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Dockworkers of the World Unite:
Worker Power and Trade Union Strategy in a Global Economy

By

Caitlin Fox-Hodess

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Peter Evans, Chair
Professor Dylan Riley
Professor Cihan Tugal
Professor Richard Walker

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Abstract

Dockworkers of the World Unite: Worker Power and Trade Union Strategy in a Global Economy

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Caitlin Fox-Hodess

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

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This dissertation examines contemporary transnational organization and strategy among dockworkers unions through a global organizational ethnography of the International Dockworkers Council (IDC), an independent global union organization. The research draws on 80 in-depth interviews and participant observation at a dozen international meetings of union activists, while the analysis relies on nested comparisons. In Part I, Chapter 2 examines the IDC's regional-level organization in Europe, while chapter 3 examines three European country case studies (Portugal, Greece and England). In Part II, Chapter 4 examines the IDC's regional-level organization in Latin America, while chapter 5 examines two Latin American country case studies (Chile and Colombia).

Olin Wright (2000) and Silver's (2003) theory of worker power would suggest that dockworkers in general have a high degree of 'structural power' – the power accruing to workers as a result of their position in the economic system -- because of their central role in the global circulation of commodities and capital. Nevertheless, I find that dockworkers' 'structural power' is heavily conditioned by the state, suggesting that frameworks that partition the economic basis of worker power off from its political and social basis may be insufficient. Instead, comparative research at the national and regional levels demonstrates that dockworkers' structural power varies considerably in different parts of the world as a result of differing political and social conditions, with significant consequences for sectoral labor internationalism.

Within Europe, dockworkers' power at the point of production is supported by strong industrial relations frameworks protecting the right to organize and take industrial action free from the threat of state-sanctioned or state-sponsored violence. Consequently, dockworkers have developed a strong regional-level network that provides effective mutual aid during disputes through industrial solidarity at the point of production. In contrast, within Latin America, dockworkers' structural power in many countries, particularly outside of the Southern Cone, is effectively quite weak, despite their central position in the economic system, as a result of unfavorable industrial relations frameworks and pervasive violence at the national level. As a result, dockworkers have struggled to develop a cohesive regional-level network capable of delivering solidarity actions that are effective in the wide variety of national contexts for trade unionism found within the region. These national and regional-level observations are used to examine the challenges workers face in developing strong, cohesive and effective organizations that are truly global.

Dedication

For my grandparents, Gertrude and Rubin Hodess,

who first instilled in me the value of working-class internationalism.

Acknowledgements

As any good union organizer knows, a successful strike or campaign cannot be carried out by a few dedicated individuals alone but instead is always the result of the collective labor of many people whose efforts often go unnoticed. The same is true of a PhD dissertation. This project would never have been possible without the generosity of fellow trade union activists, labor researchers and many others who I've had the pleasure of learning with and from over the course of many years. My experiences working with activists from myriad backgrounds within the labor movement have been just as formative for me as my academic training has been and this dissertation is the better for the creative tension generated through weaving in and out of these two worlds.

Growing up in a union family with a father who was a blue-collar trade union leader for most of childhood meant that I was immersed in the world of the labor movement for as long as I can remember. I would therefore like to thank my parents, Sue Fox and Aram Hodess, and my paternal grandparents, Gertrude and Rubin Hodess, all union members and life-long activists, for sparking my interest in trade unionism and internationalism from an early age and teaching me the value of solidarity. In addition to parties at the union hall, visits to picket lines and rallies, and fierce debates around the dinner table, I had the opportunity as a young person to learn about the anti-sweatshop movement, the damaging affects of free trade and racism, the value of labor-environmental alliances and feminism, and the legacy of US imperialism in Latin America and beyond. The worldview that these experiences fostered led me to this research project.

As a recent college graduate in 2006, I had the good fortune to be placed as a summer intern through the UC Berkeley Labor Center's Labor Summer program with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), where I went on to work as an organizer in 2006-2007 on a campaign to organize workers at the Blue Diamond almond factory in Sacramento. The community and labor organizing experiences I gained, as well as the opportunity to organize international solidarity actions in Spain, were formative for me. I will always be grateful to the incredible team of experienced activists in the ILWU's organizing department who I learned so much from at that time and since: Peter Olney, Carey Dall, Agustin Ramirez, Amy Willis and Marcy Rein. Outside of the academy, no one has had a greater influence on my intellectual trajectory than Peter and so I would particularly like to thank him for his generosity, incisive feedback and many thought-provoking conversations over the years.

I returned to graduate school in 2009 after a two-year stint living in Chile and quickly got caught up in the excitement of the post-economic crash student movement. At Berkeley, the organizing energy first generated through the student movement soon coalesced among graduate students into Academic Workers for a Democratic Union (AWDU), a reform caucus within UAW 2865 (the UC Student Workers Union). AWDU's central principles included a committed to union democracy, a more emboldened approach to contract negotiations and social justice unionism. My experiences as an AWDU activist and elected leader in the union over the course of several years provided an invaluable foundation for thinking through many of the questions that came to the fore in my dissertation research. There are far too many friends and comrades to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for the learning and struggle we underwent together to list here, but foremost among them, I would like to express my deep thanks to Amanda Armstrong-Price, Blanca Misse, Sara Silverman-Smith, Brenda Medina-Hernandez, Nick Kardahji, Shane Boyle,

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I was also fortunate to have an excellent dissertation committee. Peter Evans, my dissertation chair, has not only provided invaluable guidance over the past nine years but has always done so with a great deal of infectious enthusiasm for the project. In particular, I've learned so much from his unparalleled ability to move from international comparative analysis at the national level towards building a genuinely global understanding of contemporary labor issues. It's no mean feat – particularly for such a senior academic -- to make even the most critical feedback feel supportive and constructive, and Peter is a true role model in this regard. The coursework, teaching assistant work and qualifying exam I did with Dylan Riley provided me with a stellar education in social theory which has informed my dissertation every step of the way. Cihan Tugal has been a steadfast supporter of the project and I've appreciated his consistent interest in grounding the research not only in relevant intellectual debates but also in pressing political questions of the day. Dick Walker's yearlong reading group in *Capital* gave me the confidence to engage more deeply with political economy and his encouragement to incorporate insights from geography has benefited the project. Finally, my experience at Berkeley would not have been complete without the support and encouragement of close friends and family over the years. In particular, I would like to thank my sister, Ana Fox-Hodess, a fellow trade union activist; my brother-in-law Francisco Nunez; my aunt, Beth Hodess; and dear friends Gowri Viyajakumar, Louise Ly, Lauren Bundy, Zachary Levenson, Carter Koppelman, Josh Williams, Amanda Armstrong-Price and Blanca Misse for everything we've shared together.

When I began my fieldwork full time in 2013, I never could have anticipated how much I would come to feel part of the International Dockworkers Council's community of activists from around the world. From the very beginning, I was struck by the warmth, openness and good nature of the group I encountered, and that continues to be true five years later. Traveling on my own across cities, countries and continents for the research could have been a very lonely and trying endeavor, but thanks to the IDC family, I was made to feel at home wherever I went. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who not only gave their time to be interviewed for the project but so often went far above and beyond in sharing their workplaces, union offices and local dockworker haunts with me during my travels. I have profound admiration for their dedication to the international trade union movement – a dedication that so often comes with difficult personal sacrifices – and I have learned so much from both their strategic acumen and principled approaches to the work. There are too many people to properly thank here, but I would particularly like to thank the follow individuals, without whom the project simply would not have been possible: Giorgos Gogos, Anastasia Frantzeskaki, Antonio Mariano, Sergio Sousa, Andy Green, Nelson Francino, Jhon Jairo Castro, Mauricio Zarzuelo, Ricardo Suarez, Erik Helgeson, Martin Berg, John Harrison, Marc Storms, Anthony Tetard, Manuel Lanon, Rafa Egea, Victor Morin, Manuel Cabello and David Moreno. From the IDC Coordinators office, I would like to thank General Coordinator Jordi Aragunde and former administrator Susana Busquets. Additionally, from PASO in Colombia, I would like to thank Nate Miller and Neil Martin.

The project would never have been possible without generous funding from a number of different organizations. I'm particularly grateful to the Social Science Research Council, which provided both preliminary and dissertation-year funding through its Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship and International Dissertation Research Fellowship programs. Year-long funding from the UC Berkeley Labor Center, the UC Berkeley Dean's Normative Time Fellowship and the UC Berkeley Sociology Department's Leo Lowenthal Fellowship allowed me to extend my fieldwork and provided critical support during the writing phase. Additional funding was provided by the Council for European Studies, as well as the Institute of European Studies and the Institute of International Studies at UC Berkeley.

During the writing stage of my dissertation in London, I was lucky to find a wide network of scholars both near and far who provided valuable feedback. Participating in the Centre on Labour and Global Production at Queen Mary University was especially beneficial. From the CLGP, I would like to thank Liam Campling, Adrian Smith, Elena Baglioni, Tessa Wright, Ashok Kumar, Jonny Jones and Kim Moody for their thoughtful engagement with my work. I would also like to thank Laleh Khalili, Rafeef Ziadah and Tim Pringle, from SOAS. Further afield, I am grateful to Carolina Bank Muñoz, Camilo Santibáñez Rebolledo, Roland Erne, Jen Schradie, Barry Eidlin, Camila Alvarez, Zachary Levenson, Gowri Vijayakumar, Eli Friedman, Paul Ryan, Nantina Vgontzas, Peter Cole, Thomas Collambat, Franck Gaudichaud, Andreas Bieler and Kate Doyle Griffiths for their feedback and advice. I am indebted to Pablo Gaston and Manuel Rosaldo for their deep engagement with the project over the past years through our virtual writing group, as we each crossed an ever-shifting array of time zones and countries. Finally, I was very lucky to be able to correspond with Peter Waterman during the write-up phase and even luckier to spend time with him at his home in The Hague before his passing in 2017. Peter's commitment to labor internationalism, spanning decades, as both an activist and a scholar; his open-mindedness and refusal to get stuck in tired orthodoxies; and his vision of left-wing internationalism from below, have been guideposts for me in my journey and I'm grateful for his generosity.

Finally, my biggest thanks are reserved for my wife, Joanne Rosenthal, without whom none of this would have been possible. We met in London in 2013 at the beginning of my fieldwork and our relationship developed across cities and countries on three continents as we flew to meet each other as and when our work schedules allowed. Her love, support, understanding and good humor have allowed me to not only withstand the ups and downs of researching and writing this dissertation but to remain grounded during the process.

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Preface

The seed of an idea that eventually grew into this dissertation was planted in 2007 during a trip I took to Spain as a twenty-two-year-old organizer for the International Longshore and Warehouse Union. It was on this trip -- meeting with Spanish dockworker union activists in Barcelona and Alicante to lay the groundwork for a collective action meant to embarrass the CEO of the California factory where we were organizing -- that my abiding interest in the possibilities of labor internationalism was sparked. The knowledge that a group of California factory workers struggling to organize under quite adverse circumstances could suddenly depend on a group of dockworkers halfway around the globe who they had never met opened up to me a world of possibilities rarely considered within the confines of the rather parochial American labor movement. This link was forged through the International Dockworkers Council (IDC). An anomaly among global union organizations, the IDC is autonomous, non-professionalized and run by the volunteer efforts of rank-and-file members and shop-floor leaders. It was the initial spark of recognition of the potential for such an organization to reshape the field of possibilities for worker organizing globally that led to this dissertation.

Over the course of four years (2012-2016), research for this project took me to forty cities in twenty countries in Europe, Latin America and the United States to interview key dockworker union members active in the IDC and to attend a dozen international meetings of the organization. Aside from the formal research involved in the project, I spent countless hours visiting ports, union offices, hiring halls and local hangouts with the activists I met during the course of the research, forging close relationships based on a shared commitment to the values of solidarity and internationalism, as well as the construction of working-class power. My research proceeded from the assumption that the role of intellectuals in the worker movement is neither to serve as cheerleaders, delivering false hope, nor as defeatists, replicating the view that ‘there is no alternative’, but instead to provide critical support, drawing on what I learned from the trade unionists I worked with in the project to faithfully delineate the parameters of the possible, with an eye towards identifying openings and effective strategies. The findings presented herein reflect this collaborative, solidaristic approach to labor research.

I began this study by asking, how can labor best organize at the transnational level to more effectively confront the challenge of globally organized capital? However, over the course of my research, it became clear to me that in order to answer this question, I would first need to rethink some of my assumptions about how worker power is constituted, and the attendant implications for worker strategy, as the data I gathered continually challenged assumptions which are widely shared among many people in the labor movement, on the left more broadly and in some academic traditions. In the introduction that follows, I lay out the stakes of the debate over labor movement revitalization and critically examine what I now view as the faulty assumptions on worker power I held when I began the research.

Introduction

In this introduction, I begin by examining the assumptions I held on worker power when I began research for the dissertation and explain how these assumptions were continually challenged through field work. I then present the revised framework I developed over the course of my research for thinking about worker power and the revised research question that resulted: under what conditions can dockworkers effectively exercise power? Throughout the dissertation, I consider the implications of this question for the construction of global unionism. Fundamentally, I argue that capitalism is a totality and, as such, power grounded in the economy can never be abstracted from power grounded in state and society. The result is that there is a tremendous degree of variation in power among categories of workers who might otherwise appear to have a similar, substantial degree of power when viewed purely through the lens of their position in the economic system. In fact, the sphere of the economic can only exist in a vacuum in the theoretical abstractions of political economists – and never in the real world in which labor and political organizing actually occur. Viewing logistics organizing as a magic bullet, then, actually *requires* flattening out or eliding the role of state and society. It is just this elision or flattening out that my work seeks to recover.

This dissertation, then, provides key contributions to both grounded debates on logistics sector organizing and trade union internationalism and theoretical debates on the nature of worker power in the global political economy. Through cross-national comparisons, I provide an analysis that seeks to redress overly economistic assumptions about worker power in a global political economy, recovering the social and political conditions which make economic action possible. Through cross-regional comparisons of the Global North and the Global South, I provide an analysis that moves beyond the often heavily eurocentric bias of the Industrial Relations literature on global unionism, substantially broadening the scope of analysis to put a range of issues often considered in isolation from one another into conversation. By doing so, I provide a framework better able to inform worker strategy at the global level, identifying commonalities of strategic decision-making and organizational form that predicted success or failure in the cases and considering them in relation to their national and regional contexts. This dissertation is therefore driven by a belief that in order to better understand what unions should do, we need to better understand the conditions of the possible – conditions which include economy, state and society. Only by accurately understanding the conditions of the possible can we build powerful worker organizations today.

Following the presentation of my proposed theoretical framework for analyzing worker power, I discuss my research design and provide an overview of key arguments and the empirical chapters. The analysis focuses on two levels of comparison. The first level of comparison is national and examines five country case studies (England, Greece, Portugal, Chile, Colombia) of recent dockworker labor disputes of IDC affiliates and the role of international solidarity in their resolution. For the country case studies, I have divided the comparative analysis into two chapters, homing in on the European and Latin American cases respectively. The second level of comparison is regional and examines the IDC's efforts to establish regional-level networks of rank-and-file dockworker union activists in Europe and Latin America, analyzed in two chapters, respectively.

The European component of the project, covered in the first two chapters, allows for an examination of the role of strategic decision making and organizational form in a context in which the assumption of dockworkers' high degree of structural power is largely met. The Latin American component of the project, covered in the third and fourth chapters, conversely, brings assumptions about the supposed uniform strength of dockworkers' structural power into question, facilitating analysis of how structural power is constituted in the first place. The role of strategic decision-making and organizational form is then examined in a context in which dockworkers' structural power is at best uneven, and often quite weak. Running in parallel to these national and regional intra-IDC comparisons, is a shadow comparison of the IDC's competitor organization, the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), some of whose affiliates split to form the IDC in 2000 in response to organizational and political failures which they perceived to stem from the ITF's bureaucratic character. In the conclusion, I examine the implications of my findings for global unionism more generally.

Labor Movement Revitalization

There is a wide-ranging debate today among both labor academics and labor movement practitioners over how to build organized worker power in a world dominated by global neoliberalism, the erosion of social welfare states, ever greater capital mobility and the decline of trade unionism and avowedly working-class political parties in traditional strongholds. In which geographic locations, sectors or workplaces should we expect to find worker power today? How can it be effectively maximized through appropriate organization and strategy? And what is the relationship between building effective worker power at the local, national and international levels? These are just a few of the guiding questions defining the terms of these debates. Many of these debates are implicitly or explicitly framed through the need for labor movements in the Global North to respond effectively to the twin issues of the decline, due to capital flight and automation, of core industries which were historically union strongholds, and the rise of the non-mobile and growing service sector, with its generally weaker unions and lower union density. Four categories of approaches to these developments have emerged in academic research, and generally map onto a range of approaches to these issues by activists.

A first approach, which I term the "service sector approach", has seen a number of scholars and labor unions in the North argue for a turn toward organizing the service sector, reasoning that the key to labor movement resurgence lies in reaching workers in the fastest growing sector of the economy -- which generally has the added bonus characteristic of being relatively non-mobile and difficult to automate today (Chun 2009; Milkman et al 2010; Milkman et al 2014; McCallum 2013; Sassen 2010). In the United States, service sector organizing has formed the most vibrant component of labor movement renewal, targeting groups of workers – women, people of color, immigrants – who have historically been neglected by the labor movement. Nevertheless, three decades of concerted organizing efforts in this sector in the Global North have yielded far weaker gains than their proponents had anticipated, perhaps nowhere better typified than the costly Walmart organizing campaign in the United States which has yet to unionize a single store. Even where workers have been unionized in large numbers, their ability to exercise class power has not come close to matching that of the mid-century working class.

A second approach, which I term the "precarity approach", has drawn attention to the great numbers of unemployed workers, or workers laboring under situations of extreme precarity, whether through contract and agency work, or misclassified self-employment (Benanav 2015; Milkman and Ott 2014; Rosaldo 2016; Standing 2014). This approach has alternately called into question the continued relevance of unions or called for creative new efforts to organize these workers, regulate their labor or achieve a guaranteed minimum income. What generally unites these divergent arguments is the shared belief that capitalism has made a decisive break with the past, entering a new historical era characterized by unemployment and/or tenuous employment relationships that requires a radical rethinking of organizing strategies.

A third approach, which I term the "going global approach", makes the case that the ever more global scale at which capital operates requires labor to break past the bounds of its national borders and organize at a similarly global scale (Anner 2011; Bronfenbrenner 2007; Evans 2010; Fairbrother, Levesque and Hennebert 2013; Gordon and Turner 2000; Lillie 2006; McCallum 2013; Moody 1997; Munck 2010; Stevis and Boswell 2007; Waterman 2001; Waterman and Wills 2001; Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout 2008). Nevertheless, contemporary labor internationalism has been hampered by a wide range of issues, including the costs of international organizing; the difficulty of pulling embattled local and national unions out of immediate defensive struggles on their home turf; political and cultural differences, compounded by on-going legacies of empire, racism and xenophobia; and the difficulties of developing organizations at the global level that do not stray too far from the shop-floor level where workers themselves are located.

A final approach, which I term the "core industries approach", has maintained a focus on strategic sectors of the economy (Yeselson 2013), arguing either that the key to labor's resurgence lies in organizing manufacturing workers in the Global South (particular attention has been paid to China in this regard)[1] and/or in bolstering the strength of organized labor at strategic points in global supply chains (particular attention has been paid to organizing logistics workers in this regard – see Moody 2017a). These scholars and activists have reasoned that while increasing numbers of workers in the Global North are now employed in the service sector and precarious work, the weaker ability of these workers to disrupt the core functions of capitalism sets a limit on what they can achieve, and so labor movement revitalization will rely on re-energizing labor organization in strategic sectors.

The Disruptive Potential and Central Role of Logistics Workers in a Global Economy: 'The People Who Move the World Can Also Stop It'

It is the combination of these two final approaches – the possibility of revitalizing labor movements by organizing logistics workers at the global level -- that I put under the microscope in this dissertation. In Management Studies, logistics is defined as 'the process of planning, implementing and managing the movement and storage of raw materials, work-in-progress

[1] Silver, Beverly and Lu Zhang. 2009. "China as an Emerging Epicenter of World Labor Unrest" from Hung, Ho-Fung, ed., *China and the Transformation of Global Capitalism*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

inventory, finished goods and the associated information from the point of origin to the point of consumption' (Rushton & Walker 2007: 4). Logistics today is an industry in its own right, providing the "links" in global supply chains that make globally disintegrated production, and the geographical separation of production from major consumer markets, possible. Within global supply chains, perhaps no single link provides greater disruptive potential than ports, which handle upwards of 90% of global commerce today (George 2013). The global economy as we know it simply would not be possible without massive increases in maritime traffic and trade.

For most of its history, logistics was primarily the concern of the military. But in the post-war era, it increasingly drew the interest of the business world. The global economic recession in the 1970's, coupled with lower profitability rates for firms in the Global North, led these firms to pursue cost savings through outsourcing production to the Global South. Outsourcing was facilitated politically by free trade agreements, which removed tariffs, substantially reducing the cost of international production and trade. Additionally, structural adjustment programs imposed on indebted countries in the Global South by the IMF, World Bank and WTO led to the end of the mid-century developmentalist state, with its focus on building up internal markets. Instead, countries in the Global South began to shift towards an economic strategy of export-led growth and foreign direct investment, incentivized through tax breaks and other subsidies, coupled with the lower cost of labor and fewer regulations in these countries relative to the Global North.

At the same time, at the industry level, leading firms in many sectors were shifting from a strategy of push production – in which firms 'push' merchandise on consumers through forecasting and marketing – to a strategy of pull production – in which firms utilize new technologies to respond rapidly to consumer demand, as the basis for competitive advantage. Taken together, these developments created a strong need for a global logistics industry. As more lead firms adopted logistics as a key component of their strategy for competitive advantage, other firms felt the pressure to follow suit, a phenomenon known as the "Walmart effect" (Fishman 2006). Scholars have argued that consequently, we have witnessed a "logistics revolution" in global business (Bonacich and Wilson 2008).

These transformations in the field of political economy were enabled by technological innovations that made the growth of the logistics industry and global trade possible. On the communications side, the key developments have been the rise of the internet and point of sale data. The internet allows simultaneous tracking of merchandise as it travels around the world, allowing for precise coordination. Point of sale data, such as that gathered through bar codes, allows firms to make up to the minute decisions about orders based on consumer demand.[2] On the transportation side, the key development was the invention of the intermodal shipping container (Levinson 2006). Shipping containers today come in standardized sizes everywhere in the world which can be transferred from ship to truck or train and back again without ever repacking the merchandise. That is to say, merchandise can be loaded in a factory in China and

[2] I am indebted to Dr. Elena Baglioni, from the School of Business and Management at Queen Mary University of London, for her insights into the rise of the logistics industry, through her course on Global Supply Chains.

arrive at a retail distribution store in the United States without ever leaving the container it was shipped in. In addition, larger and larger ships create ever greater economies of scale.

Consequently, today, there is a great deal of interest in the disruptive potential of workers in the global logistics industry[3] – an interest shared by scholars, governments, global management consultants, labor movement practitioners, and political activists on the far left. The logic uniting interest in this sector among such a diverse group is that logistics provides a keyhole into the global economy as a whole. From the perspective of many labor movement practitioners and activists on the far left, as well as many scholars, organizing logistics workers may provide a sort of magic bullet for labor movement revitalization or more radical political projects, as disruptions at key chokepoints in the global economy send ripples outward. Cowen (2014: 126) provides a summary of this perspective from the scholarly literature – a perspective which she shares -- in her book on logistics:

> Bonacich (2003) suggests, "Logistics workers are crucial local factors in global production and delivery systems . . . they cannot 'be moved offshore.'" Reifer (2011, 10) argues that the logistics revolution "arguably increased the power of workers in the global supply chain," suggesting that if "coalitions are able to capitalize on their strategic strengths as key nodal points in global trade and production and actively work on international solidarity across borders, the stage could be set for a radical revamping of the global system." Or in the simple words of Jo Ann Wypijewski, speaking at the 2010

[3] Allen, Joe. February 12, 2015. "Studying Logistics". *Jacobin.*
Allen, Joe. March 11, 2015. "Organizing the Choke Points". *Jacobin*.
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Dockworkers Conference in Charleston, "The people who move the world can also stop it."

In fact, this belief in the possibility of logistics sector organizing as a 'magic bullet solution' for labor and the left was one I strongly shared when I began this research and was one of the main motivating factors in choosing this topic, along with the IDC's unique organizational form among global union organizations.

My introduction to this approach to labor movement revitalization came through my experiences working for the ILWU in 2006-2007. The ILWU, despite its relatively small size and geographic scope (approximately 40000 members on the West Coast of the United States) has, in many ways, exemplified historically the promise of logistics sector organizing. In 1934, San Francisco dockworkers went on strike to secure a union-controlled hiring hall. The strike received widespread support from Bay Area workers and students, in part through linkages forged through the Communist Party. As a result, a sectoral strike on the docks rippled outward, launching the first successful general strike in U.S. history (Olney 2018). This strike not only played a major role in establishing a legacy of radicalism in the San Francisco Bay Area, both within and beyond the labor movement, but also in shaping a national labor law regime in the United States[4] as the FDR administration sought to contain labor militancy through providing legal pathways to union recognition and collective bargaining.

Hot on the heals of their victory, in the mid-1930's, West Coast dockworkers almost immediately set out to organize the inland supply chains feeding the docks, a campaign known as the 'March Inland' (Schwartz 2000). In fact, they were quite successful in these efforts, extending their legacy of labor militancy to Bay Area warehouses. At the same time, the ILWU began a longstanding tradition of using their power at the point of production to protest U.S. foreign policy and oppressive regimes abroad (and at home), as well as supporting workers struggling in other countries (Ahlquist and Levi 2013; Cole 2015a; Cole 2015b; Cole and Limb 2017; Mills 2005). Nevertheless, in more recent times, the ILWU's warehouse sector has contracted precipitously, with many locals disappearing altogether and significant difficulties encountered in new organizing campaigns away from the docks. In the next section, then, I problematize some of the assumptions I held when I began my research, which are representative of an approach within the labor left that stems, in part, from generalizing from the U.S. experience in the 1930's and historical experiences in other countries[5], as well as from broader

[4] One of two other major general strikes in 1934, which contributed substantially to the adoption of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935, was the Minneapolis trucker's strike – notably also in the logistics sector. In fact, the most significant strikes in the manufacturing sector from that period – the Flint sit-down strikes – followed the adoption of the NLRA rather than preceding it.

[5] This perspective on the labor left has broader currency in the anglophone world, arguably because England, Ireland and Australia share elements of the ILWU story in their own labor histories. The London docks strike in 1889 was the first successful general strike in the country and provided a major boost to the labor movement nationally. And, like the ILWU, English dockworkers in the T&GWU had a long history of labor radicalism. A similar story can be told about the Maritime Union of Australia. Though the Dublin lock-out in 1913, the most significant

economistic tendencies in some strands of Marxist theory.[6]

Reasons for Skepticism: Interrogating the 'Magic Bullet' Approach

Bonacich and Wilson (2008) argue in their book *Getting the Goods: Ports, Labor and the Logistics Revolution* that the logistics revolution has not resulted in uncomplicatedly positive outcomes for workers. They identify six negative trends for workers as they are squeezed more and more by employers in the same just-in-time production processes that have necessitated the rise of logistics in the first place: increased health and safety violations, increased security and surveillance, the rise of precarious and contingent labor, low wages, a highly racialized workforce and fewer workers with unions. In other words, logistics workers are not immune to the economic, social or political changes depressing the collective power of workers more generally. Bonacich and Wilson's (2008) work, then, provides ample reason for skepticism about logistics organizing as a sort of 'magic bullet' for restoring working-class power.

In order for economically-based forms of power – in particular, 'position in the economic system' – to deserve the primacy attributed to them, we might expect logistics workers around the world to have already been powerfully organized, en masse. The fact that this has not yet occurred – that, instead, we have pockets of organized workers in the logistics sector in particular countries, certainly the exception rather than the norm at the global level – provides a powerful indication that assumptions about the primacy of the economic may be over-stated. My own assumptions in this regard were challenged repeatedly as I conducted research. In some cases in the dissertation, most notably in Chile and Portugal, dockworkers did, in fact, exercise an exceptional degree of power at the point of production, sending ripples outwards, and winning important victories. But the reasons that they were able to exercise power successfully had as much to do with particular sets of political and social circumstances in their countries -- as well as their embeddedness in broader networks and sound strategic decisions -- as their position in the economic system, which, after all, was equivalent to the position of the economic system of dockworkers in the less successful cases (England, Greece and Colombia). This finding, then, highlights one of the key virtues of comparative research and one of the key pitfalls of

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industrial dispute in Irish history, was not successful in the short-term, it established a lasting precedent of solidarity and resistance that provided major impetus to the growth of the Irish labor movement. Many other countries have similar stories to tell.

[6] Though outside the purview of this dissertation, the gendered assumptions of the economistic tendency on the labor left, which privilege the role of historically white male industrial workers in heavy manufacturing, mining and logistics as the vanguard of the proletariat, are worth exploring as well. In fact, 'position in the economic system' within this school of thought has tended to focus exclusively on *commodity production and circulation* rather than *social reproduction*, despite the fact that workers in the heavily feminized (and heavily unionized fields) of K-12 education and healthcare delivery might be expected to exercise substantial power not only at the point of production but also in the broader society and polity. The recent national wave of extra-legal education sector strikes in the United States – flying in the face of predictions on the labor left that the next 'upsurge' would certainly be found in the logistics sector – only serves to underline this point.

generalizing from a single case: all of the conditions that make something possible are not necessarily visible in isolation.[7]

Furthermore, the fact that something exceptional has happened and is therefore possible does not necessarily mean that it is probable. Kimeldorf's (1989) classic study of dockworker unionism in the U.S., for example, attempts to explain the highly divergent histories of the West Coast ILWU and the East Coast ILA, known for its conservatism, business unionism and ties to the mafia. Additionally, scholars including Santibáñez Rebolledo (2016) and Hamark (2013), though certainly sounding a minority view within the broader literature, have made the case that dockworkers' power is not a given in all times and places and has instead depended heavily on their historically contingent ability to secure union controlled hiring halls.[8] This suggests that rather than assuming the power and reach of logistics workers *a priori,* it may be more useful to ask a different question. Under what conditions can dockworkers effectively exercise power? This is the question I now turn to in the dissertation.

Approaches to Worker Power: Beverly Silver's *Forces of Labor*

The dominant framework for understanding worker power today – particularly in sociology and geography – is the framework developed by Beverly Silver in her 2003 book, *Forces of Labor: Workers Movements and Globalization Since 1870*, which builds on an earlier (2000) article by Erik Olin Wright. *Forces of Labor* is arguably the foundational text of global labor studies and therefore merits careful consideration because of its wide-ranging influence in the field. Overall, Silver is interested in identifying global-level patterns of labor unrest in *longue duree* perspective. To do so, she examines global trends over time within and between leading industries (specifically, auto and textiles).

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[7] It is only when the role of state and society are brought in to our understanding of worker power that cross-national variation among workers in the same sector suddenly gains clarity. But rather than re-examining assumptions about the primacy of the economic, proponents of the 'magic bullet' approach have instead tended to explain the lack of organization in the sector almost exclusively via union politics and the trade union bureaucracy. I'm of course sympathetic to these arguments, as I detail below, but this is just one piece of the story. Placing some of the blame on political and social conditions does not require us to let trade union bureaucrats off the hook – it simply provides a more realistic assessment of the terrain of struggle without slipping into overly voluntarist arguments that may overstate the degree of agency than trade unions possess given political and social constraints. The result on the ground of this sort of over-estimation of the role of economically-based structural power can be forms of adventurism that simply result in workers and their organizations being crushed by employers and/or the state.

[8] Peter Olney, the former Organizing Director of the ILWU and a strong proponent of logistics sector organizing, makes a related argument in a forthcoming paper (2018): "strategic choke points are not static and forever. Class conflicts and new technology preclude any strategic position from becoming permanent."

Structural Power

Of greatest relevance to this dissertation are Silver's arguments on the industry-specific conditions of worker power. Following Olin Wright (2000: 962), Silver divides worker power into structural power, rooted in the economy, and associational power, rooted in workers' collective organization in trade unions and political parties. Structural power is further divided into marketplace bargaining power and workplace bargaining power:

> Marketplace bargaining power can take several forms including (1) the possession of scarce skills that are in demand by employers, (2) low levels of general unemployment, and (3) the ability of workers to pull out of the labor market entirely and survive on nonwage sources of income. Workplace bargaining power, on the other hand, accrues to workers who are enmeshed in tightly integrated production processes, where a localized work stoppage in a key node can cause disruptions on a much wider scale than the stoppage itself. Such bargaining power has been in evidence when entire assembly lines have been shut down by a stoppage in one segment of the line, and when entire corporations relying on the just-in-time delivery of parts have been brought to a standstill by railway workers' strikes. (Silver 2003: 13)

While marketplace bargaining power plays a relatively minor role in the book overall, workplace bargaining power lies at the heart of Silver's analysis, following a long Marxist tradition of focus on the 'commanding heights' of the economy to identify strategically situated workers who can act as a proletarian vanguard of class struggle.[9] Silver (2003: 15) conceptualizes the impact of this workplace bargaining power as a series of ever widening circles of power emanating from the shop-floor:

> the assembly line has allowed a relatively small number of strategically placed activists to disrupt the output of an entire plant . . . with the increasing integration of production among plants within a corporation, a strike in a plant producing a key input part could bring all downstream plants, and even an entire corporation, to a standstill. Finally, with the increasing concentration and centralization of production, the disruption caused to a country's economy by a strike in a key corporation or key industry (including transportation industries linking plants to each other and to markets) also grew. This has been the case especially where workers are located in an industry on which a country overwhelmingly depends for foreign exchange.

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[9] For example, this line of argumentation is evident in Perry Anderson's classic (1980) structuralist critique of E.P. Thompson's (1966) more textured, 'bottom-up' approach to class formation in *The Making of the English Working Classic*: "Cotton, iron and coal together form virtually the sum of the first phase of industrialization in Britain: yet the direct labour-force of not one of them is treated in *The Making of the English Working Class*. In the absence of any objective framework laying down the overall pattern of capital accumulation in these years, there is little way of assessing the relative importance of one area of subjective experience within the English working class against another." (33-4) Charles Bergquist's (1986) book on labor movement emergence in Latin America, which Silver (2003) cites several times, as well as John Womack's (2009) recent book on strategic sectors in Latin America, provide further examples of this line of argumentation.

Workers in industries located at particular nodal points within production networks, as well as industries producing leading commodities in a given economy, therefore have a high degree of structural power because of the greater potential of workers in these industries to disrupt the economy as a whole through industrial action. Workers in logistics are often cited as contemporary examples[10] as a result of their central nodal position in the global circulation of commodities – with perhaps no group of logistics workers laboring at a more strategic location than the ports.

Associational Power

While structural power is the power accruing to workers simply by virtue of their position in the economic system, prior to the exercise of worker agency, associational power, conversely, is the power accruing to workers through their collective organization in trade unions and political powers. Silver's framework essentially views structural and associational power as two potential fonts of power from which workers can draw as they engage in struggle. For example, as Silver argues through the two key industry case studies – the automotive sector and the garment sector – autoworkers' structural power is greater than that of garment workers because of the higher degree of sunk capital investments, greater proportion of skilled labor in the industry and the large number of satellite industries producing parts and the like that service the industry. Consequently, because garment workers have a lower degree of structural power, they must depend more heavily on their associational power in labor conflict (94). However, in the end, associational power appears to be a less potent form of worker power as Silver notes that garment workers have not sparked the kind of sustained and powerful labor movements that automotive workers have.

Critique of Silver

Silver's (2003) formulation of worker power dichotomizes structural power as economic and associational power as social and political, but it also implicitly dichotomizes structural power as structural, in the philosophical sense, and associational power as agentic. It therefore falls short analytically on both grounds, failing to capture the fact that all worker power (whether structural or associational) requires worker agency for its realization and that not only associational power, but structural power as well, are constituted through state and society. Class conflict may emerge 'organically', but the forms it takes are highly specific to given national contexts.

Because of the central role of the state in reproducing capitalism in myriad ways – through ensuring private property rights, delineating legal and illegal forms of contestation and struggle, building consent through ideological and institutional means (i.e., social welfare state programs) and punishing infractions through the police, military and prisons -- the state is always present in the articulation and disarticulation of worker power. National contexts, therefore, are containers for class conflict, structured to a significant degree through law, state institutions and

[10] Silver (2003) in fact notes the high degree of transportation labor unrest – and, in particular, maritime labor unrest – for the entire period of her study (98).

political legacies, which reproduce and legitimize capitalism and define the rules of the game for labor disputes. The state consequently shapes worker power by defining the rules of engagement of class struggle via repressive means (use of the police, army, courts and prisons) as well as generative means (laws governing collective bargaining, social welfare programs and industrial action). In other words, laws and institutions impacting labor reflect the coalesced history of class struggle in a given country[11] and, as such, are contradictory -- simultaneously coercive, co-optative and generative, channeling class conflict in particular directions. States therefore play a critical role in explaining variation in strategies and outcomes amongst workers who otherwise occupy similar positions in the global economic system, and all labor disputes, regardless of their overt aims, are inherently political.

