Documents include GUF and ITUC congress documents, project and activity reports, online publications, presentations at seminars and conferences and ILO conference reports, included in the references sections of the individual publications. Additionally, the published works have been peer reviewed, with extensive reviews and responses to the *Global Unions Global Business* book from within the academic and trade union communities. All of these publications have been presented extensively at various forums and academic conferences.

During the final writing process interviews and correspondence were carried out with existing and previous GUF staff in Industriall and IUF and the international staff of their affiliates in Sweden, Nepal, Colombia, South Africa, USA, UK and Thailand. Data was reviewed from GUF and ITUC congress documents, project evaluations and activity reports from Industriall. Additionally research was carried out using all of the GUFs' online news services and research, particularly in relation to solidarity actions and work focusing on precarious employment.

One of the difficulties in researching about the GUFs as organisations is their characteristic of exhibiting defensiveness and lack of engagement on organisational issues with non-affiliated unions and individuals. Although this information is easily available within the formal structures it is difficult for researchers to engage GUF leadership in critical thinking about their current work and organisations.

Much of the important organisational and strategic information that exists within the GUFs is held at local level, often through projects and project coordinators. The GUFs differ in how strategically they use this information with some collecting it methodically (this was the culture within the ITGLWF, now merged into Industriall). One of the consequences of undervaluing and under-resourcing the education work of the GUFs is that the valuable knowledge and information which surfaces during educational activity is either not captured or not made use of strategically. A great deal of important information is therefore held in project documents which the author was responsible for writing and monitoring and has been used throughout this thesis and the publications within it.

Additionally at national and international level critical academic writing about trade unions is often not encouraged, with 'labour friendly' academics cautious about raising contentious issues for fear of losing access to insiders and valuable data. There is limited history of either existing staff or external researchers producing critical and analytic research contacts within the GUFs, with most research being purely descriptive such as Aidan White's book (2008), Hans Schwass's directory funded by the FES (2004) and most recently Ed Mustill's guide to global unions produced by LabourStart (2013). There are some important exceptions to this in the writings of Dan Gallin, previous General Secretary of the IUF (Gallin, 2014) and Vic Thorpe, previous General Secretary of the ICEM (Thorpe, 1996) who follow in the footsteps of Fimmen and Chip Levinson, the previous General Secretary of the ICEF, the organisation that merged with the miners to form ICEM (Levinson, 1978). Current critical writings about the GUFs come from a limited number of 'insiders' such as Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick (previously IUF) (Cotton & Gumbrell-McCormick, 2012; Gumbrell-McCormick, 2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2002; 2004) Peter Rossman, Mohammad Greenfield and Kirill Buketov from the IUF (Garver et al., 2007; Rossman & Greenfield, 2006), Doug Miller, previously the ITGLWF (Miller, 2004; 2005; Miller et al., 2000), and the author (Cotton, 2014; 2013; 2010; Cotton & Gumbrell-McCormick, 2012; Cotton & Royle, 2014; Croucher & Cotton, 2013; 2012).

The publications included in this thesis represent the transition from practitioner to writer and the development in my own ideas and my confidence in them. It was only once I stopped working within the GUFs that I became aware of the difficulties of critically examining them from within. The culture, certainly within the ICEM at that time, was a combative one where critical thinking was not encouraged. At times the GUFs, like many trade union organisations, can react defensively to threat, either internal or external, by shutting down open debate about the strategies and structures of the GUFs. This is

particularly the case in relation to financial information that is rarely analysed or debated openly within their structures.

As is often the case in most trade unions, they run on a high degree of loyalty and the vocational motivations of staff that at times can block critical thinking and reform. This reality was compounded by my position within the ICEM as Head of Education, a place where dialogue and debate has to take place and where, often, problematic issues are raised. This put me in the difficult position of raising contentious issues within ICEM structures and meetings, while maintaining a growing volume of project work and securing funding annually from affiliates.

As a woman in her twenties and thirties I was in a distinct minority within the GUFs and in many of the national union contexts where I was working, such that I experienced additional difficulties in making and holding a position in discussions. Despite being appointed and supported by the then General Secretary and, in the main, managing to establish highly collaborative relationships with colleagues, the organisational dynamics at play were often painful and difficult to manage.

This relates not least to the extraordinary workloads placed on educational staff within the GUFs. This was already a serious problem by the time I started to work at the ICEM, following the early death of the previous Education Officer, Anne Browne, from cancer. Despite the effectiveness of education work in delivering the objectives of the GUFs, it continues to be greatly undervalued and issues about the unsustainable workloads of staff remain hidden. In interviews with Industriall staff it was suggested that 'education' was no longer a priority with a 'new' strategy of organising and union building following the merger between ICEM, ITGLWF and IMF. Although the methods, funding and local project co-ordinators remain exactly the same as before 2007 and long term developmental projects carried out by each organisation continue, there has been an attempt to 'reinvent' education as organising. This underlines the lack of understanding and value attached to education within the GUFs and the often nonsensical debates held by the GUFs and affiliates about 'new' models of organising. Despite the evidence that union building methods have not radically changed in the last two decades this repackaging of education has been used to promote some radical political shift post-merger which has arguably not taken place.

On my first day of work at the ICEM, I was gently reminded of the dilemma faced by activists within union organisations where tensions and impossible demands are routine by an experienced Swedish trade unionist. His advice was deceptively simple; it was to 'be

honest'. At the time I thought this was a cultural bias but throughout my time working in the GUFs it proved to be a valuable strategy to attempt although, at times, an unpopular one. It is no coincidence that having left the ICEM in 2007 I started the process of training in psychotherapy and developed a deep interest in the psychology of work and mental health.

As part of my process of development, I chose to co-author the first three publications. Although comfortable with writing, it took several years to learn the craft of writing academically. My first publication was written with Richard Croucher, who I had worked with since the mid-1990s on education projects in the former Soviet Union for the IUF and the ICEM, under the coordination of Labour and Society International based in the ITF building in London. We jointly carried out these pioneering projects taking participatory education methods to trade unions for the first time in the region, and went on to develop similar programmes in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus. Richard encouraged me to come to work at Middlesex University and over the first six months of being back in the UK we wrote the *Global Unions Global Business* book. This was an important developmental process for me, learning to craft a piece of work this size and to reflect on my experience for the first time.

The second publication was co-authored with Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick whose background includes working as Communications Director of the IUF. She wrote an important PhD (2001) on the ITUC (then ICFTU), which was one of the first pieces of writing about the global unions that I recognised as based on reality. We became friends and she was highly supportive in helping me establish myself and my ideas within an academic context. The final co-authored piece I wrote with Tony Royle whose case study on organising in McDonalds in Russia I had read some years before when I was working with the IUF in Eastern Europe. This is a brilliant case study and I wanted to create something this powerful based on my experience in the Colombian Mining sector.

This was also a period where I learned to value my own experience as an 'industry practitioner' (Iacono et al., 2009) and the contribution of the experience that I bring. This was particularly the case with the case studies, of Anglo American and Colombian mining, which represent in both cases long-term fieldwork and new initiatives which form important developments in international trade union work.

Although debate is an obvious part of academic development, coming from a trade union environment I was nervous about entering into a dialogue about my work. However,

my experience has been positive and I continue to be grateful for the generosity of other academics in responding to and building these ideas, in particular Miguel Martinez Lucio (Manchester Business School), Paul Gooderham (NHH) and Richard Hyman who have consistently taken me seriously enough to engage with my ideas and provide detailed comments and discussions about all of the publications in this thesis.

Section 2: The GUFs from different perspectives

This Section summarises the publications that form the basis of the thesis and highlights their main contributions and omissions. Each of the publications represents a different perspective on the GUFs; organisational, international relations, global governance and union building.

2.1 Organisational Perspective

Croucher, R. & Cotton, E. (2012) *Global Unions Global Business: Global Union Federations and International Business*. **Second Edition. London: Libri Publishing.**

This co-authored book was my first publication after leaving my position at the ICEM and returning to the UK to take up a part-time position at Middlesex University. The book was co-authored with a colleague who I had worked with for over ten years, in Central and Eastern Europe, both with the IUF and the ICEM. The book came out of discussions about the deficit of accurate literature about the GUFs, and the difficulties in getting data about them, particularly organisational and financial information. We also wanted to develop some case studies that could show the range and depth of GUF work but without idealising them, particularly focusing on their relationships with multinational companies. The book aims to be a useful guide for both trade unionists and people working in international employment relations with some critical thinking about their future role in the context of the changing employment relationship.

The first Section of the book offers an introduction to the GUFs and the political challenge they face, a general overview of the economic environment in which they work, and a chapter on the history of the international trade union movement. Section two gives a detailed description of the GUFs as organisations, looking at both their financial and political foundations. It is followed by a chapter looking critically at their role in international collective bargaining and the strategic role of International Framework Agreements (IFAs) in building regulatory responses and relationships with multinational companies (MNCs). This is followed by a chapter examining company and regional networks and, in the

second edition, a short chapter on campaigning using the case study of the IUF's long-term campaign for the rights of contract workers in Unilever.

The book is critical of the value of global networks given their high financial cost and low results in terms of social capital and mobilising international solidarity action over the long term. Despite the strategic interest of unions based in MNC headquarter countries to establish these networks, it is the case that once their initial funding, usually secured by headquarter unions and the companies themselves has been exhausted, unions from other countries are unwilling to cover their costs of participation in the long term. This is part of a general reluctance of developing country unions to pay for their participation in the GUFs but also represents a perceived lack of concrete benefits generated by those networks. In most cases it could be argued that these networks were developed from the top down, representing the interests of funding unions in Western Europe and North America.

Section Two includes a case study of the relationship between the ICEM (now Industriall) and the mining company, Anglo American. This chapter was reproduced in Gooderham, Grogaard & Nordhaug (2013) *International Management: Theory and Practice*, providing a detailed summary of the complex network of relationships between international employers and the GUFs. The case study was also a useful reminder of the wide gap between international negotiations between GUFs and CEOs at head offices and the reality of implementing even small changes on the ground, in this case in Colombia and Ghana. The case study also highlights the often 'technical' and educational nature of initial contact between GUFs and affiliates in developing countries and also the concrete results that can be secured in even hostile environments with weak protections for workers and unions.

Chapter seven looks in some detail at the GUFs' education work and sets up the overall argument of the book, that education is a highly effective way of delivering the strategic objectives of the GUFs. The book provides four main arguments for concentrating GUF resources in their educational work, namely that resources used in this way: provide socialisation and confidence building for trade union activists and leaders; promote discursive practices and collective problem solving methods which are ideally suited for building union capacity internationally; use constructively the diversity and international experience of GUF affiliates; and stimulate democratic involvement at national and international levels.

Section three is the conclusion where it is argued that in order to adapt to developments in the global political economy the GUFs will need to develop this educational approach,

operating on a 'minilateral' basis within the GUFs' wider multilateral framework. Additionally it is argued that the GUFs should pursue funding for this work by gradually devolving fundraising to the regions. The book ends with a political choice for paying affiliates to try to overcome the conflict between the Logic of Legitimacy and the Logic of Resources. Without increased dues income from key affiliates in Western Europe, North America and to lesser extent BRIC countries, the GUFs will continue to fail in terms of the imbalance between the supply and demand for international solidarity. This might explain the dominant strategy of the GUFs, a response that is likely to be an inadequate one of consolidation and decline.

The book was received well by academics and trade unionists, described as the 'essential guide' to international trade unionism. The book was read by GUF staff, particularly in the regional structures and led to some internal debate. The organisational and financial data reproduced in the book made its publication the first time that there had been a clear outline of the difficulties that the GUFs faced. It was a difficult decision to publish this information, in part because of the repercussions of exposing their financial vulnerability. It was also unwelcome to some that we highlighted the failure of key affiliates, including key unions in developing regions, to address the problem of declining resources despite unions in some countries having increasing access to development funding and leverage with employers.

There were a number of omissions in the book. These include an absence of an analysis of the lack of solidarity work carried out through the GUFs by unions from Australia, North America and Japan or of the motivations behind this failure. Although affiliates from these countries pay high affiliation fees, they choose to carry out the main bulk of their international work bilaterally, and as a result choose not to fund or strengthen the GUF's union building work. Despite their continued high affiliation fees, the lack of union building work represents the loss of an important financial and political resource for the GUFs.

A further omission of the book is a lack of analysis of the GUFs' relationship with organising. The original thinking for the book was that because the GUFs are not actively involved in recruiting individual members, their role in organising is limited or indirect. This omission also reflects the difficulties in linking existing literature on national attempts to build organising models and debates about union renewal to the realities of the working at international level. For example, much of the UK literature on union renewal does not obviously reflect the debates at international level where there is an undisputed need for

unions to use all strategies available to them and a long history of 'union building' activities that draw from different educational, social and political traditions. On reflection the book could have make the link between education and organising more explicit, particularly in defending the position of emancipatory education methods as a primary tool for organising workers and the importance of this long standing tradition.

The final omission of the book relates to the different models of trade unionism that are reflected within the GUFs and more generally within national labour movements. GUF affiliates represent multifaceted forms of unionism (Fairbrother & Hammer, 2005), including the contested affiliation of 'self-employed' unions such as SEWA. More importantly, the role of social movements and new forms of labour organisation needs to be mapped and understood, and explicit links to national official trade unions and the GUFs needs to be explored further, an issue we return to at the end of this Section.

As a continuation of the argument contained in the book, this thesis therefore takes a pragmatic turn and looks at what would be the most effective use of GUF resources in the immediate future.

2.2 International Relations Perspective

Cotton, E. & Gumbrell-McCormick, R. (2012) Global Unions as imperfect multilateral organisations: An international relations perspective. *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 33 (4): 707-728.

This article applies an international relations framework and the notion of multilateral organisations as a way of understanding the nature of the GUFs and how they operate. One of the paradoxes of the GUFs is that they are both powerful and fragile structures, with leverage with MNCs and recognition within international bodies such as the United Nations, most importantly within the ILO and global governance machinery. At the same time they are underfunded structures with small numbers of staff in headquarters and regional offices, with often weak ties to affiliates in many parts of the world. Despite this reality the GUFs have proved to be resilient organisations and this piece tries to understand why this might be the case by using an international relations framework, drawing on the work of John Ruggie on multilaterlism (1993) and Keohene on minilateralism (1986), themes raised in the book but not fully exploited. This article adds to

this frame by introducing Marleau's concept of subsidiarity (2006), which is used to understand the relationship between the GUFs and individual affiliates.

The central argument of the article is that GUF structures are a form of 'imperfect multilateralism' which involves both having multilateral structures but also 'minilateral' methods of working in order to build close solidaristic relationships between trade unionists and their organisations. Minilateral methods, principally through the use of educational methods and programmes, serve to strengthen affiliates' engagement and investment in the GUFs and their relationships with other affiliates globally. It is this combination of providing a multilateral frame, recognised by employers and states, and minilateral ways of working. This is what is described as 'imperfect multilateralism', which can withstand major organisational problems such as a weak financial base.

In order to see this imperfect multilateralism more clearly the article uses Marleau's concept of subsidiarity (2006). Subsidiarity is where the multilateral structure - in this case the GUF secretariat and executive structures - are setup so that they provide an 'articulating device' between individual unions and regions. As such, the main drivers of the GUFs are their regional affiliates with the secretariats carrying out important interlocution with other international and multilateral structures.

This model of multilateral organisation is also important for GUF internal democracy, providing a fair mechanism for decision-making and the redistribution of resources between affiliates. Because the financial contribution of a small number of unions is so great, it is important that the resources - including political ones - are distributed via formal decision-making structures. It is the regional members that, in the main, determine the priorities for GUF action and where, therefore, funds are directed. The article suggests that, given the resource deficits faced by the GUFs, there may well be conflict over 'orientation of action' between affiliates such that this capacity to make democratic decisions about where resources are concentrated is an important factor in GUF durability.

Additionally, the multilateral nature of GUF structures helps to counteract the tendency within regions to look inwards and focus on local rather than international priorities. Engagement with unions through the GUFs encourages genuine international exchange and debate, and a system of global governance for trade unions to carry out solidaristic work on broad issues such as precarious work.

The willingness of affiliates to participate in the structures and work of the GUFs is developed through minilateral methods, principally through the use of educational programmes. The article argues that the GUFs, therefore, represent an imperfect

multilateralism where small-group relationships are an important factor in the capacity of the GUFs to carry out international solidarity action within large group and multilateral structures.

One area that we might have explored further in the article is the link between the Global and the European federations. The GUFs had a diverse and sometimes difficult relationship between the European and international federations with some, notably the ITF and IUF, having to manage conflictual territory issues with totally independent European bodies, triggered by the formation of a separate European Trade Union Congress (ETUC) in the 1970s (Gallin, 2014). The relationships between the GUFs and European Federations are not highly developed, with often 'separatist' European federations, leaving one retired GUF General Secretary to describe their political orientation as akin to "a grubby little club of European nationalists" (Gallin, 2014: 23). A key reason why the formal European structures matter is money with the European affiliates providing the financial stability within the internationals and project funding for developing country affiliates.

However, the contribution of the paper is that it places the much under-researched area of the GUFs within an international relations framework and provides a relatively sophisticated analysis of how they function. There continues to be a deficit of theorising about the GUFs that compounds the often Eurocentric focus of much of the academic writing about them.

2.3 Global Governance Perspective

Cotton, E. (2014) Transnational regulation of temporary agency work: Compromised partnership between Private Employment Agencies and Global Union Federations. *Work, Employment and Society.* **DOI: 10.1177/0950017014545265**

This article uses global governance theory to critically explore the potential for the GUFs to contribute to the regulation of temporary agency work (TAW). Using the concept of transnational private labour regulation (TPLR), the central proposition is that there are immediate entry points for the GUFs to establish dialogue with private employment agencies (PrEAs), the largest ten companies representing 30 per cent of the TAW market.

The first part of the article tries to understand why, despite several years of contact, there has been a failure to reach agreement between the GUFs and PrEAs. The article then makes three pragmatic regulatory proposals on the basis of existing GUF TPLR mechanisms. The first approach is to establish an industry standard based on the shipping industry's Flags of Convenience initiative. The second approach centres on negotiating an International Framework Agreement (IFA), and monitoring mechanism. The third approach is to establish multi-sectoral dialogue with the GUFs facilitated by the Council of Global Unions, making use of the newly created Global Union Principles on Temporary Work Agencies. These three approaches are not mutually exclusive but their relative strengths are analysed.

The paper asks the practical question of whether GUFs could use the existing framework to make inroads into regulating precarious work as a field enlarging strategy for the GUFs. The size of both the GUFs and the ten top PrEAs is a major strategic opportunity. The argument is not that any of the TPLR mechanisms are a substitute for organising or that they offer a magic solution to the increase of precarious work. However, it does argue that there are important distributive and political gains to both sides to extend existing TPLR mechanisms to cover temporary agency work. Despite the massive political compromise this would represent for the GUFs, it does not contradict their regulatory approach to MNCs and establishes trade unions as a legitimate interlocutor for agency workers, something they are currently unable to do on the basis of membership.

The criticism of this approach taken on its own is that it does not lead to change at the level of the worker, rather 'bargaining without bargaining power is a theatre of make believe, not a strategy of struggle' (Gallin, 2014:143). This relates to the well-researched problem of implementation of global agreements secured through international bodies, compounded by the general lack of union organisation for temporary agency workers. Although a legitimate criticism of using TPLR, it is also the case that one of the advantages of securing TPLR mechanisms through the GUFs is that it can give some national unions entry points into dialogue with employers that they would not otherwise have. Although TPLR is an elite based model of regulation in that it is negotiated principally at international level without GUF affiliates' involvement, it potentially provides an important human rights framework through which local dialogue and collective bargaining can be initiated, often for the first time.

The current deadlock raises important questions about how sustainable the GUFs' TPLR activities are, given the apparent lack of strategic value to PrEAs, in addressing their CSR interests. There has been little headway in building up the content of IFAs to regulate global supply chains, and the only substantial international agreement for TAW is the 2012 Volkswagen Group/Industriall Temporary Work Charter, which is unlikely to be replicated outside a similar, and politically dubious, set of circumstances (see Section 3.1).

Part of the traditional argument about why IFAs exist is that they satisfy the particular interests arising in the institutional background of the mainly Western European companies that have signed them. For MNCs from these countries there is still a weak acceptance of social partnership with functioning trade unions, and established systems of dialogue and negotiations based on a framework of human rights and, often, egalitarian principles. The same institutional perspective can also be used to explain the attitudes of those MNCs that do not see any strategic advantage of dialogue with the GUFs, such as Coca-Cola (Gallin, 2014; Levinson, 1978) and McDonalds (Levinson, 1978; Royle, 2005). The predictive power of the Varieties of Capital model is much debated in the academic literature as to whether it adequately explains how and why minimum standards are established in MNCs. The model obscures the importance of the attitudes of the individuals involved, particularly senior leadership within MNCs and the GUFs, an omission reflected in this article is an important contributor to the current regulatory deadlock.

The reality is that there are a small number of individuals both in the GUFs and PrEAs who are highly active in attempting to regulate agency work and specific reasons why they have failed to do so. This includes the frustration experienced by the GUFs at the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) secured through negotiations between Phil Jennings, General Secretary of UNI, Denis Pennel, General Secretary of CIETT and Annemarie Muntz, Director of Group Public Affairs of Randstad and President of EuroCIETT and Fred van Haasteren, CIETT President and Executive Vice President of Social and General Affairs of Randstad. This agreement is clearly inadequate from a GUF perspective and signed to meet the specific interests of the individuals involved to secure gains for their organisations. In the case of UNI, this directly undermines the GUFs' own Principles on Temporary Agency work and with it a basis for joint GUF action.

This paper came out of a long period of work on the issue of precarious work at the ICEM and a consultancy for Randstad's Public Relations Board in 2012 about how they

could engage with the GUFs and establish minimum standards for TAW. This consultancy was organised by Annemarie Muntz and involved the General Secretary of CIETT, Denis Pennel. The proposals forming the basis of this paper were presented and debated with the board, including a critique of the CIETT/UNI MoU. Throughout this period of work, what has been striking for me is the lack of real understanding of why global governance initiatives had stalled despite the clear potential for agreement on minimum standards between the two groups. Although there is no reason to believe that these ideas have been taken up by Randstad or CIETT, it was to their credit that the problems surrounding the credibility of the existing CIETT/UNI MoU were openly discussed during this process.

This paper is now somewhat out of date in relation to the recommendation for dialogue through the Council of Global Unions (CGU) as in 2015 is likely to be disbanded due to lack of coordination and lack of political will within the GUFs to maintain it.

2.4 Union Building Perspective

Cotton, E. & Royle, T. (2014) Transnational Organising: A Case Study of Contract Workers in the Colombian Mining Industry. *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 52 (4): 705-724.

This article is a case study examining the process of union building carried out by Sintracarbon, the Colombian mining union representing workers in the Carbones del Cerrejón coal mine, establishing dialogue with multinational employers and organisational renewal in this extremely hostile union environment. The use of a case study powerfully brings to life the realities of the educational work of the GUFs, and provides a sobering reminder of the long-term nature of union building.

One of the themes of the article is subsidiarity and the ways in which inter-union relationships are articulated within the framework of the GUFs. What the case study highlights is how the authority of unions principally comes from their experience and capacity to act locally, in combination with their affiliation to a multilateral structure that offers coordination and articulation between them. Where this exchange takes place, within and between regions, it can be a powerful motivator for unions who are isolated and in decline. It is argued that unions are much more likely to adopt alternative union building

strategies when they are based on the experience of other unions, particularly those in the same sector. Further it is argued that this exchange principally takes place through GUF education programmes, both local and international, allowing for unprecedented dialogue and opportunities for strategy formulation.

Using Weyland's concept of a 'viable solution' (2008) the case study emphasises the important role of regional exchange and the experience of the Peruvian miners' union in exploiting governmental inspection systems to increase leverage with employers and the contract workers. This diffusion of ideas between affiliates, facilitated through long standing ICEM education projects, provided an important route through the political and organisational deadlock that Sintracarbon was in. It enabled Sintracarbon to be highly strategic in that it did not attempt to organise contract workers until it had established a system of tripartite inspections of contractors within the mine and had managed to re-start negotiations with Cerrejón management, including issues of wages and conditions for contract workers ultimately secured into their collective bargaining agreement. It was only in the very last stage of activity that Sintracarbon leadership started to organise within certain contractors, due to concerns about not exposing contract workers to victimization.

The article also underlines the significance of linking union organising to the local community and broader social justice issues. The argument uses Wever's (1998) concept of 'field enlarging strategies' of unions in response to the growth of externalised labour in the USA and the need to organise precarious workers. Strategies include organising around social problems such as housing, health and education, and focusing on social justice issues in campaigns. The approach taken by Sintracarbon was essentially community based in that the argument for organising contract workers used to persuade their own members of the need to organise and subsequently with management was that their treatment was unfair. This represented an organising strategy within a broader social campaign about inequality and unfair treatment of workers and their families within the mining community.

This article goes into detail about the long-standing educational work of the ICEM in Colombia that allows us to understand the unexpected successes of Sintracarbon in organising contract workers in this hostile environment. An important aspect of the educational work in Colombia worth noting is the apparently 'technical' and apolitical content of the projects. The ICEM's work started with a technical health and safety project in the mining sector which, although an important issue for miners, was regarded by union leadership as a potentially pointless exercise given the level of threat and political pressure the unions were under from paramilitary and guerrilla groups. The second phase

of the project work then focused on training local representatives on education methods where again the question was raised about whether this was a priority in a situation of crisis, however, ultimately gaining local support because it provided resources and spaces where trade unions could safely meet. Following many years of education methods and basic union education, the ICEM's project turned to the issue of modernisation and recruiting members. Something that had been consistently missed in the drama of working with unions under threat and an issue not openly discussed within the unions was that they had totally ceased to recruit new members. Although painful for the participants and ICEM staff involved, this part of the education work allowed the Colombian unions to articulate questions and debate the future of their organisations. The issue of priorities arose again when the ICEM started to carry out research on contract labour, which was at that time not considered a priority or a union organising issue. The final phase of the project focusing on social dialogue was seen, by some, as a decision of extreme political naivety given that collective bargaining had totally ceased and relations with employers were virtually non-existent.

The use of technical training is twofold. Firstly it builds union 'expertise', an important motivator for union membership and organising. In the case of HSE this is strategically very important to Sintracarbon members and Cerrejón workers. HSE is a genuine issue in mining and there is a clear link between HSE and the use of contractors, as well as a link between HSE and social justice within the wider community. As a result of the ICEM's Global Health and Safety Project, Sintracarbon was able to develop genuine expertise and therefore leverage with management. Additionally, as Cerrejón management has direct legal responsibility for HSE for all workers, including contractors, working in the mine it provides leverage to Sintracarbon's argument about their responsibilities to contact workers. This expertise is also based on the information that is uncovered through research, either formal or informal, during educational activities. There are different ways of using research - what Culpepper (2002) calls the 'logic of information' and the 'logic of exchange' where there is a difference in the level of active use of experience and information or 'dialogic capacity' (Culpepper, 2002: 778), both of which are adopted in this case study. Information, often not accessed by employers and academics, is a powerful resource in building union strategies.

Secondly, 'technical' education allows the introduction of emancipatory methods into settings that do not encourage dialogue and where political differences are difficult to work with. What is often not made explicit within trade union education is that the methods

themselves have an important political aim, which is to establish dialogue between participants and, as in the case of the Colombian Social Dialogue project, with employers. The methods are based on a dialogic model that allows for a high level of consciousness raising and collective problem solving, which are conceived of as intrinsically democratic and therefore political. In discussions with the leadership of Sintracarbon, many of whom have participated in all of the ICEM's projects over a ten year period, the unions were in the 1990s heavily ideologically led causing them to be suspicious of the ICEM (previously the Miners International Federation) and its politics. It is the case that Colombian unions would never have taken part in a project with a GUF, who at early stages were regarded as agents of neo-liberalism, which explicitly aimed to politically educate Colombian activists. By focusing on technical content such as HSE and education methods, dialogue was established quickly without major political buy-in or ideological conflict between participants.

In part because of the long-term nature of this educational approach, it enabled Sintracarbon to build high levels of social capital internally as well as with the broader mining community. Dense networks already exist within the Cerrejón mine, characteristic within mining communities in part because of the inherently dangerous nature of the work making miners reliant on good working relationships among themselves and with management. The inevitable environmental impact on the wider community of mining operations can work to instil norms of solidarity and generalised norms of reciprocity within communities. However, it is important not to romanticise the quality of relationships, particularly between trade unionists that routinely face threats and violence. Often they are working in isolation and have little opportunity for establishing dialogue with other trade unionists or community activists and civic actors.

This is an aspect of the educational work that needed to be underlined, that it provides spaces outside of official trade union structures for difficult discussions to safely take place. This capacity to establish and maintain 'transitional' spaces such as these should not be underestimated, particularly in hostile union environments where trade unions have a tendency to fall into defensive modalities. This often leads to the stifling of debate and avoidance of important strategic issues such as union decline. In the Colombian context, there is the additional problem of the security of trade unionists such that internal flights are the only safe mode of transport, a cost beyond the Colombian trade unions. As a result the budgets of GUF education projects allow trade unionists to meet safely in a literal sense.

Education work not only deepened relationships, but also widened them to include previously unorganised contract workers representing 50 per cent of the working population. This combination of widening and deepening interpersonal relations increases the strategic capacity of Sintracarbon as well as its legitimacy with the managers of the mine. This is reflected in the resilience of the membership organised in contractors and Sintracarbon's continued commitment to organising contract workers in the mine. Although the union Sotrans has been unable to successfully gain union recognition two new unions in Blasquigmar and Sepecol have been created in 2014 with 120 and 130 new members respectively.

Section 3: GUF Capacity

Although the GUFs continue to be the largest membership organisations in the world outside of religious groups, their significance at international level is not well recognised. Much of the academic literature that does exist tends to provide unrealistic analyses of their capacity (Hyman, 1997), usually focusing on just one aspect of their work, that of securing IFAs and negotiating with MNCs. Although this is an important part of their work, it does not reflect their union building activities that, it will be argued in this Section, represent a future basis for GUF legitimacy.

Although the working class has grown on a world scale (Martinez Lucio, 2010), the GUFs have always had to aggregate and prioritise a huge diversity of interests. This raises an important question of GUF legitimacy, usefully framed by Hyman (1997), which looks at whose interests the GUFs represent. Hyman identifies four categories of interests: the 'bread and butter' issues of wages and conditions; workplace rights/security/career opportunities; issues of political economy such as welfare and social wages; and finally community and environmental issues looking more broadly at society and social justice.

Changes in existing and potential union membership should over time be reflected in changes in union priorities. However, it is important not to underestimate that what are often presented as general interests have traditionally been shaped by the particular interests of 'relatively advantaged sections' (Hyman, 1997: 517) of membership. This is particularly the case with the industrial sector GUFs where the interests of key paying affiliates in Western Europe and North America have been reflected in the priority given to international negotiations and IFAs with MNCs headquartered in these countries. This set of interests can be contrasted to the interests of developing country membership - more attuned to broader social justice and political economy issues such as informal work and

living wages. Also the changing priorities of mainly non-unionised workers in OECD counties, concerned with precarious work and welfare reform.

In addition to the question of whose interests take priority within the GUFs, there is a question about the GUF's capacity to promote these interests. Another way of framing this is to ask where GUF capacity lies in the future with rapidly changing geopolitical, employment relations and economic developments. Using Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman's framework for analysing union power (Gumbrell-McCormick & Hyman, 2013) this next Section analyses GUF leverage using four criteria; institutional, structural, associational, and organisational. I have used the terminology of 'union building' to replace 'organisational' to allow for some consistency throughout this thesis but the meaning remains true to the original framework.

3.1 Institutional Power

Counter-power to Capital

The GUFs' capacity to establish international regulation and participate in international dialogue with employers and states has traditionally been framed within the broader argument for the creation of international trade unions in order to build 'counter-power' to the growing internationalisation of capital.

The 'counter-power' argument for international sectoral trade union organisation was presented by Edo Fimmen in 1924 and remains an important focus for the GUFs in the 1980s and 1990s. The central argument, re-presented in the writings of Charles Levinson (1978) and Vic Thorpe (1996), is that the GUFs and their attempts at international collective bargaining are a necessary response to the growth of MNCs and the internationalisation of capital.

As early as 1924, Fimmen predicts the development of 'concerns' (business which fuses diversified branches of production and controls under one management) and then vertical (same production process) and horizontal (same industry) 'combines' or cartels who are able to operate internationally as precursors to MNCs. This 'emigration' (Fimmen, 1924: 57) of capital was starting to create a redistribution of industrial wealth and power within Europe, with companies consolidating in order to reduce risk and eliminate competition.

The power of MNCs continued to rise quickly during the 1980s shaped by the current neoliberal economic globalisation, trends which have intensified since the 2008 economic crisis (Peters, 2011). Multinational companies continue to expand their financial interests, in particular the growth of State Owned Transnational Corporations (SO-TNCs), shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Top 15 State-Owned TNCs, 2012

SO-TNC	Headquarter Country	Sector	Foreign Employees	Total Global Employees
Volkswagen Group	Germany	Auto	296,000	533,469
Deutsche Telecom AG	Germany	Telecoms	113,502	232,342
GDF Suez	France	Utilities	110,308	219,330
General Motors Company	USA	Auto	108,000	213,000
Orange SA	France	Telecoms	65,492	170,531
Eni SpA	Italy	Utilities	30,412	154,730
Airbus Group	France	Aircraft	88,258	140,405
CITIC Group	China	Diversified	30,806	140,028
COSCO	China	Transport & Storage	7,355	130,000
Vale SA	Brazil	Metal Mining	15,680	85,305
Eni SpA	Italy	Oil & Gas	51,034	77,838
Petronas	Malaysia	Oil & Gas	8,653	43,266
Vattentall AB	Sweden	Utilities	23,864	32,794
Statoil ASA	Norway	Oil & Gas	2,842	23,028

Source: UNCTAD, World Investment Report (2014).

As with all MNCs, the significance of SO-TNCs relates to their financial size rather than their role as employers. As Table 1 highlights, companies of this size outsource many labour functions, which is reflected in the relatively small number of direct employees, both in headquarter countries and internationally.

Further, MNCs have been concentrated through strategic mergers and acquisitions since the late 1980s to the present day.

Table 2: Largest Cross-border Mergers & Acquisitions (value of transactions), 2014

Acquirer Name	Headquarter Country	Target Company	Headquarter Country	Value of transaction ($ millions)
Pfizer	USA	AstraZenica	UK	106,863
Holcim	Switzerland	Lafarge	France	25,909
Actavis	Ireland	Forest Laboratories	US	25,110
General Electric	USA	Alstorm-Energy SA	France	17,124
Novartis AG	Switzerland	GSK-Oncology	UK	16,000
Kotobuti Reality Co	Japan	Beam	USA	13,933
Vodaphone Group	UK	Grupo Corporativo	Spain	10,025
Porsche Automobil (Volkswagen AG)	Germany	Scania	Sweden	9,162
GlaxoSmithKline	UK	Novartis-Vaccines	Switzerland	7,102
LetterOne Holdings (L1 Energy)	Luxemburg	RWE Dea AG	Germany	7,099

Source: UNCTAD, World Investment Report (2014).

Mergers and Acquisitions have a significant and direct impact on jobs, with 7 per cent of all global job losses 2002-2007 attributed to mergers and acquisitions (Peters, 2011) in addition to the loss of 'good-paying' jobs in favour of more precarious employment (Brewster et al., 2008) through outsourcing and contracting out (shown in Table 2).

Although only a small percentage of people work directly for MNCs they influence the employment relationship indirectly through their control of global supply chains, as principal users of private employment agencies and their financial and political influence on national institutions and labour regulation. As a result MNCs continue to be a major focus of interest to trade unions and the GUFs, which is reflected in the structures of the GUFs and in the priority given by them to their international regulatory work.

Despite political diversity among the GUFs, all seek dialogue with employers and use campaigning and global agreements to build their leverage with them. The political difference between, for example, the IUF which takes a more combative approach to relations with MNCs and Industriall, may well be explained by the industrial strategies of the MNCs in their sectors. Although there are companies in all sectors that do not recognise trade unions or GUFs, clearly the particularly anti-union bias of companies such as Unilever, Coca-Cola (Garver et al., 2007), Nestlé (Garver et al., 2007; Greenfield, 2006) and McDonalds (Royle, 2005) will impact the IUF's attitudes and strategies towards them. However all of the GUFs seek dialogue with MNCs and, where possible, attempt to secure trade union and basic rights for their affiliates.

Currently, the GUFs carry out their regulatory work in a number of ways, including their participation in international dialogue, significantly through the ILO and the OECD, and negotiating international agreements with employers that enshrine these international standards such as International Framework Agreements (IFAs).

Multilateral structures

An important reason why GUFs are able to act as interlocutors with MNCs is that they are multilateral structures, ones which coordinate relations between three or more states on the basis of generalised principles of conduct (Ruggie, 1993). This involves the capacity to coordinate dialogue and develop consensus that is then articulated internationally through mobilization of affiliates. Because of the rapid increase in developing country affiliations for

all of the GUFs, they can be described as genuinely international bodies, with the potential to coordinate across an unparalleled section of economic activity.

Having genuine multilateral structures allows trade unions to engage meaningfully on human rights and international standards. The GUFs are the vehicle through which trade unions are recognised as legitimate social partners by the United Nations and international bodies such as the ILO, OECD and the Global Compact. Having multilateral structures also allows trade unions to gain recognition from MNCs through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and governance agendas. This function has high currency with some developing country trade unions where leverage with multinational employers at national level is weak.

This multilateral structure in part explains the high strategic capacity of the GUFs because it provides an important 'dialectic' (Gumbrell-McCormick & Hyman, 2013) between unions. The GUFs are structures that are uniquely able to facilitate dialogue and exchange between trade unions, a powerful resource for trade unions to develop new strategies and share information about international employers that can be used to increase their leverage at national level.

This multilateral structure also accounts for the durability of the GUFs in that they are highly 'elastic' structures, based on fundamental principles that allow for both diverse memberships and adaptability in the face of changing economic and political environments.

Subsidiarity

GUFs also operate according to an organisational principle of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity is a weak form of confederation where the GUF structures take a central coordination role but where political power is retained at national and, more loosely, at regional levels. Under this model the GUFs operate as an 'articulating device' between unions internationally where the political and mobilising capacity is retained at the level of the affiliates. For the GUFs to function, subsidiarity requires that the international structures provide additional leverage with employers but also that affiliates have the capacity to exploit these additional gains.

The GUF's are organised according to the principle of subsidiarity such that they pool the strengths of affiliates, both in terms of collective size at international level as well as leverage with employers. The GUFs also emphasise national capacity building

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programmes in order to assist weaker affiliates to exploit this international and collective leverage.

Minilateral structures

The GUFs are minilateral in two senses. Firstly they have smaller powerful groups at their core who carry out and finance a large percentage of their work. The Scandinavian, German and UK unions take an organisational lead as the primary funders of the GUFs, as well as driving much of the industrial agenda within the GUFs. The regional structures of the GUFs have key and dominant affiliates, principally the BRIC countries but also unions from countries with established trade union movements such as Ghana and unions from strategic sectors such as energy or ports. Additionally, some GUF affiliates are important because of their moral and political authority, such as unions from Iraq and Colombia. In the case of Western Europe affiliates from Germany and the Dutch Nordic countries have high authority because of the level of resources that they contribute through affiliation fees but also through project funding. The Scandinavian unions are the principal funders of the GUFs' union building programmes and as a result have a high degree of authority at executive and at regional levels in developing countries.

The GUFs are minilateral in a second sense, in relation to the methods they use to facilitate international solidarity an issue explored more fully in Section 4 on trade union education below. The methods used promote dialogue and through this the building of local social and political capital. This capital has a dual function of promoting local union building as well as contributing to the GUFs' capacity to mobilise international solidarity action.

Transnational Private Labour Regulation (TPLR)

Much of the regulatory work of the GUFs involves transnational private labour regulation (TPLR), which is regulation involving employers and employees, with the absence of the state. TPLR is a 'soft' form of regulation, which includes international agreements between GUFs and MNCs on the basis of fundamental principles and minimum standards. With an established TPLR mechanism such as International Framework Agreements (IFAs), TPLR has the relative advantage of being quick to secure. This is partly because such mechanisms are highly elastic in that they do not require either side to agree politically or substantively in order to reach agreement as well as the established nature of IFAs with over eighty signed agreements in existence.

The weaknesses of the GUFs' regulatory work exist at both workplace and international levels. At the level of the workplace, there are widespread difficulties of implementation with limited trade union and management knowledge and capacity to address human rights issues. In very few cases MNCs have committed the resources to build local capacity to implement IFAs, instead carrying out the basic requirement of distributing agreements internationally in appropriate languages and, sometimes, funding communication and review activities. The capacity of the GUFs at international level to monitor and implement the agreements is also limited in the main because of financial restrictions. This results in a reactive approach with GUFs focusing resources on strategic points of conflict and as the number of IFAs grows, so does this problem of implementation.

Further, the lack of capacity of the GUFs to secure labour regulation across supply chains remains a major barrier to international regulation. As outlined in Section 2.3, the GUFs have so far failed to use existing TPLR and international mechanisms to secure rights for contract and temporary agency workers. There continues to be reluctance on the part of MNCs to take responsibility for the governance of global supply chains and, because of a lack of union density, there is only limited potential for national and global unions to expand TPLR to include indirect employees.

The motivations of MNCs to negotiate with the GUFs are diverse, but broadly TPLR comprises a part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy. A recent TPLR development is the Bangladesh Accord, created after the Rana Plaza disaster in April 2013. The Accord is a significant development in expanding TPLR to the supply chain, in a sector where multiple retail brands source garments from the same factories and industrial zones. The Accord, coordinated through Industriall and the Workers' Rights Consortium (WRC), was signed in July 2013 with 35 brands. The Accord was based on a pre-existing Memorandum of Understanding signed by the ITGLWF (now merged into Industriall), the Dutch Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) and two MNCs, PVH and Cheebo, following the 2012 Tazreen fire in Bangladesh where 112 garment workers died. The Accord is a more substantial framework, with a formal Steering Committee and inspection structure, with signatories funding the remedial work through subscriptions based on levels of production in Bangladesh. Inspections have all been carried out by three private contractors with corrective actions and plans currently being set up.

The use of contractors to set up the Accord highlights the significant lack of national capacity to implement the agreement. This relates both to the State's capacity to provide a regulatory framework for factory inspections as well as the 14 Bangladeshi trade unions

affiliated to Industriall to carry out the inspection and monitoring work. There have been significant delays in setting up new legislation required to establish national inspection systems, despite significant ILO funding. Additionally Industriall's Bangladesh affiliates, who have historically been weakly organised, have not been proactive in using the Accord to build local bargaining capacity, particularly on the issue of minimum wages. There is a new large scale union building project funded by the Swedish trade unions involving Industriall's 14 affiliates which funds full time organizers to go to workplaces to introduce the Accord and organise workers in the sector. However, the expectation is that only a percentage of these unions will be able to make use of these resources in the long term. Although there are discussions underway within Industriall about the future development of industrial wage bargaining in the garment sector, focusing on Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Ethiopia, there is a genuine question of whether international agreements and bargaining can be matched with the local union capacity necessary to implement and maintain them.

The credibility of international agreements is periodically questioned, because of their minimum content and scope of application. This is particularly true in relation to the 2012 Temporary Agency Charter signed between the Volkswagen Group and Industriall. Despite the Charter offering major gains for agency workers internationally, the criticism is that it came about because of the particular circumstances relating to the long-standing corruption scandals at Volkswagen in Germany. After many years of public tax avoidance and environmental and safety scandals the company's use of bribes and payments to employee representatives on the Supervisory Board was exposed in 2005, resulting in a three year prison sentence for the Volkswagen Employees Representative Klaus Volkert for receiving an estimated $4 million from Peter Hartz, the then head of personnel and Klaus-Joachim Gebauer, a Volkswagen executive. This case received high attention because of the influence of Volkswagen in national economic policy through the Hartz Reforms and the overturned 2007 Volkswagen Law, which attempted to give unprecedented influence to employee representatives in German companies. As a result, the credibility of the Charter has been severely damaged and is unlikely to be replicated with any further MNCs.

3.2 Structural Power

The structural power of the GUFs is based on the strategic position of their affiliates in production processes and their relative sectoral and collective bargaining power. The key economic and employment relations' trends affecting the structural power of the GUFs include the rise of financialisation of non-financial companies, growth of precarious work, impact of recession and austerity and resulting decline in union power.

Over the last 20 years the majority of large companies have made extensive use of outside finance - debt and equity - for funding which has led to short term investment strategies and management practices designed to deliver faster and higher returns on investment. Of increasing concern to trade unions has been the growth of Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), including Private Equity (PE), particularly in health, technology and finance sectors. The economic crisis, which was felt acutely by AIFs leading to sharp losses, raised concerns about the risk of bankruptcy in a wider range of non-financial companies in the future and subsequent job losses (Applebaum et al., 2014).

Since the recession there have been large scale cuts in public sector jobs, and renewed privatisation, particularly in Western Europe. This has contributed to a decline in public sector membership and a growth in 'precarious' work in traditionally organised sectors in Western Europe. This has put a downward pressure on union power in relation to wages and job security. An indication of this is the massive growth in youth unemployment and temporary contracts since 2008 (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013). This means that both nationally and internationally, union members traditionally from elite and core classes are declining with an increase in the number of non-unionised periphery and excluded workers.

One of the most significant factors affecting the structural power of trade unions is the growth of insecure and precarious work, primarily through the use of subcontracting and outsourcing, and extensive subcontracting chains (Doogan, 2009). With this 'externalisation' of the employment relationship (Theron, 2005) come other externalisations; projections of risk and duties away from the principal employer onto others with implications not just for trade union density but also unions' capacity to represent members' interests including collective bargaining.

Downsizing across OECD countries is significant because it offers immediate cost savings to companies. During 1980-2005 10 million jobs were lost in Western European industrial sectors (Peters, 2011) with a rise in jobs in the finance and service sectors.

Approaches to downsizing are diverse, with the political orientation of governments and the electoral system good 'explanators' for the models adopted (Brewster et al., 2013).

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Although there are significant differences between Liberal Market Economies and Coordinated Market Economies, proportional voting systems show significantly stronger employee protections than majoritarian systems, indicating how important electoral reform could be for unions in, for example, Britain. With the increased use of new technology and downsizing and outsourcing a relocation of jobs to low wage and 'non-union regions' has taken place (Peters, 2011: 88). This includes OECD countries such as the USA with its system of employment-at-will and countries with low union density in the private sector (Applebaum et al., 2014).

These changes in the employment relationship have led to the introduction of management techniques aimed to introduce new 'flexible' working and lean production methods (Peters, 2011). Often these new working methods are linked to work intensification and production processes that reduce protections and increase managerial control. Research on the service and health care sectors reveals widespread use of 'command and control' systems of management, linked to work intensification, cuts and targets (Carter et al., 2013).

Hyman (1997) usefully divides classes of workers into four main groups; elite, core, periphery and excluded. These groups are constructed differently in different national contexts but GUF membership patterns can be understood using these four categories, where elite and core workers tend to dominate and there is still a relatively low level of activity relating to periphery workers. Periphery workers include relatively visible categories such as temporary agency workers and 'self-employed' workers. Excluded workers include the large majority of informal workers in developing countries who remain outside of labour and trade union protections.

For several decades, there has been a general decline in traditionally strong trade union memberships across Europe, with the number of UK shop stewards falling by two thirds between 1984-2004 (Charlwood & Forth, 2009) and with a 'de facto enterprise unionism' prevailing in the private sector (Gumbrell-McCormick & Hyman, 2013). Connected to these changes in the nature of work and representation, there has been a downward pressure on wages and collective bargaining, reflected in the decline in real wages in developed countries, shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Average Real Wage Growth G20, 2006-2013
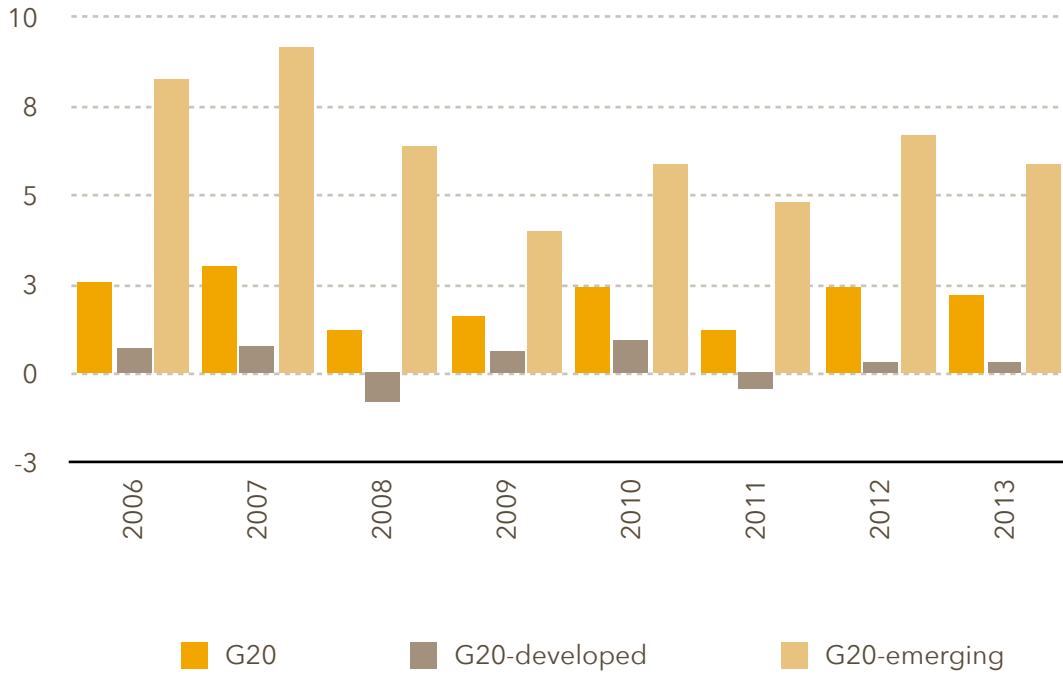
Source: ILO, Global Wage Report (2014/15).

Since 2008 there has been a decline in national level collective bargaining, particularly in Western Europe and a return to 'concession bargaining' and bipartite agreements as a way of maintaining job security. Although there continues to be high numbers of working people covered by collective bargaining across Europe (Gumbrell-McCormick & Hyman, 2013), during economic crisis there has been a pressure for unions to engage in concession bargaining trading employment guarantees against wages, with only Belgium and Denmark avoiding wage reductions (Peters, 2011).

The institutional bias of the Western European affiliates of the GUFs may explain their relative lack of attention to precarious work until the early 2000s (Standing, 2011). The strategic importance of precarious work forms globally means that the GUFs have had to develop strategies and resources for this new area of work, often focusing on the 'zone of higher unionisation' (Hyman, 1997) where workers are between the core and the periphery, such as temporary agency workers. This leaves key affiliates and the GUFs with strategic choices about how to both protect existing memberships and dues incomes, as well as building their strategic capacity to organise precarious workers.

As outlined in Section 2.4, the GUFs have, since the early 2000s, placed a growing strategic importance on developing 'field-enlarging strategies' for affiliates dealing with precarious work. The GUFs have capitalised on their multilateral structures to offer a place for international exchange and coordination of responses to precarious work. Increasingly GUF initiatives include attempts to organise precarious workers, often through education programmes looking at organising strategies and broad social justice campaigning, such as the Stop Precarious Work Now campaign coordinated through Industriall.

This level of work involves an emphasis on 'organising from below' rather than the more traditional GUF work of 'regulating from above' (Gallin, 2014). Although building affiliates' capacities to organise precarious workers is a necessary and important role for the GUFs, on an organisational level the increase in precarious work will inevitably mean a decline in national and therefore international union membership and dues incomes.

As a result, GUF strategies for union building outside of elite and core workers, to include categories of periphery workers, although essential for legitimacy, raises difficult questions about their structural power in the future.

3.3 Associational Power

The associational power of the GUFs is the willingness of members to pay dues and to mobilise around GUF campaigns and international solidarity actions. Associational power is difficult to measure at international level as affiliates' capacity to pay membership dues does not necessarily relate to their willingness to pay nor ability to mobilise national membership around international issues.

Solidarity

At national and international levels trade unions often move between two different senses of solidarity: first, as a normative or moral principle which creates an obligation to support other workers and their unions in case of need; second, as a form of 'enlightened self-interest' with only weak ethical underpinning, motivated by the belief that an injury to one is an injury to all (Stirling, 2007).

The notion of solidarity appealed to by unions is influenced by their institutional setting and organisational cultures. There is an inherent tension between the 'two faces' (Gumbrell-McCormick & Hyman, 2013) of trade unionism, the 'sword of justice' where unions defend the oppressed and underprivileged and a model of 'vested interests' where the focus is on defending particular interests of a smaller group of predominantly elite workers.

This tension has become more acute as precarious work grows and the diversity of workforces becomes a clear social justice and trade union issue. One question that preoccupies unions is how to maintain a sufficiently strong level of solidaristic ties between increasingly diverse groups of workers and, to a lesser degree, memberships (Muller-Jentsch, 1988). In addition to changes in employment relations, this question relates also to societal changes and, in Western Europe, to the decline in cohesive working class groups and social-democratic political support (Kjellberg, 2011). As a result, building sufficient levels of solidaristic ties between diverse affiliates is a major job of work for the GUFs.

Income

The GUFs' capacity to raise income from affiliates suffers from a 'density bias' (Sullivan, 2010a: 146) in that only a small percentage of affiliates are paying full affiliation fees for their full membership numbers.

The affiliation fees of ITUC are representative of the GUFs' capacity to raise membership dues internationally, with Europe by far the largest payer, Asia-Pacific second and Africa, with the largest and growing membership within the internationals, providing the lowest level of dues income, shown in Table 4.

Table 4: ITUC regional affiliation fees, 2014

Region	Paid 2013 Chf	Forecast 2014 Chf	Paid 2014 Chf
Europe	8,527,724	9,026,917	7,494,450
Asia-Pacific	3,246,565	3,611,932	2,372,615
North America	2,062,314	2,064,227	1,658,347
Latin America & Caribbean	679,061	729,670	539,875
Sub-Saharan Africa	609,239	556,684	30,082
Middle East and North Africa	20,496	29,027	2,755

Source: ICFTU congress documents.

Additionally each region often has one affiliate who pays a large percentage of national and regional dues payments. In the case of Industriall, as Table 5 shows, the largest payment comes from the German union IG Metall, and is closely followed by a small number of unions below.

Table 5: Top 10 paying Industriall affiliates, 2014

Industriall affiliate	Country	Affiliation Fee 2014 Chf
IG Metall	Germany	2,200,000
Japan Council of Metalworkers Unions (JCM)	Japan	1,650,000
IG BCE	Germany	1,100,000
United Steelworkers of America (USW)	USA	771,000
Unite	UK	460,560
National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)	South Africa	392,240
International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers	USA	369,854
United Auto Workers (UAW)	USA	304,502
Unifor	Canada	261,828
Unionen	Sweden	249,891

Source: Industriall Executive Committee Report (2014).

The majority of GUF affiliates pay a reduced membership rate, calculated according to organisational incomes which, for example in the case of unions in Eastern Europe, represent a small percentage of membership dues income. It leads to the anomaly that the largest trade unions pay only a small affiliation payment to the GUFs, shown graphically in the case of Industriall's Russian affiliates in Table 6. Russian affiliates have been consistently reluctant to disclose full membership numbers with the exception of the Russian Oil and Gas Workers Union (ROGWU) with an estimated membership of over 1 million members, the Miners' and Metallurgical Workers Union of Russia (MMWU) with estimated 900,000 members and the All-Russian Electric Trade Union (ARETU) with an estimated membership of 500,000. What is known is that these are some of the largest affiliates within Industriall but paying consistently low affiliation fees.

Table 6: Industriall's Russian affiliates, 2014

Russian trade union	Affiliation Fee 2014 Chf
Miners' & Metallurgical Workers' Union of Russia (MMWU)	167,800
Russian Oil, Gas and Construction Workers Union (ROGWU)	25,000
All-Russian "Electric Trade Union" (ARETU)	16,300
Automobile and Farm Machinery Workers' Union of Russia (AFW)	15,125
Engineering Workers' Union of Russia (EWU)	15,125
Russian Aircraft Industry Workers' Union (Profavia)	15,125
Russian Independent Coal Employees' Union (ROSUGLEPROF)	15,119
Shipbuilding Workers' Union of Russia (SWU)	8,800
Russian Chemical Workers Union	8,650
Russian Trade Union of Metal Workers in the Nickel, Cobalt and Platinoids Industries (RTUMWNCPI)	7,500
Russian Radio-Electronic Industry Workers' Union (REIW)	6,000
Interregional Trade Union "Workers Association" (ITUWA)	2,500
Timber & Related Industries Workers Union of Russia (TRIWU)	1,200

Source: Industriall Executive Committee Report (2014).

The increase in non-OECD membership across all the GUFs since the 1990s is a major resource for GUF legitimacy and capacity to mobilise international solidarity. However, it also represents a major threat to the financial stability of the GUFs. This is partly because of the lower affiliation rates for unions from developing and transition countries, but also the reluctance of key affiliates in each region to take the lead in identifying and securing financial resources available in their regions for GUF activities. In the main, this relates to the unions of Brazil, South Africa, Japan and Russia where union branches may have financial resources for international work that has not successfully been negotiated by national union structures. In addition, the fundraising potential of trade unions in these countries has not been exploited even where established charitable and development aid funds exist which trade unions would be eligible to apply for, particularly in partnership with local NGOs and community groups.

Attempts by the GUFs to raise affiliation fee rates over the last ten years have failed, with affiliates cutting membership numbers in order to maintain total dues payments. This is often a reflection of declining national membership but it also reflects a concern that national union executives will not be willing to make the political decision to increase the costs of international affiliations in a climate of recession and declining dues income. Although GUF executive members are generally highly committed to the work of the GUFs, they often experience difficulties in winning the necessary political support in their own unions to raise affiliation payments.

Additionally the willingness to pay GUF membership dues is often not matched by the willingness to mobilise around international issues. For example, the North American unions pay substantial membership dues but are often reluctant to take a lead in GUF campaigns or programmes, preferring to carry out their own international work bilaterally. This is a characteristic of North American, Japanese and Australian unions, where despite relatively high GUF affiliation fees the main bulk of their international work, including educational programmes, are carried out bilaterally. This is not to question the quality of the work carried out bilaterally by affiliates, such as the important educational work of the USW or CAW in Canada, but rather to explain the gap between paying GUF affiliation fees and willingness to mobilise memberships through them although, as noted below, there are recent signs of a change in attitudes in the USA.

For all of the GUFs, the German, Dutch and Scandinavian unions continue to be the main sources of both financial resources and solidarity action within the GUFs. These unions only partly fund their solidaristic work through their own funds, with the much larger share (on average 80 per cent) of project funding coming from national development funds paid by taxpayers. This means that the unions are subject to government policy and will continually need to defend international expenditure. Even in Europe there is a deficit of resources, coordination and expertise to carry out international solidarity (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013) thus, providing added value in return for the substantial costs of GUF membership for these unions.

The principal response by trade unions to reduced resources is to merge. In Western Europe there has been a large decline in the number of trade unions over the last fifty years which has, particularly in Northern European countries, led to a concentration of trade union power nationally and internationally. This is particularly noticeable if we look at the cases of Germany and the Netherlands where a small number of industrial unions represent the largest political power within both their national centres and the GUFs.

The experience of merger strategies is 'mixed' both in relation to the impact on services and also the financial benefits. Unsurprisingly, GUF responses to reduced resources have focused on streamlining activities and merger, with the most recent merger taking place in 2012 between the ICEM, IMF and ITGLWF to form the largest industrial GUF, Industriall. Currently there are no further mergers being discussed within the GUFs. This is in part because mergers often come at a time when some unions have failed to secure sufficient consensus on organisational renewal. The larger these organisations get the greater the 'problem of large numbers': lack of commitment, latency, reduction in paying membership, decline in democratic involvement leading to decline in efficiency and legitimacy.

GUF mergers have historically been carried out in a highly secretive way excluding most affiliates and avoiding the difficult work of struggling for political consensus, an approach which is counterproductive in building affiliates' participation and concern for their own internationals (Gallin, 2014).

Often underestimated is the cost of redundancy packages for staff that have often two or three decades of service within their organisations. It has tended to mean that the younger staff have left the GUFs during mergers, something which is likely to merely postpone the problem of GUF capacity within the next ten years during which the majority of staff will be retiring. Mergers also threaten a decline in the GUFs' specific industrial identities and, through the loss of experienced staff to redundancy or early retirement, a loss of sectoral and international expertise.

The only counterbalance to this trend relates to the hundreds of local project coordinators employed short term by the GUFs to deliver their education al programmes. These people tend to be younger with an orientation towards union building and activism, capacities that are likely to prove more important to the GUFs as these structural issues become even more problematic.

GUFs have attempted to increase coordination between them as a way of pooling resources. Recently an attempt was made to establish an independent coordination point for the GUFs through the creation of the Council for Global Unions (CGU) in 2012. The CGU came out of the ITUC's founding congress, which decided to end the full time coordination position that the ICFTU had funded and ask the GUFs to directly fund this coordination mechanism themselves. The coordinator, Jim Baker, carried on in this new organisation and an annual income of €250,000 was raised per year for his salary and the work of the council. Despite the CGU managing to set up a working group on Temporary Agency Work and to establish the GUF principles, the Council has not been able to develop a key role within the GUFs. In the event Baker, possibly unadvisedly, stood against Sharon Burroughs at the last ITUC congress for General Secretary and subsequently resigned from the CGU. As a result of the lack of support for the work of the Council, it is likely that the GUFs will take this opportunity to close the CGU in 2015.

Labour Support Organisations (LSOs)

Throughout the history of trade unions there have been related 'labour support organisations' set up to support organising. LSOs typically focus on specific technical interventions, such as education and organising in countries where union capacity is weak, and also providing specific services to the GUFs such as fundraising or new areas of expertise such as HIV/AIDS.

In each of the regions where GUFs carry out educational projects the GUFs have used the research and pedagogical services of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) set up to support workers and unions. Although funding in the main is directed towards affiliates, in particular areas such as informal workers or HIV/AIDS, where unions are not the main actors, existing progressive organisations are used. Over the last two decades important partners providing research, education and organising resources, including Naledi and Ditsela in South Africa, CLIST in Thailand and Instituto Observatorio Social in Brazil. At international level, LSOs include LabourStart which provides the largest online trade union news service, the International Federation of Workers Education Associations (IFWEA),

the Global Labour Institute (GLI) which organises an annual activists summer school and critical research and Labour and Society International (LSI) which was set up in the 1990s in the UK to access European Union and to project manage education programmes in the former Soviet Union for the IUF and ICEM. With the exception of LSI which was closed in 2004, these organisations continue to do important educational and research work for the GUFs.

Additionally, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organising (WIEGO) was created by Pat Horn originally from the self-employed women's union in South Africa (now closed) and Dan Gallin, previously IUF General Secretary and Director of GLI. WIEGO has attempted to fill a major gap in international work of trade unions in organising informal workers. It is a broad and expert network of organisations, mainly NGOs, practitioners and researchers looking at organising women who work informally. Of the GUFs only the IUF, which sits on WIEGO's board works with them actively, because of the high number of unorganised women workers in their sectors. This is an untapped resource by the GUFs, in part because of the reluctance of their affiliates to recognise self-employed and informal sector organisations as trade unions.

LSOs have, despite their expertise and fundraising capacity, not historically been valued by the GUFs. This is expressed through the reality that none of these organisations have managed to secure sufficient levels of funding from the GUFs, either directly through their dues income or indirectly through project funding that they raise, to sustain themselves and core staff. Although the relationships between the small numbers of individuals involved in these initiatives are good and often highly involved, the GUFs have not supported them sufficiently, and as a result these initiatives are limited and vulnerable, resting on the commitment of a small pool of individuals.

Mobilising Members

The GUFs have had a high degree of success in building their geographical coverage by focusing activity since the 1990s on recruiting affiliates in developing and transition economies. This is reflected in the growth of developing country membership of the ITUC summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: ITUC declared membership and estimated paying members by region: 1998, 2003, 2013

Region	1998	2003	2014
	Declared Membership	*Declared Membership*	*Declared Membership*
Western Europe	43,214,250	43,637,707	50,930,563
Central and Eastern Europe/ N.I.S.	8,235,265	37,296,378	42,298,495
Asia and Pacific	27,907,407	27,282,638	32,709,509
Latin America	19,361,761	16,467,678	21,348,304
Africa	8,941,858	10,590,676	14,261,365
North America	14,612,112	12,362,956	10,277,531
Middle East	747,800	1,273,528	3,868,052
West Indies	420,332	382,798	Included in Africa Region
Total Memberships	**123,440,785**	**149,294,359**	**175,693,819**
Percentage of membership for which dues paid	87	63	Estimated 40-50

Source: Croucher & Cotton (2009); ITUC membership figures and authors' calculations.

The GUFs' capacity to mobilise members is, paradoxically, limited by their large memberships where the majority of memberships will be passive. In Section 2.2 this is described as the 'problem of large numbers' where the majority of the membership will be latent and unaware of any link between their union and a GUF.

Despite the decline of social democracy in most of the countries of Western Europe, affiliates in these countries continue to have a relatively high capacity to mobilise their own memberships on issues of international solidarity and social justice. In order to maintain this important connection between domestic memberships and international solidarity action, they tend to be highly involved in programmes and campaigns with activists and branch officials often providing technical support and coordination. Western European trade unions' relationships with key national employers also provide important industrial leverage which can be used for international solidarity although, as discussed above, this leverage is likely to decline.

In the main, the GUFs are able to mobilise their affiliates around key issues if they are framed well. Generally, the closer the issue to the interests of local membership the more likely they are to carry out international solidarity action. This is particularly the experience of international solidarity networks within major MNCs, where workers recognise the concrete benefits of solidarity action, particularly around issues of contract labour and during periods of collective bargaining.

One of the positive developments since 2008 indicated by a number of GUFs is a change in attitude of unions from North America. Historically, although paying large affiliation fees, these unions carried out most of their international solidarity work bilaterally. Despite a long history of antagonism with key North American employers and a culture of more aggressive corporate campaigning, the North American unions have been actively involved in GUF sectoral and company networks, recognising their value in increasing leverage with company managements. For a long time one of the items for negotiation around IFAs was the 'special' situation of North America with MNCs claiming that international labour standards could not be applied there, in part because of highly repressive labour and trade union legislation, but also because of this adversarial corporate culture.

This was compounded by the political conflict within the USA trade union movement between AFL-CIO and Change to Win which isolated these affiliates from the GUFs even further. The SEIU, a key union behind the creation of Change to Win in 2005 and unions

affiliated to it channelled their solidarity funding through this new structure, carrying out politically motivated bilateral projects focusing on organising models, mainly in strategic countries like the UK and China. However, over the last few years this division has been resolved with most USA unions re-affiliating to the AFL-CIO and collaborative work on issues of organising and international solidarity now taking place.

One of the positive impacts of this split was that it created a movement towards democratic debate within the USA unions with a demand for more direct involvement of union branches, including international solidarity action. Indications are that it has led to higher branch level engagement with the GUFs and their campaigns. An example of this is the Nestlé dispute in the USA in 2014 where local United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) members wore 'I am IUF' badges after workers were told by Nestlé management not to sign an IUF petition because this would signal 'trouble'.

For most of the GUFs there is a tension between increased demand for international solidarity and their capacity to supply it. There is a growing developing country membership and deterioration of working conditions in North America and Western Europe, which raises the capacity of the GUFs to mobilise around international solidarity. However, this increased capacity for mobilisation is not matched by the capacity of the GUFs to raise dues and other income from their affiliates, either in traditionally high paying regions of Western Europe and North America or in the power bases within their growing regional structures. This leaves the GUFs with a widening gap between the demands for international solidarity action and the resources available to them to effectively coordinate it.

3.4 Union Building Power

A key function of trade unions in most parts of the world is to support members to build their individual and collective capacities in the face of employers (Huzzard, 2000), particularly in response to sectoral, technological or political changes such as introducing collective bargaining into the newly independent trades unions of the Former Soviet Union (Khaliy, 2005; Sogge, 2004). One of the principal ways that they do this is through educational programmes and methodologies, well established in most parts of the world.

Over the last three decades these methods have been adopted by unions in most parts of the world, principally through the work of international trade union structures such as the GUFs and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (Croucher & Cotton, 2012;

Croucher, 2004). Millions of Euro are raised and spent annually to disseminate these education methods to national and local trade union structures in a conscious attempt to build trade union capacity and international solidaristic networks.

Emancipatory Methods

The methods used in the vast majority of GUF education projects are founded on workers and emancipatory education traditions that emphasise dialogic methods, small group work, consciousness raising and collective problem solving. These methods require only limited resources and can have high returns for unions in capacity building of local organisations and strong solidaristic relationships between members.

An emancipatory model of trade union education aims to build activism through consciousness raising, problem identification and collective problem solving. It is a dialogic model of education, emphasising small group dynamics and collective tasks (Klandermans, 1986). It is underpinned by a number of principles, including confidentiality and solidarity, and activities aim to provide a safe space for expressing and processing experience and a vital source of support in the workplace.

Additionally, education programmes provide important opportunities to widen the pool of collective experience and to learn from diverse strategies and union responses to globalisation. This is a key resource for trade unions in developing strategies for renewal on the basis of gains made by other unions. These methods are highly effective at building social capital, understood as the resources built up through relationships to provide mutual aid and development. A detailed analysis of the strategic importance of emancipatory education in the work of the GUFs is explored in Section 4.

The combination of multilateral structures, minilateral methods and principle of subsidiarity is a highly 'potent' way of union building. The GUFs offer a multilateral structure that provides a consistent and reliable system of norms and obligations, which facilitates the recognition and engagement of trade unions at international level both with employers and with the international human rights mechanisms. In addition, their minilateral work allows the GUFs to provide meaningful union building programmes which, although limited by resources, build social capital and with it high capacity for international solidarity action. This capacity to deliver international solidarity in turn gives important credibility to the work of the GUFs and raises their standing with affiliates as important international actors.

3.5 Future Regional Trends

Despite the GUFs' important membership gains, there are significant limitations to their development and consolidation of their regional structures. This Section examines the GUFs' attempts to build union capacity in Eastern Europe, China and Middle East North Africa (MENA) and draws some conclusions about their strategic capacity in the future.

Eastern Europe

From the 1990s several of the GUFs took the political decision to establish programmes and offices in Moscow to build their relationships with unions in the former Soviet Union. This was a major departure for the GUFs, to court affiliation from formerly communist union structures, all of which were almost entirely unreformed. At that time, there were no procedures for affiliating former Communist unions into the GUFs, and each organisation developed different strategies to establish solidaristic ties during this period of transition. For example, the ICEM created a category of 'transitional' status for unions that could not immediately affiliate but with which the intention was to encourage sufficient democratic reform to allow for full affiliation. This fairly shortly led to the affiliation of unions across the region, but with unions that had only, at best, started the long process of organisational reform.

Some GUFs made the decision to wait until further economic and industrial reform had taken place before investing the large resources needed to build Eastern European membership. Three GUFs - IUF, ICEM and UNI - quickly became the most active and organised in the region, establishing project offices in Russia employing activists who were younger than the existing union leadership and in different ways independent from them. Unlike other regions, the GUF structures in Russia remained outside of existing union structures. The GUF personnel involved were Kirill Buketov, Lika Shershukova, and Galina Yurova working for the IUF, Andre Mrost for the ICEM and Olga Vinogradova for UNI. The staff of the three GUFs adopted a collaborative approach and jointly developed an educational approach in the region.

Table 8: Chronology of trade union developments in Eastern Europe, 1990s to the present

Dates	Location	Activities & events	GUF participation
1990s-1995	Central & Eastern Europe, Transcaucasus & Central Asia	Networking & information exchange, planning/ feasibility, seeking transitional status/ affiliations	IUF ICEM
1992-1999	Central & Eastern Europe, Transcaucasus & Central Asia	Amendment of labour and trade union legislation including collective bargaining	
1995-2005	Caspian region	Bilateral and multilateral contact between oil and gas unions	NOPEF ROGWU OGWU ICEM
1996	Russia	• Russian legislation on trade union pluralism passed • Creation of independent confederations VKT and KTR	
1995-2000	Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Moldova, Belarus	Trade union education projects (Phare/Tacis)	IUF ICEM
1999-2005	Central & Eastern Europe, Transcaucasus & Central Asia	Affiliation of unions and national centres to the GUFs and ITUC	All GUFs and ICFTU/ITUC
1999-present	Croatia, Serbia, BiH, Kosovo	Trade Union Education Projects	IUF ICEM
1999	Russia	Putin becomes Prime Minister of the Russian Federation	
2000-2010	Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan	Trade Union Education Projects (Tacis)	IUF ICEM UNI ITF
2000-2008	Russia	Putin is President of the Russian Federation	

2003-2010	Russia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine	Complaints submitted to ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association: • Russia (1) • Ukraine (8) • Moldova (1) • Belarus (3) • Georgia (2)	ITUC IUF FNV ICEM VKT/KTR
2004	Ukraine	Orange Revolution	
2005	Caspian Region	Creation of Caspian Energy Network	ICEM ROGWU NOPEF OGWU
2005-2006	Azerbaijan	• Creation of new private sector unions in contractors McDermott (USA) and Boschelf (France) • Protocol on organising contractors in oil and gas ROGWU & OGWU	ICEM OGWU NOPEF ROGWU
2006	Russia	Closure of ICEM Regional Office	ICEM
2009	Russia	Creation of KTR: integration of VKT & KTR)	
2010	Ukraine	Yanukovych wins Presidential Elections	
2012	Russia	Putin becomes Prime Minster of the Russian Federation	
2013-2014	Russia	Closure of GUF and ITUC regional offices	UNI IUF Industriall ITF ITUC
November 2013	Ukraine	• Yanukovych suspends negotiations on EU Association Agreement • Maidan protests started • 1st December national protests and violence in Kiev	

| January-May 2014 | Ukraine | • Crimea annexed
• Separatist groups formed in Donetsk and Luhansk
• Sniper attacks on protesters in Kiev
• Yanukovych replaced by Poroshenko in Presidential elections | |

These developments were coordinated through the GUF head offices, principally through Wolfgang Weinz (IUF) and Peter Schmitt (ICEM), tasked with building contacts in Central and Eastern Europe and a strategy for long term engagement. Both had jointly for many years carried out solidaristic and information gathering visits.

By the mid-1990s the ICEM and IUF had jointly secured European Union structural funding, through their involvement with an independent UK-based NGO called Labour and Society International (LSI). LSI was set up by David Clement, previously from the Commonwealth Trade Union Council (CTUC) and Professor Arthur Lipow, a labour academic at the Department of Politics at Birkbeck College London. The author was shortly after employed by LSI to raise funding through the EU and manage the subsequent education programmes for the IUF and ICEM. Ron Oswald (IUF General Secretary) and Vic Thorpe (the then ICEM General Secretary) jointly sat on LSI's board, along with David Cockroft (General Secretary of the ITF) and UK trade union leaderships including Fred Higgs who at that time was a National Officer of the TGWU and subsequently became the General Secretary of the ICEM from 1999. LSI was set up to raise funding and provide educational expertise from the UK's trade union education centres - principally tutors from South Birmingham Trade Union College and the Workers Education Association (WEA) - for long term educational programmes in Central and Eastern Europe. The first projects, funded by the Phare/Tacis Democracy Programmes were carried out in Romania, Hungry, Slovakia and Russia. Further project funding was secured and education programmes were developed in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Further funding was secured through Tacis as well as the Dutch trade union structure FNV Mondiaal to establish a joint ICEM/IUF project office in Baku and an education methods programme on the same model in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan with the inclusion of additional GUFs, namely UNI and the ITF. This model of education methods programmes was also adopted in the joint IUF/ICEM Balkans region, run by an experienced trade unionist Mato Lalic and Teuta Krilic in Zagreb from 1999 to the present.

The adoption of an educational approach enabled the establishment of relationships with these previously unknown unions. Importantly this model of joint union education programmes, carried out with unaffiliated unions, gave the GUFs the opportunity to work with both established and new trade union structures. In the main, this was only achieved in the mining sectors, with independent mining unions from Russia (Independent Coal

Employees Union of Russia, Rosugleprof), Ukraine (Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine, NPGU) and Belarus (Belarussian Independent Union, BNP). Although their participation in the programmes was relatively small because of the fragility of the union structures and leadership at that time, it allowed the GUFs to open affiliation to both old and new structures within the region.

Additionally, this educational work allowed unions in the same sectors to establish solidaristic contacts and start to develop networks, which proved to be important for unions working along growing supply chains and production processes. One of the key developments during this period was the creation of the ICEM's Caspian Energy Network formally established in 2005 in Azerbaijan, with the support of the Russian Oil and Gas Workers Union (ROGWU) and Nopef, the ICEM's Norwegian oil sector affiliate. (See Part 2 for more detailed outline of this network.) Unions in this network had long standing exposure to international educational activities and resulting relationship building amongst affiliates which provided them with a basis for effective networking and cooperation. Additionally, the ICEM's work on organising contract workers encouraged the Azeri Oil and Gas Workers Union (OGWU) to organise contract workers in American contractor McDermott during the launch of the network, establishing the first union for a private foreign contractor in Azerbaijan.

The educational model used in the former Soviet Union was important in those countries where unions were motivated towards change because of the rapid decline in union resources and capacity to service memberships after 1989, principally outside of Russia. Strong relationships were formed through the educational programmes, with many of the participants of these programmes going on to become union leaders within their organisations (Croucher, 2004, Khaliy, 2005), an important indicator of the union building impact of education programmes.

However, the leverage developed with the Russian unions through these education programmes was low, in part because of the size and resistance of these structures to economic and political changes taking place at that time. There were some notable exceptions amongst the Russian unions including ROGWU that, under the leadership of Lev Marino, took an active role in developing solidaristic relationships with unions in the oil and gas sectors across the Caspian region and an active participant in ICEM/Industriall executive policy making. However, for all of the Russian unions, one of the barriers to reform relates to their financial structures where membership dues are paid directly to enterprise and branch level organisations with only a small percentage passed onto the national structures. As a result the national offices are under-resourced and reluctant to

raise difficult organisational and political problems with key branches. This means that the national leadership of the Russian unions are not able to raise sufficient leverage, either political or financial, with key branches to undergo a process of organisational change at the level that they need to do to accommodate transition to a market economy.

The alternative unions in Russia are increasingly well organised with the creation of the Confederation of Labour of Russia (KTR) in 1996 which has grown into a membership of approximately 2 million. The KTR is organised into sectoral unions and sections covering the seafarers, dockers, pilots, teachers, agricultural and construction workers. The construction union is interesting because it is the first Russian trade union to focus on organising migrant workers.

KTR has created two organising schools set up to develop new cadres of organisers and leadership. The original strategy was to recruit organisers from workplaces but this failed because of the victimisation they faced. Then student groups were approached but this model of organising did not work, in part because of the dropout rate of the students when they were transitioning into work. Additionally, MNCs repressed the creation of new unions in their operations, a strategy that has become more aggressive since the introduction of sanctions against Russia in 2014, particularly affecting the food sector where many food companies are closing and conditions are deteriorating quickly. As a result the current organising strategy is to recruit organisers from new political networks and demonstrations that have been taking place throughout Russia over the last five years, taking advantage of the growing opposition to the increasingly authoritarian government.

The Trade Union Rights Defence Centre was set up in 2013 offering solidaristic and legal support to new unions and activists in the region. The Centre was set up by Valetin Urasov, a Russian trade union leader who was released from prison in 2013 following his arrest for activities in the Russian Alrosa diamond mining company. Following a protest rally about working conditions and trade union rights he was arrested under charges of possession of narcotics and sentenced to six years in a penal colony. A human rights case was submitted to the ILO by the KTR, supported by the IUF, Industriall, ITUC, and the FNPR following which he was released and reinstated but with a 15 per cent cut in his salary. In 2013, he was given the Arthur Svensson award by the Norwegian trade unions which came with a €50,000 prize with which he set up the new Centre.

Although the growth of independent trade unions and leadership is significant, by the late 1990s authoritarian politics had returned in the region with a rise in human rights abuses, including attacks on Freedom of Association in Belarus and the 2011 Zhanaozen

massacre in Kazakhstan when sixteen protesters were killed following an aggressive police response to a six month strike of 20,000 oil workers in the Mangistau region.

Since 2013, political events have moved quickly in the Ukraine. The Maidan movement, created from the original crisis when Yanukovich refused to sign the EU Association Agreement, has developed into a political movement protesting against corruption, authoritarian rule and the violent repression of democratic protest.

Despite organisational and political reform within the Ukrainian unions, particularly in the transport, metal and food sectors, unions are facing an industrial and human rights crisis. Crimea's infrastructure is broken and there has been a virtual cessation of food production. The Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine (NPGU) under the leadership of Mikailo Vloynets, with its stronghold in Donetsk region, is trying to coordinate international solidarity through its strong international links to protect its members from intimidation from separatist groups. At the time of writing, 12 of Ukraine's 136 mines are in occupied territories with widespread abandonment of mines across Donetsk and Lugansk.

As a result of the lack of civil and political responses in Russia to the conflict in Ukraine, the Russian trade unions are also facing a further crisis of legitimacy. The two ITUC affiliates in Russia, the FNPR and the KTR have remained limited in their capacity to challenge Putin's foreign policy in the region. The FNPR officially shows loyalty to the state in relation to the conflict in Ukraine, ostensibly to avoid economic sanctions and job loss. Rank and file members across Russia are heavily divided with the Confederation of Labour of Russia (KTR) being the only Russian union structure that is opposed to the war but with relatively limited political power.

The political developments in Russia have affected civil society organisations at large, with a long-standing problem for INGOs to secure legal registration. It had meant that the GUFs had been operating in semi-legal status since the 1990s but with the Russian government taking a position of non-intervention. During the ICEM's financial restructuring in 2006, this was a decisive factor in the closure of its Moscow office with unforeseen legal and other costs involved in attempting to regularise their operations. As the political situation in 2013 deteriorated many non-governmental organisations were visited by the Federal Security Service (FSB), including the ITUC, to warn them that they and the GUFs would need to cease operations in Russia. As a result, all of the GUFs have closed their regional offices with political responsibility for the region returning to the secretariats.

The probable future trend for the region is that further anti-democratic legislation will be brought into place and that the region will develop violently into two sub-regions. Russia, Belarus, and Kazakstan, which in 2014 signed a trade agreement with potential to extend

the agreement further by incorporating Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. A second sub-region is composed of countries looking towards the EU, including Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

These developments leave the GUFs in a precarious position. With weak established and independent trade unions in the region, and the increasing isolation of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan from Europe, opportunities for union building are limited. Therefore, the GUFs will continually need to review and revise their strategies across the region in response to these developments. They will need to take a longer-term perspective on working with the collective and political structures that come out of this period of unrest.

China

China continues to represent a significant political challenge to the GUFs, both in terms of engagement with workers in China who are increasingly involved in industrial disputes, and with China's official trade union structures, the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). The ACFTU is structurally under the control of the Chinese government and the Communist Party and a clear international position that free and independent trade unions do not exist in China. Although the 1995 Chinese Labour Law allows certain levels of collective 'consultation' and the 2004 Chinese Trade Union Law recognises the role of trade unions in collective negotiations, collective bargaining remains limited in China (ILO, 2010). The collective agreements signed by 2008 covered over 60 per cent of working people but include only minimum standards and wages, which are already enshrined in national law (ILO, 2014).

Although none of the GUFs or the ITUC have courted the affiliation of the Chinese unions - neither the ACFTU nor the 'new' unions which have been organised in foreign multinational companies - there continues to be a general policy of 'engagement', with only the IUF clearly maintaining a position of non-engagement. This compromise reflects a lack of debate and strategy within the GUFs about their position on the potential for union building in China.

This was most recently highlighted at the ITUC congress in Berlin in 2013, which the Hong Kong trade union confederation, the HKCTU, and the ACFTU both attended. The HKCTU, recognised as the only independent trade union within Chinese territories, was denied the right to speak from the platform about the situation in China. This was on the basis that the ITUC had guaranteed there would be no criticism of the ACFTU at the event as a condition of their attendance. As a result the HKCTU organised a side event attracting

a high level of participation of unions, particularly from Eastern Europe, including an IUF representative who boycotted the rest of the congress.

During this event, recent developments in Hong Kong and trade union links with the Occupy HK movement were discussed. Also the panel reported on the HKCTU's general strike, which was led by Coca-Cola workers who had been involved in IUF union building projects for some time.

Despite the lack of reform within the ACFTU, there has been a significant rise in spontaneous industrial action in China since market reforms. Although figures are unreliable, Guandong province has seen a 300 per cent increase in strikes since 1999 (Taylor, 2000) mainly in the private sector and related to non-payment of wages, job insecurity and concerns over favouritism. By 1998 there were over 16.5 million workers claiming non-payment of wages and 8 million complaints over wage cuts (Taylor, 2000). This is attributed to the economic situation leading to changes in management approaches and a decline in working conditions. These disputes are not carried out with the support of the ACFTU unions, although official unions have not so far attempted to repress any industrial unrest.

New unions have been created in the foreign owned private sector and these developments have been watched carefully by the GUFs. Although still officially part of the ACFTU, some of these new unions show encouraging signs of more participatory cultures and relationships with management. The character of these new enterprise unions is heavily context dependent, exemplified in Taylor's important research on 7 recently privatised enterprises in Guangzhou and Shanghai which highlight the growing demand for collective representation in response to the increasing tensions between market reforms and workplace wages and conditions.

The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) is an increasingly important actor in these developments. Internationally their profile has grown as a result of the HKCTU's participation in the Hong Kong Occupy movement since 2013. As soon as the violence broke out in 2014, the HKCTU called for a general strike and has been an highly active partner to Occupy Central, particularly in mobilisations and maintaining order during the demonstrations. There has been a good transfer of skills between the two structures, with the HKCTU sitting on the organising committee of Occupy Central.

The HKCTU has been active in developing an organising approach in Hong Kong. The organising model used by the HKCTU is a familiar one of offering legal consultation and 'crisis interventions' in disputes, as well as an element of strategic planning and mapping of recruitment targets. Education activities are used to build cadres and new leaderships,

based on a participatory and study circle methods, following many years of international education programmes.

The HKCTU also runs an organising project in mainland China, but because of the vulnerability of activists there is no official information about the work that they do. In informal conversations with the HKCTU activists involved in the project the strategy for the project is described as focusing on Hong Kong businesses operating in mainland China and using the same organising model as is used in Hong Kong at workplace level. An important aspect of this work is to secure accurate information about industrial relations within China, a severe problem given the scale of 'dis-information' that is distributed through the official union and party channels.

Despite these important developments there is a debate about whether reform of the ACFTU is possible and what could be sustained through the industrial changes taking place in China. Disagreement centres on the potential for institutional reform and the weight given to social change and industrial struggle in shaping and reforming social capital in China. The HKCTU does not believe reform of the official structures is realistic despite a growing number of progressive trade unionists within it. Some, including the renowned Han Dong Fang from the China Labour Bulletin, are more optimistic about younger generations of workers building strong networks and alliances, as a basis for organisational reform. Central to this argument is the impact of legal reform allowing Chinese unions to bargain collectively with employers, thus developing a new generation of trade union officials who have the capacity to carry out basic union functions. Han Dong Fang currently works as an advisor on labour issues to the ACFTU and the Chinese Communist Party.

The GUFs have predominantly kept their relationships with the ACFTU at a distance, receiving their delegations and, in the case of Industriall, securing initial agreement with the Chinese Government to build minimum industrial standards in the mining sector.

In some cases, such as the German and Scandinavian unions, some bilateral projects are ongoing in home country company operations, such as the metals sector. These bilateral initiatives tend to be jointly carried out with company management, looking at human rights and health and safety in their operations. Because of the small scale of these projects in comparison to the scale of the Chinese labour market, these projects appear to be benign but there is no evaluation of their impact.

Probably the most critical literature on international attempts to form relationships with Chinese unions is in Dan Gallin's book *Solidarity*, where he offers an important critique of the USA union SEIU's attempts to engage with the ACFTU, exposing the political

weakness of international union interventions in China. Focusing on the organising 'success' in Wal-Mart operations in China he argues that there is no potential for genuine international union building work in China.

The creation in 2008 of a union in Wal-Mart in China was heralded by the American union SEIU and its president Andy Stern during a solidarity mission as a major union building success. This is despite union recognition being requested by the then Chinese President, Hu Jintao. Stern's understanding of the importance of union organising in China to protect American jobs is a sobering reminder of the dangers of bilateral work and of representing the interests of one group of workers rather than the fundamental principles that underlie international trade unionism. In the event, the Wal-Mart operation was closed in 2014, and with no activists or cadres within the enterprise there was no opposition from the trade union.

Gallin's book reminds us of an important aspect to change: change will take place when the old system breaks down. Although China has high levels of industrial struggle, the ACFTU has shown remarkable resilience in its refusal to reform. Although there is obviously potential for the Chinese labour movement to develop through these struggles the question is whether this will trigger sufficient crisis within the ACFTU such that it stimulates genuine internal reform of the official structures.

This leaves the GUFs with the option to continue to 'engage' with Chinese unions but at a low level of sectoral or foreign company level. The resources required to engage with Chinese unions are not available to the GUFs, nor are they likely to result in paying affiliations. This means that that any interventions in China will have to be for strategic rather than organisational reasons.

Furthermore, although the GUFs will be naturally inclined to encourage and support any new union structures, the question will be whether their intervention would increase their chances of long-term survival or, as has been the case in many cases of weak new union developments, be a hindrance given the likely reprisals from the state and ACFTU.

Unlike the diverse union structures in the former Soviet Union, union renewal in China is only likely to come about if sufficient activism and demand develops at the level of the workplace. However, because of the severity of state repression of self-organised groups of activists it is optimistic to think that the current spontaneous disputes will be sustained over the long term and lay the foundations for an alternative union structure, as it did for example in Russia. These inherent problems within the Chinese union environment have led to an organisational inertia at the level of the GUFs, a situation that is likely to remain for the foreseeable future.

Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, as it is predominantly demarcated within GUF structures, is a complex and diverse region. Over a decade of civil conflict within the region, the impact of the political changes taking place since the Arab Spring of 2011 and the rising threat of jihadist groups has meant that industrial and trade union activity has been severely damaged. With the virtual non-existence of trade union organisations in the Gulf States and the development of still fragile union structures in Egypt, Tunisia and Iraq, unlike other regions of the world there is no obvious base or coordination point for the GUFs in the region. Even in Tunisia, Jordan and Egypt, where much of the work of international organisations including the GUFs has traditionally been originally based.

Table 9: Chronology of trade union developments in the MENA region, 1945 to the present

Dates	Location	Activities & events	GUF participation
1945	MENA	Creation of Arab League	
1989	Maghreb: Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania	Creation of Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)	ICFTU
1995-2000	Egypt, Tunisia	Creation of ICEM National Councils	Industriall
2003	Iraq	Saddam Hussein overthrown	
2005	MENA	Free trade zone created across Arab League	
2007	Palestine	Creation of Federation of Independent Democratic Trade unions and Workers Committees	
2010	Tunisia	Self-immolation of Mohamed Bonazizi	
2011	Arab Spring: Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen	• Tunisian Government over-thrown • Mubarak resigns • Anti-government protests and massacres in Libya • Gaddafi over-thrown • Syria suspended from the Arab League • Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh injured in palace bombing	Industriall affiliates in Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen
2011-2013	Saudi Arabia	Labour protests	

2012	Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Israel	• New Law on Association in Algeria limits international participation • Morsi government seizes Trade union assets and INGO/GUF activity suspended • Industriall's Egyptian and Israeli affiliates expelled for non-payment of fees	Industriall Friedrich Ebert Foundation
2013	Iran	Interim agreement on Iran's nuclear programme with Western states	
2013	Egypt	Trade Union Education Projects reinstated	Industriall Friedrich Ebert Foundation
2013	Jordan, Egypt	ITF Jordan and ITUC Jordan and Egypt project offices close	ITF ITUC
2013	Iraq	Industriall's 6 affiliates form National Council in Iraq	Industriall
2013	MENA	Creation of new ITUC Arab Structure	ITUC
2014	Iraq, Syria, Libya	Islamic State (IS) declared a caliphate and consolidated in Iraq, Syria and Eastern Libya	
2014	Iraq	Energy sector training held in Lebanon	Industriall

Because of the strategic nature of its sectors and established relationships with unions in the region, the work of Industriall provides a good indicator of international trade union capacity in the region.

In Egypt, the election of Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood led to the state controlled Egypt Trade Union Federation's (ETUF) substantial assets being taken over and union leaderships being replaced by supporters. Despite a new government being in place, democratic elections within unions were not reinstated and new leaders of the ETUF were appointed by the government. For Industriall, many of their ETUF affiliates were dis-affiliated in 2012 because of non-payment of fees. These unions were traditionally aligned with the Mubarak government, and opposed to the new trade unions that have been created since 2011.

The two new national centres, the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU, created in 2011) and Egyptian Democratic Labour Congress (EDLC, created in 2013), are affiliating new trade unions but there are also a growing number of new trade unions not affiliated to either. The new unions are either plant or company based, often welcomed by the military onto sites in the oil fields because of the attempts by the Muslim Brotherhood to take over the existing union structures.

As is common when there is a sudden growth of 'alternative' new unions, traditional trade union donors have been active in Egypt, predominantly the Solidarity Centre of the AFL-CIO. This money, used for union building projects, was relatively short lived in part because of the arrests and interference experienced by International Non-Governmental Organisations in Egypt during this period.

Industriall's most active affiliates are the General Trade Union of Electricity and Energy (GTUEE, affiliated to EFITU), a new General Trade Union of Petroleum Workers (GTUPW), which is a collection of new unions linked to the EFITU, and the Free Trade Union of Misr Mahalla Spinning and Weaving Company (FTUMMSWC) which is an industrially and politically active organisation based in a textile factory which has 22,000 workers. Industriall uses education programmes to increase both industrial and organisational capacity, although there are currently no long-term developmental programmes in place. Instead, as is common in unstable countries, there have been a wide range of industrial seminars, for the metal, energy and textile sectors and in October 2013 Industriall hosted a conference on Trade Union Rights and Industrial Relations in Multinational Companies,

with the participation of parliamentarians, academics and unions adopting recommendations on labour laws, minimum wages and fundamental rights.

In Iraq, there exist some established unions, where leaderships worked in exile for several decades, and new organisations in the construction, textile, engineering and electricity sectors. This includes a new Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions (IFOU) with Hassan Jamal as leader with good links with new workers' councils set up in Basra. Industriall has six Iraqi affiliates who in 2013 created a National Council to coordinate international solidarity work. Industriall, along with the ITUC, is focusing on a campaign to reform the labour laws that prevent trade unions from carrying out organising, collective bargaining and strikes. Iraqi affiliates are well respected within the GUFs with Hashmevia Muhsin Alsaadawi, the President of the General Union of Electricity Workers and Technicians (GUEWT), a titular member of Industriall's international Executive Committee.

Industriall's work in Iraq focuses on campaigning for amendments to the labour code and to introduce trade union rights. This campaign was suspended during the change in government but will be re-launched in 2015 although the Government is likely to be focused on responding to the presence of IS in Iraq. Industriall also carries out educational seminars for the Iraqi unions but organising events within Iraq presents a major security problem for participation such that even in 2014 meetings are held in Lebanon. It is likely that in 2015 one focus for activity will be networking between unions in the region within MNCs, particularly Shell, Lukoil and Eni although the lack of legal status of trade unions in Iraq mean that direct negotiations with MNCs at national level is not possible.

In Tunisia, Industriall's affiliates are all part of the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), overwhelmingly the largest trade union confederation and a respected party in ongoing political negotiations with the newly elected governments. Tunisia represents one of the most stable countries in the region for trade unions, following the completion of two post-transition elections and the use of voting to marginalise Islamic groups. In both Tunisia and Morocco, Industriall National Councils were set up in 2013 with a focus on networking in MNCs, union building and protection of women workers.

In Palestine, Industriall continues to work with the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), which is supported by Fatah. In 2007 a new national centre was created - the Federation of Independent Democratic Trade Unions (FIDTU), following long standing workers' rights campaigns coordinated by the Democracy and Workers' Rights Center (DWRC), based in Israel but there is no formal contact between this group and the GUFs. Israeli Histradrut was disaffiliated from Industriall in 2012 due to non-payment of affiliation fees.

There are also developments in Libya with the creation of new trade unions in the petroleum and petrochemical trade unions although there is no information on how these new structures relate, if at all, to the existing national centres and the Bengazi leadership of the traditional Libyan unions. The declaration of Eastern Libya as a province of IS and the ongoing conflict between military, militia and Islamic militants means that there is no current potential for union building activity in Libya.

The difficulties in establishing GUF structures in regions of conflict are familiar. With a lack of political leadership from affiliates in the region, the GUFs are limited in their capacity to build national and regional structures. The GUFs, having learned from experiences in Eastern Europe, are cautious in adopting a strategy of working too quickly with new unions formed over the last few years. The political and leadership situation within the old and new unions is not stable which means that a more long-term perspective has been taken to union developments in the region.

Although there is a tendency for solidarity funding to come on stream to work with new unions, typically USA development funding through the Solidarity Centres, the GUFs have taken a longer term perspective in observing new developments and limiting their educational work to networking and technical activities such as exchanges between unions in the same sector and, to a much lesser degree, MNCs.

The ITUC is in the process of creating a new regional structure but there are inherent problems within the ITUC constitution that splits affiliates from MENA into two distinct regions - Asia Pacific and Africa. The ITUC has continued to carry out activities with its affiliates and most recently has developed a strategy to set up Workers Committees in Saudi Arabia, following the spontaneous industrial disputes that took place between 2011 and 2013.

As with all international interventions in the region, it is difficult to measure the potential impact of the ITUC and the GUFs' solidaristic work. Although contacts exist with old and new trade unions in most sectors and educational and networking activities continue to take place, the political and industrial instability has not allowed long term union building initiatives to take place.

Summary

These industrial and regional trends have a long-term impact on the structures, incomes and working practices of the GUFs and the need to identify strategic points where they can deliver international solidarity in the longer term.

Furthermore international solidarity will require working with an expanded range of social actors to include social movements which are increasingly important vehicles for social change, building democracy and basic standards at work. This engagement with social justice and civic movements is crucial to build a sufficient base for unions to mobilise around industrial issues. It implies that the GUFs will need to organise solidarity action more in response to events than in response to union affiliations, and work increasingly on the issues and using the same methods as broader social networks.

In the next Section this theme of union building and education is revisited and the impact on social relations and union democracy explored in detail. The proposal we turn to in the final section is that GUFs could use their expertise in education methods to build dialogue and democracy and with it the strategic capacity to mobilise working people around democratically debated sets of priorities.

Section 4: Education Revisited

There are two main roots to the methods used in GUF education programmes. The first is trade union education in Western Europe developed out of the Swedish Working Men's Institutes of the 1880s and the German workers education system (Eiger, 1994). What is common to these traditions is that they understand education primarily as a way of creating social change and have therefore a broad understanding of education to include political, cultural and recreational activities.

As a result of the changes in class and communities in the early twentieth century, trade union education adopted a more liberal and pragmatic focus, not explicitly working on issues of class in many parts of the world. The German system tended from the 1920s to be more systematised and became a system of technical training and 'academies'; however the principal aim of both traditions was to build workers' participation and build their confidence to deal with workplace issues. The Swedish model of study circles is less formalised and more grassroots focused with a limited role for tutors and a focus on small-group work and participant selection of areas of study. Interestingly in response to the recession in the 1990s the Swedish LO responded by closing its residential colleges in order to cut costs and returning to the original model of study circles (Eiger, 1994).

The second root of GUF education comes from the Brazilian pedagogue, Paulo Freire who developed his methods throughout the 1970s until his death in 1997. Emancipatory education (Freire, 1970), sometimes called Active Learning Methods (ALMs) or participatory education, is the dominant model used in GUF education projects. Emancipatory education builds solidaristic relationships and collectivisation by using dialogic methods, consciousness raising, containment and building social capital between individuals and unions.

Freire's politicised thesis is that education is a 'practice of freedom' which has the ontological aim of 'humanisation' (Freire 1970: 25), how to live a full and free human life. This process of liberation requires raising consciousness, collectivisation and praxis (Klandermans, 1986), defined as reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it. The methods aim to promote a dialogue between participants, looking at their experience of the real world, reflecting on it and changing it (Mayo, 1995). Dialogue here is understood not as a pure form of reflection, or 'verbalism' (Freire: 1970: 68) rather it is

mediated by experience of the material world, including emotions and the body. An important aspect of a dialogic approach is that it involves both understanding of and acting on the world (Vella, 2002).

Emancipatory education is a 'deconstructive methodology' (Taylor, 1993) that attempts to de-codify our understanding of the world, a process which involves naming, reflecting and acting. The 'knowledge' and content of emancipatory education is based on the experience of the participants within the group and for this purpose, emancipatory education invariably uses small groups. For Freire it is through dialogue that humanisation and transformation of organisations and society takes place by creating a sense of connectedness and humanisation, parallel to the psychoanalytic project.

Although an emancipatory framework is used in most GUF education programmes, its application depends on the specific union environment in which the methods are used as well as the orientations and capacities of individual tutors. For example, in established trade union education systems, including the UK, education methods have become stagnant and limited in their emancipatory potential in part because their administration of state funds distorts the original emancipatory objectives of trade union education. Additionally, because organisational decline is threatening union survival many organisations have developed defensive cultures, characterised by rigid thinking, idealisations and undemocratic practices that are diametrically opposed to emancipatory education methods.

To understand the value of GUF education work, this Section will look at how an emancipatory model of education works and draw out the developmental 'parallelism' (Armstrong, 2005) between this model of education and psychoanalytic processes. Although Emancipatory Education is not a therapeutic practice per se, it shares important developmental concepts with psychoanalysis, including its emancipatory aims (Britton, 2003), the emphasis on understanding internal and external realities in order to reduce inhibitions and build ego strength, using dynamic and dialogic processes between people, providing a containing and transitional framework for development and building solidarity between people.

4.1 Emancipatory aims

Freire's teaching is based on the belief that the principal aim of learning is to establish ourselves as subjects with the capacity to define our own experiences, problems, and

desires and with it a capacity to act on the world (Brown and England, 2004). Additionally, emancipatory education aims to build agency by increasing decision-making capacity where people make use of the resources available to them (Freire, 1970). This model of agency can also be equated with one of the aims of psychoanalysis that is to build ego strength (Britton, 2003). Ego here is understood as the regulatory agency in the mind (Freud, 1923), where the individual is able to provide a boundary between and manage different internal and external realities (Rice, 1965).

Emancipatory Education, as a result, highlights the embodied nature of learning and the need to incorporate practice and knowledge (Freire, 1970). This has an important parallel in psychoanalytic approaches that emphasise an embodied understanding of the self and its relationship with the material world (Miller and Rice, 1967; Menzies Lyth, 1989). We can think of this as a process where people can move from a paranoid schizoid position where difference is projected outwards, to a depressive position where there is a tolerance of complexity, vulnerability and difference. This movement between positions allows us to acknowledge our projections and increase our 'capacity to experience our enemy as part of ourselves' (Mosse and Zagier Roberts, 1994: 130).

Building agency is, in part, a process of empowerment and rethinking our relationship to power, inevitably touching on our own internal relationships principally with the superego. Freire's thesis is that full emancipation involves addressing both the external 'oppressors' and the internal 'oppressor', aspects of individual psychic experience which oppress or inhibit us. Freire's understanding of the need to emancipate ourselves from internal oppression sits well with the work of Britton (1993) and his writing about the process of liberating the self from the superego by building the ego and adopting a position where the demands of the superego can be challenged. The process of empowerment within the emancipatory education tradition can be understood as precisely this movement from 'underdog' to a self capable of making critical judgements about reality and of taking action. In psychoanalytic terms we can understand this as a process of development where the ego becomes the source of individual authority rather than the 'monarchic autocracy' (Britton, 2003: 104) of the superego.

Mirroring this formulation of emancipation, Freire explicitly sees the overthrowing of oppression as a dual process, exposing both internal and external oppressors leading to a stronger sense of our own and other people's humanity. His thesis is not that internal change is a substitute for attempts to change external reality, rather that removing external 'oppressors' is not sufficient for full emancipation.

4.2 Dialogic methods

Emancipatory education is fundamentally based on dialogic methods where alternative ideas and perspectives come about through interaction between different people and from which alternative politics can emerge.

This requires setting up 'communicative spaces' (McKeown et al., 2014) where genuine dialogue is possible. Dialogue here is understood as a process where everyone presents their arguments but attempts to remain open to persuasion remaining respectful of difference (Raelin, 2008). This model, which emphasises egalitarian, transparent and discursive approaches to defining and solving problems, is ideally suited to stimulate democratic involvement in diverse settings (Croucher & Cotton, 2012). The use of small groups is highly effective in establishing dialogue (Feidel-Mertz, 1964; Huzzard, 2000) and providing important opportunities for group learning (Vella, 2002)

Olmsted (1959) describes these primary and small groups as 'incubators' of human character based on a belief that human beings are essentially social and require interaction with other human beings and the material world to form a sense of self. Importantly for both Freire, and indeed psychoanalysis, learners and educators are both equally necessary to developing an awareness of reality. For Freire this dialogic model is emancipatory because it is based on the necessary liberation of the participant from object of study to subject of study.

Union education is essentially a 'problem posing education' where both teachers and students are 'critical co-investors in dialogue' (Freire: 1970: 62) and therefore subjects in the educational process. This implies a shift in the positioning of teacher and participant, towards what he calls 'co-intentional education' (Freire, 1970: 22), moving away from a 'banking concept of education' (Freire, 1970: 64), towards a dynamic dialogue between participants and between participants and tutors.

4.3 Consciousness Raising

Freire's writing (1998; 1994; 1974; 1970) describes two stages of learning: a growing awareness of reality and a commitment to transform that reality. Freire regards learning as consciousness raising, 'conscientizacao', where we learn about reality including issues of power and oppression. Emancipatory education takes an ontological position that our perceptions of reality are socially constructed, privileging some versions of reality over others and denying those realities that undermine established realities. As with psychoanalytically informed approaches, emancipatory education is premised on a 'recognition of reality' (Freud, 1937) and bringing into consciousness those aspects of internal and external reality that have been dissociated (Freud, 1923).

In learning theory part of this emancipatory process of seeing reality as it is, involves tackling core assumptions, or 'threshold concepts' (Meyer and Land; 2003) that provide a basis or a perspective to the subject area and are 'transformative' in that they trigger a change in consciousness (Meyer & Land, 2003; Mezirow, 1997) or authentic insight, described by the psychoanalyst Bion as a transformation into 'being that something' (Bion, 1970).

Methodologically, consciousness raising is stimulated through dialogue in small groups, providing an important reality-testing function, both at the level of raising consciousness of reality as it is but also developing 'reality-tested relations' (Main, 1975: 71).

For example, the first stage of any educational activity involves participants defining the issues they are facing, a kind of 'naming' process or 'problematising' (Taylor, 2013) which then forms the focus of the following activities. This is an important orientation whereby engaging with people's perceptions of their own situations, they become the subject rather than the object of critical investigation. The tutor has no role in establishing or naming problems, only to then ensure that the following activities are geared to address them. This framework has clear parallels to the therapeutic relationship where sessions are directed by the patient bringing issues, either consciously or unconsciously, that then determine the focus of the therapeutic work.

Another important aspect of emancipatory education is to collectively understand the external environments in which we work and the dynamics that underpin them. A specific method used within psychoanalysis is to carry out workplace observations and analyse them through workplace observation groups. Although now rarely used by trade unions, Freire explicitly advocates this method of carrying out 'observation visits', which aim to

understand environments by observing 'moments' either direct or indirect at different times and locations. This includes taking notes and preparing a report for the learning group, whose aim is to decode and reconsider what was seen. For Freire there is a direct causal link between consciousness raising and concrete change such that by understanding environments we also help to build responses to the real problems that are being faced.

4.4 Containment

One of the difficulties for learners is to overcome the defences that we create to protect ourselves from the pain of being challenged and provoked out of an 'everyday consciousness' to allow for a realistic understanding of the world. This is a central aspect of psychoanalytically informed processes, dealing with ambivalence in relation to wanting and not wanting to know about reality, and the resistances we put in place to protect ourselves from the anxieties this evokes (Gosling, 1981).

Anxieties are heightened by learning in groups, making it important to understand group dynamics and the use of defences that can obstruct learning (Krantz, 2006; Erlich, 2006), such as the inability to engage critically with the subject matter, attacking participants with different views or trying to find quick simple solutions in order to reduce group frustration.

One of the most common defences in groups is denial of differences, reflected in the idea that we are all the same or that we can always reach consensus, common in trade union organisations and settings. Anxiety within groups can lead to toxicity where primitive defences are used involving projections of unwanted states (Main, 1975) into individuals, groups or people on the boundaries of organisations (Krantz, 2006). This can result in a focus on group survival and a dominance of basic assumption groups, rather than a focus on the work task itself (Bion, 1961).

Emancipatory education focuses on often-harsh realities at work including victimisation, redundancies and a lack of power in relation to employers. Trade unionists themselves are vulnerable to anxiety and burnout in the face of the nature of their work, heightened in a time of recession. So it is important here not to underestimate the levels of anxiety experienced within these groups or the importance of the containing function of the educational frame and the tutor to manage them.

An emancipatory framework is designed to manage the likely increase in anxiety of participants through guided activities, setting clear timeframes and through tutors' modelling of behaviours. Emancipatory Education consistently follows three main stages; problem identification, getting information and planning. Activities are designed to be familiar and clear by having explicit aims, tasks and time limits, with instructions at each stage of the process.

Bion describes maternal containment as a process where the mother 'detoxifies' the infant's destructive feelings by taking them in, digesting them and then returning them in a digested form (Sandler, 2005). The infant's experience is that although it has projected something painful into the mother, they were able to tolerate and process it and the infant is able to introject the idea of an object that is capable of dealing with anxiety. Parallel to this, an emancipatory education framework is set to provide containment of group anxieties to allow for learning, but one which is sufficiently porous to allow for experiential learning to take place at the individual and group level and to focus on securing real outcomes for participants.

Much of this containment comes down to the capacity of the tutor to provide a secure and predictable framework for participants and to negotiate the tensions between individual difference and membership of a union (Gosling, 1981). Although the role of a tutor is not to provide interpretations specifically about group dynamics (Miller, 1989) as with therapists and consultants within the psychoanalytic tradition, tutors are involved in managing group dynamics. They will inevitably have to bear high levels of confusion and projections from the group (Bion, 1952; Main, 1975), and develop their awareness of group dynamics and how to manage them. Importantly the tutor is also responsible for modelling the values and principles of emancipatory education, including confidentiality, equal respect between students and acknowledgment of the realities in the classroom. In the absence of clinical or workplace supervision for most trade union tutors this capacity tends to be diverse and highly individualised with tutors having to find alternative support systems to manage these often overwhelming experiences within groups.

4.5 Solidarity

Solidarity is a central organising principle for trade union activity, referring both to the principle of common action with others and to the identification of one's own interests with theirs (Hyman, 2001). This model of cooperation is linked to psychoanalytic formulations of

cohesion in groups established through identification (Freud, 1930) and a focus on group tasks (Menzies Lyth, 1989). For members of trade unions, this involves the commitment to support other members in response to conflicts with employers.

Solidarity can be conceived in two senses: first, as a normative or moral principle that creates an obligation to support other workers and groups; second, as 'enlightened self-interest' motivated by the belief that an injury to one is an injury to all representing only a weak moral imperative. At national and international levels trade unions often move between these two different modalities although there is an increased emphasis on mutual and concrete benefits from solidarity within this period of economic globalisation and political conflict (Stirling, 2007).

The emphasis on small group problem solving is based in part on a pragmatic aim to pool ideas and experience, with trade unionists often having enormous experience in dealing with workplace problems. The final stage of any trade union education activity is to plan concrete steps forward. These 'solutions' are based entirely on the experience and ideas of the participants, making use only of the experience within the group.

Working in small groups makes it possible to build strong emotional ties sufficient to build a sense of altruism (Freud, 1930) and reinforce an often deep understanding of the importance of collectivism. Small group educational activities are helpful in building ties where 'solidarity is un-self-conscious' (Olmsted, 1959). This is in part because small groups provide an important 'holding environment' (Praglin, 2006) where people can potentially feel secure enough to speak honestly and with authenticity allowing meaningful relationships to be formed. As a result, being in small groups allows a sense of identification and 'belonging' (Bion, 1961; Turquet, 1975) where people can generalise about their connectedness, but at the same time offer individuals a specific and unique role in the group. This sense of belonging could be understood as a workplace equivalent of secure attachment, a necessary basis for building mental health (Fonagy, 1994).

In large group settings such as union congresses, there are risks of reinforcing basic assumptions, such as 'oneness' (Turquet, 1975) or pairing in the attempt to create cohesion. Although less likely, small groups can also be vulnerable to strong identification with the 'union', which can lead to 'gang states of mind' (Canham, 2002) where the diversity of memberships and individual difference are denied (Hoggett, 1992; Winnicott, 1950).

Trade union education's attention to developing realistic plans in the final stage of activity is helpful in overcoming the common basic assumptions found in trade union

groups. If the real workplace problems have been identified clearly at the beginning, then the focus on finding realistic responses to them can minimise retreating into a basic assumption, particularly the idea that the 'union' will omnipotently provide a final solution. It places the responsibility and activity firmly in the hands of the participants and in so doing reinforces their sense of agency (Pogue White, 2006). Further, small groups focused on tasks reinforce the solidaristic relationships between the participants, building confidence in the direct benefits of collective action and encouraging cooperation between them (Flavin et al., 2009).

4.6 Transitional Spaces

Using Winnicott's idea of transitional phenomena, we can understand trade union education as an 'intermediate area of experience' (Winnicott, 1971: 2) which is 'in-between' (Praglin, 2006) union organisation and outside it. Winnicott saw transitional phenomena as a 'third area' of life made up of both inner and external realities with transitional spaces providing a 'resting-place' (Winnicott, 1971: 3) from our attempts to keep them separate. This is particularly the case with education settings that create spaces where dialogue and emotional experience can openly take place. As a result participants are likely to feel a stronger sense of freedom to talk openly about their experience, including their emotional experiences within a group setting. Gosling (1994) argues that, as a result, these transitional spaces are important locations for innovation and experimentation, much needed resources within often stagnating trade union organisations.

One way in which these dynamics are explored is through simulation exercises, or role-play involving negotiations or situations of conflict. Although often initially unpopular with participants because of the experiential nature of learning, they are highly effective developmentally as they encourage people to work in teams on common tasks within complex scenarios. The use of role-play in trade union education is a version of a psychoanalytic 'event' in that it creates a temporary 'play space' (Winnicott, 1971) for individuals to carry out activities as a form of 'serious play' (Evans and Palmer, 1989). The content of the role-play is based on people's experiences and feelings in an attempt to trigger experiential learning rather than ideological or theoretical learning.

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The use of role-plays exposes often denied and under-articulated unconscious dynamics within groups (Erlich, 2006). From a psychoanalytic perspective well-contained learning experiences have a powerful effect on the individual providing, when successful, a sense of satisfaction and hope that contact with other people can realistically be positive. For Winnicott (1971), participation allows individuals to reduce their guilt about aggression towards the group, and strong feelings of fear, and build non-idealistic collaborations with others.

The availability of different roles within simulation exercises allows participants, often for the first time, to experience different perspectives and positions such as taking authority or arguing back. A key advantage of a role play format is that it allows argument to be experienced as non-personal and appropriate to the task, and can encourage participants to claim 'the right to form a judgement' (Britton, 2003: 108) and an important opportunity for 'benign projective identification' (Main, 1975). This can, if used well, contribute to building participants' 'negative capability' (Bion, 1970) to understand individual and group dynamics, experience uncertainty and make realistic assessments of what can be changed.

This emphasis on creating spaces in education has to be balanced with the idea that there is a 'paradox in learning' (Armstrong, 2005: 181) such that once a model or course becomes formulated and, as is often the case institutionalised, the spontaneity of experiential learning within the space decreases.

4.7 Building Unions

The objective of emancipatory education is not simply to build social capital but also to build political capital (Banks & Methgar, 2005), the resources to make political gains and shift the power balance at work and in society more generally. The broad political agenda for all trade unions is to build human welfare and social justice, which not only involves raising standards for workers through negotiations with employers, but also necessarily involves societal and political projects.

The adoption of emancipatory education methods to build union organisation has a long tradition in most parts of the world. Even in regions such as Eastern Europe where the methods were not introduced until the 1990s, there is widespread acceptance that the methods can be used for organising and building solidaristic ties. For many unions their

organising and education work will fall under one department and organising drives will use emancipatory education methods to engage existing and potential memberships.

This is particularly clear in union traditions that emphasise 'social-capital formation and mutual-aid functions' (Jarley, 2005: 1) in order to build union organisation. It means that resources can be mobilised within the group, even where dense working class networks that formed the basis for trade union movements no longer exist. This is particularly important to the GUFs when affiliates are asked to make difficult decisions about committing resources internationally where identifications are harder to make. One of the problems with looking just at social capital and organising is the tendency for 'like' to attract 'like' (Clawson, 2005: 40). As a result unions that use emancipatory education have to be careful that attempts to build social capital prioritise activities that are inclusive and therefore attractive to diverse groups.

This is a much broader understanding of trade unions than the Webbs' idea of unions improving employment conditions for wage earners (Webb & Webb, 1913). This orientation regards unions' organisational legitimacy as based on their capacity to serve human welfare rather than narrow interests such as wage claims or collective bargaining. It is a political view that the interests of trade union members are not separate from the interests of society at large and that in order to renew and maintain their legitimacy with members and society at large they have to advance the interests of a broadly defined constituency.

In order for this model to work it has to transform 'individual dissatisfaction into collective grievance' (Gumbrell-McCormick & Hyman, 2013: 177), unions have to create a collective sense of injustice, including a sense of who is responsible for it and sufficient organisation to shape collective demands and action.

The GUFs by their nature are orientated towards this bigger political project of re-establishing social justice through international solidarity action.

However, taking this broad political perspective presents the GUFs with the problem of how to reconnect members to a sense of 'belonging' (Gallin, 2014) to an internationalist perspective. Currently the GUFs represent predominantly a 'union of strangers' (Jarley, 2005: 7) with information and control of political advantages maintained at leadership level. In the next Section it is argued that in order for this internationalist strategy to work and given their resource limitations, the GUFs will need to develop the scope and the density of their solidaristic networks so as to sustain their political objectives into the future.

Section 5: Conclusion

5.1 The political choice

This context statement started by exploring the changing political, economic and sociological factors affecting the future capacity of the GUFs to coordinate solidarity internationally. In *Global Unions Global Business* the dilemma faced by the GUFs is framed as a conflict between the Logic of Legitimacy and the Logic of Resources. The political choice for the GUFs and their affiliates framed in specific concrete terms, to secure an increased percentage of trade union resources to the GUFs as a response to declining national membership levels and reduced leverage with international capital.

The decline in financial resources is a long-standing problem within the GUFs although there has been a marked reluctance both internally and with key affiliates to address financial issues head on. In 2000 the ITUC (then the ICFTU) carried out the Millennium Review, looking at the structural options facing them and the GUFs. Although revealing some important data for the first time and thus opening up a debate within the GUFs, the review did not provide a broader platform for debate amongst key affiliates in Germany, Netherlands, Scandinavian and North American countries. Instead the review was totally ignored by the GUFs, possibly because of the coordination role that the ITUC took during the process, something that would act as a disincentive for the GUFs. What was distinctly lacking from the process was any debate about the future political aims of the global unions, and with it ignoring the core justification for maintaining these international structures.

This thesis has stayed with this central dilemma, but has taken a broader look at the basis of GUF legitimacy and resources. Firstly it is proposed that GUF legitimacy does not rest entirely on membership size and geographic scope or international agreements with MNCs; instead it argued that increasingly the GUFs' political proposals and activities are necessary for their continued legitimacy. Developing political responses to the current economic crisis is required to act as a 'counterpower' to neo-liberal economic globalisation and the systemic problems faced by working people. Political action around social justice are increasingly central to this political struggle, demanding that the GUFs increase their

strategies and activities to engage with the organised political movements developing internationally, from which new generations of activists and political identities will be formed.

Secondly a broader understanding of the resources available to the GUFs is proposed which highlights their capacities to build the social and political capital required to sustain international solidarity. This capacity, principally achieved through a model of emancipatory education, is a key resource that the GUFs need to expand and mainstream across all of their activities and expand to include the participation of a broader range of networks and associations. This educational resource is the basis of the GUFs' capacity to bring about progressive change, by building a deep level of engagement, which in turn acts as a basis for international cooperation and strategic exchange between diverse groups and individuals.

The strategic advantage of using an emancipatory education model and methodologies is that it allows a deeper and broader exchange between trade union organisations and individual activists. As has been argued, this is important not just in developing social capital, it also provides unions who are often working in isolation with 'field enlarging' strategies. Where unions have successfully, or unsuccessfully, developed responses to workplace issues these experiences when pooled and exchanged through GUF networks and activities create valuable collective knowledge and capacity for union building. However, it is argued here that through the use of emancipatory education methods across all of these networking activities the efficiency of those exchanges will increase.

This links back to the issue of legitimacy, where the international regulatory and negotiation work of the GUFs, important in relation to key European affiliates, has to be met with a capacity to exploit it at local level particularly in developing countries where the vast majority of GUF membership works. In turn, the capacity of GUF affiliates to implement international regulatory mechanisms, such as IFAs, serves to raise their leverage with employers because of the increased credibility of those agreements.

In most cases it could be argued that the regulatory work of the GUFs was developed from the top down, representing the interests of key unions in Western Europe and further that the methods used in negotiating and implementing agreements and organising networks suffer from limited dialogue and debate with affiliates in developing countries. In particular, there is very limited scope to debate political strategies in response to MNCs within the GUFs. There is a tendency to use the networks as procedural processes where complaints are raised by unions in developing countries to headquarter unions such that the power relations, both in relation to the company and between unions, remain intact.

That is not to say that unions cannot see the value of building networks in multinational companies but it does question the strength of this connection. What current practice does not seem to do is act as a sufficient basis for building dense social networks and with them a strong enough solidaristic relationship to mobilise internationally. This leaves the GUFs with a political deficit, and not just a purely financial one.

One of the risks of this political deficit is that it limits the GUFs capacity to act in relation to the key human rights and social justice issues that they were set up to address. A comment made about the ICFTU seems an appropriate warning to the GUFs here: 'The institution lives far too much in a bureaucratic and abstract world where form takes precedence over substance and preoccupations with turf, jurisdiction and status overshadow the original purpose of the exercise' (Gallin, 2014: 82).

Restructuring the GUFs and increasing cooperation between them, although financially necessary, are essentially strategies for managing decline. As a result they do not address the fundamental questions about how they can mobilise workers in defence of collective interests and values. Kelly (1998) usefully categorises the necessary elements of mobilisation into: a conception of common interest; some form of collective organisation; and a perception of opportunities for successful outcomes. The biggest challenge to the GUFs is to build engagement with affiliates and more broadly across social movements to create a sufficiently powerful conception of common interest to form the basis of collective organisation.

Increasingly, labour movements are integrated into broader social movements and work with a wide range of civic and single-issue groups. The majority of these in developing countries operate informally, with trade unions considered exceptional in their levels of organisation and financing as well as their capacity to disrupt economic and political activity. For many unions, their solidaristic networks are dense and their leaderships are capable of adopting the role of 'visionaries' (Sullivan, 2010b) within often unfocused collective organisations that come out of specific protests and disputes.

This model of trade unionism is sometimes described as social movement unionism, emphasising the capacity for mobilisation as a way of turning association (numbers of people forming a collectivity) into organisation (capacity for collective action in opposition to capital and the state) (Jarley, 2005). Social movement unionism is characterised by not limiting activities to traditional collective bargaining and focusing on relationships with employers, but rather opting to work with broader social and political opportunities and to carry out direct political action. It also means widening the organising model from a simple one of recruiting union members as the sole basis for union revitalisation (Sullivan, 2010b)

towards an expanded model of building relationships with existing and often spontaneous groups of working people. In the current political climate this is an important opportunity for trade unions, where the experienced activists within them offer an important resource to the many self-organised and spontaneous collective actions and networks that exist within social movements.

5.2 The Proposal

One of the key resources that trade unions offer civil society is their educators and activists experienced in running activities in a way that builds capacity within groups. Emancipatory education methods respond to the growing need to build social and political capital though understanding societal changes, building dialogue and strong solidaristic relationships in situations of industrial conflict and mobilising diminishing resources. This is not a process of building 'organic solidarity' (Hyman, 1997: 529), rather it is precisely this educational model's capacity to contain differences and conflict that gives its relevance to the task of building collective organisation in the current political and social climate.

A key reason why education has been so overlooked in the GUFs' attempts to secure their position internationally is that educational work is often undervalued within the GUFs and by their affiliates. On a practical level one of the reasons for this is because the majority of their affiliates at any one time are not engaged in educational project activity. This means that experience of the link between education and union building is often restricted to new affiliates in developing and transition economies and the small number of German, Dutch and Scandinavian unions that provide the main bulk of funding. Even where donor unions are actively involved in GUF education projects, as with the Swedish trade unions, appreciation of the emancipatory impact of the methods will be limited to a few hundred trade union leaders and branch activists.

As a result, the hundreds of experienced educators that carry out GUF projects are often regarded as ancillary to the organisations, a status reflected in their temporary contracts and lack of contribution to regional or international decision making structures. Although project staff tend to be highly engaged with affiliates and with each other, politically they are not highly valued nor, therefore, influential in decisions about organisational change within the GUFs.

One of the deeper reasons why GUF education projects are undervalued relates to the inherent difficulties in carrying out union building work. Union building is not a straight-

forward process because it involves managing the diversity of individual, organisational and political perspectives that exist within trade unions (Hoggett, 1992). The process of union building is a developmental one and as a result involves overcoming both the psychological and structural difficulties of looking realistically at problems and engaging in collective problem solving. In a situation of 'organisational overwhelm' (Perini, 2010) there is often a reluctance to engage realistically with the problems that unions face or to address the individual psychological development of members, in an attempt to avoid 'catastrophic change' (Sedgwick, 1982).

Emancipatory education requires working with groups and individuals, managing the politics of difference while maintaining the 'cross-sectional demands' (Sedgwick, 1982) of diverse memberships and organisations. Education by its nature can raise difficult emotional issues for participants including acknowledging the presence of need and dependency on others and being able to challenge often strongly held ideological views and positions about trade unionism. Using Freire's formulation, education involves challenging both external and internal oppressors, representing a complex political and psychological view of the world and of change.

For some trade unions the psychological aspects of education work are not believed to be the legitimate work of trade unions, preferring instead to focus education on industrial and ideological themes and on the external environment. The psychosocial basis of Freire's model however regards union building as essentially a project of emancipation. This is understood as a dual task of addressing the external reality of oppression, as well as internal psychic oppression, where individual psychological empowerment or building ego strength is central to the political project of organising. One of the consequences of trade unions denying emancipatory education's dynamic model of development, is that education becomes marginalised, understood as a support service rather than the principal tool for union building.

For unions in hostile environments a common defensive position is to locate all problems in external actors, as a way of creating cohesive group identification. Although this is, at times, an important driver of solidarity action such cultures can have the consequence of arresting the development of social and political capital at membership level. Censorship of dialogue and denial of the diversity of opinions and conflict inherent within all groups, is a 'strategy of survival rather than development" (Armstrong, 2005: 89) leaving members without the authentic relationships and political framework that they need.

The proposal of this thesis is to prioritise the union building work of the GUFs across all areas of activity as a response to the political deficit that the GUFs currently face. This emancipatory educational model is one that is essentially political in that it emphasises consciousness raising and collective action in response to the economic structures in place. A union building process is one that it encourages both the development of strong solidaristic ties between workers as well as providing a space for dialogue that allows for the development of common ideas and strategies. That is, emancipatory education methods can build both the social and political capital needed for the GUFs to bring about real social change.

The proposal does not involve any further restructuring of the GUFs but rather a focus on work that creates spaces or 'cognitive frames' (Culpepper, 2002: 778) where new ideas, politics and action can be determined by activists and trade unionists. This necessarily includes international exchange and coordination but it is a model that re-orientates work and remaining GUF funding into educational activities. The key capacity of unions and GUFs to create spaces where new political ideas are evolved has to take priority over executive, bureaucratic, and organisational processes.

This would involve prioritising funding for educational work as well as using emancipatory methods across all areas of activity, in particular global meetings and networking activities. There is a long history of dissatisfaction with the efficiency of international meetings and network activities, in large part due to the lack of dialogue and social capital that they support. There is a tendency to use the networks as procedural processes through which complaints are raised by unions in developing countries to headquarter unions while the power relations, both in relation to the company and between unions remain intact. Further, in order to stimulate the degree of internal diversity and democracy needed within the GUFs their 'dialogic capacity' (Culpepper, 2002) needs to be built so that they can coordinate genuine exchange of ideas and experiences among increasingly diverse memberships.