In addition, non-state social institutions and ideologies shape worker power by delineating the imaginative landscape in which workers develop organizational and strategic innovations, as well as the field of potential allies that organized labor may seek out. The cultural and ideological resources that workers have to draw from are important because experimentation and innovation of organizational forms and strategies lie at the heart of successful trade unionism, enabling worker organizations to adapt effectively to the ever-changing world of capitalism. The existing field of culture and ideology, embedded in both state and non-state institutions, delineates the imaginative parameters of such experimentation and innovation by shaping what it's possible to envision and what will resonate with the collective and with outside allies. In other words, the existing field of culture and ideology serve as fodder for, and condition, the kinds of hegemonic claims that can be made in trade union struggles.

In summary, then, while dockworkers' structural power derives from their position in the global economic system, it is subject to political and social conditions present at various scales, including the local and the regional, but above all, the national. Labor geographers, borrowing from Massey's (2005: 9) argument that space itself is "the product of interrelations. . . constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny" have therefore emphasized that "however 'global' some social relationships have become, place difference, uneven geographical development and local specificity persist." (Castree et al 2004: 17) In fact, as Herod (1997) has argued, labor-capital struggles often play out as dialectical struggles over space and scale: workers struggle to fix capital in particular spaces, while capital responds by enacting its own spatial fixes, to which labor may then respond by using the 'fix' of internationalism to match capital's new scale, and so on. In the process, workers themselves reshape the spaces of capital. This relatively optimistic view is tempered, however, by geographers who have instead emphasized the continuing centrality of states in constituting the spaces and scales of labor contestation – often with quite negative consequences for workers (Rutherford and Gertler 2002 Cumbers et al 2010; Peck 2016)

Challenges to Our Understanding of Worker Power

By neglecting the role of state and society in co-constituting worker's structural power, we instead run up again and again against the absurd situation of treating purely abstract and hypothetical economic power as actual power. A number of practical examples illustrate the

[11] Or to borrow Poulantzas' (1978: 128) formulation, the state is the "material condensation of a relationship of forces."

difficulties of adequately conceptualizing worker power without incorporating state and society. First, the same problems that make it difficult for workers to organize generally in a given national context make it difficult for workers in strategic sectors, such as logistics, to organize as well. As Bonacich and Wilson (2008) identified in their book, these factors include weak labor law protections, deskilling, automation, subcontracting, immigration status, etc. Consequently, a long-term perspective on the sector demonstrates that winning protections via state regulation as a consequence of labor struggles has been particularly critical to building the power of workers in the historically casualized logistics industry.[12] The subsequent deregulation of the industry beginning in the 1970's and 1980's in the US and UK, conversely, has had profoundly negative effects on workers' ability to exercise power.

Second, as I found in my research, and as an overview of the historical record of key logistics worker strikes suggests, it is often the 'flank' of 'non-strategic' workers that protects the 'fortress' of 'strategic' workers during conflicts, rather than the other way around.[13] The cases, as well as historical evidence, amply demonstrate that strategically-located workers who become politically and socially isolated lose power over time and that success comes through strong coalitions in the broader polity and society that allow dockworkers to make hegemonic claims during conflicts. Silver's framework, instead, would suggest that community coalitions (a form of 'associational power' in Silver's framework) are of importance primarily to workers with weak structural power (see page 120). But trade unions in the successful cases in my dissertation – Chile and Portugal – though relying primarily on the exercise of power at the point of

[12] Silver (2003), in a sense, concedes this point but this is not reflected in her theory: "the role played by state regulation has been far more central and direct in the dynamics of transportation labor unrest than in other industries. The importance of smoothly functioning transportation systems to capital accumulation – combined with the strong workplace bargaining power of transportation workers and the limited scope for spatial fixes – helps explain why states have felt it necessary to intervene extensively and precociously in transport industry labor unrest. For example, railroad workers in country after country, were among the first to gain legal rights (e.g., legalization of trade unions). Simultaneously with the adoption of these new rights, however, laws that restricted their activities (e.g., the outlawing of strikes) were also passed." (101)
[13] For a particularly strong articulation of how this has played out historically, see Armstrong (2015): "The presupposition of a sharp distinction between workers' collective action at the point of production, on the one hand, and precarious or surplus populations' coordination of blockades and appropriations at strategic economic nodes, on the other hand, tends to distort our understanding of pre-Fordist histories of class struggle, in which these two dimensions frequently overlapped and at times took shape in mutually enabling ways. The mass picket, a key tactic of the mass strike, relied on and made manifest associations between various faces of surplus labor – those employed along strategic economic nodes, but also those employed in less strategic sites and those unemployed, terminally or otherwise. While these associations were often fraught and sometimes fleeting, they were anything but marginal to the history of working class struggle at the turn of the century. The history of the mass picket thus reshuffles the terms of debates about similarities and differences between the pre-Fordist moment and the contemporary moment. To the extent that the former is "like" the latter, there is in the present a need for shifts in Left discourse and strategy, including a thinking otherwise of the industrial worker / surplus population polarity, and an effort to forge tactics and organizational forms that could enable these groups to act in concert toward the realization of shared interests."

production, made extensive use of domestic alliances to bolster their claims in the broader society and polity as well, and research participants viewed these alliances as critical to their success.

Finally, the same long-term dynamic Silver identifies – in which strategically-situated workers' strength at the point of production ultimately makes them more vulnerable to counter-movements by capital and states – is true not just across the long historical arc but in the short-term. As Erik Helgeson, a dockworker leader at the Port of Gothenburg in Sweden whose union has been engaged in a long-running dispute with APMT, put it, employers and the state are just as aware of workers' strategic positions as workers' organizations themselves are. As a result, strategically-situated groups of workers are much more likely to be on the receiving end of state-led or state-sanctioned efforts to repress their power, whether through legal means (typical of the Global North) or more overt forms of violence (typical of the Global South).[14] In other words, *the strongest position for workers economically can simultaneously be the weakest position for workers politically*, with obvious consequences for their ability to successfully exercise power in disputes.[15]

Worker Power as Co-constituted by Economy, State and Society

Under capitalism, workplaces are not democracies but autocracies. And yet, they are structured autocracies, structured not only by the exigencies of the market but by the states and societies in which they are embedded. States in particular determine the extent to which capital's prerogatives hold sway in myriad ways, from the conditions under which workers can be hired and fired to regulations on health and safety to the creation of a (never level) playing field for collective organization of labor and industrial relations. In this regard then, I take the heterodox

[14] As political scientist Laleh Khalili, an expert on labor and logistics in the Gulf states, put it in a recent (2018) interview in *Viewpoint Magazine*: "in the Gulf in particular it becomes clear that the possibility of a kind of mobilization that effectively challenges value-in-motion still depends on old-school structures for mobilizing workers, and in the absence of unions or more equitable labor laws, the basic ability of these workers to resist deportation after a protest is massively hampered. . . constant innovations in technologies of economic governance not only help the process of capital accumulation but also forestal forms of mobilization: ports that are far away from cities; both land-side and ship-board automation; flags of convenience; bifurcated work contracts aboard ships which see massive disparity between wages and time off between crew and officers; and so on. It is a mutually constitutive process: new forms of work bring new forms of protest bring new forms of containment bring new forms of mobilization bring new forms of work."

[15] This is true within the sphere of civil society as well, as workers in strategic sectors come under increased pressure by the public (often via the media) who may blame them – rather than their employers – for disputes that impact beyond their immediate workplace. Both the miner's strike in the UK and the PATCO strike in the US exemplify the paradoxical possibility that workers in the strongest position economically as a result of their strategic position may simultaneously be in the weakest position politically (vis a vis the state) and socially (vis a vis the society at large).

view that all industrial disputes, however mundane in their stated goals and repertoires of action, are inherently political disputes. Taking this position to its logical conclusion, I propose that all industrial disputes therefore contain within them a germ seed of revolutionary potential, however obscured, in that, by withholding their labor, workers as a collectivity -- at least temporarily and implicitly -- withhold their consent to capitalism and affirm that labor is the source of all value.

In this section, then, I propose an alternate framework for understanding workers' structural power as co-constituted by economy, state and society and consider the implications for theorizing worker strategy. The framework I propose for understanding worker power and strategy draws from the work of Antonio Gramsci (1971) and Nicos Poulantzas (1974).[16] Poulantzas' analysis emerged through attempts to understand the role of the petite bourgeoisie in German and Italian fascism -- echoing Marx's (1852) writings on the role of the petite bourgeoisie in 19th century French Bonapartism – as a class economically closer to the proletariat but politically and ideologically closer to the capitalist class. As a result, he concluded that classes are formed not purely in the realm of the economy but through political and social determinations as well.[17]

I argue that what is true for class formation is also true for the constitution of class power. Because class struggle always plays out vis a vis both employers and the state, as well as in civil society, worker power is always constituted economically, socially and politically. Purely economic understandings are inherently ahistorical and unable to fully account for power differentials, particularly among workers located in the same position within the economic system in different parts of the world. The theoretical innovation of this dissertation, then, is its analysis of the workplace as a political arena using analytical tools more generally employed to understand states or polities.

Position in the economic system alone, therefore, is not sufficient to inform worker strategy in any given situation. Because worker power is not solely constituted by the economy, it follows that there is no 'one size fits all' model for successful labor struggle by workers in the same industry in different countries – with important implications for global union organizations. In order to be successful, worker strategy must instead be responsive to the conjuncture of state, economy and society that constitutes worker power at specific times and places. In order to

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[16] In an influential essay on their work, Przeworski (1977: 368) pins down the crucial contribution of Gramsci and Poulantzas setting them apart from orthodox Marxists: "Economic, ideological, and political relations as a totality impose a structure upon class struggles. . . This view, which attributes to ideological and political relations the status of objective conditions of class struggles, breaks away from the economistic and historicist elements inherent in the formulation of the 'class-in-itself'."

[17] As Poulantzas (1974) puts it, "The definition of the class nature of the petty bourgeoisie is the focal point of the Marxist theory of social classes. It very clearly shows that, contrary to an economistic conception of social classes, relations of production alone are not sufficient, in Marxist theory, to determine the place a social class occupies in a mode of production and to locate it within social formation. It is absolutely indispensable to refer to ideological and political relations." (From *Fascism and Dictatorship: The Third International and the Problem of Fascism*, 237)

develop a theoretical framework that takes into account power differentials between workers in the same 'position in the economic system' in different parts of the world in order to better inform worker strategy, I draw from Antonio Gramsci's theory of political 'Cadornism'.

Coded in the language of 19th century Italian nationalism to avoid Mussolini's fascist censors during his imprisonment, Gramsci argued the need for divergent socialist strategy in the East and West because of the different relationship between state and society in each location. In the East, with its state core protected primarily through repressive means, rather than through a hegemonic project built on consent amongst a wide stratum within civil society, revolutionaries were able to simply 'storm the winter palace' to take power. In the West, to the contrary, state power is constituted not solely through repression and violence but through the institutions of civil society which form a protective layer of consent and legitimacy around the state and therefore form a critical element of the terrain of struggle.[18] Gramsci argued that it was only by understanding these differences that revolutionaries could undertake a "concrete analysis of the relations of force" in order to "reveal the points of least resistance, at which the force of will can be most fruitfully applied; they suggest immediate tactical operations; they indicate how a campaign of political agitation may best be launched, what language will best be understood by the masses, etc." (185) These insights are relevant for understanding worker strategy both cross-nationally and cross-regionally given the continued differentiation of political economy at the national level in the global capitalist system and its attendant implications for trade unionism.

I argue that it is only by understanding workers' structural power in the workplace as *also* simultaneously constituted by economy, state and society that workers can develop strategies appropriate to specific contexts. By incorporating state and society, we move beyond hypothetical, abstract conceptualizations of worker power to concrete, actually-present conceptualizations of power that constitute the field of the possible for workers in different times and places. Understanding worker power in purely economic terms instead leads to an *overestimation* of worker power, creating real dangers of adventurism[19] in which workers fail to

[18] "The same reduction must take place in the art and science of politics, at least in the case of the most advanced States, where 'civil society' has become a very complex structure and one which is resistant to the catastrophic 'incursions' of the immediate economic element (crises, depressions, etc.). The superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare. In war it would sometimes happen that a fierce artillery attack seemed to have destroyed the enemy's entire defensive system, whereas in fact it had only destroyed the outer perimeter; and at the moment of their advance and attack the assailants would find themselves confronted by a line of defence which was still effective. The same thing happens in politics, during the great economic crises. A crisis cannot give the attacking forces the ability to organize with lightning speed in time and in space; still less can it endow them with fighting spirit. Similarly, the defenders are not demoralized, nor do they abandon their positions, even among the ruins, nor do they lose faith in their own strength or their own future. Of course, things do not remain exactly as they were; but it is certain that one will not find the element of speed, of accelerated time, of the definitive forward march expected by the strategists of political Cadornism." ("The Political Struggle and Military War", *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 235)

[19] This first became apparent to me in debates over the port blockades during the Occupy movement in 2011 on the West Coast. The powerful November 2011 blockade of the Port of

achieve their objectives, in best case scenarios, or in which workers and their organizations are simply crushed by employers and the state in worst case scenarios. Conversely, *underestimating* workers' socially and politically conditioned ability to exercise their economic power similarly leads to defeat, as employers determine that they are not obligated to concede to workers' demands.

Trade Union Strategy and Implications for Global Unionism

States, Imperialism and Internal Differentiation in the North and South

Given the centrality of the state in constituting workers' structural power, any understanding of worker power in the global context will necessarily require an understanding of the ways in which states are differentiated and related to one another in the global system. Despite the limitations of the term, imperialism, broadly construed to signify both the economic and political domination of peripheral states by regional and global hegemons through the vast array of forces at the hegemonic state's disposal – ranging from military and intelligence operations targeting various domestic political formations, to the ability to offer debt relief, foreign direct investment and aid, as well as the ability to deny or provide access to markets through trade agreements or sanctions -- must form a central part of the analysis (Mohandesi 2018). The position of states within the global political economy, therefore, as well as the relations between them shape both the ability of workers in a given country to make use of their position in the economic system and the terrain upon which workers within different states may form relations with one another across borders.

For example, within the Global South, the economic and military dependency of countries like Colombia on the U.S. creates a different terrain for labor internationalism than for countries like Chile, which are far less reliant on the U.S. for trade and military spending and may therefore place greater valuing in cultivating other international relationships. In addition, the fact that there is less cabotage[20] within Latin America in general, relative to Europe, as a

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Oakland by tens of thousands of protesters in response to police violence during the Occupy movement was successful because of groundwork laid over more than half a century by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). Most significantly, this groundwork includes taking advantage of openings in U.S. labor law and the coastwide longshore contract that allow ILWU members to refuse to cross community-maintained political picket lines on the grounds of health and safety (the same arguments are used to refuse to unload ships coming from ports in dispute or caught up in political conflicts). This tactical opening, combined with the union's strong connection to the community through traditions of radicalism in the Bay Area, won the day. A subsequent attempted blockade a month later, led by ultra-leftists openly disdainful of the union, on the other hand, was a failure.

[20] Cabotage refers to transportation via shipping routes that make multiple stops in the same territory. Within Europe, ships following global routes typically stop in several main ports in close proximity to one another. Because trade within Latin America is primarily with the Global North and East Asia, shipping lines make fewer stops at ports located at much greater distances

result of stronger North-South trade ties relative to South-South trade ties, creates fewer opportunities for meaningful South-South industrial solidarity. This is also evident in the absence within Latin America of powerfully organized transshipment ports in key locations – like the Port of Algeciras in Spain – which have played such a central role in industrial solidarity among European dockers[21]. Taken together, the very different economic geography of Latin America may create greater incentives for North-South collaboration than South-South collaboration comparable to the North-North collaboration found in Europe.

In this dissertation, then, I consider a core region – Europe – and a peripheral region – Latin America. Fundamentally, at the regional level, I argue that Latin America provides a sharp contrast to Europe in terms of the ability of dockworkers to make use of their power at the point of production. In Europe, though dockworkers in general are on the defensive, unlike Latin America, overt violence against trade unions, either sponsored or sanctioned by the state, is vanishingly rare, and the legacy of earlier and more robust periods of working-class organization and struggle remain embedded in industrial relations systems that compare favorably for workers to those available in most of the rest of the world. As a consequence, though European dockworkers struggle against capital on a less propitious playing field than in the past, this playing field nevertheless allows them substantially greater room to maneuver than is available to workers in much of the Global South because social and political factors in the broader society continue to allow them to exercise substantial power at the point of production. This has proved advantageous not only for trade union struggles at the national level but also for the growth of trade union internationalism within Europe. These differences with Latin America, and the Global South more generally, are ultimately attributable to the on-going legacy of Northern imperialism.

While Chapters 2 and 4 provide an overview of the European and Latin American regions, respectively, and emphasize similarities within regions and differences between regions, the national comparative chapters 3 and 5 from Europe and Latin America are suggestive of the internal differentiation within these regions. Greece and Portugal form part of Europe's internal periphery, as has been particularly evident during the economic crisis and sovereign debt crises, which have facilitated a massive transfer of publicly-owned wealth to the private sector – and the consolidation of Germany's position as a regional hegemon -- through the cudgel of structural adjustment programs in exchange for debt relief[22]. As a consequence, Greek and Portuguese

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from one another within the region.

[21] The obvious candidates to play such a role in Latin America would be the major Colombian transshipment Port of Cartagena, located near the Panama Canal. The difficulties of trade union organizing in Colombia, of course, have precluded the emergence of a powerful trade union comparable to La Coordinadora at the Port of Algeciras in Spain, located near the Strait of Gibralter.

[22] The notion of an internal periphery within Europe has been popularized by Marxist academics like Wolfgang Streeck and Costas Lapavitsas and in the pages of the *New Left Review*. A recent piece by political theorist and former SYRIZA central committee member Stathis Kouvelakis (2018: 23) provides a neat summary of this position: "Greece, Portugal, Ireland and, to a lesser degree, Spain all experienced over-indebtedness while Germany went on running up surpluses.

dockers, respectively, fought to maintain their power at the point of production by preventing the privatization of the ports and the exposure of union-controlled labor pools to non-union competition. The third European case – Britain – is part of Europe's core, with London constituting the center of the European finance industry and was relatively insulated from the crisis compared to Europe's South. Nevertheless, the long-term effects of Thatcherism – with its deregulation of the port industry and weakening of labor law -- put British dockworkers, like their Greek and Portuguese counterparts, on the defensive, as they struggled to maintain their power at the point of production at the newly-opened port of London Gateway, owned by global terminal operator Dubai Port World. Given that dockworkers continue to exercise substantial power at the point of production in all three European cases and in Europe in general, I find that organizational form and trade union politics were most predictive of success or failure in the European cases. More specifically, European dockworkers in the successful case – Portugal – succeeded because they were able to work around trade union bureaucracy and combine strong industrial action and community support at the port in dispute with strong industrial action from an international ally. In contrast to the Colombian case described below, despite constrained sovereignty in both the Greek and Portuguese cases, the continued susceptibility to labor protests by national governments in both cases underlines the very different terrain of struggle that even the most embattled workers in Europe face in relation to workers in many parts of the Global South.

Turning from Europe to Latin America, the picture changes dramatically as the long-term role of U.S. imperialism (including trade union imperialism, detailed in Chapters 4 and 5) takes on an outsized importance. In the political sphere within Latin America, the U.S. government has effectively worked to prevent the ascendance of left-wing governments capable of bringing about substantial and institutionalized transformations in the balance of class forces at the national level.[23] In their place, military dictatorships have systematically worked to destroy the organized

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In the background of the debt crisis was a European configuration that tended to deepen the divide between the centre and the periphery—or rather peripheries, plural, because the European South had been joined by a second internal periphery, that in the East, which had from the start been allocated the status of a Mezzogiorno, a supplier of cheap labour. Over-indebted, the countries of the first periphery found it impossible to borrow on the markets, as Eurozone rules required, and had to have recourse to 'rescue plans', loans made available by the EU, with the participation of the IMF. Memoranda of Understanding are nothing but the accords signed by these countries, first of all Greece, in return for fresh loans granted to cover the old, a way to assure private banks that these countries would honour their interest payments. The mechanism thus involved a new round of debt, with the result that at the end of the operation the level of indebtedness would be greater still—which is what has happened in the case of Greece."

[23] "Washington attempted variations of the same in response to the Cuban Revolution (1959–), the "peaceful road to socialism" in Chile (1970–1973), and the Sandinista Revolution (1979–1990) in Nicaragua. In place of overt military intervention, the central means of U.S. interference were mammoth infusions of counter-insurgent aid to allied anti-Communist forces, whether in the form of allied dictatorships that had captured state power, or right-wing terrorist death squads and paramilitary formations where the Left was in power. Washington facilitated an extraordinarily sustained level of violence throughout Latin America's Cold War. In Central

left and trade union movement, severing vital ties with the past.[24] They have also ushered in a shift from attempts by the mid-century developmentalist states in the region to upgrade through Import Substitution Industrialization – a process which led to substantial urban working-class organization in political parties and trade unions – to a return to growth through the export of primary commodities in mining and agriculture – a process which has substantially disorganized the working-class.

In the economic sphere, in a process comparable to that of Southern Europe vis a vis the troika in the past decade, the IMF and World Bank, which represent the financial interests of the Global North, have utilized the carrot of debt relief to compel countries in Latin America and other parts of the Global South to accept the stick of structural adjustment policies, reshaping an already tenuous playing field for labor decisively in favor of capital. In addition, free trade agreements – with their promise of increased and privileged access to major consumer markets – have resulted in a wide array of compromises by peripheral states that have additionally resulted in a weakening of working-class power and organization. For dockworkers specifically, the privatization of ports in many countries has significantly compromised their ability to construct or maintain power at the point of production.

Nevertheless, as noted above, as with Europe, there is substantial internal differentiation within the region in terms of how these processes have played out in individual countries, and their impact on working-class power and organization, as evidenced in the two Latin American country case studies in this dissertation. Chile remains the paradigmatic case of U.S. imperialism in the political sphere to subvert an overtly socialist project of not only regional but global significance. The seventeen year-long Pinochet dictatorship converted Chile into the "laboratory of neoliberalism", foreshadowing developments that would soon become general in much of the region, and indeed, the world. Yet, Chile today is considered one of the most consolidated democracies in Latin America. As a result, despite the legacy of dictatorship and complete transformation of the economy and industrial relations system, trade unionists can depend on the rule of law to a greater degree than in many other countries in the region, providing a more

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America, the U.S. Central Command coordinated and financed a Central American Military System for Telecommunications and other forms of synchronization across state intelligence agencies, while in the Southern Cone of South America, the U.S. established the transnational state-terror network Operation Condor, providing logistical, technical, financial, and military support to the dictatorships of Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil." (Webber 2018)

[24] "Dictatorships of the Southern Cone, and the counter-insurgencies of Central America, had murdered hundreds of thousands. Along with lasting effects of collective psychological terror, the socio-political roots of the Left in these societies had been annihilated. Few of the usual conveyor belts of collective memory in the history of the twentieth century Left – experienced cadre, formal associations, and informal cultural infrastructures – remained to pass on lessons to a new generation; and besides, Latin American social structures had been so deeply transformed by state terror, imperial intervention, and capitalist counter-reform that any new Left to emerge at this stage would necessarily look much different than what had come before. . ." (Webber 2018)

propitious playing field on which to contest capital. Most significantly for this study, despite partial privatization of the country's ports, Chilean dockworkers have largely maintained their power at the point of production through the maintenance of union-controlled hiring halls, allowing substantial room for maneuver during industrial disputes.

Colombia, conversely, is exceptional in the region both for having avoided a sustained military dictatorship and for its prolonged civil war and the endurance of pervasive state-sanctioned and state-sponsored violence against the left and the trade union movement. As in Chile, the U.S. government has long played a major role in these processes, from propelling the 1928 Banana Massacre in support of the United Fruit Company to the more recent Plan Colombia, with Colombia holding the dubious distinction of being the largest recipient of U.S. military aid in the Western Hemisphere. Additionally, like Chile, Colombia has focused its development strategy on the export of primary commodities – though Colombia is far more dependent on the U.S. in this regard than Chile, with its more diversified array of trading partners. Taken together, the results for trade unionists of these processes have been abysmal. Colombia has long been considered the most dangerous country in the world for trade unionists, with the highest incidence of targeted violence, including frequent assassinations. Consequently, Colombia workers struggle against capital on a highly uneven playing field in which their room for maneuver is severely constricted. Furthermore, unlike other countries in the region, in which union organization at the docks was maintained despite privatization, in Colombia, privatization of the ports led to the destruction of a powerful unitary trade union of dockworkers almost overnight. In other words, Colombian dockworkers' power at the point of production was simply destroyed and has yet to be rebuilt, constricting their ability to maneuver against maritime capital.

Revisiting the Magic Bullet Approach

We can now re-examine the issue posed in the preface – the viability of logistics worker organizing as a 'magic bullet' solution to labor movement decline – in light of the proposed framework for analyzing worker power. Rather than assuming logistics workers have a high degree of structural power as a result of their position in the global economic system, the proposed framework would instead ask a different question: *under what conditions* are dockworkers able to successfully exercise power? As I found in my research, dockworkers met with success when 1) they and their international allies were able to engage in industrial action at the point of production without being crushed by state-sanctioned violence and legal repression and 2) ideological conditions in the broader society allowed them to form alliances with other organized groups and make credible hegemonic claims that their struggle was in the interests of a broader public. Only when these conditions were met were dockworkers able to successfully contest capital. In other words, logistics workers *do* have a high degree of economically-grounded structural power as a result of their important role in global capitalism, but economic power, in isolation from political and social forms of power, is unlikely to be successfully utilized and thus remains at the level of the abstract and hypothetical. By broadening our understanding of worker power to encompass state and society, we instead build a model of worker power that reflects the concrete and utilizable.

Beginning an analysis of worker strategy by defining the structural conditions of worker power is critical both for local and national organizing and for building global unionism. The highly constrained context described herein in the Colombian case – where workers were unable to effectively exercise power at the point of production as a result of state-sanctioned violence and the absence of labor law enforcement -- may seem extreme, but the fact is that there are many more countries in the world with conditions for worker organizing more similar to Colombia than there are countries like England, Greece and Portugal, and global unionism must contend with this reality.

Once the socio-political determinants of worker's structural power are met, an additional set of conditions concerning the exercise of worker agency determined success or failure in given cases. While socio-political conditions determine the possibilities for workers to exercise power at the point of production, as well as the availability of potential external alliances, ultimately exercising power in these ways depends on the strategic decisions of union activists themselves. In this regard, union democracy – defined here as the ability of rank-and-file workers to exercise a central role in strategic decision-making – appeared as a necessary precondition for shop-floor militancy and the construction of fruitful external alliances in the successful Chilean and Portuguese cases. Bureaucratized trade union organizations, conversely, are less likely to meet with success as competing organizational objectives take precedence over shop-floor issues, hindering the development of an effective shop-floor strategy (as in the English case).

In Greece, unfavorable socio-political conditions forced a choice between an international labor strategy and a national political party alliance. Greek dockworkers were ultimately unable to resolve this tension and hedged their bets on an anti-privatization strategy in alliance with SYRIZA. Despite their strong tradition of union democracy and militancy at the shop-floor level, they were ultimately defeated by SYRIZA's capitulation to the troika after the 2015 election. This case, in comparison to the Chilean and Portuguese cases, suggests that while left-wing parties continue to play a crucial role in trade union struggles today, their efficacy lies not in taking the reins of government -- where structural logics impeding alternative projects to global liberalism are in operation – but in articulating and coordinating the interests of workers with those of other social groups in civil society through a shared framework of socialism (De Leon et al 2015).

Overall, the cases suggest that successful global unionism requires organizational flexibility and responsiveness to the wide variety of national contexts in which workers struggle, rather than a one size fits all model. In practice, this means not assuming workers' structural power a priori on the basis of their economic position but instead remaining attentive to the constraints and possibilities of a given national context for worker organizing. For dockworkers specifically, this requires recognizing that while their greatest power ultimately stems from their ability to stop the flow of commodities in the global economy, this form of power will not always be available to them in practice as a result of national socio-political factors. Under less favorable circumstances, as in the Colombian case, other forms of global assistance may need to be provided first to build up the power of local and national unions at the point of production. Conversely, as in the English case, when this form of power is available to workers, relying on associational power in the form of extra-workplace contention, rather than the exercise of power at the point of production, is a losing strategy. The shadow comparison between the IDC and the

ITF running throughout the dissertation suggests that trade union democracy, at both the local/national and global levels, is better able to deliver both the responsiveness and shop-floor militancy that effective global unionism requires.

Argument of the Dissertation

Research Design

This dissertation is a global organizational ethnography of the International Dockworkers Council (IDC), a global union organization. The question of how workers' power at the point of production is structured in practice, as well as the implications for trade union strategy, is considered through an innovative research design utilizing multi-level nested comparisons. Chapters 3 and 5 provide comparative national-level analyses of recent dockworker labor disputes in Europe (Greece, Portugal, England) and Latin America (Chile, Colombia), respectively, while Chapters 2 and 4 allow for regional-level comparisons of dockworkers international organization in Europe and Latin America. While the European cases (Portugal, Greece, England) allow for a consideration of the role of trade union strategy and organizational form in disputes when dockworkers' structural power is strong, the Latin American cases (Chile, Colombia) allow for a consideration of the role of trade union strategy and organizational form in disputes when dockworkers' structural power is at best uneven, and often weak. Running through all four empirical chapters is a shadow comparison of the IDC's competitor organization, the International Transport Workers Federation, which allows me to examine the role of international organizational form in global unionism.

Research was conducted in person between 2012-2016 in 40 cities in 20 countries in Europe and the Americas. The analysis draws on over 80 in-depth interviews with key activists, as well as participant observation at a dozen international meetings, and union archival documents and media reporting of the disputes. While other studies (McCallum 2013; Lillie 2006) have examined global unionism in global perspective, they have tended to focus on top-down campaigns directed from the Global North by mainstream, professionalized and bureaucratic global union organizations. My study, in contrast, examines global unionism from the perspective of rank-and-file activists at the local and national level, in both the Global North and the Global South, within the context of an independent, rank-and-file run, networked global union organization. Rather than directing campaigns from above, transnational solidarity emerges in the IDC as a collective strategic response to local and national union struggles. By studying a non-bureaucratic global union organization (the IDC) in a sector which shares a bureaucratic global union organization (the International Transport Workers Federation), my study allows for meaningful examination of the impact of organizational form on labor internationalism through shadow comparisons in both Europe and Latin America.

The study, therefore, allows me to substantiate the proposition – put forth by many scholars in the field of global labor studies – that union bureaucracy is a significant hindrance to labor internationalism, a key argument in the dissertation. Nevertheless, I argue that union democracy is a necessary but not sufficient condition for building robust global unionism. Union democracy provides openings for militancy and radicalism foreclosed by union bureaucracy but does not in itself generate militancy and radicalism. At the global level, then, greater efforts to build person-to-person linkages among workers located in different locations in the global

political economy, as well as sustained political education on the ongoing legacy of northern imperialism and its impacts on the Global South, are sorely needed.

The European country cases, detailed in chapter 3, provide the basis for a second key argument: while the theoretical framework of structural power, even when it includes state and society, delineates what is possible for workers in a given context, agentic decisions on politics, strategy and organizational form remain determinative of dispute outcomes. The chapter points to two key factors predicting success when dockworkers' structural power is strong: first and foremost, shop-floor action at the port in dispute paired with shop-floor action by European allies, and second, external national-level alliances mediated through left political groupings. Union bureaucracy at the national and international levels (via UNITE and the ITF) impeded dockworkers' ability to implement such a strategy in the English case. However, union democracy alone was not sufficient to ensure a successful outcome, as in the Greek case, where national political imperatives (opposing privatization of public assets) conflicted with shared international objectives (ensuring labor standards on the docks). Greek dockworkers ultimately bet on a national political party ally, SYRIZA, and lost their dispute when the party entered government and capitulated to the troika. Therefore, despite the high degree of structural power dockworkers possessed in all three of the European cases, it was only the Portuguese dockworkers, who combined shop-floor and international industrial action with strong national-level external alliances mediated through a far-left political grouping that met with success.

The third key argument is developed in reference to the Latin American country cases, detailed in chapter 5. In contrast to the European country cases, the Latin American country cases unsettle the initial assumption of a uniformly high degree of structural power among dockworkers through examining one country in which dockworkers structural power was relatively strong as a result of sociopolitical factors – Chile – and one country in which dockworkers' structural power was relatively weak as a result of sociopolitical factors – Colombia. I find that this differential degree of structural power had a significant impact on the development of trade union strategy. Because of their inability to exercise power at the point of production, Colombian dockworkers, defying the predictions of Silver's theoretical framework, relied not on industrial action but on external pressure and support via international allies. Chilean dockworkers, who were able to exercise power at the production, instead more closely approximated the predictions of Silver's theoretical framework, relying on coordinated industrial action and external alliances at the national level to achieve a major victory.

The final key argument is developed through the European and Latin American regional case studies in Chapters 2 and 4. The findings highlight the role of affiliate unions' structural power within a given region, the absence or presence of regional-level transnational governance and practical organizing issues concerning distance and finances in shaping or constraining the possibilities for rank-and-file networks to develop at the regional level. There is a strong case to be made that 'bottom-up' rank-and-file global unionism would do well to organize in ever expanding circles from the local to the national to the regional to the global levels. Consideration of the difficulties of regional-level trade union organizing in different parts of the world therefore provides an important insight into the difficulties of building truly global organizations. Yet, while a large body of research has examined trade unionism at the regional level within Europe – where international trade unionism has been most developed and successful -- there has been little consideration of the applicability of these findings for other regions of the world. The cross-regional comparison of trade unions from the same global union organization attempting to build

rank-and-file networks in Europe and Latin America, detailed in chapters 2 and 4, therefore, therefore provides an important contribution to the existing literature on global unionism.

Overview of the Chapters

Part I of the dissertation – covered in chapters 2 and 3 -- examines the IDC's work in Europe. Chapter 2 provides an overview and analysis of the IDC's regional-level organization in Europe, where the organization has been most successful in building a strong rank-and-file network for dockworkers. I argue that the European working group of the International Dockworkers Council provides an important model of transnational organizational form for labor in Europe that manages to avoid the "elite embrace" of the European Union (Hyman 2013) remaining firmly tied to shop-floor trade unionism. The organization's networked rank-and-file structure, in contrast to the bureaucratic, professionalized structure of mainstream international union organizations like the ITF's European section, increases the efficacy of transnational unionism by removing layers of bureaucratic mediation that slow down action, fostering a culture of militant solidarity based on friendship and trust. Nevertheless, participants noted the heavy personal burdens placed on activists under this model and the difficulties, in specific circumstances, of operating without the assistance of paid professionals. Finally, though the networked, rank-and-file model mitigates key problems emanating from the professionalized, bureaucratic model, differing national legal and political contexts for unionism remain significant barriers to effective internationalism.

Chapter 3 takes a closer look at the European region, through an intra-regional comparison of recent labor disputes of IDC affiliates in Greece, Portugal and England. In Europe, dockworkers' structural power is generally strong, as a result of social and political conditions for trade unionism that compare favorably with those facing workers in much of the rest of the world. Though dockworkers in all three countries (England, Portugal and Greece) face significant constraints from hostile national governments (as a long-term consequence of Thatcherism in England and a short-term consequence of troika-led austerity in Portugal and Greece), they nevertheless maintain the ability to take action at the point of production and organize free of the fear of state-sanctioned violence, in contrast to dockworkers in many other parts of the world. Under these conditions, organizing campaigns which combined industrial action at the worksite in dispute with industrial action at the worksite of European allies were most likely to produce successful outcomes. However, this local-to-local industrial solidarity was predicated on the IDC's networked organizational form, political agreement among the unions and the successful negotiation of bureaucratic blockages at the national level. Greece presented a failed case of transnationalism due to the union's overreliance on a national political ally to resolve the dispute at the expense of greater efforts to develop international solidarity. England was a case of mixed success -- while the English dockworkers came close to a victory thanks to effective international solidarity, a lack of attention to action on the shop-floor at the local level due to national bureaucratic blockages in the union impeded their success. Portugal was a successful case due to the union's ability to work around national-level blockages, combining local industrial action with industrial action from an international ally, and building strong linkages with workers and other actors in civil society.