This leaves us with a further question about whether the use of emancipatory methods is sufficient to create political power within trade unions or whether unions need to introduce 'political education' (Gallin, 2014) which looks explicitly at the politics of union building. This thesis has argued throughout that a model of emancipatory education is intrinsically politicising because it provides important transitional spaces where these new ideas can be articulated and developed. In particular, the methods facilitate dialogue between diverse groups and issues, which is likely to be important as political developments take place and social movements emerge.

The GUFs have in many ways benefitted from a high degree of institutional inertia when it comes to addressing their financial deficit in that they have remained relatively stable organisations to date. However, the absence of any organisational crisis has allowed the GUFs to ignore their growing political deficits. It could be argued that a level of 'creative destruction' (Gumbrell-McCormick & Hyman, 2013: 197) needs to take place for them to orientate their structures and activities to the needs of future memberships and workers.

The radical reintroduction of democratic practices through emancipatory education programmes into the GUFs across such diverse memberships requires patient attention to union building and with it the capacity to bear disappointment and conflict. The proposal represents a shift in leadership power and opens unions up to the possibility of policy changes such as a break with social partnership models. However, the GUFs are well suited to this important task because they are based on 'generalised principles' of solidarity and social justice and are therefore highly durable (Ruggie, 1993) in the context of a proposed period of organisational crisis.

Fimmen steadily reminds us that the work of global unions involves two objectives which, at times, are in tension: to operate within the existing economic system in order to negotiate the best conditions for working people but at the same time to develop alternatives to it. This is essentially the tension that the GUFs need to navigate now, and the proposal is to emphasise the development of the social and political capital that can shape this alternative rather than a continued strategy of adaptation to the current economic order. The proposed strategy is to use an emancipatory model of education, in order to create the important transitional spaces where people can develop their own ideas about the construction of social justice at work.

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PRAISE FOR *GLOBAL UNIONS, GLOBAL BUSINESS*

'This pathbreaking book provides both an invaluable resource on the history of global union federations, and new insights on current issues and contestations. It will be of great interest to all with an interest in the state of unions worldwide, commentators and critics of globalization, and those concerned with fairness at work in a wide range of contexts.'

Professor Geoffrey Wood, University of Sheffield

'Powerfully argued and impressively documented, this stimulating book provides a readable, insightful introduction to the challenges facing global trade unionism. It will prove of tremendous value to both union activists and academics teaching international business, international employment relations and HRM.'

Professor John McIlroy, Keele University

'This book is an excellent example of public social science. Focused principally on global union federations it is historically informed, empirically rich and argues that the key to international union renewal and success is education (informed by research). I most strongly recommend it.'

Professor Peter Fairbrother, RMIT University, Melbourne

'Elizabeth Cotton and Richard Croucher have written the essential guide to international trade unionism: its actors, its structure, its history, its functions, its activities. I know of no other recent book that details as clearly what the international trade union movement actually does and why it is important for workers everywhere. Its weaknesses are not glossed over but Cotton and Croucher have proposals on how these can be addressed. A must read for trade unionists and for activists in the global justice and solidarity movement.'

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GLOBAL UNIONS,
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Global Union Federations and International Business

RICHARD CROUCHER

AND

ELIZABETH COTTON

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Contents

Preface

THIS book is aimed at all those interested in the experience of working people in the current phase of globalisation. We have incurred debts to many such people in writing it. Experts in international business, corporate social responsibility, international trade unionism and others have generously shared information and their thoughts with us. We therefore thank Mare Anceva, Ross Brennan, Samar Badar Al-Husan, Alexandr Ivakhno, Aranya Pakapath, Cristhian Rivas, Carlos Bustos, Wolfgang Weinz and Fabian Nkomo.

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Finally, we thank all those trade unionists who have discussed these subjects with us over the years. We hope they will find the book a fair and useful account of their remarkable work.

Richard Croucher
Elizabeth Cotton

Preface to the
second edition

THIS book's first edition attracted considerable interest from academics, trade unionists, labour educators and experts in globalisation. The appearance of a second revised version provides us with the opportunity to respond to some points made by reviewers. We were fortunate to have our work reviewed by an impressive and cosmopolitan group of academics and practitioners. The judgements published by those experts were generous; they were also consistent in stressing the book's value in terms of explaining how the GUFs work.

I

Anibel Ferus-Comelo, writing in the *Journal of Economic Geography* (August 2009) felt us to be 'well placed to analyse the position of these historic labour institutions'. She described *Global Unions Global Business* as 'An exciting read' that made 'a valuable contribution to the vast body of literature on globalisation and labour by engaging insightfully with subjects rarely touched upon by proponents of labour internationalism, namely the financial and human resources of Global Union Federations, their governance structures and their role in the political education of union members. This is clearly an 'insiders' account worth taking seriously.' Rachel Anand, an academic and ex-GUF official, also drew attention to the 'excellent discussion of the little known structure and organization of the GUFs.' (*Historical Studies in Industrial Relations* 25/6).

Salma Soliman, an expert on the Arab world, reporting on the work in the influential Africa-oriented *Pambazuka News* asserted the book's wider significance, suggesting that it: 'Makes important reading for all those interested in social justice in Africa and indeed the world. Brief, concentrated, clearly written, authoritative and well-documented, it is the first book for a generation to look in detail at the workings of a little-known and therefore widely misunderstood level of trade union activity, the Global Union Federations (GUFs), and their relations with activists on the one hand and the corporate world on the other'(*Pambazuka News*, Issue 451). The global labour authority Ronaldo Munck, writing in the first edition of *Global Labour Journal*, picked up on similar aspects. Finding it 'a fine book', he joined Ferus-Comelo, Anand and Soliman in underlining its contribution to furthering understanding of the Global Union Federations' governance and activity: 'The singular contribution..... is a close and detailed analysis of the governance and resources of the GUFs.' Munck also stressed our educational and regional themes:

'A major – and perhaps unique – emphasis is placed on the importance of education, too often taken for granted by labour strategists.. ...... I would mention the emphasis the authors place on the regional dimension which they, correctly in my view, posit as a neglected yet increasingly important level of activity between the national and the inter-national.' Munck went further than the reviewers in drawing out the work's wider significance: 'On the face of it *Global Unions, Global Business* is a study of the role of the Global Union Federations (GUFs) in international employment relations. It certainly delivers a closely observed insider based account of the opportunities and constraints faced by the GUFs in the era of high globalization. However, given its scope and the experience of the authors it goes much further to provide an ambitious and grounded answer to the question of what is to be done by labour to answer the challenges posed by globalization'.

In broad terms, these estimations were endorsed by the American labour educator Tracy Chang who, addressing her fellow educators through the pages of the US-based *Labor Studies Journal*, identified a specific use for our publication. After summarising its content and suggesting that it 'provides a good overview of the GUFs and how they function', she reached the conclusion that it is 'A useful book for advanced union leaders who wish to study globalisation and international strategic campaigns and for labor educators... (*Labor Studies Journal* 35 (1). This was indeed one of the important contexts for which we originally designed the book.

<center>II</center>

We feel the need to respond to some minor critical comments made by reviewers, since they allow us to clarify significant elements of our main arguments and also to update readers on the current state of writing on our subject. Ferus-Comelo points out for example that, despite the book's title it is not about global business. Her remark is accurate in that we were not centrally concerned with corporations. We would nevertheless add that the book does cast a backlight on business activity by looking at the global labour aspects of companies' operations. Paul Gooderham, a specialist in international business, writing in the Norwegian union journal *LO Aktuelt* (02/09), recognised this. He highlighted our analysis of the Global Union Federations' relations with MNCs: 'Without in any way idealizing GUFs Croucher and Cotton demonstrate very convincingly the ability GUFs have to monitor the activities of multinational companies across continents and to negotiate binding agreements on behalf of employees....' However, our main response to Ferus-Comelo's comment is to invite readers to reflect on the deliberate ambiguity of the way that we use 'business' in the title. The book's central argument concerns the *global nature* of the GUFs' business' despite the influence wielded by the unions of the developed world within them. We view matters from the sweatshops of the 'developing' world and not only through the GUF General Secretary's office window. As Anand recognised, it is written 'from a perspective that avoids as far as possible the 'Eurocentric' position'.

We analysed the ways that power is distributed within the Global Union Federations and proposed methods of alleviating the problems, in ways consistent with the GUFs' traditions. Our proposed solutions are two-pronged. We call for unions in the developed world to increase their material contributions to the global level of unionism. We do not leave the matter there. At the same time, we argue that small groups of national unions working together can use educational activity to re-build the trade unions in a 'mini-lateral' way, simultaneously using the expertise and resources of the GUFs to increase local participation in their affairs. We propose an extension of those forms of active education which socialize and arm activists and which also encourage democratisation.

One reviewer, the retired British trade union official Regan Scott, criticised this argument. He suggested that the GUFs were not likely to abandon their classical tool of international collective bargaining in favour of educational activity, nor to establish the latter as a rival to it. We replied extensively to this criticism in the publication in which it originally appeared (the European construction union publication *CLR News* 1/2010). We did so in concert with four other academic colleagues (John McIlroy, Gary Daniels, Martin Upchurch and Graham Taylor) also criticised by Scott and in whose company we were pleased to find ourselves. We respond more briefly here.

Scott's criticism is helpful to the extent that it provides us with the opportunity to re-iterate our original argument in clear terms. First, we did not and do not suggest that international collective bargaining should be abandoned; rather, we pointed out that most of the world's unions are little involved in it and are unaware of the opportunities which International Framework Agreements can provide. Union education can address the issue and function as a *complement* to international collective bargaining.

To reiterate our argument in a little more detail. International Framework Agreements bargained by GUFs and multinationals are declarations of principle. They do not embody joint regulation of substantive employment issues. Nor do they ensure union recognition. Indeed, they may even on occasion help companies evade or postpone the extension of recognition to unions outside of the developed world. Progress requires GUFs to engage in power-building through education if they are to assemble the components of a challenge that can facilitate genuine joint regulation. In the process, participation in the GUFs' affairs can be promoted through educational processes.

Moreover, education can assist more widely in vital information exchange on what organising approaches work best in practice, as well as in the ideological and practical construction of solidarity, something that does not necessarily arise 'spontaneously'. This is no small matter when the vast majority of the world's workers make their livings not in MNCs nor even in their supply chains but rather in 'informal' employment. Unless and until unions find effective ways of organising

these workers, collective agreements at the global level will have only limited impact on them. Moreover, the GUFs' and ITUC's legitimacy as the voice of world labour will be open to challenge as they will continue to represent only a small proportion of workers.

<div align="center">III</div>

Geoff Wood, an academic specialist in employment relations, writing in the Canadian-based *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations* (64 (4)) felt that he was reviewing 'a fine book' but also called for more empirical detail.

Wood's request has to some extent been met by other authors. A considerable volume of relevant material has been published since the appearance of the first edition of our book. Indeed, a huge volume of data is contained in an encyclopaedic two-volume survey comprising nearly 900 pages on the GUFs and the European union federations published by the German trade union foundation the Hans Bőckler Stiftung: *Die globalen und europäischen Gewerkschaftsverbände* ('The Global and European Trade Union Federations') by Hans-Wolfgang Platzer and Torsten Müller (Berlin:Edition Sigma, 2009). The research for this work was based on extensive official organisational documents deposited in the Archiv der Sozialdemokratie of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Bonn. We used materials from the same source and added to them by our own deposit in that archive. Platzer and Müller's documentary analysis was supplemented by interviews with General Secretaries and other senior officials. This German-language publication therefore represents a rich source of official information and discussion, leavened by academic comment.

A second significant publication to have appeared since our first edition is an excellent historical analysis of the very uneven development of international union networks in Ford and General Motors between 1953 and 2001 by Thomas Fetzer, 'The late birth of transnational labour cooperation: Cross-border trade union networks at Ford and General Motors (1953-2001)' (*Labour History Review* 75(1): 76-97). It is impossible and unnecessary to do full justice to Fetzer's subtle analysis here.

The key point that we wish to make is that this detailed article complements and supports our analysis of the development of transnational union networks. We identified a number of conditions for successful network building and explained that network building in MNCs is a difficult and problematic process best carried out on a regional basis and using educational methods over a long period. Fetzer's impressive study confirms the importance of a regional basis and of the long-term perspective required, although it makes no mention of educational activity.

Fetzer documents just under half a century of failed co-ordination initiatives beginning in the early 1950s initially led by the American United Auto Workers through its then strong influence in the International Metalworkers' Federation. He shows how increased though still modest co-operation through what he calls 'risk communities' (whereby the risk of companies establishing intense competition

between plants may be contained) has been built. In doing so, he warns against teleological conceptions of a growing transnational labour identity. Greater, although strictly limited co-ordination has arisen from a very specific combination of political and economic circumstances, and could easily be reversed. Most importantly in relation to our arguments, he argues that to the extent that greater co-ordination has been achieved, it has been based on the growing threat of competition from plants outside of Europe and the USA. There has been, he suggests 'A conscious juxtaposition of (West) European and non-European interests' (93). The article therefore reminds us of an important political reality. It shows how, where the regional basis is Europe alone rather than a group of regional networks across the world, that a 'Fortress Europe' mentality *inimical* to a global approach may emerge.

Again, this is in line with our argument that the tendency in Western European (and especially British) unions to conflate 'international' with 'European' may operate in ways contradictory to the interests of their counterparts in developing countries. This contention informed our critical analysis of how International Framework Agreements are used by the GUFs. Moreover, we strongly suggest that it underlines the importance of generating a shift in power within the GUFs themselves that allows unions from outside of the developed world greater influence than they currently enjoy if greater global co-ordination is to be achieved.

<div align="center">IV</div>

In this new edition, we take the opportunity to update our list of International Framework Agreements. This evidence, taken together with our recent conversations with international union activists, confirm us in the view that we expressed in the first edition that they make considerable demands on GUF resources. During 2009, relatively few new IFAs were signed; in general, these were limited in their geographic scope than previously since some covered regions of the world rather than the globe. We also note that GUFs were increasingly signing Memoranda of Understanding with companies, reflecting a growing realisation that specific agreements on union facilities are the key issue. Further, we see that significant campaigns were being conducted that did not (as we pointed out had been the case with the ICEM and Anglo-American plc) result in IFAs but nevertheless brought GUFs into significant dialogues with important companies.

Besides correcting some typographical errors which occurred in the first edition, we have also taken the opportunity to add a brief new chapter (six) to provide an account of the GUFs' campaigning activities. The case study which we pursue in this new chapter is of the campaign recently run by the IUF in relation to the global Anglo-Dutch company Unilever. It shows how the IUF initiated and orchestrated a campaign centring on both union rights in Pakistan and on the crucial 'externalisation' or employment issue which we stressed in the first edition. The campaign had the Pakistani workers at its centre, and their involvement was

supported by educational activity. We feel that it buttresses two of our key themes: the importance of international union education, and the scale of the resources needed by the GUFs to conduct this kind of work. Given that campaigns are now being conceived of by the GUFs as permanent, it seems to us to underline our argument that they GUFs are sorely in need of greater support from their best-resourced affiliates.

<div align="center">V</div>

We would like to reiterate our thanks to those experts on international trade unionism and others to whom we have incurred debts. We are pleased to repeat and amplify here our heartfelt thanks to all of these people, many of whom have taken the time and trouble to engage with us after the appearance of the first edition.

We again conclude by thanking all those 'ordinary' trade unionists who have discussed these subjects with us over the years. Again, many of them continue to discuss these issues with us. They are extraordinary people.

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List of Initialisations and Acronyms

AA	Anglo American plc (Company)
ACFTU	All-China Federation of Trade Unions
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organizations
AFRO	African Regional Organisation (of the ITUC)
AGA	Anglo Gold Ashanti (Company)
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
ARV	Antiretrovirals
BASF	Badische Anilin und Soda Fabrik (company)
BWI	Building and Wood Workers' International
CGIL	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (Italian Confederation of Trade Unions)
CGT	Confédération Générale du Travail (French Confederation of Trade Unions)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTA	Central de Trabajadores Argentinos (Argentinian National Centre)
CUT	Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (Colombian National Union Centre)
EI	Educational International
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
EWC	European Works Council
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (German Friedrich Ebert Foundation)
FNPR	Federatsiia Nevasymykh Profsoiuzov Rossii (Federation of Russian Trade Unions)
FNV	Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (Dutch Confederation of Trade Unions)
FOC	Flags of Convenience
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GBC	Global Business Coalition
GFA	Global Framework Agreement
GMWU	Ghana Mineworkers' Union

GUF	Global Union Federation
GURN	Global Unions Research Network
HRM	Human resource management
ICEF	International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Unions (1946–1995)
ICEM	International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (1995–)
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
IFA	International Framework Agreement
IFBWW	International Federation of Building and Woodworkers
IFCTU	International Federation of Christian Trade Unions
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
ILO	International Labour Office/Organization
IMF	International Metalworkers' Federation
ISF	International Shipping Federation
ISNTUC	International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
ITGLWF	International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation
ITS	International Trade Secretariat
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
IUF	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations
IWMA	International Working Men's Association
LO Norway	Landsorganisasjonen i Norge (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions)
LO-FTF	Landsorgasitionen I Danmark/Funktionærernes og Tjenestemændenes Fællesråd, (Danish Confederation of Trade Unions)
LO-TCO	Landsorganisationen i Sverige/ Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation (Swedish Trade Union Confederation)
MNC	Multinational company
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers, South Africa (Union)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGWU	Oil and Gas Workers' Union, Azerbaijan (Union)
OPZZ	Ogolnopolskie Propozumienie Zwiazkow Zawodowych, Poland (All Poland Alliance of Trade Unions)
PCFT	Petrol and Chemical Federation of Thailand (Union)
PSI	Public Services International
RILU	Red International of Labour Unions

ROGWU	Russian Oil and Gas Workers' Union
SASK	Suomen Ammattiliittojen Solidaarsuuskeskus (Finnish Trade Union Foundation)
TUC	Trades Union Congress, UK
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNI	Union Network International
USWA	United Steel Workers of America (Union)
VCT	Voluntary counselling and testing
VWWC	Volkswagen World Works Council
WCL	World Confederation of Labour
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions

I
Contexts

Introduction

We had been approached by phone calls from some crew members of the vessel *Little Kid-II*, a Cambodian-flagged ship, saying that they were not being paid. We spoke several times to the Ship Manager insisting that they pay all the money due to the seafarers. The company totally ignored its obligations to the crew and did not pay them when they were due, even though the rate they were paid was below the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) rate.

On 20th of December 2006 we were informed by the seafarers that the vessel was calling at Rostov-on-Don (Russia). We asked for the help of the ITF Actions and Claims Unit in London, and following their detailed advice contacted their Russian colleagues. We advised the ITF affiliate, the regional organisation of the Seafarers' Union of Russia (SUR) of the situation, asking for their assistance. At the same time we recommended that the seafarers spoke to SUR, and supplied them with the contact details. We and SUR recommended the crew members to organize protest actions. To help the seafarers in these actions two SUR representatives were sent on board (Mr. Zenkovskiy, head, and Mr. Petchenko).

The port authorities, frontier guards and the company itself were alerted to the coming actions. The guards put obstacles in the union's way. The vessel's captain put pressure on the crew aimed at getting them to abandon their action and promising to pay out the balance of the wages due later, in Istanbul and trying not to permit the union's representatives to come onboard. Later the frontier guards just took back SUR's permissions to enter, but they went on contacting the crew by phone and outside of the port persuading them to go on with the actions.

This, and the knowledge that the ITF was watching the case, inspired the seafarers to continue their sanctions. It took several days, but finally the company gave in when they received evidence that they had no choice but to pay out the wages, and they knew the ITF was involved.

Extract from an interview with Alexandr Ivakhno,
Ukrainian Seafarers' Union, 20 January 2008

This book analyses the work of the Global Union Federations, illustrated in our opening quotation, and makes suggestions for their re-orientation. We discuss the current position of the trade union movement's international institutions, their internal lives and their relations with companies. The book is therefore a contribution to a widely overlooked aspect of globalisation.

Unions remain by far the largest membership organisations in the world and have extensive international coverage, dwarfing non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also engaged with the impact of globalisation. Although NGOs are often regarded more positively than unions, they rarely have membership structures and generally rely on unelected professionals (Edwards, 2001; Batliwala, 2002). In terms of democratic involvement, unions provide much greater opportunities for members to determine policy and play a part in organisational governance. Despite some historic cases internationally of corruption, trade unions have long and proud traditions of democratic processes. They provide a substantial proportion of working people with opportunities for political involvement, and for shifting power relations at work. This aspect of unionism has taken on renewed importance with the development of global trade. Nevertheless, we also argue that without change in the ways that the international institutions of the trade union movement operate, the existing power dynamics will remain intact and globalisation will continue to operate in negative ways for many workers.

Our primary focus is on the global union organisations themselves, significant but little-studied actors in the construction of the beginnings of an international system of industrial relations. The work of these organisations is important in coordinating union responses to longstanding distributive and procedural justice issues that have been exacerbated by globalisation. Real possibilities exist for international trade unionism to build its position within these discussions. The distribution of wealth and access to resources such as health and education within countries is central to current debates around development, and unions are relevant because of their redistributive capacity. As Elliott and Freeman (2003) argue, the 'missing voice' in these debates is that of workers in developing countries. Unionisation has a major contribution to make in rectifying that position. Unions have many positive outcomes for workers, facilitating collective voice mechanisms that help to increase their earnings and reduce earnings differentials, including gender earnings differentials (Freeman and Medoff, 1984; Weichselbaumer and Winter-Ebner, 2003). They help to enforce the law in workplaces (Harcourt et al., 2004). The benefits they bring to society more generally are well established. Unions internationally gave birth to many other cooperative, mutual and adult educational organisations, building civil society and promoting 'democratic development' (Stiglitz, 2000). Stiglitz linked this to the way that unions have historically played a major role in providing opportunities for democratic involvement, including by addressing workers' needs to improve their wider understandings through education.

Many international companies are involved in a quest to show that they have 'fair' labour practices without recognising unions. These quests involve increasingly elaborate and ineffective methods of monitoring themselves and their suppliers, for example by finding NGOs that will attest to the humanity of their practices through inspection processes and so on. It then appears to be a matter of surprise to them that there is a persistent pattern of rediscovery by investigative journalists showing that in fact these problems have not been resolved. The harsh reality is that for many of the world's workers, talk of human rights in the workplace is just that: it is strictly rhetorical (Douzinas, 2000; Beirnaert, 2008). It is evident that only stable union organisation within workplaces can begin to deal with both rights and distributive issues on an ongoing basis; no monitoring or inspection system can hope to match such organisation.

Our subject is important precisely because of trade unionism's widespread decline. The fall in union membership in most countries is caused primarily by objective circumstances: massive restructuring in global capitalism that has hugely disrupted well-unionised industries and created weak negotiating positions for workers. Both have of course been facilitated by the rise and dominance of neoliberal ideas.

Unions' difficulties are inextricably linked with the problems faced by workers across the world. Labour's share of total income has been falling in the developed countries for some years. In the UK, labour took a rising share of national income for the century up to 1970, but this trend has now been reversed (Glyn, 2006). This is not only because of the expanded world labour supply; it is also partly because of relatively low levels of investment. Further reasons are found in: the new international division of labour; the ever present threat of relocation; the development of different forms of human resource management; the widespread adoption of Japanese production models; lean production; 'High Performance Work Systems'; and the pursuit of free trade policies by the international financial institutions (Upchurch, 2008). The pursuit of flexibility has become a catechism for employers, with a 'normal' model of full-time employed workers employed by one company probably now looking abnormal from a global perspective. Employees' grip on their jobs has been loosened: even in Japan and South Korea, for many workers, lifetime employment has been eroded and replaced by precarious work forms. The widespread creation of 'informal' work has created a large pool of almost exclusively non-union workers. This in turn threatens unions' legitimacy in their wider function as representatives of the wide interests of labour rather than of particular groups of employees.

The veteran trade unionist Hans Gottfurcht, a leader with enormous experience of international union affairs wrote on our subject in the mid-1960s, and his accounts exuded optimism (Gottfurcht, 1962; 1966). Trade unions, he proclaimed, 'stand in the centre of world events' (1966: 12). There were objective grounds for his up-beat statement: trade unionism stood at an historically high level, and between the publication of his books in 1962 and 1966 an internationally coordinated strike

involving the chemical workers' international occurred. It is hard to see similar grounds for optimism today. Multinational companies' growing power and the reduction in labour's share of global product both point in a more pessimistic direction. Despite much discussion of 'union renewal', the historic institutions of the labour market – trade unions and employers' associations – have been in retreat in most countries for several decades. These developments affect unions' capacity to act in workers' interests at all levels, including the international. J.K. Galbraith (1983) noted that historically, great concentrations of power such as that collectively wielded by large corporations today tend to produce countervailing forces. Whether the union internationals can constitute such a force, or even be one element in a wider coalition, is an open question that is explored below.

The broad family of international trade union institutions consists of the Global Union Federations (GUFs) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

Diagram 1: National and International Levels of Trade Unionism
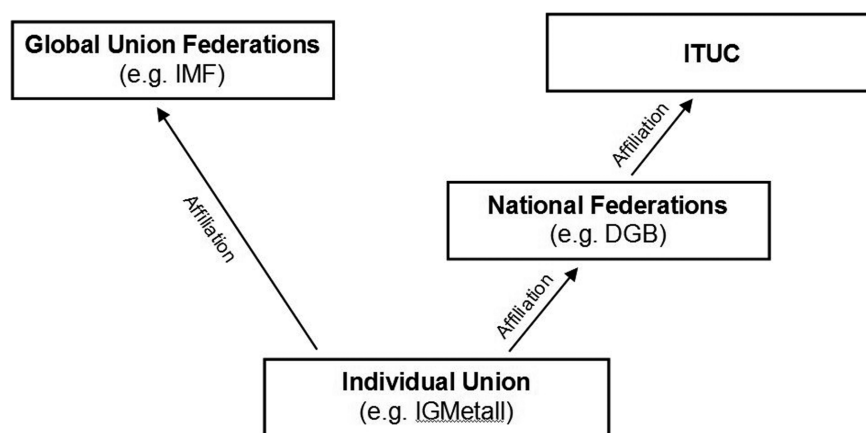
GUFs are distinguished by industrial sector, with national unions from over one

hundred and twenty countries affiliating to them. Harold Lewis, ex-general secretary of the international transport workers has argued that GUFs account for 80 per cent of the international movement's activity, and at least 90 per cent of its work directly affecting workplaces (Lewis, 2003). The sectors covered range from education where Education International represents teachers, to transport, where the International Transport Workers' Federation is active. The GUFs are diverse organisations which share many characteristics. They can be grouped into three categories. The first is those with a private sector membership and an industrial and bargaining focus (BWI, ICEM, IMF, IUF and UNI). The second category (IFJ and ITGLWF) also have private sector members, but have less bargaining focus because they have a weak and unstable membership base. The third (EI and PSI) encompasses public

sector unions, which relate mainly to international governmental organisations and national governments and have solid membership bases. In this book, the focus is on the first two categories because they operate primarily in the private sector.

The book also touches on the work of the ITUC, created by merger in 2006,

Table 1: List of Global Unions, 2008

Global Union	Main Sectors Covered	Estimated Total Membership (Millions)	Total Number of Affiliates	Number of Countries Covered	Estimated Number of Developing Country Affiliates	Estimated Percentage of Developing Country Affiliates
ITUC	Umbrella body	168	311	155	190	61
EI	Education	30	394	171	189	48
IMF	Metalworking	25	200	100	Unknown	Unknown
ICEM	Chemicals, energy, mining, paper	20	379	117	182	48
PSI	Public services	20	650	160	323	50
UNI	Telecoms, graphics, media, retail, services	15.5	900	140	Unknown	Unknown
BWI	Construction and materials	12	318	130	Unknown	Unknown
ITGLWF	Textiles, garments, leather goods	9	238	122	163	68
ITF	Transport	4.5	654	148	63	10
IUF	Food, agriculture, catering, tourism	2.6	375	127	206	55
IFJ	Journalism	0.6	117	100	43	37

Source: Union websites

which works with the GUFs. The ITUC affiliates national centres, is relatively well resourced and is the largest umbrella organisation in the world. These are the established global organisations representing labour's interests, which are collectively referred to as 'the internationals'. When we refer to GUFs alone, we mean to exclude the ITUC.

GUF functions can be split into three types. First, they defend the existing space

in which unions operate, for example by defending trade unionists' basic rights in extremely hostile environments. Second, they work to create further space, for example by collective bargaining (Wills, 2002). This set of tasks currently looms large in their own perceptions of their role even though GUFs have influence rather than power in relation to companies. Third, they help unions to exploit these spaces, primarily by building their capacities through educational and information activities. These functions are shown in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2: GUF Functions

Functions	Methods	
Create space for local unions	IFAs	
Defend space for local unions	Solidarity work	
Demonstrate to unions how to move into space	Education	

The internationals are coordinating bodies that link, or articulate, unions at other

levels to each other and to international institutions and employers (Eder, 2002). Although the GUFs are formally described as 'global', this represents an aspiration rather than a reality since they are more accurately described as international bodies with wide coverage that are 'globalising'. They have historically built outwards from their European bases to include unions in other regions and are still engaged in extending their coverage to every country where unions exist. The GUFs both co-exist with and transcend the bilateral links that often spring up between individual unions across the world. Central to our argument is the view that only the multilateral frameworks provided by these international union institutions can shift the balances of power that exist both between unions and between unions and employers. For some, less institutionalised international links between unions are often felt to be sufficient and even preferable. We argue against this view.

Despite over a century of activity many misunderstandings of the internationals' roles are evident. Most people engaged in workplace industrial relations have little knowledge or understanding of these organisations and many trade union members are not aware that their unions are affiliated to them. The internationals have partly themselves to blame: they are poor promoters of their own successes, operating quietly even when real gains are secured for affiliates. However, it is important to understand that, like other trade union bodies, they operate within harsh political

environments, invariably experience a hostile press and are therefore reluctant to divulge information to the outside world. They emphasise internal democracy and accountability rather than external transparency. In the 2006 Global Transparency Initiative, the ITUC was ranked last of all the non-governmental organisations surveyed, with a 13 per cent transparency capacity. Data on their activities is therefore very difficult to come by. There is a need for greater information on these bodies, and this is an important aspect of what we set out to achieve in this book.

Existing writing, with a few honourable exceptions, can be broadly divided into two camps: advocates/advisers and critics. Those falling into the first have a firm grasp of the realities of life in the internationals, often derived from experience of working in them (see for example White, 2006). Their strength, an in-depth knowledge of an organisation, can also be a weakness, however, since they are often concerned uncritically to defend their institutions past or present. Thus, for example, Chip Levinson (1972), ex-general secretary of the then International Chemical and General Workers' Federation (ICEF), tended to overstate its international bargaining successes in the 1960s. In the second camp, some criticism is vehement, and is marked by questionable argumentation. For example John Logue (1980: 24) referred to 'parasitic elite junketing', which apparently involved 'taking your pretty secretary [or, for that matter, your plain wife] on expenses-paid trips'. This is integral to his view that such junketing is a key reason for the longevity of this level of unionism.

There is no shortage of writers with criticism and advice for trade unions but much of it at the international level is of little value because it is founded on weak empirical bases. In sharp contrast to unions at the national level, academics have only infrequently enjoyed long-term or close relationships with the international trade union movement. This is compounded by the lack of publicly available data about the work of the internationals due in part to the levels of secretiveness which they practice. In writing this book, for example, the authors often have to use ITUC data as comparable material is not available (or where available is too imprecise) for the GUFs – although we do so only when convinced that the two pictures are similar.

We agree that what Lewis (2003) calls 'the theoretical wasteland' of international trade unionism should be addressed. We make some contribution in this area, focussing on education and its role, but the wider development of theory is not our main purpose here. Rather, we try to present a realistic and empirically grounded picture of the internationals in order to raise the quality of debate about their future. We present new data on several aspects of the internationals' internal lives and external work in the global economy. These data come from numerous sources. First, they derive from over fifty formal and informal interviews with officials of the internationals and union activists from many countries of the world. Second, they have been drawn from a trawl of the internationals' official and semi-official working documents. Many of the latter are not routinely available to outsiders, but

nor are they confidential and almost all of those referred to exist in the Library of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Bonn. These last data have been especially important to us. Third, we have used the archival resources of the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick, where the records of the International Transport Workers' Federation and other relevant organisations are deposited. Finally, we draw on our own extensive personal records based on immersion in international union work over a period of fifteen years, some directly for the internationals and some less directly. We count many of those active in the international trade union movement as friends, and part of what we analyse is our own activity.

The book is structured and argued as follows. The next two chapters constitute the first section and provide background to the current situation. In Chapter two, the context in which unions and the internationals operate is outlined, showing why national unions are increasingly turning to the GUFs for assistance and illustrating the considerable extent of the demands on them. In Chapter three, we explore the internationals' history, showing the distinctive legacy they draw on to sustain them, and the significant new opportunities created by the end of political divisions symbolised by the recent creation of the ITUC.

Our second section is concerned with the current position of the internationals both internally and in relation to companies. In Chapter four, we analyse the internationals' resources and governance, explaining the twin problems of an internal balance of forces weighted towards developed country unions and major current financial issues. Chapter five examines their role in international collective bargaining. We show that the International Framework Agreements that currently play such a large role in their strategy are useful, but are generated by processes that reflect the power relationships described in the previous chapter and hamper their effectiveness. In Chapter six, we examine the company and regional industrial networks established through the GUFs and we suggest how they may best be built.

Chapter seven is concerned with education and is central to the book's argument. We propose that education is an important, polyvalent area of work that supports all of the other activities outlined previously. Importantly, it has a democratising effect by raising levels of participation in union affairs and could usefully be expanded. We therefore reject the common suggestion within the internationals that the GUFs' main task should be international collective bargaining. Chapter eight is intended both to illustrate and integrate our argument. It is also a contribution to wider discussions of the dynamics of international business. An extended case study, it shows how one GUF succeeded in building dialogue with a major multinational company, combining GUF discussion with senior management with organisation from below, strongly facilitated by educational work in Africa and Latin America.

Our third section consists simply of the conclusion. We accept that developments in the global political economy offer prospects for the internationals in building

more multifaceted forms of unionism (Fairbrother and Hammer, 2005). We argue that this is best done using the educational approach we advocate which should be developed, and partly funded by devolving fundraising to regions. This educational work can most effectively be carried out by small groups of countries operating together on a 'minilateral' basis within the internationals' wider multilateral framework.

Our conclusion is presented as a challenge to the internationals' membership: to raise their material contribution to the internationals, despite the current trend in the opposite direction. The key players are the unions of the developed world, and the issue is whether they are able to make the political case to their own membership to intensify their commitment to internationalism.

Globalisation and Unions

Introduction

T HIS chapter highlights the difficult international environment in which unions currently operate, without attempting a comprehensive analysis of global capitalism and its effects on workers and unions such as that by Moody (1997). It is divided into two sections. In the first, we sketch the consequences of globalisation's political dimension for workers and unions, stressing the weakening of national employment regulation and the lack of any adequate compensatory measures at global level. In the second, we examine both the problems and possibilities created for unions by multinational companies' practices. We conclude that it is difficult for unions to solve their problems either at national level or through bilateral links with other individual unions, causing them to increase the demands they make on the internationals.

Globalisation

The definition and consequences of globalisation are contested (Gills, 2000). The processes, it has been shown, require precise specification in more than one sense. Rugman (2001) for example contends that the companies involved should be conceptualised as 'regional', since many operate across only a few, often adjacent, countries. Others suggest that the current wave of globalisation constitutes less of a break with the past than is often supposed, since the internationalisation of trade and multinational companies are long-term phenomena. The history of capitalism has been characterised over three centuries by constant expansion in a geographical sense and in terms of its extension to ever-wider areas of social relations (Sewell, 2008). Capitalism has long sought 'spatial fixes' to labour problems: where workers become organised in one location, new locations are identified (Silver, 2003).

Between 1850 and 1914, the movement of capital, trade, immigration and flow of information were all arguably more developed than today (Hirst and Thompson, 2002), and this suggests a need to define the current wave's specific features. One key difference is that developing countries' systems of protection from competition are

today weaker than under colonialism. As late as the immediate post-Second World War years, strong American pressure to end the British system of imperial protection, in favour of the current General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), was effectively resisted (Toye, 2003). The current globalisation wave is characterised by the international financial institutions' discouragement of protectionist behaviours by developing countries. Indeed, the financial aspects of globalisation have profound consequences not only for national regulation, but also for companies and how they access and manage labour. Opening economies to international trade has had demonstrably negative effects on trade unions (Mosley and Uno, 2007).

If some have played down the globalisation phenomenon and sought carefully to delimit its boundaries, another school of thought has emphasised the current political influence and pervasiveness of neoliberal ideas. Thus, it has been argued that the globalisation process should be understood more widely than simply the unimpeded flow of capital and goods between countries, since it includes a wide range of other phenomena and, in particular, a major political dimension (Carling, 2006). Globalisation is seen as rooted in liberal economic theory, whereby the increasing liberalisation of trade is held to enhance wealth and to 'develop' those parts of the world to which it extends. The perspective is especially relevant to unionisation, whose fortunes have historically been strongly affected by the political environment (Western, 1997).

In this accommodating climate, 'free market' organisations have moved on to moral high ground previously occupied by others. Organisations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation deploy considerable resources to present themselves as having an increasingly 'developmental' role in the world economy (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005), an agenda previously claimed by nationalism, social democracy and their historic allies. They propose a progressive, visionary, reforming agenda. 'Development' is seen by them not as the task of a developmental state in alliance with unions, but of these charitable foundations, markets, multinationals and increased trade.

From the late 1970s onwards, corporations sought new production locations where costs could be reduced and products marketed, and the international financial institutions created space for them by insisting on bi- and multilateral trade agreements. They pressured developing countries to reduce tariff barriers and allow unrestricted flows of capital, products and services. Structural Adjustment Programmes, repackaged as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, offered loan finance from the 1980s onwards, on condition of major reform and, in particular, a reduced role for the state. The ex-colonial powers are also implicated, as Stone (2004) showed, by pushing African states towards the IMF when they insist on enforcing harsh performance criteria as the condition of loans.

Many states shifted towards 'free market' politics, and the effects on both employment and unionisation have been considerable. In Africa, for example,

they included the destruction of large parts of national healthcare and education systems, weakening workers in the employment relationship by making them more dependent on the health insurance and treatment that potentially came with formal employment. Much of manufacturing industry was destroyed, reducing the scope of and possibilities for unionisation. Unemployment rose dramatically in many countries as public sector workers were dismissed. Currency devaluations reduced real wages. Labour law was often revised in ways that were negative for trade unionism, while formal laws protecting employees were unenforceable by emasculated states (Wood and Brewster, 2007). Similar effects have occurred more widely. In many countries, minimum wages have fallen into disrepute, so weakly enforced have they become (Grindling and Terrell, 2005). Other pro-labour legislation has simply gone unobserved. The South Korean Equal Employment Act 1987, for example, obliges employers to provide facilities for childcare at workplaces, yet workplace childcare constitutes only one per cent of the total number of these facilities (Moon, 2006). In such cases, governments are clearly more concerned with employers' reactions to legal enforcement than with the legitimacy of their own law-making.

Symbolic of the current relationship between governments in the developing world and multinationals has been the development of Export Processing Zones (EPZs). These are areas where foreign companies are encouraged through incentives to operate and labour laws are either suspended or not enforced. They have grown considerably: by 2002 there were 3,000 EPZs employing more than 40 million workers, the great majority of whom were young women (Abott, 1997; ICFTU, 2003). Attempts to organise unions in EPZs have been met by violence from local security guards and police (ICFTU, 2003). Lim (2005) argues that multinationals have not been 'innocent bystanders' in determining the conditions that governments impose within EPZs.

The freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, both Core Labour Standards in the International Labour Organisation's estimation, are under growing threat at a global level. Many countries, including the USA, India and China have refused to ratify the ILO conventions (87 and 98) that specify these basic rights. We show the countries who have signed the conventions in Map 1. Even among the surprisingly small number of signatory countries, there are several in which there have been high levels of complaints that they have not been observed. The results for unions are obvious. For the GUFs, this means an increasing volume and difficulty of solidarity work, where companies and governments are the object of protest on behalf of trade unions and their members alleging breach of these rights.

Recent legal changes in many countries have allowed employers to create fuzzy employment relationships and diffuse and precarious forms of work. These forms of employment are strongly associated with the growth of informal work that is a further distinctive feature of the current wave of globalisation. 'Informality' here means disguised, ambiguous or poorly defined employment relationships where employers are unclear or entirely absent (Chen, 2007). The phenomenon is very widespread: in Asia,
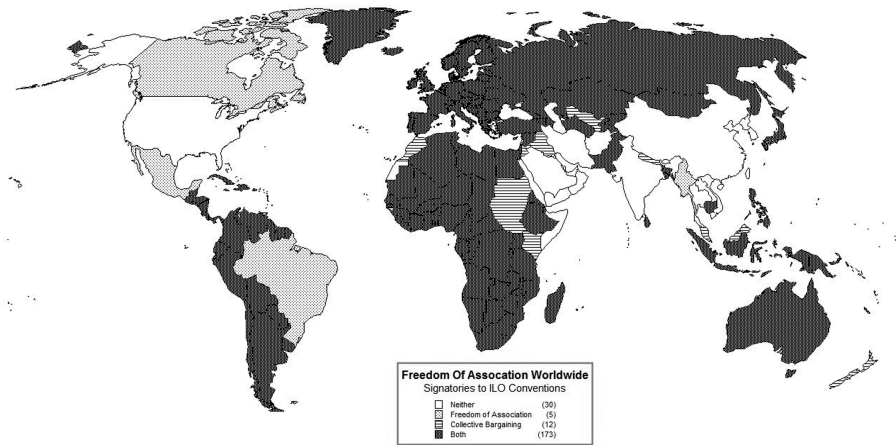
Map 1: Freedom of Association in the World

Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, informal workers now constitute between 60 and 70 per cent of the total working population. Few of these workers operate in total isolation from companies; their conditions are generally determined by the lead firm in the value chain, either a large national or multinational company (Chen, 2007). A pool of workers has therefore been created who find contract, agency or self-employed terms relatively attractive. As Lourenço-Lindell (2002) graphically illustrates in her detailed account of informal workers' lives in Guinea-Bissau, many of whom also work in the formal part of the economy when possible, they are 'walking a tightrope' where falling off means being unable to sustain their livelihoods.

Although unions have made efforts to recruit those working informally, these attempts have brought only very limited success (Verma and Kochan, 2004). The barriers are formidable: fierce competition between individuals, the heterogeneity of the workers involved and hard-line patriarchal attitudes are just a few of the problems (Wood and Frynas, 2006). Anyemedu (2000) identified a central issue of concern to unions in trying to organise these workers, that of high organising costs in relation to any possible subscription income. The workers fear harsh retaliation from employers and state officials if they join unions, threatening their very existence. Even if they do join, they are unable to pay realistic union subscriptions.

The current wave of globalisation is also characterised by a dramatic increase in the world labour supply. Vast amounts of extremely cheap labour, notably in the former Soviet Union, China and India, are now available to companies. There has been a tripling of the labour available to multinationals from around one billion people in 1980 to some three billion post-2000. This resulted not only from the collapse of Communism, but also from the opening up of economies to world capital and greater participation of women in waged labour (Munck, 2004).

Moreover, an increasing proportion of the labour has become mobile. There are currently an estimated 86 million migrant workers, who commonly have few legal employment rights (Lowell, 2007; UNDP, 2008).

No global system of protective worker regulation has emerged to compensate for the weakening of national systems and shift in power towards employers. While a wide range of advisory documentation exists, from the long-standing OECD guidelines for MNCs to the International Labour Organisation's Core Labour Standards, these are merely guidelines. As Hyman suggests, they are 'weak and largely tokenistic' (Hyman, 2002: 1).

Multinational Companies

Multinational companies loom large in global union thinking for five sets of reasons. First, they are engines of globalisation with high political profiles through their role in linking investment, trade, technology and finance. Second, they are often unionised in part of their operation and a foothold therefore exists that can be deepened. Third, there is a demand from companies for GUFs' work. The companies themselves are aware of a need both to coordinate their human resource policies worldwide and of the risks that labour issues pose for them. Extended value chains with links into the informal economy increase their exposure to this 'labour risk'. Fourth, as our case study in Chapter eight illustrates, senior trade unionists and MNC managers often have mutual long-term professional acquaintance. This may come from previous industrial relations dealings, or from discussion on a relatively equal and informal footing at the Davos World Economic Forum. These contacts have frequently established mutual knowledge of their organisations as well as personal lines of communication. In short, they are far more accessible to GUFs than the informal economy, helping to explain why a high proportion of GUF resources are spent in targeting them. Fifth, dialogue with central management in international companies is a significant, identifiable service that GUFs can offer affiliates.

However, just one per cent of the world's workforce of three billion people is employed by multinational companies (Köhler, 2003). At present, multinationals remain a strictly limited phenomenon in geographic and employment if not in trade terms. They largely carry out their business in the Triad of North America, Europe and Japan (Rugman, 2001). In 2005, all but four of the top 50 multinationals were headquartered in the Triad, although multinationals have begun to emerge from countries outside of it (UNCTAD, 2008). Many MNCs only expand to nearby countries; for example, one of the world's largest multinationals, the anti-union Wal-Mart, has most of its foreign investments in Canada. Multinational investment in the developing world is concentrated in Asia and Latin America (UNCTAD, 2008). MNC incidence is also to some extent sectoral. The Russian food sector is dominated by them, as are extractive industries in Africa, but their presence remains smaller

in developing countries' railways. Multinationals are however growing: 73 million people worked for them in 2006 compared with 25 million in 1990. The World Bank projected that MNCs will increase considerably in extent and importance over the next twenty-five years (World Bank, 2007). For unions, work in them may represent as much an investment for the future as for the present.

As we noted above, the internationalisation of companies and trade has been a long-run process spanning several centuries. The trading companies of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century gave way to multinationals in manufacturing, utilities, services and extractive industries that expanded greatly in the inter-war years (Wilkins, 1974). The largest and most rapidly expanding activity in the 1950s and 1960s was in the colonial world's extractive industries (Jones, 1993). However, as Wilkins (1974) shows, these companies were rarely sufficiently powerful to challenge governments. In fact, governments actively sought on occasions to restrict strongly their operations and even expropriate them. In 1938, the Mexican oil industry, previously the preserve of multinationals was nationalised, providing a niche for Mexican unions, in a successful operation that provided a model for other countries. Costa Rica operated a system of state monopoly over the importation and marketing of petrol throughout the 1920s and 1930s (Odell, 1968). From the mid-1950s to the early 1970s many countries such as Egypt, Algeria and Burma, expanded their state sectors as nationalisations were carried out in areas considered vital to their national economies. Current 'resource nationalism' is a real force but generally stops short of nationalisation.

In a growth wave from the 1970s onwards, MNCs greatly increased their economic activity; by the early 1990s their accumulated sales were equivalent to one-third of the world's gross product (Buckley, 2000). These corporations ushered in the current era, since they were operating in a diversified set of industries, with an increasingly strong emphasis on services (Rugman, 2001; UNCTAD, 2008). Their influence on governments now came to be seen in stronger terms than previously; the end of the Cold War meant that there was no alternative to attempting to attract their investment. Their control of advanced technology means that their presence is now seen as a requirement for development; as a result, multinationals have become 'rule givers' in relation to governments (Thelen, 2006).

Multinationals, and especially US-based companies, argue publicly and privately for the relaxation of employment law. The changes in labour law recently enacted by the Chinese government, the Employment Contract Law 2007 and the Labour Disputes Arbitration Law 2007, which included some clauses providing the state unions with the opportunity to acquire some representative functions brought vigorous protest from the American Chamber of Commerce and threats that companies would disinvest. The equivalent organisation in Germany similarly presses for relaxations in labour law (Singe and Croucher, 2004). However, as the Chinese example shows, nation states continue to legislate in employment areas in ways not approved by international

business. The nation state is therefore not always anxious simply to attract foreign investment at any price and outcomes are negotiated even if the balance in the negotiation has swung towards foreign companies.

Multinationals are popular employers in host countries. The differential paid by MNCs over local companies, after controlling for the industry involved, is large, and largest where average wages in the host countries are lowest. In the lowest income countries, employees in US-based multinationals earn twice as much as those in domestic companies (Graham, 2000). Differentials are especially marked in relatively hi-tech or high value-added sectors (Flanagan, 2006). Shell and BP, widely criticised for their activities in Nigeria, are nevertheless pay leaders in that country (Otobo, 2007). These advantages are often multiplied by access to company-based or assisted education and healthcare.

MNCs use much more labour than they employ, as capital markets impose performance regimes that demand cost reductions and push them towards accessing pools of cheap, 'informal' labour (Morgan and Kristensen, 2006). In addition, new forms of finance seek rates of return higher than those traditionally expected by investors (as they are often legally obliged to do), and simultaneously to escape even stock market regulation. An important form of such finance is 'private equity', and it has been estimated that some 20 per cent of the UK's non-public workforce is employed by these vehicles (Rossman and Greenfield, 2006). Private equity's influence clearly raises investors' expectations of appropriate rates of return and erodes commitment to other stakeholders. It has been shown that private equity has raised rates of redundancy across the world (Hall, 2008).

Theron (2005) uses the term 'externalisation' to encompass the different ways of obtaining labour from outside of the corporation's boundaries. Its extent at global level has unfortunately not been the subject of any systematic investigation (Mosley and Uno, 2007). Labour outsourcing is increasingly being required of local management by multinationals' central managements (Westney, 2008). Externalisation virtually removes the direct claims that workers can make of them. Externalised workers are rarely protected by law in the same ways as 'standard' workers, because in almost all countries the law envisages a 'standard' employment relationship. Externalisation takes many forms, many of which are in reality not discrete, and its incidence and damaging consequences for workers and unions alike have been widely remarked on by researchers examining the developing world (Wood and Brewster, 2007; von Holdt and Webster, 2005; Theron, 2005). The creation of 'value chains' from the MNC at the top down to tiny family concerns, sub-contractors or individual 'own account' workers inexorably drives the overall share of labour in company earnings downwards (Barrientos, 2002). The ends of these chains contain a good deal of 'labour risk' for companies. An American researcher linked cars sold in Canada back through car manufacturing multinationals to the Brazilian steel industry and slavery in the Brazilian charcoal industry (Bales, 2004).

Thus, the multinationals are linked, both directly and indirectly, to the 'informal' economy. Intermediaries have oiled the wheels of this process. In many countries legislation was enacted in the 1980s that facilitated the activities of labour agencies (Glyn, 2006). Thus, even in highly regulated Germany, the number of agency workers has risen from just over 100,000 in 1993 to 630,000 in 2007 (Bundesinstitut fűr Arbeit, 1993; 2007). Seventy per cent of the workers used by Nestlé to manufacture, package and distribute products throughout the world are not directly employed by that company (Rossman and Greenfield, 2006). As we noted above, reliable global figures on the extent of externalised labour do not exist (ILO, 2007) but their growth may be simply illustrated by the extent of the multinational companies that supply it, shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Key Multinationals Supplying Labour

Multinational	2004	2006/7
Adecco	5,800 offices	7,000 offices 2007
Manpower	4,300 offices	4,400 offices 2007
Vedior *	2,200 offices	2,433 offices 2006
Randstad		1,827 offices 2006 2,670 offices 2007

Note: * Vedior was purchased by Randstad in December 2007
Source: ICEM (2004); company annual reports and websites

The labour-supplying multinationals whose empires are indicated in Table 2 are clearly only the formal, visible part of labour contracting; a wide range of labour suppliers in the developing world constitute the submerged part of that iceberg. These intermediaries form part of a nexus of corruption in obtaining contracts, criminality and violence in Colombia (Pearce, 2004). Lourenço-Lindell (2002) describes the extensive activities of agents called 'headmen' in Guinea-Bissau, who first negotiate for work from employers in competition with other headmen, and then select labour and supervise tasks.

These work forms condition workers' and managers' expectations of acceptable standards of terms, conditions and treatment. In direct employment terms, MNCs can thus remain 'model' employers, and 'employers of choice', while distancing themselves from their suppliers and indeed the suppliers of suppliers where conditions are very different. The minority of employees in the company's direct employment are well aware of their privileged status. MNCs are able to raise productivity partly because they tie employees into their ways of working. Thus, many MNCs follow a dual policy: ending or avoiding the employment relationship for the majority of employees, and improving pay to well above local levels for the

minority they choose directly to employ. This is a new aspect of the current wave of globalisation.

There are however limits to the process. The extent to which it can be required depends on the extent to which the company's success is perceived as reliant on developing the long-term commitment of its labour force. It is only minimally practised in some high value-added companies such as the German-owned motor manufacturers. These operate with a more cooperative labour paradigm which facilitates union involvement and employee representation at all levels.

Multinationals' direct policies in relation to unions reflect at least to some extent their countries of origin. US-based companies favour countries where wages are lower, where it is easiest to shed labour and the industrial relations environment is seen as benign (Cooke, 1997; Bognanno et al., 2005). The last characteristic is measured in terms of the extent of local union influence, though MNCs are more favourably disposed to company-based forms of representation such as works councils. As we show in Chapter five, European-based multinationals are relatively friendly towards unions. This is related to the form of human resource management (HRM) that they adopt and the extent to which they attempt to dictate the form from the company's headquarters. There are essentially two forms of HRM. One is 'collaborative'. This has a developmental or humanistic focus, where employees are seen as partners or collaborators. On the other hand, there is 'calculative' HRM in which employees are treated as a resource. Calculative HRM centres on the accurate measurement of employee contributions to the firm, and the adoption of individually based reward systems (Gooderham et al., 1999). It sidelines unions since individual pay is not conducive to traditional forms of collective bargaining.

In Europe, foreign companies (which are mostly US-based) more commonly follow 'calculative' HRM than domestic companies (Gooderham et al., 1999; 2006). US-based companies in less-skilled sectors tend to follow centralised union exclusion policies. Thus, McDonald's has successfully resisted unionisation in many national contexts (Royle, 2005; 2006). In the failed attempt to unionise the McDonald's greenfield food processing factory in Moscow, the few activists involved received significant material, publicity and moral support from the global union, the IUF (Royle, 2005). McDonald's may constitute an exceptional company, but similar policies have been applied by other US-based companies with relatively low-skilled workforces such as Wal-Mart, even in highly regulated Germany (Köhnen and Glaubitz, 2000). In Ireland, they follow similar policies largely through setting up on greenfield sites (Turner et al., 2002).

Anti-union policies pushed by central managements may occasionally be resisted at local level. A recent work suggests that local managers can defend and advance subsidiaries' influence in alliance with unions. Kristensen and Zeitlin (2005), in their study of APV, a manufacturing multinational based in the UK with subsidiaries in the USA and Denmark, argue that the Danish subsidiary achieved a strategic

role in the company by using their links to many different local actors. The union was a key ally for local management, helping improve the company's access to skilled labour locally and actively helping management strategise. The prescription these authors offer, of a MNC involved in facilitating dialogue between itself and employees through representative institutions is, they admit, an unlikely prospect. The setting was exceptionally favourable for such an alliance. The Danish model provides considerable possibilities for union representatives not only through the 1973 law providing for employee representatives' election to company boards, and through European Works Councils, but also by well-established, historically deeply rooted norms.

Outside such exceptional environments, and especially outside of the developed world, local management pursues *less* union-friendly models than central management. Even when written into collective agreements, local managers adopt 'flexible' interpretations of relatively clear rights such as those to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The latter may be formally espoused at headquarters level, and then, to adopt the terms used by a team of management scholars, 'ceremonially' adopted or 'lost in translation' locally (Fenton O'Creevy et al., 2007). Thus, for example, managers in countries such as Russia and Mexico, where company-based unions are widespread, interpret allowing company unions as complying with central values favouring the freedom of association. They thereby marginalise or exclude forms of unionism centred on mobilising workers and meaningful bargaining. In Russia, this entails, at worst, union forms designed to discipline workers and, at best, welfare-oriented unions. In this scenario, collective bargaining consists of essentially administrative discussions about a 'collective agreement' that specifies little and cannot be enforced.

Multinationals pose problems for unions at national level because of many of these companies' capacity to threaten to shift location, to play one unit off against another and to distribute investment according to local performance. These possibilities are clearly more available in some sectors than others but many MNCs, as we saw above, are currently located in services rather than in the location-bound extractive sector and can therefore threaten this with credibility. Martinez-Lucio and Weston (2004) have argued that even in the highly regulated European context, the dynamics set up by this possibility are often very difficult for unions to overcome.

In general however, and despite these problems, MNCs are relatively well unionised in the developing world when compared to domestic companies. The most systematic study of the subject demonstrates that they more readily recognise unions, and direct investment by them brings better labour relations (Mosley and Uno, 2007). Their importance also underlines the internationals' significance to national unions; the latter draw on the GUFs' expertise in dealing with them. The expansion of multinationals' international reach serves to remind many trade

unionists, particularly in the developing world, of how intimately the fates of their national unions and the internationals are intertwined.

Conclusion

The consequences for unions of the current wave of globalisation have been severe. Many of the old certainties and structural supports for trade unionism have been removed. The predominance of neoliberal economic ideas has reduced union political influence. MNCs have become more assertive in relation to national governments than in previous waves of globalisation, while the growth of informal work has diminished union membership and economic power.

The possibilities of unions dealing with their problems at national level have clearly decreased. National regulation has far less mileage than hitherto and unions have therefore turned to the international level for solutions (O'Brien, 2000).

Developing country unions have also continued to develop bilateral links with other unions, often from the ex-colonial countries. But these links are much less likely to offer viable solutions since the internationals have greater capacity to generate comprehensive information about multinationals. Nor do they occur within the internationals' democratic framework. Still less can links with a few developed country unions offer prospects of organising among informal workers, where these unions have little or no experience. These resilient problems are better addressed by the internationals, with their breadth of experience and expertise in the developing world. Whether they have the resources or governance mechanisms to address them in optimal ways is a question we discuss in Chapter four.

Past and Present – the History of International Trade Unionism

Introduction

THIS chapter deals with the history of the international trade union movement's institutions, to locate our contemporary analysis in that context. The history of all these bodies is part of their organisational culture, as their headquarters' walls covered with posters of twentieth-century campaigns demonstrate. Despite some useful contributions, no adequate overall history of this level of trade unionism exists. With a few honourable exceptions (exemplified by the work of Tony Carew (1987; 2000; 2007) Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick (2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2004) and Marcel van der Linden (2000)), previous accounts have occurred in separate 'historical' and 'current' silos. Yet certain enduring themes are apparent, implying profound structural issues. On the other hand, the current situation has novel characteristics, not least because of the relative political unity of the world's unions after the collapse of Communism in 1989.

Our arguments in this chapter are as follows: first, history shows a significant sequence in the formation of different bodies, reflecting their relative weight in the thinking of national unions. Second, we argue that it is not the case, as some have suggested, that the structures devised between the late 1890s and 1903 'remained largely unchanged' in the twentieth century (van der Linden, 2000: 528). This refers simply to the dual structure with an international umbrella organisation and industry-based bodies. It ignores the existence of rival international structures for much of the twentieth century, which rendered cooperation across the political divide next to impossible. The inception of the division constituted a *dis*continuity of major importance. This political division in the international union movement that appeared soon after the Russian Revolution has now disappeared, creating new opportunities. Third, the internationals have long, rich histories which have stamped their individual and collective identities and, importantly, underpin a long-term view by unions of payoffs from membership. Long organisational histories encourage affiliates to see the benefits of affiliation in the long-term rather than to look for short-term

benefits. Finally, we suggest that a certain version of the history, emphasising the internationals' collective role in the fights against Fascism and Apartheid functions as a sustaining resource.

Origins

The first wave of institutional international union cooperation occurred in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, at the beginnings of an earlier intense phase of globalisation. National markets had not yet been finally consolidated in Europe and America and major imperial projects such as the 'scramble for Africa' had yet to begin.

Marx's international, the International Working Men's Association (IWMA), formed in 1864, therefore operated in a context in which the need for such a body was less self-evident than it was later to become. Marxist language and ideals live on as a set of shared reference points in international trade union discourse, including in its symbols such as the singing of the *Internationale* at some international union gatherings. The IWMA and its successors provided intellectually powerful alternatives to the nationalistic, racially based and imperialist ideas being pursued not only by employers and ruling élites, but then accepted in wide sections of the trade union movement. These ideas found expression in many damaging ways, including in racially based unions in many parts of the world (Kirk, 2003).

Marx's project attracted some affiliation and support from sections of the European trade union movement, faced by employers importing cheaper foreign labour from neighbouring countries. The IWMA also established relations (albeit fractious) between political internationalists and trade unions, which paved the way for the Second Social Democratic International. Trade union internationalism, although not initiated by Marxists, therefore found its first institutional form under Marxist leadership although, as Marx well knew, the policies of the IWMA were too advanced and idealistic for the pragmatic British union leaders. This highlighted what was to be a long-standing tension between the industrial interests and national orientations of most union leaders on the one hand, and those of the more political internationalists on the other (Collins and Abramsky, 1965). It already implied the enduring question of precisely how strong or autonomous an international could be: how much power would be ceded by national unions, fearful of having policy determined by those holding an alternative conception? The issue's significance was underlined by the interest of rival political streams in international trade unionism such as the anarchists and Christians.

Diagram 3: Timeline – the History of the International Trade Union Movement

International union movement	World events
1864: International Working Men's Association formed	
1871: Delegates of Austrian, German and Scandinavian shoemakers sign cooperation agreement	1871: German victory in Franco-Prussian War; Unification of Germany
1876: International Working Men's Association dissolved	
1889: International Trade Secretariats of shoemakers, printers, hatters, tobacco workers formed	1881: Second International founded
1897: International Transport Workers' federation formed	
1901: First conference of the International Secretariat of National Trade Union centres held	
1913: International Federation of Trade Unions founded	
1914: Over one hundred International Trade Secretariats in existence	
1914: 33 ITSs in existence	1914: Outbreak of First World War
1918–1920s: Many ITSs merge	1917: Russian Revolution
1919: IFTU re-constituted	1918: First World War ends
1919: International Federation of Trade Unions founded	
1920: International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (forerunner of WCL) formed	
1921: Red International of Labour Unions founded	
1937: Red International of Labour Unions formally dissolved	1933: Nazis accede to power in Germany
	1939: Outbreak of Second World War
1945: World Federation of Trade Unions formed	1945: Second World War ends
1949: International Confederation of Free Trade Unions formed	
1973: European TUC formed	
	1989: Soviet Union collapses
2006: WCL dissolved to merge with ICFTU and form the International Trade Union Confederation	

The Emergence of International Sectoral and Umbrella Bodies

The formation of the Second (Social Democratic) International created the political cohesion and contacts that precipitated the first international industrial organisations. In many continental European countries, trade unionism was a project launched by social democrats rather than, as in Britain, the reverse or, as in the USA, one that never generated a Labour Party (Robert, Prost and Wrigley, 2004). This is not to argue that the main concerns of the new international union organisations were political, since the contrary was the case as they were primarily interested in industrial matters. It is to suggest that the first viable institutions of internationalism were formed on a non-Marxist basis that nevertheless inherited some of Marxism's internationalist rhetoric.

As we show in the timeline, highly skilled craft trade unionists together with miners and textile workers were the first to initiate international organisations on an industrial basis from 1889 onwards. These were the GUFs' predecessors, the International Trade Secretariats (ITSs). The basis of the craft unions' organisation was strong occupational identities and capacity to restrict entry to their trades at local and national level. They felt a need for international coordination for pragmatic industrial as well as for political reasons. Huge vertically integrated cartels were emerging and expanding their international reach. Migrant labour was becoming increasingly important and threatened to undercut national unions' efforts, especially in continental Europe. In Germany, whose expanding economy was sucking in migrant workers from neighbouring countries, the issue was especially pressing and the majority of ITSs were based in Germany from their inception up until Hitler's accession to power in 1933.

However, the basis for international union organisation was rickety. At the end of the nineteenth century, national systems of trade unionism were still being consolidated: in Britain there were still movements for local autonomy in craft unions at the beginning of the twentieth century. In France, social democrats 'implanted' union organisation in rural areas (Robert, Prost and Wrigley, 2004). In short, strong elements of regionalism *within nations* remained in the unions seeking to establish international coordination (Dreyfus, 2000). The incomplete and uneven internal development of national systems until 1914 therefore formed a basis for ITSs founded on little more than information exchange and occasional mutual support of strike action.

The development of ITSs within industry sectors both preceded and precipitated the formation of an umbrella organisation for national union centres and reflects their importance to pragmatic unions in dealing with emergent international companies. The umbrella body began and continued as an organisation for more directly political purposes than the ITSs. This was the case even if the German and French unions that played a key role in establishing all of these bodies had

very different conceptions of the purposes and methods of trade unionism. These unions built the next international umbrella venture, the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres (ISNTUC), to be renamed the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) in 1913. The British stood aloof, but by 1913 the IFTU had grown to include twenty affiliated national centres, mostly in Europe but including the USA and the Transvaal (Fimmen, 1922).

The IFTU did not go far beyond exchanging information; the French conception of a more political and internationally solidaristic unionism was sidelined in favour of the more institutional and information-sharing form advocated by the Germans (Tudyka, 1983; Dreyfus, 2000). This remained influential in the IFTU even after the First World War, since it allowed national union centres to learn about each other and companies without being tied to any specific international policies.

By 1914, the current structure's broad outlines were visible: a set of industrial coordinating bodies, and an umbrella organisation bringing national centres together. So, too, were at least three of the significant abiding issues: unions' concern not to cede power; tensions between forms of trade unionism; and real political differences. The latter were soon to sharpen, generating a major and long-standing split in the international movement.

Division in the Movement: the RILU

The First World War had been preceded by dramatic strike waves in Europe that encouraged the development of revolutionary union ideas, or syndicalism. This in turn encouraged many to imagine that the strike weapon could be used for internationalist purposes. But the outbreak of war demonstrated the strictly rhetorical nature of the Social Democratic Second International's commitment to an international general strike in the event of war. The First World War brought massive political rupture. The Russian Revolution solidified the earlier breakaway of the Communists from the Social Democrats, a division that was to last, with only a brief interlude, for the next seventy years. This division was to be even more damaging than the one that had already emerged between the IFTU and the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU), whose relationship to the IFTU has been characterised as 'at times quite competitive and combative' (Tosstorff, 2005: 401). Thus, sharp political and religious rivalries were both present in the world's trade union movement from an early stage.

The social democratic and business forms of trade unionism took steps to advance and consolidate their position in response to a huge upturn in union membership during the First World War. Between April 1919 and August 1921, twenty-nine ITSs were established (van Goethem, 2000). The umbrella body also became much closer to a global coordinating body than hitherto. The fourteen countries represented at the founding congress of the IFTU in 1919 consisted essentially of the Europeans,

plus the American Federation of Labour, self-appointed guardian of the Latin American movements that had joined the recently formed Pan American Federation of Labour (van Goethem, 2000; 2006). The Americans were determined to follow a resolutely industrial path, but the Europeans defeated them, insisting on the need for political action. But the IFTU, initially urged by the French CGT, was already taking this type of action in initiating discussions (from which they were subsequently excluded) that brought the establishment of the tripartite International Labour Organization (ILO).

The ILO was an important institution that was to provide a major forum for international labour issues. The IFTU, though disappointed at the watered-down form that the ILO assumed, soon set to its enduring task of lobbying it to create international labour standards (Tosstorff, 2005). The IFTU had thus helped create much of the water in which it and its descendants the ICFTU and ITUC were to swim. In 1921, the American Federation of Labour, dismayed at the political turn of events, notified the IFTU that it had decided not to affiliate (Fimmen, 1922). This marked the beginning of over two decades of widespread indifference among American unions towards the international trade union movement that was only to be overcome at the end of the Second World War. For the Communists, the same developments were interpreted in quite a different sense: the formation of the ILO was a sign that the mainstream unions had definitively sold out to the capitalist class.

In many countries, including Britain and the USA, the Communist parties absorbed many of the pre-war syndicalists, thereby acquiring some of the best and most active trade unionists. From the 1920s, the international Communist movement built its separate union institution, the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU). In 1921, the IFTU decided that any union affiliating to the RILU could not be admitted to the IFTU (Fimmen, 1922). A minority in the IFTU, led by its co-secretary and general secretary of the relatively well-developed International Transport Workers' Federation, Edo Fimmen, favoured opening a dialogue on the appropriate structure for the international movement. Fimmen's political outlook was on the cusp of social democracy and Communism and coloured by syndicalism (Buschak, 2002). To the consternation of many, he therefore advocated including the Soviet unions in the discussion.

Labour's Alternative

The issue was among those that brought Fimmen's resignation as IFTU co-secretary; it was only after resigning that he gained the freedom to write probably the most important document ever written on the international movement's structure, *Labour's Alternative* (1924). The majority of the work discusses developments in international capitalism, which 'imposed' and 'forced' change on unions. Earlier moves towards international cartels were now accelerating: 'Huge, octopus-like capitalist groups are extending their tentacles to grasp all the treasures of the world…' (p.10). Pre-1914, these only sought to dictate prices to consumers, but now

they sought to dictate the price of labour. He defined the internationals' task as bargaining collectively with these groups, a prelude to collectivising the means of production through revolution.

For Fimmen, the IFTU–RILU division was central because it obstructed coordinated bargaining; post-1950, this argument was proven highly relevant. Other significant issues such as increasing the minimal involvement of women and colonial workers in trade unionism would be assisted by overcoming that key problem. Removing the division between the IFTU and RILU was, moreover, a condition for releasing the *resources* required to bring a more truly international organisation into being by persuading unions in the rest of the world to affiliate. Fimmen's emphasis on resources makes explicit an issue that remains relevant today. A new organisational basis was needed for this merged IFTU; the ITSs were a key ingredient because they mirrored capitalist organisation, but national union centres could not be ignored and he therefore advocated a combination of national centres and ITSs as a basis (pp.117–23). There is a notable and probably politic ambiguity here about the precise form that such an organisation would take, which allowed room for manoeuvre at a later stage.

Fimmen's ideas foundered on the very problem they addressed: the political split between Communists and Social Democrats. He had written the work at a time when it was still possible to argue as he did, because relations between the two sides had not degenerated too far. But from the defeat of the British General Strike in 1926 until the early 1930s, RILU encouraged breakaway unions and launched savage attacks on the 'reformist' and (more commonly) 'social fascist' or 'Amsterdam' unions. This poisoned relations and ruled RILU out of any constructive dialogue with either the IFTU or the majority of ITS affiliates. Fimmen, from his position in the transport workers, was left to continue to try to improve relations between the two warring sets of unions.

Free Trade Unionism and Communist Affiliations: from Divorce to Global Rivalry

From the mid-1920s, the unions throughout the international patchwork that was the Soviet Union were decisively stripped of their independence and subordinated to the Communist Parties. As Carew (1987) pointed out, Western unions were therefore right to regard them as not being free trade unions, even if Communist-led unions in the Western world could not be categorised in the same way. The Soviet unions became 'a school of Communism' and a 'transmission belt' of Communist policy. In the workplace, they became the welfare wing of management and exercised harsh discipline on dissidents. Internationally, these unions became instruments of Soviet foreign policy, as illustrated by the demise of the RILU itself. After the accession of Hitler to power in 1933 and the German unions' destruction, Stalin decided that a more conciliatory attitude towards the Social Democrats and the mainstream trade

unions was required. RILU, which had started life as a genuinely independent body, was run down from 1934 onwards and quietly disbanded in 1937 because Stalin regarded it as an obstruction to his foreign policy (Tosstorff, 2004).

The Nazi's rapid demolition of the previously powerful German unions removed an important element in the international movement and sent tremors through the remainder. All of the ITSs, who had already been campaigning against Fascism since 1924, and who supported the Italian resistance, played a significant role in campaigning against Nazism. The ITF had demanded immediate action in defence of the German unions in 1933 by the IFTU but were defeated by the opposition of the German unions themselves (Simon, 1983; Reinalda, 1997). The ITF began publication of a multilingual publication, *Swastika* (soon to become *Fascism*), documenting the effects of Fascism on workers from 1934 to 1945. The transport workers' extensive worldwide networks were later used to good effect by the Allied governments in espionage during the Second World War (Koch-Baumgarten, 1997). The ITF was also the driving force in establishing a Joint Council of Propaganda between itself and the metalworkers' and miners' internationals to propagandise for free trade unionism in the occupied countries, an initiative that soon went beyond its original functions: by 1944, the Council was sending delegates to liberated France to influence the re-forming French unions.

The effects of Stalinism on workers were also understood in the international trade union élite. Meeting in the context of widespread pro-Soviet feeling in Britain after the invasion of the USSR, the Annual Meeting of the International Metalworkers' Federation in August 1942 attended by exiled trade unionists from numerous countries demonstrated their awareness. They heard and accepted without demur a speech by Sidney Parlett of the ILO, who argued that:

> The Russian representatives at an international gathering would only voice policy insofar as it found consent and endorsement from the Russian Communist Party. If, therefore, the workers were going to fight for a Charter of trade union rights for other countries, how could they rely on the unequivocal support of the Russian trade unions?

> (IMF, 1942)

The defeat of Nazism in 1945 brought a temporary and unstable unity in the international trade union movement, when for a brief period Social Democratic and Communist unions came together in the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). But as the Cold War set in, the split between the Social Democratic and Communist streams re-established itself amid tumultuous and vituperative scenes (Hogan, 1989). One of the causes célèbres was the degree of independence to be given to ITSs; the Soviets argued for (and later adopted when they were left to themselves) a structure in which the ITSs would be integrated into the world body as 'trade departments'. This, of course, would have meant ceding considerable industrial

influence to the Soviets, and was rejected; the ITSs were strongly opposed to having their autonomy reduced in this way (Windmuller, 1954; McShane, 1992).

The US government strongly encouraged the American unions to step up their activities in the international movement, and worked influentially against WFTU across a broad material and ideological front (Windmuller, 1954; Carew, 1987). However, as Denis McShane has argued, the European unions' own experiences had also been important in their rejection of Soviet influence (McShane, 1992). By 1950 WFTU was unquestionably dominated by the Soviet unions because major Western unions had left (Koftas, 2002). The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) was formed on Anglo-American initiative and it and the WFTU went their separate ways, beginning an increasingly bitter war for the political affiliation of unions in the rest of the world. Both of them together with the third, relatively small but aggressive, International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (later World Confederation of Labour, WCL) now pursued their own rival agendas, competing for affiliations and trying to establish their own structures throughout the world.

WFTU was also influential in global terms. In the 1950s, it gave considerable material assistance to help found and maintain formally independent international associations, notably the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions and the much stronger Congreso Permanente de Unidad Sindical de los Trabajadores de America Latina. In Africa, WFTU, after initial criticism of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity, began to work closely with it (Lieβ, 1983). In India, the All-India Trade Union Congress was an affiliate. In Europe, the largest union confederations in France and Italy, the CGT and CGIL, were long-term full affiliates until the latter moved to associate membership. The CGIL gradually distanced itself from WFTU as part of a wider disillusionment on the part of Western trade unionists with the effects of their affiliation. The CGIL moved away because of declining strength and failure in its persistent efforts to secure unity in action in relation to employers with the other Italian union organisations who were strongly opposed to the CGIL's international affiliation (Rogari, 2000). After 1968, this sort of distancing became common among national unions.

The unions previously affiliated to IFTU formed a large part of the organisational basis for the creation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in 1949. The new title both reaffirmed unions' historic assertion of their independence from employers and the state and stressed the difference between themselves and unions in the Communist world. The ICFTU soon gained primacy within the international trade union movement in its role as the 'voice of labour', because of its use by governments as such in the restructuring of the post-War years (Gumbrell-McCormick, 2001). Other parts of the international movement now entered a period of steady increase in interest and affiliations. Thus, the Christian IFCTU expanded in the developing world, establishing a regional organisation in Latin America in the mid-1950s (Pasture, 1999). So, too did the ITSs, as we show for the ITF in Table 3.

Table 3: Number of ITF-affiliated Organisations by Region, 1946 and 1964

ITF region	1946	1964
Europe/Middle East	57	117
Latin America/Caribbean	5	99
Asia-Pacific	9	42
Africa	3	36
North America	3	18
Totals	**77**	**312**

Source: Lewis (2003: 360)

Regional organisations grouping countries together developed throughout the world, first in the ICFTU and later in the ITSs, to reflect the interests of the developing country membership within the international structures. Their creation increased the diversity of unions involved in the international movement. There was a feeling among some affiliates that the ICFTU as a global organisation was constantly trying to widen its functions beyond the coordinating role that they thought it suited to, but that its basis made it difficult for it to help unions locally. In 1966, the British TUC's international committee minuted:

> If the question of starting afresh arose the TUC – taking experience as a starting point – would perhaps not be in favour of establishing an organisation such as the ICFTU with its present functions, nor disposed to accept that the somewhat heterogeneous political attitudes of major ICFTU affiliates provide a satisfactory basis for common and large-scale operations directed towards developing countries.

(quoted in Carew, 2007: 163)

The judgement from the TUC's international committee may have underestimated the international movement's work. Through their structures in the world's regions, the ICFTU and ITSs built widespread educational activity to develop the skills and capacities of local unions to deal with their problems. The ICFTU had a long tradition of such work and soon began to use its Solidarity Fund, first set up in 1957, for educational purposes (Gottfurcht, 1966; Carew, 2000). A strong example of its activity was the coordinated efforts by the ICFTU and six GUFs to develop cadres in Indonesia in the late 1960s (Carew, 2000). Another example from this period was the substantial educational work of the ICFTU in Africa. The calibre of those carrying out this work was considerable; it was led by the Nigerian intellectual Wogu Ananaba, author of an impressive history of the African trade unions (CISL, 1972;

Ananaba, 1979). This educational work also importantly allowed the internationals to acquire detailed understandings of the world's very different unions.

In Europe, the heartland of the international movement, the growth of structures designed to coordinate European unions in part reflected an increasing feeling that the ICFTU was providing too little for the unions of the developed world, one of the underlying reasons for the Americans leaving it in the late 1960s (Carew, 2007). The development of the European Union stimulated a proliferation of bodies both outside and inside the existing organisations. The international movement was faced with the development of essentially parallel structures in the form of European Industry Federations and the European TUC. Thus, for example, between the late 1950s and 1983, nominally separate bodies for food, drink and tobacco workers existed both inside and outside of the IUF (Buschak, 2003). WFTU hoped that the development of these European-level bodies would improve relations with ICFTU affiliates, but these hopes proved groundless (Lieβ, 1983).

For the ICFTU, creation of the ETUC led to the loss of its existing European body (Gumbrell-McCormick, 2001). This created major tensions within the ICFTU as it struggled to decide how to deal with the new phenomenon. Ultimately, it decided not to take a position, which Gumbrell-McCormick (2000a) argues was a wise act of diplomacy and not simply inertia, since it allowed the ICFTU to maintain the world organisation's unity albeit at considerable cost. However, for some national trade union movements in Europe, the EU's increasing pull ushered in a period of greater orientation towards Europe to the exclusion of the rest of the world.

The international trade union movement was expanding beyond its hitherto narrow geographical base, as each side in the Cold War was trying to recruit unions. In Africa and Asia, unions often provided the mass base for nationalist movements to fight for independence from the European imperial powers, and the Americans and Soviets vied for their loyalty. The unions of Europe, the USA and the USSR pursued what was at least in part a Cold War political agenda in the rest of the world. Gary Busch (1983) argued that for the main governments involved, the importance of international trade unionism was second only to military intelligence. A consequence was that the ICFTU ruled out contact between itself and WFTU despite the wishes of some of its affiliates (Lieβ, 1983).

In some parts of the ex-colonial world such as Africa, the Cold War had serious consequences for trade unionism, weakening it wherever the US distributed economic or military aid (Koftas, 2002; Thomson and Larson, 1978). Wedin (1991), in a sensitive study of foreign union assistance in Latin America, shows how despite good intentions, foreign interventions at this time had negative effects and even 'victims'. Foreign subventions on occasions reduced union democracy to a farce (Croucher, 2003). In Kenya, for example, the nationalist politician and trade union leader Tom Mboya rapidly marginalised his political opponents with financial backing from the USA, finally removing them from the Kenya Federation of Trade Unions (Hagglund,

2007). In Japan, the Cold War also had important negative effects and the ICFTU affiliates became identified with the occupier. By 1950, the Communist union centre Sanbeyu was in the forefront of the Japanese trade union movement, but the American Military Government stimulated a breakaway centre, Sohyo. In the early 1950s, the American Military Government dismissed large numbers of public sector trade unionists in the name of removing Communist influence, but also included non-Communist unionists. This initiated a period lasting right up until the collapse of Communism, in which affiliation to the ICFTU or WFTU constituted a factional issue within Japanese unions described as 'damaging' (Carew, 2000: 218). Despite this sharp split, the ITSs were nevertheless able to provide a focus for coordinated action between Japanese enterprise-based unions. In 1964, the International Metalworkers' Federation established a Japan Council, playing a major part in establishing the annual 'spring offensive' (Park, 1983).

A combination of political and industrial rivalries weakened ITS attempts to confront the activities of multinationals. These attempts were the first signs that the international union movement was moving decisively towards attempting international collective bargaining despite the implied transfer of bargaining authority from national to international level. Charles 'Chip' Levinson, general secretary of the ICEF, seeking to raise the profile of his previously weak ITS (Gallin, 1997), confirmed this as the international movement's main task (Levinson, 1972). The North American United Auto Workers and the West German IG Metall pushed this agenda within the International Metalworkers' Federation while the ICEF and the IUF developed international campaigns directed at particular multinationals. World Company Councils were developed in some companies in the 1960s by the IMF and ICEF. Yet significant unions in France, Italy and India were excluded because they were affiliated to the WFTU (Leiβ, 1983). By 1988, a new approach emerged that allowed the preservation of national unions' bargaining independence and the first International Framework Agreement (IFA) was concluded by the IUF with BSN Danone in 1988 (Gumbrell-McCormick, 2000a; 2004; Wills, 2002).

The ITF was meanwhile pursuing international collective bargaining in the shipping industry with rather more success. The 'Flags of Convenience' (FOC) campaign, initiated in the late 1940s gathered momentum in the 1960s and began to bite in the 1970s. The campaign had political and industrial thrusts, and succeeded in enforcing minimum standards of pay in many of the world's ships. We expand on the FOC campaign in Chapter five.

Towards a Unified International Movement

The existence of a common enemy helped the ICFTU to mobilise affiliates, but simultaneously illustrated the significance of the division between itself and the other confederations. The increasingly anomalous existence of Apartheid in South Africa

brought the ICFTU to develop a widely supported campaign. The Confederation undoubtedly made a real contribution here, overcoming the many constraints limiting its capacity for independent action (Gumbrell-McCormick, 2001). The circumstances were quite specific, in that there was a considerable consensus among affiliates that the Confederation should act (Gumbrell-McCormick, 2001). Roger Southall (1995) has shown however that effective solidarity was still restricted because of Cold War tensions between the ICFTU, the ITSs and the (non-dues paying) WFTU affiliate, the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

As the multinationals grew in strength, and pushed at existing trade boundaries, semi-official meetings were held between officials of the world's divided trade union movement (Lieβ, 1983). The extension of Western corporations into the Comecon countries provided a motive for Western unionists to show increased interest in Eastern Europe, while the emergence of 'dissident unionism' there ironically provided a motive for official Soviet unions to shore up their role through contact with their Western counterparts (Busch, 1983).

After 1989 and the collapse of Communism, the way was paved for a more unified trade union movement at international level and extension of previously limited attempts to develop international networks and collective bargaining. Huge areas of the international economy were now opened up to companies and the ICFTU tried to take the opportunity to expand its influence. A key conclusion of a 1990 ICFTU/ITS Conference was that the ICFTU should strengthen their 'coordination of the work of the ITSs and national centres' and a new department for multinationals was established at the Confederation (ICFTU, 1990; Gumbrell-McCormick, 2000a: 514). As this showed, the ICFTU did not accept a role limited to lobbying but wished to expand its coordinating, organising and bargaining functions.

Unions in the former Soviet Union were allowed back into the fold of 'free' trade unions, even if their qualifications for entry were highly questionable. In the words of one commentator, the arrival of the ex-Soviet unions 'unleashed a tremendous struggle to remake the geography of workers' representation in central and Eastern Europe' (Herod, 2001: 224). In the 1990s, even before these unions were admitted to the ICFTU, many affiliated to GUFs. The GUFs were therefore able quickly to come into direct contact where the ICFTU could not, and this was used to reject the ICFTU's hegemonic claims within the international movement. The irony was that these unions' ultimate admission to the ICFTU entailed only limited strengthening of it, because the former Soviet Union affiliates of WFTU had no tradition of negotiating with management. The main weapon used by the internationals has been an expansion of the GUF's educational activities aimed at improving unions' capacity to represent members (Sogge, 2004).

The loss of most Russian unions, and that of a significant number of others in the world who left the WFTU without subsequently joining the ICFTU meant that WFTU withered, and stopped publishing membership figures in the 1990s although it continues to play some role in India, Latin America and the Arab countries. This

left the ICFTU as by far the biggest international player, with the relatively tiny Christian WCL the only alternative.

In November 2006, the ITUC was formed from the ICFTU, the WCL and a number of sizeable and influential left-wing unions such as the Polish OPZZ, the Argentinean CTA, the Colombian CUT and the French CGT. Since the WCL's strength lay in the developing and transitional countries, the international trade union movement achieved better international coverage even though some WCL affiliates refused to join. At the same time, the ITUC established a Pan-European Council including non-ETUC unions and notably the Russians, who are not represented in the EU-oriented ETUC (Traub-Merz and Eckl, 2007).

Politically divisive tendencies persist in some of the world's unions, and the largest issue is that of the state controlled unions in the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), not currently recognised as free unions by the ITUC. The ACFTU is linking up with African unions through its cooperation with and funding of the Organisation of African Trade Unions and their financing of the sizeable Nkrumah Labour College in Accra (Traub-Merz and Eckl, 2007). There are voices arguing for engagement with the ACFTU through the latter's admission to the ITUC, an issue that threatens to re-divide the international free trade union movement.

Conclusion

The international movement is now closer to being worthy of the global description than ever before, and previous political and religious obstacles to unity in action that restricted attempts to deal with multinationals have been removed.

Key structural issues have been evident throughout the movement's history and continue to loom large today. Perhaps the most important is the reluctance of national unions to cede power to international organisations. Another is the respective roles of the sectoral and umbrella bodies. The importance of educational work as a central and in many respects unifying activity helping the internationals establish shared activity of value to affiliates has been evident.

Those active in the international trade union movement continue to find positive resources in their organisations' history: its sheer length demonstrates the depth of their experience. The internationals' collective record of actively resisting fascism and opposing Apartheid represent shared touchstones. While political differences may have been at the centre of the international movement's history, both sides now refer to a shared tradition of campaigning against both.

The length of the organisations' histories goes well beyond being a collective resource because it encourages affiliates to take a long-term view of their involvement and of the benefits to be gained from it, an idea we expand on in Chapter four.

II
The Work of
the Internationals

The Internationals –
Governance and Resources

All international trade union organisations face three tasks: organisation, policy, and democratisation. This means international trade union policy must be democratised, it must reach deep down among the membership, including them, involving them.

<div align="right">Dan Gallin, ex-general secretary of the IUF (quoted in Rütters, 2001: 1)</div>

Introduction

THIS chapter examines the central political dynamics within the internationals. We begin with an analytical account of how they are governed, showing the developed country unions' dominance of the GUFs' structures, underpinned by their high financial contributions. We also explain the current resource difficulties and the consequent political choice that the more financially secure affiliates are now faced with.

We also argue that the two most commonly discussed strategies of merger and de-regionalisation are unlikely to deal effectively either with the GUFs' difficulties or the underlying problem of national union decline. We therefore advocate two measures. The first is an increased material contribution from more developed countries. The second, for which we draw on international relations theories, is to encourage regions and sub-regions to make a contribution themselves. We suggest that they pursue a union development agenda organised on a small group or 'minilateral' basis and seek funding to support it. We believe the latter measure offers real possibilities for accessing funds, for improving the real involvement of developing country unions in the internationals and for building the affiliated unions themselves.

We begin with an overview of the internationals' membership and explain how they are governed and staffed. Next, the resources problem is examined. Finally, we expand in detail on the two proposed measures for arresting and reversing recent trends.
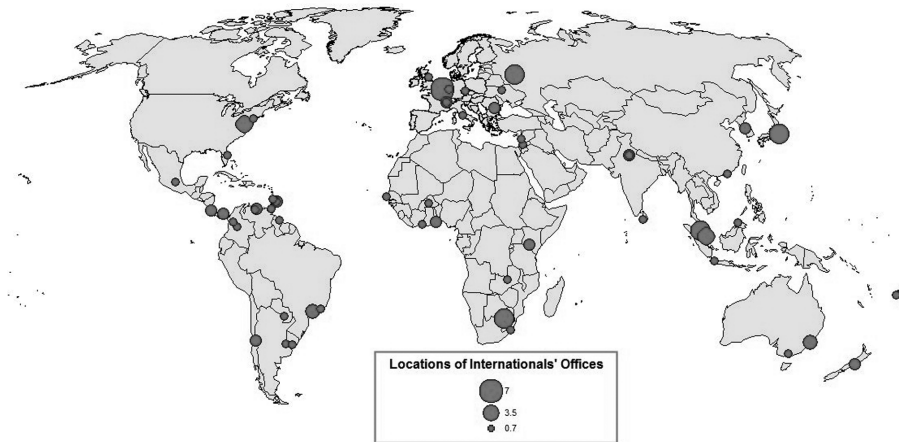
Global Governance: Structures and Authority

Shown in Map 2, the GUFs' headquarters are all in Europe. Most executive and statutory (i.e. required by rule) international meetings are hosted at headquarters.
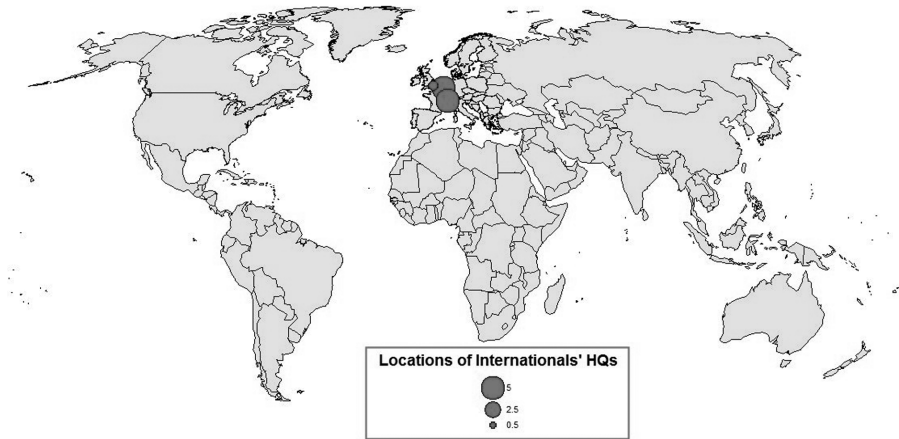
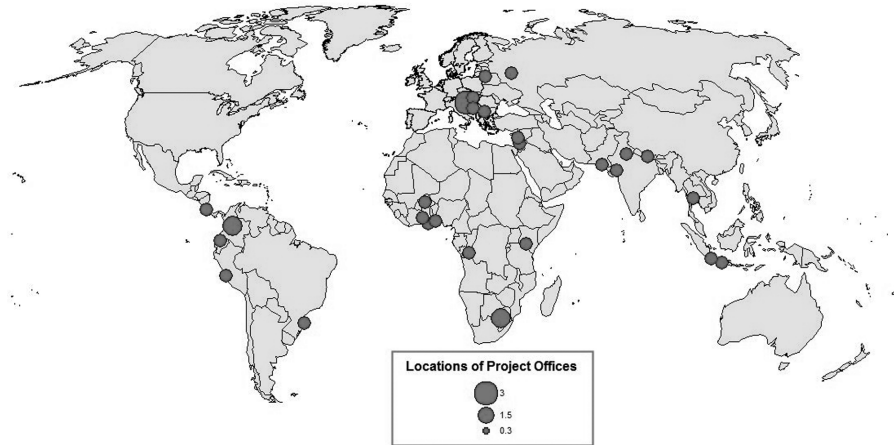
Map 2: Locations of Internationals' HQs

In 2004, the regional offices were distributed as shown in Map 3.

Map 3: Locations of Internationals' Offices

In addition many internationals have established technical support offices in sub-regions and specific countries, mainly to manage particular programmes and projects, shown in Map 4.

Map 4: Locations of Project Offices

The internationals, in common with other union organisations, have well-developed governance systems and all maintain strict formal decision-making procedures based on their rules or 'statutes'. These formal structures and procedures constitute a framework providing some constraints on powerful groups. The first democratising structure, also standard in national unions, is congress. Congress is the highest decision-making body, and in most cases meets every four years. This contrasts with almost all national unions where congresses are held more frequently. Congresses host around two thousand delegates and provide opportunities for unions to network and lobby for their agendas. Formal congress procedures are also tightly administered by headquarters officials, restricting the possibility of unanticipated decisions.

All internationals have dues payment categories reflecting ability to pay, with most affiliates clustered in the lower paying ones. In an attempt to limit the voting power of high-paying affiliates, voting rights are in most GUFs determined by paying membership levels regardless of category of payment. The only exception is the removal of voting rights from unions who have paid no affiliation fees. This is a second democratising measure, that seeks to de-couple subscription from participation but, significantly, voting is restricted to leadership elections and issues where consensus cannot be reached. Congresses, by virtue of their infrequency and the lack of decision-taking opportunities, therefore have very restricted possibilities for determining or affecting strategy.

The internationals' executives meet more frequently, usually annually, but in some cases twice a year. Seats are allocated for regional committee members, regional distribution and women since the internationals have all made concerted efforts over at least the last decade to ensure statutory representation of women at all levels. This is a third democratising measure. It has helped to broaden executive meeting agendas and in some cases how debate is conducted.

Table 4 shows the distribution of executive positions by region in the ICFTU between 1972 and 2003.

Table 4: Regional Distribution of Executive Positions in Relation to Membership in the ICFTU, 1972–2003

Region	1972				1983				1992				2003			
	Seats	%	Mbp	%	Seats	%	Mbp	%	Seats	%	Mbp	%	Seats	%	Mbp	%
Africa	3	12	868	2	4	11	546	1	5	11	1,997	2	6	13	10,590	9
Asia	5	20	4295	11	6	17	11,047	14	8	18	19,628	20	11	23	27,282	24
West Asia	1	3	1800	2	1	2	800	1								
Middle East	2	8	844	2	2	6	865	1	2	4	882	1	2	4	1,273	1
Latin America	3	12	1552	4	4	11	12,608	16	5	11	10,812	11	6	13	16,467	15
Caribbean	1	4	122	-	1	3	311	-	1	2	149	-	1	2	382	1
Third World	*14*	*56*	*7,681*	*20*	*18*	*51*	*27,177*	*34*	*22*	*50*	*34,268*	*35*	*26*	*55*	*55,994*	*50*
Europe	8	32	27,805	72	10	29	35,902	45	14	32	46,872	48	15	32	43,637	39
North America	2	8	1,300	3	6	17	14,902	19	6	14	14,990	15	6	13	12,362	11

Source: Gumbrell McCormick (2002) and ICFTU Congress Reports

The Table shows that in 2003 the developing country unions had a small majority of executive seats in the ICFTU. However, this tells us little about their weight in decision making both there and in GUFs. In reality, a consensus between the main unions of the developed world, and especially those that contribute high amounts financially (the Germans, Nordics, North Americans and Japanese) is likely to carry any vote.

Formal authority runs in clear lines up to the general secretary and president. General secretaries and presidents are elected officials, as opposed to the vast

majority of those working for the internationals who are appointed functionaries. General secretaries are currently all European. An increasing number of presidents are from developing countries. The general secretary carries ultimate responsibility for their organisations but this is to some extent shared with presidents particularly at times of political conflict. The great majority of senior officials are men, with only one female GUF general secretary, Anita Normark of BWI.

Information is controlled and distributed by the senior officers and this group therefore has significant power to set agendas (Lukes, 2002). Officers' power in this respect probably exceeds that of union officers at national level, because of the linguistic barriers and wide range of difficult-to-interpret information involved internationally. As Kratochwil argues, there is a 'baffling' array of information requirements for players in a multilateral setting, and this is apparent in the case of the internationals. He argues that for international organisations to be able to achieve consensus and cooperation, 'of paramount importance is the interpretation of the "facts" and inferences about motivations' (Kratochwil, 1993: 448). This complex process of interpretation is inevitably dominated by permanent officials. They also play a significant role in working groups. Working groups and non-statutory committees, formed regularly to review and develop policy are the general secretary's main partners in policy making.

Executive committees are formally responsible for running the organisation between congresses. However, Kahler's (1992) problem of 'latency' is evident in these committees. 'Latency' describes the situation whereby members become passive in large diverse groups. Delegates fall into diplomatic mode and rarely raise contentious issues publicly, with the breaks and evenings providing important social and political contact. Few delegates attend executive meetings in order to help resolve difficult international issues. All delegates' unions face their own financial and political problems and delegates are reluctant to tackle the same problems multiplied at international level. In addition, they are concerned to maintain unity and there is therefore limited real participation at this level. Thus, the financial difficulties that we analyse below are little discussed even within the internationals' executives and are certainly not publicised. As a result, a subject of fundamental importance is not widely understood and is only discussed within a highly restricted group, often in informal situations. This group largely consists of officials together with the representatives of influential national unions, which is largely coterminous with those making large financial contributions.

There are three types of authority that unions can draw on in their dealings with each other in these bodies: *contribution authority*, *political authority* and *moral authority*. The first comes from the amount that a union is seen to contribute to the collective both in financial and human terms and has primacy over other forms of authority. Germany, USA, Canada, Japan and the Nordic region collectively

represent on average 80 per cent of the internationals' dues income. High levels of affiliation fees and external project funding coming from Western European and North American unions means that the focus at executive level is on their interests, and this is well understood by unions from elsewhere. Conversely, where a region has been consistently unable to deliver appropriate affiliation fee payments, for example Latin America in recent years, their credibility and influence is much diminished.

Political authority comes from the perceived political importance of an affiliate's country and its trade union movement. At the global policy level, this is closely associated with contribution authority although the political positioning of an affiliate at important political moments is also significant in the shorter term.

The third, more temporary form of authority is moral. Moral authority is acquired when a union movement becomes prominent because of its exceptional achievements or particularly adverse environment; recent examples are Colombia and Iraq. When representatives from these countries speak they are not contradicted and in general they are supported. But this does not confer any wider authority on them to influence global strategy and therefore the authority is limited and transient.

Staffing

Some 700 people globally work for GUFs, 380 at headquarters and 297 in regional offices. This is a small number in comparison both with the ITUC and with major non-governmental organisations: in 2007, for example, Oxfam had 6,000 employees worldwide. This small staff must administer organisations which themselves consume large amounts of time and energy, with high levels of reporting and written accounting to executive bodies. The workforce's capacity to meet these demands seems likely to decline in the near future, as approximately 50 per cent of the internationals' existing staff will retire by 2013. Many of these staff have enormous understanding of particular industry sectors and unmatched in-country experience acquired over long periods, raising a serious question about the regeneration of human resources within the internationals.

Archer (2001) suggests that the national composition of staff is an important dimension for judging an organisation's degree of internationalisation. In this sense, different internationals represent variations on a theme. In some cases the general secretary strongly affects the functionaries' national make up; in others the influence of powerful affiliates dominates while in a third group both influences are combined. There are therefore high proportions of South African, German, American, Australian, Japanese and British staff.

Employment in the regions is often more precarious than at the headquarters secretariats, weakening the formers' overall position in relation to headquarters. In some GUFs, a proportion of those working in the regions is employed on temporary contracts, through externally funded projects. The number of staff employed by the

internationals is provided in Table 5 below, with the minimum numbers employed on temporary contracts given in brackets.

Table 5: Numbers of Staff Employed by the Internationals, 2004

Global Union	Total Number of Head Office Staff	Regional Staff					Total Number of Regional Staff	Total Number of Union Staff	Percent-age of Head Office Staff
		Africa	*Americas*	*Asia Pacific*	*Europe*	*Middle East and North Africa*			
EI	33	12	8	9	4		33	66	50
ICFTU	84	12 (2)	17 (3)	19	8 (4)	2	58 (9)	142 (9)	59
IFBWW	14	8 (6)	5 (2)	14 (8)	1 (1)	1 (1)	29 (18)	43 (18)	33
ICEM	17	2	4	2	2		10	27	63
IFJ	12 (3)	2 (1)	3 (1)	3 (1)	3		11 (3)	23 (6)	52
IMF	22	3	5	9 (4)	2		19 (4)	41 (4)	54
ITGLWF	7	3	4	4	4		15	22	32
ITF	102	5	7	10	11	1	34	136	75
IUF	19 (2)	2 (1)	7 (2)	12 (8)	12 (2)		33 (13)	52 (15)	37
PSI	28	12	9	15	20	2 (2)	58 (2)	86 (2)	33
UNI	41	8	12	10	16		46	87	47
TUAC	9 (3)							9 (3)	50
Total	**388 (8)**	**69 (10)**	**81 (8)**	**107 (21)**	**83 (7)**	**6 (3)**	**346 (49)**	**734 (57)**	Average 49

Note 1: The 'Head Office staff' figures include secretariat staff not located in Head Offices. The figures in brackets refer to the minimum numbers of staff employed on temporary contracts.
Note 2: The ICEM closed its regional offices and relocated the secretariat to Geneva during the period 2007–2008.
Source: Schwass (2004)

Outside of the developed world, externally funded projects play a considerable role in providing staff. Not all of the internationals provided current information for this table, but it gives some indication of how many staff members are partly (more than 50 per cent) or wholly financed by project funds: for example, 8 (6) means that out of 8 staff, 6 are financed by project funds. The number of staff sponsored by project funds is in reality higher than shown here since some GUFs operate numerous project offices separate from the regional offices. The proportion of head office to regional staff in the last column is calculated without taking project staff into consideration; European

regional organisations independent of GUFs have also been omitted (Schwass, 2004).

The governance of the internationals therefore places considerable power in their European headquarters, whilst influence within them is concentrated in affiliates with high contribution authority. Most affiliated unions fall outside of this category.

Membership

The key task in the 1980s and 1990s was seen to be moving away from being based in the developed world and towards becoming genuinely global organisations. There was therefore an intense drive to build affiliation levels in order to permit elections to regional structures, and this proved highly effective. The internationals recruited large numbers of unions, many of which became the recipients of resources from the developed world's unions. Despite this drive, the internationals' regions today are globally incomplete, since at this point few GUFs have established presences in the Middle East and none have offered formal recognition to the Chinese unions.

Non-OECD unions' motivations for affiliating have important consequences. According to Logue (1980), strong national unions will only affiliate to international bodies if they cannot solve their problems at national level; in the case of non-OECD unions, the converse applied since many of the unions affiliating were not and had never been strong. They affiliated because they were weak. Some sought to substitute for old alliances that had previously sustained them. African and Asian unions involved in national liberation movements had seen an erosion of their previously close relationships with the nationalists in power after independence and started to experience pressures to subordinate themselves to states (Wood and Brewster, 2007). Others saw affiliation as a step out of political and industrial isolation. For many unions, joining the internationals was their first opportunity to build genuinely global contacts on the basis of relative equality, as previously international contacts had been with ex-colonising countries' unions. They were in addition often controlled by national political élites. For other unions, such as those from the former Soviet Union, affiliation was seen as a way of affirming their democratic legitimacy by gaining admission to the free trade union movement. It also provided them with a way of looking at other forms of unionism which they had not been able to access before the 1990s, without committing themselves to adopting any of them.

These motivations sustained unions through affiliation processes which they experienced as difficult and involved them in divulging organisational information that they would have preferred not to submit. In the case of the ITUC, affiliation was also a protracted process as it maintained a now-abandoned policy of limiting affiliations to one per country, and in many countries competing union structures and political affiliations made selection processes lengthy. These processes raised expectations of what could be delivered after affiliation, and in many cases the

demands overwhelmed the internationals. The real possibilities of providing help were dwarfed by the expectations of unions whose only previous experiences of international organisations were of large bodies such as the United Nations or well-resourced NGOs.

Some unions, such as those based in South Africa, were relatively self-sufficient, but these were a small minority. Most new affiliates posed major difficulties, and foremost among them were those from the former Soviet Union. Since the 1990s, these unions have put significant pressure on the GUFs to help them become more effective organisations. Most of these vast unions, with formal memberships numbering millions, were completely unknown to the internationals, since they had previously been excluded from the ITUC 'family'. They are heterogeneous and virtually impossible accurately to map (Garver et al., 2007). Whilst making demands on the internationals, they maintain their old affiliations. The VKP, the CIS regional structure dating from Soviet times, continues to operate and to provide an alternative locus of activity, and, along with WFTU, in the 1990s opposed national union affiliation to the Western 'anti-communist' internationals. In 2000 the Russian FNPR affiliated to the ICFTU. However, its President, Mikhail Shmakov, currently sits as the President of VKP, highlighting the Russian unions' decision to live in both worlds. The GUFs were aware of the Russian stance and unions were usually admitted to GUFs without any serious pressure being put on them to reform prior to admission. These unions therefore posed real challenges when they came into the internationals as full members.

The Chinese unions, whose formal membership is in excess of the rest of the world put together, represent a further responsibility for the internationals. Most GUFs conduct 'active engagement', which entails forming diplomatic and in some cases technical relations without discussing affiliation. In this case, they receive no income for their work.

The recently affiliated unions are the main beneficiaries of the transfer of resources that occurs within the internationals, and developed country unions have to justify that transfer to their own members. In the next chapters we look at two of the most significant areas of activity for European and North American unions: collective bargaining and networking across multinationals. Here is an important positive argument for their contributions, because international bargaining and networking are easily identifiable products. National networking between affiliates of the same GUF is a further benefit. Less-apparent benefits also exist, including being able to call on the internationals' experience and linking capacities. It is often assumed that it is only the developing country membership which either needs this level of support or can demand it from other affiliates. Yet many cases exist of OECD country unions benefiting from international support during disputes. One recent example is that of the powerful Finnish Paper Workers' Union which in 2005 received extensive support from many unions including the Brazilian paper workers in its successful battle to resist employers' attempts to increase the use of contract labour.

In summary, the internationals have faced increased demands from their affiliates outside of the developed world for which they receive little income, and although identifiable benefits exist for OECD-based affiliates, this has caused them to examine their commitment more closely.

Headquarters–Regions Relations

There is clearly a balance to be struck between the requirement to tailor policies and practices to specific conditions on the one hand and the need to ensure coherence in global policies and activities on the other.

The issue is strongly affected by broader political attitudes. Sentiment in favour of increased regional autonomy has solid underpinnings, both in Europe and in the developing world, where unions have long been suspicious of the 'imperialist' foundations of the global unions. This is especially apparent in radical unions in Latin America who see the Western European and North American domination of the international structures as reflecting the policies of their national governments, and as part of an imperialist policy. These broad sentiments are shared by many other unions in the developing world.

Gumbrell-McCormick, in her study of the ICFTU, approaches the centre–region balance issue through the concept of federalism, defined as 'individuals gathering together through national groups to act in common with other national groups' (2001: 20). Strong and weak federalism are distinguished, depending on the level of power delegated by national unions to the internationals. In the ICFTU, federalism is relatively strong because regions are virtually autonomous. Regional structures within GUFs have varying degrees of autonomy but federalism is weak in the majority because regions are essentially subordinated to the headquarters. Most are effectively outposts of the international and are, unlike the ITUC's regions, not regarded as essentially autonomous organisations.

Regional executive committees generally meet twice a year and regional conferences are held, in the main, every four years, putting considerable power in the hands of regional officials. Regional secretaries head regional offices, and they are usually appointed functionaries of the international. In these cases the GUF exercises control through its regional secretary. In a minority of cases (the ITUC, UNI and IUF) the equivalent officer is elected, with the title of regional general secretary. In simple terms the distinction is between a regional secretary, whose job is to represent the interests of the international within the region, and a regional general secretary or elected regional president, whose task is to represent the interests of the region to the international executive.

Regional autonomy is also limited because, for the majority of GUFs, budgetary and financial issues are ultimately regulated exclusively at headquarters level. In recent years, internal and external auditors have begun to focus on the regions'

financial practices, bringing criticism of the management of project funds and standards of accountability more widely. They also refer to the precarious position of regional offices and structures, and in particular the common problem of the non-registration and lack of legal standing of regional offices and structures with national authorities.

Regions are further weakened in relation to headquarters by the distribution of authority within the regions themselves, since they are not homogenous blocs of countries with shared interests. Within each region, with the exception of Western Europe, clear national centres of influence exist. In Africa, South African unions dominate, providing up to 80 per cent of GUFs' regional income. They are a much admired union movement that emerged through struggle, an evolution not replicated by unions in other African nations. They therefore combine a high degree of all three of the types of authority identified above. The South African unions are, on the other hand, self-conscious in their dominance of political processes, a self-consciousness that is not evident in the cases of Japan in Asia and the USA in the Americas. In Asia, Japanese unions exert strong influence on the basis of high contribution authority. In Latin America, despite the fragmentation of the organisations themselves, the Brazilian unions do likewise through political authority. Where structures cover the Americas, the North American unions essentially control them through a combination of contribution and political authority. In Eastern Europe, Russian unions are highly influential, also through contribution and political authority. In Western Europe, power relations between countries are more balanced. The Nordic unions are well interconnected and tend towards common positions that increase their influence within the European and international structures. They, along with the Germans, in most cases the highest dues payers to international bodies, are also the main funders of international projects and that contribution authority, although not always decisive, gives their views heavy weighting in GUFs.

As implied above, a different centre–periphery model exists in the ITUC and some GUFs, closer to a strong federalist arrangement where regional structures enjoy high levels of autonomy. The most extreme example is the ITUC, which has the powerful European TUC and three autonomous regional organisations (Africa, Asia and Latin America).

However, analysis using the federalist concept only takes us so far. It focuses on centre–affiliate relations and therefore does not help greatly in addressing the issue of imbalances of influence within and between regions. The imbalances issue is important because it limits many unions' influence, involvement and commitment.

The concept of multilateralism, which focuses on coordinated relations beyond those of the centre and affiliates, is useful here. The GUFs are multilateral bodies; their multilateralism contains federalism. In other words, multilateralism forms an outer frame for federalism. Ruggie defines multilateralism as it applies to norms, régimes and organisations as follows:

Multilateralism is an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct; that is, principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard to the particularist interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence.

(Ruggie, 1993: 77)

Axelrod and Keohane's (1986) idea of 'diffuse reciprocity', where membership of a multilateral organisation is expected to yield a rough equivalence of benefits between members in the aggregate and over time, usefully deepens Ruggie's multilateralism concept. The multilateralism and diffuse reciprocity of GUF membership contrasts with the bilateralism and short-lived nature of an increasing amount of international union work. Bilateralism is both particularist and linked to a particular situation such as a campaign; it is normally a short-term relationship based on specific reciprocity. Diffuse reciprocity on the other hand is longer term, in that affiliates do not expect short-term payoffs from their membership.

Ruggie (1993) argues that multilateral structures are sustainable because the generalised organising principles on which they are based are more elastic than those of bilateral relationships. This elasticity means that multilaterals are able to contain internal tensions, especially when their work is in demand. The theory helps explain the GUFs' immense adaptability, and even their survival in a context of extreme resource pressures.

Multilateralism, as we suggested above, provides a flexible outer frame for federal arrangements and for groupings of different sorts. These internal small groups, with the right incentives, are able to work towards creating collective goods. As Olson says:

If the central or federated organization provides some service to the small constituent organizations, they may be induced to use their social incentives to get the individuals belonging to each small group to contribute toward the achievement of the collective goals of the whole group.

(Olson, 1965: 62)

In short, multilateralist bodies like the GUFs can contain smaller or 'minilateral' (Kahler, 1992) groupings that can strengthen them. This is positive both because of the problem of 'latency' and due to the power imbalances within GUFs and their regions. We return to this later, since it has a bearing on the resource issue which we now outline.

The Resource Issue

Developed country unions are experiencing a steady decline in the number of workers paying subscriptions. Table 6 shows how this is reflected in the ICFTU through the

declining numbers of members that national unions actually pay subscriptions for in relation to their declared membership.

In 2001 the ICFTU claimed 147 million members (the WCL estimated its membership at 4.3 million at that time). These figures are only broadly indicative, since they include over 50 per cent of unions implausibly declaring exactly the same membership figures for each year over a five- or six-year period (ICFTU, 2001b).

Falling membership in the majority of unions has a direct and dramatic effect on the internationals' dues income, a key source of funding. Only one per cent of union membership dues worldwide is dedicated to international action and affiliation. The most recent calculation of the funds available to the internationals, carried out as part of the ITUC's Millennium Review in 2001, estimated a total income of US$60 million per year from membership dues, donated funds and development cooperation funds raised externally. Between 1999 and 2003, an additional US$70 million of donations and project funds was channelled through ITUC regional structures. To put these figures in comparative perspective, Oxfam received some US$580 million in 2007, while the British union Unite claimed an income in the same year equivalent to about US$400 million.

Table 6: ICFTU Declared and Paying Membership by Region, 1998 and 2003

Region	1998		2003	
	Declared Membership	*Paying Membership*	*Declared Membership*	*Paying Membership*
Western Europe	43,214,250	37,594,584	43,637,707	36,233,803
Asia and Pacific	27,907,407	18,112,000	27,282,638	14,708,392
Latin America	19,361,761	19,254,000	16,467,678	7,439,380
North America	14,612,112	14,612,112	12,362,956	12,362,056
Africa	8,941,858	8,454,000	10,590,676	10,254,425
Central and Eastern Europe/ N.I.S.	8,235,265	8,048,000	37,296,378	11,300,583
Middle East	747,800	745,000	1,273,528	1,271,000
West Indies	420,332	424,122	382,798	387,000
Totals	**123,440,785**	**107,243,818**	**149,294,359**	**93,956,639**
Percentage of membership for which dues paid	87		63	

Source: ICFTU (2004) and authors' calculations

The 2001 analysis noted that real value fee receipts per member had dropped by 22 per cent since 1994 (ICFTU, 2001a). Table 7 shows the actual fees received from its affiliates in 1998 and 2003. Between 1999 and 2003 the ICFTU increased its membership by 28 million but saw a fall in paying membership of 12.4 per cent. In addition, the internationals all face a serious challenge from the late payment of membership fees.

Table 7: ICFTU Actual Fees Received per Region, 1998 and 2003

Region	Actual Fees Received, 1998 (EURO)	Actual Fees Received, 2003 (EURO)	Percentage Change (+ or -)
Central and Eastern Europe/N.I.S.	115,884	194,870	+68.2
West Indies	3,030	4,351	+43.6
Western Europe	5,403,298	5,862,541	+8.5
North America	2,215,906	1,647,439	-25.7
Africa	131,899	67,675	-48.7
Asia and Pacific	1,467,920	490,412	-66.6
Latin America	29,744	4,259	-85.7
Middle East	37,890	5,155	-86.4

Source: ICFTU (2004)

National unions practise trade-offs between affiliation fees and the number of members they choose to affiliate: if the international increases fees, they simply reduce the number of members affiliated. The internationals' resources are therefore strictly limited by the amounts that national unions are prepared to contribute, conceived of in essentially historic terms. In 2004–5, the ICEM tried to address the problem directly in an explicit but unsuccessful attempt to raise international affiliation fees higher on the political agenda of OECD country unions. Annual accounts revealed that a 2003 affiliation fee increase, designed to bring a 14.29 per cent increase in income brought only a 1.2 per cent increase in 2004 (ICEM, 2004a; ICEM, 2004b). Here was explicit confirmation of the GUFs' previous experience, that raising affiliation fee levels simply leads to a reduction in claimed membership by affiliates. The ICEM discussed two alternative responses. Initially, it considered presenting the case for affiliates to devote an increased percentage of their national income to international work. After enormous and at times acrimonious debate amongst affiliates at international and regional levels, this proposal was rejected as unrealistic. Affiliates were

unable to secure sufficient political support within their own organisations to defend an increase in affiliation fee levels. The only remaining option was to reduce expenditure and to close regional offices. The ICEM's regions have from then on been assisted by the secretariat.

Project funding is also essential income, used to sustain educational activities that, as we outline in Chapter seven, are considerable. In total, project funding represented just under half of the internationals' total income in 2000 (ICFTU, 2001f). Increasingly, the internationals blur the line between project activity and the resource people employed to manage them on the one hand, and their core costs and staff on the other. Schwass (2004: 22) refers to this blurring in diplomatic terms: 'the term "direct project costs" is somewhat difficult to define'. It is therefore impossible precisely to estimate the balance between membership dues and project funding, a particular issue in the cases of the ITGLWF, BWI and ITUC. The area is sensitive since it is clear that a sizeable proportion of the internationals' funds come from outside the trade union movement. This fundamental reality, which has gone un-noticed or at least un-mentioned by other authors, is a major issue. It clearly means that the internationals are dependent on external funders and risk becoming essentially project-driven organisations as happened to the IFPAAW prior to its forced merger with the IUF in 1994. There is a need for the international trade union movement to become less dependent on these sources.

Nevertheless, the internationals' ability to continue to raise significant project funds currently remains crucial. Potential exists here to develop the role of GUF regions, since donors have increasingly decentralised arrangements, with funding decisions often being made at regional and sub-regional levels. Those GUFs with a relatively strong federalism may therefore have a potential route out of financial problems, especially when combined with a minilateral approach where several countries' unions collaborate. GUF regions operating within a strong federalist model, such as the IUF's East European region, have already been able to use their independence to raise considerable project funds.

Financial problems have intensified debate over the appropriate level of regional autonomy. In this debate, the case advanced by headquarters for improved regional accountability cannot be dismissed as simply a device for headquarters to increase their specific weight. In the ITUC's 2004 Congress documents, the financial auditors complained of a lack of consistent financial reporting from AFRO (ITUC, 2004). Gottfurcht had done the same in 1966, indicating that this is a long-term issue and not one invented opportunistically.

Thus, the financial problem means that the internationals rely heavily on external funding to support key areas of activity. An answer may lie in more rather than less regional autonomy, but regional accountability both upwards and downwards remains an issue. These, however, are not the terms in which the internationals' future is normally discussed.

Re-structuring the Internationals

The most recent major attempt to generate discussion around restructuring, the ITUC's Millennium Review, failed seriously to involve GUF executives and brought only minor results disproportionate to the scale of the problems.

Within the internationals, discussion of organisational strategy focuses almost entirely on a merger of the main GUFs. One GUF, the ITGLWF, clearly has inadequate resources to carry out the range of tasks required of any global union body, and merger offers a way out which it intends to take. For other GUFs, pushing the merger trend to its logical conclusion is not a solution that will be widely acceptable; some, like the IUF, have set policies firmly against merger. A common suggestion (see for example Traub-Merz and Eckl, 2007) is to establish two large GUFs, one for manufacturing and one for the public sector. However, the current prospects of the GUFs agreeing to merger on this scale are tiny. There are several understandable reasons for this. First, GUF merger has invariably meant that one headquarters has to be chosen, bringing the loss of uniquely experienced staff. Second, some international trade unionists refer to the national level experience of merger which has often entailed long periods of internal disruption. There is some support from serious research for that viewpoint (Dempsey, 2004), and it was long ago suggested that mergers fail to overcome the problems that create them (Chaison, 1996). It seems that although no research exists on GUF mergers, these problems are likely only to be magnified at international level. Third, it is pointed out that many of the claimed benefits of GUF merger centre on cost reductions that are not assured or quantified, and that could be obtained in other ways.

In 2006, in direct response to the weakness of the solutions under discussion, the Council of Global Unions was formed to intensify coordination and cooperation. Yet this appears to have attracted little support from several GUFs, with the IUF and IMF deciding not to participate. The objection is that it is, in the words of one official, 'a complete waste of scarce resources'. Currently, neither merger nor the Council of Global Unions offer viable solutions to the current resource problems.

Prior to discussing a proposed solution, we note that the internationals stand to benefit from a management review encompassing all of them, similar to those that have been carried out by some trade union movements at national level (for a review and comparison of these in Canada, the USA and Britain, see Clark et al., 1998). At a minimum, this seems likely at least to make useful suggestions as to how efficiency could be improved both individually and collectively. Some of the issues to be covered, such as succession planning for the high proportion of staff due to retire over the next decade, are especially urgent.

Small Groups: Collaboration and Minilateralism

In the current situation, a further strategic review seems unlikely to attract sufficient support from the GUFs to be viable; the Millennium Review may be read as an illustration of the intractability of the structural issues. We now outline an alternative approach.

Both research and experience indicate that small groups are able to work more effectively together and deliver improvements to the internationals' work even with reduced income. We therefore suggest a move away from a merger/restructuring focus and towards increased inter- and intra-GUF collaboration.

Intra-GUF collaboration can be enhanced by small groups of unions working closely together on concrete issues, offering the prospect of overcoming Kahler's problem of 'latency'. Small groups create environments where individuals and individual organisations are more likely to form robust relationships. They find it easier to define their own individual and collective interests and to navigate the process of forming alliances and working with other organisations. When small groups are comprised of geographically, politically or industrially connected unions there is potential for them to operate effectively together in symbiotic ways.

There are two ways in which small groups can make international groupings more effective, as described by Kahler (1992); in one, the group acts as a 'broker' (sometimes described in practice as 'missionaries') for negotiations within the wider grouping. In the other, the small group operates as a 'progressive club' in which it develops and promotes more progressive policies or work than the 'lowest common denominator' normally experienced in larger groups. This model offers global unions a way of developing meaningful and ambitious collaboration between affiliates.

A strategic approach to inter-GUF collaboration could also be usefully developed by substantially expanding a number of existing collaborations. Educational collaboration offers good prospects here. One positive example has been the ten years of GUF cooperation in the former Soviet Union across various educational programmes. A second is the work of UNI, IUF and PSI on the shared concern of private equity. The joint initiative started in 2007 and includes research and online information, with potential for joint campaigning. A third joint initiative relates to contract labour, initiated by the ICEM but being extended to include all GUFs and the ITUC. The programme has developed research and strategic discussion about how unions manage the issue in different sectors. An important element has been to spread awareness amongst unions that the growth of the use of contract labour or the 'externalisation' of work is a major threat to labour standards at local and international levels. This collaboration could involve an important campaigning (including around multinational labour agencies) and lobbying element, to relate to the current wider discussion around international labour standards. Collective bargaining provides a fourth case. The joint signing of IFAs is important for strengthening IFA credibility with stakeholders. Three currently exist and it appears

likely that more will follow. Finally, significant collaboration exists between the internationals in the Middle East and North Africa, and China. The needs of both areas far outweigh the resources available, underlining the need to pool resources.

These collaborations offer global unions a focused and decentralised way of forming stronger international structures, and could provide a more ambitious and realistic way out of the current impasse.

Conclusion

The internationals have been victims of their own success in recruiting affiliates, but the influence of the latter remains limited. This is important background to the shortcomings in using international agreements and building company networks that we identify in the following chapters.

Resources have been a resilient, long-term problem. In a 'big picture' sense, the resources issue would have been recognisable to Gottfurcht in the 1960s and even to Fimmen in the post-First World War years. The reluctance of unions at national level to cede increased resources to the internationals is a long-term one that can only be addressed by a combination of the objective logic of globalisation and the political will to take the necessary steps in response.

The immediate resource issue that the internationals face can only be dealt with by developed country affiliates because it is urgent. Survival rests on this small group of unions making the political choice to devote a higher percentage of their income towards international structures than they have historically done. A strategy to convince their own executive bodies to do this when their own membership income is in decline is needed and one of this book's objectives is to provide material for such intelligent appeals to members.

There is a second, longer-term prong to our proposed strategy. We propose a minilateral approach within the existing multilateral structures. We suggest pursuing the union developmental agenda through educational activity supported by fundraising, by building sub-regional and small group programmes both between unions and the internationals themselves. Funding is increasingly decentralised and offers real opportunities for such groups. The inter-union collaboration should mobilise the demonstrated democratising effects of educational activity discussed in Chapter seven. Participation can be raised, and this can combine with increased contribution authority, providing an opportunity for developing country unions to increase their influence in the internationals.

International Collective Bargaining

Two leaders of the union Edegel in Peru's electricity sector, organising workers in the Endesa group attended the ICEM project's education, which led to a number of achievements. Their improved bargaining skills directly brought better salaries and conditions of work. It helped establish a Contract Workers' Union in the company. Membership increased, so did links with the community and a library was set up for members. The International Framework Agreement with Endesa was used to improve health and safety standards, and this also included extension of the same standards to contract workers.

Cristhian Rivas, ICEM Project Coordinator Peru

Introduction

THIS chapter deals with the main tools currently used by GUFs to improve unions' ability to bargain and organise within multinationals: International Framework Agreements (IFAs).

A good deal of attention has been focussed on these agreements both within the internationals and by academics interested in the development of an international system of industrial relations (for example, ICFTU, 2001b; Wills, 2004; Müller and Rüb, 2005). They have been adopted as a major part of the industrial GUFs' strategies; UNI, IMF, ICEM, BWI, IUF and ITGLWF have all passed congress and executive resolutions to this effect. Essentially statements of fundamental rights, these agreements offer some possibilities for local unionists by establishing a context for unions to develop local bargaining with employers.

Our argument is as follows: current ways of working do not maximise IFAs' potential. Many agreements are negotiated without the involvement of unionists from developing country unions, who are not made fully aware of the agreements' purpose, ramifications and implications. Indeed, in some cases the GUFs, as the representatives of these unions, are themselves only marginally and formally involved

in concluding them. Trade unions from outside of the developed world are often little involved in IFA monitoring and review processes. In these circumstances the agreements frequently do not enable developing country unions to conduct dialogue with companies. There is therefore a need to review how they are negotiated, promoted, monitored and reviewed.

Negotiating International Framework Agreements

International Framework Agreements are often concluded between unions and GUFs on the one hand and senior management on the other. We reproduce the building workers' model framework agreement in Annex 1 and an actual agreement with the French company Lafarge in Annex 2. These agreements may be seen as an attempt to establish stable relationships with companies on an international basis and they are favoured by European unions over the more adversarial and episodic US strategic campaigning approach, which identifies and attacks companies' key relationships (Russo, 1999; Greven, 2003; 2006; 2008).

IFAs may also be viewed as alternatives or supplements to unilateral company codes of conduct as, unlike these codes, they are negotiated and normally feature key union rights (Holdcroft, 2006). In some sectors, such as clothing and textiles, thousands of unilateral codes remain in existence and are likely to remain the predominant tool available to GUFs to exert leverage on companies because of union weakness. Table 8 below provides those details which we have been able to establish of the IFAs in existence in mid 2008.