Part II of the dissertation, covered in chapters 4 and 5, examines the IDC's work within Latin America. I argue that within Latin America, structural power among dockworkers is highly

uneven, despite their position in the economic system, as a result of weak labor law regimes, fear of state-sanctioned violence in many cases and unevenness in the availability of allies in civil society and acceptance of radical ideological traditions. These factors, in turn, are the results of more long-term processes -- the continued legacy of Northern imperialism and relatively recent histories of military dictatorships that laid siege to trade unionism and the organized left, as well as the resultant turn to neoliberalism in much of the region. The far greater disparities in dockworker power among the Latin American cases have therefore created far greater challenges to building the kind of robust regional trade union network that the IDC has built in Europe.

I find that though dockworkers are predicted to have a high degree of structural power as a result of their position in the economic system, Colombian dockworkers, in contrast to Chilean dockworkers, in fact had a very weak degree of power at the point of production as a result of mitigating social and political factors. This difference in their ability to leverage power at the point of production led Chilean and Colombian dockworkers to pursue very different strategies, with the latter relying on external alliances while the former relied primarily on industrial action. The Latin American cases, in consequence, provide a critical corrective to overly sanguine views of the potential for global unionism in strategic industries, which explicitly or implicitly generalize from the European and North American experience and consequently overestimate the power of strategically-situated workers at the global level. Centering the Global South in the analysis therefore allows for a consideration of the unevenness of worker power among similarly situated workers in different parts of the world, providing critical insights into some of the most significant challenges to building global unionism.

Chapter 4 is an analysis of the IDC's regional-level organization in Latin America – paralleling Chapter 2, which analyzes the IDC's regional-level organization in Europe. I argue that Latin American dockworkers face far greater challenges in building an effective regional-level rank-and-file network than their European counterparts. The most significant challenge is the unevenness in strength of unions in the region, with dockworkers in many countries having quite weak power at the point of production, despite their position in the global economic system, making it difficult to provide solidarity to one another during disputes. In practice, only a small number of dockworker unions in the region, located in the Southern Cone, are in a position to provide this kind of support. Additional challenges include the high costs of travel, coupled with low operating budgets, among unions in the region, making the kind of frequent face-to-face organizing and development of strong relationships seen in the European case far more difficult. Notably, in Europe, not only is travel inexpensive and unions better resourced, but the unified industrial relations framework provided by the European Union, with its sectoral social dialogue, provides both a logic and financial assistance for frequent meetings. These same structural factors have imposed significant challenges for the development of regional level organization within Latin America, which continues to depend heavily on a single regional coordinator and assistance from Europe in lieu of a cohesive regional-level activist group. Nevertheless, a shared analysis of U.S. imperialism and the embourgeoisement of workers in the Global North -- as well as similarities of language, culture, politics and history -- provide a strong basis for collaboration and suggest that the project of global unionism as a whole stands to gain much from incorporating workers in the Global South more centrally.

Chapter 5 is an intra-regional comparison of recent labor disputes of IDC affiliates in Latin America – paralleling the intra-regional country comparisons from Europe in Chapter 3. In contrast to the European cases, because conditions for labor organizing in Latin America are

uneven across the region and the lack of regional political integration does not favor transnational coordination by unions, quite different strategic outcomes are produced. Though dockworkers are predicted to have a high degree of structural power as a result of their position in the economic system, this was true in practice in only one of the two Latin American cases – Chile. In Colombia, conversely, pervasive state-sanctioned violence, the absence of labor law enforcement and lack of control of the hiring hall meant that in practice, dockworkers ability to exercise power at the point of production was negligible. Consequently, and in contrast to what Silver's theoretical framework would predict, Colombian dockworkers adopted a strategy I term 'human rights unions', relying on associational power, rather than structural power, in the form of legal complaints and external international labor alliances to put normative pressure on transnational employers and the Colombian state to reach an agreement, as well as providing financial support to the union. In Chile, on the other hand, workers faced a relatively more open context for organizing and maintained the ability to exercise power at the point of production, allowing the union to pursue a wider range of strategic pathways. Due to the political history of the union's leadership, activists adopted a strategy I term 'class struggle unionism', relying primarily on coordinated industrial action and secondarily on national and international alliances, to win an agreement. At the international level, this strategy was supported by the threat of blockade of Chilean cargo by IDC affiliates.

In the conclusion, I consider the implications of these findings for efforts to build global trade union organizations more generally. I argue that the diversity of national contexts for labor organizing around the world requires organisational flexibility and responsiveness on the part of global union organizations to develop strategies appropriate to specific contexts rather than a "one size fits all" model. I find that developing non-bureaucratic, rank-and-file forms of labor internationalism is a precondition for building such flexibility and efficacy. Nevertheless, 'other southern questions' are at play as well, in particular, the fraught relationships between trade unionists in the Global North and the Global South, with the former possessing far greater economic resources and more propitious conditions for organizing as a result of their embeddedness in powerful, wealthy nations that continue to shape the global political economy in their own interests. Overcoming these dynamics within the global trade union movement requires not only innovative organizational forms but shared and deepened political understandings of the ongoing legacy of imperialism and an appreciation of the broader horizons for organizing that Southern trade unionists may bring to the table.

The findings, then, shed light on an oft-cited contradiction in *The Communist Manifesto* between its famous closing line, "Working men of all countries, unite!" and the earlier observation in the text that "Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie." In fact, my research suggests that rather than an either/or proposition regarding the question of national or global class organization, this is better understand as a both/and proposition. Worker power sits in between economy – which is simultaneously national and global – and state and society, which are still overwhelmingly national. Consequently, global organization can have a critical magnifying effect on worker struggles, which continue to play out primarily within national arenas, but can never supplant the need to struggle at the local and national level. Global worker movements, therefore, should focus on facilitating affiliates' support for one another's national struggles and should be attentive to economic, political and social differences shaping both national-level trade

union strategy and inter-union dynamics at the transnational level. In other words, global worker movements should forge a unity based on an understanding and attentiveness to national level differences, as a path towards building greater collective power globally for all workers.

It is certainly not the intention of this dissertation to substitute a social and political understanding of worker power for an economistic understanding but instead to delineate the ways in which worker power is simultaneously constituted by each, with an eye towards identifying the implications for trade union strategy and international collaboration. Logistics workers in the abstract *do* have tremendous economically based structural power as a result of their position in national and global economic systems. Figuring out when such power is useable – which is only possible by bringing state and society back into the picture – and how best to use it – through appropriate strategic decisions and organizational form -- can provide crucial leverage for a broader stratum of workers seeking to achieve economic and political gains. However, accepting that worker power is constructed not solely through the economy but also through state and society, at the same time means accepting that no single group of workers hold an objectively privileged position of power relative to capital at all times and in all places. There simply is no single magic bullet solution for the working class that can be located solely in the economy.

Additionally, as the research in this dissertation and historical evidence amply demonstrate, strategically-situated workers who have managed to send ripples of power outwards through their success in struggles at the point of production have done so in close collaboration with less 'strategic' workers and political groupings in the society at large, who have provided them with forms of economic, social and political support that have proved crucial in key moments, simultaneously benefitting from the power that 'strategic' workers were thus able to exercise. Ignoring or minimizing the role of these extra-workplace linkages, therefore, would be a catastrophic error for the trade union movement – an error unfortunately too often encountered in practice in the contemporary world.

These observations, taken together, suggest that because capitalism is an economic, political and social totality, rather than looking again and again to the industrial working class as an inevitable vanguard group, working class leadership in struggle can and does come from a multitude of economic and non-economic locations. Labor movement revitalization, then, will come not from assuming these locations *a priori* based on purely economic criteria but by considering the particular conjunctures of economy, state and society that constitute worker power in specific times and places, recognizing the interconnectedness of worker struggles across sectors and in the social and political fields as well.

PART I:
EUROPE

Chapter 2

Building Labour Internationalism 'from below':
Lessons from the International Dockworkers Council's European Working Group

In Part I, I examine dockworkers' labor conflict strategies in a regional context in which dockworkers generally have a high degree of power at the point of production: Europe. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the International Dockworkers' Council's regional-level organization in Europe, where the organization has met with its greatest success in developing a sustained form of rank-and-file internationalism, whose hallmarks include a high degree of internal democracy and a strongly shared collective culture. In this chapter, the IDC is analysed in relation to the European Transport Workers Federation (ETF), the European organization of the International Transport Workers Federation, a bureaucratic global union federation. Evidence from interviews suggests that the IDC's rank-and-file model in Europe provides significant benefits over and above the ITF's bureaucratic model. Nevertheless, the chapter also examines some potential drawbacks of the IDC model, as well as flagging up some of the key problems that organizational form alone cannot solve.

A second comparison, explored briefly in the conclusion to this chapter, is developed further in Chapter 4, contrasting the IDC's powerful and well-established organization in Europe with its Latin American organization, which has struggled to develop a comparable degree of strength or internal cohesion as a result of structural factors in the region. Thus, while Chapter 2 tells the 'optimistic story' of the transformative potential of rank-and-file labor internationalism, Chapter 4 complicates that story by considering whether such a model is easily achievable outside of Europe, with its powerful, well-resourced unions, short distances between countries and low cost of travel. Chapter 3, which focuses in on three country case studies in Europe, additionally complicates the 'optimistic story' by finding that although trade union democracy is a key factor predicting successful collaboration across borders, trade union democracy on its own is not sufficient to resolve strategic or political differences among affiliate unions, with decisive impacts on dispute outcomes.

Global Unionism, Union Democracy and Movement Revitalisation in Europe

The declining power of trade unions in Europe has inspired a sizeable literature on strategies for trade union revitalisation, ranging from social partnership to new organising to restructuring (Frege and Kelly, 2004; Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick 2013). Consistent calls have been made to internationalise the trade union movement as the increasing Europeanisation of capital and regulation have made transnational trade union collaboration a greater necessity than ever. However, Europeanisation has simultaneously undermined the conditions for the emergence of strong internationalism by weakening national trade unions and forcing them into defensive battles for survival (Bieler and Schulten 2008; Dribbusch 2015; Bieler and Erne 2014; Bieler 2013; Stan, et al. 2015; Nowak and Gallas 2014). Consequently, trade union activities within Europe remain heavily focused at the national level (Martin and Ross 2000; Erne 2008). Additionally, several studies (Pulignano et al. 2013: 141; Dufresne 2015: 147-8; Larsson 2014:

391-2) conclude that despite the growth of transnational regulation, persistent national differences in labour law may impede more militant and effective forms of cooperation.

Transnational collaboration nevertheless remains a potent, though underutilised, tool in labour's arsenal. This chapter examines whether the efficacy of transnational unionism in Europe may be enhanced through an organisational model of rank-and-file democracy at the transnational level. While many scholars (Dufresne 2015; Harvey and Turnbull 2015; Hyman 2013; Moody 1997; Waterman 2001; Wills 1998) argue that building transnational structures firmly connected to shop-floor unionism would result in more effective internationalism, few studies have tested out this proposition systematically and arguments tend to rely on anecdotal evidence. This chapter therefore contributes to the literature through analysis of original empirical research into the efficacy of the International Dockworkers Council's (IDC) European working group, an organisation which provides a model of rank-and-file union democracy at the transnational level. A shadow comparison with the European Transport Workers Federation (ETF), a professionalised, bureaucratic transnational organisation, facilitates analysis of the broader implications of international organisational form on transnational unionism.

The next section of the chapter provides an overview of long-standing debates on the efficacy of bureaucratic and rank-and-file forms of trade unionism. I then present a discussion of the research design and case selection utilized in this chapter. Findings examine the advantages and disadvantages of the IDC's organisational model, as well as remaining challenges for transnationally-organised workers to resolve. In short, interviews suggest that the IDC's rank-and-file structure within Europe does indeed facilitate more effective coordination of solidarity than the bureaucratic structure of the ETF. Nevertheless, the IDC's model imposes significant personal costs on activists as well as occasional difficulties of operating without professional assistance. Additionally, problems of effective transnational coordination stemming from differing national contexts for trade unionism remain. In the conclusion, I consider the applicability of these findings for transnational trade unionism more broadly.

Theorising the Effects of Trade Union Governance Models

Bureaucratic and Rank-and-File Forms of Trade Unionism

As used herein, *bureaucratic trade unionism* – or 'professional unionism' (Heery and Kelly 1994) refers to the direction and management of trade unions by full-time officials, whether elected or appointed, while *democratic trade unionism* – or 'participative unionism' (Ibid) refers to the direction and management of trade unions by rank-and-file workers. While these are ideal types and elements of both are often present in the same organisation, key factors distinguishing these two models of trade unionism include the degree of 1) participatory or representative democracy 2) local union autonomy and 3) control over organisational resources by full-time officials or rank-and-file workers. In his classic genre-initiating study, Michels (1911) views the bureaucratisation of political parties and trade unions, regardless of their politics, as an inevitability — an 'iron law of oligarchy' – a view shared by Offe and Wiesenthal (1980) who argue that bureaucratisation is an inevitable effect of growth and institutionalisation. Writers in the Marxist tradition have often tended to agree, arguing that because full-time officials depend for their livelihoods on the stability of trade unions as institutions, they hold

back the militancy of the rank-and-file and reach unfavourable compromises with management (see Darlington and Upchurch 2011 for a review of this position).

This doubly negative view of trade union bureaucratisation as both inevitable and always detrimental, however, is not universally shared. Another school of thought, evident in much of the classical anglophone industrial relations literature (Webb and Webb 1920; Kerr et al 1960) takes a positive view of bureaucratisation as a hallmark of trade union movement maturity and a necessity for trade union efficacy. As Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin (1995: 834) put it:

> The underlying premise of the theory that monolithic, bureaucratic unions are superior in winning material benefits for their members is that rationality and efficiency are enhanced by bureaucracy. . . Nondemocratic or oligarchical rule is required for the effective defense of union members' interests because to cope with "bargaining pugilism," the union needs a centralized apparatus that parallels the structure of modern industry and enables it to countervail the concentration of corporate power.

In recent years, this position has been elaborated in the labour literature by American sociologists studying trade union movement revitalisation (Voss and Sherman 2000; Voss 2010). Voss and Sherman (2000: 309, 337-338, 342-4), for example, found that revitalisation at the local level was largely dependent on the "bureaucratic power of the international" (342-343), (that is, the national union in the U.S. context) which is needed to shake local branches, conceptualised as conservative fiefdoms, out of their complacency through removing local union officials from office, putting local branches into trusteeship and putting unelected professional staff into influential positions at the local level. Voss (2010: 377) develops this argument further, concluding that "paid union staff, strong leadership and central coordination have played a more consistent key role in union renewal", in contrast to the union democracy perspective on revitalisation which argues for "local autonomy . . . from centralism; that staff interests tend to be opposed to rank-and-file interests and that bureaucracies suppress democratic innovation."

While some scholars have questioned whether rank-and-file unionism is ever truly sustainable in the long-term, despite periods of activism from below (see Darlington and Upchurch 2011: 78 for a review of this position), an alternative approach argues that though unions tend towards bureaucratisation, the development of strong rank-and-file structures within unions can resist this tendency (Ibid: 90). This position is supported by a number of empirical studies of trade unionism in the United States (Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin 1995; Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin 1996; Levi et al 2009). Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin (1996: 3, 27) take perhaps the strongest position on this question, arguing that whether unions develop in democratic or bureaucratic directions is simply the result of contingent internal political struggles within trade unions. Bureaucratisation, therefore, is by no means inevitable, and can be staved off by 'insurgency and radicalism' (3).

Studies by Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin (1995), Levi et al (2009) and Levesque and Murray (2002) therefore conclude that rank-and-file democracy is not only possible but increases the ability of trade unions to win major gains for their members. Levesque and Murray (2002) in fact conceptualize local-level participatory union democracy as a power resource and critical precondition for labour movement revitalisation in a global economy. Levi et al (2009)

demonstrate that heavy-handed intervention by national trade union bureaucracies – what the authors term "The Voss and Sherman strategy" – is not the only way to bring about "a renewed emphasis on organising and more militant confrontation of employers" (223). Instead, the ILWU, which represents dockworkers on the West Coast of the United States, "possesses a strong and long-standing rank-and-file democracy and a demonstrated capacity for winning good contracts" (204) as well as a commitment to organising (223). They propose that

> the participatory elements appear to have enhanced both solidarity and militancy. Because members knew they could hold the leaders' feet to the fire should a contract negotiation or strike go badly, they were more willing to follow the leaders into battle. Because of the deliberative process that preceded negotiations, strike votes, and contract votes, the quality of the outcome seems to have been better. (222)

Finally, through a study of industrial unions in the United States from 1937-1955, Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin (1995: 841) find that:

> . . . when members are active, self-conscious participants in the union's political life, the workers and their union leaders tend to establish a sense of common identity and class solidarity. Consequently, the contracts won by such democratic unions tend to reflect the workers' wants and demands and thus subvert, rather than sustain, the sway of capital in the immediate production process.

Implications for Transnational Unionism

Moving from the local and national to the international scale, Stevis and Boswell (2007) and Pulignano (2007) highlight the far greater logistical difficulties trade unions face in carrying out effective campaigns of global scope and argue that a high degree of delegation by national unions to an international organising body and centralisation of command is therefore necessary for efficacy. Hyman (2005) and Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick (2013) take a different view, however, arguing that some of the same problems emanating from bureaucratic forms of trade unionism at the national level are evident at the transnational level: a disconnect between full-time officials and rank-and-file workers, without whose "understanding and commitment, there is little capacity to act collectively" (Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick 2013: 12-13.) Furthermore, Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick (2013: 15) argue that the rise of cheap, instantaneous internet-based person-to-person communication

> means that many of the traditional hierarchical channels of official interchange have become obsolete. If the institutions of international labour do not become less like bureaucracies and more like network organisations, welcoming the opportunities for increased transparency and internal democracy, they are likely to be consigned to increasing irrelevance.

Consequently, many scholars (Hyman 2013; Harvey and Turnbull 2015; Dufresne 2015) argue that building effective labour internationalism in Europe requires breaking out of the 'elite embrace' of Brussels to form transnational organisations with a stronger base at the shop-floor

level. Nevertheless, Hyman (2005: 150) calls for a mix of top-down and bottom-up approaches to global unionism, arguing that "It is necessary to build on the resources, historical understanding and strategic capacity of 'bureaucratic' union organisation while also cultivating the initiative and flexibility of grassroots initiative". Moody (1997), Waterman (2001) and Wills (1998), on the other hand, go further, arguing that trade union bureaucracy is neither necessary nor inevitable and calling for the development of rank-and-file democracy at the international level.

Research Design

Case Selection

Dockworkers provide an ideal case for the study of trade union internationalism because of the strength of their trade unions, the inherently internationally-oriented character of their work and the existence of multiple international organisations in the sector, allowing for comparative analysis. Collaboration among European dockworkers is facilitated by a shared European culture, widespread competency in English, the use of social media, and the low-cost of travel within Europe, as well as strong and relatively well-resourced unions. The common governance framework of the EU provides an on-going political logic for collaboration in Europe, while the integration of European markets, shared employers and connections via shipping routes provide an on-going material logic.

Dockworkers are famous for the strength of their trade unions and militancy (Turnbull 1992), grounded in their key position in the economy and the nature of the labour process (Bonacich and Wilson 2008; Kerr and Siegel 1954) and enabled in Europe by favourable socio-political conditions — even if, in practice, their strength and militancy has varied across space and time (Turnbull and Sapsford 2001), particularly as they have encountered the rise of global neoliberalism (Turnbull and Wass, 1994). In fact, their successful campaign to defeat a European Directive on port work in the early 2000's is frequently cited as one of the most important examples of transnational European worker organising (Turnbull 2006; Leiren and Parks 2014), despite significant difficulties coordinating the two competing international organizations of dockworker unions (Gentile 2016).

The International Dockworkers Council (IDC) is an autonomous international organisation of dockworker unions founded in 2000 following the well-known labour dispute at the Port of Liverpool in the 1990's (Saundry and Turnbull 1996). The Liverpool dockers had engaged in a wildcat strike that became an infamous multi-year dispute. Their national union at the time, the T&GWU, refused to back them, and blocked support from the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) – the global union organization to which the English dockworkers were and are affiliated. Nevertheless, an impressive campaign of international solidarity developed, including a blockade preventing a ship carrying "scab cargo" from Liverpool from docking in ports around the world. Though the dispute was ultimately lost as a result of the Liverpool dockers' abandonment by their national union, it provided an important precedent for international action. It also provided valuable experience in international coordination among trade unions that had effectively been blocked from joining the ITF for decades as a result of the organization's 'national sovereignty clause' which allows current affiliates to prevent the affiliation of other trade unions from their same countries – a long-term

legacy of the ITF's post-war turn to strident anti-communism, in collaboration with the CIA[25] (Gentile 2016), an issue explored further in Chapter 4.

As a result, dockworkers in Southern Europe, in particular, where radical political trade unionism is more prevalent than in the north, had been very weakly represented in the ITF (Gentile 2016) and many activists were keen to form their own international body. They shared this desire for the development of an international organization with the radical Swedish Dockworkers Union, an anomalous independent union within Sweden's highly centralized industrial relations system that had long been at odds with the mainstream Swedish Transport Workers Union which had ensured their exclusion from the ITF. IDC activists therefore proposed the creation of a global organization for dockers that would redress the issues of bureaucratization that they believed lay at the heart of the failed Liverpool dispute. Seventeen years later, the Barcelona-based IDC represents 100,000 dockworkers in 30 countries and has become a major force in international dockworker activism.

The IDC is organised along a model of rank-and-file direct democracy, following the organisational model of La Coordinadora, the autonomous Spanish dockworkers' union. Annual zone assemblies and biannual general assemblies, and annual regional assemblies, are open to all members and rotate between ports. Nearly all participants are active in their unions at the local level, where they work on the docks. Additionally, local unions, and even individual dockworkers, may affiliate directly to the international organisation, a significant benefit for rank-and-file activists who find themselves at odds with national-level trade union bureaucracies, as in the Liverpool dispute. (This is also a benefit for the IDC, as it provides the organization with connections to unions that would otherwise be unwilling to work with them). There are no executive officers and no executive decision-making body: decisions made at the international level are advisory and must be ratified by the rank-and-file at the local ports before they are implemented. Finally, the IDC depends on the volunteer labour of participants, employing only two people, who do not have a decision-making role in the direction of the organisation.

[25] Gentile (20216) provides a succinct history of the ITF's collaboration with the CIA in breaking Communist trade unions in Southern Europe in the post-war period: "in the lead-up to the founding of the ICFTU, [ITF head] Oldenbroek called for a conference of noncommunist dockers and seafarers unions. Held in Rotterdam in August 1949, the conference featured a barrage of red-baiting speeches and resolutions. These activities culminated in a declaration of incompatibility between a transport union's affiliation to a [communist] WFTU trade department with ITF affiliation and the establishment of the Vigilance Committee against Communism in the Mediterranean. This ITF founded but FTUC backed committee sought to break dockers' unions in France, Italy, and Greece who struck against the shipment of Atlantic Pact arms and of French arms to Indochina. The Committee's most notorious success was a violent episode of strikebreaking in Marseilles, led by Irving Brown and funded by the CIA, and using, in part, Corsican criminals as strike breakers (Carew 1998; Lewis 2004). Such activities were designed to weaken communist unions and to support and legitimize the fledgling national docker and seafarer unions that were established by the FTUC and internationally certified by the ITF." (118)

By contrast, the London-based International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), founded in 1896, and its Brussels-based European organisation, the European Transport Workers Federation (ETF), founded in 1999, are bureaucratically organised and represent workers across the transportation sector. Under the ITF's model, though the quadrennial international conventions are officially the highest decision-making body of the organisation, voting is limited to delegates from national unions and the long periods between conventions mean that they inevitably exercise limited power over the day-to-day direction of the organisation. Instead, in both the ITF and the ETF, the international executive board, comprised of representatives of national unions, is empowered to make decisions in meetings closed to rank-and-file members, while full-time professional staff play a major role in the day-to-day work of the organisation. Table 1 outlines key differences between the organisational models.

Table 1: International Trade Union Organisational Models

	International Dockworkers Council	**European Transport Workers Federation**
Organisational Form	Rank-and-file democracy: governance by local-level activists with little mediation by the international organisation.	Bureaucracy: pyramidal structure of governance by international body, with direction from national officers and professional staff.
Key Actors	Local-level rank-and-file union activists.	Professional staff at the international level; full-time officers of national unions.
Primary Contentious Repertoire	Coordinated industrial action at the local port level in different countries.	Lobbying of EU policy makers; symbolic actions at the local and national level.

Methodology

This chapter draws on research conducted between 2012 and 2016 in Spain, England, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy, Greece, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Cyprus. Forty-six semi-structured interviews with IDC and ETF activists and staff form the core of the analysis. Participants were selected through a snowball sampling technique on the basis of their participation in international dockworker activism in Europe. The analysis focuses primarily on the IDC's European working group, formed in 2012 as a body that would meet more frequently than the annual assemblies, with participation from each affiliate, in order to respond more rapidly to issues facing European dockworkers as a result of the economic crisis and austerity politics. Semi-structured interviews of 1-2 hours in length were generally conducted at activists' home ports. With the exception of the Maltese union, IDC working group members from every European affiliate union at the time of research were interviewed, as well as the non-participating Italian IDC unionists, for added insights into the IDC's European

organisation.[26] Interviews were conducted with core ETF activists from Germany, England, the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as ETF and ITF staff in Bruseels and London, for the shadow comparison. Table 2 provides details on the number of interviews in each country and the trade union affiliations of the unions. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and themes were identified and coded, with particular attention paid to participants' analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each organisational model and similarities and differences in the perceptions of IDC and ETF participants.

Table 2: Summary of Interviews

COUNTRY	PORTS	UNIONS/ INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS
BELGIUM	Antwerp	ACV-TRANSCOM (ETF and IDC); BTB (ETF)	2; 2
CYPRUS	Limassol	SEGDAMELIN – PEO (IDC)	2
DENMARK	Aarhus; Aalborg	3F Dockers (ETF and individual branches in IDC)	5
ETF Headquarters	Brussels	ETF staff	2
FRANCE	Le Havre	CGT-Dockers (IDC)	2
GERMANY	Hamburg	ver.di (ETF)	1
GREECE	Piraeus	Piraeus Dockers Union (IDC); OMYLE (ETF and IDC)	1; 1
ITALY	Genoa	CGIL (IDC)	3
ITF Headquarters	London	ITF staff	2
NETHERLANDS	Rotterdam	FNV (ETF)	2
PORTUGAL	Lisbon	Sindicato dos Estivadores e da Actividade Logistica (IDC)	3
SPAIN	Barcelona; Valencia; Tenerife; Algeciras	La Coordinadora (IDC)	6

[26] Since that time, the IDC has added European affiliates in Norway, Slovenia, Croatia and Belgium, of which only the last of these was interviewed (prior to joining the IDC).

SWEDEN	Stockholm; Gothenburg; Helsingborg	Svenska Hamnarbetarforbundet (IDC)	6
UNITED KINGDOM	Tilbury; Felixstowe; Southampton; Thamesport; Liverpool	UNITE the Union (ETF and individual branches in IDC)	6

Advantages, Disadvantages and Further Problems to Solve:
An Appraisal of the IDC Working Group's Organisational Model

This section explores research participants' assessments of the advantages and disadvantages of the IDC's model of rank-and-file trade union democracy, as well as remaining challenges for transnationally-organised trade unionists in Europe.

Advantages of the IDC Model: Agility, Militancy, Culture and Community

Working-group participants identified a number of key advantages of the IDC's organisational model – agility, militancy, culture and community – and argued that they derived from activists' embeddedness in local port workplaces and trade unions. As a Spanish IDC participant from Algeciras put it:

> A person that wants to defend the dockworkers and that doesn't go to work at the port can't defend the dockworkers because they don't know what happens. They can know a lot about laws, they can know a lot about negotiation, they can be the best guy in the world, but if they aren't in the port and can't go and see and smell the odor of the sea and experience heat and experience cold and work at night and get wet when it rains, they can't transmit or can't feel what it is that the *compañeros* demand. . .

A Greek IDC participant from Piraeus concurred, arguing that the organisation's strength derives from "the fact that we don't hire persons but we give our personal time. . . it means that you believe in this. . . And you love, somehow, this thing. You care about your colleagues in other ports." The ITF, in contrast, according to a Danish IDC participant from Aarhus who had also participated in ITF meetings, is:

> a reverse funnel. . . If you want to create solidarity, it's the rank-and-file, it's the docker that needs to do it. . . We're not machines. We've got our own minds. We can think. And that's why . . . ITF has been really bad. . . it's a top-down organisation.

Participants of the working-group were understood as liaisons for their local unions, rather than as executive officers fully empowered to make decisions on their own. The non-hierarchical, direct and collective approach of the working-group, coupled with the lack of a decision-making role for staff, were cited by participants as key differences between the IDC and the ITF.

Working group activists noted the importance of their person-to-person ties, not mediated or constrained by bureaucracy, in delivering powerful solidarity actions in a timely manner. An English IDC participant from Tilbury contrasted his experience with the IDC to his experience with the ITF:

> it's totally run by the bureaucracy. . . I spoke to a docker from [an ITF port]. I said, look, let's get your phone number, it'd be good to have a bit of a contact. And he said, no, no, no, you can't have my phone number. Why not? He went, that's not the way we've got to do it. . . you need to go through your official to go to your national officer to go to the ITF who will then contact the national officer. . . who will contact my local officer who will speak to me. So I said, but I might just want to chat. I might just want some information, what time's a ship leaving your port. But he said, you know how it should go. So at that point, I thought, this is a complete and utter waste of time. . . it will take bloody three months to get an answer. . . I really gave up trying to use the ITF as any kind of means to kind of improve connections and communication. Because, I mean, I knew it wouldn't work.

Instead, as a French IDC participant from Le Havre argued, "with IDC, it's really simple. I have my phone, I have the numbers, I can . . . simply call him if I need information or I need to bring some solidarity. . ." A Spanish IDC activist concurred:

> For us, bureaucracy is a slowing down of all conflict. If we have a conflict tomorrow in Costa Rica, the next day we have people already prepared to look for alternatives, to carry out solidarity actions. . . With a higher degree of bureaucratisation, if tomorrow we have a conflict in Costa Rica, the conflict won't arrive at the central office until Monday and a decision won't be made until Friday, until the next week, . . . And we understand that we dockworkers enduring a conflict cannot wait three weeks until a decision is arrived at. We have to make decisions at the base-level and make them with force and directly.

A key ETF participant from Belgium, while emphasizing the ETF's greater ability to navigate institutions of European governance, in fact shared a similar perspective: "IDC is much stronger than ETF in going directly to each other. . . ITF/ETF is slower. It's bigger. It works much easier. . . as an IDC member because they inform each other."

Several IDC participants gave the example of a hastily-organized meeting in 2013 by UNITE in support of the unionization campaign at the newly opened London Gateway Port. Though UNITE as a national union is an affiliate of the ETF, none of the national-level ETF reps from Europe attended the meeting, citing the short timeframe in which it was organized. Local-level port leaders in England who were affiliated to the IDC insisted that IDC reps be invited, and nearly twenty showed up with just a few days notice (in addition to a local-level ETF activist from Antwerp with close ties to IDC.) IDC activists at the Port of Algeciras in Spain quickly took action against the first ship to arrive from London Gateway, providing a major push to the employer to resolve the dispute (Fox-Hodess 2017).

An English ITF activist from Southampton reflected on the differential response from the ITF and IDC to the meeting, echoing the views expressed in interviews by IDC activists:

> I think they've [ITF] been a bit critical at the last meeting of UNITE for the short notice we gave in calling the meeting. Which I accepted, it was short notice. But it was the fact

> that the ship was coming in and we had to deal with it, sort of, on the spot. And it was difficult with people's diaries. And I think that sometimes can be a problem as well. If you're an official, you're obviously very busy. And so your diary is planned weeks and months in advance. So if you give somebody a week's notice, it's difficult. Whereas, a rank-and-file member, it's a lot easier for them to get to a meeting called at short notice.

A Belgian activist from Antwerp whose union is affiliated is currently affiliated to both the ITF and the IDC (though was only affiliated to the ITF at the time of the meeting) expressed surprise that the Dutch union FNV, which represents dockworkers at Europe's largest port in Rotterdam had not been at the meeting:

> They were very busy because they just had this action in the Netherlands at APM. But for me, what can they do is like what [our union leadership] does with me. Somebody should be sent, another activist. At least to follow up the idea. But this is difficult for such a union. . . Those leaders [of the Dutch FNV and the Belgian BTB], they want to keep everything for themselves. . . A leader cannot be everywhere.

While the Rotterdam dockworkers affiliated to the ITF had slowed down the ship for an hour by utilizing their global agreement on maritime labor to inspect the seafarers' working conditions, the ITF activist from Southampton argued that it was the 24-hour blockade by IDC dockworkers in Algeciras that would have "had a massive impact on the shipping line. I imagine they put a hell of a lot of pressure on DPWorld to get something agreed."

Working group participants attributed the IDC's militancy to its organisational form. A Spanish IDC activist from Algeciras emphasised that "The rank-and-file worker sees me in the port and can perfectly well ask me whatever appeals to them, tell me how they see it, and moreover I'm able to feel if what we are doing is good, if what we are doing needs more reflection. . ." As a consequence, IDC working group participants were able to make accurate assessments of where the rank-and-file stand on different issues and engage in education and organising on international issues directly at the workplace and in local branch meetings. A Spanish IDC activist from Barcelona emphasised that:

> Before making decisions in the working-group or in an assembly, we have all had the obligation to bring them to our ports and our countries and debate them with our workers to arrive at a position. There is not a decision taken by the IDC that comes from the working group saying 'this is it, tomorrow there has to be a strike because of the European Union'. . .The workers see the decisions as our own. . . At the end, the decisions become their own and they believe in them. . .

Consequently, because actions were both decided upon and implemented by the rank-and-file at the local port level rather than being directed from a central office, the IDC was better positioned than the ETF to take aggressive positions on international issues.

Working Group members identified the IDC's worker-centred culture and community as additional advantages of the organisational model. In particular, IDC participants cited the trust, friendship and feelings of brotherhood fostered by the non-professionalised organisation for its success. An English IDC participant from Tilbury appreciated:

> the laughing, the joking, the mickey-taking—it's identical, you know, absolutely identical. . . there's that comradery, that's what it's built on, isn't it? . . . in the limited ITF stuff I've been involved with, you know, I meet colleagues, associates. In the IDC, I kind of meet my friends. I regard them as good friends now because I know they think like me, they act like me, muck about the same as me. And I feel really comfortable in meetings with them. I know I can speak freely and openly and discuss anything I like.

This sense of closeness was fostered through frequent in-person meetings that moved among different port locations, providing participants with the opportunity to visit one another's work places and union offices and meet local rank-and-file members across Europe. These person-to-person ties were often maintained subsequently through social media. Meetings also involved a significant social component. The result was that

> Because we see each other periodically, we already know who we are, we have direct contacts, and at the end, we have a relationship that's, apart from the union, a human relationship. We already know who can and who can't, who has and who doesn't have, and that way, we can advance a lot. (Interview, Spanish IDC participant, Algeciras)

Interview participants emphasised the significance of major pan-European dockworker mobilizations against the European Directive in 2006 in Strasbourg and in support of Portuguese dockworkers in 2012 in Lisbon in forming a common identity and sense of purpose. A Swedish IDC participant from Gothenburg reported of his members' participation in Strasbourg:

> they're tough guys, in their own opinion. But we're not used to the Southern European approach to protests. The Spanish or the French, they brought gas masks, and then the teargas comes. So our guys were quite shocked and they were very proud, and still are, like they're veterans from Strasbourg!

A Danish IDC participant from Aarhus shared his impressions of the Portuguese demonstration: "it was amazing to walk through the beautiful streets of Lisbon with so many dockers from all over Europe. . . it created a lot of network and [we] met a lot of people and started talking, got involved."

This strong sense of community was also evident in slogans and visual culture. 'Never Walk Alone Again' – a slogan adopted from the Liverpool dispute in the 1990's – has been followed up more recently by 'Proud to Be a Docker' and 'Don't Fuck My Job'. These messages were visible on mass-produced t-shirts, posters, banners, stickers and social media. (At least one long-time activist had an IDC tattoo). Logos superimposed a dockers' hook or fist over a map of the world. The IDC has an official Facebook page, primarily for sharing press releases and photos of actions from around the world, but key activists participated frequently in larger rank-and-file dockworker online fora as well. These included International Docker Force, Dockers Society and Dockers Hangaround, which collectively have several thousand followers globally and post a wide range of material, from serious news items on issues affecting dockers around the world to photos from work to humorous memes. Affiliate unions also maintained their own pages, as did key activists, who used the site frequently for information sharing, support and encouragement, and occasional debate.

While IDC participants volunteered time and again in interviews how personally significant relationships formed with counterparts in other countries had been for them, and the

role this had played in building the organisation's strength, non-professional relationships were not mentioned in interviews by ETF participants. Participants contrasted the strong sense of community within the IDC, to the ETF, highlighting the issue of trust in particular. A Swedish IDC participant from Gothenburg explained:

> If I called a Spanish guy and said, can you do something for us?, and he called me and said, we can just slow down the ship, and you see on the computer that it's not even there, that would be devastating. But for [the ETF], that is normal. It's just something that you include in a press release, and everything is fine. The employers of course know this, so it has no effect anymore.

Problems of trust within the ETF were evident from interviews with a number of ETF participants as well. A German ETF participant from Hamburg shared a perception voiced by both IDC and ETF participants with regard to the Dutch union which represents workers at Europe's largest port in Rotterdam: "they are weak. They bark like dogs but they cannot make industrial action." A Belgian ETF participant from Antwerp shared the difficulties he had experienced getting his members to support the Dutch: "my members say, those Dutch guys, in Ports Packages I and II, we did five strikes of 24 hours. They did a small part. We sent more than fifty coaches to Strasbourg. And they sent two coaches." Other participants from both the ETF and IDC faulted the Dutch union for its willingness to accept solidarity from others without reciprocating in meaningful ways. Nevertheless, a Swedish IDC participant from Gothenburg noted that whereas in a bureaucratic organisation, it is the bureaucracy itself that holds the participants together, "The thing is that trust is very important [in the IDC] . . . when something is going wrong because you lose trust in somebody, the hole is very deep."

Disadvantages of the IDC Model: Personal Costs and Lack of Professional Expertise

IDC participants emphasised the high personal costs of participation and occasional difficulties of operating with a very low budget and no professional staff as key disadvantages of the IDC model. With the exception of a small number of single male participants and one mother with primary childcare responsibilities, nearly all of the working group participants were men who either had older children with fewer childcare needs or partners who took primary responsibility for care work in the home. Frequent travel to international meetings, in addition to their regular work on the docks and union responsibilities at home ports, placed significant burdens on family relationships:

> last week my wife said to me, why do me and the kids always come second? And she's right. Because I find it extremely easy to say, but I can take the kids out tomorrow. . .This meeting's on this day at this time. I can't put it off. And I've spent way, way too many years saying to my wife and kids, I'll do that with you tomorrow. (Interview, IDC participant, Northern Europe)

An IDC participant from Southern Europe concurred:

> it takes a lot of time away from the family. . . it's necessary to dedicate many hours to this. . . it's necessary to travel. . . when I'm at home, I'm reading news about the sector . . . all I do is talk on the phone with people that call me from the sector, with my comrades.

Similar experiences were echoed in interviews with participants from a wide range of countries.

Because of the high cost of hiring translators, active participation tended to be somewhat limited to those conversant in English. Yet, a Greek IDC participant from Pireaus noted that this is less of an issue than it might have been in the past since

> the people that they work in the ports now. . . know. . . many more things than our colleagues twenty or thirty years back. . . they are more qualified, they know languages, they can use new technology, they can go through legal papers and create politics and develop strategies . . .

Additionally, widely available low or no-cost internet tools helped to ameliorate these problems. Email communications and Whatsapp, for example, cut down on the cost of coordination and the availability of free translation sites online makes this a particularly valuable way to communicate.

On the other hand, some participants noted that they would like to see both a greater financial investment in the organisation to support the costs of participation, as well as greater flexibility in hiring specialists to take on particular tasks, while not falling down the slippery slope of bureaucratisation. As an IDC participant from Greece put it, "We are not exactly amateurs, but sometimes we need more professional help". A Spanish IDC participant from Valencia centrally involved in the health and safety committee agreed:

> In the end, we are dockworkers whose profession is to load and unload ships, and we play, in quotes, at being experts in health and safety, in training, when there are people who really are experts in these subjects. . . I think that the structure of the ITF and ETF in this aspect is much more powerful. They directly have very qualified specialists thinking about these issues. . . The companies have people that work, that they pay to think eight hours a day how to fuck us. So they're always a step ahead. . . we dedicate a lot of time and effort to it, but we're never going to reach the same level as them just by willpower and effort. . .

In a similar vein, a Portuguese IDC participant from Lisbon noted the importance of media strategy in disputes: the IDC is an "informal, small, administrative organisation. . . in the last weeks, if we wanted this [victory] in Portugal, we needed to have here a press journalist talking with everybody. So we need to . . . invest more in the structure." The IDC's DIY approach was also evident in their efforts to build the organisation further on volunteer efforts alone: "what we can do is actually see if someone has a vacation close by, ask them to go there, and say, here are a few email addresses, if you need help, please write, and they do" (Interview, Swedish IDC participant from Gothenburg). A Spanish participant from Algeciras argued that, in consequence of the lack of funds and staff, the IDC function as "firefighters. . . when there's a fire, we go and put it out". In this respect, he argued that the IDC has far greater agility than the ITF/ETF, but a more difficult time planning and implementing long-term projects.

Additionally, though IDC participants shared criticisms of the ETF's professionalised, bureaucratic model, ETF participants and staff argued that the ETF had a much greater ability to successfully navigate the institutions of European governance, which they emphasised has proven crucial on several campaigns. As an ETF leader based in the Brussels office put it quite simply, the IDC "have not understood yet how Europe functions." A German ETF participant

from Hamburg, extolling the virtues of social partnership, argued that the IDC instead engages in class struggle: "If you do the struggle in this way . . . You lose, because . . . the shipowners and the finance industry and also some states. . . have a high potential for lobbying and working together." IDC participants, conversely, shared a diversity of views on the 'EU question', ranging from the view that the ETF did in fact have superior capacities, to the view that the IDC had greatly improved its capacity over time in Brussels, to the view that the importance of EU lobbying at the end of the day paled in comparison to the importance of grassroots mobilization and industrial action.

Remaining Challenges for Labour Internationalism in Europe:
National Legal and Political Differences

The IDC's organisational model provided a number of distinct advantages but could not in itself overcome difficulties emerging from the differing national legal and political contexts of affiliate unions. The most significant external obstacles to effective labour internationalism facing dockworkers in Europe were restrictions on industrial action at the national level. Swedish and Danish dockworkers from the IDC emphasised the difficulties they faced in effectively communicating their legal constraints — and the subsequent need for more flexible transnational tactics — to southern European comrades who faced a more legally permissive environment for industrial action. As a Swedish participant from Helsingborg put it, "That's a weakness. . . the understanding inside the organisation of . . . differences in different countries. . . a two-hour strike in Sweden is just as efficient as a 48-hour strike in France." A Danish participant from Aarhus concurred:

> one of the weaknesses in the working group has been that some have said . . . we all need to do the same thing. . . let's just say that we agree on supporting Portugal. And what can you give? . . . We can only do slowdowns. Fine! So just slow down. Denmark? We boycott the ship. . . We do what we can do. Why is it so important that we all do the same?

While participants argued that communication and understanding of these differences had improved over time, they continued to pose challenges at a practical level.

In addition, differing socio-political contexts in affiliate union countries impeded successful cross-border collaborations, as detailed in the following chapter. Though the left-wing CGIL dockers from the northern Port of Genoa were long-time affiliates of the IDC, they had virtually no participation in the organisation as a result of port reforms carried out in Italy in the 1990's which made many the key issues facing European dockworkers a moot point for them (interviews). Political contexts also played a significant role in blocking successful internationalism in cases where potential affiliates were unable to translate foreign political contexts to their members effectively. For example, as explained in Chapter 3, a long-standing dispute at the Port of Piraeus in Greece against port privatization failed to receive the same kind of robust international solidarity from Spain that IDC dockworkers in England and Portugal received in recent years as a result of the difficulty of 'selling' the Greek anti-privatization issue within the Spanish context relative to 'selling' the English and Portuguese labour standards issue (Fox-Hodess 2017).

Lessons from the IDC Experience

This dissertation broadly substantiates the view put forth by Bieler and Schulten (2008), Hyman (2013), Harvey and Turnbull (2015), Moody (1997), Waterman (2001) and Wills (1998) that forms of labour internationalism putting the rank-and-file at the centre may substantially reduce problems of efficacy created by more bureaucratic forms of labour internationalism. In particular, the IDC model facilitates greater agility, militancy, a shared culture and sense of community. Nevertheless, though the balance sheet for the IDC's rank-and-file model is certainly positive, participants noted the heavy burden placed on individual activists and the difficulties arising from a lack of professional staff. In consequence, as one activist put it, the IDC is most effective as 'firefighters' during disputes and faces greater difficulty in carrying out long-term projects. Furthermore, while these organisational innovations represent a substantial improvement in confronting problems arising from *within* the international trade union movement, external challenges to effective labour internationalism remain. In particular, differing national political and legal contexts of the affiliate unions continue to pose major challenges for effective coordination in Europe, as Pulignano et al. (2013), Dribbusch (2015) and Dufresne (2015) argued.

Though the IDC certainly provides a potentially useful model for other groups of workers interested in building non-bureaucratic organisations to facilitate international labour solidarity, it is important to examine potential constraints to applying this model elsewhere. Dockworkers are located at a particularly powerful and internationalised space within the global political economy and increasingly share common employers (Bonacich and Wilson 2008). Coupled with the common market in Europe (Turnbull 2006), the strength of national unions, the relative ease of international travel and ever-greater trend toward English as a *lingua franca* even for non-college educated workers in Europe, these structural factors provide strong incentives for collaboration. These highly specific characteristics of dock work in Europe make it particularly amenable to international cooperation in ways that simply may not apply for workers in less-internationally oriented and mobile sectors or in other parts of the world. In fact, few trade unions in other sectors have succeeded in developing comparable levels of international coordination and the IDC itself has struggled to develop comparable levels of international coordination at the regional level outside of Europe -- an argument developed further in Chapter 4, which examines the IDC's organization in Latin America. Finally, as noted above, the IDC's organisational model imposes high personal costs on participants – costs that to some extent are absorbed through the non-remunerated labour of female partners in the home who take on a disproportionate share of family responsibilities. Because the burden of social reproduction among working people globally continues to fall mainly on women, this organisational model may prove more challenging for sectors dominated by women.

The IDC's ability to build labour internationalism from the ground up has been made possible by the fact that its affiliate unions, for the most part, have long traditions of robust rank-and-file union democracy at the local level, and, in many cases, autonomy or semi-autonomy from larger national union structures. To the extent that the IDC model relies heavily on assembly-based democratic unionism at the local level, then, this model of organising international solidarity may not be easily transferable. In this respect, local and national efforts to enable greater rank-and-file participation and direct democracy may be necessary pre-conditions for building strong rank-and-file trade unionism at the international level. Nevertheless, despite

the evident obstacles to applying the IDC's European working group model more broadly, simply observing the enduring success of a single instance of institutionalised rank-and-file democracy at the international level provides concrete evidence that such a model is possible in some cases. Though it may not be easy to implement such a model for every group of workers in every part of the world, those workers interested in such a project will have much to learn from the IDC's experiences over the past seventeen years. In particular, union activists interested in building a labour internationalism 'from below' would do well to note that IDC's European Working Group's success has depended on a flexible, responsive and participatory democratic structure that ties together local level rank-and-file leaders across ports, simultaneously cutting out layers of bureaucratic mediation and fostering a culture of militant solidarity.

Chapter 3

Organizational Form and Transnational Political Alignment in European Dockworker Union Campaigns: A Cross-National Comparison of Portugal, Greece and England[27]

In the previous chapter, I analyzed the IDC's regional-level organization in Europe, utilizing the ITF's European-level organization as a shadow comparison, and argued that notwithstanding some drawbacks, the IDC's rank-and-file model of labor internationalism provides significant advantages over the ITF's bureaucratic model. In the final section of the chapter, I noted that while the IDC model significantly increases the efficacy of transnational trade union action in Europe, it cannot in itself resolve problems stemming from the misalignment of strategies among affiliates as a result of differing national legal and political contexts for organizing.

This argument is developed in greater depth in this chapter, as I move from the regional to the country level in Europe to examine the role of trade union organizational form and politics at the local, national and transnational levels in recent disputes in Greece, Portugal and England. While the previous chapter develops general arguments about the costs and benefits of the IDC's organizational form within Europe, this chapter broadens the analysis by bringing union politics back into the picture and grounds the arguments in the experiences of shop-floor activists involved in industrial disputes at the local port level. Through comparative analysis of three local port unions embedded in the same international activist network, I found that success depended both on overcoming bureaucratic blockages at the national level and on the alignment of union politics among international allies.

Dockworkers in all three European countries in the study faced significant challenges as a result of cataclysmic political shifts – Thatcherism, and its legacy, in England; compromised sovereignty and troika-imposed austerity in Greece and Portugal -- which had substantially reduced their ability to achieve major victories. Nevertheless, as chapter 5 makes clear, despite these substantial challenges, European dockworkers continue to struggle under social and political conditions that are far more propitious than those under which workers in most of the rest of the world struggle. The climate of pervasive, state-sanctioned violence and near absence of state enforcement of labor law detailed in the Colombian case -- as well as the not insubstantial police violence detailed in the Chilean case – detailed in Chapter 5, as well as the myriad issues facing dockworkers across the Latin American region, as detailed in Chapter 4, provide a vivid illustration of this difference. As a result, despite conditions that compare unfavorably to recent decades, European dockworkers continue to exercise substantial power at the point of production, with union density and/or percentage coverage by collective bargaining agreements rivaling nearly all other sectors in the region. While the legal space for industrial action is more constricted than in the past, sound strategic decisions covering both shop-floor

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action and extra-workplace alliances, have left room for dockworkers to nevertheless achieve important victories.

The Challenge of Building an International Labor Movement Today

At least since the 1848 publication of *The Communist Manifesto*, with its famous last line "Working men of all countries unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains", activists seeking to advance the struggles of working people have advocated for and sought to build international organizations of workers. But as Marx himself learned from the failed experiment of the International Workingmen's Association, international labor organization is easier said than done. While exploitation is most tangibly experienced by workers at the local level, and workers' collective power in the economic system stems from their disruptive power at the point of production, capital itself is always embedded in an international system of accumulation. Maintaining labor organization solely at the local and national level, therefore, can never be sufficient. But "scaling up" labor organization poses a separate set of challenges: first, workers must become aware of the interconnectedness of their struggles across borders; and second, they must find strategies for pressuring capital in a context where increasing scale takes labor organization further and further away from the shop-floor. Successful struggle by workers against exploitation, therefore, would seem to involve organization at the shop-floor, national-political and international levels. But what form should this international organization take and how might workers overcome their myriad national differences while not straying too far from the shop-floor? In other words, what are the conditions and strategies that enable unions to overcome barriers and coordinate effectively at the international level? These questions continue to complicate efforts to build an international labor movement today.

The small number of successful examples of contemporary labor internationalism point to the inherent difficulties of organizing transnationally. Examples of successful campaigns tend to come either from cases of shared and immediate self-interest -- in which workers share common transnational employers or common transnational governance frameworks -- or from cases in which workers engage in one-off acts of solidarity in campaigns with limited scope. This dissertation instead examines an exceptional case: a non-mainstream and non-bureaucratic global union organization, the International Dockworkers Council, that has sustained and developed itself from a single one-off solidarity campaign for the Liverpool dockworkers in the 1990's to a broad network based on principles of rank-and-file collaboration and mutual aid today. My study of the IDC therefore provides an analysis of an institutionalized form of rank-and-file internationalism, providing an important model to union activists interested in building labor internationalism "from below".

Using interviews with key union activists and union archival materials, this chapter examines three cases of international solidarity among workers located at the heart of the global economy: dockworkers. The structural position of dockworkers in the world economy – their central role in the circulation of commodities and accumulation of capital and the very high degree of international interconnectedness inherent in their work – suggests that if effective labor internationalism is to make a decisive contribution to dispute resolution among any group of workers, it should do so among dockworkers. Yet, among the European dockworker cases in my study, there was significant variation in outcomes of international coordination. The divergent outcomes of otherwise similar cases reveal the critical role of politics and strategy at different

scales and sites of union organization in determining the successful exercise of labor internationalism. *Fundamentally, I argue that where political conditions and ideological traditions allowed the building of concrete and direct linkages between workers at local worksites, labor transnationalism has a positive impact during labor struggles.*

Effectiveness depended on coordinating strategy at three levels. At the local and transnational levels, dockworkers succeeded by tying together strong shop floor and community action at the site of the dispute with effective industrial action (or the threat thereof) by dockworker allies at the local port level in other countries. This was, however, predicated on coinciding agendas among labor unions internationally -- in this case, agreement on the need to preserve labor rights at the docks through union exclusivity and disagreement on the issue of port privatization. Finally, at the national level, success depended on avoiding or overcoming the constraining effects of national union bureaucracies and political parties. These findings stand in contrast to the strand of existing scholarship on international solidarity (outlined in the following section), which assumes that national union organizations must play a key role in international campaigns and that centralized decision-making power at the international level of union organization is a necessity.

Table 1 summarizes my central arguments, while Table 2 outlines all variables considered in the analysis. Greece presents a failed case of transnationalism due to the unions' reliance on a national political ally to resolve the dispute at the expense of greater efforts to develop international solidarity. England is a case of mixed success. While the English dockworkers came close to a victory thanks to effective international solidarity, insufficient attention to the shop-floor impeded their success. Portugal, on the other hand, is a successful case, due to the union's strategy of targeted shop-floor action, solidarity with the non-union workforce, national social movement alliances and effective international solidarity. By examining the same group of actors (rank-and-file activists of the International Dockworkers Council) operating in the same region and industry during the same time period (2009-2016), the comparative research design of my project provides insight into the impact of mulit-scalar union politics and organizational form on the success of transnational campaigns. Nevertheless, the broader applicability of these findings – beyond Europe, with its high degree of regional integration and ease of regional coordination, and beyond the ports sector, where workers have significant power at the point of production – remains an open question which is further explored in Part II of the dissertation.

TABLE 1: Key Explanatory Variables and Campaign Outcomes

	PORTUGAL	GREECE	ENGLAND
DEMANDS	*Labor rights agenda* Preservation of union-controlled labor pool not subject to non-union competition at the Port of Lisbon.	*Anti-privatization agenda* Reversing and halting privatization of terminals and their concession to COSCO at the Port of Piraeus.	*Labor rights agenda* Winning union representation and a contract for dockworkers at the new London Gateway port.
EXPLANATORY VARIABLES	*Local* Strong shop-floor action and alliances at the local level *National* Worked around bureaucratic union blockages and formed alliances with the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary left *Transnational* Strong shop-floor action at the international level.	*Local* Strong shop-floor action and alliances at the local level *National* Entanglement in bureaucratic party blockages at the national level *Transnational* Absence of shop-floor action at the international level.	*Local* Absence of shop-floor action and alliances at the local level *National* Entanglement in bureaucratic union blockages at the national level *Transnational* Strong shop-floor action at the international level.
OUTCOMES	*Victory* Tripartite negotiations with government and employers secure a written agreement.	*Defeat* Full privatization of port goes forward under SYRIZA government.	*Partial victory* Access and neutrality agreement negotiated with the company but has not yet led to a contract.

TABLE 2: Full Summary of Local, National and Transnational Variables

	PORTUGAL	GREECE	ENGLAND
LOCAL UNION	Strong shop-floor action; solidarity with non-union workers.	Strong shop-floor action; lack of solidarity with non-union workers.	No shop-floor action.
LOCAL COMMUNITY	Strong community coalitions.	Strong community coalitions.	Weak community coalitions; symbolic actions largely taken outside the local area.
NATIONAL UNION	Remained independent from the more conservative national federation of dockworkers unions during the course of the dispute.	Autonomous local union.	Large, national multi-sectorial union (UNITE).
NATIONAL POLITICS	No significant national party allies, but strong allies in the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary far left; austerity regime with involvement of troika.	Strong ties to SYRIZA, which had strong involvement in the campaign prior to 2015; austerity regime with involvement of troika.	Weak, peripheral involvement of the Labour Party; austerity regime without involvement of troika.
TRANSNATIONAL: ETF	International protest in Lisbon supported by the ETF; assistance in national negotiations	N/A	Weak symbolic actions in Northern Europe organized by the ETF.

	through contacts in Brussels.		
TRANSNATIONAL: IDC	Strong shop-floor action in Algeciras, Spain facilitated by the IDC; major international protest in Lisbon organized by the IDC.	No shop-floor action internationally; international protest in Piraeus organized by the IDC; assistance in lobbying efforts from the IDC in Brussels and Athens.	Strong shop-floor action in Algeciras, Spain facilitated by the IDC; assistance in negotiations with DPWorld from IDC.

Current Perspectives on Labor Internationalism

There has been a renewed interest in recent years among both labor movement practitioners and scholars in the possibilities and challenges of building international organizations of working people (Bronfenbrenner 2007; Evans 2010; Fairbrother, Levesque and Hennebert 2013; Gordon and Turner 2000; Munck 2010; Stevis and Boswell 2007; Waterman and Wills 2001). The issue of European-level labor organization has taken on a particular urgency for workers in the countries most heavily affected by the global economic crisis, sovereign debt crises and concomitant imposition of austerity by the European Commission, the IMF and European Central Bank (referred to herein as the "troika"). However, meaningful European-level solidarity has generally been lacking (Bieler and Erne 2014; Bieler 2013; Stan, et al. 2015; Nowak and Gallas 2014). To explain these blockages to successful labor internationalism, scholars in recent years have focused on transnational organizing structures, the balance between local, national and transnational scales of union organization and the role of union politics, while labor geographers have emphasized the continuing relevance of the local.

If the problem of successful labor internationalism is essentially a problem of transnational organization, then blockages may be overcome by developing appropriate organizational structures and strategies for collaboration at the international level. The first school of thought within this framework argues for the centrality of national and transnational union organizations in this process. Evans (2010) argues that developing a robust global labor movement will depend on bringing together the hierarchical structures of national unions with the networked structures of globally-oriented social movements (360-365), as well as national unions and global unions, the Global North and the Global South (365-367). Stevis and Boswell (2007) find that the major challenge of the new labor internationalism is convincing national unions of the need to invest resources and power in international coordinating bodies (2-3; 144-45). And Pulignano (2007) concludes that the primary problem is the lack of "vertical integration between the European, national, and local structures of employee representation" and the unwillingness of national level unions in particular to delegate to the European level (139, 152, 153). Moody (1997), Waterman (2001) and Wills (1998), on the other hand, have instead each argued that the transnational and national union bodies are themselves a source of blockage,

tending to produce a bureaucratic labor internationalism that puts a damper on the rank-and-file initiative and shop-floor militancy which remains at the heart of organized labor's real power.

The second school of thought within the organizational framework argues that the problem is found in the need for reciprocity between union organizations at different scales (local/national/global). McCallum (2013) finds that the successful campaign to organize G4S security guards required a paradoxical combination of expertise and tight central coordination from international bodies alongside "reciprocity with local actors" (3). Lillie (2006), in his study of the ITF's global Flags of Convenience campaign, likewise argues the need for national unions to relinquish control in large-scale global campaigns to international experts and centralized coordination, but finds that success is also contingent on locally-embedded actors in the form of ITF inspectors on the docks. Dufour-Poirier and Levesque (2013) emphasize the need for a "delicate balance between bottom-up and top-down processes" (51), with local, national and global union organizations each playing a critical role. Levesque et al. (2013) similarly argue that success depends on the ability of local union leaders to "frame local issues in relation to the global, but also to bring them back to the level of the local" (77). Finally, Adanhounme and Levesque (2013) reject the local vs. global framing altogether, arguing that "by seizing opportunities to articulate the various levels, unions can strengthen their capacity to act at the supranational level while simultaneously enhancing the capabilities of actors at the grassroots level" (123).

Another school of thought has attributed the impediments to successful labor internationalism to the politics of union leadership. Kay's (2011) study on the campaign against the North American Free Trade Agreement found that left-leaning national union leadership politics was the key predictor of engagement. On a similar note, Ahlquist and Levi (2013) attributed the strong history of international solidarity work by Australian wharfies and West Coast dockworkers in the United States to the left-wing politics of national leaders, who were empowered to engage in political work once they had ensured material gains for the members. Erne (2008) found that whether European-level union organizations developed Euro-democratization or Euro-technocratization strategies was a largely contingent process based on assessments by key actors in each case, though Europeanization of the trade union movement was itself largely determined by the regulatory framework provided by the EU and the Europeanization of employers. A recent special issue of *Labor History* (Erne et al, eds., 2015) highlighted the role of a range of transnational politicization processes in providing a greater impetus to collaboration than that provided by market forces alone. Bieler (2006), on the other hand, notes the role of weak regulatory frameworks at the *national* level, while also finding the sectoral degree of regional economic integration to be key predictors of labor's willingness to engage at the European level.

Economic geographers, conversely, have tended to emphasize the continued importance of the local. As Castree (2000) puts it, the dominant strand of argumentation in favor of unions "going global" "overstates the necessity for up-scaling solidarity and uncritically accepts prevailing views of globalization." (284) Herod (2001) makes a similar argument: whether unions should focus on the local or global is entirely contingent upon the economic and political specificities of a given dispute and how they shape opportunities for leverage. Anderson (2015) argues that GUFs should put more emphasis and resources into supporting "single-sited struggles" in order to "make them . . . launching pads for the global circulation of union power", rather than focusing on geographically extensive campaigns (48). Finally, Cumbers and

Routledge (2010) argue for the need to "instill a culture of decentralization and local autonomy within GUF's" (50) as well as the need to "disperse power to more decentred networked forms of organization" (54).

While I argue that labor geographers are right to emphasize the continued centrality of the local in labor internationalism, their analysis of the role of union politics and strategy is often underdeveloped. Labor sociologists, on the other hand, provide useful analyses of the role of politics and strategy in labor internationalism, but tend to focus too heavily on the national and transnational levels at the expense of the local. My research follows that of labor geographers by focusing on the local level of transnational union campaigns, but takes up the questions of politics and strategy posed by labor sociologists. In doing so, I restore the question of workers' agency at its most local level to the study of contemporary labor internationalism.

Peter Turnbull, a scholar of Industrial Relations, provides a path to bridging the political and organizational concerns of the sociologists with the workplace concerns of the geographers in his work on European dockworkers and, with Harvey, on aviation workers. In his earlier work on the European dockworkers' fight against a European directive that would have severely degraded their working conditions in the early 2000's, Turnbull (2006; 2007; 2010) found that the European Transport Workers Federation's efforts to rely on the "force of logic" in winning over European power brokers in Brussels only worked when it was backed up by the "logic of force" by ETF and IDC dockworkers at the point of production. His more recent work, with Harvey (2015), on the ETF's efforts in the European aviation industry, extends these earlier arguments further, providing a pointed critique of international labor organizations that move too far from the shop-floor:

> it seems that when European trade union federations become embroiled in the comitology of the EU – which is probably as far removed from the capacities and inclinations of local union organizations and their members as it is possible to be – they are enveloped in an "elite embrace" accompanied by the suppression of both political alternatives and mobilization capacity. (319)

The article closes with a discussion of an autonomous group of aviation workers who, like the IDC nearly a generation earlier, have recently broken with the ETF over strategic differences and criticism of its organizational model.

This chapter extends Turnbull's work by examining both a newer era of European dockworker solidarity and attendant differences in the strategy and form of organization. While Turnbull, and Turnbull and Harvey's, work on the port and aviation industries, like much of the global labor literature more broadly, focuses on international campaigns in which participants have relatively convergent interests – either because of common employers or common transnational governance structures – this chapter examines cases in which only the workers in dispute at a local port are in danger in the short term, though standards in other countries could be affected in the long term through shifting cargo to lower-standard, lower-cost ports. Organizing under these conditions, then, presents a different set of challenges. This chapter, therefore, examines the political and organizational conditions in which workers exercise the "logic of force" when it's not in their immediate self-interest to do so, and what forms of force are most likely to be effective in these cases.

My work contributes to the literature by suggesting that in these cases, effective local-to-local transnational solidarity in the form of shop-floor action is most predictive of success, though such cooperation is first predicated on shared goals (see Table 1). While working at the national scale – whether within labor unions or within the political ambit – does not *necessarily* produce blockages, the requirement that leaders at this scale must balance the needs of multiple constituencies, as well as their degree of distance from the rank-and-file, may make it more likely to be the site of blockages. Consequently, and contrary to the findings of many labor sociologists, I argue that concentrating decision-making power in international campaigns within higher scales of union organization (whether national or transnational) may, in fact, be *less* likely to produce successful outcomes for workers. For this reason, I concur with Cumbers and Routledge's (2010) argument in favor of more networked forms of internationalism that preserve local union autonomy. But contrary to the findings of many labor geographers, I argue that the political and strategic decisions made at the local level – rather than structural factors – were most determinative of outcomes in each case.

Understanding Multiscalar Political Alignment

Background: European Dockworkers as a Key Case of Multiscalar Labor Organizing

Dockworkers' labor is located at a key chokepoint for the circulation of commodities (and capital) in the global economy (Bonacich and Wilson 2008; 244-49). It should come as no surprise, then, that the transportation sector has among the highest and most politically significant number of strikes in the modern world in any sector (Silver 2003; 98). In the period 1870-1996, transportation sector strikes accounted for 35% of the global total, "the largest category, surpassing even manufacturing (which accounts for 21% of total industry-specific mentions over the time period) and mining (which accounts for 18%)" (Ibid, 98). Within the transportation sector, maritime strikes accounted for over half of the total number (Ibid, 99).

In addition to their structural position, dockworkers, particularly in the Global North, tend to have exceptionally strong labor organizations. Numerous theories have been advanced to explain the strength of dockworker unions in disparate countries and regions, including the centrality of the hiring hall and the necessity of unity in casual labor; the dangerous, physical nature of the work, carried out in teams; the fact that historically, dockworkers lived near to one another in close-knit waterfront communities isolated from the rest of the society and multiple members or generations of a single family often work in the same port; and the cosmopolitanism of the work and circulation of radical political currents through shipping routes (Kimeldorf 1989; Kerr and Siegel 1954; Weir 2004). Additionally, dockworkers' unions have historically demonstrated substantial political agency, using their power at the point of production to protest oppressive regimes domestically and around the world. Dockworkers have played a central role in the development of national labor movements and global unionism as well.

As noted in the previous chapter, the IDC differs from mainstream global union federations (GUFs) like the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) in that it is a rank-and-file led organization that relies primarily on assembly and council-based decision-making, as well as mutual aid and industrial action, rather than bureaucratic decision-making, lobbying and symbolic action. Unlike the mainstream GUFs, where decision-making tends to be concentrated in the hands of national unions officials and the staff of the global bureaucracy, the IDC is

essentially a networked organization in which decisions are largely taken cooperatively by local-level union representatives and activists who continue to work as rank-and-file dockworkers. This is particularly true in Europe, where the IDC has its most well-developed organization.

In Europe, decision-making and coordination take place primarily through the European working group -- which essentially functions as a European stewards' council for dockworkers -- as well as an annual European General Assembly open to all members. The European working group features frequent face-to-face meetings of union activists from the local port level across Europe. Decisions taken in the working group are provisionary, subject to ratification in general assemblies of the members at the ports. This organizing model relies on the initiative and commitment of local level activists and their organic connections to the workforce for its efficacy. Horizontal organizing within the IDC-Europe is additionally facilitated by the fact that the majority of the affiliates, whether local or national, are autonomous organizations with a high degree of internal democracy and a history of militancy and radicalism.

In the early and mid-2000's, European dockworkers faced their first major organizing challenge of the new century when European Directives were drawn up that would have severely deregulated the ports sector across the EU and undermined working conditions. In response, dockworkers successfully mobilized to defeat both "Ports Package I" and "Ports Package II" (Turnbull 2006; 2007; 2010), rare instances of European Directives being voted down by the European Parliament. However, though the Ports Packages were defeated, the European port employers, working in concert with the European Commission, remained determined to break the unions and reassert more favorable conditions of accumulation and greater control over the labor process. The global economic crisis, European sovereign debt crises and imposition of austerity agendas have provided an opening to accomplish this goal. Consequently, employers have shifted since 2009 from a strategy of attempting to downgrade dockworker working conditions through deregulation at the European level to the national level, setting the stage for the conflicts in England, Portugal and Greece described in this chapter.

The shifting strategy on the part of employers, from the European level to the national level, has necessitated a shift in strategy on the part of the dockworker unions. While the European-level push for deregulation in the 2000's would have affected all of the member state dockworker unions, thereby providing a strong impetus for collaboration, the current push to downgrade working conditions at the national level will only affect the targeted country's dockworkers in the short-term, making the incentives for international collaboration less obvious. However, downgrading conditions at the national level will potentially affect dockworkers across Europe in the long-term by setting off a race to the bottom made possible by the ease of shifting container traffic to other countries' ports within the EU. The shift in employer strategies toward the national level has therefore necessitated a shift towards a longer-term perspective on the part of labor, capable of seeing beyond immediate national self-interest in order to overcome employers' European-level logic of divide and conquer.

The European dockworker union activists in my study of Greece, Portugal and the UK are members of the IDC, though UNITE at the national level in the UK, as well as OMYLE, the national Greek port clerks union, hold dual membership in the ITF and its European section, the ETF. My project utilizes interviews with key union activists conducted between 2012 and 2016, as well as union archival materials, such as meeting minutes, press releases and internal correspondence. I have conducted a total of fifty interviews with key European-level dockworker

union activists from the IDC and the ETF/ITF in Spain, England, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy, Greece, Portugal and Cyprus. The English, Greece and Portuguese cases were selected because they have been the primary focus of IDC organizing efforts in Europe since the beginning of the economic crisis.

Greece: Hedging Bets on a National Political Strategy Impeded International Solidarity

The sovereign debt crisis began in Greece in late 2009, quickly becoming the worst in Europe, and was addressed with a bailout from the IMF/European Central Bank/European Commission "troika" in 2010. In the previous year, the publicly-owned and managed Port of Piraeus had been partially privatized through a concession of two terminals to Chinese-owned shipping company COSCO as the end result of a much longer-term process of streamlining the Greek state. As a result, half of the port immediately became non-union (though union members were integrated into the remaining public terminal controlled by the union or offered early retirement). The workers at the COSCO terminal were employed through subcontractors, generally on non-permanent contracts, with far inferior wages and working conditions. The concession of the terminals was heavily opposed by the port unions, who staged multiple strikes and protests in response, led by the blue-collar Piraeus Dockworkers Union and the white-collar union OMYLE.

As the Greek economy showed no signs of improvement after the first bailout, a second memorandum was passed in 2012, which, like the first, laid out a set of conditions which required a radical downgrading of the social welfare state, the selling-off of public assets and the withdrawal of social rights. This memorandum explicitly mandated the sale of the Ports of Piraeus and Thessaloniki to pay back the troika, a process carried forward following the 2012 election. COSCO was the lead bidder, and the announcement was followed by multiple strikes and protests in Piraeus. The unions also used legal complaints at the Greek and European levels, citing anti-competitiveness in an attempt to prevent the full privatization of the port. These actions managed to put off the bidding process until early 2014.

Leaders in the port unions in Piraeus, along with the majority of the Greek labor movement and working-class, believed that the clearest path to halting further privatizations and erosion of working conditions and social benefits lay in a SYRIZA election victory. Prior to its election in early 2015, SYRIZA had actively and publicly supported the Greek port workers' campaign, which aligned with the party's own anti-austerity, anti-privatization agenda. Current Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, for example, held a large public meeting in late 2013 in Piraeus on the issue. Leaders from both the blue-collar union and the white-collar union at the port held positions in party committees and had good working relationships with party leaders, providing ample reason for optimism were SYRIZA to form a government.

In addition, the Pireaus port unions allied themselves with a wide range of labor and community groups in Piraeus and beyond who would be affected by port privatization. They succeeded in building a solid mass base of organization in the community through assisting with food banks during the crisis, participating in anti-fascist work and emphasizing the negative economic and social impacts of port privatization for Piraeus as a whole. In essence, the unions' struggle was successfully framed through coalition work as an issue of interest to the Greek people more generally. Furthermore, despite the lack of a strong tradition within the Greek labor

movement of prioritizing international trade union work and taking part in transnational campaigns, union leaders from Piraeus made consistent efforts to inform, and seek the support of, European allies within the IDC, through active participation in regular meetings. In fact, the blue-collar dockworkers' union in Piraeus had been one of the founding members of the IDC in 2000 and, as an independent union, was free to participate entirely on its own terms.

The goal of public port ownership served a number of internal and external political functions for the union. Internally, both unions had substantial Greek Communist Party (KKE) minority factions which consistently exercised pressure on the SYRIZA-aligned leadership to reject anything less than full public ownership. There were also external strategic reasons for rejecting anything but full public ownership. First and foremost, given the precipitous erosion of labor standards and rights in Greece during the crisis, the unions believed that it would be much easier to preserve their wages and conditions under the more favorable labor rights regime governing public sector work and feared that further privatization could throw the legal status of their existing public-sector union itself into doubt. Additionally, emphasizing public ownership allowed the unions to build a strong coalition with a wide range of local community groups, including unlikely allies, like the Chamber of Commerce, as well as SYRIZA, which they viewed as the only real prospect for a left alternative to austerity in Greece. Negotiating trade-offs in exchange for accepting privatization, therefore, never seems to have been seriously considered.