Table 8: International Framework Agreements to February 2011

Company	Headquarters Country	Industry	GUF	Year Concluded	Signed by HQ Country Union
Danone	France	Food Processing	IUF	1988	No
Accor	France	Hotels	IUF	1995	No
IKEA	Sweden	Furniture	BWI	1998	No
Statoil	Norway	Oil	ICEM	1998	Yes
Faber-Castell	Germany	Office Material	BWI	1999	Yes
Metro	Germany	Commerce	UNI	1999	
Freudenberg	Germany	Chemicals	ICEM	2000	Yes
Hochtief	Germany	Construction	BWI	2000	Yes
Carrefour	France	Retail	UNI	2001	No
Chiquita	USA	Agriculture	IUF	2001	No
OTE Telecom	Greece	Telecommunications	UNI	2001	Yes
Skanska	Sweden	Construction	BWI	2001	No

Company	Headquarters Country	Industry	GUF	Year Concluded	Signed by HQ Country Union
Telefonica	Spain	Telecommunications	UNI	2001	Yes
AngloGold	South Africa	Mining	ICEM	2002	Yes
Ballast Nedam	Netherlands	Construction	BWI	2002	Yes
DaimlerChrysler	Germany	Auto Industry	IMF	2002	No
Endesa	Spain	Power Industry	ICEM	2002	Yes
ENI	Italy	Energy	ICEM	2002	Yes
Fonterra	New Zealand	Dairy Industry	IUF	2002	Yes
Merloni	Italy	Metal Industry	IMF	2002	Yes
Norske Skog	Norway	Paper	ICEM	2002	Yes
Volkswagen	Germany	Auto Industry	IMF	2002	No
GEA	Germany	Engineering	IMF	2003	No
ISS	Denmark	Building Cleaning	UNI	2003	Yes
Leoni	Germany	Electrical/Automotive	IMF	2003	No
Rheinmetall	Germany	Defence/Electronics	IMF	2003	No
SKF	Sweden	Ball Bearing	IMF	2003	No
Bosch	Germany	Automotive/Electronics	IMF	2004	No
H&M	Sweden	Retail	UNI	2004	Yes
Lukoil	Russia	Energy	ICEM	2004	Yes
Prym	Germany	Metal manufacturing	IMF	2004	No
Renault	France	Auto Industry	IMF	2004	Yes
Röchling	Germany	Engineering	IMF	2004	No
SCA	Sweden	Paper Industry	ICEM	2004	Yes
Arcelor	Luxembourg	Metals	IMF	2005	No
BMW	Germany	Auto	IMF	2005	No
EADS	Netherlands	Defence	IMF	2005	No
EDF	France	Energy	ICEM & PSI	2005	Yes
Falck	Denmark	Graphical	UNI	2005	
Impregilo	Italy	Construction	BWI	2005	Yes
Lafarge	France	Construction	BWI & ICEM	2005	No
Rhodia	France	Chemicals	ICEM	2005	Yes
Stabilo	Germany	Cosmetics/Instruments	BWI	2005	Yes
Veidekke	Norway	Construction	BWI	2005	Yes
Euradius	Netherlands	Graphical	UNI	2006	Yes
Nampak	South Africa	Graphical	UNI	2006	No
Portugal Telecom	Portugal	Telecoms	UNI	2006	Yes
PSA Peugeot Citroen	France	Auto	IMF	2006	Yes
Royal BAM	Netherlands	Construction	BWI	2006	No

Company	Headquarters Country	Industry	GUF	Year Concluded	Signed by HQ Country Union
Securitas	Sweden	Property Services	UNI	2006	Yes
Staedtler	Germany	Writing and Drafting	BWI	2006	Yes
France Telecom	France	Telecoms	UNI	2007	Yes
Inditex	Spain	Textiles	ITGLWF	2007	No
NAG	Australia	Finance	UNI	2007	Yes
Quebecor	Canada	Graphical	UNI	2007	Yes
RAG	Germany	Mining	ICEM	2007	Yes
VolkerWessels	Netherlands	Construction	BWI	2007	No
Waz Group	Germany	Media/journalism	IFJ	2007	No
Brunel	Netherlands	Recruitment & and Services	IMF	2008	No
UMICORE	Belgium	Metals	ICEM & IMF	2008	Yes
Vallourec	France	Metals	IMF	2008	Yes
Aker	Norway	Shipbuilding	IMF	2008	Yes
Ability	Brazil	Telecoms	UNI	2008	Yes
Danske Bank	Denmark	Finance	UNI	2008	Yes
ICOMON	Brazil	Telecoms	UNI	2008	Yes
G4S	UK	Security	UNI	2008	Yes
Takashimaya	Japan	Retail	UNI	2008	Yes
Wilkhahn	Germany	Office furniture	BWI	2009	Yes
Elanders	Sweden	Printing	UNI	2009	Yes
Indetex	Spain	Retail/distribution	UNI	2009	Yes
Tel Telecomunicacoes	Brazil	Telecoms	UNI	2009	Yes
Antara	Indonesia	Printing	UNI	2010	Yes
Shoprite Checkers	South Africa	Retail	UNI	2010	No
GDF Suez	France	Energy & water	ICEM, BWI & PSI	2010	No
Pfleiderer	Germany	Wood	BWI	2010	Yes
Italcimenti	Italy	Cement	BWI	2010	No
Electrolux	Sweden	Appliances	IMF	2011	Yes

Source: IFAs taken from GUF websites, employee figures taken from Hoovers.com

IFAs originated in the late 1980s, but have developed significant momentum in the twenty-first century. They are arguably an historic breakthrough since earlier attempts at international collective bargaining in the 1960s and 1970s essentially failed (Bendiner, 1987; Rehfeldt, 1993). One reason for their emergence is that subsequent long-running attempts since the early 1970s by the ITUC and GUFs to win a social clause in international trade agreements had met with little success over the following quarter of a century. The ITUC, while claiming some success in dealings with the World Bank, acknowledged the difficulties and limitations of discussions with the international institutions (ITUC, 2006).

GUFs therefore decided at the turn of the century to try to use the Core Labour Standards that had been recently agreed by the ILO. It was thought best initially to target 'softer' European companies with requests for them to publicly accept these standards and adopt them as their own. It was seen as important to obtain a sufficient number of agreements to build momentum and to encourage more reluctant companies to start negotiations – and this proved successful. IFAs often contain statements of the ILO's Core Labour Standards, some form of review and complaints process, a communication/monitoring mechanism (generally an annual meeting between the signatories) and provision for review and re-negotiation. In 2000 just nine signed agreements existed but by 2004 there were thirty-two, and by mid-2008 sixty-one, mainly in the metalworking, chemical and energy, building and wood, and services sectors (cf. Schömann et al., 2008).

The current context is, however, not conducive to strong agreements at international level. Rehfeldt's (1993) argument in relation to the earlier international collective bargaining attempts – i.e. that they were undermined because no adequate legal framework existed for them – remains valid. Nor are current power relations conducive to negotiated compromises weighted towards workers' interests. Management are not responding to sustained pressure from workers throughout companies when they conclude IFAs (Thorpe and Mather, 2005). Company motives for reaching them are little studied, but IFAs' titles reveal a CSR agenda. For those who look no further (for example, unions outside of those involved in negotiating them) they may appear from these headings as nothing more than company CSR statements. There is a clear risk for the GUFs of being used by companies simply as accomplices in their PR efforts.

It has been argued that companies signing these agreements wish to influence stock market views of their company, develop their corporate cultures internationally, improve conflict resolution and to extend existing cooperative relations with headquarters unions (Schömann et al., 2008). The first IFA was signed by the IUF with Danone, a company that sees itself as a 'social business', a self-image it continues to develop. In this case, the image appears to have some substance. Bruno Vannoni of the IUF was quoted in 2003 as saying: 'We have a real dialogue with the company and they appear to be much more interested than many other farm-produce multinationals in listening to the concerns of employees' (Blyth, 2003: 2). Danone's

family-friendly brand image as a food company also gives it sizeable exposure to the risk of costly brand damage. The majority of its workforce is employed outside of France and it is therefore exposed to the risk that its labour practices may contain pockets of poor practice.

The process of forming a relationship with management leading to an agreement is not uniform. Headquarters unions and related European Works Councils generally play an important role, but agreements are also initiated directly by GUFs (Hammer, 2005). GUFs are the only representatives of unions from outside Europe involved in negotiating IFAs and have attempted to define their role in relation to headquarters unions in concluding them. The International Metalworkers' Federation report on IFAs summarises the principles of negotiation required by that GUF. These include: reference to the ILO Core Labour Standards, universal coverage across all company operations and the importance of home country unions' and works councils' involvement in the negotiation process. The emphasis is therefore on the role of the headquarters union and works councils, reflecting the especially strong influence of powerful national unions in the engineering industry and therefore in that GUF.

The metalworkers are a specific case where workplace organisation is strong and unions are especially reluctant to delegate negotiations to the GUF. Consequently, the IMF has had little role in negotiating many of these agreements, but has often been used to sign them after they have been agreed. Thus, for example, the Röchling 'Principles of social responsibility' are signed by the company chairperson and his counterpart from the European Works Council (Ernst Gräber, also chair of the German Works Council), while two representatives of the European metalworkers and one of the IMF are described as 'entering into the agreement at the time of its signing'. Similarly, the Rheinmetall 'Principles of social responsibility' are signed by the chairperson of the European Works Council, Erik Merks, also chair of a Rheinmetall Works Council and in 2002 a member of the company's supervisory board. This agreement is signed by Merks, and also by representatives of the European metalworkers and the IMF, both of whom are described as 'joining the agreement at the time of signing' [*sic*]. In terms of the right to freedom of association, both agreements' texts are rather ambivalent, and refer to works council forms of representation as a legitimate alternative to trade unionism. In these cases, it appears that the chairpersons of the European Works Councils are also prominent in their German companies. The general impression is that the influence of the German headquarters union has been more significant than that of the GUF.

Other GUFs have equivalent well-organised unions within them and also experience a similar if less sharply posed issue of the balance between the global union and powerful affiliates. There are often practical reasons making it difficult for unions from developing countries to be involved in negotiations. Thus, without real GUF involvement, there is no voice in the negotiation process for unions from outside Europe. This increases the need to make these unions fully aware of the rationale for the agreement and how they might use it.

What occurs in the period after an agreement has been signed has a great bearing on whether it is used by local unions. Agreements have to be translated into all the relevant languages and sent to local management and unions. However, even if this is carried out effectively, the local representatives' level of understanding of the agreement's purpose is unlikely to be high if they simply receive a copy of the IFA without further explanation or discussion regarding the thinking behind it. Even the full meaning and import of specific terms can be an issue. For example, the term 'freedom of association' may not be immediately clear to many workers. Thorough reporting back to extra-European unions on the purpose and course of the negotiations is clearly required.

The evidence of these agreements being used to good effect in practice is not especially strong. Although the texts are often available on GUFs' websites, examples of their practical use are not prominent either there or in their publications. We surveyed selected GUF websites and publications for a six-month period, searching for such references; the results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: References to International Framework Agreements in Selected GUF Publications

Global Union	Total Number of Items	Total Number of References to IFAs
BWI	115	1
IMF	55	10
IUF	47	0
UNI	81	3

Sources: Global Union online Newsletters & Bulletins July–December 2007

The nature and purpose of IFAs could play a significant part in union educational programmes. Yet, mainly concerned with their relationships with well-organised and large European headquarters unions, GUFs currently promote them in a way that contributes little to educating or building their other affiliates' capacities. In reality, GUFs and headquarters unions substitute for the weakness of many affiliates in relation to multinationals by negotiating and signing international agreements that leave local power relationships and dynamics intact.

International Collective Bargaining: Scope and Content

Hammer (2005) distinguishes between two types of IFAs, dividing them into 'rights' and 'bargaining' agreements, with the first covering union rights and the second dealing with substantive issues. In some cases they include clauses on bargaining

subjects such as health and safety and HIV/AIDS. However, the second category's title is potentially misleading: it should not be understood as *substantive bargaining on central distributive issues*, since this is not included in IFAs.

The only GUF which negotiates substantively on key distributive issues is the International Transport Workers' Federation. The ITF bargains for seafarers with groups of ship managers and employers centred on the International Maritime Employers' Committee, with whom it reaches collective agreements through the International Bargaining Forum. These managers and employers have been forced to react collectively to union power in a way that other employers currently are not (Anner et al., 2006). The ITF's long-term Flags of Convenience (FoC) campaign underpins this bargaining by establishing and enforcing conditions of employment through mobilising the combined industrial strength of seafarers, dockers and transport workers. Ships docking in well-unionised ports may be subject to industrial pressure from these groups of workers, and agreements are backed up by an international system of ITF inspectors in ports worldwide. The ITF's agreements with employers are distinctive in that they reflect a serious and prolonged industrial campaign, but also in three further ways. First, they have required that affiliates at least share bargaining with the GUF. Second, these agreements cover wages. Third, they are policed by a co-ordinated ITF inspectors' network, supported by regular educational activities allowing them to meet, develop contacts and exchange experience.

Koch-Baumgarten has cogently argued that there were three circumstances that brought this unique situation about. Firstly, the FOC nations were located in the developing world and were at the time of the campaign's origins essentially union-free, allowing the transfer of collective bargaining responsibilities from national level to the ITF. Secondly, the unions in labour-exporting countries were not to be influential in ITF decision-taking processes for some time to come, allowing the capital-exporting countries to enforce and consolidate the system. Finally, port union controls could be used to discipline potential conflict, both between unions and between unions and the FOC employers. The ITF was gradually able to build the commitment of unions from all countries to the campaign (Lillie, 2004). Nevertheless, the campaign arose, as Koch-Baumgarten shows, from a very specific set of historical circumstances unlikely to be replicated.

It is anticipated within the internationals that IFAs can also be extended to sectoral employers' associations where these exist at international level. Sectoral agreements are clearly easier, and cheaper, for GUFs to make than agreements with large numbers of individual employers. Whether employers who are tending to move away from national level employers' associations will be inclined to move towards them at international level is, however, unclear (Croucher et al., 2006).

As outlined above, IFAs normally include the eight ILO Core Labour Conventions: the freedoms of association and collective bargaining (87 and 98),

against discrimination (100 and 111), forced labour (29, 105) and child labour (138, 182). An important right contained in the Danone agreement but absent from many others is that contained in C.135, 'rights of workers' representatives in the undertaking'. Other labour standards could in theory be included, such as those enshrining the right to strike, security of employment, access to decision makers and those regarding migrant workers. However, the conventions mentioned are generally restricted to the eight stated above. An ILO survey of those agreements signed before the end of July 2003 showed that 20 per cent did not even include Conventions 87 and 98, while mentions of other conventions were even fewer (ILO, 2003). Some, such as the Volkswagen agreement, make only indirect reference to the Core Labour Standards.

The IUF has developed a way of dealing with the current weak focus on union recognition in the agreements, designed to educate both affiliates and companies more fully on their purpose. It has signed a number of national and international Labour Recognition Agreements with multinationals, whose limited but clear aim is to secure union organising and bargaining rights. These agreements emphasise arguably the most important rights covered by an IFA and, because of their relatively sharp focus, may be a more effective way of helping unions build their organising and bargaining capacity. Increasingly, GUFs are trying at review meetings with companies to formulate and agree clearer and more specific language in IFAs, particularly on the right to organise. The IUF's move towards highlighting the organising and bargaining rights issue is clearly a departure of fundamental importance for the whole international union movement. It brings the vital question of local union rights much more clearly into focus.

Hammer (2005) suggests that one effect of IFAs is to extend company level agreements up supply chains to suppliers. In general, however, multinationals resist strong clauses mentioning suppliers. In fact, in some agreements such clauses do not exist (Schömann et al., 2008). With few exceptions, when these clauses appear, they simply specify that companies should 'inform' and 'encourage' their immediate suppliers, ignoring the extended supply chain, and there is no hint of sanctions if they do not conform (Schömann et al., 2008). The Lafarge agreement reproduced in Annex 2 says 'Lafarge will seek to use the services of those trading partners, subcontractors and suppliers which observe the principles agreed'. The Prym–IMF–European Works Council agreement simply 'encourages and supports their business partners to consider this declaration in their own respective company policy [*sic*]'. Even the proposed clauses in the IMF model agreement are not strong: 'X company supports and encourages its suppliers to take into account these principles in their own corporate policy.'

The IMF obviously regards a more stringent model clause as unrealistic. The Lukoil agreement arguably has a stronger but essentially similar version of this type of clause:

The Agreement covers all activities and operations where Lukoil has direct control. Where Lukoil does not have overall control it will exercise its best efforts in order to secure compliance with the standards and principles set out in the Agreement. Lukoil will notify its contractors, licensees and major suppliers of the existence of the Agreement and encourage them to comply with the standards and principles contained within it.

<div align="right">Lukoil–ICEM–ROGWU Agreement 2004</div>

The absence or weak wording of these clauses is significant in the context of widespread externalisation and the fact that the great majority of workers are not directly employed by multinationals. This weakness primarily reflects company resistance to including more substantive terms and conditions.

Implementing and Managing Agreements

The implementation and management of these agreements is a critical area. Local management, like some local unions, are often neither aware of, nor committed to, an agreement signed by senior management in Western Europe. Unions can remedy this situation by reporting problems through agreements' review processes. Local company management can be surprised to learn that these processes exist. In Asia and Latin America, national union federations are weak and incapable of providing much assistance, so management in local operations generally do not anticipate that unions can muster any level of technical or political support. However, the actual incidence of this sort of reporting does not appear to be high.

There is little evidence that local unions have exploited these agreements. The BWI (2004) evaluation suggested that 'currently only a handful of unions are active in using the framework agreements and many are unaware of their purpose or even of their existence'. Vic Thorpe and Celia Mather, highly experienced international trade unionists reporting on the ITGLWF's project designed to conclude IFAs, wrote that 'Many affiliates interviewed had no clear idea of the nature or purpose of an International Framework Agreement' (2005: 7). It is worth noting that this ignorance was despite the project's specific efforts to inform them. Thorpe and Mather went on to recommend a more 'up from below' approach to generate more support (Thorpe and Mather, 2005: 7–8). Such an 'up from below' approach could include involving affiliates more fully in implementation and review processes than at present.

There are currently two approaches to monitoring both IFAs and unilateral company codes. A model promoted by BWI and ITGLWF is of direct GUF supervision and systematic monitoring of suppliers. BWI argues that establishing monitoring groups as part of an IFA's terms is an important tool for monitoring and building the agreements, particularly in companies with long sub-contracting and supply chains. The best-documented example comes from the favourable Scandinavian context. The BWI–IKEA agreement established an IKEA Monitoring Group, made

up of BWI, IKEA and Swedish trade union representatives aimed at developing good industrial relations. Joint missions were carried out by the Monitoring Group in response to complaints from Slovakia, Hungary, Malaysia, Romania, Poland, Thailand, Laos and China. IKEA then set up a Compliance and Monitoring Group to manage IKEA's own code for suppliers. According to the company, this structure carried out training for 80 IKEA auditors and it is claimed that between 2000 and 2003 twenty thousand corrective actions were carried out as a result of audits. The model is essentially one of joint policing from headquarters, thereby at one level overcoming the issue of weak and uneven union representation in many of the company's workplaces outside of Sweden. It satisfies the company's requirement for reduction of labour-related CSR risk and clearly brings benefits to workers. The clear danger for the global union, however, is that the process plays too small a role in building trade unionism outside of the headquarter country.

The second model, used by IUF, UNI, IMF and ICEM, is more collaborative (Fichter and Sydow, 2002) and designed to build affiliates' capacity to monitor and use complaints and review mechanisms. This model is closely tied to the formation of company networks that potentially facilitate complaints being raised. Recently, a method of monitoring has been agreed at Peugeot–Citroen that envisages more decentralised processes. The agreement will be monitored by 'social observatories' to be established at local level involving management and unions according to terms of reference to be agreed by the local parties. The involvement of local unions provides a direct voice for them that would otherwise be absent, and they are clearly more involved in this case than in most. Such an arrangement promotes confidence that local representatives will understand the agreement's content and how it should be applied.

To offer real possibilities for unions outside of Europe to organise, IFAs need to clearly state practical, concrete and specific rights at the workplace. That is, they must be capable of being used by local unions and not simply vague statements by companies of general responsibilities. In this respect, the IUF approach of making them recognition agreements has a good deal to offer.

Conclusion

What impact might IFAs have on building local capacity to bargain and organise? It is important to answer this question within a global perspective, since only a tiny minority of the world's workers are employed in these companies. This is unlikely to change rapidly, and if the internationals cannot organise workers well beyond multinationals their legitimacy as representatives of global labour is likely to be threatened.

Although IFAs set frameworks, the way this is done means that their impact may always be minimal. Limits exist for further developing agreements through review

processes if the current balance of forces between local unionists and managements in the developing world – where the latter possess an overwhelming advantage – remains or, as seems more likely, worsens. The building workers' evaluation of these agreements reached a similar conclusion:

> There is an urgent need for more and better involvement of affiliated trade unions and for them to take greater responsibilities. This will require a training programme to assist unions to take up the challenge of recruiting and organising in those companies.

(BWI, 2004)

It seems more important to help trade unionists to operate both technically and politically within multinationals than to attempt to create agreements they cannot use. As Ingeborg Wick concludes in relation to her research on IFAs and unilateral codes of practice, there is a need to strengthen union capacities to take advantage of them, 'particularly in the developing world' (Wick, 2004: 127). This can be seen as part of the wider process of explaining and promoting international régimes that was identified many years ago as important to any such régime's diffusion and survival (Olson, 1965). Developing networks of trade unionists at both company and regional levels can potentially play a part in this, and this is the subject of our next chapter.

Campaigning

Introduction

IN the previous chapter, we stressed the lack of involvement by unions in the developing world in important aspects of the IFA process. In this brief chapter, we discuss campaigning, by which we mean pressurising companies in a comprehensive and concerted way. In practice, this primarily means mobilising activists to publicise companies' labour practices and using formal procedures in order to win concessions and open a wider dialogue with it. 'Corporate campaigning' is included in this definition, but as a sub-category. Increasingly, difficulties in conventional collective bargaining have generated a need for such activity and it is therefore one which GUFs are taking increasingly seriously. We use a case study to highlight how issues raised by a developing country union were brought on to a GUF's agenda and successfully pursued in this way.

We reject any false dichotomy between the two strategies of IFAs on the one hand and campaigning on the other. Both approaches have their place, according to circumstances. We do nevertheless note that many campaigning opportunities, often originating in the developing world, present themselves to the GUFs. They regularly come into contact with groups of workers experiencing major problems with multi-national employers. Whether they choose to adopt these issues as campaigning matters and if they do, how they then prosecute the subsequent campaign are the questions to be addressed. When vigorously taken up, campaigns can maximise opportunities for involving workers and unions in the developing world when compared with the top-down signing of agreements conducted thousands of miles away.

The chapter is structured as follows. We begin by discussing some of the different methods open to GUFs in campaigning, explaining the issues that they raise. We then present our case study.

Campaigning: forms and issues

Campaigns may take many different forms, from on-the-ground representations to companies, through co-ordinated industrial action, to political action in the public sphere, including 'cyber campaigning'. All today draw at least to some extent on the 'Corporate Campaigning' technique which originated in the USA in the 1960s and is currently exemplified in the work of Ray Rogers and Andy Stern of the American SEIU. The approach identifies company pressure points and attacks them by every means possible. Because of its emphasis on mobilising union resources to pressurise companies this technique exists in a sometimes uneasy relationship with 'organising models' which stress worker self-activity. Yet, as we noted above, corporate campaigning emerged precisely because of unions' reduced capacity to mobilise members.

It has been seen as a case of "desperate measures for desperate times", since it is a nothing-to-lose approach in that it adopts powerful measures in the face of obdurate employers (Manheim 2001:40). It can therefore heighten tensions between different trade union movements since it is not always viewed favourably by the more co-operatively-oriented Continental Europeans. The latter often point out that the aim is to create a dialogue with a company, and that this can be made more difficult if strong and damaging measures are taken against it too early in the process. Increasingly, therefore, GUFs adopt nuanced versions, involving programmes of escalating pressure in order to exert just enough to reach their aims.

As noted above, campaigning may take many different forms, but when a comprehensive range of methods is used, it tends to be resource-intensive and GUFs therefore have to choose their issues strategically. The increasingly extended time-frame for campaigns is a further reason for considering the matter in a strategic way. Given the experience that companies will make agreements to settle particular issues without monitoring compliance on the ground, and without generalising any local solution to the global level, GUFs have come to see a need for extended campaigning that transcends single issues and seeks permanently to embed the means for exerting constant pressure on companies. This approach reflects and illustrates the concept of "permanent campaigning" (Plasser & Plasser, 2002) where campaigns are conceived of as continuous in order to regulate corporations on an ongoing basis. It is in effect a substitute, ideally a temporary one, for collective bargaining. The GUFs are therefore faced with long-term commitments which have major resource implications.

A further, related choice that offers the prospect of addressing the resource issue is whether and how far to act in alliance with other organisations. Campaigning with NGO and broader civil society organisations has historically been important to trade unions. The strength of these campaigns often lies in their capacity to raise general awareness and mobilize consumers (CIIR, 2000) although this clearly has little purchase in non-consumer sectors. However, at times it is difficult to resolve

the inherent tensions between the different organisational and political methods favoured by the GUFs and NGOs. The international NGOs' constitutions, are shaped by their charitable status, and lack political clarity in relation to companies and their labour practices (Berry and Gabay, 2009). An excellent case in point is campaigns for company codes of conduct, often promoted by NGOs, but of very limited value to unions because of their vague stance on labour issues and their self-regulatory nature. Even where alliances are built, thereby creating the prospect of making some economies in the use of resources, the potential difficulties and costs of maintaining the alliance itself have to be taken into account.

Some forms of campaigning entail a need for sophisticated and costly communications techniques, in order to reach large and diverse audiences and to engage with highly developed corporate systems. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s American campaigning techniques, using television and new internet technology, were disseminated and rapidly became mainstream both within GUFs and their key affiliates (Plasser & Plasser, 2002).Two of the earliest promoters of these technologies within the labour movement, Eric Lee and Marc Bélanger, continue to develop new communication and campaigning approaches, including online radio programming. Other cyber methods were on the other hand relatively low cost in relation to the benefits they brought, in part because they sought to leverage the company's own information and image against them. Strong examples of the use of online campaigning were the ICEM's tyre campaigns against Continental and Bridgestone/Firestone in the mid-1990s, both carried out using what were then innovative online petitioning methods, where websites were set up to support direct email protests to management in Germany and Japan (Manheim, 2001). Bridgestone/Firestone, who had 'permanently replaced' two thousand striking members of the USWA, was subjected to a 'cyber picket', using the company's web presence against it. In common with many later campaigns, it used a visual symbol. In the Firestone case, this was a black flag, symbolising immediate disqualification for major rule violation in motor racing. Several of these campaigns were seen within the GUFs as quite successful in bringing results with the companies concerned.

In general, using a combination of different channels appears to work most effectively, and this requires more time and resources from the GUF than cyber-campaigning deployed in isolation. The case that we now present shows precisely such a wide range of approaches used simultaneously.

The IUF, Unilever and the *Casual-T* Campaign

Our example is the IUF's *Casual-T* campaign. This had a number of distinctive features. It involved a GUF in using education to crystallise an issue experienced by a group of workers and then using a combination of methods successfully to pressurise a major MNC. It was a direct result of the GUFs' wider strategic concern

with the evolution of precarious work, and the publicity and emphasis that they gave the subject. The campaign is not a sporadic action, but is regarded as a permanent feature of the IUF's work in order to achieve and maintain an ongoing and structured dialogue with Unilever.

It is important to note that the apparent prospects of success were far from obvious at the outset, not least because the very issue that gave rise to it -casualisation- also hampered campaign building by tending to fragment the workers at its centre. Moreover, the company also appeared to be in a fairly strong position for other reasons. Many unsuccessful attempts had been made over decades by national and international unions to establish dialogue and bargaining with Unilever, one of the world's largest food and domestic product companies. Unilever has approximately 140,000 employees in one hundred countries and claims that it supports between four and seven million jobs through its supply chain. It is a company with a positive CSR image and is often regarded as a 'good employer'. It invests huge amounts in advertising and promoting itself and its products; in 2007, this totalled some 5.2 billion Euros.

The company had created endemic insecurity within the workforce. An estimated 20,000 permanent jobs annually have been eliminated in this MNC through subcontracting, outsourcing and agency labour, a process described by the IUF as 'Hindustanisation'because of the lead taken by Hindustan Unilever. Clearly, in a relatively short space of time the company would directly employ a tiny number of workers. In Pakistan, very few workers fulfilling tasks on the company's behalf were either permanent or employed by Unilever itself. Rather, they were 'no work, no pay' employees taken on by labour contractors with none of the rights to sick pay or the many other enjoyed benefits by the small number of permanent workers. Many had been used in this way over decades. Because of this employment basis, they were lawfully excluded from joining an existing company union, the Union of Unilever Workers.

The basis for any campaign clearly had to be laid carefully and systematically and, as we stress elsewhere, union educational work can play an important role here. The IUF's relationship with the Pakistani union was developed over a long period of union educational work. This included wide-ranging discussion of union organising issues and in particular around the casualisation question, using the IUF manual *Outsourcing and Casualisation in the Food and Beverage Industry* developed for affiliates in 2006. It was this that led the workers involved to decide in October 2008 to launch a campaign to secure permanent jobs.

As we have already implied above, the central company policy towards unions since the 1970s had been rigidly to oppose any form of contact. The standard corporate response to national unions and GUFs alike was that industrial relations issues were a matter for subsidiary companies and local managers. Managers were instructed to avoid coordinated bargaining above all. In short, the policy remained

that laid down in very clear terms by the Company's document 'Attitude Towards International Trade Unionism', dated 1 September 1973:

'Unilever regards industrial relations as a matter for individual operating companies and national managements. It has no wish for wages to be compared between countries, or for workers in one country to support those elsewhere, or for unions to negotiate internationally. It is a **corporate priority** (emphasis original-authors) to make sure that trade unions never feel that they could negotiate above the heads of national managements outside their own countries.'

The workers' campaign therefore faced a determined employer which clearly required the international's support if it was to succeed. Articles appeared on the IUF website and a letter was sent to Unilever's CEO. Four months after this letter had received no reply, in early 2009, the IUF made a strategic decision to launch an IUF-led campaign. This was centrally planned and resourced by the GUF, and focussed on the deteriorating employment conditions experienced by non-permanent workers. The framing of the issue, as one of casualization linked to worsening conditions, had substantial resonance with many IUF affiliates and beyond (Shawki, 2010). The campaign had a central team in the IUF's Geneva headquarters, was actively supported by its regional co-ordinators and also by a Pakistan network set up by the local union.

A strongly and valuably branded, widely recognizable product, Lipton Tea, one of the company's 1600, was targetted. The Lipton tea logo was appropriated and modified as the campaign's symbol. This provided a central theme which could be used in conjunction with add-ons such as '100% disposable' and 'the slaves built the pyramids, casual workers build pyramid tea' added as appropriate. A wide range of mechanisms were used to pressurise the company. First and foremost, the workers at Khanewal themselves took action co-ordinated by the Khanewal Workers' Action Committee. Second, and also importantly, the Dutch trade union FNV Bondgenoten, especially active on international issues, supported them, citing their own fears for casualisation more generally. Third, the central IUF orchestrated the campaign, deciding from the outset to mobilise its affiliates around the world in a co-ordinated way. IUF research facilities were used to investigate the company's structure and to identify all of its key relationships. The company's ethical advisors were supplied with information. The company's Annual General Meeting was informed on the situation, attracting media attention. Social networking sites were used as part of a cyber campaign, to target the company and its shareholders through virtual petitions. Postcards and e-communications were sent to the company.

Demonstrative protest action from a geographically-dispersed range of IUF affiliates and others was organised. In September and October 2009, a series of co-ordinated demonstrations were held internationally. Pickets were held at company premises in Pakistan, Russia, the Netherlands, Hungary, the Philippines, Australia, Uruguay, South Africa and the Dominican Republic. Lipton's Australasian

headquarters in Sydney were targeted by a range of unions co-ordinated by Unions New South Wales. The protest demonstration featured the *'Casual-T'* logo and was covered by national radio and television. In Russia, the VKT (the All-Russian Confederation of Labour) and the All-Russia Agricultural Complex Union conducted a series of demonstrations at Unilever-sponsored events and offices. In South Africa, despite strong management pressure not to participate, members of ICEM affiliates demonstrated outside the Unilever Maydon Wharf plant in Durban. In Budapest, activists from the Hungarian Trade Union Confederation MSZOSZ and the Metal Workers' Federation drank a symbolic toast of tea to the Pakistani worker activists at Lipton's Budapest headquarters. They then threw the teabags into a rubbish bin and handed it, together with a written demand from the Hungarian Unilever Workers' Union, to a Unilever representative. Thus, the campaign showed considerable creativity and involved an internationally wide range of unions with very different cultures and political orientations. The company was being simultaneously pressured at multiple geographical locations and in different ways.

The company's initial reaction was to continue the previous policy of trying to ignore what was occurring. The Pakistani labour contractors on the other hand were more hostile and less aware of the way that their actions were now in the public sphere than Unilever. Their relatives violently attacked and hospitalised Abdul Aziz, a member of the Khanewal Action Committee. This was in turn publicised all over the world by the campaigners, to Unilever's embarrassment.

Positive results were obtained from using a formal mechanism. The IUF acknowledges that use of a frequently criticised and non-binding procedure played a role in changing the company's long-held policy. The procedure in question was that linked to the OECD's Guidelines for Multi-National Enterprises, a set of guidelines and principles designed to promote responsible practice in, *inter alia*, industrial relations. These have no legal force but may be adopted by national governments. Complaints that they have been breached may be made to National Contact Points, who are individuals nominated by governments.

In March 2009, the IUF made complaints to the OECD National Contact Point for the UK that the rights to fair or decent pay and to freedom of association were being breached at the two plants. These were not the first relevant complaints to be made to the National Contact Point, since two others concerning the company's operations in India and Pakistan had been made earlier. According to the OECD guidelines, the complaint must give rise to an investigation and an attempt at conciliation. The mere fact that the conciliation process is set in train does not imply that the complaint is accepted, but negotiations between the IUF and the company began under the auspices of the UK National Contact Point. Through that process, the company soon agreed to make important concessions at the Pakistani plants, bringing the beginning of international dialogue between the IUF and the company.

Unilever agreed to create two hundred additional direct, permanent jobs with

priority given to the members of the Khanewal Workers' Action Committee, which led the struggle locally. Thus, even if in only a minor sense, the 'Hindustanisation' process was reversed. Further local agreements were also reached, at the Rakhim Yar Khan plant in Pakistan and at Sewri, India. Perhaps more significantly, union dialogue with the company was achieved in a number of broad areas. Mention of unions appeared on the company's website for the first time. The mutuality principle was accepted at the level of the Pakistani company, in that the IUF and Unilever Pakistan agreed to form a committee to oversee appointments to permanent jobs. The company also agreed that the IUF itself and its affiliates were, in its own words 'entitled to exercise full representational functions' in the factory. Finally, in March 2010 the company hosted an international meeting of trade union representatives from all of its major countries of operation; this in turn led them to commit themselves to regular meeting with the IUF to discuss labour practices. The continuing campaign holds out the prospect of ensuring that the regular meetings envisaged between the company and the GUF both actually take place and are adequately and fully informed by workers' problems.

A broadly similar pattern of events also led to a role for the IUF and its affiliates in ensuring that union rights are upheld in the Coca Cola bottling plant through an agreement that resolved a long and bitter dispute in Multan, Pakistan in July 2010. Thus, the role of the international itself appears to be expanding.

In July, 2010, in a curious coda to this case, Unilever was named 'Company of the Year' by the UK-based organisation Business in the Community, for the 'positive impact' it has on communities, environments, marketplaces and workplaces around the world. Whilst the award is from a UK organisation, it is made for the company's work at the global level. While the solutions described above may appear to legitimate such an award, the fact that a major campaign formed the background to them seems to have been ignored. As is so often the case, most of the self-congratulatory discourse which followed the award concerned the environment and sustainability rather than employees. This illustrates the extent of the gulf between so many business organisations on the one hand, and realities in the developing world's workplaces on the other which makes the need for the GUFs' work so apparent.

Conclusion

Clearly, the *Casual-T* campaign successfully utilised a range of co-ordinated tactics to achieve a symbolic win on casualisation, an issue of major importance. It succeeded in establishing apparently permanent channels of dialogue with a company that had previously resisted dealing with unions on anything other than a national level and even then on as narrow a front as possible. Finally, while the company has not signed an IFA with the IUF, it has recognised the GUF's industrial relations role at global level. The campaign may be regarded as a contribution towards the GUFs' wider goal

of mainstreaming the labour standards issue within globalisation discussions, which remain centred on environmental and other questions that do not compel companies to confront the ways that they get work done.

Several further conclusions may be drawn that are significant for our themes. First, *Casual-T* drew on but transcended 'corporate campaigning' tactics by involving workers and using formal procedures. Unlike the lead-up to the signature of most IFAs, it mobilised the whole GUF's human resources in a centrally-co-ordinated way to build on sustained local activism. No IFA has been concluded with the company. Second, it bears repeating that it is a continuing campaign designed to ensure that pressure on the company is maintained. It is this, together with HQ involvement in campaigning and the fact that the IUF is involved in monitoring the implementation of local agreements that has made it resource-intensive. Since the campaign was on a strategic issue, this could be justified, but any proposal to take the approach to more than a few other companies will have to take this into account. As we stress throughout this book, this underlines the crisis of resources faced by the internationals. Third, long-term educational activity carried out by the GUF was important to developing the local activism that formed the foundation for the whole campaign, a theme that we develop in chapter eight dedicated to that subject.

Networks

Introduction

I NTERNATIONAL networks of trade unionists are clearly useful for unions attempting to make IFAs into meaningful organising tools. Moreover, because they help to build unions' engagement with other unions internationally, they are key to delivering international solidarity action.

Defining 'networks' is problematic as the term is used by GUFs in multiple and often confusing ways – sometimes to describe *ad hoc* groupings, sometimes committees and even to describe a GUF (Union Network International). By 'network' here we mean stable groups of union representatives from different units of a multinational company or sector who are in communication with each other. A degree of stability and permanence is required for the description to be meaningful, as in many cases networks have been formally established but have no continuing existence (Greven, 2006). Finally, networks should be identifiable as such within the trade unions and membership should be possible. In practice, networks take quite different forms, with differing levels of involvement of works councils, headquarters and non-headquarters unions, management and GUFs. From a union viewpoint, networks' aims vary and may develop across time, but they are generally set up initially to collect and exchange information with the aim of progressing towards organising, coordination and solidarity action.

Company networks are of strategic significance to GUFs (Garver et al., 2007). The IMF World Auto Council identified both IFAs and 'timely, accurate and accessible information' through networks as central, related tasks for the IMF in 2004 (IMF, 2004). The BWI evaluation of IFAs similarly suggested that to succeed, they would require 'substantially improved communication and global networking' (BWI, 2004).

The central argument of this chapter is that the networks in existence are in these terms problematic. Staggeringly, given their strategic importance and the substantial GUF resources dedicated to them, there are no examples of truly global company networks. There are no networks with global scope that relate directly to existing International Framework Agreements. This is largely because of pockets of non-unionism, non-affiliation by some unions and because many companies take pains

to keep agreements and networks apart. However, important methodological and procedural problems also hamper network development.

To be described as successful, a network should deliver demonstrable benefits to workers. In this chapter, five key factors are identified that underlie successful networks: how they are formed, company attitudes and influence, resources, the network's ability to facilitate participation of diverse memberships, and the spatial basis of that membership. Existing company networks show that self-interest and a potential increase in bargaining power with employers are insufficient to generate the high level of engagement required to achieve success. The networks that we examine which function at higher levels exhibit 'significant commonality' (Olmsted, 1959: 21) and encourage a depth of engagement that goes beyond the instrumental. The network members are aware of having something significant in common; that is, a commitment to *international* trade unionism.

The chapter concludes with the suggestion that the best way to develop sufficient commitment from network members is to build engagement by working in small groups, or 'minilaterally' as defined in Chapter three, using participatory educational tools.

A Functioning Regional Network

That networks have great potential for unions is exemplified by the ICEM's Caspian Energy Network, formally established in 2005 in a region and sector of major strategic importance to the GUF. The Caspian Sea region, with the world's third largest oil and gas reserves behind the Middle East and Russia is likely to become a major energy exporter over the next decade. Currently, these countries are relatively minor producers due to specific political, economic and technical factors. Major multinational oil and gas companies operate in Azerbaijan, the centre of oil production in the region, through a consortium. BP, Chevron, ENI-Agip and Lukoil are involved and the Norwegian oil company Statoil is a small but significant consortium member. The Azeri state oil company Socar is a major player in exploration and development, directly employing around seventy thousand people. Numerous new pipeline projects have been proposed. Some are under construction, the most significant being the Caspian Pipeline Consortium Project, the Baku–Tiblisi–Ceyhan oil pipeline and the South Caucasus natural gas pipeline Baku–Tiblisi–Ersurum. These and other projects involve countries outside the Caspian region, notably Turkey, Georgia, Iran and the countries of Central Asia.

The oil unions in the former Soviet Union were until the early twenty-first century entirely enclosed in bureaucratic relations with their state employers, with no experience of or, in many cases, interest in organising workers in the growing number of private companies. Long-term contact between the leaderships of the Norwegian, Russian and Azeri unions led to discussion of forging a strategic alliance

and opened the Azeri union to wider perspectives. These unions represented the most significant groups of union membership and concentrations of available resources, particularly in relation to access to company management. For more than five years the unions, in partnership with the ICEM, engaged in educational work and associated relationship building, developing strong communication links between future network members. Thus, the group's evolution allowed time for educational processes to occur.

At the initial network meeting, union participation was as broad as possible, given that there were no contacts in Iran and Turkmenistan and only weak links with Kazak ICEM affiliates. The meeting was held on the basis that participants would be free to set up the kind of network they thought would be effective. Group participation was high, allowing unions to set group goals highly congruent with individual interests and to form an informed, realistic view of what could be achieved. Active learning methods were used, and focussed aims established through in-depth discussion about the network's purpose. These aims included the identification of business and trade union partners willing to enter into dialogue, and the development of negotiation skills in union representatives. Significantly, the network also decided on immediate tasks, including research, negotiation and organising activities. The process allowed the core group of Azeri, Russian and Norwegian unions to persuade less-engaged members to increase their commitment. Both the strategic and immediate targets were concrete and achievable but group aims were set to the highest, rather than the lowest, common denominator. The network agreed collectively to attend an international oil sector conference taking place in Baku the following year in order to find possible company targets and present the network publicly.

During the visit to Baku the network directly assisted the Azeri Oil and Gas Workers' Union (OGWU), which until this point exclusively organised permanent workers in the state oil company Socar, to organise private sector employees. The union had only limited experience of organising and none of managing strike action. In November 2005 two thousand workers employed by Socar, BP and the American-based contractor McDermott, supported by OGWU, went on strike for union recognition, medical care, improved pay and contracts. The Caspian Energy Network members, all senior leaders in their own countries, assisted OGWU's President, Jahangir Aliyev, to manage the negotiations and to carry out a recruitment campaign to organise private sector workers. The network used the national media to pressure the employers' consortium, highlighting the issues involved and announcing the presence of union leaderships from across the region, supported internationally by the ICEM.

OGWU organised 5,000 private sector workers during this campaign. Shortly afterwards, 1,600 workers employed at the offshore BosShelf site, a French–Azeri construction project partially owned by Bouygues, joined OGWU following a strike. Union negotiations brought improvements for workers. Several of the companies

now recognise Azerbaijan's national celebratory days and official holidays. These strikes proved to be historic breakthroughs in the Baku area, because a wave of similar actions followed. At the time of writing, workers in another fourteen companies have been engaged in industrial action also bringing improvements to contract workers' terms and conditions. Most recently, in June 2008 OGWU negotiated increases of more than 100 per cent in minimum salaries and obtained health and safety improvements for over one thousand contract workers at Caspian Shipyards.

The network was therefore able to perform a high level of 'locomotion' (Olmsted, 1959: 113), or mobilisation, based on the high level of cohesiveness built within the primary group. This cohesiveness was, in turn, based on the high capacity of network members to communicate, developed through the educational approach to relationship building. The wave of organising and negotiating successes in Baku galvanised the network, providing a precedent for organising in the private sector that showed results which members in other countries promoted in their own unions. Several other unions in the network are now moving beyond their enclosed state oil company horizons to organise more widely.

Company and Sectoral Networks

The Caspian Energy Network contextualises our analysis of company and sectoral networks because many are less evidently successful in delivering benefits to workers. There is in fact little reliable information about the numbers and workings of the networks supported by different GUFs, reflecting the latters' nervousness that a gap exists between theory and practice in this area. The number of genuine networks operating in each GUF is likely to be in single figures.

In what follows, the five key factors in developing networks mentioned above are highlighted and illustrated from the limited evidence available.

The first factor to consider is how networks are formed. The Caspian Energy Network was created after a long process of relationship building. The core unions at the network's centre had brought their relations to the point at which they were already strongly committed to the idea of a regional network before the founding meeting. At the meeting, network aims were developed from the bottom up and attracted the broadest possible participation. This contrasts sharply with the normal process whereby a GUF or union raises money for a meeting, and then invites unions to join a 'global network'. There are normally short preparation periods for these meetings and the scope of the proposed organisation is already set from outside. In addition, relationships are generally too weak to build commitment and a focus on practical issues is lacking. Expectations are raised beyond what is achievable, particularly in view of the actual resources available, which are seen as almost exclusively the GUF's responsibility to acquire. The network is then in

practice frequently reduced to a small 'global steering committee' with little wider involvement.

Although the few existing accounts pay little attention to them, company attitudes and influence are another key factor. Since resources are a major issue, in almost all cases management plays a role in providing the conditions for networks to exist. Frequently, network meetings divide their time between union-only pre- and post-meetings, as well as joint meetings with management. Management structures often conceptualise them as 'employee consultative councils', similar to national level or European Works Councils but without the same legal basis. Companies are anxious, as Schömann et al. (2008: 46) point out, to avoid trade union organisations 'becoming real negotiating partners on working conditions' at international level. Thus, for example, Unilever expressed its preference for company-based forms of representation such as works councils over trade unions to Schömann and her colleagues. In common with many management structures, they prefer to avoid the 'outside influence' of unions, and to build close relationships with in-company representatives. However, these can be too close. The Volkswagen World Works Council (VWWC) appears to have the strongest structure and most cooperative relationship with management. But it has also become clear that the nature of the relationships between company and works council in the national level German codetermination bodies that form the basis for the VWWC went well beyond cooperation. Their corruption amounted to a major public scandal that still threatens to discredit the entire system of codetermination in Germany.

As we remarked above, a disjuncture exists between IFAs and company networks. In the cases of the signed IFAs listed in Table 9 in Chapter five there appear to be only a few functioning regional and no global networks corresponding to them. The explanation, it has been suggested to us, is simple: managements do not wish the two to coexist and, given their role in allowing paid time off and funding travel and accommodation for those who attend, they often have the power to make sure that they do not.

A common theme of the limited discussion that has taken place on this subject by others is that structural and process difficulties may be overcome, but only if more resources become available (Müller and Rüb, 2005; Miller, 2004). That is, the cost of running networks poses a serious challenge to already stretched union finances. A 'global network' meeting costs between thirty thousand and seventy-five thousand Euros and approximately three quarters of the network's potential membership is likely to lack the resources to pay for their participation. Since global networks are seen as the responsibility of the coordinating GUF, it is assumed that they must either raise project funding from donors or from companies themselves. A second possible resourcing strategy is for the headquarters union to carry the main burden of administration and activity costs. This inevitably tends to further increase the weight of that union within the network. Networking underlines

the resource crisis facing the internationals. Either unions at national level will have to commit more resources to international work, or networking will remain inadequate to the tasks.

The fourth factor to consider is the network's ability to facilitate the participation of diverse memberships. This is affected by the complexity of communication within international networks (Miller et al., 2000). Communication at international level is difficult, for both practical and political reasons. In many countries, and probably the majority, union activists have only limited English or second language capacity. In most developing countries activist access to computers is extremely limited and telecommunications are often unreliable for providing timely responses to other network members' messages. Even when the practicalities of communication are somehow managed, most activists from the developing world are entering an entirely unfamiliar forum in a 'global' network. At network meetings members must explicitly state their own interests, understand those of other unions and critically assess the network's potential. This all has to be done within a relatively short period of two to three days, often with little pre-meeting information or previous contact with other network members. Groups of diverse and often inexperienced participants find it difficult to successfully navigate such situations.

Levels of union organisation in multinationals are uneven. This can limit the scope of network membership, with totally unorganised sites and others with low density coexisting with well organised ones. These disparities create a situation of unequal weight and influence between units which has to be managed to ensure that genuine collaboration becomes possible. The more truly international the network is, the greater are the socio-economic differences that must be confronted. As discussed in previous chapters, considerable differences exist between the politics and approaches of unions from different traditions, to the extent that cohesion can become almost impossible to achieve.

None of this is to deny that interests can be aggregated, but the difficulties in developing full participation are considerable. Clearly, the internal dynamics of the network count, in particular whether the network helps members from developing regions genuinely to participate.

The problems are graphically illustrated through the example of an international network within the US tyre manufacturer Goodyear. The United Steel Workers of America (USWA) funded the initiation of the Goodyear Global Union Network in March 1999, at an event attended by over one hundred trade unionists from sixteen countries. In 2006 the USWA started the Goodyear Newsletter, during a strike against Goodyear in the US and Canada, called 'Global Solidarity'. By the account provided by a representative of the Thai workers involved, the network later proved incapable of defending a victimised activist.

In 2005 Anan Pol-ung, President of the Thai Goodyear union PCFT was sacked for trying to negotiate improved benefits and permanent contracts for twenty-five

contract workers on annual contracts. In October 2005 all of these workers were sacked, and all direct employment of contract workers by Goodyear was terminated. Goodyear then used external labour agencies to employ workers in these functions. Anan was simultaneously reinstated, although at a lower grade.

The Thai Industrial Relations Court ruled for the reinstatement of the contract workers in April 2006. When the remaining sixteen workers (two had died in the intervening period) appeared at the factory for work in May 2006, management refused them entry. In August 2006 Anan was sacked for a second time for failing to attend a meeting because he had to attend to his comatose mother in hospital.

The ICEM was contacted by the Thai union PCFT requesting solidarity support. The ICEM ensured that the dispute was understood and recorded, and contacted the United Steelworkers of America. The GUF built a high-profile information and solidarity campaign, as this represented one of the first attempts by a small local union to organise and bargain for contract workers, a priority issue. After repeated requests, the United Steel Workers of America agreed to invite Anan Pol-ung to discuss the case during the two-day Global Goodyear Unions' Network Meeting in Akron, Ohio, USA 19–20 March 2007. The meeting was attended by ICEM representatives and its most powerful affiliates, including the South African NUM and the German IG BCE. Despite this representation, when Anan's case was raised in the meeting with management, the Goodyear HR representative was allowed simply to comment that he tried not to be involved in matters outside the US and that he would refer the case to the manager in charge of Thailand. The outcome is regarded by the Thai workers as a network failure, particularly since they had managed to overcome major barriers in bringing the case to international attention. Despite heavy backing by the GUF, the Thai activists did not obtain even moral support from the network, including from the developed country trade unionists present.

International company networks are too frequently dominated by headquarters unions, leaving no space for weaker and smaller unions to genuinely participate in network development and work. Several longstanding networks have made little or no progress in addressing this major problem. The Daimler–Chrysler World Employee Committee, formed after the merger between the two companies as an extension of German works council arrangements, provides an example. Some unions outside of the key Europe–North America company axis are not involved, while the IMF has only an advisory role. In the view of both of these unions and the IMF, the network pays too little attention to the need to construct and aid organisation in the developing world.

A second example is that of the Nestlé network, whose development is shown in Table 10. This network's origins are tied up with significant international action, in which the right of a Peruvian union to operate was successfully defended, via the IUF and a New Zealand affiliate (Rütters, 2001). This initial impetus was important to all concerned, but, predictably, proved hard to maintain.

Table 10: The Nestlé Network

Phase	Objectives	Participants	Activities	Funding
1972–1979	Networking & information exchange, planning/feasibility	Global	2 IUF conferences, informal contact with Nestlé management	IUF/Affiliates' own expense
1980s	Networking & information exchange	EU, North America	2 regional networking events	Affiliates' own expense, Nestlé European Council
1993–1999	Development of 3 regional networks, global networking and information exchange, establishment of network objectives	Africa, Latin America, Asia-Pacific	1 global & 3 regional meetings, Manila Declaration	LO Norway
2002–2004	Coordinated information exchange, networking and campaigning	Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia-Pacific	4 regional & 1 global meeting	FES, NGG, IUF
2004–2007	Coordination of information and networking in 4 regions	Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia-Pacific	4 half-time coordinators	FES

Source: Levinson (1972) and Rüb (2004)

The IUF report on the Nestlé network (Rüb, 2004), as it has functioned more recently, raises structural and process issues about the way that internal dialogue is conducted. Agendas and procedural matters are used to deal formally with issues that are of interest mainly to headquarters unions, and there are too few possibilities for delegates to address problems outside of this framework.

The key to successful aggregation of interests between representatives of workplaces with different interests from unions of very different types and of facilitating the necessary learning process is, Hoffmann (2005) suggested, a discursive and transparent way of operating that acknowledges differences of interests and tries openly to find common ground. This underlines the relevance of using educational methods, which assist networks in developing open and participative approaches, as Erne (2006; 2008) has shown. Doug Miller, an experienced worker educator with the ITGLWF, provides guidance on appropriate processes (Miller, 2004). His sensitive analysis is especially useful precisely because it derives from a sector with relatively weak union organisation, which tends to magnify the problems associated with network building. The methods Miller advocates are: a multi-level research effort by unions on the company, awareness raising to build networks, a flexible approach

by the GUF, and coordinated campaigns with other interested organisations such as NGOs (an approach that is especially relevant to the weakly organised ITGLWF). Thus part of his prescription is similar to ours since he advocates an inclusive, flexible approach facilitated by strong research and two-way educational processes broadly defined.

The fifth and final factor that influences network functionality is the spatial basis for membership. The network operating in the German chemical multinational BASF illustrates the point, because there is no central dialogue, but rather a set of regional networks established over a period of around ten years. This is a highly devolved structure, sustained by a combination of external project funding from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and company finance, and built on a regional basis with involvement from the ICEM. It is viewed within the GUF as relatively successful since regional dialogue with management has been secured in Latin America and Asia. Coordinated bargaining within each region has been achieved, albeit to different extents. The right to organise has also been won in practice, most notably in some Latin American workplaces. Definite gains have therefore been made, although how much this has been brought about by the network is harder to ascertain. The BASF example indicates the significance of the degree of devolution of the networks' structures and power relations. It is an example of the benefits of working within smaller groups, in this case with a smaller geographic scope. The problem of language is to some degree alleviated by working within sub-regional or regional groups. Although this will have a limited effect in the Asia region, it impacts much more in Latin America and the former Soviet Union.

We summarise our interpretations of the five networks discussed above in Table 11 below. We note the limited level of solidarity action, mobilisation and bargaining success that the networks have managed to achieve, despite many years of activity. All of the networks discussed claim some success, but their achievements, although real, are so far limited to a few documented instances. Some limited space has been created for trade unionists outside of the developed world. The Daimler–Chrysler network succeeded in successfully raising the right of Turkish workers at the Ditas plant to organise, and has dealt with other complaints raised through its consultative structure with management. In Nestlé, the network's origins were linked to successful international solidarity action. Later, it was able to provide moral support to an important strike at a plant in Korea, with the union consolidating its position and membership through public action and the network in turn gaining impetus through that.

The most substantial, if uneven, bargaining successes appear to have been achieved by the BASF regional networks. The regional Caspian Sea network has also delivered considerable gains to workers.

Table 11: Interpretive Summary of Five Networks

Company/Sector	Initiator	Motives	Achievements	Disadvantages
Caspian Energy Project	ICEM NOPEF ROGWU OGWU	Build bargaining & organising capacity in the Caspian	Organising private sector workers Establishing regional network	Requires high level of GUF and union staff resources No real capacity to include organisations from Turkmenistan and Iran
Goodyear	USWA	Establish global information and campaigning network to support national negotiations	Information exchange	No capacity for direct solidarity action
Nestlé	IUF	Inability to secure dialogue with Nestlé management	Information exchange Solidarity mechanism High-profile IUF activity	No dialogue at national, regional or international levels Unsustainable financially
DaimlerChrysler	IG Metall German Works Council	Secure information and coordination between key plants Ensure IG Metall control of international dialogue	Resolution of several disputes	No real IMF role No real developing country influence Weak agreement with company Unable to sustain commitment of unions globally
BASF	IG BCE ICEM GWC	Establish regional social dialogue outside Western Europe	Regional dialogue in Latin America and Asia Networking contacts in Eastern Europe	No IFA No global dialogue; failure to engage North American management and unions

Conclusion

The conclusions here mesh with arguments made elsewhere in the book that working within small groups and with an educational focus offers an immediately viable way of networking. Five key factors have been identified as important to networking success: how networks are formed, company attitudes and influence, resources, the potential for participation and the spatial basis of membership. In terms of how networks are formed, time and resources are clearly needed for the educational processes required. Company attitudes and influence are closely linked to the resources issue; networks' degree of independence needs to be as high as possible and therefore more independent funding is needed. At present, IFAs and networks are being kept apart by companies who dispose of the necessary resources.

Maximising membership participation in the network is largely determined by whether the power dynamics between unions from developed (particularly the headquarters unions) and developing countries can be managed successfully. The use of an educational approach helps this to be managed effectively; what this entails is explored in the next chapter. How networks are run is a major issue and taking an educational approach to networking raises the potential for generating the other success factors. Education allows network members to communicate their own interests and relate to those of others in ways that build psychological engagement. Importantly, it strengthens the link between membership identification with the network and their behaviour. A network's capacity to mobilise union activity and resources is also increased because targets are well understood and articulated. This level of engagement is fundamental to building a strong communication foundation.

The most successful examples of high levels of engagement involve small groups of unions, normally brought together on a regional or sub-regional basis. These small, closely related groups are able to achieve higher degrees of mutual understanding, cohesion and coordinated action than existing networks. The point about the effectiveness of regional as opposed to global networking already appears well taken in some GUFs. Thus, the IMF's World Auto Council has argued to the IMF that improved regional structures should underpin their World Auto Councils (IMF, 2004).

This discussion has implications for the question raised in the previous chapter regarding how to proceed with IFAs. Following the analysis laid out in this chapter it is clear networks that still need to be built effectively to use IFAs should, from their inception, be created on a minilateral or regional basis, with the bulk of resources devoted to educational activities rather than, as at present, to global steering committee meetings. This is an essential reorientation.

International Union Education

It is important to realise that this tool for the union, education, keeps on being improved and used to keep the movement going forward. In general, trade union education is an essential tool for the unions as it has the capacity to allow them to define where they are, where they want to be and how they will get to where they want to be. It is a tool for unions to deal with the challenges of today's globalised workplace and the MNC.

<div align="right">

(The African trade unionist who provided this
quotation has asked to remain anonymous.)

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Education helps to build solidarity between workers at local, national and international level. Through affiliation with ITF and participation in ITF education courses, our airline union learned and had information exchanges with similar unions in other countries. In one airline company, many protest letters were sent to management in Thailand and they were forced to improve the work rules.

<div align="right">

Aranya Pakapath, ICEM Project Coordinator Thailand

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Introduction

THIS chapter examines trade union education in the international context. We refer here to educational work carried out primarily by the internationals, which although it is often linked to that carried out at national level, is distinctive because of the involvement of trade unionists from more than a single country. Trade union education has historically been, and remains, a central tool of the internationals' work and this is unsurprising since some major national unions had their origins in educational activity. In most GUFs funding spent on this area is equivalent to income from affiliation fees and consumes more staff resources than any other area of work, even though its full import and significance are not always grasped.

Our argument here has four related strands. First, education broadly conceived is indispensable for helping unions to socialise activists, arm them with arguments and

confidence to tackle their problems, form networks and develop their organisations. Second, the union educational model, which emphasises egalitarian, transparent and discursive approaches to defining and solving problems, is ideally suited to international activities. Third, the world's unions are extremely diverse and have a wealth of experience in dealing with workers' problems. This very diversity, often referred to as a major problem in international unionism, can be turned to advantage through positive use. Exchanges of experience and the results of experimentation can be shared constructively in educational environments. Finally, and crucially for both unions and the internationals themselves, education strongly stimulates democratic involvement. It has been shown that unions can become 'learning democracies' whereby the informal processes of collective learning coexist with, supplement and support more formal representative democracy (Huzzard, 2000).

International Union Education: Definitions, Extent, Significance and Methods

We adopt a broad definition of education. We include within it all forms of activity designed to build unions' capacities to deal with members' problems, from formal programmes of education at one end of the spectrum to secondments, informal consultancy and coaching at the other. Nevertheless, the primary activity we are referring to consists of classroom-based programmes of structured discussion and participant-centred activities. These approaches can also be used to good effect outside of classrooms, and supplemented by the other methods we refer to.

The number of trade unionists participating in education at any one point is extremely difficult to estimate with any degree of accuracy because basic data are unavailable. Nevertheless, we attempt a very broad estimate here since it is important to have some idea of its global reach.

It is likely that on average a GUF works with approximately fifty unions from developing countries each year and educates somewhere between five hundred and five thousand unionists at grassroots and leadership levels, i.e. between ten and one hundred per union. Therefore if the number of union participants lies somewhere between these poles of ten and one hundred, then the global total is in the region of around 25,000 a year for all GUFs. This is a relatively small proportion of total membership, since the membership of ITUC affiliates is around 167 million. Nevertheless, over the last twenty-five years of global union programmes, hundreds of thousands of trade unionists are likely to have received some level of education. A large percentage of these participants have maintained their activism and some have taken senior positions. A good deal of scope remains for further development, because some of these participants are likely only to have had brief contact with union education.

Some further insight into the proportion of members involved can be gleaned

from rough estimates of the numbers touched by the relatively large educational effort made by the internationals and others in the former Soviet Union. An external evaluation of international union educational work there admitted that figures are difficult to give with confidence. This comprehensive report, produced by a team of researchers led by Irina Khaliy of the Russian Academy of Sciences (2005), estimated that the total number of people involved over the ten years between 1994 and 2004 exceeded 300,000. The total formal membership of the Russian unions alone in 2004 was around 34 million; therefore around one member in one thousand had experienced some involvement. Recognising that the aim was to train the vital activist layer rather than all members, the report suggested that the extent of the work was 'truly significant' but that much remained to be done to increase the numbers involved: 'There are still thousands of willing activists at workplace level who need practical assistance to help them in the new functions they know they must perform' (Khaliy, 2005: 3). Thus, even here, where major efforts have been made, many remain untouched. Sogge (2004) pointed out that despite the upsurge in international bodies' efforts in the former Soviet Union, many requests for assistance could not be met.

The internationals are responsible for coordinating the educational effort. They are well placed to carry out, commission, supervise and expand educational work since they have unique expertise in international industrial relations. They are living concentrations of accumulated historical knowledge, a profound asset from which affiliates and their activists stand to benefit. They also have many experienced individuals who can be described as 'bridge builders', people who have been identified as being important in helping trade unionists from different backgrounds to work together in effective ways (Garver et al., 2007). The internationals' staff are aware of best practice in union educational methods although they are often less aware of the applicability of these methods outside of the classroom situation in, for example, network-building contexts. As we argued in the previous chapter, this is an issue that needs attention.

We show the typical aims, subjects, forms and results of trade union education in international contexts in Table 12 below. Union education has an overarching aim, i.e. one that applies to all of its forms: to raise trade unionists' and workers' confidence in their capacity to tackle their own problems collectively. Underneath this umbrella aim, a good number of secondary aims have also existed.

The first and perhaps most obvious is to develop unions' capacity to carry out representative functions on behalf of their members, both directly by improving representational capacity and indirectly by addressing union structures, management and ways of working. Many unions worldwide do not have extensive experience of representation nor of organising or mobilising workers. In the case of unions from the ex-Communist countries for example, education has recently meant demonstrating the relevance of unions adopting organising, mobilising and representational

Table 12: Typical Target Groups, Subjects, Aims, Forms and Results of International Trade Union Education

Target Group and Subject	Aims	Forms	Results
Union officers and workplace representatives: representing workers (Typical topics: organising and mobilising workers, health and safety, negotiating)	Improve worker representation	Formal education programmes, study circles	Improved worker representation, democratising effects in unions
Union officers, representatives and workers: training for paralegal representatives	Provide free representation in legal contexts	Formal education programmes	Systems of free workers' representation in industrial courts, legal arbitration systems
Trade union tutors: 'training trainers'	Increase available pool of worker educators	Formal education programmes, 'micro-teaching', coaching and mentoring, information, materials exchange through newsletters etc.	Creation and maintenance of pool of worker educators
Union officers and workplace representatives: union management and organisational development	Improve union structures, ways of working; improve participation of women and ethnic minorities	Formal educational programmes, inter-union exchanges	Improvements in union effectiveness; increased participation of women and ethnic minorities
Workplace representatives and workers: very wide range of workplace-based subjects including HIV/AIDS peer counselling	Very wide range Peer counselling for HIV/AIDS aim is to train peer counsellors	Formal educational programmes, study circles	Raise identification with union; specific outcomes such as creating body of HIV/AIDS peer counsellors
Workers	Raise workers' participation in unions and in HIV/AIDS programmes, skills training etc.	Wide range of formal and informal forms	Raised worker participation in unions and HIV/AIDS programmes, improved worker skills etc.

approaches. Issues of union structure and democracy are addressed, especially by encouraging the participation of women and ethnic minorities in union affairs, often through women-only courses (Reufter and Rutters, 2002). The second aim, from a more institutional perspective, has been to offer a practical and effective route out of the isolation and stagnation experienced by many unions in developing countries and to provide a much needed impetus for their organisational development. Programmes therefore aim to impart a sense that they are part of a wider global movement. More recently, a third aim has appeared: to raise levels of workers' participation in activities such as HIV/AIDS or skills development programmes. This type of work is controversial in terms of how faithfully it reflects trade union aims and how far it is primarily driven by a wish to access funding. In Britain, it has been argued that government support for building a system of workplace union learning representatives has in fact brought unions little and represents little more than a channelling of trade unionism to state ends (McIlroy, 2008). At this point, therefore, it may be that the overarching aim is not present.

At the global level, the educational emphasis has shifted in recent decades. In an initial phase, from the 1980s to the mid 1990s, the main thrust was towards diffusing union educational methods and building cadre systems. Partly because of the experience of the Scandinavian donors, this was based on essentially self-organised and directed study circles. These were experientially based, problem centred, highly adaptable and, not least, sustainable. From the late 1990s onwards, a second phase began as international trade union education directly attempted to stimulate more fundamental change in unions. In many cases union policies, financial structures and internal democracy were putting a brake on educational efforts and, more importantly, on broader structural changes. Education designed to make unions more effective, often masked in the language of 'renewal' or 'modernisation' to make it more acceptable to affiliates who might be offended by the idea that their organisations required overhaul, was launched.