The Greek unions' unwillingness to consider negotiating a deal for their members in exchange for accepting privatization, however, has been a source of ongoing frustration for international allies in the IDC, expressed in meeting after meeting over the years as the Greek leaders pressed their case and leaders from other countries expressed skepticism. Though most Western European ports were privatized starting in the 1980s, dockworkers unions were generally able to preserve their working conditions, wages and benefits – as well as closed-shop unionism – in the run-up to privatization through negotiated transitions because of the very different political and economic climate. Dockworker leaders from other countries, therefore, argued that it would be impossible for them to make the argument to their members that they should join in the fight to reject privatization outright in the Greece case. The lack of political alignment over campaign goals prevented the emergence of the kind of robust international industrial action provided in the English and Portuguese cases described below, though the IDC participated in a series of symbolic actions and lobbying activities for the Greek port workers, including short "stop work meeting" strikes and protests at the terminal.

Apart from political considerations, at a tactical level, fighting privatization also posed major difficulties in terms of international support. In cases of union busting, international allies may simply target shipping lines that utilize non-union labor to put pressure on the primary employer, as in the English and Portuguese cases. A single action can have a major impact if there is a credible threat of an on-going blockade. But this pressure tactic only works when the target is the employer. And in anti-privatization campaigns, the primary target is not the employer but the state – and in the Greek case, the unelected troika. Boycotts of Greek cargo – rather than single ships -- would have required a far greater degree of coordination and capacity for action among all European dockworkers that it's not clear they currently possess. Had the target been COSCO and union rights rather than the Greek state and privatization, however, the IDC could have simply targeted ships loaded at the COSCO terminal -- as they did to the ships loaded at DPWorld in England and by the non-union dockworkers in Lisbon -- a far easier task

to accomplish from a tactical perspective. Yet, it wasn't clear that the port would be handed over to COSCO until the privatization deal was complete, further complicating matters. While the unions received support from the IDC for improving the conditions of the non-union workers at the already-privatized COSCO terminal, difficulties organizing workers there due to the anti-union climate, and later, the lack of cooperation from KKE activists employed in the terminal, meant that that effort was unsuccessful.

As a consequence of these political and tactical problems at the transnational level, the Piraeus unions focused their attention primarily on resolving the dispute through shop-floor action and alliances with community actors at the local level, and betting on success through their alliance with a political party (SYRIZA) at the national level (Table 2). But during the calamitous negotiations with the troika in 2015, SYRIZA abruptly dropped its commitment to fighting port privatization, which has gone forward.

In essence, the Greek unions faced a series of difficult to negotiate trade-offs impeding political alignment with international allies. Fighting solely for unionization at the privatized terminal would likely have meant strong international support targeting ships calling at that terminal, but much diminished local/national support, which was predicated on fighting privatization, and an undermining of the position of the leadership vis a vis other political factions in the union as well (see Table 2). A principled, ideological commitment to opposing privatization, built on the view that ports constituted part of the collective sovereign wealth of the Greek people and a public good, as well as a principled, ideological commitment to supporting SYRIZA in the interests of the class as a whole, sealed the decision. Ultimately, the union leadership hedged their bets on a SYRIZA election victory to reverse port privatization and restore union power, in lieu of robust international support, and lost (see Table 1). The question of what the outcome would have been had international allies chosen to more strongly support the Greeks in their anti-privatization stance, or what the outcome would have been had the Greek unions chosen to focus on labor rights rather than privatization, are not ultimately answerable. Yet counterfactual evidence from the English and Portuguese cases suggests that had the Greek dockworkers chosen to circumvent the troika by forcing the new private employer to bargain with them directly, industrial action at the ports of international allies, coupled with the unions' own actions, may have been enough to bring the company to the table. The Greek case, therefore, demonstrates how the lack of effective local-to-local transnational shop-floor solidarity as a result of political differences is implicated in campaign failure.

Portugal: Successful Mobilization through Multiscalar Alignment

Portugal, like Greece, faced a devastating economic crisis and sovereign debt crisis, followed by major attacks on workers' rights and labor standards. The government received a bailout from the troika in return for austerity measures in 2011. As a direct consequence of this agreement, the Portuguese government was required to expose the union-controlled hiring pools at the ports to market competition from non-union stevedoring companies, a measure passed into law in 2012 (Fox-Hodess 2014). Breaking union power at the ports was intended to decrease labor costs and the risks of work stoppages in order to attract business from global shipping lines and investment in the ports.

In Lisbon, employers attempted to introduce a second, non-union labor pool to compete with the primary union labor pool of professional dockworkers. The Lisbon dockworkers first engaged in a protracted political struggle with the national federation of dockworkers unions, which they viewed as willing to capitulate too quickly in exchange for protections for older dockworkers at the expense of the younger generation. In fact, they had broken with this national federation as early as 1997 over political differences. During this time, a group of activists within the union in Lisbon built a strong base of community support and subsequently won their local union election. The new Lisbon leadership remained independent of the national union federation in Portugal, leaving room to develop a strategy of militant resistance in coalition with the community. Their successful strategy utilized selective strikes in response to specific provocations from employers; community-based support, particularly from organized groups of unemployed workers, as well as left-wing activists; strong solidarity with casual non-union member workers from the union labor pool who had lost their jobs; and a commitment to eventually absorbing workers from the non-union labor pool into the union labor pool.

The strong on-the-ground campaign motivated an escalating series of international actions, beginning with a mass protest of European dockworkers in Lisbon in November, 2012 – the largest European dockworker mobilization since the EU Ports Packages fights in the 2000s – and culminating at the beginning of 2014 with coordinated international actions which were able to deliver a victory. The key action was taken by dockworkers at the Spanish transshipment port of Algeciras to warn Maersk in early 2014 that ships loaded by workers from the non-union labor pool in Lisbon would be blockaded, providing a "yellow card" to the captain of the first ship to arrive with cargo loaded by these workers.

These actions, coupled with behind-the-scenes support in Brussels with the European Transport Ministry from Spanish and Belgian dockworkers unions, led to successful tripartite negotiations with the Portuguese government and employers in February, 2014. The employers acceded to all of the key demands: the non-union labor pool in Lisbon would not be permitted to grow beyond the twenty-one workers already employed and those workers would have the option to be integrated into the union pool after a new collective agreement was reached; the employers would drop a lawsuit against the union for damages incurred during the strikes; and contract negotiations would be extended with government mediation (Fox-Hodess 2014). The Lisbon union has now refocused its efforts on fighting union-busting and poor conditions in other Portuguese ports with on-going international support.

The Lisbon dockworkers' case is therefore the key case of successful political alignment: strong shop-floor and community action at the site of the dispute were matched with strong shop-floor action at a foreign port, resulting in a victory (see Table 1). At the shop floor level, the union adopted a legally and politically effective tactic of "protection strikes", meaning that they would engage in four to twenty-four hour stoppages if, and only if, workers from the non-union labor pool were brought in to work at the port. In fact, of the three cases, only Lisbon had a fully effective shop-floor strategy, formed through on-going and targeted industrial action and through building solidarity and cooperation with two groups of non-members: solidarity with dismissed casual workers who were not members of the union but had been employed by the union pool, and backstage cooperation with workers from the non-union labor pool. They built solidarity with the former group of workers by helping support them and fighting for their reinstatement after they had been dismissed so that they didn't cross the picket line, and they built solidarity

with the latter group of workers by always leaving the door open for them to eventually join the union labor pool once an agreement was reached.

As in the Greek case, impressive local community coalitions helped to magnify the impact of the dockworkers' shop-floor actions and made it more likely that they would be able to bring the government in as a power broker following the intensification of international action. In essence, the Portuguese dockworkers succeeded in framing their struggle as an inspiring example of resistance to troika-driven attacks on the working-class, posing the government, the European Commission and the employers as the interlocutors of the struggle. Unlike the Piraeus dockworkers, however, whose campaign focused on the politically and tactically complicated issue of public port ownership, the Lisbon dockworkers garnered powerful international support because their goal of fighting union-busting aligned with the international movement's interest in maintaining union exclusivity at the docks across Europe. ETF-affiliated unions, particularly the Belgian dockworkers, played a role in passing along key contacts in Brussels and brought ETF affiliates to the November, 2012 protest in Lisbon, illustrating the still tense but far more collaborative than in the past relationship between the IDC and the ETF in Europe. Nevertheless, as Table 2 suggests, ETF actions were limited as compared with the actions of the IDC affiliate in Algeciras, and unlikely to have been decisive.

While the fact that the Portuguese dockworkers faced smaller, national employers – rather than foreign multinationals like DPWorld and COSCO – might suggest a plausible alternative explanation for their victory, counter-factual evidence from the English case suggests that the character of capital is less important than it might appear. In the English case, despite facing an aggressively anti-union foreign multinational, the dockworkers came very close to a victory thanks to an identical form of international solidarity as that utilized in the Portuguese case (blocking the ships at Algeciras). The English dockworkers, however, lost not because DPWorld is a Dubai-based multinational but because of a lack of organization on the shop-floor at London Gateway, a notable contrast to the high degree of shop-floor organization in the Portuguese case. Additionally, the Portuguese victory came about despite a major obstacle not encountered in the English case: opening the union labor pool to competition was actually a requirement of the agreement with the troika, mandated by law.

The Lisbon dockworkers won because they were able to successfully combine strong local shop-floor and community power with effective international solidarity (Table 1). By remaining independent from a national union federation that was willing to cut a deal and electing new leadership in Lisbon, they developed a strategy of powerful but targeted shop-floor action; a strong emphasis on militant action with allies in the broader Lisbon community; and a series of escalating international actions, both symbolic and industrial, culminating in the threat to blockade the first ship loaded with non-union labor and a favorable agreement with the employer (Table 2).

England: Effects of Successful International Mobilization Undermined by Misguided Strategy of National Union Bureaucracy

England, like Greece and Portugal, was hit hard by the global economic crisis, but did not face a sovereign debt crisis or entanglement with the troika. Nevertheless, the conservative government in power since 2010 has been deeply committed to an austerity agenda and, as in the

Portuguese case and the Greek case until 2015, has not been a potential ally for labor. In this context, dockworkers in England faced union-busting through the construction of a new non-union port due to the already-existing deregulated and marketized port system created at the end of the Thatcher era. Under this framework, new ports can be constructed by private actors without regard to existing port capacity. This has allowed global operator Dubai Port World to develop a deep-water "super port" on the Thames in close proximity to older, unionized container ports, threatening to put downward pressure on wages and benefits throughout the industry. The agreement to allow DPWorld to build was approved in 2006 by the previous Labour government.

English dockworkers, organized through the multisectoral national union UNITE, had begun to raise alarm bells at the prospect of a non-union DPWorld port and its potential impact on unionized workers in other British ports by the late 1990's. However, UNITE, which concentrates financial and organizing resources at the national level, did not respond with an organizing campaign until the spring of 2013, when the port was nearly complete. The campaign was run by UNITE's nationally centralized organizing department, which has borrowed heavily from the "corporate campaign" model innovated by service sector unions like SEIU in the United States. Under this model, because of the challenges unions face in organizing new groups of workers in the private sector, unions are encouraged to focus campaigns on building external pressure on key decision makers in companies in order to win agreements providing the union with access to the workforce and/or recognition. In the DPWorld campaign, UNITE primarily focused on weekly low-risk symbolic protests by existing union members at the offices of key investors and managers.

The corporate campaign model was originally developed for, and has met with some success, in organizing service sector workers with little power at the point of production. But UNITE's national organizing department has tended to apply this strategy in a standardized way, regardless of industry. In doing so, they have foregone the opportunity to utilize the far greater power at the point of production that dockworkers have relative to service sector workers. In fact, virtually no attempts were made to organize workers at the port until the spring of 2014. An attempted demonstration of union power, then, may instead have been perceived by the company as a demonstration of weakness in this case.

In the fall of 2013, when it had become clear that UNITE's campaign was not yielding results and the union was coming up against the deadline of the first ship arriving at the port, UNITE's national dockworker section called an urgent international meeting with European dockworkers' unions from the ETF, as detailed in the previous chapter. Pressure from rank-and-file leaders in the UK resulted in the IDC being invited at the last minute, and nearly all attendees ended up being from the IDC. The meeting resulted in small symbolic actions by ETF-affiliated dockworker unions in Northern Europe, and more substantive support from the Spanish IDC dockworkers at Algeciras, who blockaded the first ship that left the newly opened London Gateway port, as in the Portuguese case.

As a result, DPWorld entered negotiations with UNITE and agreed to a neutrality and access agreement, allowing organizers into the port to sign up union members. The company engaged in classic union-avoidance tactics while the organizers had access, and without an already-existing workers' committee or recognition agreement in place, were able to prevent UNITE from winning sufficient support from the workforce. In effect, the lack of emphasis on

building a base of worker support for unionization prior to the agreement with DPWorld made it nearly impossible to do so after the fact, when the union could be painted as an outside interest brought in without the workers' say and when it had little leverage on the docks to enforce the agreement.

As a result, UNITE decided not to seek a union certification election at that time. The goals of the London Gateway campaign – winning union recognition and a collective bargaining agreement with conditions commensurate with those of other English dockworkers – were commensurate with the goals of the international movement and thus received strong international support (Table 1). But bureaucratic campaign decision-making at the national level, which overestimated the potential impact of a leverage campaign and underestimated the need for prior shop-floor organizing at the port, prevented the English dockworkers from receiving the full benefits of international solidarity and thus resulted in an incomplete victory (Table 2). Like the Greek case, then, the English case demonstrates how a lack of effective local-to-local shop-floor action is implicated in campaign failure.

The weaknesses of the UK campaign are perhaps best illuminated through comparison with the Lisbon campaign, which shared the benefit of receiving the same type of strong international solidarity lent by Spanish dockworkers in Algeciras but lacked the Portuguese dockworkers' strong shop-floor organizing focus (Table 1). As a result, though the Portuguese dockworkers had far fewer resources to employ and were laboring under far more adverse political and economic circumstances, they were ultimately successful due to their union's structure and leadership orientation which allowed for a shift in strategy.

Though the well-financed leverage campaign which formed the core of UNITE's strategy generated some limited press coverage, the impact was much weaker than in Portugal and Greece, where the dockworkers built coalitions with local and national actors deeply rooted in shared interests and shared politics that succeeded in framing the conflicts more broadly and resonated with a far wider public. Had UNITE wanted to build deeper coalitions, however, they would have come across a context-dependent challenge: while the Greek and Portuguese cases unfolded in major metropolitan areas in or near the countries' capitals, London Gateway is located at a distance from the city and lacks an obvious logic for coalition work.

Yet, another recent, but successful, case of transnational mobilization on behalf of English dockworkers suggests, however, that community support itself may be of secondary importance as compared with coordinated local-to-local industrial action in cases where the state does not play a central role in the dispute. In 2013, IDC-affiliated dockworkers at the Port of Gothenburg slowed down ships coming from the English Port of Tilbury when they were on strike, bringing about a successful resolution to the dispute, without any community involvement whatsoever. Though the Tilbury dispute concerned a less high-stakes issue – contract negotiations, rather than union avoidance – the point is worth emphasizing because of the evident tendency on the part of national union bureaucracies and global union federations to rely increasingly on symbolic actions and leverage campaigns (McCallum, 2013). Even in those cases in which powerful external coalitions are formed, as in Greece and Portugal, they can (and did) at best serve as magnifiers of shop-floor power and not as substitutions for it.

Conclusion: The Promise and Pitfalls of International Solidarity

European dockworkers have faced significant challenges in recent years in meeting capital's shift in strategy from unified attacks at the EU level to national attacks on unions and working conditions. In the best case scenario, when politics and strategies line up at the local and transnational levels, and national-level problems are successfully tackled, as in the Portuguese case, the result is a win not only for the workers immediately involved in the dispute but for national and international labor movements more broadly. On the other hand, even robust international solidarity, as in the English case, can fail to deliver a definitive victory when national issues of bureaucratization and their concomitant effect on local-level organizing remain unresolved. And finally, as the Greek case unfortunately demonstrates, strong local and national action are in themselves no guarantee of effective international action when political objectives are not in sync and clear strategic openings are lacking or missed. As the well-known labor movement slogan goes, "collective action gets the goods", but it turns out that not all forms of collective action are equal. Industrial action at the point of production, rather than the symbolic actions often favored by national and global union organizations, made the greatest difference in all three cases.

These findings make clear the role of both intra- and inter-union politics and organizational form in shaping the strategies and practices that make such local-to-local transnational coordination possible. They cast doubt on the assumption shared by many labor movement leaders and scholars that in a global economy in which worker power is being eroded on the shop-floor at the local level and in politics at the national level, a turn towards global organization by itself will be sufficient. Instead, these cases suggest that failure to attend appropriately to local and national union dynamics can leave even the most robust international campaigns with nothing to show for their efforts. As Table 1 suggests, then, no particular level, whether local, national or transnational, is sufficient on its own to determine a positive outcome. Instead, it is the felicitous combination of political and organizational strengths – and avoidance of blockages -- at different levels that enables a successful result. Overall, therefore, the project calls attention to the need to build on the research agenda of Levesque et al (2013) on the intersecting roles of politics and organizational form at multiple levels of union organization in transnational campaigns.

Perhaps counter-intuitively, given the strand of the global labor literature (Evans 2010; Lillie 2006; McCallum 2013; Pulignano 2007; Stevis and Boswell 2007) which has argued for the necessary centralization of national and international union structures in transnational campaigns, I found instead that neither was conducive to successful outcomes. In the case of national structures, entanglement with SYRIZA proved to be a source of blockage in the Greek case, while UNITE's overly centralized approach to organizing proved to be a source of blockage in the English case. Instead, it was the Portuguese dockworkers – who had broken with their national union federation over strategic differences and engaged politically through a diffuse network of far left and social movement activists, rather than mainstream political parties – who enjoyed a successful outcome. In the case of transnational structures, the networked organizational structure of the poorly-resourced IDC proved particularly amenable to facilitating the kind of local-to-local solidarity actions that delivered a victory in Portugal and a partial victory in England, while the symbolic actions of the far better-resourced ETF appeared to make little difference.

Building on the work of Kay (2011), Ahlquist and Levy (2013) and Erne (2008), this chapter calls attention to the central role played in transnational campaigns by the contingent political and strategic decisions of key activists, and in particular, those at the most local level of union organization. My work additionally builds on Turnbull's (2006; 2007; 2010) findings on European dockworker mobilizations that the "force of logic" only works when it's backed up by the "logic of force". Avoiding the "elite embrace" of the EU (Turnbull and Harvey, 2015), therefore, allowed the IDC to facilitate a particular combination of local-to-local solidarity at the transnational level that proved efficacious. In fact, the IDC's ability to do so was facilitated by the kind of networked, decentralized form of internationalism that Cumbers and Routledge (2010) advocate. Given my finding that local-to-local shop-floor coordination was most predictive of success, then, organizations like the non-mainstream global union organization in this dissertation, the IDC -- which relies on a non-bureaucratic, networked form of transnational organization that ties together activists who remain heavily embedded in their workplaces -- may potentially provide a positive model for others in the global labor movement.

In the Part II of the dissertation, I turn to the IDC's work in Latin America to consider the applicability of these findings beyond Europe. Rather than generalizing from the European experience, as the Industrial Relations is wont to do, this dissertation instead *exceptionalizes* the European experience by viewing it global perspective. While political difference is evidently a key factor in Europe, its importance is even greater at the global level, where additional issues of resource constraints, scale and more overt forms of class-based violence come in to play as well. I argue that while the principles of rank-and-file internationalism so vital to the European context remain relevant for the rest of the world, these principles alone are not sufficient to confront the myriad challenges that workers in the Global South face as a result of difficult socio-political contexts at the national level, which are themselves the result of their countries' subordinated position in the global political economy.

PART II:
Latin America

Chapter 4

Labor Internationalism in the Global South: A Latin American Perspective on the IDC

Introduction

In Part I, I analyzed the IDC's regional organization and three country case studies in Europe, where dockworkers' power at the point of production is generally strong. In Part II, I analyze the IDC's regional organization and two country case studies in Latin America. As the next chapters will demonstrate, structural power is shaped as much by social and political factors as it is by material realities in the economy – complicating efforts to develop comparably powerful organizations in Latin America to those in Europe at the local, national and transnational levels. Though dockworkers in Latin America are situated in a similar location in their respective countries' – and the global – economies, and though they work the same ships, often for the same companies using the same equipment, their structural power is far weaker overall than the structural power of European dockworkers. With some notable exceptions -- particularly in the Southern Cone -- the general picture in the region is one of dockworkers being unable to make use of their strategic position in national and global systems of production to develop powerful labor organizations because of mitigating national and social political factors, in particular, pervasive violence, state repression and weak or unenforced labor law. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the IDC's Latin American region as a whole, paralleling Chapter 2, while Chapter 5 focuses in on two recent disputes – in Chile and Colombia – that provide a marked contrast to one another, as well as to the three European disputes detailed in Chapter 3. While Chapter 4 draws some general conclusions about the Latin American region as a whole, Chapter 5 examines intra-regional variation.

The key argument in this chapter is that the very different configuration of dockworkers' structural power at the national and regional levels within Latin America, relative to Europe, therefore imposes a very different set of conditions for the development of regional-level labor internationalism in Latin America. Following the introduction, I provide an overview of the literature on labor internationalism in the Global South. The empirical discussion that follows is divided into three parts. The first part covers the challenges that Latin American dockworkers face in developing a regional-level organization, while the second part covers opportunities for transnational collaboration and the third part details respondents' concrete suggestions for improving the IDC's work in the region.

I find that despite tremendous growth in affiliation over the past five years -- as a result of heroic organizing efforts by the IDC Latin American coordinators, as well as the historical and on-going failures of the ITF in the region -- the IDC within Latin America continues to face significant challenges to building the kind of regional-level network that dockworkers have built in Europe. I attribute the greater challenges that Latin American dockworkers face relative to European dockworkers to three key factors. First, the weakness of Latin American trade unionism in general relative to European trade unionism poses the most significant challenge to building regional level organization. In Europe, the rights of trade unionists to organize and bargain collectively are well-established and generally respected, while the rule of law prevails, with overt violence or repression against trade unionists a very rare occurrence. This situation is

to a significant extent reversed within Latin America, particularly outside of the Southern Cone, as a result of the long-term and ongoing legacy of Northern imperialism, dictatorship and the neoliberal turn. Trade unionists, including dockworkers, despite their economic position, therefore often struggle to build even local level organizations. Consequently, building a regional level organization may seem like a pipe dream, and a useless one at that if it simply brings together a number of weak organizations unable to provide one another with meaningful support. The fact that the greatest impetus for collaboration among Latin American dockworkers has come from the Southern Cone, where unions are the strongest in the region provides evidence to support this argument. Additionally, there is a far greater mismatch between needs and capacities than in the European region: the Latin American trade unions most in need of international support are those struggling for basic legal recognition and collective bargaining agreements, as in Colombia, and consequently have little to offer in return. At the same time, the trade unions best able to provide this support come from wealthy countries in the Global North, rather than other countries in Latin America.

Second, severe resource constraints, coupled with the much larger distances and greater cost of travel in Latin America relative to Europe, create practical barriers to building the kind of face-to-face rank-and-file network characteristic of the IDC-Europe. While many European activists noted that the grueling schedule of international meetings created difficulties in their personal lives, the cost of attendance was only mentioned as a factor in the participation of the smallest and least well-resourced unions in Europe, and only then in terms of how many people to send to meetings, rather than whether to send people to meetings. Latin American activists, conversely, noted that the cost of international travel was the primary barrier to participation in international meetings, while noting that increasing the frequency of face-to-face contact with other activists in the region was crucial to building the network. As I discuss in the final section of this chapter, interview respondents suggested a number of ways around this, including having unions in wealthier countries further subsidize the cost of travel and focusing on sub-regional meetings (for example, in Central America or the Southern Cone) instead of Latin American wide meetings.

Finally, the presence of a robust transnational governance framework in Europe, though not determinative of European dockworker coordination (which goes back several decades), has nevertheless imposed a systematic logic for cooperation that is lacking in Latin America, paralleling Kay's (2005) finding on the impact of the transnational governance structures created by NAFTA for transnational labor collaboration in North America. The concerted effort by the European Commission since the early 2000's to deregulate dock work in the EU has provided a strong impetus to collaboration within Europe. Since that time, the formal Social Dialogue, which began in 2013, has not only required but also paid for union activists to attend quarterly meetings in Brussels, providing a transnational institutional logic for ongoing work and communication. In addition, ongoing cooperation has been facilitated by the myriad national level challenges European dockworkers have faced as a result of troika-driven austerity programs and the long-term threat this poses to dockworkers in other countries because of the ease of diverting cargo within the EU. Similar transnational governance structures and incentives are simply not present within Latin America.

Nevertheless, despite these significant challenges for regional-level organization, there is room for cautious optimism. First, the IDC has achieved impressive growth in affiliation over the past five years and now has affiliate unions in nearly all of the countries in the region. Interview

respondents were particularly impressed with the IDC's successful campaign to support Paraguayan dockworkers facing severe government repression. Uruguayan dockworkers blockaded Paraguayan cargo; Uruguayan, Argentine and Brazilian union leaders organized a delegation to meet with the government; and IDC leaders from the U.S. and Europe organized a delegation as well. International support for the Chilean dockworkers, in the form of a threatened blockade of Chilean cargo, was viewed as a sign of the organization's progress in the region as well – even if there has been internal debate over the process and impact of the international intervention. The long-term failures by the ITF in the region, which supported conservative and corrupt anti-communist unions during the Cold War and into the present and has a highly top-down approach to organizing, have also provided space for the IDC to grow. On the other hand, damaging long-term experiences with global union organizations and internationalism in general have also created skepticism among some potential participants, such as the left-wing leadership in Chile's' Union Portuaria, many of whose locals are not affiliated to the IDC.

Second, interview participants cited numerous economic and practical logics for cooperation, ranging from the presence of common employers at the ports to common shipping routes. Nevertheless, at the regional level, these logics remain largely as potentialities to be developed and many practical issues must be addressed. For example, while the Uruguayan dockworkers blockaded Paraguayan cargo in solidarity with their Paraguayan comrades, they noted that the effects of this type of action would be limited until they could convince Argentine dockworkers (affiliated to the ITF) to not accept diverted cargo. Similar actions have not been tried at the international level elsewhere in the region, though dockworkers in Chile refuse to handle diverted cargo from other affiliates of their national organization during disputes and have advocated for a similar system at the Latin American level. The possibility of coordinated action on the basis of shared employers, similarly, has a great deal of potential within the region but so far has not been utilized – though Latin American dockworkers have benefitted from European comrades putting pressure on global port operators like Maersk and Dubai Port World, particularly in Colombia.

Finally, political logics for cooperation were strongly emphasized by both the current and former Latin American coordinators of the IDC – logics facilitated in part through shared language, culture and political histories, in particular, opposition to military dictatorships, U.S. and European imperialism and neoliberalism. The current regional coordinator, a dockworker leader from Uruguay, was particularly eloquent on this point, arguing that the IDC as a whole needs its Latin American section to provide a political counter-point to the more limited perspectives of dockworkers in the Global North who, he argued, have gone through a process of *embourgeoisment* and a concomitant narrowing of political horizons. Like the former regional coordinator, from Argentina, he emphasized that the Latin American section was keen to broaden the organization's political horizons beyond a narrow set of bread and butter issues.

In the last section of the chapter, I examine the most common proposals that emerged from interviews for improving the work of the IDC in Latin America. Both the current and former Latin American zone coordinators (from Uruguay and Argentina, respectively) strongly recommended organizing sub-zones within Latin America grouping together smaller sets of countries in closer proximity to one another (such as a Central American sub-zone and a Southern Cone sub-zone) to address the issues of resource constraints and distance, as well as the need for more frequent face to face contact among activists. Activists from the two affiliate countries interviewed for the study – Chile and Colombia – emphasized the need for better and

more frequent communication between the central office and affiliate unions to facilitate better understanding and work between the organization's infrequent zone meetings and visits from the zone coordinator. Finally, there is a widely shared interest in developing a practical and political education and training program for activists, encompassing bread and butter issues such as best practices for health and safety and the basics of collective bargaining, as well as broader discussion of political economy.

In the next chapter, I turn my attention to two key labor disputes within the region – in Colombia and Chile – to provide an on-the-ground perspective of local, national and international strategic considerations against the backdrop of particular national and regional contexts shaping worker power. In the conclusion that follows, I reflect on the implications of the very different worlds in which dockworkers union activists in Europe and Latin America struggle as activists for developing truly global trade unionism.

Labor Internationalism in Latin America

Academic literature on contemporary labor internationalism has focused predominantly on two configurations: solidarity among trade unions within the Global North (particularly within Europe, but also involving North America and Australia) and solidarity by trade unions in the Global North with trade unions in the Global South. Studies of solidarity among trade unions within the Global South, on the other hand, have been few and far between, as are studies highlighting critical perspectives by Southern trade unionists on Northern-led internationalism.

North-South Internationalism in Latin America

In the Latin American context, scholarship on labor internationalism has focused overwhelming on North-South collaborations, grouped together into four broad categories. The first category concerns scholarship on northern 'labor imperialism', primarily, though not exclusively, stemming from the AFL-CIO's collaboration with the U.S. State Department during the Cold War to stymie the growth of left-leaning trade unions in Latin America and elsewhere around the world. Kim Scipes (2010) has been the foremost proponent of this approach, and Battista (2002), Sims (1991) and Spalding (1992) have provided critical interventions from the U.S. perspective as well. Thomson and Larson (1978) give a classic account of English trade union imperialism, while more recent work by Collambat (2011) and Nostovski (2016) examines European and Canadian trade union imperialism respectively. Broadly, this literature argues that true international labor solidarity was consistently undermined during the Cold War by trade unions in the North who preferentially supported conservative or "yellow" unions in the South in collaboration with anti-Communist and/or imperialist governments committed to preventing the rise of left-wing governments and increased economic independence. Nostovski (2016) adds to this the role of white supremacy and nationalism in these endeavors.

As I saw in my research, this Cold War legacy has reverberations in the present, in the form of distrust of Northern trade unionists by many trade unionists in the South and a continued failure by Northern trade unions to embrace more radical forms of unionism in the region. In fact, this failure is as much a problem for European trade unions pushing a model of technocratic and corporatist unionism as it is for North American unions whose role in the region has been to some extent surpassed by that of the Europeans (Collombat, 2011). Notably, such problems of North to South union paternalism are not limited to Latin America. From her work in South

Africa, India and Guatemala, Seidman (2007: 37) finds that "Even with the best of intentions, the international community is ill equipped to ascertain the legitimacy of workers' organizations or to distinguish unions that provide real avenues of expression for workers' concerns from authoritarian corporatist bodies that restrict workers' participation." Nostovski (2016) advocates instead for what she terms "worker-to-worker' international solidarity – of the kind advocated by the IDC -- to counteract these tendencies.

Literature on labor internationalism in post-Cold War Latin America has examined transnational campaigns targeting free trade agreements, sweatshops and multinational employers. There is a particularly well-developed literature on labor's NAFTA campaign, for example (Bacon 2004; Compa 2001; Kay 2011; Stillerman 2003) Both Bacon (2004) and Kay (2011) highlight what they see as a small number of largely positive and potentially transformative relationships between trade unions in the U.S. and Mexico as a result of the NAFTA campaign, despite the persistence of formidable political challenges to cross-border solidarity among national unions and federations in both countries. However, they nevertheless note that the end result of the trade agreement itself has been a disaster for labor, with weak and essentially unenforceable labor provisions despite a hard-fought battle. Furthermore, even those U.S.-based unions that have developed strong relationships with militant, radical trade unionists in Mexico and elsewhere in the region remain susceptible to the pull of protectionist strategies of the left and right when opportunities arise (Fox-Hodess 2018).

Von Bulow (2009; 2010) and Dubrosin's (2014) work on the labor campaign against the Free Trade Area of the Americas – which included both North-South and South-South components provides further insights. As with NAFTA and the dockworker cases in this dissertation, Von Bulow (2009) and Dubrosin (2015) find uneven transnational participation across time and space by Latin American trade unions. Perhaps counter-intuitively, Dubrosin (2015: 281) argues that transnationalism was predicted by the strongly neoliberal governments in the region in the 1990's, while the so-called 'pink tide' led to re-nationalization of trade union strategies as trade unionists unexpectedly found potential allies in government. This finding mirrors Anner's (2003) argument that unions tend to engage in internationalism when national pathways to dispute resolution are blocked. On a similar note, Dubrosin (2015: 283) finds that the reduced 'presence and interference in historical terms' of the U.S. in the region has had a similarly negative impact on labor transnationalism within the region, quoting an Argentine trade union official who stated, "'we can have our differences, but when it comes to U.S. imperialism there is a common rejection in Latin America that unites us all'".

Northern consumer-based activism against sweatshops and in favor of so-called 'fair trade' initiatives have also been well-studied in the literature (Anner 2011; Armbruster-Sandoval 2005a; Kumar and Mahoney, 2014). Echoing Kay (2011) and Bacon's (2004) work on NAFTA, Armbruster-Sandoval (2005a) finds that even the most positive examples of cross-border collaboration against sweatshops – resulting in important agreements for workers – have in most cases been quickly undermined by capital's ability to quickly shift production locations in light manufacturing industries. Nonetheless, Armbruster-Sandoval (2005b) argues that given these structural constraints, "chances for more successful and substantial results are greater when the TAN [Transnational Activist Network] and the domestic nonstate actor (a maquiladora union, in this case) are strong and work together on a collaborative basis." (470) In this respect, he shares Seidman's (2007) concern with the tendency by Northern trade unionists to frame Southern trade

unionists as passive and helpless victims of transnational capital, viewing this as unconducive to the kinds of strong, collaborative relationships needed for effective internationalism.

Finally, scholars have examined cross-border campaigns targeting multinational employers shared by workers in the Global North and the Global South. Bank Muñoz's (2017) recent book, for example, examines unionization efforts by Walmart workers in Chile and the not uncomplicated role of U.S.-based unions and European-based global union federations in their campaign. Bank Muñoz (2017) and Young and Becerra (2014) highlight a key issue often encountered in these relationships: the tendency of better resourced Northern unions to set the agenda for organizing in response to their own needs, rather than collaboratively with Southern unions. On a related note, Anner (2003) found in his study of Brazilian and German autoworkers that their collaboration for many years focused on human rights -- "a less potentially controversial issue than coordinating actions to determine whether jobs should stay in Germany or move to Brazil" (125-6) – suggesting difficulties encountered in particular when workers in export-oriented industries work together. Young and Becerra (2014) provide a damning indictment of Northern based solidarity in their study of Colombian autoworkers' experiences with the UAW:

> the UAW's solidarity has almost always been limited to causes that do not threaten the 'Big Three' U.S. auto companies (GM, Ford, and Chrysler). The leadership appears passionate about helping exploited autoworkers, but only when the employer is a 'foreign' and non-unionized company like Nissan or Hyundai. They are generous with the union's money, but only when the donation in question would not embarrass their business partners. (252-3)

In a 2016 article for *Salvage* magazine, I discuss the UAW's betrayal of its South Korean allies during international negotiations over the US-South Korea Free Trade Agreement once protections for the US auto industry were included. More recently (2018), I detailed the United Steelworkers willingness to sell out long-standing allies in the Global South – in particular, Brazilian unions who have provided the USW with crucial support during contract disputes – when political opportunities to adopt protectionist tariffs arise.

South-South Internationalism in Latin America and Beyond

As noted at the outset, despite the large and growing body of literature on North-South trade union collaboration in Latin America, there is far less available in the scholarly literature on South-South trade union activities in Latin America and beyond. One exception is the body of literature on SIGTUR – the Southern Initiative on Globalisation and Trade Union Rights – which, though not specifically a Latin American initiative, is a non-bureaucratic South-South project that incorporates some Latin American trade unions and therefore provides a useful jumping off point for analysis (Lambert and Webster 2001; Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout 2008; Dubrosin 2014). Lambert and Webster (2001) argue that union democracy has played a central role in sustaining and developing the network, which, like the IDC, has chosen to work with independent, democratic unions over those unions that are "were products of American post-World War II intervention, unrepresentative of the working class and reflecting instead the interests of authoritarian statism, local economic elites and multinational corporations" (344).