The methods of trade union education used in international work have also undergone a revolution in the last twenty years. For much of the twentieth century, the predominant method was formal lecturing by experts to relatively passive groups of participants. This coexisted with a minority strand, which emphasised the importance of an experientially based, problem-solving, highly participative approach whereby participants negotiated between themselves and with tutors the concrete problems for discussion. Union educational work has more recently built on this minority strand and has drawn on a set of compatible, overlapping philosophies eclectically fused by the tutors concerned. A more or less standard component has been the active learning methods first devised in German workers' education in the 1920s (Feidel-Mertz, 1964). The 1920s theorists grappled with the problem of how to build an educational practice appropriate to the thousands of workplace representatives elected in German unions under the post-First World

War works constitution law. Their solution was essentially to begin by inducting accounts of problems from participants, and then to approach the issues by using the experience of those present, and inducting external resources such as the law, rather than beginning by explaining legal details. This was the origin of the current orthodoxy. In addition, tutors sometimes drew on the work of other theorists such as the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire and his book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) to stress the emancipatory and empowering nature of education and collective activity.

All of these approaches encourage participants to step aside from their personal educational background or position in the union to acquire the tools to address real issues in the workplace. Lecturing has given way to problem-solving of concrete issues brought to the group, defined and intensively discussed, *inter alia* through simulation exercises. In the last decade, these methods, often under titles such as 'the new educational methods', or 'the ILO approach' after several important projects carried out by that organisation, have rapidly gained ground and have begun to displace traditional methods.

Participative education methods have provided many unions outside of the developed world with the only sustainable way of conducting education. They require virtually no facilities, a vital consideration since funding residential training has been beyond most unions' means. Dedicated buildings or large budgets are not necessary, and the methods provide ways of working that can be used in workplaces and local offices. Simultaneously, they are resource expanding since they greatly increase the contribution that unpaid activists can make.

Union educational methods are frequently preferable to normal trade union decision-taking environments that provide far less participation opportunities and are governed by more formal rules. Their insistence on the equal right of all to participate and to share their experience is important in this connection. They model a highly participative mode of decision-taking that supplements and balances the necessary formal meetings based on organisational agendas. This is particularly relevant where significant cultural differences and power imbalances exist. The problem-solving educational focus is also usefully polyvalent in relation to the external world in that it is not linked to a specific subject. It therefore helps unions respond to collective problems in the workplace and external shocks to their structures whatever their nature.

Although perceived differently by different unions internationally, union educational methods constitute a way of working recognised by most unions in the world. They therefore constitute a shared frame of reference that can be useful in providing a basis for constructing international networks through which the diversity of union functions, structures and modus operandi can be turned into a positive resource on which participants draw (Croucher, 2004).

Donors, Projects and Funding

The great majority of international union education is carried out through projects, funded by a small group of donor organisations. Referred to as development cooperation programmes they are, in the main, funded by the Dutch/Nordic trade union bodies, established to administer funds from national affiliates and tax payers. The funds come mainly from government, and to a more limited extent in the case of FNV, from clauses in collectively bargained contracts negotiated with employers. An exception is the ITF's FOC Campaign, funded through the Seafarers' Fund, i.e. largely by employers. Another is the prominent example of employer funding for development work through the IUF's joint programmes in the tobacco and chocolate sectors, but these do not provide funds directly for union education. In the cases of Sweden and Finland, national unions are expected to contribute co-funding for projects funded through the donor organisations. The ITUC estimated that in 2000, US$10,380,522 was raised for the internationals' development cooperation programmes. Given the large scale funding not included in the secretariat accounts used to compile these figures, this estimate is conservative.

The key donors for large projects have long been the Dutch FNV Mondiaal, LO-TCO Sweden, LO-FTF Denmark, LO Norway and SASK Finland. LO-TCO has the largest annual budget, at an estimated 13 million Euro for 2006, closely followed by FNV with 11.9 million Euro, and SASK with an unconfirmed annual budget of approximately 3 million Euro. In addition, the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), a social democratic foundation using predominantly governmental funds, provides extensive funding for more localised projects. Active in just under one hundred countries worldwide, it makes a significant contribution in a decentralised way. FES has a dedicated programme for the GUFs with an annual budget of 10–15 million Euro per year.

These organisations award and administer funding in two ways. The first is multilateral, i.e. by channelling money to the internationals and international NGOs. The second is bilateral, where money is provided direct to local unions and NGOs. The pattern of funding is shifting, with donors increasingly opting to make funds available for bilateral projects, mainly in partnership with civil society organisations other than unions. For example, the Danish LO-FTF over the last five years has moved away from working with GUFs, and their current contribution to the internationals' work is tiny. Given the significance of project funding for covering the internationals' core costs which we noted in Chapter four, any reduction in the extent to which their risk is spread across donors must be a matter for concern.

Table 13 below provides estimates of the balance of donors' funds allocated to bilateral and multilateral development projects in 2004. The table shows high levels of bilateral funding when measured against the funders' rhetorical commitment to the internationals.

Table 13: Estimated Bilateral/Multilateral Allocation of Trade Union Development Funds 2004

Solidarity Support Organisation (donor)	Bilateral	Multilateral
LO-TCO (Sweden)	25%	75%
FNV (Netherlands)	70%	30%
SASK (Finland)	25%	75%
LO-FTF (Denmark)	75%	25%
LO (Norway)	80%	20%

Source: Minutes of the Nordic-Dutch & GUF Meeting, Tuesday 5 April 2005
(Document in authors' possession)

It is increasingly difficult for GUFs to raise educational funding, for three reasons. The first is the election of more right wing governments in the Netherlands and Nordic countries, entailing increasingly stringent administrative requirements on the funding organisations which we detail below. The second is donors' anxiety that funding will be used to compensate for the internationals' declining income from affiliates. The third is that the majority of donor officials are increasingly drawn from outside the trade union movement and simply do not understand union objectives or their ways of operating. Their instinctive inclination is to work with NGOs.

Significant attempts to find new sources of funding to sustain project work are therefore being made. The reduced global amounts available from some funders (notably the FNV), and the political sensitivities of company funding have led the internationals to look towards other national aid structures, such as the British government's Department for International Development, and foundations. There has been a great expansion in the GUFs' large-scale funding in certain areas such as HIV/AIDS, and GUFs with affiliates in industries such as mining and transport (for example the ICEM and ITF) have taken some of this up. This work is clearly relevant to members' interests, but the wider risk is that the search for project funds makes the internationals increasingly subject to funders' different, sometimes problematic and constantly shifting, priorities.

Results

There have been few systematic studies of the results of international trade union education. One of the most extensive and detailed is the Khaliy report on work in the former Soviet Union, based on in-depth research throughout most of the country's regions. This suggested that the results of international educational work in the FSU had been highly significant, and that this had been underestimated both by the projects themselves and by the few Western researchers who took any

interest. Unlike Khaliy's research team, Western researchers did not venture into the regions, while project coordinators often moved on to the next project rather than research the results of the previous one. The Khaliy report argued that the 'results were precisely those that could have been expected: unions became more radical and democratic' (Khaliy, 2005: 37). Similar results were found by David Sogge (2004), investigating the work that FNV Mondiaal supported in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union: the union problem was 'being turned around' as the title of his report put it. Perhaps the most eloquent testimony is that of the Federation of European Employers, whose website says that the Soviet-style FNPR unions in the former Soviet Union are 'much reformed'.

The results are closely linked to the processes set in train by the methods. The overarching result of union education is normally improved confidence to deal with problems collectively (Charoenloet et al., 2004). Several authors have also pointed out that education raises social capital between participants, thereby strengthening the links between them, and may also effect shifts in identity that bring about stronger union identification (Feidel-Mertz, 1964; Huzzard, 2000; Kirton and Healy, 2004). In our case, the identifications are international and can help to facilitate network building and the internationals' solidarity work in supporting activists in difficulty.

Participative methods have had a considerable and visible democratising effect on both the internationals themselves and their affiliates, with course participants going on to play a wide range of roles in representative bodies. Gumbrell-McCormick (2001) has shown how the ITUC's drive to improve women's participation at the international level in the late twentieth century was effective, when combined with other political measures in changing both the ITUC and its national affiliates. Studies at national level have shown how women's perceptions of their identities and their identification with unions can be raised by women-only courses (Kirton and Healy, 2004). Broadly similar results have been reported for educational work in the USA directed at increasing ethnic minority activism (Margolies, 2008). The democratising effect referred to by these researchers has been shown to occur even as a result of courses with other aims (Croucher and Halstead, 1990; Caldwell, 1998; Croucher, 2004).

As we show in many of the cases elsewhere in this book, activism in many national contexts carries considerable dangers to those involved, sometimes including risking their lives. In Latin American countries, trade unionism is 'high risk' activism since the murder of activists is common (Loveman, 1998). Educational activity can play a major part in establishing the dense and diverse national and international networks of support that can help to sustain activists. Relationships established through education have operated to support trade unionists working in the increasingly repressive states of Belarus and Moldova, facilitated exchanges of organising and bargaining information between them and helped the internationals to deepen their

understanding of the situations in these countries (Croucher, 2004). In the next chapter we document further examples drawn from Colombia.

Results are also evident in terms of union organisational development. Significant improvements in this direction were reported by the five GUFs project that focused on the modernisation of unions in Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Started in 2004 and completed in 2008, this involved education on facilitating organisational change, together with close consultancy support to union leadership. In many of the unions, the project achieved a combination of 'hard' (structural and financial) and 'soft' (ways of working and cultural) change, albeit in differential ways depending on the pre-project readiness of unions to benefit. In Central Asia, the results have been relatively modest, involving mainly the establishment of educational schemes in the GUFs' affiliates. In Ukraine and to a lesser extent Russia, unions have been stimulated to go a good deal further. While they too have increased their educational effort, several have also shifted the balance in the distribution of subscription income more towards their national structures, thereby allowing meaningful coordinated organising and mobilising strategies to begin to be developed. For the first time, unions in the Ukraine outside the mining sector (where the independent miners' union must constantly organise in the face of determined opposition from managements and the official union) have undertaken organising drives (Guliy, 2008).

The effects of participating in GUF-led education are summarised succinctly by Mare Anceva of the Union of Industry, Energy and Mining of Macedonia:

> The Trade Union of Industry, Energy and Mining of Macedonia – SIER – is a member of two GUFs: IMF (since 1995) and ICEM (since 1996). SIER is a small union in a small country. When considering all the benefits that come with membership, it becomes very valuable, particularly for small unions and marginal economies.

> We in SIER appreciated very much the education projects, which resulted in building up union capacities, awareness of current global trends and broadening views regarding the organization itself, methods of work, etc. Of course, we had to find our own ways in all that (no copy and paste is ever possible in this work), but the influence and the welfare that came out of being a member of the GUFs are indisputable. GUFs are, first of all, very good and reliable sources of information. That is of greatest importance in dealing with privatization and FDI. Just meeting other colleagues, both from transition and developed countries and having the chance to exchange opinions and experiences is of special value.

> To explain what I mean, the *Train-the-trainer* project with ICEM/IUF resulted in having the first trainers within the union (which further resulted in a substantial increase in the educational activities carried on). The *Modernization* project

resulted in speeding up changes within the organization, the development of regional networks and improvements in workplace representation. Now the *Health and Safety* project with IMF is expected to result in having three union experts in SIER who will be able to act as union inspectors and to help health and safety representatives in the companies in their work.

Finally, the results of union education are not simply 'downwards', i.e. transferring ideas and information to affiliates, but are also 'upwards', making significant transfers in the opposite direction, to the internationals. Union education cannot be seen as uni-directional learning whereby trade unionists at 'lower' levels learn from those at national and international levels. Labour educators themselves have unfortunately done little to dispel this misconception. Thus, otherwise excellent works produced by experienced practitioners simply deal with what union activists learn (see for example Spencer, 2002). Internationals can access both industrial relations and organisational information in this way, use it to relate closely to the unions' specific concerns and objective situations, and convey it to other unions. As we explained in Chapter three, education historically was the way that the internationals acquired vital information that allowed them to affiliate, assimilate and develop unions as they expanded outside of their strongholds in the developed world. Without such long-term, patient development of relationships this knowledge could not have been established and needs could not have been addressed in effective and efficient ways.

International union education has probably been most successful where unions from small groups of countries have been brought together with some external input. The model has shown itself to be more successful than simply bringing in external tutors or facilitators from developed countries to conduct courses. Strong examples of such groupings have existed in both francophone and anglophone West Africa, Ukraine and Moldova, the Scandinavian countries and the countries of central Asia. An obvious advantage has been to reduce the linguistic and other practical difficulties referred to in the previous chapter. In addition, the format allowed a focus on exchanging experience within a set of cognate problematics since institutional and cultural environments show a combination of commonality and readily recognised differences. A limited amount of external input by GUF representatives and foreign tutors has in these cases allowed a wider perspective when necessary.

An example is a small union in Tanzania, TAMICO, with members in the mining sector. As a result of the local system of 'African socialism' or 'Ujamaa' entailing state–union cooperation, the union had no history of organising workers. In 2001 a team of four organisers was established from the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa. This exchange was facilitated by the ICEM through a regional shop stewards programme funded by Nordic donors and coordinated by Zimbabweans. The NUM organisers focussed on the Geita Mine, with approximately 3,000 workers, none of whom were unionised. Within two

weeks, using South African experience and assistance, TAMICO had recruited 400 members. The ICEM helped the newly established branch and shop stewards to register the union and train its leaders. The union was able to make this dramatic shift in orientation through targeted contact with another mining union in the region and coordination with its international.

Education's Political Marginalisation

Educational activity is important to the internationals, yet as we have shown above, its funding is problematic because it comes from a small group of European countries with an increasing predilection for bilateral projects that bypass the internationals. At the same time, there has been a long-term shift away from discussing trade union education within the GUFs. The subject is dealt with in a cursory way within executive bodies. Since these problems exist in a major area of work, why are they not discussed more extensively? More broadly, why is education marginalised both in intra-GUF and academic discussion?

Education was regarded by a previous generation of experienced international trade unionists as a tool of self-evident use in their work. Omer Bécu, general secretary of the ICFTU, underlined its significance in his preface to Hans Gottfurcht's mid-1960s book on the history and current position of the international movement, a work whose main text also takes the importance of education as obvious (Bécu, 1966). Bécu describes it as 'indispensable for the firm anchoring of the trade unions in the developing world' (Bécu, 1966: 5). This recognition appears to have diminished since that time, and the assumption is that education is now conducted simply because it is requested and/or because it provides funds.

We suggest that there are two core reasons for this neglect. The first is that for many trade unions the activity is invisible, because it only applies to those most in need of it and therefore does not touch the relatively powerful and much-researched unions of the USA and Western Europe. Many large OECD-based trade unions affiliated to GUFs simply have no contact with the GUFs' education programmes. At any one time, at least 60 per cent of affiliates will not have international trade union education in their consciousness. Only the donor and recipient country affiliates will have any real understanding of what work is being conducted and its results.

The second reason is the more profound problem of demonstrating palpable outcomes from educational work. Often, very little baseline information is available about the unions involved prior to projects starting. For projects begun in the 1980s and 1990s, it was impossible to secure this information and there was therefore an almost complete absence of data about what these unions could already do. Moreover, although in many cases projects build organisational capacity and lead directly to recruiting new members, many of the results are vital intangibles such as building confidence in key activists. Impacts are also often indicated in only indirect

ways – for example the successful completion of a negotiation process, which will always have other factors determining the outcomes.

Attempts to use indicators that take full account of intangibles can also bring problems with donors because they are in stark contrast to those that governments find acceptable. Increasingly, governments have sought to impose 'Logical Framework Analysis', a highly formulaic approach to planning and project management, on local unions. Global unions are consequently often caught between donors and unions as 'interpreters', trying to bring these two different languages and orientations into a meaningful dialogue. They have not always succeeded, and these approaches have alienated many unions in the developing world in addition to the GUFs.

Marginalisation of debate around education heightens the risk that it will fall by the wayside, and be displaced by bilateral activity. Schwass evokes a very real and sobering prospect:

> the future of trade union development cooperation looks bleak. If donors chose the easy way out by going bilateral, i.e. disregard GUFs as partners and work directly with national centres and unions in developing countries, then a lot of added value is lost. It would be the end of meaningful international trade union development cooperation.

(Schwass, 2004: 23–4)

This is a crucial and timely point made when donors under pressure to report results to their governments on an annual basis may find it easier to carry out bilateral programmes with national unions or NGOs. Development funds set up to build unions would then have no genuine link to the collective experience of decades of trade union education carried out through the internationals, a bleak prospect for donors and recipient organisations alike.

Herein may lie the final reason for the marginalisation of education within the internationals: the very difficulty of the issue and lack of any obvious or immediate solutions leads to denial because they do not feel that they can address such a large-scale problem.

The Education–Research Symbiosis

Research is a function that also suffers from restricted discussion within the internationals. It is a function with a number of different uses and has considerable symbiotic potential with the educational approach. Yet the current research deficit means that the GUFs are under-equipped with the results of dedicated research that can provide them with the tools they need to make well-supported arguments and buttress their positions as sectoral experts.

Research on companies can obviously yield significant results for unions, revealing how corporations interlink, their ownership, supply chains, stakeholder structures

and so on. Greven (2008: 2) argues that 'solidly based sophisticated' research on industrial sectors is essential to US-style strategic campaigning against corporations that identifies all the pressure points that may be accessed to pressurise them, and his argument holds equally for organising or collective bargaining. In addition, detailed and properly contextualised accounts of how unions have developed their own organisation to approach key problems have great potential. These can be fed into courses, but can also be developed from them. Much rich discussion held inside classrooms draws on unique experience that cannot be accessed by other means and this needs to be captured for the use of other trade unionists.

Many small or workplace-based unions have little or no research capacity, yet most of the GUFs themselves carry out little more than the simplest forms of investigation, providing too little detail and analysis for them to be of great use to affiliates. Research for the European Industry Federations, on the other hand, is relatively well developed, partly because researchers in Europe themselves have the capacity to work without a great deal of funding from the Federations. A good example is that of the European Institute for Construction Labour Research, which has existed for over fifteen years and publishes the widely distributed and well-regarded *CLR News*. Similarly, the great majority of OECD unions have both their own research departments and good links to academic networks.

The few examples of effective use of research demonstrate its potential. The ITF carries out research on key logistics companies, circulating it widely; similarly, its case studies on organising in the informal economy show the possibilities of transferring significant experience in this way (Bonner, 2006). High-quality research is also produced for one relatively well-resourced GUF, the PSI, to underpin its anti-privatisation campaigning. The PSI Research Unit based at the University of Greenwich in London produces a steady stream of reports and publications that help provide solid data to support the PSI's campaigning.

The ITGLWF developed multilevel research on companies it targeted in the early 2000s. 'Multilevel' because it involved trade unionists at different levels in companies investigating both their operations and the company's suppliers fully. Miller (2004) provides a striking example of the combination of education, research and determined local organising activity that brought positive results in the Southern African clothing industry. Activists were trained, and research conducted in Southern Africa was used to identify the primary contractors of Asian MNCs exploiting the US Africa Growth and Opportunity Act in the Maseru Export Processing Zone. This was in turn used to exert pressure on the US companies ordering the goods, with the result that one-third of the 26 companies in membership of the Lesotho Textile Exporters' Association conceded union recognition to some degree.

It might be suggested that research capacity of the required type does in fact exist, in the form of the Global Union Research Network (GURN). This was established to try and bridge the gap between unions and academics, notably by coordinating

the ILO and academics to generate dedicated research. It brought together a group of supportive academics and research institutions worldwide but the results have been small in relation to GUFs' needs. In addition, donors are increasingly funding research, such as that carried out by the Observatório Social in Brazil, but without union involvement or developing union capacity to carry out their own research.

The need is for dedicated researchers to work on a GUF by GUF basis, with increased resources. GUFs require databases of supply chains and collective agreements, but unions will not provide these for public display on the web. In educational contexts, high-trust relations can be built, allowing exchange of relatively sensitive documents of this type. As Miller shows, educational approaches can make a further contribution by developing research capacity in local activists through a mix of classroom-based and coaching activities.

Conclusion

Vitally, education has a democratising effect within unions, from which the internationals have already benefited, raising the participants' levels of commitment to operating within existing structures. Much academic discussion of union renewal all too often misses the essential processes of human interaction and development that necessarily underpin any such renewal. These are enhanced by education. But slow, patient work developing activists through long-term education programmes and informal dialogue does not hit any headlines and is currently under-discussed both in the internationals and more widely. It is nevertheless a significant aspect of efforts to raise the level of contact between the world's unions and to improve their effectiveness.

We advocate further expanding this type of work. Yet the intermittent and precarious resources available to the GUFs for education are under threat and constitute a problem requiring full discussion. The internationals' reliance on donors' funds for developmental work masks the reluctance of national unions in developed countries to pay anything more than relatively small amounts to international bodies, as discussed in Chapter four. This is an immediate problem and the signs of change are currently running in the wrong direction. Swedish unions, previously highly reliable contributors to educational projects are now seeking to minimise their overall financial contribution. The problem is as serious as the dues income problem outlined earlier and similarly requires an open political discussion between unions about whether they are prepared to make the necessary investment in international work.

Case Study – a GUF's Relationship with a Multinational Company

Introduction

THIS chapter illustrates many of the themes developed and discussed earlier. It is a case study of the ICEM's relationship with Anglo American plc (AA), analysing how the GUF, national unions in South Africa, Ghana and Colombia and the company interacted with positive results for workers. The main institutional players are represented in Diagram 4.
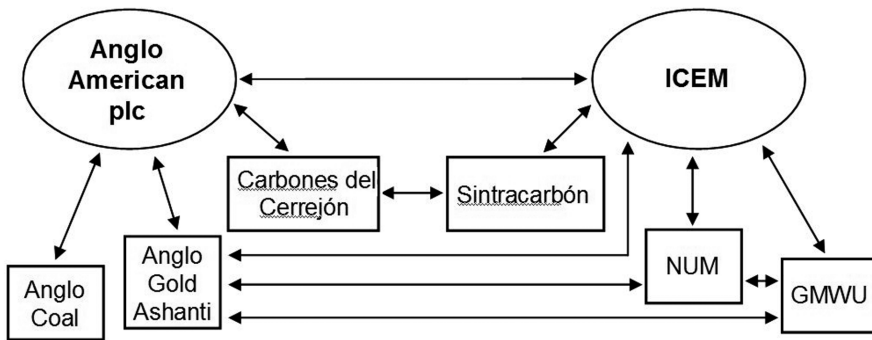
Diagram 4: Anglo American and its Relationships to other Main Players

The case was selected for two reasons. First, it was chosen because *prima facie* it allowed detailed examination of how a GUF acted as a major player in advancing workers' interests. Second, unusually high-quality longitudinal information was obtained through the long-term involvement of one of the authors, supplemented by extensive project reports, company and union documentation.

We show how the GUF developed a positive relationship with a multinational by integrative bargaining on an issue of great significance both to it and to workers; this built company consent for distributive bargaining by affiliates in a different part of

its operation on another continent. The narrative demonstrates the significance of strong articulation developed over many years between the national and international union levels, in part created and supported by a strong educational input. The GUF's role was crucial: none of the national unions in the case had previously related effectively to multinationals. The GUF learned from the process and transferred the approach elsewhere in the world. The case confirms that, contrary to Neuhaus' (1981) suggestion, GUFs can initiate significant developments and need not simply react to other actors' agendas.

The case is presented in three sections. The first introduces the company and its relationship with the ICEM. The second analyses work developed in Ghana around HIV/AIDS in the mining sector. The third section examines the dynamics of rebuilding union dialogue with mining companies in Colombia. Finally, we draw broad conclusions and examine the case's wider relevance.

The Company, the ICEM, National Trade Unions and Their Relationships

Anglo American is one of the world's largest corporations, ranked 88 in the Financial Times Stock Exchange index of the world's largest 500 companies and employing 162,000 people worldwide in 2006. Its operations are focussed on mining. The company, like other natural resources companies, has enjoyed rising prices for its products since 2000, and its increasing profits in that period are significant background to the case.

The company, although owned mainly by British financial institutions, operates in many countries but its main mining operations are in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. It was for some time South Africa's largest conglomerate and a key corporate player in negotiating the post-apartheid employment settlement (von Holdt, 2004). It has a complex and highly devolved structure, claiming in response to criticisms of the activities of companies in which it has a sizeable interest (War on Want, 2007) that it does not have 'management control' of them (Anglo American, 2007). Following the practice of many such corporations, the associated companies have high levels of managerial autonomy and seek to establish internal leadership in both efficiency and CSR matters. In this sense it is typical of the modern multinational, and can be conceived of as a 'federation' (Andersson et al., 2007) or a grouping of companies linked by a range of methods including overlapping directorships and shareholdings. The overall company composition in 2004 is portrayed in Table 14.

It is clear from Table 14 that in 2004 it had a controlling financial interest in both Anglo Coal and Anglo Gold Ashanti (AGA). This interest was reduced to 41.8 per cent in April 2006; but until spring 2007, AA retained two directors on the AGA board. In 2000, AA bought a 33 per cent share in the Cerrejón mine in Colombia; by

2006 three companies, AA, BHP Billiton and Xstrata, were equal shareholders. AA works closely with Cerrejón management.

Table 14: Anglo American plc – Business Overview, 2004

Business Area	Main Countries of Operation	Key Subsidiaries	Percentage Ownership of Subsidiaries
Platinum	South Africa	Anglo Platinum	74.1%
Gold	South Africa	Anglo Gold Ashanti	54.5% (17% in 2008)
Diamonds	South Africa	De Beers	45%
Coal	South Africa, Colombia	Anglo Coal	100%
Base Metals	Chile	Anglo Base Metals	100%
Industrial Minerals	UK, France, Belgium	Anglo Industrial Minerals	100%
Paper and Packaging	South Africa, Russia	Anglo Paper and Packaging	100%
Ferrous Metals and Industries	South Africa, Australia	Anglo Ferrous Metals and Industries	100%

Source: Anglo American plc, *The Business: An Overview*, 14 February 2004

Company relations with stakeholders have to be built on a long-term basis, Sir Mark Moody-Stuart, chairman, argued to shareholders at the April 2008 AGM. Fixed sites and high front-end expenditure mean 'that we have to live with the judgements we make about our ability to operate ethically in particular locations' (Anglo American, 2008). 'Resource nationalism' increasingly means the company has to attend to its wider political profile throughout its operations. AA and AGA are highly engaged with international development and since 2000 AA has made a considerable contribution to the UK government's Africa strategy. The company's CSR efforts are also reflected in its role in establishing and building the Global Business Coalition (GBC), set up to promote business responses to HIV/AIDS, which Sir Mark Moody-Stuart chairs. The GBC claims that it has supported millions of people through implementing local workplace programmes with its 220 member companies.

AA has taken a 'business case' approach to HIV/AIDS provision, although there is considerable congruence between business and CSR rationales. AA's subsidiary Anglo Coal was one of the first companies in the world to calculate the precise economic benefits of providing antiretrovirals (ARVs), but this 'making disease management pay' (the phrase is that of Dr Richard Gaunt (2007) of AA's major competitor Rio Tinto) approach is becoming well established in mining companies. Research carried out in Anglo Coal showed in 2006 that it was economic to provide

private medical insurance, including possible VCT and ARVs, for all employees and their dependents rather than to provide nothing. The company's preliminary cost-benefit analysis is shown in Table 15 below. After the first year, the costs of providing drugs were estimated to decline relative to savings from absenteeism and healthcare. This calculation accompanied a move beyond the classic position taken by companies, whereby they deny any legal responsibility for workers' sexual health. The latter position clearly rejects any real responsibility for reducing risk, in order to limit potential liabilities (Weait, 2007).

Table 15: Anglo Coal – Preliminary Cost Benefit Analysis of Providing ART

Duration	ART Cost per Month (Rands)	Absenteeism Savings per Month	Health Care Cost Saving
Per month saved vs no ART – 12 months	R2223	R1052	R755
Per month saved vs no ART – 18 months	R1652	R1093	R804
Per month saved vs no ART – 24 months	R1304	R1126	R837
Additional saved CD4 100–250 vs less than 100 – Two years pre-positive		R458	R396

Source: Ms D. Muirhead, Aurum Institute for Health Research, presentation
(Document in authors' possession)

The company has scope and reasons for improving both its health and safety record and its public image: in 2007 it reported that forty-four people were killed in its mining operations, and its practices in relation to indigenous communities have been sharply criticised (War on Want, 2007). Part of its reply to War on Want's criticisms was to point to its record in publicly insisting that the Colombian government attend to the physical defence of trade unionists. Like many mining employers, AA is reconciled to trade unionism and almost all of its mining sites have a major union presence. The company has sought to construct positive relations with unions, including them in efforts to improve efficiency by cost reduction; union cooperation in health and safety has brought major benefits to the rate of return on capital employed. Their experience at the New Denmark mine in South Africa demonstrated this dramatically, when union partnership helped raise the return on capital employed from 24.7 per cent in 2001 to 43.2 per cent in 2003. Moody-Stuart used this experience as a model for others in the company to follow (Anglo American, 2003). Hence, the links between trade unionism, health and safety and profitability are well recognised at the top of the company.

Anglo Gold has robust long-term relations with the South African National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)**,** based on AA's 'progressive positions' on recognising black unions in South Africa, and its part in the transition to democracy (Anglo American, 2003; 2008). The NUM itself had a central role in ending apartheid and enjoys great prestige within the trade union movement both in Africa and internationally, with strong bilateral links with other mining unions, and high-profile participation in the ICEM and the IMF. The NUM has long emphasised HIV/AIDS as an issue, having concluded an agreement with the South African Chamber of Mines on the subject in 1993 (N'Deba and Hodges-Aeberhard, 1998). The union has a broad political conception of its representative functions and has successfully negotiated protection for contract workers (von Holdt and Webster, 2005). The NUM has conducted personnel exchanges with many African mining unions and has had a long-term relationship with the Ghana Mineworkers' Union (GMWU) based on personal contacts developed through the ICEM Regional Committee. The GMWU is itself a strong union within the well-developed Ghanaian trade union movement (Frazer, 2008), and is therefore a relatively equal partner for the NUM. It is a highly politicised organisation, focussed on dialogue with the state which until recently ran the mines. It was only therefore relatively recently that the GMWU had to negotiate with private management and the union stood to learn from a relationship with the NUM.

Exchanges between the ICEM and AA were partly based on the long-standing relationship between Fred Higgs (then ICEM general secretary, retired 2006) and Sir Mark Moody-Stuart. The two were in contact when Moody-Stuart held management positions at Royal Dutch Shell and Higgs was National Oil Industry Officer at the UK's Transport and General Workers' Union. This contact continued through difficult years for Shell and for oil workers, including the 1995 Brent Spar incident. The relationship was renewed through their joint participation in the United Nations Global Compact's Advisory Committee from that body's foundation in 2002. The committee was established to help the Global Compact develop speedily into a credible CSR mechanism, working directly under Kofi Annan's office at the United Nations. Its membership included representatives of civil society, labour (GUFs and the ITUC) and business. Shortly after its creation, Moody-Stuart became AA chairman but retained his Advisory Committee position. The foundations of trust between Higgs and Moody-Stuart were built on the fact that, unlike other participants, both came from an industrial relations background. They held similar views on the minimum 'integrity measures' that would be credible for the Global Compact to be an effective body, based on their experience of industrial monitoring and complaints procedures. Their capacity for joint action was higher than either had with the non-governmental organisations involved.

There was also a long term and complex web of relationships between the ICEM and its key affiliate the NUM, and of both with the CEO of Anglo Gold Ashanti,

Bobby Godsell. Godsell is an exceptional business person. On his retirement from the company in 2008, he was credited by Moody-Stuart with a significant role in South Africa's transition to democracy (Anglo American, 2008). An industrial relations expert, he was hailed as an 'organic intellectual' of South African business (Handley, 2005) for his part in South Africa's transition. The editor of works on South Africa's future (Berger and Godsell, 1988), he persuaded a sceptical business community of the merits of the Labour Relations Act in its amended 2002 version, which improved legal cover for contract workers (Bidoli, 2004). In 2002, he surprised a business meeting in New York by wearing an NUM strike T-shirt (*ibid.*). Godsell had a close relationship with Cyril Ramaphosa, the first NUM president and subsequent secretary general of the ANC who became chairman of the Mondi paper and packaging group after its de-merger from AA (Bidoli, 2004; Mondi, 2007).

In West Africa, long-term relationships also existed between AGA management and medical staff, the ICEM and the Ghana Mineworkers' Union (GMWU). The GMWU president, John Brimpong, was the Ghana TUC's HIV/AIDS representative, and a member of the ICEM regional and international executives who was well known both within Ghanaian mining communities and to local mine management. Brimpong was at the centre of a constellation of industry and community contacts built up over forty years of union activity. An already close relationship between GMWU leadership, the ICEM and senior AGA medical staff was cemented through the latter's HIV/AIDS project.

The ICEM's HIV/AIDS Pilot Projects: Background and Significance

The ICEM was one of the first GUFs, with ITF and EI, to take a lead on promoting HIV/AIDS action by unions since workers in these sectors are disproportionately affected. From 2002 the ICEM worked with affiliates to develop a strategy and initial activity. The union problems identified when dealing with HIV/AIDS were defined as lack of leadership, the stigma around testing and a lack of sustainable funding for treatment. An additional barrier in Africa was the reluctance of workplace representatives, often from Christian backgrounds, to confront the issue. At that point virtually no ICEM affiliate, except those in South Africa, Ghana and Botswana, recognised HIV/AIDS as a union issue. In countries outside Africa, ICEM affiliates, notably in Eastern Europe, strongly resisted the argument. The African affiliates could therefore potentially become international leaders to persuade others of the case for taking up the area of work.

Following six months of consultation with affiliates already active around the issue and experienced HIV/AIDS activists, the ICEM and these affiliates decided to promote medical provision and prevention programmes, and to negotiate anti-discrimination policies through pilot schemes that could later be adopted elsewhere

in the world. The agenda was therefore more ambitious than the earlier common union practice of simply carrying out awareness campaigns. It entailed developing core expertise, raising funds from new sources and dialogue with both employers and government.

HIV/AIDS is a central labour management concern for multinationals invested in Africa and Eastern Europe. In Sub-Saharan mining, infection rates are approximately double national averages and frequently higher. In Zambia the BBC reports a national infection rate of 14 per cent, and an estimated 50 per cent in mining communities (BBC News Online, published 22/06/2006). These high rates are explained by four factors. The first is the remoteness of mining operations and the communities surrounding them. Second, single sex workers' hostels, although reducing in number, are widespread. Third, many male migrant and contract workers are away from their partners, further stimulating high levels of prostitution and 'second families'. Fourth, stigma and denial around sexual practice and prevention of infection is widespread.

The private sector plays a significant role in general healthcare in these communities, making miners dependent on companies for health, and in some cases life, as well as work. The majority of clinics and hospitals in mining regions are to some extent privately supported or funded. Most miners working directly for multinationals at present are members of private medical insurance schemes which provide antiretroviral drugs, although this is a recent development and rarely applies to indirect or contract workers. Thus, companies play a considerable role in the diagnosis of HIV/AIDS and in providing access to treatment as well as in healthcare more broadly.

The diagnosis of HIV/AIDS raises significant dilemmas for management and workplace representatives alike and is therefore extremely demanding for individuals on both personal and professional levels. If a worker with HIV/AIDS is threatened with dismissal, this raises fundamental issues about that worker's future. Workers' fear of losing their jobs demands strong workplace representation by the union, since local management may take action against them despite statements by senior company staff thousands of miles away. The issue giving rise to the dismissal threat may not be the simple fact of the worker having HIV/AIDS. For example, a worker receiving antiretrovirals through a company medical scheme may face dismissal for a gross misconduct matter. The local manager and workplace representative will both have to take personal responsibility for evaluating the cost to the worker, his family and the community of him losing his job and, simultaneously, his access to treatment.

Workers must be convinced that testing will not lead to dismissal and, to a lesser degree, they also must be confident that it will lead to treatment. This should be seen in the context that until legislation changed in 2003, mining companies in South Africa practised compulsory testing for workers at the point

of recruitment, refusing those who tested positive (Kenny, 2004). The role of trade unions is important in negotiating, verifying and rigorously policing any assurances by securing anti-discrimination and anti-victimisation protections in collective agreements, promoting and monitoring VCT provision and by convincing workers that they will not suffer if tested.

Most workers, even in highly infected areas do not present themselves for testing. Only tiny percentages of workers normally volunteer, particularly if testing is offered by company doctors in company facilities. Companies draw a distinction between confidential and anonymous testing, arguing that they practise the latter, but this fails to reassure workers. Most employees in African mining companies have limited confidence in management's concern for their interests (von Holdt, 2004) and they require credible guarantees of protection from company action against them that only union involvement can offer.

Preparing for and Implementing the Projects

In September 2002, on the ICEM's initiative, an International Framework Agreement was signed between Anglo Gold, ICEM and the NUM, the first such agreement signed with a company operating in Africa. The accord was signed in public after the UN's World Summit in South Africa, and promoted as part of the company's sustainable development work. It had essentially symbolic rather than substantive significance in tackling HIV/AIDS, because it contains no clause on the subject. It nevertheless symbolically cemented the relations between the three signatories and was relevant background to their cooperation in the HIV/AIDS field.

By 2004 the ICEM had launched an international HIV/AIDS initiative, designed to identify pilot workplaces where the GUF and its affiliates could develop workplace provision, with the support of employers, local hospitals and international funding. The project aimed to mainstream the issue in affiliates' policies and practice. It was decided to work in two Ghanaian mining regions, Obuasi and Tarkwa, with Anglo Gold Ashanti and its partner company with which it was merged in April 2004, Ashanti Goldfields, because of the working relationship with the companies and the GMWU's clear commitment to conduct the demanding programme. Overall, the project worked within the comprehensive guidance offered by the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS in the Workplace; the immediate objective was to implement a strategy based on the Code. The pilot project aimed to secure, through negotiations with these key employers, the establishment or development of dedicated medical facilities for VCT and treatment, and adequate anti-discrimination and non-victimisation clauses in agreements. The pilots would in due course identify other important needs, including a need for trained peer counsellors from union cadres to support miners diagnosed positive. These counsel people before and after testing, helping them to make lifestyle changes and to manage their treatment.

These companies, unlike many others, have professional staff to manage HIV/AIDS to high technical standards. By 2004 the ICEM also had acquired dedicated HIV/AIDS coordinators. The experts responsible for CSR and HIV/AIDS in both the company and the GUF facilitated technical discussion between the partners. Technical staff involvement also helped build consensus within the companies since there was marked management resistance within them, as in other companies, to acquiring inherently difficult and open-ended responsibilities which generate considerable uncertainty about future costs and requirements. For all parties involved, there is no margin for error. Even small technical mistakes in HIV/AIDS testing and treatment programmes are likely to reduce uptake and to make restoring miners' confidence very difficult.

It has been suggested that the most effective company strategy is to carry out in-house programmes, without involving partners (Husted, 2003). Yet the AA companies rejected this option. Company engagement with the GUF and local unions occurred against the background of strong relationships outlined above, but its immediate cause was the practical issue of testing and the positive effect that the company felt the union could have. The huge scope for charismatic union leaders to influence workers' perceptions is difficult to envisage outside of the African mining context. Their role is highly significant well beyond the workplace, since they are seen as community, and not simply as workplace, leaders. This influence has frequently been referred to by AA managers. Thus, Brian Brink, AA's senior vice-president for health, highlighted the partnership with other organisations including unions as 'crucial to success' in tackling HIV/AIDS (Business Action in Africa, 2007: 20).

Senzeni Zokwana, the president of the NUM (elected president of the ICEM at its Bangkok Congress in 2007) personally took the issue of HIV/AIDS to mines. He carried out awareness raising activities and encouraged testing. He publicly submitted himself for personal testing at each mine, paving the way for successful testing drives. The union also undertook a wider educational effort to train peer educators and negotiators to bargain for protections for people living with HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS programmes are often reported in vague ways, but in the cases of AGA and AA more widely, tangible results could be reported. In AGA in 2004, 10 per cent of employees were being tested; in the company's 2006 annual report, 75 per cent were reported as having been tested. By June 2006 34 per cent of AA's workers had been tested: 9,758 of an estimated positive work force of 28,294 were enrolled in the company's HIV/AIDS programme, 3,772 of whom were taking up antiretroviral treatment. In comparative terms, these are high take-up rates and a significant improvement on previous levels.

A further concrete result is identifiable, since the Ghana pilots triggered agreements with the employer and government. AGA signed a public–private partnership agreement with the Ghanaian Ministry of Health in 2005 to provide

HIV/AIDS testing and treatment and malaria control in the Obuasi mining area, an initiative supported by the ICEM. In this 'co-investment' project (Vuckvic et al., 2005), the company donates the infrastructure of the hospital and available medical staff. It provides VCT and ART to its employees and their dependents at these facilities through an agreement with the Ghanaian government and with insurance company funding.

The project provided an essential first step in establishing the possibility of moving beyond an awareness-raising model by making material progress and showing concretely how that could be done. It also made the case to companies outside those directly involved that union cooperation is a positive factor. The pilot initiative has been exported, at the time of writing, to other companies in Ghana and also to Botswana, Nigeria, Namibia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali.

We now turn to the second element of the case study: ICEM–union–company relationships at the Cerrejón mine in Colombia.

Colombia

This part of the study focuses on relations between the Sintracarbón union and Carbones del Cerrejón, part owned by AA. As indicated above, AA is closely involved in Cerrejón with regular visits to the mine by senior AA staff including Edward Bickham, executive vice president, external affairs. The African initiatives described above were essential background to developments in Colombia since they created awareness within the GUF and the company that positive relations on that continent were yielding benefits for both sides. It also shows how education played a significant role in building relationships between Colombian unions and generating union capacity to act locally in relation to AA and other companies.

For trade unionists, Colombia has long represented the most dangerous country in the world. The civil war has placed unions in a highly vulnerable position since they have to operate with and in the interstices between government, guerrillas, paramilitary forces, multinationals and criminals (Pearce, 2004). Hundreds of union leaders have been assassinated during the last decade, causing activists to reduce or abandon their union work, leaving small, isolated unions. At the time of writing, many trade unionists have again been forced into hiding by a wave of violence.

Overcoming Problems of Inter-union Dialogue

Colombian unions have varied and powerful political orientations that tend to fragment them. Unions in the ICEM sectors are affiliated to the main centre-left Colombian union federation, Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT). They have a strong orientation towards political action, and the state has the legal right to intervene in their affairs. Up until 2000, none of the unions discussed below

provided representative services to members and had only minimal experience of collective bargaining, while some resisted dialogue with employers on political grounds. Certain unions actively supported oppositional movements while others retained their historical basis in left-wing groups although there is no organisational or political link between the unions and the left-wing guerrilla organisations ELN or FARC. One union was built from the radical M19 grouping, although M19 was disbanded and no longer directs union strategy. Unions have strong factional dynamics and most unions experience mistrust between executive members that becomes acute at high points in the societal conflict.

Unions in the ICEM's industries also have significant industrial differences. For example the Sintraelecol union is a large public sector union, with the highest level of security threat for union leadership. Miners, among the first Colombian workers to organise in the early twentieth century, have a respected position, but are also exposed in relation to threats of violence against them. Sintraquim, by contrast, is a small, relatively moderate union representing a majority of women working in the chemicals and pharmaceuticals sectors, mainly concerned with the lack of secure jobs and factory closures. These differences make it difficult for unions to cooperate, both between themselves but also within the CUT and the ICEM. This reinforces their sense of isolation and weakness in relation to employers. It should be noted however that the ICEM affiliates have attempted to work in a coordinated way for ten years as the ICEM Colombia Committee, which reflects their increasingly important positioning within CUT and, more recently, with employers.

The ICEM's Interventions

The foundations of the ICEM's work were educational, and projects moved through three overlapping stages: building the GUF–union relationship, reviewing the unions' own structures and ways of working and finally bargaining with companies.

The ICEM's work with Colombian unions began in the 1980s through the Education Department of the Miners' International Federation (MIF), which merged with ICEF in 1995 to form the ICEM. Ann Browne, then MIF education officer, established contacts with the mining unions, initially informally, focussing on mining communities and child labour, which were priority issues for the MIF at that point. These contacts led to a relationship with the current leadership of the Sintracarbón (at that time Sintraintercor) union.

Sintracarbón and the Carbones del Cerrejón management were central to wider developments in Colombia. The Cerrejón mine is one of the largest open caste coal mines in the world and Sintracarbón is also an important ICEM affiliate. Its president, Jaime Deluquez, is a member of both the ICEM Latin American regional committee and its international executive committee. He is a well respected and highly effective member of the international with a deep awareness of the possibilities and limits

of international trade unionism, formulating clear requests to the ICEM and its affiliates in ways that could be readily understood and responded to. He is therefore in a strong position to represent the interests of his own union and the other ICEM Colombian affiliates at international level. His reputation with management was that of a capable and focussed leader. He played a key role in helping build the relationships between Sintracarbón, Carbones del Cerrejón and the ICEM.

In 1975 the state-owned company Carbones de Colombia (Carbocol) sold 50 per cent of the Cerrejón mine to Intercor, an ExxonMobil subsidiary. In the late 1990s the mine and the surrounding region suffered from poor health and safety conditions and in response to Colombian requests were included in the MIF's international Health and Safety Project for mining unions. Interestingly, the GMWU also participated in this successful global health and safety project. The project, in addition to campaigning for ratification of the ILO's mining safety convention, C.176, provided education and consultancies for unions to develop their own health and safety capacity and to work with managements to build medical services. Significant gains were made by the union, including introducing the first occupational health testing system in the mine and creating a good working relationship with company medical staff. The doctor currently in charge of the Cerrejón medical facilities, Dr Salvador Uricoechea, first met the union through this programme. Uricoechea and the union established comprehensive systems for data collection and testing for occupational diseases.

This programme ended in 1998 and simultaneously a dedicated educational methods programme began, for ICEM affiliates in Colombia and those interested in affiliating. The consistent funding and support it received for fifteen years from the Swedish metal and mining union Metall (now IFMetall) and LO-TCO was essential. From 1998 until 2004 the programme was coordinated from Bogotá by the experienced trade unionist Carlos Bustos. The high-quality work focussed on educational methods for Colombian regional and national leaders, with particular emphasis on providing a safe and inclusive educational environment for national and local leaders. The project funded them to travel by air rather than by the inherently dangerous road routes and provided an important way for national leaders to meet their own regional and local activists.

Union educational methods provided democratic and safe contexts for trade unionists to debate and find solutions to highly threatening problems. The educational setting provides clear rules and participation, and emphasises equality between participants – exceptional emphases in the national context. For those that came from a highly politicised background, the experience of participatory education was initially very difficult to come to terms with, as they were accustomed to lecture-based, and position-taking modes of exchange. At first, classroom discussions were highly combative, leading to absenteeism. Less senior, female and younger trade unionists were initially unwilling to participate in joint activities, but this changed as the focus gradually shifted from aggressive political debate towards finding practical

and practicable joint solutions to industrial relations problems.

Over time, participants grew to appreciate the educational environment, and the removal of restrictions and stress when they attended project activities. Attendance gradually improved. For many involved, the risks of congregating in one location meant that for attendance at project activities to be so consistent over the long term the benefits must have been significant. Education provided an opportunity to build social capital: friendships and good working relationships were formed between activists from the same and different unions. This had a long term effect on their behaviour at ICEM and other union events and also provided them with a firm social base from which to venture into trying to address their individual unions' ways of working. By 2004 the ICEM's six affiliates were all prepared to start reviewing their organisations.

A new phase of education was therefore directed at examining these issues. The unions perceived their problems to be recruiting new members, weak finances, corruption, and lack of education at any level, all contributing to organisational stagnation. Both joint and single union seminars were carried out using ICEM staff to initiate thinking around organisational change, focussing in particular on the difficult recruitment issue. Although this phase was relatively short, the discussions stimulated union executives to think beyond the immediate crisis that they faced, to consider longer-term objectives and to regard the possibilities of recruitment more positively. In brief, they began to take a more strategic approach, including in terms of their relations with employers.

Dialogue with Employers

A final phase of the ICEM's educational work in Colombia turned to the core issue of dialogue with employers. By 2003 collective bargaining had effectively atrophied. Colombian law allows management and unions to extend collective bargaining agreements without revision at six monthly intervals, and the practice had become common. The level of danger for union leaderships is raised during negotiations with management, discouraging negotiators from resuming discussions. The education programme was redirected towards a process of formally denominated social dialogue, directly mediated by the ICEM, involving the six ICEM affiliates and eight nominated MNCs.

The original MNCs identified were:

- Anglo American (UK)
- BHP Billiton (Australia)
- Xstrata (Switzerland)
- Linde (Germany)
- Codensa/Endesa (Spain)

- Owens Illinois (USA)
- Smurfitt (Ireland)
- Union FENOSA (Spain).

The related ICEM affiliates were:

- Sintraelecol (Elecric Power)
- Sintravidricol (Glass)
- Sintracarcol (Paper & Cardboard)
- Sintracarbón (Coal)
- Sintraquim (Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals)
- Fenaltec (Electrical Engineers).

One-day meetings occurred every quarter, preceded by ICEM affiliate meetings and facilitated by the ICEM leadership to agree areas for negotiation. Complementary research was commissioned by the ICEM on specific areas such as contract labour, and union-only and joint training activities were organised on new issues such as HIV/AIDS. The areas identified by the group for negotiation included security for trade unionists, health and safety, HIV/AIDS and contract labour.

A process of ICEM-mediated negotiations with employers was initiated around this agenda and carried on for several years with an increasing emphasis, encouraged by the ICEM, on bilateral negotiations between employers and unions. International mediation provided both sides with an externally created platform to restart direct collective bargaining. AA and the Spanish-owned utilities multinational Endesa (with whom the ICEM has an International Framework Agreement) were pivotal to company participants responding to central company prompting to become involved. The security and health and safety agendas were especially attractive to these companies.

A framework for dialogue was agreed in the early stages, designed to provide clear mechanisms for unions and employers. The central commitment of both the companies and union partners was to seek common ground and agreement. Importantly, the partners committed to participation in the process regardless of any local disputes or ongoing collective bargaining. Partners were asked to nominate formally a small team of representatives responsible for maintaining dialogue within their organisation. These were responsible for ensuring their consistent participation, for securing bilateral meetings at workplace level to debate areas of common interest, for maintaining regular communication with partners and the ICEM and finally for contacting the ICEM general secretary if difficulties arose. The importance of continuity of personnel from both unions and companies was emphasised, to ensure that momentum was maintained.

In 2004, the process, still at an early stage, was buttressed by state involvement. The government appears to have been interested in closer relations with companies, and in discussing human rights issues both with them and with the ICEM. Employer

and union partners attended regular meetings with the Ministry for Social Protection, to present the issues under negotiation and seek support from the ministry for the principles of their work. The meetings were headed by Jorge León Sánchez, vice-minister for social protection, and his staff, joined initially by government human rights specialists. Areas for future work were identified including promoting HIV/AIDS initiatives and developing tripartite dialogue on setting limits and standards on contract and agency labour. Importantly, the vice-minister committed himself to prioritise action when unions approached the ministry about union representatives' security.

The most significant outcome of the ICEM programme was improved dialogue between Sintracarbón and Carbones del Cerrejón. On 1 December 2004 negotiations between Carbones del Cerrejón and Sintracarbón re-opened. The negotiations were closely watched by other companies and unions to see what could be achieved at a time when the level of violence against, and murder of, unionists was especially high. During the negotiation period the union negotiators and their families were threatened with extortion and assassination and the entire negotiating team was forced into hiding. Sintracarbón contacted the ICEM to inform them of the threats. The ICEM immediately contacted Sir Mark Moody-Stuart, and requested that they contact Cerrejón management to establish whether the company was in a position to minimise the risk. AA management and the union immediately issued a joint statement affirming their belief in fundamental labour rights and condemning intimidation. The company drew the threats to the attention of the vice president of Colombia, asking that the personal security of those involved be ensured. The negotiation process was able to continue; and although the threats did not entirely stop, they diminished and the negotiators and their families were unharmed throughout. Developing an HIV/AIDS pilot in the Cerrejón mine was discussed in 2006 with senior AA management as the final stage in this relationship. Although it is currently unclear whether this will succeed, it is testimony to the strength of relationships that such a complex issue could be broached in the context.

These negotiations brought some benefits for workers, and established a momentum that built on these. As a result of a subsequent wave of negotiations, an improved agreement was signed on 28 January 2007. The agreement brought salary increases for all workers including those in ancillary jobs and holding fixed-term contracts. The company pension scheme was opened for the first time to workers on fixed-term contracts of longer than six months. Also for the first time the company agreed to follow Colombian legislation by monitoring contract workers' conditions, and by jointly carrying out health and safety inspections within the mine with Sintracarbón representatives. In addition, the agreement covered social issues such as education and family benefits.

Sintracarbón's achievements provided motivation for other unions to embark on renewed collective bargaining. Thus, for example, coordinated bargaining was

subsequently secured in the glass sector after many years of stalling by key employer Owens Illinois. The results of these negotiations were uneven, but overall workers' conditions were improved in both salary and health and safety terms. In companies where senior management had a strong relationship with the ICEM, local bargaining was more successful than elsewhere. Ensuring the participation of local management in most cases required direct communication between the ICEM Secretariat and the multinational's senior management. In these cases, they received unequivocal instruction from international and in some cases regional management to participate in good faith. Without this, it is unlikely that local managers would have participated as fully as they did.

The Colombian union movement itself remains both divided and fragile although currently the ICEM unions and their national centre, CUT, enjoy the highest level of internal cohesion in their history. Alliances between the ICEM unions involved have proved to be extremely strong, and they represent the most cohesive bloc within CUT. The unions are in regular contact with each other in relation to security for union leaders, contacts which were totally absent in the past. The CUT itself has improved its standing nationally and internationally and is recognised as a serious partner at both levels. All of this has provided a solid base for individual unions and raised their confidence in their capacity to deal with multinationals.

Without the many years of educational programmes, it is unlikely that the relationship between the ICEM and its affiliates would have developed sufficiently strongly to sustain a difficult, complex and prolonged process of internationally mediated negotiations. The ICEM's direct role in preparing unions and creating new spaces for dialogue created the only opportunity the unions had to step outside a previously intractable dynamic of threats and local disputes. The Colombian experience of social dialogue was consciously adopted and systematically transferred by the ICEM to other situations such as Thailand and Peru where dialogue between unions and employers had broken down.

We have to record here the torture and murder of Adolfo González Montes, a Sintracarbón leader at his home on 22 March 2008. Adolfo's murder reminds us of the continued risks faced by trade unionists in that country.

Conclusion

The GUF leveraged a 'partnership' approach in one part of the company's operation to enable a revival of distributive bargaining in another. The company was prepared to offset the clear efficiency advantages which it won from raising workers' participation in HIV/AIDS programmes in Africa against the costs of revived distributive bargaining in Latin America.

The Ghana collaboration deepened relations between the international and the company. The efficiency of company investments was raised by union involvement

under the general education umbrella: awareness raising, peer counselling and workplace representative education. The results for workers were also considerable, raising participation rates in the company's HIV/AIDS programmes while minimising risks to individuals. In Colombia, serious political factionalism within unions in an endemically violent situation was overcome and the GUF rebuilt dialogue with AA and other companies. Education was used in different ways in Africa and Latin America. In Africa, it was a mix of peer counsellor and workplace representative education while in Latin America it took more 'classical' forms beginning with representative education, and subsequently shifting to discussion of union structures and ways of working. In both contexts education was a major factor in building relationships, local capacity and creating the possibility of dialogue with AA. The case shows the significance of educational work and, in its African dimension, of the usefulness of a minilateral approach to it.

The ICEM was a major actor in its own right in the two continents that are central to AA's mining operations, taking initiative and mediating between the company and national unions. The formal collective bargaining that resulted in an IFA with Anglo Gold played a relatively minor role here. The GUF's input was important in taking the initiative with the AA companies and in negotiating significant safeguards for workers, in educating them and their representatives and in generalising and publicising the initiative beyond the company. A model was developed that the GUF transferred elsewhere in the world.

The case illustrates the large-scale resources required to form and maintain a relationship between a GUF and a multinational, as well as the potential rewards for doing so. The resources issue is one factor prompting us to ask how far lessons from the case can have wider significance, since GUFs have limited capacities to conduct such intensive long-term work. We can only broadly estimate the case's wider significance here and a need exists for more case studies. In this instance, a partnership approach was possible because of the HIV/AIDS issue, which generated an exceptionally powerful business case for working with the GUF. Nevertheless, broadly similar health conditions exist and concern both mining and other companies (Gaunt, 2007). Moreover, the multinational was predisposed to regard engagement with the GUF positively since it was reconciled to trade unionism, was operating profitably, was accustomed to initiating collaboration with unions to reduce costs, and senior management shared industrial relations experience with the ICEM leadership. These may be unusual features, but they are clearly not unique since the company's federal structure, concern with CSR and raising efficiency through cost reduction are shared by many others.

As we remarked above, the study illustrates the scale of the resources required to achieve success in constructing relationships of this type, a subject central to the next, concluding chapter.

III
Conclusion

The Political Decision

T HE internationals currently face a remarkable situation. On the one hand they are politically unified, have high membership, and good levels of engagement with unions. For the first time in history, they can realistically claim to approximate to being genuinely global bodies. On the other hand, they are victims of their own success in bringing in more affiliates since demands increase as resources diminish, and completion of the globalisation process will intensify the problem. There are two competing logics at work: those of legitimacy and resources. The logic of legitimacy demands that new, unaffiliated unions and groups of currently unorganised workers are recruited. The logic of resources is that integrating these into the internationals will simply deepen the financial crisis.

Without functioning internationals, supported intelligently by their affiliates, the majority of the world's trade unions have weak relationships and leverage with employers. The extremely high level of international connectedness needed to develop this leverage cannot be established through bilateral contacts. Some have been tempted opportunistically to adopt the single-track 'rank and file internationalism is what counts' line to justify the development of bilateral links rather than to sustain and develop the internationals. But bilateralism fails to address the underlying power dynamics both between unions, and between unions and employers. Bilateral contacts are established, managed and funded only by a select group of unions in rich, developed countries, and as a result are likely to reinforce existing power imbalances. For successful internationalism to be built, these power disparities have to be overcome.

Power disparities are lived out through the issue of resources. There is no alternative to increasing the resources flowing from national to international level if the internationals are to survive, and more will be required to develop in the directions we suggest. If unions do not make the necessary financial commitment, the only alternative for the internationals and their affiliates is to become even more dependent on a small group of donors for projects that they may well be unable or unwilling to fund, or to become more reliant on employers who will exact a toll. This dependency on external funds is already, as we showed earlier, at a dangerously high level. Yet in a few cases unions have reduced or even ended their international subscriptions; many others simply affiliate small numbers of members or delay

paying their dues. It is understandable that unions who are hard pressed and having difficulties in assisting their members should look to economise by restricting their payments to the internationals, but it is also a real issue in the era of globalisation.

The resources debate is becoming more public and is surfacing in conferences rather than behind closed doors. This leaves us with, at best, opportunities to make the political argument to union membership and executives to reinforce their international commitments. The transfer of resources from relatively prosperous nations' unions to others needs to be argued for at the political level not solely as an act of solidarity, nor as a form of protection against 'social dumping', but as an investment in their futures. A unionism is assumed here that sees all unions as interconnected workers' organisations, the demise of which in any country weakens the position of unions everywhere.

Which area of work should the internationals prioritise? They have three overlapping but distinct functions. First, they defend the existing space in which unions operate. Second, they work to create further space. Third, they help unions build the capacities to exploit that space, by helping unions to carry out core and new tasks more effectively. This last function is mainly carried out through the internationals' educational work. We stress that we do not argue here for the abandonment of any specific area of activity, all of which are relevant. Rather, a shift in the balance between these areas of activity is recommended, with an even greater emphasis being placed on education.

The first function, defending space, would be difficult to abandon or devolve, and not simply because of the importance to trade unionists of the duty of solidarity. The increasing worldwide tendency for the freedom of association to be attacked is a serious issue. The internationals have a unique status as institutions that unions can draw on when defending victimised activists at national level, which no national union can replicate. For the ITUC, with a formal status within the ILO governing body, this is especially relevant and the ITUC should continue to be concerned with human rights complaints mechanisms and continue to act as the political voice of international labour. Despite small results to date, political lobbying is an important area, one in which the ITUC should come into its own. The real prize is the creation of a social clause in World Trade Organisation proceedings, by linking trade with labour standards (Ewing and Sibley, 2000). As these authors point out, there are 'serious political and practical problems to be overcome' (*ibid.*: 39–40), but such a clause would open many possibilities for unions at national level, improving the possibilities for applying basic trade union rights and core labour standards throughout corporate structures and supply chains. The ITUC has the relevant expertise, tradition and track record in such lobbying work. The GUFs would obviously retain some of their role in complaints by virtue of their role in monitoring IFAs and specific rights abuses with employers, but our suggestion is for as much of this work as possible to be devolved to the umbrella body.

The second function, creating space, mainly but not exclusively through negotiating International Framework Agreements, should remain a significant area of GUF activity since it clearly provides opportunities for unions at local level. The way that these agreements should be conceptualised and presented to companies should perhaps be that adopted by the IUF, i.e. as recognition agreements rather than the more abstract framework agreements. Furthermore, they require support by improved company networking that, as we have argued, requires a more long-term educational approach. However, these agreements' limitations are thrown into sharp relief by the externalisation of much multinational employment and the explosion of 'informal' work, realities that appear unlikely to change greatly in the near future.

This area of work could also to some extent be devolved to different actors. Negotiation is not currently a core competence of the internationals, since many of their employees have relatively little in-depth experience of it. National unions, especially those in Europe, have more expertise, but devolution to them carries a significant risk. This has already been underlined, i.e. that some affiliates in the developed world may use it as an opportunity to further reinforce their prominent position in companies. Companies might try to create more space for themselves by exploiting the increased role it gives headquarters unions. This shift, therefore, would have to be carefully structured, policed and managed by GUFs. It might also be possible in some circumstances to devolve the monitoring of IFAs to a new institution that brought together the ILO, consultants and national unions, including those outside the OECD countries.

The third function, helping unions to exploit space, is a major candidate for expansion. Education is important to all levels of union activity, from organising informal workers to international networking. Moreover, imbalances in democratic participation may be addressed by the same means. Both unions and the internationals themselves stand to benefit greatly from such an increase in participation in their representative structures. As others have suggested (see, for example, Hannigan, 1998), the trade union movement would find labour educators only too willing to act with them to create an effective alliance.

There is an evident need for unions to rethink and reposition themselves, both in relation to their national contexts and employers – that is, to carry out transformational change. This has been particularly evident in the case of unions from the former Soviet Union and will be similarly significant in the Middle East and China. By 'transformational change' we mean involving members, aligning unions' structures with their missions and reallocating resources (Behrens et al., 2004). Education is of major importance in this profound type of change. In this context, it has two main aims. The first is to help unions to build their capacities to organise and mobilise workers. The second aim is to aid the union's organisational development. Organisational development supports organising in that it encourages unions to provide the necessary human resources, information and institutional

support to carry it out. Such a perspective is at least a medium-term one and, for some unions, it will take a sustained and determined effort to achieve tangible results. If experience of organising approaches in the developed world teaches us anything, it is that there are no quick fixes.

Education should clearly be adapted to the needs in particular regions. More importantly, it should be linked directly to specific forms of experimentation considered particularly relevant by the unions concerned. Thus, it might focus on organising approaches, on the recruitment of particular types of worker or on mobilising and working with those already recruited. This type of approach is likely to appeal to the many unions in the world faced by large numbers of informal workers. As argued in Chapter seven from experience of precisely these kinds of programmes, efforts should be directed towards local, inter- and intra-regional groups of national unions exchanging experience, allowing unions to pool experience about what works best and under what circumstances. This would also allow unions to tap into those creative possibilities offered by local successes in organising in certain parts of the world.

A precondition for this approach is that unions are selected for their commitment and capacity to carry out and sustain a programme of development. These unions could then act as national models for others to evaluate. There are two further conditions for success: first, that it is carried out by people with the requisite expertise in international union development, and second that it is fully integrated both into the work of the unions involved and that of the GUF itself.

A shift of responsibilities within the internationals as outlined above could provide resources for the educational bias that is required. This could be further assisted both by regions and groupings of countries within them, especially since regions play a key role in securing dues payments from affiliates. Although increased contributions from national unions are urgently needed, this will require time to deliver and, in the interim, it will be necessary to raise funds. Regions should help in terms of fundraising from union-sympathetic governments such as those of Brazil and South Africa, both of which have extensive funds that unions could bid for. It may be that in the future local and regional organisations are more able to access funding than their international secretariats. HIV/AIDS funding, for example, operates on a completely decentralised basis. Raising the level of active fund raising in the regions would help to address the balance of power within the internationals by providing the sub-regions and regions with more independent resources (Wedin, 1991). The democratising effects of education should help to ensure that these funds are used in accountable ways.