At the same time, the authors note four primary challenges facing SIGTUR that provide important insights into the challenges facing South-South international trade union organization more broadly: “the conflict of interests underpinning the new international division of labour; difficulties in searching for an appropriate model of labour internationalism; organizational weakness; and the separation of the economic and political spheres” (52). Dubrosin (2014), while noting the difficulties the network has had in developing its own initiatives and sustaining momentum (157), argues that new and better opportunities for southern labor internationalism exist today than in the past because “The current conditions of retrenchment in the northern unions and increasing confidence by southern counterparts provide for the space to build labor solidarity from the spaces considered as passive receivers of solidarity in the past.” (158). These themes have all been evident in my research among Latin America dockworker unions, as discussed in this chapter.

While Latin American trade unionism in general has a weaker tradition of internationalism than European trade unionism, Latin American workers in the informal sector have been at the forefront of building transnational labor organizations at both the regional and global levels (Bonner and Carré 2013), in particular, among domestic workers (Goldsmith 2013) and waste pickers (Rosaldo 2016). Bonner and Carré argue that although informal sector “workers earn livelihoods in very local ways. . . primarily governed by local regulation and policies. . . Global networks enable IW organizations to access representation and means of advocacy in international forums and, conversely, boost national and local efforts.” (3) Additionally, participation in international labor networks “enables organizers, leaders, and active members to learn about and exchange information on strategies, successes, and failures as well as to glean important information on the context for their work and its future direction.” (5) Finally, “Some of the networks also have access to sufficient resources to provide practical assistance to national IW organizations in support of their goals. Practical assistance may include access to research, education resources, and other means for capacity building.” (5) In other words, although informal sector workers are rarely able to provide one another with the forms of industrial solidarity evident from the dockworker cases in this dissertation and studies of workers in global production networks, they nevertheless derive significant benefits from participating in these transnational networks. At the same time, Bonner and Carré find that informal workers face many of the same challenges as formal sector workers – such as the dockworkers in this study – in building global unionism:

> All have to overcome the barriers posed by differences in language, culture, politics, and organizing traditions. Resources are almost always scarce: global organizing is expensive and electronic communication has not (yet) replaced the need for meetings, congresses, and so on. In addition, all global worker networks have to ensure they are relevant for and link to grassroots members that are facing the more immediate local and national struggles.

Frank’s groundbreaking (2005) book on the banana worker labor federation COLSIBA - provides the closest approximation to my own case study in this chapter in that it examines a group of Latin American workers organized in a non-bureaucratic transnational regional organization who are able to provide one another with concrete industrial solidarity as a result of their role in the production and movement of tangible commodities. Like Lambert and Webster (2001) in their work on SIGTUR, Frank highlights the importance of union democracy within the participating organizations and the fact that the organization has been built up over time,

from the local to the national to the transnational levels, developing functional practices over the course of many years (108). Financial support from trade unions in the Global North, as with the IDC, has enabled the jump from the national to the transnational levels for COLSIBA, funding activists' travel to the international meetings which have proved so crucial in developing strong organizational ties (71).

Frank's (2005) study examines a transnational labor organization in Latin America that has developed through a truly bottom-up, iterative process – building from the local to the national level and from there moving across borders of countries in close proximity to one another. The IDC, conversely, has developed through a process of grouping together local and national unions in different countries who have built their organizations independently of one another in far-flung locations, resulting in a more limited development of a cohesive collective identity allowing the group to act together. Nevertheless, key issues that Frank identifies are evident in the dockworker case as well, in particular, the positive role of trade union democracy, among both affiliate unions and internationally, which has provided the IDC with an opening to organize in the region because of the contrast it provides to the much older ITF. Additionally, like Frank's banana workers, the IDC in Latin America has relied on financial support from affiliates in the Global North to fund many of its activities.

At the same time, participants' perceptions of the legacy of Cold War labor imperialism and their emphasis on different visions of trade unionism within the global organization (see discussion below) adds a critical political dimension to our understanding of labor internationalism -- a central contribution of the dockworkers' case in this study. Potential affiliates – such as dockworkers unions in central and southern Chile – who in many ways would be natural fits with the organization, harbor feelings of deep suspicion about the possibilities for meaningful transnational collaboration, particularly with the Global North, given their historical experiences. And both the current and former IDC coordinators, from Uruguay and Argentina respectively, took great pains to emphasize in interviews that unions in the region had much to offer the organization as a whole, despite being poorly resourced, as a result of their broader and more politicized vision for global unionism. Their criticism of European trade unionism in general, as having narrow horizons as a result of *embourgeoisment*, therefore complicates the picture of Latin American trade unionists as passive recipients of northern solidarity (Armbruster-Sandoval 2005b; Seidman 2007), suggesting the possibilities that might emerge through transnational rank-and-file trade union organizations in which the contributions of participants from the Global South are given equal weight.

Research Design

This chapter relies on in-depth interviews with two key informants (the current and former Latin American coordinators for the IDC, from Uruguay and Argentina, respectively); participant observation with the Latin American section of the IDC at the organization's General Assembly in 2014 (in Tenerife) and 2016 (in Miami); in-country interviews with IDC participants from Chile and Colombia in 2015; and interviews and informal conversations with IDC participants from Europe regarding the Latin American section between 2012-2017. While my research in Europe took me to every affiliate country of the IDC at the time of research with the exception of Malta, research in Latin America has taken me to only four affiliate countries

(Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Colombia). As such, the research for this chapter is less systematic and complete than that of the previous and subsequent empirical chapters and the findings presented here are best understood as working hypotheses requiring further research in the form of interviews with Latin American participants from additional countries to be fully substantiated. I have had some in-person contact with affiliates from Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador through international meetings, but have not had the opportunity to interview them, and have not had any contact with affiliates from Peru, Venezuela, Paraguay or Mexico. I therefore plan to conduct follow up research in the next years to better substantiate these preliminary regional-level findings for Latin America.

Reasons for Pessimism: The Challenges of Regional Internationalism in Latin America

The political, economic and geographic conditions IDC dockworkers face in developing a regional-level organization in Latin America are far more difficult than the conditions IDC dockworkers face in developing a regional-level organization in Europe. In this section, I detail the two most significant challenges identified by research participants: 1) the uneven strength – and general weakness -- of dockworker unions in Latin America (with the exception of the Southern Cone) and stronger logic for developing collaborations with North American unions, rather than other Latin American unions, for many affiliates and 2) severe resource constraints, coupled with more expensive and longer distance travel to participate in regional meetings. I also examine a third factor which was not raised by interview participants but which is evident when comparing the Latin American region of the IDC to the European region: the absence of a comparable transnational governance framework at the regional level providing an additional logic for on-going collaboration.

Uneven Strength of Trade Unions in the Region

At the most basic level, the purpose of solidarity is to lend strength to another's struggle in recognition of common interests. But how can very weak organizations struggling to develop at the local level provide meaningful support internationally? This is a key challenge Latin American dockworkers face in developing regional-level internationalism. As a local leader from the Port of Buenaventura affiliated to the Union Portuaria in Colombia put it, "if we were stronger, if there was a struggle in any of these countries, we would support them from here. But with the weakness that we have. . ." Ricardo Suarez, the current IDC Latin America coordinator and head of the uniquely powerful Uruguayan dockworkers union explained:

> The principal problem that the workers have is the prevailing model in Latin America . . . a model of casual labor, labor at the service of the agencies and not the worker, great lack of protection. . . the worker is there when the cargo is there, when the ship arrives, but when the ship leaves, no one takes responsibility for that worker. . . so how do we create norms for dockworkers at the continental level? . . . we need registries of workers, with fixed schedules and security, with salaries.

Some potential affiliates -- for example, dockworkers in the south of Chile who have had frequent contact with the IDC but have not yet affiliated – have consequently concluded that they

must first “strengthen ourselves here” and concentrate on building their “own house”, as one leader put, before they can begin to think about international organization.

The strongest unions in the IDC’s Latin America region (see Table 1) are in the Southern Cone countries of Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, Chile and have been the driving force in the organization at the regional level. Uruguay, which has played a major role in the foundation and development of the IDC in the region, is the only country with a unitary union representing all port workers in the country. As Suarez put it, “Having a unitary union sometimes means being a bit cut off from the reality of our continent which we know is quite varied.” Though they lack a unitary organization, as in Uruguay, the Brazilian unions have all joined the IDC and are quite strong, in addition to handling the largest quantities of cargo in the region. The IDC affiliate in Argentina is a solid organization but represents a small minority of workers at the ports (primarily white collar clerks) – the much larger port union in Argentina is notoriously corrupt, and an affiliate of the ITF. As detailed in the next chapter, Chilean dockworkers have built a powerful national organization, but few locals are affiliated to the IDC.

A number of other South American unions – from Peru, Ecuador, Paraguay and Venezuela – as well as Nicaragua, have moderately strong organizations. Ecuador, Venezuela and Nicaragua share the characteristic of being countries with ostensibly left-wing governments who nevertheless have passed measures that have threatened the working conditions of dockworkers, putting them at odds with their governments. Their union organizations, therefore, are better established than those in the countries with ‘weak unions’ described below and in Table 1, but they are currently embattled at the national level, limiting their ability to engage in other activities.

Finally, the weakest unions in the IDC’s Latin American region are found in the Caribbean and Central American region -- Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Colombia – characterized by endemic violence and a lack of enforcement of basic labor rights. In these countries, trade unionism is a dangerous endeavor and trade unionists find themselves at odds with not only their national governments and employers but also violent extra-state actors. As Former IDC Latin America coordinator Mauricio Zarzuelo put it, “They are incipient unions, given that they’ve never been allowed to organize themselves. For the dockworkers in Central America, collective agreements don’t exist anymore. . . in some places where they privatized [the ports], the bosses set up company unions, threw out the combative people, the fighters, who were there all their lives, they’ve been displaced.” As a consequence, “you can count on your fingers the unions that have legal recognition or collective agreements”

Table 1: Strength of IDC Latin America Affiliate Unions

STRONG/ WELL-ESTABLISHED UNIONS	MODERATELY STRONG UNIONS	WEAK UNIONS (CONDITIONS OF ENDEMIC VIOLENCE)
Uruguay	Venezuela	Colombia
Brazil	Ecuador	Mexico
Argentina	Peru	Guatemala
Chile	Nicaragua	El Salvador
	Paraguay	

As a result of the unevenness and general weakness of dockworker unions in Latin America, activists from many countries may see more value in developing ties with well-resourced unions in wealthy countries that can provide direct financial support and/or pressure on their governments and employers. For trade unionists in the Central American and Caribbean region whose countries are heavily dependent on the United States for international trade, ties with organizations in the U.S. may be of particular value. Javier Marrugo, the national head of the Union Portuaria in Colombia, noted that solidarity from the U.S. was the most important for their union because of trade ties and opportunities that had opened up through the Free Trade Agreement to pressure the Colombian government to improve or enforce labor regulations. The organization had consequently put a tremendous amount of time and effort into cultivating relationships with a range of U.S. based NGO's and labor organizations, including Witness for Peace, the Washington Office on Latin America, the Solidarity Center and the Project for International Accompaniment and Solidarity in Colombia. They had identified the ILWU as not only an important potential ally but also a potential source of funding for their organizing program but had had limited success in cultivating a long-term working relationship beyond the Free Trade Agreement campaign. The Union Portuaria's competitor union, the SNTT, as detailed in the following chapter, was able to garner financial support from the Dutch FNV through an ITF project, providing a significant advantage in organizing in relation to the Union Portuaria – a clear illustration of the myriad impacts that relationships with unions in wealthy countries can have for weak and recently formed unions struggling in difficult conditions with few resources.

Practical Barriers to Collaboration: Cost and Distance

Building strong rank-and-file labor internationalism depends on cultivating horizontal person-to-person relationships among activists, as explained in the first chapter on the IDC's regional organization in Europe. But how can poorly resourced unions located at great distances from one another meet often enough to sustain and develop such organizing relationships? These practical considerations present significant obstacles to developing a regional network within Latin America. As Zarzuelo put it, "Europe isn't the same as Latin America. For me to travel to the Dominican Republic [from Buenos Aires] takes 15 hours. . . for us, it's impossible. First, the costs, and second, it's a major journey. In Europe, you take the subway, and you're there in no time. . . Once a year, it costs us a ton of money. . . to have meetings of delegates. . ." A union leader from the Union Portuaria in the south of Chile suggested that cost was one of the main reasons his local had remained unaffiliated: "coordination like there is in the US or in Europe would be phenomenal . . . but to get there, there has to be money. . . we're not capable of being there. We pay dues and end up out of money."

Nevertheless, despite the obstacles, participants agreed that more frequent international meetings were necessary to develop the network. In the final section of this chapter, I provide an overview of one of the main proposals that emerged to ameliorate this problem: dividing the large Latin American zone into smaller sub-zones to allow for more cost-effective and frequent meetings of activists in closer proximity to one another. Even so, for many affiliates, particularly outside of the Southern Cone, attendance at any international meetings will require that the cost of travel be subsidized by others – whether within the region or through the dues paid by IDC members in wealthier countries in the Global North.

Absence of a Transnational Governance Framework

The European Union's transnational governance framework has created a consistent logic of collaboration for European dockworkers. Since the early 2000's, they have successfully fought off repeated attempts to deregulate their industry, through close collaboration lobbying EU policy makers in Brussels, engaging in mass protests in Strasbourg and coordinating industrial actions at the ports. As a result of this process, in 2013, a formal EU "Social Dialogue" was set up for the ports sector, with both the ETF and the IDC included on the labor side. Sectoral Social Dialogue meetings, though widely viewed by IDC activists as a pointless exercise, are held quarterly, and travel to these meetings is funded by Brussels. As a result, IDC activists at a minimum see one another every few months in Brussels, allowing them to have frequent in-person discussions on a range of European dockworker issues at the local and national levels that go beyond the EU focus of the meetings themselves. Eternal vigilance on the possibility of further attempts at EU deregulation additionally encourages collaboration.

Such governmental logics are absent in Latin America. Von Bulow (2009: 7) notes that "In South America, the most important labor federations decided to give MERCOSUR their 'critical support'" yet "Although it is true that organizations from South America were able to participate in various decision making and consultative forums, 15 years later this participation has had little impact on integration policies (Jakobsen 1999; von Bülow 2003)." And as Kay (2005: 744) concluded in her research on labor transnationalism in North America: "A dearth of global governance institutions that have meaningful participatory mechanisms could explain a

corresponding lack of transnational social movements. . . global governance institutions that grant legitimacy and provide mechanisms for expressing and redressing grievances when rules are violated, are critical to the development of transnational social movements." MERCOSUR simply has not developed transnational governance to nearly the same degree as the EU, providing far fewer logics for transnational collaboration on the basis of shared interests in public policy and institutional arrangements promoting frequent in-person contact.

Reasons for Optimism: The Potential for Regional Internationalism in Latin America

Despite the substantial challenges to developing a regional-level organization within Latin America, there are reasons for optimism as well. In this section I identify the most significant factors interview participants identified as predicting stronger organizational development in the region: 1) the long-term failures of the ITF, in the Cold War and since, as a bureaucratic organization far removed from the everyday realities of workers, and the horizontal structure of the IDC, which participants felt was providing a space for more meaningful collaboration, 2) economic logics for collaboration, in particular, shared shipping routes and transnational employers and 3) political logics for collaboration, with an emphasis on the contributions that Latin American trade unions could make to the IDC as a global organization because of their broader vision for trade unionism.

ITF Failures and Growth of the IDC in Latin America

The ITF has a long history in Latin America, but the effects its virulently anti-Communist work, often in concert with the CIA during the Cold War, continue to reverberate into the present (Lewis 2013; Otero 1968). According to Waterman (2002: 7):

> ITF collaboration with US intelligence during World War II, led to its involvement with the CIA during the Cold War, particularly in the violent repression of Communist dockworker unions in France and Italy, as well as in the even more violent repression of Communist and radical-nationalist unionism in Latin America and Africa. (7)

In the post-war period (Gentile 2016: 118), the head of the ITF engaged in:

> an intense recruitment campaign among colonial and South American unions with no clear communist component, many of them small. He did this in order to stack the eventual ITF Congress vote against a decision to integrate with the [communist] WFTU and thus prove his anticommunist mettle to the AFL and US railway unions while alienating the post-war ITF's one communist unionist, the CGT's Garcias.

As a result, many trade unionists in the sector, including former IDC Latin America zone coordinator Mauricio Zarzuelo, view the ITF as agents of U.S. imperialism and suspect continued collaboration with the CIA. As Zarzuelo put it in a piece he wrote and circulated to the IDC following his retirement as Latin America zone coordinator[28]:

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[28] I have translated this piece from the Spanish language original.

> I have wondered for years, what is the purpose of an international trade union organization (ITF), which claims to represent 5,500,000 workers and generates approximately $80 MM USD annually, which cannot produce a unified global response to governments and multinational enterprises which constantly violate collective labor rights by means of unjust dismissals and imprisonment of their members?
>
> How is possible that an international organization that includes all transport workers, truck drivers, port workers, aviators, buses, merchantmen, and railways - with the power to destabilize governments - does not protect workers but does everything possible to abandon them, divide them, betray their struggles, and even negotiate with their bosses behind their back?
>
> I ask myself time and time again, what interests guide the ITF? I must clarify that I am not referring to the interests of their affiliates, union leaders, honest delegates, but rather ITF leadership: Is it backed by the CIA? Unless this is true, one cannot understand the depths of their indifference and betrayal of workers.

Peter Waterman, an eminent scholar and practitioner of labor internationalism who wrote critically and extensively on global labor collaborations with the CIA during the Cold War, however, expressed doubt that the ITF continued to collaborate with the CIA, arguing instead that ". . . the failures of the AFL-CIO or the ITF can be explained in terms of their base, vision and North-centric, incrementalist strategy, centered on collective negotiations, with the goal of good social concertation!" (Personal correspondence, 2/13/17)

Waterman's criticism of the ITF certainly accords with that of many of the IDC's affiliates, whether in Latin America or in Europe, who view the ITF as a top-down organization far removed from the realities of shop-floor trade unionism. Additionally, the Cold War legacy remains in evidence through the abundance of conservative, corrupt and/or "yellow" unions among their Latin American affiliates. The ITF's port sector affiliates in Chile, described in the next chapter, are a case in point. Zarzuelo, in his piece of the possibility of linkages between the ITF and the CIA, described what he saw as the ITF's failures during two additional labor conflicts in Latin America during his tenure as IDC coordinator for the region:

> Paraguay (2015). Eleven portworkers from Asunción were imprisoned after demonstrating against dismissals in a terminal of the Paraguayan capital. The prosecutor of the case ruled the portworkers would serve six years in prison for interrupting maritime traffic and resisting the Port Authority, both charges invented by the intelligence services and the fascist government.
>
> This conflict, which IDC took as its own when it sent its Zone Coordinators to Paraguay, consisted of a plan to free the imprisoned comrades. This plan consisted of boycotting vessels directed to Uruguay, Brazil, and Argentina. In this way, Uruguay did not assume the whole burden of boycotting vessels from Paraguay. If the boycott was to be effective, we needed to have all three countries execute an agreed-upon strategy. Brazil was willing to follow this strategy, however difficulty arose in Argentina as the maritime and port federation is affiliated with the ITF. At the point when the port workers had been held in

> jail for three months, IDC General Coordinator Jordi Aragunde ordered me to communicate with Mr. Antonio Fritz, the head of ITF for Latin America. I communicated with Fritz (based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) to explain the strategy, and he told me he understood and asked for a few days to communicate with his colleagues in Argentina, after which he would call me. Several days went by and, with no news from Fritz, I attempted to reach out to him again without success. Fritz turned his back not only on the IDC, but also on the 11 imprisoned port workers. I still await his response.
>
> Thanks to the pressure of IDC, and the great mobilizations organized by the LOMP (League of Maritime Workers of Paraguay), the eleven imprisoned comrades were finally released.
>
> Peru (2016). A strike in the Port of Callao that lasted approximately 30 days was made by the comrades affiliated exclusively to ITF. Before the outbreak of the strike, the company and government planned to boycott the strike by sending sailors to do the work of the port workers. At this point, I proposed to the IDC General Secretary to stand in solidarity with those comrades involved in the struggle: Even though they were not our affiliates, we would accompany them in a measure of global force with ITF. In short, ITF did not want our assistance and the strike was lost. Shortly after, the workers in the Port of Callao joined the IDC.

Zarzuelo argued that the IDC, in contrast, is "anti-bureaucratic, assembly-based, and above all strong in solidarity. IDC is a shield that represents port workers. Here are no bought or sold leaders, such people are directly expelled" (Zarzuelo, 2017 note) Attempts to interview the ITF coordinator for Latin America for this project to allow for a rejoinder have been unsuccessful.

Affiliates argued that, at a minimum, the IDC had created the possibility for horizontal collaboration among dockworkers unions in Latin America that hadn't existed before. As current Latin America zone coordinator Ricardo Saurez put it, the problem of the ITF is that:

> They fail in day to day work, in the work of interchange, of understanding the realities, understanding where each people goes, each organization, what are their characteristics and what are their necessities. I believe that the IDC gave us that space. . . So that's how we saw the IDC, as an opportunity to have a forum, a place, where we begin to speak . . . we understand what it achieves, that our struggles are understood by the group. . .

The organization has grown rapidly in Latin America in recent years, as a result of active organizing efforts and an active approach to solidarity during key disputes. The national head of Colombia's Union Portuaria was impressed by the IDC's successful efforts on behalf of the imprisoned Paraguayan dockers, while the local head of the Colombian Union Portuaria at the Port of Buenaventura was impressed by what the Chilean affiliates had achieved, noting that their "struggle and unity. . . serves as an example for us". Today, the IDC has affiliates in most of the region.

Economic and Practical Logics for Collaboration

Latin American participants argued that there are numerous economic and practical logics for collaboration within the region. Despite the marked differences in working conditions among affiliates, at the most basic level, Latin American affiliates share an interest in promoting the adoption of global standards on wages and health and safety in the port industry, an issue raised by several interview respondents. Shared shipping routes and transnational employers provide an additional reason for collaboration, as stoppages, blockades or other forms of pressure by foreign allies can potentially provide crucial strategic leverage during disputes, as was evident during the Paraguayan dispute, described above, and the Chilean dispute, described in the following chapter (as well as in the Portuguese and English cases described in the previous chapter). Though this kind of solidarity has not yet been utilized by the IDC to support dockworkers in Colombia, a local leader from the Port of Buenaventura appreciated the potential for such support in the future:

> here in Colombia, we are fighting the companies and also the law, because it's against us. In the short or medium term, that kind of support, boycotting the ships, would be great. We're going to present the *pliego* to TECSA. . . If they say no, we could tell the IDC which ships are coming . . .

The small number of affiliates in the region, like Uruguay, that are able to provide support, however, face a different set of challenges. With regards to the dispute in Paraguay:

> we're afraid in Uruguay because . . . our cargo basically comes from Paraguay and if we are not capable of generating a good connection between the unions it's very difficult to implement it . . . if we don't work the Paraguayan ships they go to Brazil or Argentina. So there has to be a real discussion about that.
> (IDC Latin America coordinator Ricardo Suarez)

Within South America, competition is evident not only among the ports of the southern Atlantic, but also on the Pacific coast:

> Here in the South American region at least we can get together with those from other sides, from Argentina, Brazil. . . But there's a kind of competition here as well. . . in the Pacific Coast, it's who brings the Chinese ships. That's the problem, that we haven't been able to coordinate. . .
> (Local leader from unaffiliated union in Talcahuano, southern Chile)

In addition, according to a local leader from an IDC affiliate in the north of Chile, there is little cabotage along the Pacific Coast, so there are fewer opportunities to 'boycott the ships' than might be expected. And unlike Europe, with powerfully organized unions like Spain's La Coordinadora situated at highly strategic locations – like the giant transshipment Port of Algeciras on the Strait of Gibralter – comparably located ports in Latin America, such as Colombia's Port of Cartagena near the Panama Canal, lack powerfully organized unions.

Of course, the problem of competition for cargo among ports is evident in Europe as well. Ultimately, this is a problem that can only be solved politically as trade unions in different countries decide whether to engage in a race to the bottom or to refuse to work ships diverted from ports in dispute in order to maintain standards across the board. In Europe, this problem has been resolved in favor of a working practice of refusing to handle, or slowing down the handling

of, ‘hot cargo’ among IDC affiliates, while interview respondents suggested that competition has predominated among ITF affiliates, with the trade union FNV, discussed in the next chapter, at Europe’s largest port in Rotterdam viewed as a particularly unreliable actor in this regard.

Nevertheless, despite the evident difficulties of industrial solidarity within Latin America, Zarzuelo argued that affiliates can and must find other ways to support one another’s struggles, including solidarity from Latin America towards the Global North. Speaking of the dispute in Portugal described in the previous chapter, Zarzuelo reported:

> There’s going to be a conflict in Portugal and I say to the comrades here . . . in a lot of places, they’re not going to be able to stop the ports . . . they’re not going to be able to boycott the cargo . . . because the conditions are precarious. But if we can go to the gates of the embassies to protest . . . to do something, so that the comrades know that all over the world there is a protest. That is our criteria as an organization, to be in solidarity not just in verse, in word, but concretely in what we are able, because it’s not easy to stop a port if you’re not well organized . . . we know what you will face afterwards. But there are a lot of ways to do damage to them, and we know how to do it.

For other affiliates – particularly those operating in very difficult and dangerous contexts with few resources – the most immediate economic logic of collaboration is that of financial support and training, a point underlined repeatedly in the Colombian interviews, as discussed in the next chapter.

At present, because of the far greater resources available to dockworkers in the Global North, the fees they pay to the IDC are used to subsidize the organization’s work in Latin America and Africa and Northern unions play an outsized role in the organization, which is based in Europe. Interestingly, the need for financial support and trainings, as well as alliances with foreign NGO’s, were identified as critical only by the Colombian trade unionists – whose work is largely informal and casualized – mirroring the findings of the WIEGO report by Bonner and Carré (2013) cited earlier on transnational networks of informal workers. In contrast, Suarez, from the powerful Uruguayan union where working conditions are far more secure, strongly argued the need for financial and political independence from Europe within the IDC’s Latin American zone. A non-affiliated leader from the massive Port of San Antonio in Central Chile made a related point, arguing the need to move away from what it is called ‘asistencialismo’ in Latin America – in which wealthier organizations (or the state) provide direct assistance to the poor while maintaining the underlying structures of inequality – “to build a level of organization and unity so that when any country enters into conflict, all the others support them.”

Political Logics for Cooperation

Finally, participants – in particular, the current and former Latin American zone coordinators – argued strongly for political logics of collaboration, arguments that were couched within a critique of trade unionism in the Global North. In essence, these arguments focused on an analysis of Northern trade unions as having gone through a process of *embourgeoisement* through which their political horizons had narrowed to immediate workplace issues. Trade unionists in the Global South, on the other hand, having not gone through this process, would instead generate discussion and debate on broader political issues which they felt the IDC as a

whole should take positions on. In other words, the Latin American dockworkers could point the way towards a more politically-engaged and radical orientation for the organization as a whole.

Current IDC Latin America Zone Coordinator Ricardo Suarez, from Uruguay, provided an especially comprehensive analysis of the problem of *embourgeoisement*:

> I think that Europe is stuck in its own problems . . . I understand that Europe became bourgeois. Europe accommodated to the times of capitalism, of consumption, and each one lived very well within that framework and with that, they were weakened. The organizations were weakened, the unions were weakened. And all of a sudden, a crisis arrived, not like all the others. . . a more enduring crisis, more radical, and it made them see that it wasn't all so nice, that consumption is a problem, because it creates habits, and it creates dissatisfaction . . . But they found that now they didn't have union organizations, they found that the few union organizations they had were rather bourgeois and that made it difficult. One goes and has the impression that when you speak with the workers from European unions, you are speaking far from the workers, far from the problems of the workers . . . directly or directly, the system is defended.

Consequently, he argued that Latin America, far from being simply a passive recipient of Northern solidarity, had much to offer to the organization as a whole:

> I believe that in Latin America, there is a different situation. The poverty has its good things and its bad things. The bad part is that we live badly. The good part is that it equips us, it makes us feel equal, it makes us understand, and because of that, it makes it possible that in Latin America it's more probable to be united in the struggles. . . a lot of the time, the unions from Latin America look towards the continent or look towards North America or look towards Asia, as if awaiting responses that they don't have here, and solidarity that they don't have here. And I think that it's being empowered on the other side – they are much further from us in generating that . . .

Both he and Zarzuelo shared a number of specific political issues that they would like the organization to consider. As Zarzuelo put it, "what is our position, beyond dockworker issues? . . . it's the life that we're living today as dockworkers in whatever part of the world. . . we have to take a position on sexual freedom, like abortion, we also have to take positions on war. . . all aspects of life." Zarzuelo is particularly passionate about the issue of Palestinian liberation, which he has agitated around repeatedly in the organization: "we have the ports as a tool. We could boycott all the ships coming and going from Israel. . . It's another level of participation and consciousness, from an economic struggle for a dignified salary, to international solidarity between dockworkers, to intervene in global conflict. . . we can be determinative in some way." Suarez characteristically laid out his views in broader, more philosophical terms:

> The problem is that sometimes we are confused, as though we think that we are alright, that we have a good salary, that our kids go to the better paid school, and sometimes we think that the problems are very far way, and it's difficult for us look to the side . . . more than being dockworkers, we have to debate state politics, we have to debate education issues, we have to debate health issues, we have to debate housing issues . . . if you ask "Juan" if the union in Europe is steeped in problems of education, they don't have a position . . . if they are concerned with health, it's more and more restrictive. . . if they are

> worried about the hunger that exists in the world. Not long ago I saw the big mobilization organized in response to the terrorist attacks in France . . . but we didn't see these mobilizations at the continental level because of what's happening in the Middle East and the killing of millions. There's a need to sensitize the working class. . .

Nevertheless, interviews with Zarzuelo and Suarez also revealed the diversity of views *within* the IDC Latin America, particularly on the question of whether state ownership of the ports should be the organization's position or not. These debates in fact mirrored debates in recent years within the European region, giving the very different approaches taken towards port privatization in countries like Spain and Greece, which had produced difficulties developing robust solidarity actions in the Greek case, as noted in the previous chapter. From the Uruguayan experience of privatization, Suarez had come to the conclusion that "the only way to struggle against that was not through the state-private controversy but through saying this is a class issue. Let's organize ourselves and confront it because the problems are going to be the same whether or not we're state owned. . ." Zarzuelo, an Argentine who had also gone through the process of privatization in Buenos Aires and had been heavily involved in supporting the Paraguayan dockworkers in their struggle against privatization, saw it differently:

> the [European dockworkers] are fighters for their economic interests, but not for ideological issues, for who has to be in charge of the ports, for what the ports signify for the state. Do we want to unionize private ports or national ports? That discussion that is ideological does not happen. . . in Spain the ports were national but the same workers asked that they be privatized. How can you understand it?

Consequently, "We need another type of presence. . . another position, beyond the union. To debate who the ports should belong to, just like we debate who should own the telephones, communications, petroleum, and all the rest. . ." Both Zarzuelo and a key activist from Chile have sought to build closer ties with trade unionists in Cuba to deepen the discussion of these and other political issues.

Yet, shared political histories have not always helped the organization to grow. Interviews with leaders from the non-affiliated locals of the Union Portuaria in southern and central Chile suggested that legacies of imperialism and dictatorship have left some trade union activists on the left deeply skeptical of the possibilities for labor internationalism. As a leader from the south of Chile put it, "I'm not hopeful that the US is going to promote this. . . if we're honest, South America . . . is an exporter of primary materials. . . and they're not going to allow us to have another type of development. For that reason, I see it as very far away. . . it seems almost utopian to me . . . it's almost impossible." And a leader from central Chile, reflecting on the domestic dimension, argued that "If they [the employers] don't allow us to organize locally, they're not going to allow us to organize internationally. Imagine the tremendous power the workers could have at the global level! . . . That's why I'm convinced that they're never going to allow it. They'll kill us before they allow it."

Meeting the Challenges: Respondents' Proposals for Improving the Work of the IDC's Latin American Region

In addition to identifying challenges and opportunities for developing the IDC's Latin American regional organization, participants identified a number of concrete, practical steps the

organization could take to improve its work in the region. Their suggestions make clear that even within the existing set of constraints they face, they see substantial room for agency to improve the IDC's work in the region by effecting changes *within* the organization. In other words, as with the Colombian country case discussed in the following chapter, even within a context of low structural power in the region as a whole, activists see room for maneuver and believe that decisions taken within the existing set of constraints can be determinative. Four clear themes emerged from interviews: 1) dividing the region into sub-zones to allow for more frequent face-to-face meetings among activists, in response to the problems of cost and distance participants face, in order to strengthen the network and facilitate debate and collaboration, 2) more frequent and better communication between the central office and affiliate unions, as well as ensuring that communications reach base level activists, as in the case of Colombia, 3) developing principles of mutual aid and 4) developing a regional training program on practical workplace issues, politics and economics to inform strategy and facilitate a common understanding among participants.

Both the current and former regional coordinators for Latin America, as well as a key activist from Iquique in the north of Chile, proposed organizing the region into sub-zones as a practical solution to the problem of infrequent meetings and the attendant issues this had created for creating a cohesive group up-to-date on one another's issues and capable of organising responses. Meetings are currently held only once a year, for the annual assemblies, as a result of the long distances and high costs of travel within Latin America -- a region in which most unions are poorly resourced. Suarez proposed:

> unification shouldn't only be because of closeness or distance but a bit at the impulse of the cargo, from where it's being moved. . . first issue is we should create a Caribbean zone, a South American zone, and the South in two parts. We have the Pacific and the Atlantic. . . how can I go and ask a worker in Chile, from a trade union in Chile, in Huasco, to get to Santiago if they themselves have a very difficult situation, and then to bring him to . . . Uruguay, it's really difficult. So we have to have. . . a series of smaller organizations that generate debates to later carry more power . . . so we need . . . to divide ourselves in Latin America by zone and have regional coordinators.

Furthermore, he argued that in order to improve the quality of the annual assemblies, "the reality [of each union] has to be told beforehand. We must arrive already knowing one another". Smaller, more frequent meetings at the sub-regional level would allow for this: "we should make a process to say: in the coming year we have a global IDC meeting. During that time, we're going to have debates to arrive at that meeting." Both Zarzuelo and a leader from the north of Chile additionally proposed that the IDC institute a system of delegates by country who could travel and meet together in a consistent and frequent manner, with offices in each sub-region dedicated to sub-regional organizing.

Leaders from the affiliate unions in Chile and Colombia emphasized the need for better and more frequent communication between the central office for the region and the affiliate unions to better understand the issues that dockworkers in each country are facing. Zarzuelo agreed: "I arrive, I leave, and I appear again in two years. So the relationships cool off. . ." This finding in fact mirrors Lambert and Webster's (2001) observation on SIGTUR:

> The challenge of coordinating global action has served to highlight serious organisational weaknesses. Whilst unions are increasingly aware of the necessary local/global linkage in

> virtually every dispute, as yet there have been no moves to restructure and allocate resources. At present, union federations have only one international secretary running inadequately staffed and resourced International Departments. . . As a result of underresourcing, communications break down frequently and follow-up is often poor. As trade union internationalism moves towards coordinated action, this is a fatal flaw. Campaigns only happen if human and financial resources are properly allocated. This is perhaps the greatest of all challenges in building a new internationalism. (356)

Communication appears to be a particular problem for countries like Colombia in which contact with the IDC has tended to be centralized at the national level, impeding awareness of the organization and its work at the local union level where the real work of trade unionism occurs. Nevertheless, this issue appears to have improved in recent years, with local Buenaventura leader Jhon Jairo Castro attending the previous two assemblies in place of Cartagena-based national Union Portuaria leader Javier Marrugo.

Leaders from the north of Chile expressed a desire to see the IDC in Latin America adopt principles of mutual aid on the model of their national organization in Chile. A leader from Antofagasta acknowledged the difficulty of establishing principles of mutual aid because of the competition between ports for international cargo but emphasized that this ought to be overcome by establishing “bonds of trust” and an agreement that unions in competitor ports would agree not to receive cargo from ports in dispute. A leader from Iquique went a step further, arguing that the IDC should not just respond when there is a conflict but should be involved more proactively in supporting base level unions and coordinating among them. Beyond industrial action, like Zarzuelo, he noted pressure on national governments as a potential form of support.

Finally, both the current and former zone coordinators proposed that the region should develop a practical and political education and training program for Latin American dockworker union activists. As Zarzuelo put it, “the development of Latin America is just beginning. It has to be constant. Education is missing a lot, union education, training, that’s class conscious.” Suarez concurred, arguing that “it’s necessary that the workers understand the political world of today. It’s necessary that we understand the economic world. How are we going to be able to fight when on the other side they have policies raised 30-40 years ago? . . . We have to change that.” Interest in trainings within Latin America has concorded with the IDC-Europe’s interest in global health and safety, which the Spanish dockworkers union, La Coordinadora, is particularly well-positioned to assist on through its port health and safety institute in Tenerife (FUNESPOR) and initial trainings have been provided.