In short, we find the emphasis developed by Levinson and adopted by many in the international union movement today on collective bargaining as a key task for GUFs to be misplaced. Instead, particularly given the profound informalisation of work that is taking place, unions need to focus their resources on using education

and exchange of experience between trade unionists to maintain their relevance and legitimacy as the voice of labour.

The key remaining question is how to develop structures that take serious account of the importance of unions being able to articulate their experience and political work to their counterparts in other countries. The 'problem of large numbers' (see Chapter four) is a significant block to the level of cooperation and solidarity both within and between unions. As Olson argued: 'The larger the group, the less it will further its common interest' (Olson, 1965: 36).

Small groups operating within a multilateral structure provide the best method of articulation between trade union memberships, GUF affiliates and global unions. Our proposed way of working stimulates a closeness that the majority of the internationals' passive membership rarely experiences. Working in small groups provides a way of making multilateralism function because these groups can build on affiliates' proximity and serve to facilitate exchanges and transfers of capacity between them. The shared principles of the multilateral structures provide the necessary sense of inclusion and common purpose in a wider enterprise to the small groups. Cooperation within and between small groups is also relevant to the relationships between the GUFs themselves. It is an approach that the GUFs have recently adopted in a piecemeal fashion, but collaboration on issues of strategic importance should become a major focus in the future.

We have tried here to bring the current state of international trade unionism, a largely neglected dimension of globalisation, to the attention of a wider audience. The internationals' fragility and dependence on external resources is a problem that can only be overcome by a range of measures, including a higher level of commitment by unions in the developed world, particularly those from Europe, North America and Japan. The challenge to national unions is to contribute more to the internationals in order to secure their survival, an issue that has to be addressed with some urgency.

Simply put, the internationals' affiliates need to make the difficult but crucial political decision to support them with the resources they need. The global unions are the only institutions that can develop the collective experience, articulation and collaboration between unions in the ways demanded by globalisation.

Annex 1: BWI Model IFA

BWI Model International Framework Agreement

Approved by BWI World Council on 16 November 2007
Building and Wood Workers' International

To be signed between (company name) and the Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI) to promote and protect worker's rights.

A paragraph(s) should be inserted at the beginning of the agreement giving a short description of the company and its operations. ("The company recognises that corruption, bribery and unfair anti-competitive actions distort markets and hamper economic, social and democratic development." Should be part of the policy statement.)

The BWI is the Global Union Federation grouping free and democratic unions with members in the Building, Building Materials, Wood, Forestry and Allied sectors. The BWI groups together around 350 trade unions representing around 12 million members in 135 countries. The BWI's mission is to promote the development of trade unions in the building and wood industries throughout the world and to promote and enforce workers' rights.

The agreement is based on the signatories' joint commitment to respect basic human and trade union rights, acknowledging the fundamental principals of human rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as well as relevant ILO Conventions and jurisprudence and the OECD guidelines on Multinational Companies. The parties also commit themselves to achieving continuous improvements within the areas of working conditions, health and safety standards at the workplace and positive democratic industrial relations and fair collective bargaining procedures with representative trade unions.

This agreement relates to all (company name) operations. The (company name) will secure compliance with the principles set out in this agreement also with its subsidiaries, contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and joint ventures. This agreement shall not in any way reduce or undermine existing labour relations practices or agreements relating to union rights or facilities already established by any BWI affiliate or group of affiliates or any other union within (company name).

In this spirit the (company name) and the BWI shall work together to verify the effective application by all (company name) activities and undertakings of the following requirements.

1. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected
All workers shall have the right to form and join trade unions of their own choice. These unions shall have the right to be recognised for the purpose of collective bargaining in conformance with ILO Conventions 87 and 98. Workers' representatives shall not be subjected to any discrimination and shall have access to all necessary workplaces in order to carry out their duties as representatives (ILO Convention 135 and Recommendation 143). The company shall take a positive attitude to trade union activities, including union access to workers in the organising process. The company will follow the most efficient process in the event that BWI affiliate requests union recognition.

2. Employment is freely chosen
There shall be no use of forced or compulsory labour, including bonded labour. Workers shall not be asked to surrender passports, identity papers or valuables (ILO Conventions 29 and 105).

3. No discrimination in employment
All workers shall have equality of opportunity and treatment regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, religion, political opinion, nationality, social origin or other distinguishing characteristics. Workers shall receive equal pay for work of equal value (ILO Conventions 100 and 111). Migrating and posted employees must enjoy at least the same conditions as the national work force.

4. Child labour is not used
Child labour shall not be used. Only workers above the age of 15 years, or over the compulsory school-leaving age if higher, shall be employed (ILO Convention 138). Children under the age of 18 shall not perform work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (ILO Convention 182).

5. Living wages are paid
Workers shall be paid wages and benefits for a standard working week that will enable them and their families to enjoy a reasonable standard of living, and which are more favourable than the minimum conditions established by national legislation or agreements. All workers must be provided with clear verbal and written information about wage conditions, as well as specific information regarding every payment period (ILO Conventions 131 Minimum Wage Fixing, 1970, C.95 Protection of wages, 1949, C.94 Labour Clauses (Public Contracts), 1949). Deductions shall not be made from wages unless otherwise stated in national law or collective agreements. Information regarding pay and deductions should be provided to workers each time

wages are paid, and these should not be changed other than by written consent of the individual worker or by collective agreement.

6. Hours of work are not excessive

Hours of work shall comply with appropriate national legislation, national agreements and industry standards but in no circumstances should be unreasonable. Overtime shall not be excessive, shall not be demanded on a regular basis and shall always be remunerated at a premium rate. All workers shall be given a minimum of a one day weekly rest period.

7. Health and Safety of Workers

A safe and healthy working environment shall be provided. Best occupational health and safety practice to prevent injuries and ill health shall be promoted and shall be in compliance with ILO Convention 155 Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 and ILO Convention 167 on Safety and Health in Construction, 1988 and the ILO Guidelines for Occupational Health Management Systems.

All workers shall also be given Personal Protective Equipment, at no cost to themselves, and training on occupational hazards and their prevention. Workplace Health and Safety Committees shall be established and workers shall have the right to elect Health and Safety Representatives. Trade Unions shall be encouraged to appoint and train Health and Safety Representatives.

Suppliers, contractors and sub-contractors shall be required to provide a site-specific health and safety plan and to appoint a competent person to manage health and safety and to take part in safety meetings.

8. Welfare of workers

At every work site the company shall provide an adequate supply of wholesome drinking water; sanitary and washing facilities; facilities for changing and for storage and drying of clothing; accommodation for taking meals and for shelter.

When workers are offered living accommodation, this shall be planned, built and maintained to provide reasonable housing conditions. The company shall provide health education and an HIV/AIDS awareness raising and prevention programme in accordance with the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work.

9. Skills training

All workers shall have the opportunity to participate in education and training programmes including training to improve workers skills to use new technology and equipment.

10. The employment relationship is established

The company shall respect obligations to all workers under labour and social security laws and regulations arising from the regular employment relationship (Social Security Minimum Standards Convention C.102). In locations where conditions permit, efforts shall be made to offer fixed employment opportunities. All workers

shall receive a written contract of employment. The company and all sub-contractors shall, wherever practicable, directly employ all labour, and shall pay social security and pension contributions for their workers.

IMPLEMENTATION

The (company name) will ensure that appropriate translations of the agreement are available at all workplaces and should include suppliers and subcontractors. The agreement will also be made public on the Company's website and Intranet.

a) Both parties recognize that effective local monitoring of this agreement must involve the local management, the workers and their representatives, health and safety representatives and local trade unions.

b) To enable local and national union representatives of BWI affiliated unions to play a role in the monitoring process, they will be given adequate time for training and involvement in the monitoring process. The company will ensure that they are provided with information, access to workers, and rights of inspection necessary to effectively monitor compliance with this agreement.

c) A reference group shall be set up, composed of representatives of (Company name), and of the concerned BWI affiliated union(s) in the home country of the company and a BWI coordinator. It will meet at least once a year, or when necessary, to evaluate reports on compliance and to review the implementation of the agreement.

(company name) shall make the necessary resources available for the implementation of the agreement.

Trade union representation should be secured in internal or external monitoring. Monitoring or audit reports should be made available to the signing organisations.

The annual review of the present agreement shall be incorporated into (company name) annual reporting with the consent of the signatories.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In the event of a complaint or an infraction of the agreement the following procedure will normally apply:

a) Firstly, the complaint should be raised with the local site management.

b) If the complaint is not resolved with local management, it should be referred to the appropriate national union who will raise the issue with the company.

c) Any infractions which could not be resolved through discussion at the workplace or national level will be addressed by the BWI coordinator in close cooperation with the BWI affiliates in the home country and will be reported to the responsible manager, who will ensure that corrective measures are implemented in a timely manner.

d) If the issue is not resolved, the reference group will deal with the matter and propose appropriate action.

e) If corrective measures are not taken in a way that is satisfactory to the BWI affiliate raising the complaint, and the BWI-affiliate and the BWI coordinator

participating in the reference group, the dispute shall be resolved through binding arbitration. The arbitrator will be jointly selected by all of the members of the reference group. All expenses for the arbitration will be the responsibility of the Company.

f) If a dispute is not resolved and breaches continue, withdrawal from the IFA should be a final resort.

Signatories agree that any difference arising from the interpretation or implementation of this agreement will be examined jointly, for the purpose of clarification.

DURATION

This agreement is effective from today's date, with a mutual three month notice of termination.

Date and venue

(Signature Building and Wood Workers' International, BWI)

&

(Signature company name)

Annex 2: Lafarge IFA

Agreement on corporate social responsibility and international industrial relations signed between the Lafarge Group and the International trade union federations IFBWW, ICEM and WFBW to promote and protect workers' rights

The IFBWW, International Federation of Building and Wood Workers, is a Global Union Federation organising more than 10.5 million members in 281 trade unions in 125 countries around the world in the building, building materials, wood, forestry and allied industries.

The ICEM, International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions, is a Global Union Federation organising workers in the Chemical, Energy, Mine and related Process Industries including Cement, Glass and Ceramics. ICEM unites 425 member trade unions from 121 countries representing in total around 20 million workers in these industries.

The WFBW, World Federation of Building and Woodworkers' Unions, represents 1.5 million workers in the building and wood industry and who are organised in 55 unions in 41 countries all over the world.

Lafarge is the world leader in building materials, holds top-ranking positions in all four of its Divisions: Cement, Aggregates & Concrete, Roofing and Gypsum. Lafarge employs 77,000 people in 75 countries.

PREAMBLE

Lafarge believes that there's a link between social and economic progress. The interests and success of Lafarge and its employees are interdependent. Lafarge commits itself to involve its employees directly in the Group future through an open dialog; Lafarge recognizes that employees may choose to be represented by elected employees and/or trade union organizations.

The Lafarge philosophy is to develop and maintain positive relationships with its employees in accordance with the 'Lafarge Principles of Action': "Lafarge responsibility is as much about complying with local and international laws and standards as it is about aligning our actions with our values. Respect for the common interest, openness and dialog, integrity and commitment are the main ethical principles of the Group and of the employees".

Trade unions believe that decent wages and working conditions, a meaningful job with prospects, a safe and healthy working environment, the right to join free trade unions and the right to collective bargaining are preconditions for good industrial relations.

The signatories consider that this agreement is based on the joint commitment to respect human and social rights and to achieve continuous improvement within the areas of working conditions, industrial relations, health and safety standards in the workplace and environmental performance.

The signatories recognize that the subsidiarity principle is a key performance management process within the Group; therefore the signatories respect the principle that industrial relations issues are best resolved as close as possible to the workplaces.

Lafarge considers respect for workers' rights to be a crucial element in sustainable development. Lafarge will seek to use the services of those trading partners, subcontractors and suppliers, which recognise and implement the principles listed below.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Lafarge commits itself to comply with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, the United Nations Global Compact and also the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

No forced labour

It is prohibited to make direct or indirect use of forced labour, including bonded labour and involuntary prison labour (ILO Conventions 29 and 105).

No discrimination in employment

All workers, whatever their workplace, shall have equality of opportunity and treatment regardless of their ethnic origin, colour, gender, religion, political opinion, nationality, social origin or other distinguishing characteristics. Workers shall receive equal pay for work of equal value (ILO Conventions 100 and 111). Migrant and posted employees must be ensured at least the same rights and conditions as the national workforce working in the company.

No use of child labour

It is prohibited to use child labour in any form whatsoever: only workers above the age of 15 years, or over the compulsory school-leaving age if higher, shall be employed (ILO Convention 138). In view of their age, children under the age of 18 shall not perform work, which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (ILO Convention 182).

Freedom of association and right to collective bargaining

Lafarge should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining (ILO conventions 87 and 98).

The Lafarge Group guarantees that workers' representatives shall not be discriminated against (ILO Convention 135).

Living wages

Workers shall be paid wages and benefits for a standard working week that should be at least at the level of current national legislation or collective agreements, as applied in the industry/sector concerned. All workers must be provided with clear verbal and written information about wage conditions in their native language.

Deductions from wages, unless permitted under national law, shall not be made under any circumstances without the express permission of the worker concerned.

Working hours

Working hours shall comply with appropriate national legislation, national agreements and industry/sector standards. Overtime shall not be excessive and shall always be remunerated at a premium rate. All workers shall be given a minimum of a one day weekly rest period.

Health, safety and working conditions

A safe and healthy working environment shall be provided (ILO Convention 155). Best occupational health and safety practices shall be followed and shall be in compliance with the ILO Guidelines for Occupational Health Management Systems. All workers shall be given training on occupational hazards and shall have the means of preventing them.

The signatories undertake to raise awareness of the HIV/AIDS problem and of the prevention programme in compliance with the ILO HIV/AIDS code of practice.

Skills training

All workers shall have the opportunity to participate in education and training programmes including training to improve workers' level of skills so that they can use new technology and equipment. Whenever possible, the Lafarge Group in cooperation with trade unions shall develop workers' training with a view to improving their level of skills and ensuring that they participate in their career development and increase their employability.

IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW UP

The Lafarge Group will provide information concerning this agreement in written or verbal form in all countries where this agreement is applicable.

All signatories are strongly committed to the most widespread dissemination possible of the content of this agreement throughout the Lafarge operations.

A reference group consisting of representatives of the Lafarge management and

the signatory international federations shall meet at least once a year, or whenever necessary, to follow up and review the implementation of this agreement.

The Lafarge Group shall make available to the reference group the resources needed for its mission.

The annual review of the present agreement should be incorporated into the Lafarge Group's reporting with the consent of all signatories.

All signatories agree that any difference arising from the interpretation or implementation of this agreement will be examined jointly, for the purpose of making recommendations to the signatories concerned.

DURATION

This agreement shall remain in force unless otherwise agreed by any party giving three calendar month's notice, in writing, to the other.

The present agreement may be revised at the request of one of the signatories no later than four years after it has been signed.

Paris, 12 September 2005

The Lafarge Group, Christian Herrault
The IFBWW, Anita Normark
The ICEM, Fred Higgs
The WFBW, Stefaan Vantourenhout

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Global Unions as imperfect multilateral organizations: An international relations perspective

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Abstract
We apply an international relations framework and the notion of multilateral organizations as a means of understanding the nature of trade union internationalism, the conditions under which it operates. We argue that international trade unionism involves an imperfect multilateralism which requires close working relationships between small groups of unions in order to function, that is, a 'minilateral' method of working. By using this framework we attempt to highlight the intrinsic durability and adaptability of the Global Unions and also identify areas of activity that serve to strengthen them as organisations, primarily by building affiliates' engagement and investment in them.

Introduction

Much of the literature on the international trade union movement is under-theorized. International trade union organizations comprise numerous affiliates with marked differences in membership strength and material resources, and conflicting ideologies and identities. How in practice are policies shaped and decisions taken? Formal constitutional provisions tell us little. As an approach to an answer, we apply an international relations framework, and in particular the notion of multilateral organizations, as a means of understanding the nature of trade union internationalism, the conditions under which it operates and the problems which it currently faces..

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is an international organization of national trade union confederations. It has 305 affiliated member organizations from 151 countries and territories, with a total membership of 176 million workers. It is closely linked to the international organizations of occupational or industrial trade unions, the ten Global Union Federations (GUFs) (previously known as International Trade Secretariats), which date back in some cases to the late nineteenth century. Together the ITUC and GUFs have adopted the collective label 'Global Unions'. The relative lack of attention among academics and the general public to international trade unionism is curious when one bears in mind that they are, along with faith groups, the world's largest membership organizations. They have great though often hidden influence on other international bodies, national governments, trade union movements and civil society. Yet their very size is indicative of the problem we address here: the difficulty for very large democratic organizations to operate effectively.

Archer (2001: 33) defines international organizations as 'formal, continuous structure[s] established by agreement between members... with the aim of pursuing

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the common interest of the membership' and with core functions which include norm and rule setting and providing information, socialization and articulation between members. This definition clearly applies to the Global Unions, which even more than most other international organizations are founded on the principle of internal democracy (Webb and Webb 1920). In order to operate successfully, they must not only act efficiently on behalf of their membership but be able to engage their membership in order to achieve their objectives. (Offe and Wiesenthal 1985). We argue that the existence of multilateral structures is necessary for genuinely global trade union activity to take place, but that what exists is an imperfect multilateralism which requires close working relationships between small groups of unions in order to function effectively. We further argue that union capacity to carry out international solidarity action requires a robust relationship between members which can only be developed by working in a 'minilateral' way with small groups of affiliates.

For most of its history, international trade unionism has been beset by ideological, regional and organizational cleavages. Most of the literature has focused on ideological cleavages, with the primary dividing lines being between social-democratic, christian and communist organizations (Carew 1987, MacShane 1992). At its creation in 2006, the ITUC united for the first time affiliates of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the inheritor of the social-democratic tradition, and most of the affiliates of the much smaller World Confederation of Labour (WCL), derived from the christian tradition, along with a number of important ex-communist unions (previously affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions, WFTU) and other independent unions. What were once inter-organizational ideological divisions now had to be managed within the new unified organization. The second major basis for division, geographical differences, is more significant today than ever. There have long been significant differences between the ideas, practices and priorities of the unions of the industrialised countries and those of the industrialising countries. All the Global Unions have their headquarters in Europe, mainly in Brussels and Geneva, where the weight of membership and financial resources has always been concentrated, although most of them also possess regional structures including committees, offices and staff. The regional structures do not necessarily resolve the differences of interests, resources and perspective between these two groups. A third basis for division is the more practical one between organisations like the ITUC and its predecessors (ICFTU etc.), which are based on national centres, and the GUFs, based on industrial unions. While the GUFs retain a formal autonomy in the new structures, they are now more closely linked to the new global body, the ITUC, but it remains to be seen how effectively this closer link will operate in practice.

What do Global Unions do, and why do they do it

Scholars and practitioners of international trade unionism give different answers to the questions of why unions act internationally, and what they do. Many view trade union internationalism as a response to the internationalization of both product and labour markets, which entails that wages and working conditions can no longer be defended by action purely at the national level. This was the position of Charles Levinson, general secretary of the International Chemical and Energy Workers' Federation, who led the drive for World Company Councils in the 1960s-70s (Levinson 1972). In recent years this challenge has been conceptualized in terms of globalization, with the growing power of multinational companies (MNCs), the unequal relationship between rich and poor nations and the threat of a 'race to the bottom' in terms of labour costs and employer practices (Logue 1980, Ramsay 1997, 1999). Similar arguments, however, were made by early advocates of international trade union organization, such as Edo Fimmen, general secretary of the International Transportworkers Federation (1924). Other authors present the case for a

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transnational trade union response in terms of solidarity, a concept which refers both to the principle of common action with others and to the identification of one's own interests with theirs (Hyman 1999, Lorwin 1953, Zoll 1996). For members of the Global Unions, this involves the commitment to support other members in response to conflicts with employers, both locally and internationally, in order to protect standards for working people everywhere. Solidarity can however be conceived in two contrasting senses: first, as a normative or moral principle which creates an obligation to support other workers and their unions in case of need; second, as a form of 'enlightened self-interest' (Collier, 2008: 247, Logue 1980, Ramsay 1997) with only weakly ethical underpinning, motivated by the belief that an injury to one is (sooner or later) an injury to all. The tension between these two conceptions of solidarity has generated dilemmas for international trade union organization, in part because the practical benefits of solidarity actions are often difficult to identify and take many years to bear fruit.

A second dilemma concerns the orientation of action. This may be internal, focused around the sector or industry the organisation represents, particularly in the case of the GUFs and their predecessors: Global Unions seek to align the policies and activities of affiliates in order to pool resources and prevent damaging downwards pressure on standards. The rationale is that effective collective action will enable unions through their own efforts to counteract the challenges of globalization.

The other orientation is external, focused on action at a more general and political level. The ITUC in particular has conceived much of its role in terms of engaging with other actors at international level, especially the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and other UN institutions. The International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), a predecessor of today's ITUC, was deeply involved in the creation of the ILO in 1919 (Van Goethem 2000: 80-2) and was a ready-made interlocutor for the new organization. Within the ILO's tripartite structure – its Governing Body draws half its members from national governments and a quarter each from workers' and employers' organizations – the ITUC and its predecessors the ICFTU and IFTU have always effectively controlled the workers' side. To an important extent, the ITUC (like its forerunners) and the ILO confer legitimacy and recognition on each other. This relationship has become increasingly important in recent years, as globalisation has brought international labour relations affairs into greater prominence, and as a result of institutional change within the UN system, in particular within the ILO (Fröhlich 2007). These changes were stimulated by a number of international developments (Haworth and Hughes 2003) including the end of the Cold War, increased concern about social protection and the linking of world trade and labour standards. The ITUC has strongly supported the 'decent work' agenda launched in 1999 by the newly appointed ILO director-general, Juan Samovía. Closely linked to this agenda was the priority given – from among the multiplicity of ILO conventions – to a set of core labour standards relating to freedom of association and collective bargaining, prevention of forced labour, elimination of the worst forms of child labour and prevention of discrimination in employment.

Similarly, while the GUFs have long focused on MNCs, work on this issue has become even more important following the recent process of company mergers and acquisitions (Schmidt, 2002). This process has stimulated a new area of work for the GUFs in their efforts to resist the competitive downwards pressure by MNCs on national standards. National unions lack the capacity to influence corporate policy without concerted international cooperation, and the response has therefore been the attempt to negotiate transnational agreements, usually in the form of International Framework Agreements (IFAs).

These global developments have increased the incentives for national unions to cooperate globally, providing both concrete benefits but also broader advantages, such as providing thinking, coordination and opportunities for joint action. But Global Unions are faced with an internal conflict between two competing realities of supply

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and demand. The first reality stems from their success in affiliating trade unions from outside the OECD countries which provided their traditional core, and the fact that their legitimacy demands that this process of recruitment continue, perhaps even to include China. Yet in most non-OECD countries, unions have few fee-paying members (even though they may attract wide-scale support), whereas membership numbers (and hence financial resources) have been declining throughout the traditional industrialized world. The second is that, as indicated above, the need for effective international trade unionism becomes ever greater with the acceleration of economic internationalization, itself driven by the priorities of the international financial institutions (IFIs) and key national governments (notably the USA), which the Global Unions strive to little effect to counteract.

There are enormous cultural, organizational and political differences between unions that make cooperation particularly difficult at the international level. It is hard for new and even sometimes established member unions fully to understand the position of other members or to appreciate how to navigate an international setting, even with today's greater possibilities for transport and communication. The language barrier remains significant at the world level, especially for less educated trade unionists, and it remains one of the key capacities of the Global Unions to integrate information and experience from a diverse membership and use it not only to facilitate communication between them but also to forge common values and priorities for action. This is essential for all international organisations: As Kratochwil argues (1993: 448), a central function of international organizations 'is the interpretation of the "facts" and inferences about motivations', and Windmuller (1967, 1987) and others agree that this is equally true of the day-to-day work of the Global Unions.

Global Unions: The regional dimension and the issue of resources

The work of the global unions can be divided into three main areas (Croucher and Cotton, 2009). The first is the defence of affiliated unions, usually through direct solidarity action in support of a particular dispute or problem. The second is to further the interests of trade unions within international and inter-governmental organisations, in recent years mainly through pursuing international negotiations with employers, using company networks and International Framework Agreements (IFAs). The third is capacity-building for unions in less developed parts of the world, carried out primarily through long-term development work, in particular education programmes.

The ICFTU was the first peak-level international trade union organisation to establish regional organizations for the Americas (including both North and South America), Asia and Africa shortly after its foundation in 1949; its rivals the largely communist WFTU and the christian CISC, predecessor of the WCL, soon followed suit. In the new climate of the cold war trade union organization was seen as an essential part of a greater ideological battle. De-colonisation offered many opportunities for trade union growth in newly independent states, where trade unions had often played a key role in the independence struggle. All three internationals found themselves competing for affiliates, a competition that created opportunities for corruption and opportunism on all sides. Many of the organizational problems evident today originated in the 1960s, particularly the struggle of the regional structures to achieve a sustainable basis of paying affiliates and to reduce the reliance on externally funded projects. By the early 1990s the GUFs were establishing regional structures and offices, directing the bulk of their dues income towards building a genuinely global membership. This included integrating unions from the former Soviet Union and attempting to incorporate unions from the Middle East. .At the European level, the ICFTU also set up a European regional organization, which became moribund and then gave way in 1973 to the independent European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), which soon admitted affiliates of the WCL and former

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affiliates of WFTU. The rise of an autonomous European regional body thus paved the way for the foundation of the ITUC, but also encouraged a greater focus on European affairs among European trade unions, sometimes to the detriment of international trade union solidarity (Windmuller 1976, Gumbrell-McCormick 2000). As Traub-Merz and Eckl have noted (2007: 4), 'organisational autonomy necessitated a division of labour which repeatedly called for difficult compromises – especially on issues affecting European foreign-trade interests – between an ETUC with a more protectionist profile and an ICFTU bound to solidarity with trade unions from developing countries.'

There have been marked variations both within and between the regions in terms of economic and social development, levels of trade union membership and financial and organizational resources. At the beginning of the 1970s, union organization was relatively strong in Asia, while in Africa it was clearly weakest, meaning that effective regional organization was possible only with substantial external support (Croucher and Cotton 2009). The majority of the Global Unions brought together two completely distinct regions, North and South America, with the USA and Canada largely subsidising this work. In the case of the ICFTU, the regional body ORIT (*Organización Regional Interamericana de Trabajadores*) was widely criticised as a channel for US foreign policy, supporting corrupt and unrepresentative but anti-communist Latin American unions in the 1960s and 70s, before a 'clean up' in the 1980s (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000). In contrast, the WCL had a separate regional organization for South America, CLASC (later renamed CLAT) (*Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores*) that prided itself on its autonomy from North America and gained considerable influence among all those opposed to the US domination of ORIT. How to deal with the Americas was to be one of the most contentious issues in the creation of the ITUC and has been resolved only by the creation of regional sub-structures which allow North and South America to operate largely independently. A different issue arose in the case of Europe, where – as noted above – the ETUC was autonomous from the Global Unions. The solution was to create a Pan-European Regional Council (PERC) within the ITUC; the ETUC general secretary holds the same office within PERC. In practice, the latter focuses on trade union issues in Eastern Europe, beyond the boundaries of the European Union (EU).

The ETUC and ITUC share a headquarters building, the International Trade Union House in Brussels. But the European organization is significantly better resourced. Though the ITUC charges its wealthiest affiliates higher affiliation fees than the ETUC – in 2010, €197 per thousand members as against €161 – the majority of ETUC membership belongs to the higher-fee affiliates, whereas the opposite is the case with the ITUC. In addition, the ETUC benefits from substantial resources from the EU, in particular for its research, education and health and safety agency, the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI). The differences are reflected in staffing. The ITUC, with its global remit, lists 74 headquarters staff in 2011. The ETUC lists 52, with an additional 64 in the ETUI. The latter has 20 research staff with a direct input into the ETUC policy process; the three ITUC policy departments (Human and Trade Union Rights, Economic and Social Policy and Equality) together have 17.

For many unions in developing and transition countries, contact with a Global Union was their first possibility to establish relationships with trade unions outside their own country, and sometimes inside, on a basis of relative equality. In most parts of the world, in particular in countries under military dictatorships and in the former Communist bloc, trade unions, and in particular any international contacts, were heavily controlled by governments. Subsequently, democratization often went hand in hand with economic liberalism, and unions faced dramatic changes in the structure of their industries and the employment relationship, and often faced foreign employers for the first time. Affiliation to a Global Union was thus a highly attractive

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option and provided both contact with the outside world and internal prestige as well as educational and financial resources for union work. This was particularly pronounced in the case of the former Soviet Union. Unions in these countries typically cost more for the Global Unions in development aid than they bring in affiliation fees.

As noted above, unions in most developed countries have experienced a steady decline in the number of workers paying subscriptions (Visser 2011). This is in part due to increased unemployment but also the shift from manufacturing to private services, and more recently the squeeze on public sector employment, which almost universally is a trade union stronghold. Also of great importance is the growth of insecure working arrangements such as short term contracts, temporary agency work, homeworking, subcontracting and 'dependent self-employment'. While the extent of the 'informal economy' has long presented a serious obstacle to unionization in developing countries, the growth of precarious work forms in OECD countries has similar effects (Heery and Salmon 2000; Gumbrell-McCormick 2011; Standing, 2011).

These developments are to an important extent associated with the rise of neoliberalism, which has driven the promotion of employment flexibility and encouraged deregulation of markets more generally, and has greatly empowered the global corporations (Crouch 2011). The latter have put pressure on traditionally well organized industrial sectors (Hayter, 2009; Holdcroft, 2009) and regions through the exploitation of global production chains. Such trends have been a major focus of analysis and pressure by the Global Unions, though with limited success in stemming the neoliberal tide.

Precarious workers are difficult to organise for a broad range of reasons. Precarious work is dominated by women and ethnic minorities who have traditionally been weakly organized by unions in most parts of the world outside Scandinavia (Wrench and Virdee, 1996; Young, 2009). Perceived vulnerability to job loss and victimization also make unionization difficult. In some countries, moreover, there are specific legal constraints on the right of workers on 'atypical' contracts to organize and to bargain collectively (ILO 2009).

These changes in the employment relationship have provoked a profound questioning and repositioning of trade union activity and structures, not least in how unions organise (Frege and Kelly 2004; Phelan 2007; Webster et al. 2008). Unions have in most parts of the world attempted to find new organising techniques to reach new industries and work arrangements, such as the use of online campaigning and recruiting (Lee, 1996; Hayter, 2009). However there is little evidence that a 'new' organizing model has enabled unions to replace previously permanent memberships with precarious ones.

Membership decline has been reflected in a reduction of payments to the Global Unions, and often an increased incidence of late payment of affiliation fees, a significant problem for the international organizations which possess few if any financial reserves. Financial information is not readily available for all the Global Unions, but reports from the ICFTU and ITUC give a broad indication of trends. According to the ICFTU Millennium Review in 2000-01, total income was US$60 million per year from membership dues, additional donations and development cooperation funds raised externally. Between 1999 and 2003, an additional US$70 million of donations and project funds was channelled through its regional structures. During the period 1994-2001 real value fee receipts per member dropped by 22 percent. Despite an increase in declared membership of 28 million during 1999-2003, there was a drop of 12.4 percent in paying membership. The ITUC reported a rise in declared membership of more than 10 million between 2007 and 2009, but paying membership barely increased. Table 1 presents fees received by region for the ICFTU in 1998 and 2003, and for the ITUC in 2009. It is important to note that affiliation fees are weighted by the level of national income in each country; in 2009

the fee was €191.45 per thousand members for unions from the richest countries, only €3.1 for those from the poorest; the GUFs have similar arrangements, as has the ETUC. This weighting means that any fall in paying membership in the wealthiest countries has a disproportionate impact on the resources of the Global Unions.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

In addition to financial resources, intangible resources such as technical expertise and political influence are also unevenly distributed across the Global Unions. Historically, the staff of Global Unions have tended to come from the most developed countries, in particular from the Low Countries, the Nordic countries, and more recently the English-speaking countries. The leading role of certain nationalities is even apparent at the regional level: English speakers from the Indian sub-continent long dominated Asian regional affairs, although their place has now largely been taken by the Japanese. The higher level of education and greater language knowledge of citizens of these countries is the probably the main reason for this phenomenon, but these are also the richest and most influential affiliates, and their over-representation within the staff only adds to the imbalance within the global trade union structures.

As a result of the imbalance of funds and concentration of expertise among staff at the secretariat level, regional organizations have tended to act as recipients of policies or resources, rather than initiators. Although the Global Unions vary constitutionally in the status and structure of regions, all are to some degree centralized decision-making bodies. Their formal decision-making structures have evolved over time to reflect their changing membership composition, and in particular to improve the representation of women and of affiliates from the developing and transition countries. Most base formal voting power on the number of dues-paying members, and suspend the voting rights of affiliates who fail to pay their fees. However, formal voting generally occurs only at the end of the decision-making process, leaving the core policy and strategy decisions to regional and international committee meetings and informal negotiations between the leaders of key affiliates who play a leading role on these committees and contribute the bulk of resources (usually the Germans, Nordics, North Americans and Japanese).

This is not to say that a union's international influence depends only on membership numbers and financial contributions. Authority, understood as the ability to act upon others or upon organizational structures, also derives from internal qualities (knowledge, experience, strength of personality or resilience). There are a number of different types of authority held by unions beyond contribution authority, based on political and moral weight (Croucher and Cotton, 2009). Political authority changes over time, with the South African unions having come to represent one of the most admired political movements. Moral authority comes through a union's ability to withstand extreme pressure: currently unions from Colombia and Iraq are seen as having an exceptional position in international activities because of the climate in which they operate. Over the history of the international trade union movement, there have been a number of influential leaders from the developing countries, but this does not change the general imbalance of resources and influence.

In addition to affiliation fees, the ITUC receives roughly €1 million a year in voluntary contributions to its Solidarity Fund, just over half coming from its German and Japanese affiliates. Far more substantial – about €7 million a year – are the project-oriented Development Aid Funds. Almost half this funding is provided by the Dutch government and trade unions, with other substantial contributions from the Swedish unions and the ILO. These are advanced and well organized funding sources but largely depend on the political support of national governments. Given the political shifts in Western Europe, the funds are increasingly dependent on the

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ability to show concrete outputs and benefits for the donor countries. In many cases, these funds are earmarked for specific projects, often entailing a bilateral relationship between donor and recipient countries and unions.This bilateralism can be seen as subversive of the broader collective solidarity which the Global Unions aim to represent (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000b, 2001).

Another observable trend has been for unions to turn their focus inward toward their own regions. This is especially true in Europe, where unions have increasingly focused on intra-regional relationships and on the EU structures at the expense of wider international work (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000a, 2002). On some analyses, the unions of Western Europe – the Global Unions' main paymasters – have come to regard European economic integration as a more immediate concern than globalization, privileging their relationship with the ETUC. The latter, in its most recent Activity Report (ETUC 2011), a hundred-page document, devoted just three pages to global issues. This can be understood as another threat to the Global Unions, which require the substantial contributions of their wealthier affiliates to achieve collective goals. A similar phenomenon has arisen in the Asian-Pacific region, where the numerical and financial weight of the Japanese confederation RENGO allows it to dominate trade union developments in Asia (as the unions of the Indian sub-continent did before it).

Politically, both the imbalance of power and resources between regions and the increasing internal focus within regions are problematic for the Global Unions. Bilateral and regional organization leaves the power dynamics between trade unions from the global North and South intact, subordinating international priorities to the interests of the key players. When their interests change, the arrangement itself may prove precarious. A key advantage of multilateralism is that it is an attempt to govern globally, and as a result the participation of all affiliates is sought, which in turn implies a high degree of democratization affecting levels of communication between the governed and the governing, rules and accountability of global union officials.

Despite the generally accepted need for trade unions to have international multilateral structures, the affiliates of the Global Unions have proved remarkably reluctant to address an evident resource crisis. Unions facing declining membership at home naturally find it difficult to commit to paying higher amounts to their international organizations. Yet what is striking is the lack of argument and energy devoted to the problem by national affiliates within their own structures and decision-making bodies, perhaps reflecting an ambivalence towards membership of the Global Unions. There is, we argue, a tension between the broad principles of multilateralism and the specific and complex actions required to carry them out. This is clear in the case of solidarity: the policy itself is virtually unchallengeable among trade unions, but there is far less consensus on the specific and demanding actions needed in order for these principles to be pursued at global level.

We attempt below to use international relations theories to understand this tension. After introducing the concepts of multilateralism and multi-level governance, we discuss Olson's 'problem of large numbers', which suggests that organizations with large membership will always struggle to develop the motivation to participate actively in multilateral structures, threatening their organizational coherence. We refer briefly to the literature on institutional entrepreneurs, advocacy coalitions and policy communities, then turn to Kahler's notion of 'minilateralism' – the practice of working in smaller groups with a resulting higher degree of consensus, clarity and closeness – in order to conceptualize the development of more robust international relationships between unions. This entails a 'disguised' multilateralism where minilateral relations are framed within a multilateral structure. Using the idea developed by Ruggie of the 'elasticity' of multilateral structures, we conclude that multilateralism as a concept has 'heuristic fruitfulness' (Kratochwil, 1993: 443) in relation to the durability of the global unions.

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Placing Global Unions within an international relations theoretical frame
Multilateralism and multi-level governance
Though multilateralism is a dominant characteristic of international institutions, it is still a relatively weakly defined concept. A definition widely used in international relations literature is by Ruggie:

> "an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct; that is, principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard to the particularist interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence." (Ruggie, 1993:77)

Caporaso (1993: 54) adds that multilateralism is also a 'conception of how the world might be organized'. Multilateralism can apply broadly to international regimes, rules and decision-making procedures, such as the international labour standards regime (Haworth and Hughes, 2003) and more formalized organizations such as the ILO. Multilateral regimes, in essence, involve working relationships between states on the basis of agreed rules and principles, and offer a structure where states can potentially develop an agenda for global governance.

Two important characteristics of multilateralism that Ruggie emphasises are that it is both durable and adaptive. These characteristics are in part a consequence of the kinds of principles on which multilateral organizations are based: they apply to all members and across all particular moments in time or interests. This gives multilateral arrangements their adaptive and 'reproductive' capacity. In addition, most multilateral regimes or organizations rely on the intense cooperation and investment of sub-sets of members, who are willing to sustain organization despite the higher costs they incur, as we discuss below through the concept of 'k-groups'.

The principles and activities of a multilateral form need to resonate with domestic environments, or to reflect the values and cultures of key members. Ruggie (1993:10) points to the cohesive effect of collective defence against an external force: multilateral organization constitutes a 'collective-security system'. Elsewhere (Ruggie1982), in his discussion of 'embedded liberalism', he notes that the post-1945 global governance regime was shaped by US dominance and development of free trade agenda. It can be argued that the supposed benefits of entering into a system of embedded liberalism have never been realised in developing countries (Bull and McNeill, 2007), because it has not provided sufficient benefits to compensate for the negative effects of involvement in international markets and free trade regimes.

The interaction between actors at national and supranational levels is a key theme of the literature on multi-level governance (Hooghe and Marks 2003). This concept, developed primarily in analysis of the EU, points to the process of negotiation and accommodation between national and supranational (and sometimes also sub-national) actors as an essential ingredient in successful policy formation. The multi-level character of multilaterism and supranationalism is an essential insight for the study of trade union internationalism.

Generalized principles
As suggested earlier, the key 'generalized principle' underlying trade union multilateralism is the idea of solidarity. In abstract terms this has resonance with trade union members, but educational and campaigning activities by national unions are often necessary to reinforce and make real this sense of solidarity among the membership, particularly younger members who do not automatically identify with solidarity as an ideologically based ideal. However, within trade union membership there is often a deep understanding of the importance of collectivism, a key motivator for joining a union and a real and evident benefit to members. Such understanding profoundly shifts the perception of the importance of alliances with workers in other

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locations, including other countries (Zoll 1996).

This idea of solidarity as 'enlightened self-interest' (Logue 1980) is a long way from the internationalism which underlies early international socialist trade unionism, although Fimmen (1924) managed to combine the two approaches. Early Christian trade unionism was also based on solidarity, although it was closer to the christian conception of charity. The contemporary concept of solidarity is not explicitly anti-capitalist and steers away from political ideology, particularly since the integration of the socialist and christian traditions. Rather it focuses on a more pragmatic conception, that there are common interests among workers internationally, however weakly defined. It does, however, link to the objectives of the 'post-cold war internationalists' (Goldmann 1994: 2-3) who have driven the development of global economic and political institutions in order to promote a world 'order' and find common ground or 'co-existence'.

Another key organizational principle of the Global Unions is subsidiarity, where the main power resides in local or regional structures with the central body carrying a framework-setting, coordinating and monitoring function. Marleau (2006) describes subsidiarity as also providing an 'articulating device', a way for different levels from local to central to find a way of linking within one structure. In the case of trade unions we can see that this idea of subsidiarity matches closely the doctrine of solidarism, a principle of social organization where individual and collective interests are interdependent and form a dialectical relationship. Marleau argues that this principle forms the basis for EU regulation and the ILO's international standards, and the same is clearly true of the Global Unions, although they tend to place more emphasis on the coordinating function of the top level.

This generalized nature of the principles and the obligation between members helps explain the adaptability and subsequent durability of multilateral organizations. The principles are 'principles of indivisibility', that is they are not based on any particular set of interests and therefore exist and survive beyond particular circumstances.

Self-Interest, diffuse reciprocity and the problem of large numbers
The concept of collective or public goods is undeveloped in international relations, but has received growing attention since the 1990s, with the discussion of global public goods (Stiglitz 1999), revived interest in social justice (Long and Woolley 2009) and failure of the WTO Doha round negotiations (Gallagher and Stoler 2009). Organizations generally provide collective goods which benefit both members and non-members (Olson 1965: 15), although most will also provide selective or private goods as an incentive to membership. One of the collective benefits of affiliation to a Global Union is increased power in relation to employers; a private good could be, for example, the increased leverage with employers of those unions participating in the negotiation of an IFA.

The net benefit of any collective good, as understood in traditional international relations theory, declines as total membership increases: a larger group is less efficient in providing a large amount of a collective good because of the reduction in identification between members, increased costs of organizing diverse memberships and reduced incentive for individual members to contribute. Large groups may lack the level of connection between members to generate sufficient levels of solidarity or persuasion for each member to believe that the benefits of cooperation justify the costs (Hardin 1982).

We would argue, however, that the size of membership for trade unions is a benefit in and of itself and as a result the collective good increases significantly with increased membership. Being a member of what are perhaps the largest membership organizations in the world is itself a collective good, and is perceived as such by trade unionists. This perception in turn defines the interests of members and therefore what self-interest comes to mean. For example, the function of interlocution

with international organizations, where the size of membership necessarily increases legitimacy and power, is something which national trade unions would be unable to replicate through a 'myopic' pursuit of self-interest (Oye 1986: 229-31).

Self-interest is also significant here, for example economic self-interest as a motivation for international organization by industrial sector or occupation. The classic explanation for international solidarity action relates to the elimination of competition over labour costs within a given company or industry. It closely fits the reasons behind the ITF's successful international campaign to organise sea-farers, which remains the most successful of all Global Union actions to this day (Northrup and Rowan 1979), as well as the international coordination and action by trade union leaders in the engineering, chemical and food production industries from the 1950s to the 1980s (Bendiner 1987)., A closely related explanation is the presence of MNCs in such sectors, and the need for workers to organize a counter-power (Levinson 1972). This type of self interest can be said to apply most directly to industries that are well organised and in the exposed sector of national economies, that is, those most open to foreign competition (Crouch 1993). For many other industries, however, such as textiles or agriculture, either the absence of MNCs or the lack of union influence in the producing countries makes this form of international solidarity action too difficult and moves international solidarity actions closer to the 'charity' concept of solidarity.

There are of course other forms of self-interest, most notably political self-interest, which was a significant motivation for international trade union affiliation during the cold war (Carew 2000), when many national unions sought to further the foreign policy objectives of their own governments. A related form of self-interest could be described as the self-interest of organisations in their own self-preservation, for example through the prestige and the resources made available to trade unions through international affiliation (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000).

The benefits of affiliation are often not the same for all members, for example IFAs offer different advantages for unions ranging from expanded influence of headquarter unions and basic organizing rights for unions operating in highly restrictive environments (ITUC, 2010). In many cases, particularly in relation to specific campaigns and solidarity action that support one or more national affiliates, the benefits and costs are diverse. This raises an important question about how self-interest and advantage are conceptualized and measured by affiliates. Keohane's idea (1986) of 'diffuse reciprocity' is extremely helpful for explaining how these complex calculations are made by affiliates of the global unions. Diffuse reciprocity exists when membership of a multilateral organization is expected to yield a rough equivalence of benefits between members in the aggregate and over the long term, rather than short-term pay-offs. This diffuse reciprocity is essential to the principle of solidarity and the daily work of the global unions.

The Global Unions provide a unique arena 'where actions take place' (Archer 2001: 73) through articulating and aggregating interests. This arena provides an opportunity for socialization, particularly important for developing country unions which are often isolated and lack experience of operating at international and often diplomatic levels. Their motivation to join a Global Union is, in part, a 'social-communicative approach' (Caporaso 1993: 66): affiliation provides an important sense of group identity and an opportunity for dialogue.

However, the size of the Global Unions and the resultant distance from individual members has been an important issue for internal debate. The sectoral GUFs might be considered closer to the base than the confederal ITUC, because the connection from the leadership to the individual member goes through fewer levels. Instead of dealing with national centres which must form common policies out of the disparate elements of their own affiliates, the GUFs only have to deal with individual unions with less diversity of interests. But this advantage may disappear entirely in the case of large multi-sectoral unions, increasingly common with the process of

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union mergers at national level, and in the recent mergers among the GUFs (for example, the 2000 merger of FIET, PTTI, IGF and MEI to form UNI). In practice, therefore, for the GUFs as for the ITUC, the distance from the international to the individual worker is very great indeed.

This distance may have an important impact on perceived authority and legitimacy of the Global Unions. Authority and legitimacy are the foundation of trade union power: only if the members are convinced that the union is acting on their behalf, and are willing to apply collective pressure to support its goals can these be achieved. Effective trade unionism requires not just a 'willingness to pay' but also a 'willingness to act' (Offe and Wiesenthal 1985). At national level, the authority of trade unions depends on their democratic accountability to their members. Martin (1989) has referred to this as internal authority, and Schmitter and Streeck (1999) as the logic of membership. At the same time, to be effective unions must be regarded as representative by outside bodies, such as employers, parties and governments – the logic of influence. External authority can be closely linked to internal authority – if members support the union, employers and governments will also take the union seriously – but their can also be tensions between the two logics, and this is reflected within the Global Unions in conflicts between the priorities of 'agitation' and 'diplomacy' (Hyman 2005).

At international level the relationship between authority and legitimacy and the willingness of membership to act is complex and, at times, counterintuitive. There is, at times, an evident tension between the broad principles of the international trade union movement and the specific and complex actions required to carry them out. This is clear in the case of solidarity, where the policy itself is embraced but not the specific and demanding actions that need to take place in order for these principles to be upheld. This tension can be understood as an instance of Olson's problem of large numbers: 'the larger the group, the farther it will fall short of providing an optimal amount of a collective good' (1965: 35). Whatever the limitations of Olson's analysis, it correctly identifies the problem that group identity is not sufficient for the majority of Global Union members to carry out the level of solidarity action that is necessary.

This is in part a reflection of what Kahler (1992) calls the problem of latency: members tend to become passive in large diverse groups, particularly within weak federal structures. Latency occurs when an individual member not contributing to the collective good does not significantly affect any other member, and does not therefore provoke a response or action. Latency can be anticipated within Global Unions, given their complex and often opaque methods of operation and the inability of all but the largest affiliates to exert significant weight: most members may be inclined to withdraw and become passive. This is observable at international meetings, where discussion falls mainly into a diplomatic mode, rarely addressing difficult issues and respecting the relative weight of speakers. The verbatim proceedings of ICFTU congresses indicate that speakers from the largest, most influential western unions tend to speak more, and to speak on more general issues, while those from the developing countries speak mainly on matters directly affecting their country or region (Gumbrell-McCormick 2004).

Institutional entrepreneurs, advocacy coalitions and policy communities
Given the obstacles which typically confront collective action, policy initiatives require effective forms of pressure if they are to succeed. Here, the literature on institutional evolution and change (Thelen 2004) is of obvious relevance. As a number of writers have argued, new policies and organizational structures – even when necessitated by changed objective circumstances – are typically driven by 'institutional entrepreneurs' (Crouch 2005) or 'policy entrepreneurs' (Mintrom and Norman 2009; Moravcsik 1999). In some readings – particularly influenced by analyses of the formal capacity of the European Commission to initiate new regulatory practices –

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the key entrepreneur is the supranational executive apparatus; and clearly the elected leaderships of the Global Unions are crucial actors in stimulating (or at times obstructing) radical change. But within any international organization, specific affiliates or members may act in combination as drivers of change, and indeed any effective central leadership needs to build alliances between key members and construct bridges between their priorities and its own. In other words, multilateralism is often centrally constructed.

Initiating radical policy change typically requires a mobilizing discourse which identifies a fundamental challenge and persuasively depicts a solution (Schmidt 2002). This in turn normally depends on the existence of a 'policy community' (Falkner 1998; Wright 1988) and the creation of an 'advocacy coalition' (Sabatier 1988) which can press for the required policy shift. Such communities and coalitions may vary in composition according to the policy domain involved. Again, these analytical themes have obvious relevance for our understanding of how policies are created and recreated within Global Unions. We develop these perspectives below with our discussion of minilateralism and k-groups.

Regionalism, minilateralism and k-groups

Within large membership organizations there is an evident problem of cooperation across diverse interests and cultures. The smaller the group, the more likely it is that members will reach agreement and be able to coordinate action. In reality, most multilateral organizations are established and governed by a smaller subset of countries, and a common way to do this is through establishing regional cooperation (Oye 1986: 21).

Regions are not clearly defined or delineated by international organizations and may not share any linguistic or cultural commonalities. As we saw previously, there are differences in the degree of formal autonomy of trade union regional structures, particularly in Europe, but they all essentially follow the principle of subsidiarity. The developing regions are limited in their capacity for independent action because of their financial reliance on wealthier, mainly European and North American, affiliates. The relationship between regions and the global trade union bodies can be understood in terms of federalism, which may assume either strong or weak forms. Federalism (Fleiner et al. 2002) is understood here as a limitation on governmental power, dividing it both horizontally but also vertically between, in this case, regional structures with a clear functional division between national or regional levels and 'supranational' ones (Gumbrell-McCormick 2008: 326). In the main the affiliates of the Global Unions do not tend to confer more than an absolute minimum of power to the centre, preferring – like most states affiliated to multilateral structures – to maintain a 'weak confederalism' (Stein 2008) in which core aspects of national sovereignty remain intact. Certainly they agree to pay dues to the international and accept the collective choice of leadership, although not always with good grace. But in practice they have rarely if ever agreed to delegate any substantial national powers of policy-making or negotiation to their global bodies.

It is important to note that the power structures of the Global Unions are far from unipolar (Jervis 2009): the US unions, with their low membership density, do not hold a disproportionate share of the 'politically relevant resources of the system' (Walt 2009: 91), while the European unions do not form a cohesive bloc. Authority, if measured through financial contributions, is widely dispersed across Europe and North America, with important contributions also from Japan and Australia.

If the Western European affiliates that established the Global Unions remain particularly influential, this is not simply a question of economic resources but also of political culture, and the socialist and democratic norms that European trade unions have often embraced. The multilateralism of the Global Unions can be seen as linked to the embeddedness of a unificatory and rule-based approach of Western European nations (Saxer 2009).

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These constellations of influence within the Global Unions are complex and typically involve smaller groupings than the regional, and tend to divide into two main types. The first we can describe as minilateral and the second we describe as k-group cooperation. Multilateral organizations in international relations are 'typically supported by a minilateral cooperation amongst the Atlantic powers' (Kahler 1993: 300); such small-group collaboration increases the effectiveness and intensity of common action within larger membership groups. K-groups (Snidal 1985) are subgroups which are small enough for the benefits of cooperation among their members to outweigh the costs, and whose collective action enables agreement on policy and practice.

It is worth noting here that all too easily, this can involve an 'in-group' from unions with more resources, more developed transnational networks and typically English language skills exercising hegemony over affiliates lacking these advantages. Even though the objectives of such groups may be benevolent, it is at best a paternalistic form of solidarity. Wagner (2005:93) has noted a similar tendency within the ETUC: from the perspective of those outside the informal leadership 'currently solidarities are more like alliances of interest between the rich countries'. Within the ITUC, there are indications that many unions from poorer countries feel similarly excluded from effective policy-making. This evidently corrodes the basis for solidaristic action: hence a major challenge is to develop a democratic, negotiated basis for minilateralism.

The workings of multilateral organizations tend to reflect the politics and political cultures of such groups, as can be observed in many multilateral organizations which rely on working groups, committees and sometimes less formal groups of decision makers (Olson 1971). Kahler (1993: 300) calls this 'disguised multilateralism', and identifies two additional and non-hierarchical forms of minilateralism, the 'broker' and the 'progressive club'. Both offer insights into minilateral cooperation within the Global Unions. In the former, a small group creates a focal point for carrying out activity. Often this role will be taken up by a union that, although not in the k-group, has significant political or moral authority. Such a 'broker' may be a 'missionary' (Croucher and Cotton 2009: 55) or a 'policy entrepreneur', promoting particular issues and actions within the multilateral structure and vying for support.

A progressive club is a group of members with an agenda transcending the lowest common denominator. It could be understood using Olmsted's sociological concept (1959) of a primary group: members have close personal ties and associate face-to-face. Their relationship is based on a profound sense of solidarity, which is both political and emotional. Their shared perception of reality is reinforced through continuous contact and joint creation of norms, roles and cultures. This is captured by Bales (1950: 79-80): 'the heart of solidarity in the institutionalized sense is the stabilized mutual responsibility of each toward the other... as the sharer of a common fate, and as a person who is under obligation to cooperate with the other in the satisfaction of the other's individual needs as if they were one's own'.

Significant small groups within the Global Unions are those unions active in education work, both those that fund and support educational projects (particularly from the Netherlands and the Nordic countries), and those in the developing world that work in partnership with them. This is a distinct and important group within the Global Unions, not just because of their intense and involved work together but also because of the political impact of carrying out workers' education and the relationships it engenders. We would argue that the level of small group cooperation based on progressive and politically important educational principles is a major progressive force within the global unions. Educational settings provide strong social incentives and crucial socialization between unions, often from different regions,

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sufficient to shift the perception of self-interest and increase willingness to contribute to the collective good. An example of a 'missionary' group would be the individuals and unions that pushed the Global Unions and their affiliates to become more active around the issue of gender equality from the 1970s onwards. Again, the Nordic unions as well as the TUC and the German DGB played a leading role, as did particular individuals within the ICFTU secretariat. The development of international trade union action around the MNCs followed a similar process, mainly on the basis of the joint ICFTU-ITS Working Party on Multinational Enterprises with membership largely drawn from the same countries plus the United States and Canada (Gumbrell-McCormick 2000).

Most unions in developing regions are isolated from their counterparts elsewhere. It is an important benefit to join a Global Union, because of the exposure it brings to trade unionism more broadly and the pool of collective experience on which it is possible to draw. One of the key functions of the Global Unions, particularly in trade union education settings, is to gather and distribute experiences both of failure and, less often, success – providing crucial strategic and technical knowledge that can be used internationally.

Conclusion

We have attempted to deepen understanding of the international trade union movement by applying an international relations framework, using the concepts of multilateralism and minilateralism. This helps us understand not only the difficulties that Global Unions face in engaging with and mobilizing their large memberships, but also the relative durability of these structures in the face of declining financial resources. We have used the multilateralism concept to explain their adaptability, deepened it by introducing the concept of minilateralism to characterize the small-group cooperation that they exhibit. It is through such minilateral cooperation that sufficiently robust and involved relationships are formed to carry out demanding international work.

The perspective we have proposed should be at the heart of any diagnosis of the profound organizational problems that the Global Unions now face. By such understanding we hope to stimulate additional impetus for affiliates to make the ultimately political decision to strengthen and democratize their international structures.

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Table 1: Declared and paying membership and fees received per region, ICFTU 1998 and 2003, ITUC 2009

Region	Declared membership (000)			Paying membership (000)			Fees (€ 000)		
	1998	2003	2009	1998	2003	2009	1998	2003	2009
Central/East Europe	8,235	37,296	47,956	8,048	11,3016	25,761	116	195	282
West Indies	420	383	220	424	387	182	3	4	5
Western Europe	43,214	43,638	46,204	37,595	36,234	36,127	5,403	5,863	6,671
North America	14,612	12,362	10,389	14,612	12,362	10,354	2,216	1,647	1,982
Africa	8,942	10,591	13,880	8,454	10,254	12,171	132	68	97
Asia and Pacific	27,907	27,283	32,248	18,112	14,708	18,082	1,468	1,490	1,652
Latin America	19,362	16,468	24,510	19,254	7,439	16,001	30	4	103
Middle East	748	1,274	1,282	745	1,271	1,284	38	5	57
Total	123,441	149,294	176,689	107,244	93,957	119,963	9,406	9,277	10,848

Source: ICFTU Financial Reports 2004, ITUC Financial Report 2010
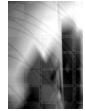
Transnational regulation of temporary agency work compromised partnership between Private Employment Agencies and Global Union Federations

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Abstract

This article critically assesses the potential for the international regulation of temporary agency work (TAW) through building partnership between the Global Union Federations (GUFs) and major Private Employment Agencies (PrEAs). Given the limits of existing national and international regulation of TAW, particularly in developing countries, and the current deadlock in dialogue through the International Labour Organization, the argument of this article is that Transnational Private Labour Regulation (TPLR) offers a unique opportunity to establish a basis for minimum standards for temporary agency workers. This article goes on to propose three potential TPLR frameworks that, although compromised, are transparent, fair and sufficiently elastic to accommodate the distributive and political risks associated with partnership. They also offer important gains, namely increasing the competitive advantage of the PrEAs involved, minimum standards for agency workers and 'field enlarging' strategies for the GUFs and their affiliates.

Keywords

Global Union Federations, private employment agencies, temporary agency work, transnational regulation

Introduction

Temporary agency work (TAW) is a large and relatively distinct category of externalized labour (Theron, 2005) signifying a triangulation of the employment relationship with the

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introduction of a third party (ILO, 2009b). There are an estimated 46 million temporary agency workers working for over 176,000 Private Employment Agencies (PrEAs), with 30 per cent of the €259 billion global annual sales revenue concentrated in 10 multinational companies (MNCs) (CIETT, 2013).

A central strategic objective of PrEAs is to build TAW as a sector, and secure competitive advantage with user enterprises, predominantly MNCs (Mitlacher and Burgess, 2007), and in new markets in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, by establishing a minimum set of industry standards. PrEAs are therefore highly active, principally through their professional associations – the International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies (CIETT) and EuroCIETT – in attempting to establish minimum industry standards for TAW.

In the main, trade unions regard the growth of externalized labour as directly responsible for the erosion of permanent jobs and decent work (Fashoyin, 2010; Forde and Slater, 2005; ILO, 2009a). However, the use of contract and agency labour is widespread across sectors and many unions prioritize organizing temporary agency workers as a matter of organizational survival (Cotton, 2013; ICEM, 2004). Trade unions, principally through the coordination of their international bodies, the Global Union Federations (GUFs), have since the late 1990s been active on the issue of 'precarious work' which is considered an important 'field-enlarging' strategy (Wever, 1998: 392) for building and reviving trade union organization. The work of the GUFs utilizes a broad range of strategies, including the use of Transnational Private Labour Regulation (TPLR) mechanisms to secure international agreement with MNCs including International Framework Agreements (IFAs) and industry standards (Croucher and Cotton, 2008; Müller and Rüb, 2005). TPLR takes advantage of the GUFs' 'institutional foundation' (Anner et al., 2006) located within their powerful affiliates from Western Europe with leverage with key MNCs (Cotton and Gumbrell-McCormick, 2012).

Despite mutual interest in building international partnerships, dialogue between the major PrEAs and the GUFs has resulted in a regulatory deadlock arising from their failure to manage the inevitable political and distributive risks involved (ACTRAV, 2011) and subsequent failure to establish a model of partnership that provides sufficient elasticity to tolerate their diverse attitudes towards TAW.

One of the key obstacles to partnership relates to the mutuality of business interests where trade unions often have a clear preference for permanent and direct employment and do not support the growth of PrEAs. Given this fundamental difference of position, this article argues that only limited partnership between the PrEAs and GUFs can realistically be established. This article proposes two potential models for limited partnership between the GUFs and PrEAs using Martinez Lucio and Stuart's (2005) 'transitional' and 'coerced' models of partnership which focus on specific risks and challenges rather than the broader management or employment relations systems in place. In the case of coerced partnership, collaboration comes about at a critical point when a strategic alliance is required by both parties. Both models, although compromised, offer a highly elastic model of partnership that does not require any substantial political agreement.

Further, this article argues that existing TPLR mechanisms provide an efficient basis for partnership because they are established, transparent and regarded as credible (Cooke, 1990). The article proposes three potential frameworks for partnership: International

Framework Agreements (IFAs); an 'industry' standard; and international dialogue through the Council of Global Unions. These three approaches are not mutually exclusive or alternatives to stronger labour protections (Trubek and Trubek, 2007). Rather, they offer viable entry points for building partnership between key international employers and trade unions and unique opportunities to break the current regulatory deadlock.

The next section introduces the debates and literature relating to the regulation of TAW. The following section briefly describes the research methods and is followed by a case study about trade union responses to TAW. The article concludes with a discussion about the potential for building partnership between PrEAs and the GUFs using TPLR frameworks.

International regulation of temporary agency work (TAW)

Externalization (Theron, 2005) is the trend of obtaining labour from outside of a corporation's boundaries, linked to the strategies of outsourcing and contracting out, signalling a change in the employment relationship with the introduction of a third party (ILO, 2009b). Although data continue to be imprecise about the scale and nature of changes in the employment relationship (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), 2008), over the last 30 years externalized labour has expanded dramatically in regions such as Asia, Latin America and Central Europe (ICEM, 2004; IMF, 2007; Woolfson, 2007). This development is, in part, driven by the demand for flexible labour (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013) and the 'staggeringly uniform' (Rubiano, 2013) ways in which MNCs have organized international business operations leading to indirect and precarious employment relations systems (De Vos, 2009; Evans and Gibb, 2009; ILO, 2009a, 2009b).

The growth of externalized labour is associated with a 'decoupling' (Hayter and Ebisui, 2013) of work from employment, leading to an absence of labour protections (Aviles, 2009; Bentein and Guerrero, 2008; Bercusson and Estlund, 2008; Bronstein, 2009; Gallagher and Sverke, 2005) such as unfair dismissal, Freedom of Association and the right to bargain collectively (ILO, 2009a; Rubiano, 2013) and by precarity and insecurity (Doogan, 2009).

Transnational Private Labour Regulation (TPLR) has grown in response to three regulatory deficits that underpin externalized employment in developing countries. First, there is a lack of enforced employment legislation in these countries (Kolben, 2011; Trubek and Trubek, 2007); second, MNCs have found it difficult to manage their global supply chains in developing and transition economies (Fichter and Sydow, 2002); third, multilateral organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) do not have the capacity to implement and monitor international standards in developing and transition economies (Blanpain and Colucci, 2004). These deficits have triggered a growth of global governance mechanisms and regulatory initiatives from international non-state and private sectors (Bercusson and Estlund, 2008; Ruggie, 2008) including trade unions and their international organizations, the GUFs.

TPLR is regulation that is supplementary to existing national legislation (Lobel, 2004; Trubek et al., 2000), 'governance without government' (Stoker, 1998: 19) involving private companies, employers associations, unions and non-governmental organizations

(NGOs). Its growth has closely tracked the increase in the global activities of MNCs and the broad failure of domestic labour legislation, particularly in developing countries, in adapting to them (Kolben, 2011).

A regulatory approach to externalized labour has inherent weaknesses (Aviles, 2009; Gallagher and Sverke, 2005) because much existing national labour legislation is 'left without an object' (Tsogas, 2009: 87). In many national contexts, externalized labour is set up precisely to avoid labour protections (McCann, 2008) by placing the employment relationship outside the scope of existing labour law, leaving temporary agency workers vulnerable to exploitation (ILO, 2009a). Regulations affecting TAW can be usefully divided into three main groups (Demaret, 2013): restriction of short-term contracts; restriction of the reasons for employing people on temporary contracts; and minimizing the economic savings for employers. This third category includes legislation that promotes equal pay for temporary workers as well as increasing the operational costs for PrEAs (Keune, 2013).

There exists an understandable preference among trade unions for national legislative responses to TAW. However, the weakness of national institutions, particularly in developing countries, has led to an emphasis on international regulation at the level of the European Union (EU) and the ILO. This preoccupation with precarious work is reflected in the United Nation's recent prioritization of enforcing the Ruggie Principles (Ruggie, 2008) and 'due diligence' in global supply chains. One of the most important regulations to date is the European Temporary and Agency Workers Directive (2008), which broadly introduces the principle of equal treatment for temporary agency workers into European and national legislation (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013; Mitlacher and Burgess, 2007). Different institutional contexts have led to diverse impact, with the key criticism of the Directive concerning the exploitation of permitted derogations from the principle of equality of treatment (Keune, 2013) leading to a rapid increase in new unions and collective agreements and large-scale negotiations of permanent contracts for temporary workers on lower rates of pay in companies such as Tesco, DHL, Carlsberg and Morrisons (Rossman, 2013).

There are a number of international recommendations and conventions established through the ILO that have been used to support labour rights of temporary agency workers. These include the ILO's Recommendation 198 on the employment relationship, an important articulation of the changes taking place in employment relations and the duties of states to establish the legal responsibilities of employers. The ILO's Private Employment Agencies Convention 181 and Recommendation 188 require governments to create legal and other protections for agency workers, establish mechanisms for agencies to be officially registered and protect freedom of association and collective bargaining. Additionally the GUFs have made use of the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association to secure rulings on behalf of contract and agency workers, most recently in Colombia and South Korea (Cotton and Royle, 2014; Holdcroft, 2013).

In addition to international regulation through intergovernmental organizations, TPLR mechanisms are increasingly used by the social partners, stimulated by the increase in the global activities of MNCs and the broad failure of domestic labour legislation in adapting to them (Kolben, 2011). TPLR operates through MNCs and other transnational non-state actors, including the GUFs, using their different motivations (Hassel, 2008).

The 'institutional foundation' (Anner et al., 2006) of these agreements, and much of the GUFs' work, is located within their powerful affiliates from Western Europe. It is on the basis of this institutional framing that leverage with MNCs exists and it is how international agreements can be negotiated and secured (Cotton and Gumbrell-McCormick, 2012). International partnership through the GUFs offers the potential for establishing stable dialogue with employers on both fundamental principles, namely the ILO's Core Labour Conventions, and more substantive issues (Hammer, 2005) such as the treatment of contract and agency staff.

TPLR mechanisms include International Framework Agreements (IFAs); signed agreements between GUFs and multinational employers that have been adopted as a major part of the industrial GUFs' strategies (Croucher and Cotton, 2008; Müller and Rüb, 2005). Importantly for TAW, contained within some IFAs there is express agreement that the use of permanent direct employment is preferred, including Norske Skog, Aker, Vallourec, GDF Suez and GEA AG. For some of the GUFs, principally Industriall, there is a strategic intention to strengthen this language for suppliers and subcontractors within the IFAs.

A new TPLR agreement is the Temporary Work Charter signed between the Volkswagen Group and Industriall in December 2012, which establishes principles for the use of temporary work. The agreement commits Volkswagen to limit the use of temporary work to a maximum of 5 per cent of the workforce, along with the principle of equal pay and access to training, representing a significant development for trade unions and their capacity to act on the issue of TAW. It remains to be seen if the Charter can be negotiated with other MNCs, particularly those headquartered outside of Germany, but because of the importance of contract and agency labour to the GUFs' key affiliates these kinds of initiatives are likely to be a priority for the foreseeable future (Hayter and Ebisui, 2013).

TPLR has well-understood limitations both in terms of legitimacy and enforcement (Braithwaite, 2006; Stoker, 1998), particularly where local trade unions lack sufficient leverage with employers to influence their implementation (Hale, 2008). The implementation of these agreements varies greatly and the evidence in developing countries is not strong (Thorpe and Mather, 2005). However, where the GUFs invest in solidarity and education activities to build the capacity of affiliates in developing countries we see higher levels of implementation (Croucher and Cotton, 2008). For example, some IFAs involve systems of joint monitoring such as the IKEA agreement signed with the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers (IFBWW) that has led to a notably high level of corrective actions in developing countries (Eurofound, 2008; IFBWW, 2004). A further generic criticism of TPLR mechanisms is that they are inherently weak in terms of content, establishing only minimum standards and excluding probably the most important protections needed by temporary agency workers such as protection from unfair dismissal. Although these criticisms are valid, the argument of this article is that TPLR, when used by unions that are involved in capacity building activities, offers a unique opportunity to establish a basis for dialogue between trade unions and major PrEAs.

Despite the interests of both GUFs and PrEAs to secure minimum standards, the problem remains for the PrEAs of how to secure dialogue with the GUFs in such as way as to 'eventually reform relations into a more open system of negotiations' (Martinez Lucio and Stuart, 2005: 809). One of the key obstacles to partnership relates to the mutuality of

business interests where trade unions often have a clear preference for permanent and direct employment and do not support the growth of PrEAs. Given this fundamental difference of position, the argument of this article is that only limited partnership between the PrEAs and GUFs can realistically be established. Two models for limited partnership are Martinez Lucio and Stuart's (2005) 'transitional' and 'coerced' partnerships, what they call 'marriages of convenience' and 'shotgun weddings'. Transitional partnerships focus on specific risks and challenges, are reciprocal but temporary, and do not attempt to change the management or employment relations systems in place. Coerced partnerships are collaborations that happen at a critical point when a strategic alliance is required by both parties. These partnerships are characterized as being leadership driven and 'elite-based' and clearly compromised, but are partnerships that can be adopted where there are no alternative ways of establishing specific outcomes.

TPLR offers a similarly limited 'dialogic' framework (Braithwaite, 2006), allowing MNCs to engage with trade unions on the basis of a shared acceptance of minimum standards. This makes TPLR frameworks both limited in depth but also highly elastic in relation to the different attitudes and motivations of potential 'accountability actors' (Lansbury, 2009). It means that TPLR frameworks have therefore potential for both transitional and coerced partnerships between PrEAs and GUFs. Additionally TPLR addresses the 'temporal asymmetry' (Benner et al., 2004) that exists between the rate of growth of TAW and the length of time needed to secure new international regulation and an 'opportunity to overcome regulatory deadlocks' (Hassel, 2008: 232).

The mutual interest of PrEAs and GUFs to establish minimum standards for TAW represents a critical point such that TPLR frameworks offer ways to establish partnerships on a transitional and coercive basis. Based on the experience of the GUFs, TPLR offers a way of opening up negotiations with employers, both user enterprises and PrEAs, in countries and workplaces where local trade union capacity and leverage is weak. Furthermore these TPLR mechanisms provide a realistic basis for partnership because they offer gains for both sides and processes that are regarded as fair and efficient (Cooke, 1990). TPLR is however a 'compromised outcome' (Bartley, 2007: 297) for trade unions because it does not address the basis of the employment relationship directly and therefore leaves the political disagreements about TAW between trade unions and PrEAs unresolved.

Research methods

The prevailing data collection technique used in this article is participant observation by the author (Myers, 1999). This provides an insider's viewpoint of the work of the GUFs as well as an insight into contemporary events and the attitudes of the actors and organizations involved (Iacono et al., 2009).

The research is based on the author's experience as Head of Education for the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) during the period 1999–2007. The author was directly responsible for developing and commissioning the first global union project on contract and agency labour in 2003, funded by the Swedish LO TCO and Dutch FNV Mondiaal, which continues to the present involving unions in Africa, Latin America, Western Europe, North America,

Eastern and Central Europe, Transcaucasia and Central Asia and Asia. Part of this project was to set up the first database of union responses to contract and agency labour and the commissioning of the first GUF research on the situation of contract and agency workers in the energy, chemical and extractive industries (ICEM, 2004). Additionally the author was responsible for creating the first multi-GUF coordinating group on the issue of precarious work in 2005 and commissioning research to assess the potential for developing a multi-GUF platform for action and negotiations with key multinational companies, both user enterprises and PrEAs (Martin, 2006).

The participant observations (Darke et al., 1998) are supplemented by public and official documents and archival records, GUF project and activity reports, online publications, presentations at seminars and conferences and ILO conference reports. Particular use has been made of the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) reports and their analysis of the regulatory deadlock.

The ideas contained in this article have their genesis in an iterative process with practitioners at two seminars that were held at Middlesex University in January 2010 and September 2012 that focused on precarious work and regulation. Representatives from the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), ICEM and the International Metal Workers' Federation (IMF) (now Industriall), Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD and CIETT actively participated in these seminars. The author was also invited to present the emerging ideas contained in this article to Randstad's Public Relations board, Euro-CIETT and CIETT leadership in Nice in July 2011. Each of these three events were followed up with e-mail correspondence and telephone conversations with CIETT's general secretary, representatives of the IUF, ICEM and IMF and trade unions in South Korea, Thailand and Colombia.

This position of 'industry practitioner' (Iacono et al., 2009) provides unique access to data and insight into the current regulatory deadlock that is not currently available through academic research, and therefore offers a small contribution for both practitioners and academics involved in this important area of work.

Temporary agency work (TAW) case study

Trade unions do not regard the growth of TAW as a positive development. Rather, they see it as increasing the trend towards the 'Hindustanization' of employment relations (Greenfield, 2009) and directly responsible for the erosion of permanent jobs and decent work (Fashoyin, 2010; Forde and Slater, 2005; ILO, 2009a). Trade unions, therefore, face a dilemma about whether to focus strategies on protecting agency workers and precarious workers more broadly, or to adopt strategies that protect workers from precarious work forms (Demaret, 2013). This dilemma is felt acutely by unions attempting to organize young workers, migrant workers and women, who represent the majority of those working in precarious conditions (Gumbrell-McCormick and Hyman, 2013).

Trade unions face difficult choices about how to respond to the increase in TAW between protecting temporary agency workers or protecting workers from precarious work forms (Demaret, 2013). Across different institutional contexts there has been a growing acceptance that unions have to adapt to changes in the employment relationship

in order to sustain memberships and structures, often involving shifts in union constitutions and ideologies. As a result protective strategies towards traditional union membership as historically seen in the industrial unions of Continental Europe and the public sectors are often combined with unions protecting temporary agency workers through inclusion in collective bargaining and creating separate union structures (Heery, 2004). Union adaptation to the reality of TAW has involved major campaigns and educational activities to encourage traditional memberships to support these changes, often appealing to principles of solidarity and protection of vulnerable workers (Cotton and Royle, 2014; Hayter and Ebisui, 2013; ICEM, 2004; IMF, 2007).

Due to the importance of multinational companies in driving the growth of TAW and the relative lack of union capacity to address it, much of the work of trade unions, particularly those in developing and transition economies, has been driven by their international organizations, the GUFs. The political orientations of the GUFs towards MNCs vary, from 'cooperative engagement' exhibited by UNI, to 'militant opposition' (Bacon and Blyton, 2004) often exhibited by the IUF. There continues to be clear political and organizational differences between GUF affiliates about how to position themselves in relation to TAW such that there is no unified international trade union strategy on TAW. However, although their attitudes towards PrEAs vary, their commitment to securing minimum standards for workers does not and all of the GUFs pursue engagement with MNCs in order to fulfil their basic functions.

For example, good use of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines has been made in the case of contract and agency workers by the IUF, with the GUF representing workers in the food, agriculture and tourism sectors. In 2009, the IUF made a complaint against Unilever to the OECD UK National Contact Point on behalf of contract and agency workers in two Pakistani plants: Khanewal and RakhimYar Khan. The IUF, since 2008, had run an international 'Casual Tea' campaign and coordinated solidarity action with affiliates in Pakistan, Australia, Russia, the Netherlands, Hungary, the Philippines, Australia, Uruguay, South Africa and the Dominican Republic (Rossman, 2013). The OECD set up negotiations between the IUF and Unilever over claims that they had breached worker rights on pay and freedom of association, settling the disputes by creating over 200 permanent positions for the contract and agency workers and establishing for the first time international dialogue between Unilever and trade unions. The IUF had carried out many years of capacity building projects for affiliates in Pakistan, which allowed for a close working relationship between them as well as a capacity for dialogue with Unilever management. This case also highlights the important role of the solidaristic and educational work of the GUFs in building union capacity in developing countries to make use of international regulation.

As well as the GUFs' TPLR activities, an important part of their TAW work involves research, campaigning and educational projects aimed at exchanging experience between unions often funded by Dutch, Nordic and German trade unions (Croucher and Cotton, 2008). Examples include Industriall's Stop Precarious Work Now campaign and the research work of UNI's TAW Unit. Most of the GUFs coordinate large-scale capacity building programmes focused on transferring knowledge and experience between unions about how to respond to TAW as well as international solidarity action including long-term campaigns in Thailand and South Korea (Holdcroft, 2013).

The importance of the GUFs' capacity building activities for implementing international regulation is worth exploring here. One example is the work of Industriall (formerly the ICEM, IMF and the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF)), the GUF representing workers in the mining, energy, metals and chemicals sectors. The initial aim of Industriall's Contract and Agency Labour (CAL) project, started in 2003, was to build union capacity to respond to the growth of contract and agency labour at a time where there was a widespread belief among affiliates that atypical workers could not be organized. Over time, the project attempted to secure dialogue with multinational employers on their use of contract and agency labour and facilitate exchange between affiliates organizing in the same MNCs. The project involved research (ICEM, 2004) on the use of contract and agency labour in Industriall sectors, in response to the information deficit that existed at that time.

The CAL project allowed Industriall to carry out important union building activities in developing and transition economies, including Colombia (Cotton and Royle, 2014), a country with high political significance for the GUFs. Industriall has strong solidaristic links with its affiliates in Colombia built since the mid-1990s through trade union education programmes funded by the Swedish trade unions. These educational projects had allowed ICEM affiliates in Colombia to create awareness within their memberships about the moral and strategic importance of taking a 'field enlarging' (Wever, 1998) attitude towards organizing contract and agency workers. Led by the mining union Sintracarbon, despite operating in a hostile union environment affiliates adopted a policy of organizing contract and agency workers and establishing dialogue with key multinational user enterprises.

The exchange of experience and strategies between Industriall affiliates was significant in providing viable strategies to do this, in particular the successful organizing experience of the Peruvian mining union, the Federation of Mining, Metal, Iron and Steel Workers of Peru (FNTMMSP). As a result, Sintracarbon has been able to organize contract and agency workers in six companies operating in the Cerrejón mine, something that would not have been possible without this articulation between international and national unions. This example highlights the important capacity building work that is needed to make use of international regulation by unions in developing countries and the unique role of the GUFs in facilitating this.

Turning to the PrEAs, the drive for international regulation is primarily market-led (Bartley, 2007). PrEAs have, understandably, been active in building a corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda to promote a distinction between their operations and the worst forms of exploitation of agency workers (ILO, 2009c). The major user enterprises of agency labour are also MNCs, themselves keen to raise their capacities to manage often complex global supply chains involving large-scale use of TAW (Mitlacher and Burgess, 2007). Although the social impact of the growth in TAW is contested (Doogan, 2001; Standing, 2011) social attitudes towards PrEAs are a growing area of concern for user enterprises. As the major PrEAs look to expand their markets into Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia, they are keen to establish friendly relations with national and international trade unions that are well represented in these countries in a way that they currently are not (Randstad, 2010a, 2010b). A big part of the PrEAs' CSR agenda has been the relaunch and development of the international and European employers'

associations, CIETT and EuroCIETT, and their own codes of conduct over the last eight years. The PrEAs have also actively participated in dialogue within the ILO, attending events and campaigning for the ratification of C181 as well as securing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Union Network International (UNI), the GUF representing unions in the service sectors (ILO, 2009c).

It is important to note here that Randstad, the Dutch MNC and the second largest PrEA in the world, is a major driving force in the development of both EuroCIETT and CIETT, particularly the work of Annemarie Muntz, Director of Group Public Affairs of Randstad and President of EuroCIETT and Fred Van Haasteren, CIETT President and Executive Vice President of Social and General Affairs of Randstad. This may in part reflect the Dutch employment relations culture (De Jong et al., 2007) facilitating a relative openness to international standards and dialogue with the GUFs.

Despite their CSR activities, the problem remains for the PrEAs of how to secure dialogue with the GUFs. This problem relates to two critical events, the first involving the signing of an MoU between CIETT and UNI in 2008. Despite inclusion of the core labour standards and a commitment to promote international negotiations, quite unexpectedly for an agreement signed by a GUF it commits the signatories to remove legal and administrative barriers to TAW. Additionally the MoU represents a strategic error because temporary agency workers operate across all sectors such that the exclusion of all the other GUFs radically undermines both the regulatory scope and implementation of the agreement (Hale, 2008; Stoker, 1998). In addition, the MoU has created a degree of embarrassment and bad feeling within the GUFs, working both as a block to securing broader international agreement, and raising doubts as to the real commitment of CIETT corporate members to engage with the GUFs (Rossman, 2013).

There also exists a regulatory deadlock at the level of the ILO due to the breakdown of dialogue between the GUFs and the PrEAs through the Tripartite Global Dialogue Forum on the Role of Private Employment Agencies in Promoting Decent Work and Improving the Functioning of Labour Markets in Private Services. Despite initial participation in the forum, set up by the ILO in 2009 to promote international dialogue and regulation of TAW, the most recent forum held in October 2011 did not reach any points of consensus or future action. This is in part explained by the forum's attempts to secure political agreement about the role of TAW in economic development and create a sectoral approach to TAW, thus creating a 'sectoral straitjacket' for dialogue. Adopting a sectoral approach to TAW is one that CIETT is keen to maintain as it provides members with a sectoral identity that, they believe, offers some degree of competitive advantage with user enterprises and the ILO. However, this sectoral approach has, like the CIETT/UNI MoU, effectively restricted partnership to a small number of organizations resulting in limited regulatory scope.

This has left the PrEAs and the GUFs with both political and strategic problems of how to get out of this deadlock and initiate meaningful international partnership.

Discussion

Partnership between the GUFs and PrEAs threatens significant distributive and political risks to both sides (Martinez Lucio and Stuart, 2005). Distributive risks include material

and environmental costs such as the impact of increased flexibility on work intensification and conditions. Political risks include organizational practices and legitimacy, particularly heightened in the case of the GUFs with diverse memberships. However, increased occupational and societal precarity has become a factor in shaping our attitudes and expectations of work security (Doogan, 2009) such that the risks for trade unions not addressing the working conditions of temporary agency workers potentially become greater than the risks of adaptation including partnership with PrEAs.

One of the key obstacles to partnership relates to the mutuality of business interests where trade unions often have a clear preference for permanent and direct employment and do not support the growth of PrEAs. Given this fundamental difference of position, only limited partnership between the PrEAs and GUFs can realistically be established. Two proposed models for partnership are 'transitional' and 'coerced' partnerships (Martinez Lucio and Stuart, 2005) which focus on specific risks and challenges rather than address underlying or political differences. These models offer pragmatic and important mutual gains but leave the political conflict between GUFs and PrEAs intact. These partnerships are characterized as being leadership driven in that they may attempt to control dissent rather than offer a fully dialogic model and therefore a compromised model of partnership.

The argument of this article is that TPLR mechanisms offer a way for GUFs to establish such partnerships with PrEAs on either a transitional or coercive basis. TPLR offers a way of opening up negotiations with multinational employers in developing countries where local trade union capacity and leverage does not exist. Furthermore these mechanisms provide a realistic basis for partnership because they offer gains for both sides and processes that are regarded as fair and pragmatic (Cooke, 1990).

The first model of TPLR that we can draw on is International Framework Agreements (IFAs). With over 80 signed IFAs to date they offer an established and therefore transparent way for PrEAs and GUFs to structure their partnerships. Their content can be considered 'fair' by both sides as it is based on accepted minimum standards that the PrEAs and the GUFs have individually signed up to through their existing activities. This means that the principles included in IFAs do not pose any political risk to the PrEAs or the GUFs.

A key advantage of an IFA is that it offers an efficient way for PrEAs to reach agreement with a number of GUFs. Co-signed IFAs exist – GDF Suez, UMICORE, Lafarge and EDF – which raises the possibility of securing an IFA across a wider group of GUFs, something required to overcome the current 'sectoral straitjacket'. This again increases the benefits of using an IFA because it allows individual PrEAs to secure partnership with a wider number of GUFs than has so far been possible thus increasing legitimacy. The mutual gains of an IFA are that PrEAs can boast an inclusive model of partnership with their international counterparts and for GUFs the first signed agreement on minimum standards and trade union rights for TAW.

A second, more involved model of TPLR is an industry-level agreement, certification and inspection system administered by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) in the shipping sector. This system, in partnership with the international sectoral employers' organizations, the International Maritime Employers' Committee (IMEC) and the International Shipping Federation (ISF), sets both wages and conditions for seafarers making it the only genuinely international collective

bargaining agreement in existence (Koch-Baumgarten, 1998). The system is well funded by ship owners who join the scheme, providing one of the few examples of adequately resourced monitoring of an international agreement. This agreement came about because ITF affiliates delegated responsibility for negotiating with employers to the ITF, because of low density in labour providing countries (Anner et al., 2006). The shipping sector has specific characteristics, but ones that it shares with TAW in that both have workers that are largely unorganized and work in locations not managed by their employers. This means that there is a similar regulatory deficit at the level of the workplace that could, potentially, be addressed through a derogation of organizing and bargaining power to the international level.

As with IFAs, because of the credibility of this partnership model it scores highly on transparency and efficiency. The gains for PrEAs relate to an industry standard's ability to secure clear market differentiation between those companies with a commitment to minimum standards, something that poses a distributive risk to PrEAs in the current economic climate. For GUFs the gains could be the establishment of a resourced system of inspection and monitoring of working conditions of temporary agency workers, something that has never been achieved outside of Western Europe. One question about this model of partnership is whether a sufficient number of PrEAs, CIETT and the GUFs would agree to participate. Some of the other GUFs have experience of industry initiatives and agreements, including mining, chemicals, tobacco and cocoa, however these have previously been single GUF initiatives. Additionally, the buy-in of the PrEAs would be influenced by the willingness of CIETT and its corporate members to engage in an initiative that was not restricted to partnership with service sector unions, something which they have to date been reluctant to do (ACTRAV, 2011).

A third and final entry point into partnership could be to establish dialogue between PrEAs, CIETT and the global unions through the Council of Global Unions. The GUFs have a long history of cooperation and relationships are generally solidaristic but with institutional coordination through the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) being difficult (Gumbrell-McCormick, 2000). In response to this problem of coordination, in 2006 the Council of Global Unions was formed, with an experienced international trade unionist, Jim Baker, as Coordinator. This represented an attempt to find a practical way for the GUFs to coordinate their work without having continually to address the thorny question of the ITUC's role vis-a-vis the GUFs. The Council is not a structure as such and is not heavily resourced, but it has coordinated an agreement on the Global Union Principles on Temporary Work Agencies (2010), the first joint GUF position on TAW. In the first section there is a political statement that the primary form of employment should be permanent, open-ended and direct, and more substantive principles including the right to have a written contract of employment, state regulation of PrEAs and protections for migrant workers. The principles include an important articulation of the ILO's core conventions of freedom of association and right to collective bargaining that require agency workers should have the right both to join a union and also be part of the same bargaining unit as the direct employees of the user enterprise where they are working. This is an insistence on the right to collective bargaining with the user enterprise,

rather than just the agency that employs them. This is the key issue of tension concerning the principles between CIETT and the GUFs. However, there remains significant consensus on the main body of the principles and therefore some potential for common ground (Demaret, 2013).

The advantage of PrEAs entering into dialogue with the GUFs through their own principles and the Council of Global Unions is that it is a pragmatic response to a highly complex institutional context. The GUFs have struggled to reach consensus on the issue of TAW and the principles are the most advanced formulation of common ground so far. Much of the difficult work of establishing a basis for dialogue between the GUFs has now been done through the Council, offering PrEAs a potentially efficient way to initiate partnership with all of the GUFs.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to address the regulatory deficit of TAW and the current deadlock in international negotiations between the PrEAs and the GUFs. Using Martinez Lucio and Stuart's 'transitional' and 'coerced' partnerships it has been argued that a limited model of partnership could offer important gains to both sides while at the same time managing the political and distributive risks involved. Furthermore, partnership could be structured using established TPLR mechanisms already used by the GUFs. This article has presented three possible entry points for partnership between PrEAs and the GUFs. These are to secure a multi-GUF IFA, establishing an industry standard co-administered with the GUFs and a less structured option of entering into dialogue with the GUFs through the Council of Global Unions and the Global Union Principles on Temporary Work Agencies.

Owing to the minimum human rights basis of these mechanisms, they also provide a TPLR framework for partnership with sufficient elasticity to allow for global unions and employers to enter into partnership without having to secure political agreement. As a result, the political risks to partnership are reduced, offering a pragmatic although compromised model of partnership. Additionally it has been argued that partnership offers concrete gains to both parties; namely the potential for PrEAs to secure competitive advantage through minimum standards for temporary agency workers, principally in developing countries where their markets are growing. For the GUFs and their affiliates partnership could secure minimum standards for temporary agency workers as well as 'field enlarging' strategies for trade union organizations.

The proposals are made in part because they are mechanisms that already exist, providing some established TPLR frameworks within which international dialogue between unions and employers could take place. This could not only break the current regulatory deadlock but potentially secure minimum standards within a relatively short time frame, thus addressing the 'temporal asymmetry' of the slow process of international regulation of a fast developing form of externalized labour. These three approaches are not mutually exclusive, nor do they offer a comprehensive solution to the political and operational problems of international regulation. Rather, the aim has been to offer entry points for partnership between PrEAs and the GUFs.

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Transnational Organizing: A Case Study of Contract Workers in the Colombian Mining Industry

Elizabeth Cotton and Tony Royle

Abstract

This article examines recent organizing successes in the Carbones del Cerrejón coal mine, reversing the organizational crisis of the Colombian mining union, Sintracarbon. Using Wever's concept of 'field-enlarging strategies', we argue that these events were facilitated by the dissemination of organizing experiences between affiliates of a Global Union Federation, International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM), which recently merged to form IndustriALL. Additionally, we argue that this articulation between international and national unions, based on the principle of subsidiarity, was facilitated through sustained ICEM educational project activity, providing multiple entry points for Sintracarbon to operationalize its strategy and re-establish bargaining with multinational employers.

1. Introduction

The Carbones del Cerrejón mine is the largest opencast coal mine in the world, situated in the northern state of La Guajira, Colombia. It is jointly owned by AngloAmerican, BHP Billiton and Xstrata (previously Glencore), operating under local Cerrejón management. The mine has its own transportation links to Puerto Bolívar from which coal is exported to Europe and the USA. The mine is profitable, representing 50 per cent of Colombia's coal sector, with a national plan for increasing extraction of this valuable low-carbon coal.

Sintracarbon is the largest coal mining union in Colombia, representing over four thousand workers in the Cerrejón mine. The relationship between Sintracarbon, previously Sintraintercor, and Cerrejón management has a long history, from the initial establishment of the mine under state ownership

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(Intercor) to its current ownership structure. Despite these changes, there has been a consistency of personnel, and many of the relationships between Sintracarbon and Cerrejón management have been in existence for over 15 years. The make-up of the management and senior personnel of the company has remained relatively consistent throughout the privatization process including human resources, medical staff and technical heads of department. Until 2007, as in most sectors in Colombia, collective bargaining had essentially atrophied at the mine, and there was an increasing pressure on Sintracarbon to find ways to re-open negotiations with management in order to deliver concrete benefits to members and consequently to maintain existing membership levels.

Sintracarbon was one of the first Colombian unions to affiliate to a Global Union Federation (GUF), affiliating to the International Federation of Miners and then, following merger, the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) in the late 1990s. More recently in June 2012, ICEM merged with the International Metalworkers' Federation, and the International Textile, Garment and Leather Worker's Federation to form IndustriALL, with a membership of over 50 million workers.

The foundations of ICEM's work with Sintracarbon were educational and institutional, with Sintracarbon leadership holding an important and active role on ICEM's regional and international executives from the time of their affiliation in 1997. In 2005, as part of a global campaign on contract and agency labour, ICEM commissioned a research report into the situation of contract workers in Colombia. At that time, there was no data available from the unions or government sources nor any evidence of existing union strategies around organizing contract workers. Within two months, ICEM's research revealed that contractors employed 56 per cent of workers in the electric power sector, 45 per cent in the glass sector, 47 per cent in the paper sector and 27 per cent in the oil sector. Contrary to previous estimates, it became clear that of the 8,400 workers in the Cerrejón mine, approximately 3,900 were contract workers, with an estimated 343 small contractors as well as 18 large contractors providing the main bulk of labour and services. It was also revealed that contract miners for these companies were paid on average US$250 per month, compared with the average US$600–800 paid to directly employed miners at the Cerrejón mine.

This was also reflected in the initial difficulties associated with defining contract workers, at that time contract workers were commonly referred to as 'contratistas', denoting anyone working indirectly in the mine. The difficulty of using this term was that it is the same word that is used for the contractor companies providing services to principal companies. The term 'contratista' in Latin America includes labour agencies and service providers such as cooperatives. In order to distinguish the companies from the people that work for them, during the research process, alternative terms were developed to describe the different actors and processes involved. This led to the adoption by ICEM affiliates of the term 'trabajadores tercerizados' for the

contract workers and 'tercerizacion', or 'third-party contracting' for the process of contracting out, terms which are now more broadly used in Colombia and internationally.

Given the scale and complexity of the contracting system in the Cerrejón mine, concerns were raised by union leadership about the viability of organizing these contract workers. Although rarely documented, the reality is that the extractive industries in Colombia are often associated with criminal and paramilitary activity; with the political and social insecurity in La Guajira allowing such groups to undertake economic activity unchallenged. One of the key ways for criminal groups to extract income from the community is to target the unions, despite their having only modest incomes due to low subscription rates, Columbian trade union leaders are often subject to the additional threat of extortion or 'taxes' (sometimes referred to as vacuna or vaccinations by paramilitary groups). Nevertheless, although all unions in the mining sector are subject to periodic attempts by both paramilitaries and guerrillas to influence union organization and activity, during the period of this case study, Sintracarbon maintained its organizational integrity and was not infiltrated by any group. This may explain the consistent re-emergence of threats made to Sintracarbon leadership from both paramilitary and guerrilla groups during collective bargaining and organizing drives.

Despite these legitimate concerns about entering into a complex and new area of organizing, what followed was a sustained campaign by Sintracarbon from 2006 to organize contract workers. Although the situation remains fragile, Sintracarbon has, up to 2011, successfully organized contract workers in six companies, through direct membership and through the creation of new enterprise level trade unions as illustrated in Table 1.

In addition to recruitment, Sintracarbon has engaged with management in negotiations on behalf of contract workers. Following sustained union organizing activity carried out during the period of this study, collective

TABLE 1
Organized Contract Workers in Cerrejón

Company	Number of employees	Union created	Number of union members	CBA achieved
Masa	750	Separate union Sintramasa	365	Yes
Sotrans	500	Separate union Sintrans supported by Sintracarbon to secure CBA	Unconfirmed	No
Aseocolba	422	Direct membership to Sintracarbon	100	No
Chaneme	261	Separate union Sintrachaneme currently in arbitration	60	No
Aramark	207	Separate union Sinatrainal with signed CBA	200	Yes
Eproqmecanica	60	Direct membership to Sintracarbon	Unconfirmed	No

Source: ICEM Colombia Seminar report 2011.
CBA, collective bargaining agreement.

bargaining was re-established in 2007. In 2008, Sintracarbon began to include specific demands on wages and working conditions on behalf of contract workers. In 2009, Sintracarbon was able to secure the first mining sector collective bargaining agreement (CBA) which included promotions for 180 contract workers to permanent contracts as well as an agreement on the right for contract workers to affiliate directly to Sintracarbon. Specific provisions for contract workers have been secured in the subsequent CBA signed in 2011, negotiated with the mediation of the Colombian Vice President and Vice Minister of Labour Relations.

This campaign raised national awareness and a commitment to tackling contract work on the part of the Colombian Unions. In July 2011, 60 Colombian trade unions, spearheaded by the ICEM's affiliates, made a national declaration against contract labour demanding that multinational enterprises and the Colombian government ensure all contractors respect national law and basic human rights. The Colombian trade unions demanded that the Government establish a signed agreement with all companies operating in Colombia to secure Freedom of Association. This included a specific reference to contractors, the creation of a tripartite committee including the GUFs and the International Trade Union Confederation, and the establishment of a national programme to eliminate contract work.

The purpose of this article is to analyse these developments, in particular how Sintracarbon was able to make these profound political and organizational changes, given the lack of indigenous experience and evidence for union instrumentality in the case of contract workers. First, we argue that Sintracarbon was able to adopt a 'field-enlarging strategy' (Wever 1998) based on the injustices experienced by both contract workers and the mining community. This was achieved by promoting the social value of organizing among contract workers and more broadly within the Colombian trade union movement. Second, we argue that this strategy to organize contract workers emerged largely due to Sintracarbon's position within the international trade union movement and its affiliation to ICEM. ICEM facilitated the diffusion of organizing strategies while building Sintracarbon's confidence that this strategy could provide significant leverage with both employees and employers. That is, this international exchange increased both the supply and demand for strategies to organize contract workers and in so doing allowed for a shift in Sintracarbon's political focus, away from the risk involved in union organizing activity towards successfully managing significant organizational change.

Additionally, we argue that ICEM's sustained and multi-stage project activity allowed for effective articulation between local and international trade union structures, based on the principle of subsidiarity, allowing for exchange of ideas and experience between affiliates (Cotton and Gumbrell-McCormick 2012; Croucher and Cotton 2008).

The next section introduces our theoretical framework followed by a section which contextualizes the employment relations situation in Colombia. Section 4 outlines the central case study of Sintracarbon's activities

coordinated through ICEM. The final section provides an analysis of the case study in which we suggest that the organizing successes of Sintracarbon were stimulated by the international exchange of ideas facilitated through their membership of ICEM.

2. Framework for institutional change

National and global trade unions are founded on the idea of solidarity, the principle of common action with others and the identification of one's own interests with theirs (Hyman 1999; Zoll 1996). For the affiliates of the GUFs, this translates into a commitment to support other members in response to conflicts with employers, motivated by both a sense of solidarity and also 'enlightened self-interest' (Collier 2008: 247; Logue 1980; Ramsay 1997) such that an injury to one is understood as an injury to all. For unions in hostile organizing environments, an appeal to international solidarity via the GUFs can be an effective way to increase leverage with employers, by mobilizing international solidarity action and intervention at the multilateral level. This can be particularly effective with multinational corporations (MNCs) headquartered in OECD countries where stronger unions are often located, the majority of whom are affiliated to the GUFs, thus providing a potentially important entry point into dialogue with international employers for the many unions that do not have this capacity at local level (Croucher and Cotton 2008).

The organizing principle of the GUFs is that of subsidiarity (Cotton and Gumbrell-McCormick 2012; Marleau 2006), such that the main institutional power of these international bodies resides in local affiliates or regional structures with the central body providing a framework setting, coordinating and monitoring function. The principle of subsidiarity is also an 'articulating device' (Marleau 2006) between local and international levels providing a unique networking opportunity for trade unions and facilitating international exchange across geographical regions, union traditions and sectors. Within the GUFs, this idea of subsidiarity matches closely the doctrine of solidarism, a principle of social organization where individual and collective interests are interdependent and form a dialectical relationship. Marleau (2006) argues that this principle forms the basis for international regulation, standards and the work of international labour organizations. Further, that the generalized nature of the principles forms the basis of the obligation between GUF affiliates, one which is both durable and elastic (Cotton and Gumbrell-McCormick 2012). The principles of subsidiarity provide an 'indivisibility', in that they are not based on any particular set of interests and therefore exist and survive beyond particular circumstances.

This is a unique and valuable resource for trade unions, the majority of which are confronted with membership and financial decline and the urgent need to adopt new strategies and activities (Aviles 2009; Bendiner 1987; Theron 2005), often framed as union renewal (Brehens *et al.* 2004; Heery *et al.* 2004; Kelly and Badigannavar 2004; Kelly and Willman 2004).

Much of the contact with affiliates of the GUFs is carried out through a framework of educational projects. The education methods used in trade union projects are based on participatory education principles and structured in self-organized and directed study circles, influenced by German and Scandinavian workers' education and the work of Paulo Freire (1970) in Latin America. These education methods emphasize equality, participation and problem solving (Croucher and Cotton 2008; Khaliy 2005) and promote both activism and organizing (Carter and Cooper 2002). GUF projects involve those affiliates that fund and support educational projects (particularly from the Netherlands and the Nordic countries), and those in the developing world that work in partnership with them. This is a distinct and important group within the GUFs, not just because of their intense and involved work together, but also because of the political impact of carrying out workers' education and the relationships it engenders. This 'small group' cooperation (Olmsted 1959) is based on progressive and politically important educational principles providing crucial socialization between unions on an international basis. It can be argued therefore that membership of a GUF can bring important benefits to affiliates as this allows for affiliated trade unions to be exposed to a broader range of experience and strategies, particularly for isolated unions in hostile environments, such as Colombia (Croucher and Cotton 2008).

Wever's work on organizational strategy is relevant here in that it tries to understand how trade unions come to adopt 'field-enlarging' strategies (Wever 1998: 392) by exploiting the social value of taking on new areas of work or memberships outside of traditional employment relations systems. Looking specifically at organizing in the USA, Wever (1998) examines union responses to profound changes in employment relations, specifically the externalization of the employment relationship and identifies three main strategies. The first two are more traditional clusters of responses focused around adding value to the production process and facilitating workplace flexibility, both strategies are characteristic of Western European trade unions. The third strategy she identifies, more typical in the US context, is to address market failures and subsequent social problems, such as housing, health and education. She argues that this latter strategy involves organizing around broad social issues, in order to attract and recruit new and typically vulnerable groups of workers, such as recent campaigns by the service workers union SEIU and the state, county and municipal workers union AFSCME. Despite the evident difficulties of taking on new areas of work, Wever (1998) argues that where social value can be identified and used to mobilize support, it can lead to membership gains and increased leverage with employers.

Additionally, Wever (1998) draws our attention to the instability of organizing strategies, which focus on the 'micro-level', on the relationship between management and workers in a specific workplace. Such strategies are unstable because of the reliance on local management attitudes towards organizing, which is commonly one of 'sufferance' rather than one which is based on a more solid commonality of interests. She argues that successful organizing campaigns are community-based, focusing on broader social

issues that the campaign attempts to address, and also taking a long-term approach, necessary to build up relationships of trust with those communities. This organizing approach has resonance with the experience of Sintracarbon where the situation of contract workers in a mining community was already understood as a community issue and one which touched on important social issues such as fairness and 'public goods' (Wever 1998: 399) such as health and safety within the mine.

Additionally, the significance of Sintracarbon's affiliation to ICEM in developing ideas about how to enter into this new area of organizing should not be underestimated. Wever (1998) raises an important inhibitor for developing an organizing strategy, namely how to carry out collective action (Olson 1965) among a wider group of social actors and in new organizing terrain (Gallagher and McLean Parks 2001). In this article, we argue that the exchange of successful strategies among trade unions through ICEM's network was a crucial factor in Sintracarbon's subsequent successes following a long period of decline. Weyland's (2008) argument about organizational change is also useful here in understanding the impact of Sintracarbon's international exposure as it provides the concept of a 'viable solution'. Weyland argues that the existence of a 'viable solution' is required to overcome the organizational resistance to change, principally on the part of existing leadership, allowing a shift in political attention from organizational decline to future growth. It is here that external linkages are key as both the supply and demand of institutional change are increased by the 'diffusion' of ideas that takes place within international networks, and we would argue that this includes the global networks that comes through affiliation to the GUFs (Herod 2001).

In section 4, we look in detail at what alternative strategies were supplied to Sintracarbon, through long-term engagement in ICEM education projects and networking with other affiliated unions.

3. Research methods

The data for this article is based on the research and project documents prepared by one of the authors in her capacity as ICEM Head of Education during the period 1999–2007. The documents include project applications and annual plans, internal seminar reports, quarterly project reports, which provided baseline data such as union membership figures, organizational changes and results of education methods training for all of the educational projects referred to in the article. Other documentation includes external impact evaluations carried out by funding and partner bodies (LO-TCO Biståndsnämnd, Metall and IF Metall), dedicated research carried out in 2005 relating to the situation of contract workers in ICEM sectors, ICEM Colombia electronic bulletins, and ICEM Contract and Agency Labour (CAL) Project seminar reports and online updates. Supplementary interviews were carried out by email with Sintracarbon General Secretary and executive

members and the ICEM Colombia project coordinator during 2008–2012 to update information about the organizing of contract workers.

4. Employment relations context

Despite a large body of solidaristic and human rights work in Colombia, the human rights situation remains extremely difficult (Frühling 2003; UN Commission on Human Rights 2005; United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2004, 2005). Recent positive developments include Ley 1309 (2007), which extends the prosecution period to 30 years for trade union victimization and specifies prison sentences for murder, disappearances, kidnappings and for threats against trade union members and representatives. A dedicated prosecution unit has been established for trade union victimization, with some indications of an increase in prosecutions. In 2008, the International Labour Organization (ILO) established an official representation in Colombia, unusually late given the level of complaints submitted against Colombia over the last 15 years for abuse of core labour standards and human rights. These changes indicate an increased recognition of the distinct human rights situation facing trade union activists in Colombia. It is still routine for union negotiators to live in hiding during the negotiation process as are threats, kidnappings and extortion of trade union leaders operating outside of Bogota and in key sectors of oil, electricity and mining.

Labour flexibilization in Latin America during the 1980s and 1990s (Pochmann 2009) involved decentralization of collective bargaining, pension privatization and shrinking social protection. In response to the relatively strong labour legislation in place, a key part of this strategy was to increase the use of atypical or temporary contracts. Latin America saw an increase in informality and an average 1 per cent growth between 1990 and 2003. The Latin American poverty rate was 45 per cent in 1980 (ECLAC 2009) and 44 per cent in 2002 (Fraile 2009). According to the ILO, Colombia's transformation in terms of the decentralization of bargaining and the increase in functional and wage flexibility is rated as substantial (ILO 2009). Colombia has an estimated 5 per cent trade union density with only 1 per cent of the workforce covered by a collective agreement, down from an estimated 15 per cent in the 1980s.

Colombia is a 'truncated' welfare state where the state is involved in poverty relief and some measure of social insurance and redistribution and with high levels of informality of work arrangements (Arango and Pachon 2004). A key factor in this informality, as with other Latin American countries, is the failure of governments to carry out redistribution and provide public services (Saavedra and Tommasi 2007). This failure can be regarded as systemic, linking low quality and uneven public services with low participation in social security systems and low enforcement of fiscal policies. This failure of the social contract is indicated by Latin America's long history of being the most unequal region in the world as measured by income

distribution (ECLAC 2009). This can be formulated as 'low tax morale' (Saavedra and Tommasi 2007: 292), where there is no societal pressure to participate in tax regimes and a strong incentive to work informally (ECLAC 2009). An estimated 22 per cent of economically active people in Colombia are currently covered by social security.

The right to collective bargaining exists for private sector workers (*Código Sustantivo del Trabajo*, Article 467 and *Constitución Política de República de Colombia*, Article 55); a tripartite committee was established in 2007 to draft legislation to allow public sector collective bargaining. Importantly, if the length of a CBA is not stated then it is presumed to continue indefinitely for successive six-month periods (*Código Sustantivo del Trabajo*, Article 477). In order to initiate a new collective bargaining process, one or both of the signatories have to submit a written request to renegotiate the agreement within 60 days to the labour inspector. A core issue that Columbian unions have faced for some time is the atrophy of collective bargaining. Each time (normally every two years) that CBAs are due for renewal unions have to make difficult decisions about their leverage with employers and their resilience in the face of potential threats to the negotiating team. This is a painful dilemma for all unions who on the one hand have to bargain for membership in order to function and retain members, but on the other hand are faced with often overwhelming difficulties in doing this without threat to life and work.

There are two further complicating factors that impact contract workers in Colombia. The first relates to the rise of cooperatives in Colombia, and Latin America more broadly (Pochmann 2009). In Colombia, small groups of 5–20 workers can set up associated organizations (*Cooperativas de Trabajo Asociados*) to carry out specific functions for companies. There were an estimated 3,000 cooperatives in place in 2007, covering an estimated 400,000 working people. Because the members are self-managed, their terms and conditions are not covered by the Labour Code (*Ley 78 de 1988* and *Código Sustantivo del Trabajo*, Articles 5 and 22). These cooperatives operate as contractors and are often themselves involved in subcontracting. This form of employment was introduced to encourage greater flexibility in employment contracts, but has led to a further decline in union membership as the majority of cooperatives formed are as a result of restructuring and privatization in the public sector. Importantly, the ILO's committee on Freedom of Association in 2009 stated that creating such cooperatives led to the violation of the core conventions on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining (ILO 2009).

The second important development in the Colombian context has been the creation of a new form of organization called the union contract or *Contrato Sindical*. This facility was set up in the early 2000s to allow unions to set up labour agencies for their own members. The model created enormous disagreement within the union movement, with most unions speaking openly against it. However, this facility coincided with a profound process of privatization, principally in the energy sectors (Sintraelecol 2001). Sintraelecol, the key union in the electric power sector, did eventually, after much internal

debate, establish a number of union contracts in an attempt to retain some of its then 13,000 membership. Already by 2005, when the union contracts were established, 7,000 members had been lost during the acquisition by Endessa and Union Fenosa. On reflection, the union decided not to expand this function, partly because of the internal conflict that it still generated, but also because it did not, as had previously been hoped, allow the union to maintain its membership levels.

Given the evident limitations of Colombian legislation in securing basic rights, there is renewed interest in national certification and governmental inspection systems as a way of regulating contract labour. In Latin America, resources are being put into the enforcement of labour and employment laws, with a doubling of inspectors in a wide range of Latin American countries (Piore and Schrank 2008). These have included systems for monitoring the practices of contractors such as in Peru and the creation of legislation relating to contractors and service providers (Ley 27626 and Decreto Supremo No: 003–2002-TR). One argument in favour of this model is that it allows for flexibility in compliance and the promotion of best practice.

5. International dissemination of union strategies

The relationship between Sintracarbon and ICEM has been consistently mediated through educational projects, coordinated centrally through ICEM's Education and Programmes Officer working closely with ICEM's Colombia Project Coordinator and the ICEM Colombia Committee made up of its affiliates. ICEM's project work in Colombia has been funded and actively supported primarily by the Swedish IFMetall (previously the metal and mining union Metall) and LO TCO Biståndsnämnd, the international development wing of the LO TCO national trade union centre and one of the largest funders of GUF education activity.

Projects have moved through four overlapping stages, initially focusing on health and safety in the mining sector, following the creation of the ILO's Convention 176 on mining safety (1995). From 1993, ICEM had been coordinating a major Global Health and Safety Project, in Asia, Africa and Latin America to establish occupational health structures in addition to campaigning for ratification of the ILO's 1995 mining safety convention 176. Because of relatively low affiliation at that time, there were only two Latin American affiliates involved in the project, Sintracarbon and the Peruvian mining federation, Federación Nacional de Trabajadores Mineros, Metalúrigos y Siderúrgicos del Perú (FNTMMSP), who quickly formed a close solidaristic relationship. Through this programme, the Cerrejón mine introduced the first occupational testing system at the Cerrejón mine and established the union as a credible partner in health and safety. The project also helped to create a good working relationship with company management and medical staff. The doctor currently in charge of the Cerrejón medical facilities first met the union through this programme and the relationships that were formed have been maintained.

By 2000, ICEM had six affiliates in Colombia, forming the ICEM Colombia Committee with a full-time coordinator providing an important coordination point for unions in ICEM sectors and representing a consolidated and active part of the national trade union centre, Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia (CUT).

Project activity then moved into a prolonged period of trade union education methods for its growing number of affiliates. A regular series of local seminars, Semilleros de Lideres, were carried out linking new and experienced trade unionists in local areas. These seminars are regarded by CUT affiliates as instrumental in building a new generation of union leaders within ICEM affiliates, with clear progression recorded through project evaluations and participants now holding elected positions in their unions. Trade union education methods were important because these helped to create a safe and inclusive environment for trade unionists, a space which had previously not existed. However, it is easy to romanticize the relationships between trade unionists in such a hostile environment. In reality, most of the union leaderships experienced difficult internal relationships and lack of trust, particularly during periods of crisis or industrial conflict, raising the importance of the educational principles, which allowed open discussion without attack or reprisals.

The ICEM project activity then moved on to a new phase of organizational development and strategic management. This involved training and seminars for union leaders specifically targeting issues such as recruitment, finances and corruption. This was facilitated by the ICEM's Head of Education and Programmes using materials and activities designed specifically for the context, but based on international trade union research. Although this phase of the project was of relatively short duration, only 12 months, it gave unions the opportunity to look beyond their profound organizational crises and focus on the strategic options available to them based on experience in other countries. What was particularly stark during this process was the almost complete lack of motivation of union leadership to recruit new members with the majority accepting their own decline. Tackling the issue of contract workers was regarded as impossible, with some unions stating that it was 'illegal' to organize them, in part because of the fear of reprisals for attempting it, but also because of the lack of any previous successful organizing experiences. This third phase of project activity provided a clear assessment of the future organizational needs of affiliates, which acted as the basis for the next stage of education.

In response to the atrophy of collective bargaining, the fourth phase of ICEM's educational work focused on establishing a formal process of dialogue with employers. This phase was initiated after a series of discussions between ICEM and the Colombian affiliates at its 2003 Congress in Norway, in an attempt to find a strategic programme that could capitalize on ICEM's leverage with multinational employers. The strategy was formulated to invite those MNCs where the ICEM and its affiliates had some leverage at headquarter level to enter into a process of social dialogue with ICEM's

Colombian affiliates, facilitated directly by ICEM. After a period of six months of sustained contact with the senior central management of a number of MNCs, the following social partners were identified (see Table 2).

The process involved quarterly meetings with employers and unions to try to secure agreement and joint activities on core issues. Throughout the process, each organization was asked to nominate a team of people to participate and to continue participation regardless of any local disputes or collective bargaining taking place. This was important to secure the process of dialogue from the potential withdrawal of company management or unions.

In the first phase of the process, it was agreed to focus on health and safety, trade union security, and contract and agency labour. During 2004, meetings were secured with the Ministry for Social Protection (MSP), with the then minister and the human rights department working under him. It was the first time that tripartite discussions had taken place on this level in Colombia, and by 2005, discussions had been held to develop joint programmes on issues such as HIV/AIDS and occupational health. Most importantly, the issue of contract and agency labour was a consistent and core theme for dialogue throughout this process. Although all six ICEM affiliates were active in social dialogue process, Sintracarbon and Sintraelecol were the main drivers of dialogue with employers because of their relative size and leverage with employers.

Running parallel to these national activities, in 2003, ICEM started the Global CAL Project, offering important opportunities for international exchange between affiliates. The initial phase of the project aimed to address

TABLE 2
ICEM Social Dialogue Project Participants, 2004–2011

Companies	Trade unions
Anglo American (UK)	Sintracarbon (Coal)
BHP Billiton (Australia)	Sintracarbon (Coal)
Xstrata (Switzerland)	Sintracarbon (Coal)
Linde (Germany)	Sintraquim (Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals)
Kapp (Germany)	Sintraquim (Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals)
Codensa/Endesa (Spain)	Sintraelecol (Electric Power)
	Fenaltec (Electrical Engineers)
Union FENOSA (Spain)	Sintraelecol (Electric Power)
	Fenaltec (Electrical Engineers)
Owens Illinois (USA)	Sintravidricol (Glass)
Smurfitt (Ireland)	Sintracarcol (Paper and Cardboard)
SCA (Sweden)	Sintracarcol (Paper and Cardboard)
Ross International	Sintracarcol (Paper and Cardboard)
Votorantim (Brazil)	Sintracarcol (Paper and Cardboard)
Drummond (USA)	USO and Sintracarbon (Mining)
Repsol (Spain	USO (Oil)
Petrobras (Brazil)	USO (Oil)

Source: ICEM Social Dialogue Project reports 2004–2011.
ICEM, International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions.

the lack of information about successful union strategies around contract and agency labour by carrying out research. Through questionnaires, events and interviews, evidence was gradually gathered showing that unions were often engaged with organizing contract and agency labour workers, with some significant successes (ICEM 2005). The project funded national, regional and international networking events allowing diffusion of experience, particularly between unions from different regions that were at different stages in casualization and privatization. The project involved awareness raising and campaigning activities to address a widespread belief by ICEM affiliates that contract and agency workers could not be organized.

The CAL project also allowed ICEM to coordinate solidarity action in support of organizing drives and disputes, requiring a high degree of information and coordination between ICEM and its affiliates (ICEM 2008). Dedicated project staff were employed in each region, and a team of experienced trade unionists from the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, the UK and Norway was established to offer technical support to affiliates, including advice on organizing campaigns and negotiations with employers.

As part of this project, specific research was carried out on the situation of contract workers in Colombia, revealing poor health and safety conditions, due to lack of health and safety information, training or equipment. The link between the use of contractors and impacts on occupational health and safety is relatively well researched (Barrett and Sargeant 2008; Quinlan and Bohle 2009; Quinlan *et al*. 2001), but this was the first time that data had been collected at the Cerrejón mine which could then be used in discussions with management. Legally, Cerrejón is responsible for the health and safety of any workers contracted in their operations, and Cerrejón's three investors are well known for their commitment to mining health and safety, and the findings of the research about the situation of contract workers appeared to be a genuine concern for them.

The experience of the Peruvian mining union FNTMMSP was crucially important to Sintracarbon's subsequent strategy. As early as 2003, FNTMMSP, with the support of ICEM's full-time project coordinator, started organizing contract workers which led to the establishment of the first contract workers' union in the mining sector for employees of the Shougang company, and is called Sindicato de Obreros Mineros de Shougang Hierro Perú y Anexos. As part of this organizing campaign, FNTMMSP carried out joint inspection visits with governmental ministries, exploiting legislation in Peru limiting the percentage of contract workers in any workplace. This legislation placed some responsibilities on the Peruvian state to promote implementation through which the union was able to establish joint inspections in the mines where they had membership. Through ICEM's CAL project, FNTMMSP disseminated its organizing successes, and the networking events of the project allowed Sintracarbon to explore this experience directly with them. On this basis, and using the existing MSP contacts made through the social dialogue process, in 2007, Sintracarbon approached the MSP with a proposal to carry out joint inspections of the contractors in the

Cerrejón mine. Subsequently, joint visits were carried out to 18 of the largest contractors, checking contracts of employment, payment of wages, and health and safety provision. Following these visits, the MSP then wrote to regional authorities and the directors of the contracting companies to formally request remedial action. The MSP then committed to carry out formal audits of all 18 contractors to monitor progress.

Importantly, the Carbones del Cerrejón team responsible for managing contractors within the mine were involved in each of these audits, which clearly established the company's responsibilities to monitor the conditions of contract workers. These audits resulted in a number of investigations into working conditions instigated by the MSP, involving both contractors and the local authority in La Guajira that holds responsibilities to monitor the practices of local businesses. Following these audits, a series of meetings were set up with Sintracarbon, MSP and Cerrejón management to look for solutions to the management of contractors. During these discussions, the union made explicit use of Article 122 of the Labour Code, which states that employers have a legal responsibility to ensure the agreements with subcontractors comply with national labour law. Cerrejón management responded by committing to intervene in the case of any written notification of violations by contractors and establishing monthly meetings between contract managers and contractors, as well as committing to ensure that the MSP's labour inspections would be a permanent feature in the mine.

Following this series of successful joint activities with the MSP and Cerrejón management, Sintracarbon made the decision to start a sustained campaign to organize contract workers in the mine. This required an internal campaign to persuade Sintracarbon leadership and members of the significance of the recent joint activities and to build their confidence that gains could be made by adopting this new strategy. It was important to have this debate given the need to secure statutory and budgetary changes to enable the direct affiliation of contractor workers to Sintracarbon, and the necessary resources to carry out the organizing campaign. In the event, Sintracarbon established a team of organizers made up of dedicated and experienced union leaders including the union's President, and a strategy to approach contract workers where contact had been made through the research and inspection activities in previous years. This allowed the team to build on many years of formal and informal contact with the contract workers and helped to secure relatively quick successes in the campaign, boosting the support for this new strategy among Sintracarbon membership.

In 2009, Sintracarbon established the first contract workers union in the mine, Sintrans, representing 150 contract workers employed by a transport company Sotrans. By November of that year, Sintracheneme, a union representing 300 mechanical maintenance workers for the company Chaneme, was recognized and started to negotiate a CBA with the assistance of Sintracarbon and CUT. On 21 February 2011, Sinailtrainal was formed with 90 members from the food company Aramak, so that by the end of the year, Sintracarbon had successfully organized over 800 workers within six

contractors. Importantly, some of these workers decided to directly affiliate to Sintracarbon while others established their own unions. Workers who joined Sintracarbon directly were usually from smaller contractors where they tended to have a weaker bargaining position with regard to their employers. It was an explicit part of the organizing strategy that direct membership to Sintracarbon offered contract workers increased leverage with their employers because of the relative size of union membership.

Despite these rapid and important organizing successes, the subsequent negotiations with the contracting companies' management have been difficult. Sintrans made immediate demands for full-time permanent contracts and wages and benefits in line with national minimal standards, but Sotrans management refused to recognize the union or any of their demands. Following a petition, 33 workers, including the two union leaders, lost their jobs when their fixed term contracts were not renewed. Despite the direct intervention of ICEM and the President of the Alternative Democratic Pole (a political alliance between two Colombian democratic parties), with Cerrejón management, the union has been unable to secure either union recognition or a CBA with Sotrans. Both Sintracheneme and Sinailtrainal have also failed to secure collective bargaining with Chaneme and Aramak management, despite following the legal petitioning process and having the full support of Sintracarbon leadership. Throughout this period, Sintrachaneme's members and leadership came under considerable pressure from management to leave the union, being subjected to 'carrot and stick' style intimidation, which included managers visiting the homes of union leaders and making both dismissal threats for those who would not comply and offers of perks to those who would.

Despite the ongoing difficulties in securing protections for contract workers, this organizing strategy has become integrated within Sintracarbon's mainstream activities and the union continues to organize workers in other contractors operating in the mine. In our final section, we draw out the reasons for these developments, arguing that despite the mixed achievements, the international dissemination of union experiences have been an important driver and motivator for change.

6. Discussion and conclusion

Given the barriers to organizing in the Colombian context, the recruitment of membership in six contracting companies and the establishment of CBAs in some of these companies at the Cerrejón mine is significant, representing the first sustained campaign to organize contract workers in Colombia. We have argued, using Wever's work on 'field enlarging' union strategies, that this development came about because of the responding strategically to important social problems, principally the health and safety within the mine, as well issues of pay and conditions for contractors, establishing an organizing strategy that appeals to broader social justice issues of health, security and

fairness. Additionally, the campaign was relatively stable in that it did not rely on 'micro-level' relationships with individual contractors, rather it made use of long-term relationships within the mining community and within ICEM. Furthermore, we suggest that the diffusion of strategies and actions between ICEM's affiliates, through campaigns and project activity, has been an essential factor in establishing 'viable solutions' that were used in Sintracarbon's organizing strategy.

An important aspect of this process was the establishment of a clear sense of injustice about the treatment of contract workers, both within Sintracarbon's membership and more broadly within the Colombian trade union movement. Despite the complexity of the employment relations system in the mine, by using the entry point of health and safety, the campaign was able to establish that there was a serious and genuine problem, but also that it was the responsibility of Cerrejón management to resolve it. This created both a sense of injustice, a clear line of responsibility and attribution (Kelly 1997; Kelly and Badigannavar 2004) establishing an acceptance within the union of the moral importance of adopting a 'field-enlarging' strategy (Wever 1998) which would include contract workers. Addressing the issues of contract workers then became seen as an important social value within the union, raising internal and external political support for the campaign.

The initial focus on health and safety also addressed a genuine problem that contract workers faced, facilitating easier engagement with them as well as potential membership benefits. Because of Sintracarbon's health and safety expertise developed through the ICEM's Global Health and Safety Project, they were regarded by the contract workers as instrumental in improving working conditions, something that Sintracarbon had not been able to show since collective bargaining had effectively broken down. The health and safety focus was also strategically important in engaging Sintracarbon and Cerrejón management to take seriously the threat to safety in the mine from unprotected contract workers. The process of carrying out health and safety inspections involved in interviewing contract workers was highly effective in encouraging them to talk to the union establishing a relatively neutral basis for contact as well as changing the perception of Sintracarbon as an exclusively permanent workers' organization.

The strategy made use of existing health and safety legislation which places a level of employer's responsibility for the conditions of contract workers onto Cerrejón management, facilitating an initial and legitimate engagement with Cerrejón management. As with the contract workers, Sintracarbon's expertise gave it credibility with management, building on existing relationships with medical and technical staff within the mine, formed during the initial Global Health and Safety Project. These long-term relationships provided a level of stability to this new organizing campaign, and formed the basis for re-establishing dialogue and, eventually, some collective bargaining within the mine.

The re-establishment of dialogue with Carbones del Cerrejón management, facilitated through ICEM's Social Dialogue Project, allowed informal

contact and exchange of ideas with Cerrejón management and an opportunity to start discussions outside of the formal and routinely difficult negotiation processes. Commissioning research on contract workers established accurate data and a level of credibility in discussions with Cerrejón management and the MSP, establishing important leverage by identifying the potential risks from using contractors in the mine. This social dialogue was established through ICEM and the leverage of its affiliates in the headquarter countries of the MNCs involved and provided an important stability to Sintracarbon's work in that it focused on building robust relationships with Cerrejón management rather than fragile 'micro-level' (Wever 1998) relationships with the contractors operating within the mine. We have argued that without this level of international coordination, a formalized dialogue at senior level could not have been established in Colombia. In the case of Sintracarbon, it led to the eventual re-establishment of collective bargaining in 2007 enabling Sintracarbon to successfully negotiate terms and conditions on behalf of contract workers, including their promotion to permanent status. This confirmed its function as a trade union providing concrete benefits to contract workers, which was an important step in building a belief in the instrumentality of unionization.

The educational approach and methods used during the campaign were also important, promoting self-confidence and providing a focus on concrete problem-solving in the workplace. For Sintracarbon leadership, the methods were important in the process of organizational change, facilitating a confident dialogue between Sintracarbon activists and leadership sufficient to secure political and financial support to start organizing. Union leadership and activists are highly aware of the personal risk they take in organizing contract workers, and a difficult and long internal debate had to take place before recruitment could start. A problem-solving orientation allowed unionists to step outside of existing ideological or organizational narratives and focus on the practical steps of union organizing. This approach is particularly powerful in an inward-looking and fragmented union context such as Colombia, where the dominant narrative at the time was that the recruitment of contract workers was impossible and that the primary function of a union was to manage their own decline.

By 2009, Sintracarbon had been involved in over a decade of education programmes and participation in ICEM's international and regional structures, creating the basis for deep solidaristic relationships between Sintracarbon leadership, ICEM and many of its affiliates. The high level of social capital that had been developed was important in allowing for an articulation and diffusion of ideas and experiences of organizing contract workers. The exchange of experience and strategies between ICEM affiliates, through the regional and international network events of the Global CAL Project, encouraged Sintracarbon to look for possible strategies that they could adopt in their own context. The experience of the Peruvian mining union FNTMMSP in organizing contract workers and exploiting national inspection legislation was also vitally important in giving Sintracarbon a viable

entry point into building links with the contract workers in a way that could be seen to add real social value, and also establish a working relationship based on partnership with the state and the company management. ICEM's articulation and leadership on the issue of contract work generated confidence among affiliates and their membership that effective union organization and interventions did exist (Cotton and Gumbrell-McCormick 2012; Frege and Kelly 2004; Lillie and Martinez Lucio 2004). Furthermore, engaging in ICEM's campaigns and educational activities provided a concrete way to operationalize them (Brehens *et al.* 2004; Heery and Adler 2004; Kelly 1997).

Our argument has been that these 'field enlarging' strategies (Wever 1998) emerged from the linkages facilitated by the international affiliation of Sintracarbon to ICEM. This model of articulation between international and national trade structures is based on the principle of subsidiarity and represents an essential element of Sintracarbon's capacity to organize contract workers. In turn, Sintracarbon's vital experience of organizing has been successfully diffused within the Colombian trade union movement and throughout ICEM's membership, allowing for an 'upwards' transfer of this significant experience of organizing contract workers in the Carbones del Cerrejón mine.

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