Conclusion

This chapter, by examining the context for regional trade unionism in the Global South, serves to *exceptionalize* the European context, which the industrial relations literature, with its heavily eurocentric biases, tends to treat as normative. Instead, ongoing legacies of Northern imperialism, carried forward through both economic and military means, and coupled with domestic rule by revanchist elites, produce conditions for trade unionism in most of the world that bear little resemblance to Europe. In fact, based on the International Trade Union Confederation’s 2017 Global Rights Index, South America as a region does substantially better than most other parts of the Global South, most notably, Asia and the Middle East, where nearly

all of the countries included in the Index are classified in the worst category, as having "No guarantee of rights" for workers. (Central America and the Caribbean, including Colombia, as discussed in the next chapter, fall into a similar category, while the picture is more mixed within Africa). In fact, nearly four dozen countries comprising nearly 2/3 of the global population fall into this category. Even the most strategically situated workers in these countries, including dockworkers, therefore, would consequently be expected to have a very low degree of structural power. Building a truly global labor movement will require proceeding from this basis.

The perspective from Latin America outlined in this chapter therefore suggests a key limitation of the literature on global unionism, which is overwhelmingly focused on North-North solidarity (particularly within Europe, but also with North America and Australia) and unidirectional solidarity from the Global North to the Global South. The dearth of studies on South-South solidarity, or critical perspectives on North-South solidarity from Southern trade unionists, consequently obscures some of the most fundamental issues for the development of global unionism -- namely, the practical and political challenges of building international trade union organizations in which poorly resourced and often very weak trade unions in the Global South can play a robust role. This chapter is an attempt to specify those challenges within a particular sectoral and regional context.

Participants identified the unevenness and general weakness of trade unions in Latin America, coupled with the long distances and high costs of travel, as key obstacles to the solidification of a regional, horizontal organizing body within the IDC of comparable strength to that found in Europe. Critically, however, participants discussed not only the nature of the challenges they face but also identified possibilities for collaboration, ranging from the economic to the organizational to the political. Key activists were particularly eloquent in their *political* critiques of the Northern-based IDC and its Northern union affiliates and argued strongly for expanded political horizons which they believe Latin American dockworkers are positioned to offer to the organization as a whole. This perspective therefore helps to move us past the tendency to view Southern trade unionists as passive recipients of Northern solidarity – a tendency identified by Armbruster-Sandoval (2005b) and Seidman (2007) – and towards a view of Southern trade unionists as potentially active proponents of a more radical and transformative vision of global unionism. This perspective is further explored in the conclusion to the dissertation that follows.

Chapter 5

Worker Power, Trade Union Strategy and International Connections: A Cross-National Comparison of Dockworker Unionism in Latin America

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined the IDC's regional organization within Latin America, noting both substantial obstacles and potential opportunities for developing a more powerful regional-level network. I found that various aspects of the political economy of Latin America as a region and of the individual countries composing the region resulted in substantially lower degrees of structural power among dockworkers relative to Europe, complicating efforts to develop a comparable regional-level organization. In this chapter, I turn my attention to the national level within Latin America, utilizing case studies of recent disputes in Chile and Colombia to examine national and transnational trade union strategy in countries in which dockworkers had disparate degrees of structural power within a regional context of low structural power. Just as I found considerable impacts on regional-level organization as a result of dockworkers' lower degree of structural power in Latin America as a whole in Chapter 4, in this chapter, I find considerable impacts on strategic decisions at the national level as a result of disparate degrees of structural power in the Chilean and Colombian cases.

While Chapter 4 provides an opportunity to analyze regional-level labor internationalism in the South in relation to the regional-level labor internationalism in the North detailed in Chapter 2, Chapter 5 parallels Chapter 3, which utilized case studies of recent disputes in Portugal, Greece and England. In Chapter 3, I found that despite sustained attacks on dockworker unions in Europe in recent decades, European dockworkers continue to exercise a substantial degree of power at the point of production as a result of the broader socio-political context in which they find themselves. Under these conditions, a strategy combining industrial action and community support at the port in dispute with industrial action at the port of international allies resulted in victory. However, success was first predicated on the union's ability to work around bureaucratic blockages at the national level and political alignment with international allies. In Latin America, conversely, because of the unequal degree of structural power available to dockworkers in Chile and Colombia, the array of strategic possibilities available to them differed substantially, resulting in highly divergent strategic orientations with highly divergent outcomes. Analysis of the more constrained context for trade unionism in Latin America in general, and in countries like Colombia in particular, then, acts as a critical corrective to overly sanguine prognostications of labor internationalism with an unexamined Northern bias.

Dockworker Power and Strategy in Chile and Colombia

In recent years, dockworkers in Chile and Colombia have been engaged in major labor disputes with wide-ranging impacts for labor movement revitalization in both countries. Nevertheless, despite the similarities of sector and region, they have pursued highly divergent strategies to achieve their goals. In Chile, dockworkers developed a strategy I term *class struggle unionism*. This strategy focused on exercising power at the point of production through a series of coordinated national strikes in the ports, assisted by local community allies and international

labor allies, who threatened a blockade of Chilean cargo. Their actions resulted in a stunning victory in which the dockworkers' national organization – despite lacking legal recognition – compelled the government to engage in national tripartite collective bargaining at the sectoral level for the first time since the Allende era. Conversely, in Colombia's largest port, Buenaventura, dockworkers pursued a strategy of *human rights unionism*. This strategy focused on exercising power outside of the workplace, relying on international normative pressure and support, along with national legal complaints, to fight for basic union recognition and a first contract since the early 1990's. Their efforts resulted in a first contract for a small group of workers at the port -- an important, though limited, victory. How can we account for the very different strategies of unions organizing in the same region who share a common position in the economic system?

As noted in the Introduction to this dissertation, dockworkers present an ideal case for research into questions of worker power, trade union strategy and internationalism because of the central role they play in the global circulation of commodities and capital (Bonacich and Wilson 2008) and the existence of two global union organizations that seek to represent their interests (Gentile 20107). The dominant theory of worker power in global labor studies, first proposed by Erik Olin Wright (2000) and later developed by Beverly Silver (2003), would suggest that dockworkers in general possess a high degree of "structural power", and, more specifically, "workplace bargaining power", which "accrues to workers who are enmeshed in tightly integrated production processes, where a localized work stoppage in a key node can cause disruptions on a much wider scale than the stoppage itself" (13) In other words, workplace bargaining power is the power workers possess at the point of production, to be leveraged through industrial action, compelling employers (or the state) to reach an agreement. Dockworkers in countries like Chile and Colombia, therefore, are predicted to have a high degree of workplace bargaining power as a result of their countries' dependence on exporting primary goods through their ports. Nevertheless, in only one of the two cases – Chile – were dockworkers actually able to make use of their position in the economic system by stopping the flow of commodities and capital through the country's ports. In Colombia, on the other hand, dockworkers relied on external alliances – what Silver would characterize as "associational power"' -- to compel employers to come to the bargaining table without exercising power on the shop-floor.

The cases, then, call attention to the limitations of the existing framework for worker power which views "structural power" as the "power that results simply from the location of workers within the economic system" while "associational power" results from "the formation of collective organizations of workers' in trade unions and political parties" (Olin Wright 2000: 962). This framework dichotomizes structural power as economic and associational power as social and political. However, it also dichotomizes structural power as a set of structural background conditions and associational power as the agentic social and political actions workers take proactively, thereby reducing structure itself exclusively to the economy. Consequently, Silver's theoretical framework falls short in explaining cross-national differences among workers who would seem to share a similar degree of power at the point of production but nevertheless pursue very different strategies.

Alternate explanations for strategic differences -- the varieties of capitalism approach, and various approaches in the social movements literature --however, bend the stick too far in the other direction, overemphasizing socio-political factors at the expense of factors rooted in the

economy. The varieties of capitalism literature (Frege and Kelly 2004) emphasizes state institutions, national cultures and path dependency with regards to modes of contention, making broad national-level claims to explain cross-national differences. The social movements literature – whether of the resource mobilization, political process or framing varieties – similarly focuses on a range of extra-economic factors, from the availability of external allies to political opportunities to cognitive processes (Hetland and Goodwin 2013). In both cases, the neglect of workplace and industry-level factors structuring workers' ability to engage in shop-floor contention make it difficult to explain why workers in different worksites or economic sectors within the same country often pursue very different strategies despite shared national histories and instituations, for example, as in the case of West Coast and East Coast dockworkers in the United States in Kimeldorf's classic (1988) study.

The difficulty of explaining intra-national workplace or sectoral-level variation without centering the role of economy in effect mirrors a key drawback of Silver's approach: the difficulty of explaining cross-national variation among workers in the same sector without centering the role of state and society. While Silver arguably over-emphasizes the role of economic factors in explaining trade union strategy, then, the varieties of capitalism and social movements approaches arguably underemphasize them. Instead, I argue that like associational power, structural power has roots in state and society. I therefore propose an expanded framework for structural power that takes account of its simultaneously economic, social and political foundations, drawing on insights from economic sociology, which emphasizes that markets never exist in isolation but instead are constituted through social and political institutions (Polanyi 2001). This expanded framework provides greater analytical leverage for explaining why workers who are presumed to share a high degree of power at the point of production as a result of their common position in the economic system may nevertheless pursue different strategies in different socio-political contexts.

I demonstrate the utility of this expanded framework through the Chilean and Colombian dockworker cases. Fundamentally, I argue that where socio-political dimensions preserve or enhance worker power at the point of production, as in Chile, workers are more likely to develop strategies like class struggle unionism. Conversely, where socio-political factors mitigate the strength of worker power at the point of production, as in Colombia, workers are more likely to develop strategies like human rights unionism that depend on external alliances. This finding contrasts with Almeida's (2008) work on El Salvador, which found that movements radicalized in the face of increased repression. Instead, in Colombia, trade union activists have pivoted to a more politically benign discourse and contentious repertoire of human rights unionism.

In the Chilean case, the relatively normalized context for trade unionism since the return to democracy, coupled with the maintenance of a union-controlled hiring hall system, allowed dockworkers to exploit the leverage provided by their central position in the economic system. In Buenaventura, Colombia, on the other hand, dockworkers' power at the point of production was weakened through a climate of pervasive violence carried out with impunity by paramilitary successor groups; the almost complete absence of labor law enforcement; privatization of the country's ports; and a large surplus labor force resulting from the armed conflict in the surrounding countryside. These socio-political factors therefore tempered their ability to exploit the leverage provided by their central position in the economic system, leading them to rely on external alliances and legal complaints.

Nevertheless, given Colombian dockworkers' weak power at the point of production, the decision to target for organizing a group of workers who possessed a relatively greater degree of shop-floor power as a result of their specific locations in the workplace –skilled machine operators with permanent contracts -- made a critical difference. In a similar vein, in Chile, where dockworkers possessed a greater degree of power at the point of production to begin with, their position in the economic system was leveraged effectively with a well-conceived shop-floor strategy targeting export-oriented ports handling primary commodities at key moments, while counting on allied workers in other ports to refuse to handle diverted cargo.

These findings on the divergent strategies of dockworkers in Chile and Colombia have important implications for global union organizations seeking to represent Latin American workers. I concur with Von Bulow's (2009: 21) finding that "there is no single type of labor internationalism waiting to be discovered. To understand the potential of and the obstacles to labor collective action across borders, it is crucial to consider the complex interactions between dynamic domestic political contexts and labor's embeddedness in new multiscale and cross-sectoral networks". The cases, then, are suggestive of the wide variety of global union organization responses – from international blockades to normative pressure to financial support -- that may be appropriate to different local and national contexts. Rather than adopting a one size fits all model, I conclude that global union organizations should instead develop flexible approaches to international solidarity and trade union strategy responsive to the needs of workers who share a similar position in the economic system and yet possess divergent degrees of power at the point of production as a result of socio-political factors.

Theoretical Frameworks: Structure, Agency and Worker Power

In Silver's (2003) framework, associational power, in the form of external alliances, tends to be viewed as a compensatory form of power to be used when workers have weak power at the point of production. Nevertheless, Silver argues that the political and social bases of associational power are continually being eroded by neoliberalism. As I found in this study, however, the power that workers enjoy at the point of production may also be eroded through political and social forces because shop-floor power itself has foundations in state and society as well as the economy. As noted in the Introduction, then, this dissertation therefore builds on the insights of Antonio Gramsci and Nicos Poulantzas with respect to the simultaneously economic, political and social roots of class formation and political strategy (Przeworski 1977) and applies them to discussions of the roots of worker power and trade union strategy.

Because of the central role of the state in reproducing the conditions for the accumulation of capital, international trade and economic growth, conflicts between labor and capital always necessarily involve the state. State and society, therefore, are no mere contexts for the exercise of worker power; they are deeply imbricated in the *constitution* of worker's power both at the point of production and in the society at large. The state, in particular, constitutes workers' power at the point of production by defining the rules of engagement of class struggle via repressive means (use of the police, army, courts and prisons) as well as generative means (laws governing collective bargaining and industrial action). In order to be successful, worker strategy must therefore be responsive to the conjuncture of state, economy and society that constitutes their power at specific times and places.

Anner's (2011) influential book on worker power, trade union strategy and labor internationalism in Latin America builds on Silver's (2003) framework, in combination with insights from political process theory and Gary Gereffi's Global Value Chain framework. Anner argues that state contexts determine whether or not unions see a need to pursue new strategies, as a result of retrenchment of industrial relations systems, while position in the economic system (location in buyer-driver or producer-driven value chains) determines workers' power at the point of production. Yet the breakdown of established industrial relations systems – as in Anner's work – is just one of many ways in which state action or inaction shapes worker strategy.

Stillerman (2017), for example, examines industrial labor disputes in historical perspective in Chile and finds that the ability of workers located in economically strategic positions to resist their employers in fact depended heavily on a range of state actions, including reclassification of skilled workers, implementation of public-private partnerships and "legal provisions permitting union busting" (113). Stillerman therefore finds that Silver "underestimates the state's role in shaping investment and labor policy, especially in developing countries that underwent ISI" (113), as well as in "establishing income policies, or setting the terms of workers' legal action" (99) – with important implications for understanding worker power and strategy.

Santibáñez Rebolledo (2016), writing on dockworker labor contention in the early 20th century in Northern Chile, challenges the notion that dockworkers historically have had anything more than purely abstract, theoretical power at the point of production as a result of their position in the economic system. Instead, in practice, the state systemically constrained dockworkers' ability to exercise power at the point of production by utilizing the armed forces and prisoners as strike-breakers, engaging in violent repression of striking workers and allowing employers to create blacklists (211). Gill (2016), in her study of working-class organization in the Colombian river port city of Barrancabermeja, similarly emphasizes the role of state-sanctioned violence as "one of the major tools that forges the development of capitalist relations." (8)

It is this more capacious understanding of the role of the state in shaping worker power and trade union strategy that I develop in this paper. Like Anner (2011), I found that workers situated in the same industry often pursue different strategies in different national contexts. However, while Anner argues that this results from workers' agency in the form of union political orientations (2011: 11, 167), I instead found that divergent strategies ultimately resulted from the socio-political differences shaping workers' ability to exercise power at the point of production. In particular, I highlight the role of pervasive, state-sanctioned violence – that is, violence carried out by extra-state actors with near impunity -- and the absence of labor law enforcement in the Colombian case, which, taken together, tempered the impact of dockworkers' position in the economic system, discouraging workers from taking industrial action. As a consequence, Colombian dockworkers pivoted towards human rights unionism, a relatively safe strategy dependent on external alliances*, despite their predecessor union's more militant history*. Chilean dockworkers, conversely, maintained their shop-floor power within a more normalized socio-political context for trade unionism. Consequently, they had more strategic possibilities open to them and ultimately chose a strategy of class struggle unionism *as a result of their union's political history*. In other words, *contra* Anner (2011), union political histories did not carry equal weight in all contexts, making an impact only in the case in which workers' power at the point of production – and, therefore, a wider range of strategic possibilities – was maintained.

Research Design

In total, forty-one in-country interviews were conducted with key activists and union leaders. In-country interview-based research was carried out in early 2015 with dockworker unionists active in the Chilean port cities of Talcahuano (6), Valparaíso (4), San Antonio (2), Mejillones (1), Antafogasta (1) and Iquique (6). For the Colombian case, in-country interviews were carried out in early 2015 in the cities of Cartagena (3) and Buenaventura (5), with additional Colombia-specific interviews carried out in the Netherlands (1), England (1) and Denmark (4) in 2016 to better understand the significant international dimensions of the case. Additional interviews conducted in Argentina (1), Uruguay (1), France, (2), and Spain (3) in 2014 and 2015 contributed to my analysis of international solidarity in both cases. The smaller number of Colombia-specific interviews (14) reflects the fact that this case focuses on organizing efforts in a single port, while the Chilean case, with 20 country-specific interviews, was a nationwide strike. Interview-based research in both countries was supplemented by the large body of primary and secondary literature by scholars, journalists, NGO's and political organizations on the cases.

As noted above, dockworker unions provide a key test case for understanding worker power because national economies depend on them for participation in the global capitalist system – particularly in economies dependent on the export of primary goods. Yet, while Chile and Colombia share the characteristics of being middle-income, export-oriented South American countries with highly neoliberal orientations -- of countries in Latin America, only Chile and Colombia make it in the top-tier rankings of the right-wing Heritage Foundation's (2016) index of "economic freedom" -- significant socio-political differences in each country mean that, in practice, Colombian dockworkers' shop-floor power is quite weak. While the International Trade Union Confederation's (2015) Global Rights Index ranked Chile in the middle of the scale as a country with "regular violations of [labor] rights", Colombia was the sole South American country to receive a ranking at the low end of the scale as a country with "no guarantee of [labor] rights". By holding position in the economic system constant while selecting countries in which the socio-political conditions for trade unionism are highly divergent, my research design allows me to pinpoint the role of state and society in shaping worker power and strategy.

Colombia: International Pressure to Win Basic Union Rights

Colombia has historically had a relatively weak labor movement, in part due to long-standing armed conflict and high levels of state repression consistently assisted by the United States (Bergquist 1986). As Rochlin (2011: 199) argues:

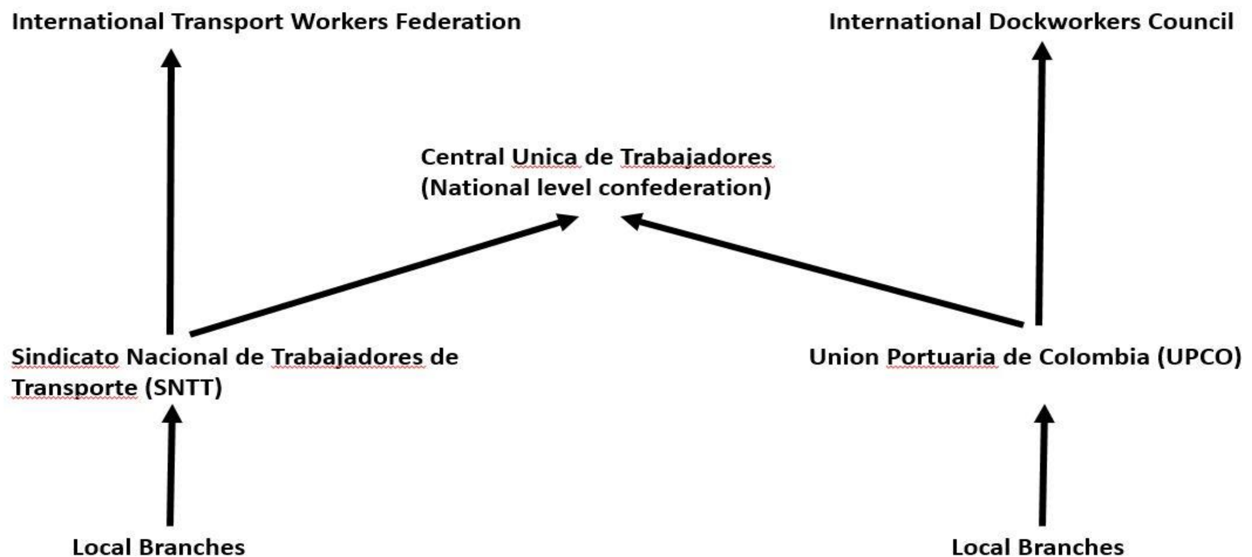
> A Modern nation state that monopolized the use of force, institutionalized conflict resolution mechanisms, a state presence across the country, political legitimacy, and notions of balance and human rights have proven to be illusive for Colombia. This is true not only with respect to comparing Colombia to the North, but to Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, Chile and other states that have achieved some key components of the Modernist ideal.

Though strong labor unions have existed historically, particularly in export-oriented sectors such as petroleum and the ports, gains have been substantially eroded since the 1970's. Consequently, Rochlin (2011: 199) finds that "Colombian labor struggles within Latin America's most violent,

right-wing and criminalized economy". This is even more true in Buenaventura, an isolated city with a 90% Afro-Colombian population long neglected by the Colombian state, in which paramilitary successor groups wield tremendous power (Centro Nacional de Memória Histórica 2015).

Nevertheless, Colombia is highly dependent on maritime transport, with 96.1% of imports entering the country by sea and 98.7% of exports leaving by sea (Hamburg Sud) through six major seaports. There are two legitimate and competing national unions engaged in organizing workers in the ports sector, the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores del Transporte (SNTT) and the Unión Portuaria de Colombia (UPCO), in addition to a much larger number of what are essentially labor subcontractors masquerading as unions, which have not been included in this study. Both organizations are affiliated to the national CUT labor confederation. At the international level, the SNTT is an affiliate of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), while the UPCO is an affiliate of the International Dockworkers Council (IDC). Please see Appendix 1 for a list of trade union acronyms.

Figure 1: Colombian Trade Union Relationships



The context for trade union work is extremely difficult given the climate of state-sanctioned violence. With regard to the ports, the national president of the UPCO reported:

> I haven't seen threats that have led to deaths. But if that did happen, the Unión Portuaria couldn't do anything. . . Buenaventura and Urabá are really dangerous – there's drug trafficking, guerrillas, paramilitaries. If one day one of those groups tells us not to go there anymore because they will kill us, we couldn't go anymore. We don't have the resources, the vehicles, nothing.

Lower-level violence and threats are even more prevalent. Buenaventura is in fact the most dangerous major city in the country. A Human Rights Watch Investigation "found a city where entire neighborhoods were dominated by powerful paramilitary successor groups. . . who restrict

residents' movements, recruit their children, extort their businesses, and routinely engage in horrific acts of violence against anyone who defies their will", including murder via disappearances or dismemberment at "chop-up houses" (Schoening 2014). Union leaders reported in interviews that most members had sent away one or more children to live in other parts of the country or join the army to avoid forcible recruitment into armed groups. With the exception of the recent militarization of the city since 2014, the federal government is notable for its near total absence in terms of social provision and enforcement of the law, including labor law (Centro Nacional de Memória Histórica 2015). A national survey of dockworkers carried out by the UPCO found that while 50% of those surveyed had a positive opinion of the labor movement, 70% of those surveyed reported being afraid to join a union out of fear of losing their jobs due to anti-union practices in the ports.

Nevertheless, from 1959-1993, Colombian dockworkers had one of the strongest labor unions in the country, in terms of employment stability, wages and benefits (Jiménez Pérez and Delgado Moreno 2008). Colombia's ports were owned and operated by the state through the company COLPUERTOS. The law privatizing the ports paved the way for third-party contracting of labor services and severe informalization, destroying the union. The UPCO has estimated from its survey that today, approximately 4000 port workers are employed directly, while approximately 12000 are subcontracted workers – the vast majority of whom are Afro-Colombian -- laboring in precarious situations of informality. Leaders from both unions concurred that subcontracting is the root problem they face in organizing (interviews).

Consequently, in addition to being the most dangerous major city in the country – and despite hosting the country's largest port – Buenaventura is the country's poorest major city. Because of the ongoing armed conflict in the surrounding countryside -- Buenaventura is the national leader in terms of internal displacement (Schoening 2014) -- there is an enormous industrial reserve army in the city and some workers are so desperate that they sleep on the street outside of the port terminals waiting for work. Nearly 80% of its 375,000 residents live in poverty (Nicholls and Sánchez-Garzoli 2011) and 40% are unemployed (Schoening 2014). As a national UPCO leader put it, "our [historical union's] disappearance from Buenaventura made [higher economic] stratas 3, 4, 5, 6 disappear from the city." A second national leader argued that historically, "The union was even strong outside of the port in Buenaventura – they determined the labor relations outside of the port. The union would fight for the rights of other workers. When that union disappeared with the privatization, subcontracting and precarity were seen not only in the port but in the whole city. . . Before the business owners didn't dare do what they do now." Today, basic amenities like regular access to potable water are sorely lacking, and the average life expectancy of fifty-one is far lower than the national average (Nicholls and Sánchez-Garzoli 2011).

The workforce is dominated by subcontractor agencies which allow the terminal operators to evade their responsibility to provide mandated social benefits and permanent contracts, providing them access to a flexible labor force that can be expanded or contracted on a day to day basis, making it much more difficult for workers to organize (Nicholls and Sánchez-Garzoli 2011). A small minority of skilled workers at the port – employed on permanent contracts as machine operators -- have somewhat better wages and working conditions than the vast majority of casual laborers, but wages and conditions are still very poor, as is their job security. Work shifts can be as long as thirty-six hours, and wage theft is rampant (Bacon 2014).

Overtime, holiday, night work and weekend wages are not paid – nor are workers paid when work has to stop because of the rain, even though Buenaventura is one of the rainiest places in the world (Aricapa 2006). Since the port was privatized, there have been more than thirty reported on-the-job fatalities and many times more serious injuries (Nicholls and Sánchez-Garzoli 2011.)

Unión Portuaria de Colombia

The UPCO was formed in 2002 by a group of retired Cartagena dockworkers who had been active in the former national union of COLPUERTOS, the state-owned ports company which was dissolved in the early 1990's after the privatization of the ports. Between the early 1990's and the founding of the UPCO chapter in Buenaventura in 2008, there was limited union activity at the port, none of it ultimately successful (interviews). In 1997, dockworkers participated in a weeklong citywide strike for an eight-hour workday: "There were some benefits. But it didn't last long. Because the agreement that the union had, they had bad advice, and they didn't sign it with the big companies but with the small cooperatives [illegal subcontractors] . . . Also, some of the union leaders became very close with the *Sociedad Portuaria* and got benefits for themselves." (Interview, local UPCO leader, Buenaventura) As a result, "the damage had been done. And it was difficult to regain the workers' trust."

From 2009, the UPCO began a campaign of grassroots organizing, including union trainings, assemblies, marches and other base-building activities in Buenaventura (interviews). Organizing activities culminated in a mass mobilization in 2012 in support of 120 dockworkers who had gone on strike over the issues of subcontracting and wages and working conditions of the directly employed (interviews). In the short term, the strike was a success, with the UPCO reaching an agreement on labor formalization with major terminal operators. However, the victory was short-lived as false employer promises were used to coax workers away from the union. After another strike six months later, the employer refused to negotiate and the government declined to intervene. The company issued threats and formed its own company union, canceling the contracts of subcontractors who employed union activists. Many activists were blacklisted from working at the terminal (Hawkins 2013). As a result, "Starting with 120 members, we ended up with just 19. The pressure was really tough. The ministry did nothing. With those 19 comrades, we started doing consciousness raising. And little by little we regained credibility." (Interview, local UPCO leader, Buenaventura).

These experiences presented the union with a key dilemma: "either you go to a strike, which we don't have the strength to do, and they call us terrorists, or we go to a tribunal and it takes three, four or even five years. *The problem is the employers and the government. They're both against us*." (Interview, local UPCO leader, Buenaventura, emphasis added) Consequently, the union's strategy has focused on putting pressure on the primary operators and government via legal complaints and international pressure to force the companies to get rid of the estimated 240 subcontractors in the port; directly hire workers; engage in collective bargaining; and compel the government to enforce labor law in the sector (interviews). This strategy has been facilitated, in part, through the campaign to include and subsequently enforce the labor provisions of the Free Trade Agreement between Colombia and the United States, which has provided ample opportunities to work with organizations from the United States, Colombia's major trading partner.

In 2015, given the difficulties of organizing the subcontracted workforce, the UPCO in Buenaventura sought to organize permanent machine operators at the TCBUEN terminal of the port. IDC Latin America Zone Coordinator Mauricio Zarzuelo, from Buenos Aires, participated actively in the campaign and, along with Ricardo Suárez, president of the IDC's Uruguayan affiliate and Zarzuelo's successor, supported the UPCO in their negotiations with the employer. Nevertheless, as the UPCO was pivoting towards organizing permanent workers, the SNTT pivoted from the Caribbean coast to Buenaventura. Ultimately, though the UPCO was successful in signing a landmark agreement with the Sociedad Portuaria and TECSA in July, 2015 (IDC 2015), the agreement fell apart after the SNTT succeeded in hiring a key national organizer from the UPCO and affiliating nearly all of the UPCO's new members (interviews).

Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de Transporte

The Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de Transporte (SNTT) is a national union representing workers in the transportation sector. In 2004, at its Congress, the CUT, a national labor confederation, took the decision to prioritize the formation of sectoral unions in Colombia through the merger of smaller company-level unions (interview). In the transportation sector, the FNV, the largest union in the Netherlands, provided funding for this initiative in a project carried out in conjunction with the ITF (interview). Though the aim of the project was to amalgamate existing CUT-affiliated unions, the SNTT has primarily expanded via new organizing efforts (interview).

The SNTT signed the union's first collective bargaining agreement for dockworkers at the COMPAS terminal in the Caribbean Port of Cartagena in 2012 – a first for Colombian dockworkers since 1993 (interview). Dockworkers active in SNTT in Cartagena emphasized that they had been successful in their efforts because they focused on organizing permanent workers at the terminal, with an eye to building power at the point of production that could be leveraged to organized subcontracted workers over the long-run (interview). They contrasted their efforts with those of the Unión Portuaria in Cartagena: "about three years ago, they had a work stoppage here. . . it wasn't successful. They fired them all" and "the rest of the subcontracted workers didn't support them" because "to make a labor movement, you need political power within a company and they don't have it [as a result of being subcontracted]. They can't call a manager to negotiate" (interviews).

In 2015, the SNTT began organizing in earnest in Buenaventura, during the UPCO's historic negotiations with TECSA, with significant assistance from the ITF and, as noted above, edged their way into negotiations, ultimately affiliating most of the UP's members (interviews). The SNTT accused the UPCO of myriad internal problems regarding organizational transparency and democracy, as well as the casual worker led organization's ability to adequately represent permanent workers at the port (interviews). The UPCO saw it differently, accusing the SNTT of opportunistically turning up at the last minute to poach their members using superior resources from international allies without having put in the long years of difficult, dangerous organizing work on the ground in Buenaventura that the UPCO had (interviews).

In April, 2016, the ITF held an international conference on port work in Cartagena, inviting affiliates from Northern Europe to participate. Danish dockworkers from the union 3F agreed to assist the SNTT in putting pressure on Maersk, a Danish company that has regular

consultation meetings with the Danish dockworkers union and that had acquired the TECSA terminal in Buenaventura the previous year (interviews). As a result of on-the-ground organizing efforts in Buenaventura, coupled with Maersk's interest in preserving its reputation in Denmark as an ethical employer, the company signed an agreement with the SNTT in July, 2016. However, the union has struggled to effectively enforce the contract in Buenaventura without bringing further power to bear at the point of production (interviews).

Colombian Case Analysis

Because of severe erosion of dockworkers' shop-floor power as a result of socio-political factors, both the SNTT and the UPCO have pursued a human rights strategy in their efforts to organize and raise standards for port workers in Colombia. In essence, socio-political conditions have all but foreclosed the possibility of other strategies for the present. Dockworkers' lack of viable alternative strategic pathways in this highly-constrained context is most clearly evidenced by the total defeat suffered by earlier organizing efforts (in 1997 and 2012) which had adopted a more militant approach involving mass organizing and industrial action. The injection of significant funds from the ITF's Dutch affiliate, as well as ITF training in professionalization and support from the Danish affiliate 3F, have given the SNTT a major advantage in implementing this strategy in Buenaventura.

Dockworkers' shop-floor power in Buenvantura has been eroded primarily as a result of state-sanctioned violence, lack of control of the hiring hall as a result of privatization and absence of labor law enforcement. Colombian dockworkers consequently labor at the mercy of predatory subcontractors, which, coupled with the size of the industrial reserve army due to the armed conflict in the surrounding countryside, has undermined their ability to exercise power at the point of production. In contrast to Chile, and *contra* Almeida (2008), repression in Colombia has tended to lead toward diminished participation and recourse to the relatively safe strategy of human rights unionism -- rather than increased participation and shop-floor militancy -- because of an expectation that the state will not intervene to enforce even the most basic legal norms. Yet, despite the convergence of the unions' strategies as a result of structural constraints, the SNTT met with greater success as a result of its long-term decision to target permanent workers who, in an environment of exceptionally low shop-floor power for dockworkers in general, have a higher degree of shop-floor power that can be utilized to pressure the employer.

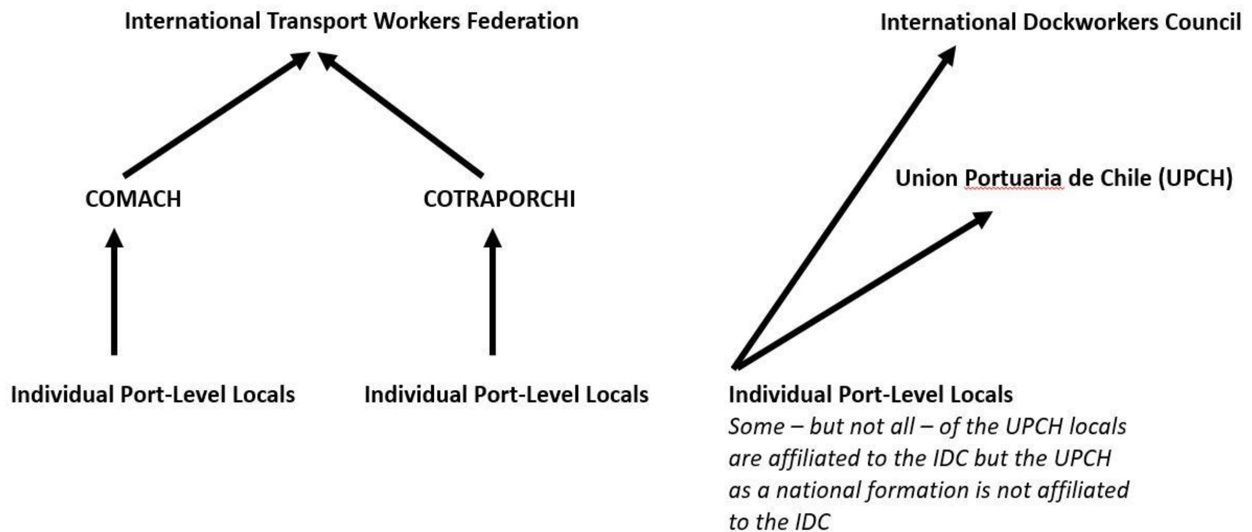
Chile: A National Strike for Sectoral-Level Unionism

In contrast to Colombia, Chile historically had a relatively strong labor movement which was the most radical in Latin America (Bergquist 1986; Palacios-Valladares 2010). Close ties to left-wing parties fostered a culture of class struggle unionism with often explicitly political aims. But during the seventeen-year-long Pinochet dictatorship, trade union activists were among the most likely to be disappeared, imprisoned or tortured and labor law was rewritten to the detriment of workers. With the return to democracy in the early 1990's, hopes were high for labor movement revitalization, but the pacted transition, which ensured a significant degree of continuity with the Pinochet era, undermined the possibility of mass labor unrest (Winn 2004). Nevertheless, Bank Muñoz (2017) argues that although legal changes during the dictatorship have in many ways undermined the labor movement's power, they have counterintuitively made

it easier to form unions and maintain accountability to the membership, allowing unions to establish strong internal democracy and militancy. Additionally, in contrast to Colombia, state-sanctioned violence is relatively rare and labor law is enforceable. As a result, recent years have witnessed an upsurge of successful labor activism in many sectors, including mining, warehousing, retail and education.

Chile's economy is highly dependent on the country's thirty-six ports, which handle around 95% of the country's foreign commerce. A large majority of Chile's dockworkers are affiliated to the autonomous and decentralized Unión Portuaria de Chile (UPCH), a national organization based on the principles of direct action and mutual aid that groups together distinct left political tendencies at the local port level. (Despite the coincidence of name, the Unión Portuaria de Colombia and the Unión Portuaria de Chile are entirely separate organizations.) Individual port locals from the North have affiliated to the International Dockworkers Council, though the UPCH as a whole is not affiliated. Non-UPCH dockworker unions, from the COMACH and COTRAPORCHI federations, are a minority in the country and are strongest at the Port of Valparaíso. They are affiliated to the International Transport Workers Federation. Representing a minority of the country's dockworkers, they are seen by the UPCH as "yellow unions". This view was confirmed through interviews with leaders from the COMACH: "we are service providers . . . we see ourselves as a business" and "we have a strong and good relationship with the employers . . . unfortunately in San Antonio and the 8th Region, they win everything with conflict."

Figure 2: Chilean Trade Union Relationships



Legal changes to the status of port unions during the dictatorship, such as ending the system of registered work permits and instituting a system of casual labor (Gaudichaud 2015) -- coupled with the partial privatization of the ports beginning in 1998 – threatened to erode the shop-floor power of dockworkers. Today, there are approximately 8000 port workers in Chile, of which the majority are casual workers. Nevertheless, in contrast to Colombia, dockworkers have in fact maintained a significant degree of power at the point of production through maintaining the *nombrada*, essentially a union-controlled hiring hall (interviews).

In the past fifteen years, Chile's port unions have gradually begun to reorganize themselves at the national level, propelled by the Bío-Bío region in the south (interviews). Many leaders had a history of struggle against the dictatorship or are from families that had been active in resisting the dictatorship (interviews). Family histories within the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), the principal extra-parliamentary revolutionary party in Chile in the 1970's, were formative for many leaders (interviews). Today, the leadership in the southern Bío-Bío region and in the North are closely connected to the Izquierda Libertaria, an anti-capitalist formation that is strong within the student movement, while the leadership at San Antonio formerly had ties to the center-left Socialist Party, and the leadership at Mejillones were closely connected to a small Trotskyist party (interviews).

The UPCH, divided into five regional branches, was formed at the national level in 2011 following several years of organizing work. The UPCH has no executive officers but operates through a system of *voceros*, or spokespeople, who are only empowered to speak on decisions taken by dockworkers at their local assemblies, with regional and national level meetings typically taking place every 1-2 months (interviews). Additionally, the UPCH is steadfastly a "sindicato de hecho" – a de facto union – not a "sindicato de derecho" – a legally recognized union (interviews). Proponents of the "sindicato de hecho" model point to the greater ease of coopting and corrupting union leaders from legally recognized unions, as well as a range of tactical benefits of operating outside the bounds of labor law (interviews). UPCH activists are united by an analysis of their power at the point of production: "the economy of this country passes through our hands. So if we stop work, the economy of this country stops. The foreign clients begin to get hungry." (Interview with leader from the south)

The most recent chapter of the Chilean dockworkers' struggle began in March of 2013 at the northern Port of Angamos in the city of Mejillones. The UPCH affiliate at Mejillones had been engaged in a fight for the right, not recognized in Chilean law, to negotiate a collective agreement covering both permanent and casual workers at the port (interviews). Among the key issues was the right to a paid half-hour lunch break – the *media hora* -- as mandated under Chilean law, a right that was not being respected by employers (interviews). The port in Mejillones is highly strategic because it is the principal port for CODELCO (Osorio, 2013), the state-owned copper company, nationalized under Allende, which is the top producer of copper in the world and major source of revenue for the Chilean state. Nevertheless, Mejillones historically had much less of a union legacy than other ports (interviews). The strategic position of the port, the fight for the *media hora* and the opportunity to build the union in Mejillones were key factors in the other UPCH affiliates' decision to support them (interviews).

In total, the first national strike for the UPCH lasted for three weeks and 85% of the country's ports participated (interviews). The ITF-affiliated non-UPCH unions did not participate and accepted diverted cargo, undercutting the UPCH's ability to exert pressure (interviews). The strike threatened the Chilean fruit harvest, a key export industry, as well as retailers facing shortages of basic imported consumer goods (Ogalde 2013), with the national Chamber of Commerce estimating losses at $2 billion. An agreement was subsequently reached with the employers to pay a large settlement to each worker for not having respected the *media hora* (interviews). Ultimately, the employers did not follow through on the agreement, setting the stage for the conflict in 2014 (interviews).

Once again, the strike began with the UPCH affiliate in Mejillones. Hundreds of police officers were bussed in in an effort to keep the port operational during the strike (interviews). In response, dockworkers organized a round-the-clock blockade of the port, physically blocking both cargo and potential strike-breakers from the ITF-affiliated unions with their bodies (interviews). A dockworker from the north who was sent to assist with the strike in Mejillones reported:

> Our work was mainly to prevent them from being able to move cargo inside the port, and to prevent the train from entering. . . it arrives three times a day with copper from all the mines in the north of Chile. . . thousands and thousands of tons a day. . . We had to go threaten the owner of the railway with the workers. I myself went, and I said, 'if you try again to bring the train inside the port, you're going to become a murderer and I'm going to become a martyr because I will throw myself on the trainline'. And that impacted him so much that he never tried again to get the train in or the police force or anything.

In other words, while employer repression in response to industrial action in Colombia led to defeat and a pivot away from shop-floor action, in Chile, the more normalized context meant that workers were able to successfully resist on the shop-floor – at least in the short-term.

Leaders from the UPCH across Chile understood that the most important victory in the strike would not be monetary but would instead be in obligating the government to engage in national sectoral-level collective bargaining for the first time since before the dictatorship, as well as winning a joint agreement for permanent and casual workers – all *in spite of* the law (interviews). Additional clashes with police, a pre-existing mutual aid agreement and the decision to continue the fight for the *media hora* -- as well as individual port issues -- led the other ports to join the strike in January (interviews). Negotiations at the national level came to focus on the issue of the *media hora* – both implementing it in the present and paying back wages owed. External support from student activists, as well as workers in other sectors played a critical role (interviews).

International solidarity was utilized to put pressure on the Chilean state to reach an agreement with the employers. The IDC sent a letter to the government threatening to boycott Chilean cargo at the height of the fruit harvest. The letter was widely publicized in the Chilean media, amplifying a movement that had struggled gain public attention (interview). Furthermore, union leaders argued that the IDC declaration had served to embarrass the Chilean government, which is particularly sensitive to perceptions outside of the country (interviews). Additionally, the Association of Fruit Exporters, "When they found out about [the declaration] that came from outside the country. . . pressured the government. They said that this has to be resolved." (Interview, leader from the north of Chile). Finally, another northern activist argued that "for [the workers] it was like, wow!, over there in Europe or in Spain or Argentina, they are paying attention to the conflict. . . Psychologically, it helped people a lot with their spirits, to have the will to keep fighting."

Out of the ensuing negotiations, the government ultimately passed a *ley corta* clearly establishing the right to the *media hora* for dockworkers without increasing the length of the workday; setting a large sum per worker in back-pay for the *media hora*; and establishing a National Day of the Dockworker commemorating dockworker leaders killed during the dictatorship. The agreement reached on the *media hora* back-pay amounted to $750000 CH – three times the monthly minimum wage -- for each year worked, per worker, since 2005

(Gaudichaud, 2015). Additionally, the government promised to subsequently work on a *ley larga* governing working conditions in the sector more broadly, as well as three on-going *mesas de dialogo* to discuss specific health and safety issues facing dockworkers (interviews).

Though the national strike and subsequent negotiations with the government and employers resulted in a major, precedent-setting victory, lasting damage to the local unions in Mejillones and San Antonio has undermined the UPCH's ability to carry out actions at a similar scale in the near-term. Through legal means, the main UPCH affiliate in Mejillones was all but destroyed. Further south, a detailed investigation carried out by the non-partisan Centro de Investigación Periodística found that an employer conspiracy resulted in splitting the union in San Antonio (Figueroa 2014), though the UPCH still has a significant presence there. Leaders and activists from both Mejillones and San Antonio were blacklisted, as were supporters from the non-UPCH affiliated ports of Arica, Coquimbo and Valparaíso (Díaz and Santibáñez 2014).

Nevertheless, the UPCH has continued enforcing the agreement, organizing on on-going issues and bringing forth new issues since the 2014 strike. They are involved in efforts to unite workers in the core export-oriented productive sectors of the economy to build towards political strikes over key issues of interest to Chilean workers more generally, such as an end to the privatized AFP pension system created during the dictatorship, which they struck for in 2016 during national protests. As a union leader from the north put it, "The political class as much as the citizenry know that when the dockworkers . . . strike, we go out en masse to the streets, we make ourselves heard." As a result, "We believe that stopping the country [by stopping work], we can fix things for everyone. . . Because [the ports] are the breaking point for the state, the losses are in the billions." (Interview, union leader from the south)

Chilean Case Analysis

The relatively more open context for union activity has allowed Chilean dockworkers to maintain their shop-floor power over time, enabling them to push at the margins of the possible in 2014 and 2015, drawing from a history of radicalism to pursue a class struggle strategy. The expectation that minimal democratic norms must be respected during labor conflicts meant that in Chile, employer and state repression (in Mejillones and San Antonio) led to increased participation among dockworkers, rather than diminished participation, as in Colombia. Additionally, unlike in Buenaventura, where dockworkers' power at the point of production power has been almost entirely eroded by state-sanctioned violence and the absence of state enforcement of labor law, Chilean dockworkers have managed to preserve their shop-floor power by preserving the all-important union-controlled hiring hall system.

Within a socio-political context that allowed workers to maintain a high degree of shop-floor power -- and therefore preserve a wider range of strategic possibilities than in the Colombian case -- workers drew from their union's political history to pursue a class struggle strategy. The case study suggests that despite the seventeen-year dictatorship and the death or disappearance of a broad stratum of left leadership, the intellectual and cultural roots of the left remain strong in Chile, with important consequences for labor and political action stretching through to the present. Legacies continued through the lived experience of UPCH activists – in particular, through histories with the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria and the contemporary Izquierda Libertaria – have contributed to the development of a militant and

politically-engaged unionism built on the principle of mutual aid at the ports and bolstered by support from left-oriented groups in civil society and internationally.

Nevertheless, class struggle unionism is not the only strategic possibility in Chile today. The ITF affiliates demonstrate that class collaborationism is also an available strategy, as are forms of micro-corporatism (Bensusan 2016; Palacios-Valladares 2010) and, to a more limited extent, human rights unionism (Public Services International 2016) -- by no means a comprehensive list. Led by Valparaíso, the ITF-affiliated class collaborationist unions pursued a legalist strategy during the dispute, filing a lawsuit which would have achieved only minimal, strictly economic demands on the *media hora* while actively seeking to undermine the more militant actions and political objectives of the UPCH by serving as strike breakers, filming actions and otherwise collaborating with the authorities and employers.

The UPCH dockworkers' highly sophisticated understanding of key pressure points enabled them to maximize the impact of their position in the economic system' and was determinative for their victory. Union activists, aided by intellectuals from the Izquierda Libertaria, recognized the importance of the copper-exporting Port of Mejillones, and the container Port of San Antonio, transferring organizers from other ports there during the strike to strengthen their efforts. Successfully shutting down Mejillones put significant pressure on the government to intervene to re-establish the international flow of copper from the publicly-owned CODELCO mine, a major source of revenue for the Chilean state. Holding the line at San Antonio and southern ports put significant pressure on other sectors of capital – in particular, exporters of fresh produce and forestry products who are vulnerable to time delays – to push for a speedy resolution to the dispute. As a leader from the south of Chile put it, "The region can't deal with more than seven days of work stoppages [at the port]. There is a build up of timber, of cellulose. The stores begin to run out. Winter begins to arrive. We use this very strategically." The result was a victory that pushed at the limits of the politically possible by establishing a national precedent within the Chilean labor movement for tripartite sectoral level collective bargaining covering both permanent and casual workers.

Conclusion

The dominant framework for understanding worker power would suggest that both Chilean and Colombian dockworkers, as a result of their central position in the economic system, have a high degree of power at the point of production to be leveraged through industrial action. Comparative research suggests instead that while Chilean dockworkers did in fact have a high degree of power at the point of production, the presumed shop-floor power of Colombian dockworkers in Buenaventura effectively did not exist in practice. In order to explain this finding, I consequently argue the need to expand our framework for understanding structural power to include state and society in addition to the economy. This more expansive understanding is better able to account for substantial cross-national variation among workers whose shared economic position would suggest a similar degree of power at the point of production but who nevertheless pursue highly divergent strategies.

Developing a framework that better delineates the roots of worker power at the point of production, in turn, allows for a more precise understanding of the field of possible strategies

open to specific, economically-defined groups of workers in given contexts. Like Anner (2011), I found that national-level socio-political context was the key factor shaping strategy in both cases. Nevertheless, while Anner emphasizes the availability of state-level alliances and neo-corporatism, I highlight a number of other ways in which state and society matter, in particular, in the Colombian case, tacit state acceptance of pervasive violence by extra-state actors, which diminished dockworker's shop-floor power in part through the creation of a large surplus labor force of potential strike breakers; lack of enforcement of labor law, making workers reticient to take action; and over the long-term, breaking the historical national union – and control of the hiring hall –through privatization of the ports. Taken together, state (in)action in these areas has created a highly uneven playing field for labor disputes, in which employers have at their disposal a wide range of tools to intimidate, cajole and repress trade union activists. As a consequence, the Colombian dockworkers pursued a relatively safe human rights strategy, depending on external alliances rather than shop-floor action. Yet, given the low degree of shop-floor power that dockworkers in general possess in Buenaventura, the decision to focus on organizing a group of workers with a relatively high degree of shop-floor power – permanent machine operators –yielded tentative, though positive, results.

In Chile, conversely, while trade union activists hardly struggle within a workers' paradise (Winn 2004), the expectation that basic democratic norms concerning extra-state violence and recourse to the law will be respected have meant that workers have been able to effectively leverage their power at the point of production during disputes. The maintenance of a union-controlled hiring hall system in Chile, in spite of the partial privatization of the ports and in contrast to the Colombian case, moreover, underlines how critical control of the labor supply is to maintaining the shop-floor power of workers in the port industry. Chilean dockworkers, operating in a less constrained context than their Colombian counterparts, had available to them a variety of strategic pathways and ultimately adopted a class struggle strategy as a result of their union's political history. Chilean dockworkers were able to effectively leverage their position in the economic system through a well-conceived strategy targeting specific ports at specific moments in such a way that they were able to bring in the state and other sectors of capital to put pressure on their employers to reach an agreement.

The cases are also suggestive of the tremendous contradictions generated at multiple scales and sites of action among trade union organizations with activities around the world. The very different orientations and trajectories of the ITF affiliates in Chile and Colombia are perhaps the clearest example. In Chile, legacy ITF trade union affiliates from the Cold War, whose "yellow union" organizations were formed during the dictatorship in an effort to curb radicalism in the sector, actively undermined the efforts of the Union Portuaria by serving as strikebreakers, providing surveillance for the employers by filming UP activities and collaborating with the employers in their public relations campaign. In Colombia, conversely, the ITF affiliate SNTT is a newly formed organization that is by all accounts engaged in energetic organizing efforts to improve the conditions of workers in the sector – a legitimate trade union organization, in other words.

In an additional twist, however, the SNTT project is largely unwritten by the FNV, the large multisectoral trade union that represents dockworkers in the Netherlands, including Europe's largest port in Rotterdam. As noted in Chapter 3, the FNV dockers section has been heavily criticized by both IDC and ETF activists for its willingness to accept industrial solidarity without meaningful reciprocating or providing sufficient support for collective projects.

Additionally, like many other trade unions in Northern Europe, the FNV's budget for international activities comes from the state's foreign aid budgets, setting clear parameters for the kinds of projects that can be undertaken (interview with FNV international office staff in Amsterdam). Consequently, the FNV and other Northern European unions have tended to push a model of social concertation in countries with radically different histories in the Global South – a deeply problematic strategy, to say the least (please see Peter Waterman's response to Mauricio Zarzuelo's note on ITF connections to the CIA in Chapter 4 for further discussion of this). Nevertheless, the fact that Danish social concertation allowed the dockworkers in 3F to successfully intercede with their Denmark-based employer Maersk on behalf of the Colombian dockworkers only further underlines the contradictions of a globally fragmented system of industrial relations.

The Union Portuaria de Colombia's difficulty competing effectively with the SNTT resulted in no small part from the difficulties the organization has faced in receiving comparable support in terms of funding, professionalization and international pressure on employers as the support received by the SNTT via the ITF and FNV. While the IDC provided assistance at the bargaining table in the Colombian case – and in terms of threatening an international blockade in the Chilean case – the organization is run on a shoe-string budget and its Southern European affiliates generally lack the financial capacity to run the kinds of long-term, funded programs that the ITF and its Northern European affiliates have run in the Global South. Because one of the Buenaventura terminals is operated by Dubai Port World, English dockworkers organizing at the newly opened London Gateway Port (also owned by DPWorld, as detailed in Chapter 3) incorporated the Buenaventura dockworkers' struggle into their campaign literature and built connections with Colombian human rights campaigns in the UK. But without representation on the shop-floor at Gateway, the impact was limited.

Overall, in countries like Chile, with relatively open contexts for trade unionism, and in countries like Colombia, with highly constrained contexts for trade unionism, some generalizable conclusions for labor internationalism may be drawn from these cases. The role of the ITF in the Colombian case suggests that when workers' shop-floor power is eroded by socio-political forces, international normative pressure targeting both states and transnational employers, as well as funding to support organizing, training and other basic union activities, can provide substantial leverage. The role of the IDC in the Chilean case, conversely, suggests that when workers have a high degree of shop-floor power, international industrial pressure, in the form of blockades or solidarity strikes, may be best suited to win broader gains for workers. Like Von Bulow (2009), then, I find that there is no one size fits all model for successful trade union internationalism. Instead, the cases suggest the need for a flexible and responsive approach by global union organizations that recognizes that workers who share a similar position in the economic system may yet possess divergent degrees of power at the point of production as a result national socio-political factors, and strategy should therefore be developed accordingly.

Appendix I: Organizational Acronyms

COMACH (Chile) – Confederación Marítima de Chile

COTRAPORCHI (Chile) – Confederación de Trabajadores Portuarios de Chile

CUT (Colombia) – Central Única de Trabajadores

3F (Denmark) -- Fagligt Fælles Forbund

FNV (Netherlands) -- Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging

IDC – International Dockworkers Council

ITF – International Transport Workers Federation

SNTT (Colombia) – Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de Transporte (Colombia)

UPCH (Chile) – Unión Portuaria de Chile

UPCO (Colombia) – Unión Portuaria de Colombia

Conclusion

This dissertation has built on innovative work in global labor studies in recent years of scholars like Anner (2011), Bank Muñoz (2017), McCallum (2013), Moody (1997), Silver (2003) Stevis and Boswell (2007); Waterman (2001) and Webster, Lambert and Bezuidenhout (2008) and shares their view that labor internationalism is a potentially powerful tool to reverse the decline of working-class power in many parts of the world. My work nevertheless contributes a distinctive perspective on worker power and organization in a global economy, in part by taking advantage of a complex comparative research design that is in itself distinctive. Rather than focusing on cross-sectoral comparisons, by examining labor organizing within a single sector and organization across different countries and regions, my research brings to the fore the ways in which different configurations of national and regional political economy determine workers' power and the strategic possibilities available to them. My work additionally breaks with the tendency towards economistic theories of worker power and strategy evident in much of the literature, 'bringing the state back in' – though the state in this dissertation is conceptualized in terms of its relative autonomy and role in securing the conditions of accumulation of capital, as well as in shaping labor-capital struggles (following Poulantzas 1973), rather than in Weberian terms.

The analysis in this dissertation is national, regional and global, drawing on research gathered through a multi-sited global organizational ethnography of the International Dockworkers Council. The IDC, as an autonomous, rank-and-file global union organization, is an exceptional case allowing me to substantiate arguments put forth by many scholars of global unionism (Moody 1997, Waterman 2001, Wills 1998) that non-bureaucratic forms of internationalism will improve its efficacy. These arguments are developed through a shadow comparison with the IDC's bureaucratic competitor organization, the International Transport Workers Federation, and this shadow comparison runs throughout the dissertation. The second axis of comparison is regional and contrasts the possibilities for effective labor internationalism within Europe to the possibilities for effective labor internationalism within Latin America, finding that key elements of political economy within each region substantially facilitate or hinder cross-border collaboration. Finally, cross-national comparisons within each region form the final axis of comparison, allowing me to examine the ways in which socio-political factors at the national level shape workers' power at the point of production, which in turn shapes the strategic possibilities available to workers both nationally and transnationally.

The dissertation as a whole is built on the argument that "position in the economic system" alone is not sufficient to understand workers' power at the point of production. Because of the wide-ranging power states have to set the terms of labor-capital struggles, all labor disputes are inherently political and state and society together create the conditions under which workers are able to exercise power at the point of production. Olin Wright (2000) and Silver's (2003) structural power does not take this into account and thus refers to a hypothetical – rather than a concrete – form of power. Drawing on the work of Gramsci (1971) and Poulantzas (1974), I propose a more useful conceptualization that treats worker power as co-constituted by economy, state and society, allowing for analysis of concrete phenomenon, rather than hypothetical abstractions. By more accurately defining the conditions of worker power, we can reach a better understanding of the strategic possibilities available to workers in given contexts.

Contrary to Olin Wright and Silver's overly economistic model, which would predict that dockworkers in general have a high degree of structural power as a result of their position in the economic system, I instead found significant diversity between countries and regions. As the cross-regional chapters demonstrated, political, social and economic factors combine in such a way that European dockworkers generally possess a high degree of power at the point of production, while, despite some notable exceptions in the Southern Cone, Latin American dockworkers generally possess a low degree of power at the point of production. The socio-political factors constituting European dockworkers' high degree of structural power in fact only come in to focus through the contrast with Latin American dockworkers' generally low degree of structural power, underscoring one of the key virtues of comparative research.

The key socio-political factors impacting dockworkers' power at the point of production and differentiating the Global North from the Global South are the presence or absence of state-sanctioned or state-sponsored violence and the presence or absence of strong and enforceable labor rights. Despite more difficult socio-political conditions than in the past, European dockworkers continue to struggle under conditions in which state-sanctioned or state-sponsored violence is vanishingly rare and labor rights are strong and well-enforced relative to most of the rest of the world. Conversely, in Latin America, conditions of state-sanctioned or state-sponsored violence and weak or unenforced labor law are commonplace, though there is significant intra-regional variation in the degree to which labor finds itself unprotected, particularly between the Southern Cone and the rest of the region.

In the regional case studies detailed in Chapters 2 and 4, I showed that as a result of the very different conditions for trade unionism in Europe and Latin America, Latin American dockworkers have found it far more difficult than their European counterparts to build a robust transnational union organization at the regional level. The most important factors predicting the ability of dockworkers to build strong regional networks are the strength of the national affiliates in a given region and their ability to provide industrial solidarity and other forms of support; opportunities for industrial solidarity provided by shipping routes; the cost and distance of travel, which facilitates or hinders face-to-face organizing and the development of a cohesive organizational culture; and the absence or presence of transnational governance structures, such as the European Union. Despite sizeable challenges in comparison to their European comrades, Latin American dockworkers noted many potential logics of collaboration – industrial, economic and political -- and provided concrete suggestions for improving their regional organization within the existing set of constraints.

In the country case studies detailed in Chapters 3 and 5, I argued that decisions on politics, strategy and organizational form are determinative of dispute outcomes both in situations in which dockworkers have a high degree of power at the point of production and in situations in which they have a low degree of power at the point of production. In other words, while state, economy and society shape dockworkers' structural power, delimiting the bounds of the possible, the outcomes of their disputes are ultimately the result of the collective agency workers exercised through their trade union organizations.

The European country comparisons demonstrate that in a regional context in which dockworkers maintain a high degree of power at the point of production, the successful Portuguese case depended on combining industrial action and community support at the port in dispute with industrial action at the port of an international ally. This was, however, first

predicated on political agreement on campaign goals and working around bureaucratic blockages. The partially successful English case lacked an industrial strategy at the port in dispute as a result of bureaucratic blockages in the national union. However, the negative effects of this were to some extent mitigated by industrial action at the port of an international ally. Finally, the unsuccessful Greek case lacked industrial solidarity from abroad as a result of the lack of political agreement among affiliates of the international organization. Robust industrial action at the local level and national-level alliances on their own were not enough to win the dispute.

In contrast to Europe, the Latin American cases suggest that dockworkers power at the point of production varies substantially as a result of very different national conditions. These national level differences resulted in highly divergent strategies in the Colombian and Chilean cases. In the Colombian case, contrary to the predictions of Silver's (2003) theory, dockworkers had an exceptionally low degree of power at the point of production and so relied on an associational strategy of "human rights unionism", featuring international normative pressure and legal complaints, rather than industrial action. In the Chilean case, dockworkers had a relatively high degree of power at the point of production and so had open to them the possibility of adopting a strategy of "class struggle unionism", relying primarily on industrial action and alliances with others on the far left. Like the Portuguese dockworkers in the successful European case, the Chilean dockworkers succeeded by combining industrial and community support domestically with the threat of industrial action from international allies. Notably, in both the successful European and Latin American cases, dockworkers not only combined power at the point of production at the port in dispute with the port of an international ally -- as Silver's (2003) theory of structural power might predict -- but, *contra* Silver, also relied heavily on an associational strategy of domestic alliances with social movements and far left political parties to amplify their struggle and exert normative pressure on the state to intervene in the dispute.

Overall, the wide array of local, national and regional conditions for labor disputes in the global economy suggests that there is no "one size fits all" model for labor internationalism. Successful global unionism must instead be flexible and responsive to local, national and regional conditions. I argue that democratic, rank-and-file models of labor internationalism embodied in organizations like the IDC are better able to provide this kind of flexibility and responsiveness than bureaucratic, professionalized models embodied in organizations like the ITF. Nevertheless, the democratic, rank-and-file organizations best able to engage in this form of internationalism may suffer from significant resource constraints, in contrast to their bureaucratic counterparts, limiting their development. In addition, while union democracy provides openings for militancy and radicalism, it does not in itself generate militancy and radicalism. The ongoing legacy of Northern imperialism and its role in structuring the global political economy, therefore, suggests that building an international labor movement that is simultaneously democratic, militant and radical will require more meaningful relationships between workers situated in different positions in the global political economy, as well as extensive political education on Northern imperialism and global capitalism. In the next section, I discuss activists' reflections on relationships between North and South and how these ties may be deepened, while in the final section, I reflect on future prospects for left labor internationalism on the docks and beyond.

Connecting North and South

> *It's important for us that European and North American comrades know that from Latin America, the cargo that arrives there is from ports where comrades are exploited. . . that the workers there have conditions that are very different from what they have. . . the dockworkers in Latin America are much more precarious, in the salaries, in the working conditions, in the places where they work, the tools, the cranes, the machines they use, many times they arrive second-hand from the terminals in the United States. There is a lack of consciousness [about this] among the workers [in the United States] . . .*
>
> *. . . we dockworkers everywhere in the world are the same. We share the same bars, we have friendships that last for years, we suffer the loss of comrades who die from workplace accidents, which are hard moments in the lives of the dockworkers, but they unite you . . . But obviously it's also different. Historical processes in those countries are very different from Latin America. . . Their unions have been around for many years, without interruption by dictatorship, or if they were, they weren't as affected as we were here in Chile, because of the genocide that the military carried out against its own people . . . The countries have grown at different rhythms. Each country has different issues to resolve that others have already resolved. . . In the U.S., they are fighting against extreme automation and mechanization of the ports . . . Here, we're just fighting for more cranes. As long as the inequalities continue in that way, internationalization of the unions will be a bit difficult.*
>
> --Nelson Francino, dockworker union leader and IDC activist, Port of Iquique, Chile

Prospects for a More Radical Internationalism

In Chapter 4, I examined the IDC's regional organization in Latin America and found that while dockworkers have struggled to develop a regional organization comparable to the IDC-Europe, they saw many potential logics for collaboration and possibilities for contributions from the region, not least of which was in advancing a more politically radical vision of labor internationalism in the organization as a whole. In interviews in both Latin America and Europe, however, I was struck by the lack of knowledge activists on both sides of the Atlantic had of the politics of their counterparts. While it's true that the Spanish dockworkers union, La Coordinadora, which plays an outsized role in the IDC as a whole, has an explicitly syndicalist orientation, disavowing broader political engagement, many of the European trade union affiliates, as well as the individuals most involved in the IDC, are themselves activists on the far left who certainly cannot be said to lack a broad vision of the political potential of trade union internationalism.

Svenska Hamnarbetarforbundet, for example, played a central role in the Freedom Flotilla to Gaza in 2010, and interest in the Palestinian cause is widely shared among IDC activists in Europe (as well as ILWU Local 10, which organized a "Block the Boat" action in 2014). The Swedish union has also played an important role in anti-racist work in support of refugees and others – as have the Greek dockworkers in Piraeus. Andy Green, a key IDC activist from the UK, is secretary of the national Campaign for Trade Union Freedom, which has

connected the fight against the anti-trade union laws in the UK with trade unionists struggles around the world. Leaders from the notoriously radical CGT-dockers in France have been heavily involved in building ties beyond Europe, while the Lisbon dockers (who have close ties to a Trotskyist organization active internationally) have developed strong connections with radical intellectuals and trade unionists from Brazil.

In many cases, these recent examples build on long-standing traditions and partially-submerged histories of radical internationalism within these unions, with some of the most famous examples including the refusal to load arms in support of the reactionary foreign policy objectives of imperialist states. For example, British dockworkers refused to load arms bound for Russia after the Revolution; Australian dockworkers refused to load arms bound for Indonesia during the struggle against the Dutch; French and American dockworkers refused to load arms bound for Indochina in the 1960's and 1970's; and dockworkers in many parts of the world blockaded ships in support of freedom struggles in Chile and South Africa in the 1970's and 1980's. These examples serve to demonstrate not only the living historical legacies of these unions but also the tremendous potential these strategically situated workers have to exercise working-class power politically through exerting power at the point of production.

Yet, despite strong roots in the far left, the politics of European IDC activists, including within their own trade union organizations, have for the most part not been put into practice within the international organization, beyond "paper solidarity" in the form of public statements. Campaigns have instead focused on the defense of affiliates' immediate interests, which have varied in terms of their broader political significance (the successful Portuguese and Chilean cases certainly had wide-ranging impacts for the left in both countries). In other words, while the Latin American critique of the limitations of the IDC's current orientation are certainly correct, interviews with participants in Europe suggest that in fact there is potentially a quite strong basis among activists and affiliate organizations to develop a more explicitly political orientation. The question, then, is how such a reorientation could be achieved.

Opportunities to Build Ties across North and South

Both interview-based research and participant observation at two global assemblies (in 2014 and 2016) suggested the need for more meaningful horizontal and transversal linkages and engagement between dockworkers in the North and South. While within the regions, relationships are horizontal and transversal, currently, only a small number of activists have meaningful connections across regions of the North and South. The organization has made some shifts in the direction of more meaningful North-South engagement in recent years by bringing Spanish, French and American activists together to meetings in Latin America and Africa, but much more remains to be done. Because the infrequent (biannual) assemblies are the sole opportunity for most Southern activists to meet their counterparts in the North and other parts of the South, and vice versa, facilitating the development of meaningful relationships through them is imperative.

At the assemblies I attended, however, I observed little mixing between delegates from different regions, particularly across North and South. Differences of language are perhaps the biggest hurdle in this regard: "The language problem is a big brake on the development of the organization because if a comrade from Latin America wants to connect with a French guy, how

does he do it? With a Danish guy, with a Dutch guy?" (Former IDC Latin American coordinator Mauricio Zarzuelo) Both Zarzuelo and a Chilean delegate similarly noted language as a limiting factor in being able to develop meaningful relationships with their counterparts in the IDC's African region. Nevertheless, the desire to make these connections, particularly on the part of the Latin American delegates, was clear, as I was drafted repeatedly to help activists with simultaneous translations in informal settings outside of the formal meetings so that they could speak with their European and American counterparts about pressing issues. Central American activists, for example, were eager to speak with Danish dockworkers, whose national organization 3F had sponsored in-country projects supporting trade unions engaged in activities at odds with their own work.

Additionally, though each region had its own meeting during the general assembly and all regions attended a general meeting, in the latter, there was little time for substantive debate given the large number of attendees. Furthermore, while the European activists meet one another in frequent meetings, the assemblies are the only opportunity that Latin American activists have each year to meet one another and develop relationships, putting greater pressure on the meetings to deliver in a meaningful way. A lack of attention by the international organization to the prohibitively expensive cost of food at assemblies held in the North is indicative of broader issues, as activists from the Global South consequently may not socialize in the same venues as their Northern counterparts outside of the formal meetings. Latin American activists in fact reported finding the 2014 assembly in Tenerife "impersonal" and having had an "ugly impression . . . I felt. . . that actually they took advantage of an opportunity, that Europe had the need to meet, so that Latin America was present and made its debate. And Latin America. . . was not able to generate a deeper debate."

Efforts to improve opportunities for meaningful exchange at assemblies – and to develop sustained relationships between activists in the North and South outside of the infrequent meetings – will therefore be a critical component of fully implementing the IDC's vision of rank-and-file internationalism at the global level. Despite the challenges, for many affiliates from both North and South, there does not appear to be a lack of willingness to develop more meaningful exchange but the organization must find ways to better facilitate this. For example, at the first General Assembly I attended in Tenerife in 2014, after learning from the head of the Union Portuaria de Colombia that one of the terminals in Buenaventura was owned by DPWorld, I introduced him to a leading English activist who subsequently built relationships with Colombian human rights organizations in the UK; spoke directly with the union leadership in Buenaventura with the help of an in-country labor rights NGO; and incorporated information on the Colombian situation into the Gateway campaign. Such connections are not difficult to make, but they require people with knowledge of affiliates in different parts of the world and language skills to bring them together. Identifying individuals and means for achieving such connections, therefore, is critical.

Looking Ahead

> *. . . when globalization takes hold and mixes us up, we're mixed up from the bottom to the top and from the top to the bottom. The comrades in Europe find it really difficult to understand our reality but inevitably, they live through a process that carries them towards our reality. In our advance, and in the fall of the European model, we find one*

another. . . the system itself is making us understand things. . . what they applied to us [in Latin America] is now being debated in Europe. . . The system is equalizing us. . . What can be done with that? I think that's the debate. . . we're searching for that space for debate, to exchange ideas. IDC hasn't been able to give that yet, but it's advancing.

--Ricardo Suarez, Uruguayan dockworker union leader and IDC Latin America coordinator

While this dissertation has largely adopted the assumption that dockworkers *at least potentially* have great structural power because of their position in the economic system, the push in recent years by some employers in the North to automate terminals suggests that this assumption should not be taken for granted. At the same time, deregulation and frontal assaults by states and capital threaten to return even powerfully organized groups of dockworkers in the North back to situations of precarity. As Olney (2018) puts it, "strategic choke points are not static and forever. Class conflicts and new technology preclude any strategic position from becoming permanent." As I've argued throughout the dissertation, worker struggles at the point of production always play out simultaneously vis a vis capital and states, and these struggles are both determined by, and determinative of, the balance of class forces in the broader society. Consequently, no group of workers, no matter how 'strategic', will ultimately prevail if the balance of class forces in the broader society is sufficiently skewed in favor of capital.

For that reason, as we saw in the successful Portuguese and Chilean cases, ties to broader communities, left parties and social movements are vital. Strategic workers who become isolated in their workplaces lose power over time. But dockworkers must also consider the difficulties of maintaining their generally better than average working conditions in increasingly immiserated global supply chains. If they remain as isolated groups of relatively privileged workers in these chains, the possibilities for maintaining these conditions over time become more difficult. Consequently, there is great need to develop connections among logistics workers upstream and downstream global supply chains, both domestically and internationally – not just among dockworkers.

Standing behind so many of the central differences in power and strategy among the trade unions in this dissertation are national states. Because states play such an important role in shaping the struggles of strategically positioned workers, state retrenchment of course has major consequences. But states, in turn are shaped through their relationships to other states in the global system and states in the core have an outsized role in shaping the actions of states in the periphery. As Evans (2014: 259, 273) notes, "national labor movements are still the most important components of the global labor movement" but "the ability of major labor movements in the Global South to make key contributions to the overall architecture of the global labor movement is a potential contingent on national political trajectories." Consequently, it's worthwhile to consider the counterfactual possibilities that might have emerged for Greece had German workers shown greater solidarity with Southern Europe during the economic crisis (Bieler and Erne 2014), or for Chile and Colombia had workers in the U.S. shown greater solidarity with left movements in Latin America over the past half century (Scipes 2010) – and for working-class power at the global level, in turn. As Latin American coordinator Ricardo Suarez argued in the quotation above, yet another possibility in the global economy is that of

convergence. Indeed, what happens to labor in the periphery has tended to make its way back to the center (or, at the very least, the periphery of the center) in recent decades. In this sense, then, though the mechanisms of connection are often obscured, an injury to one really is an injury to all. The challenge, as ever, is how to develop both consciousness and action on this basis.

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